

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:11,573

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:11,573 --> 00:00:16,097

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily

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00:00:16,097 --> 00:00:22,622

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:22,622 --> 00:00:28,527

Author investigator Francis Hitching placed television equipment in a London cellar supposedly

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00:00:28,527 --> 00:00:34,933

haunted by a 17th century cavalier.

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00:00:34,933 --> 00:00:40,137

On a flickering black and white screen he may have found the last vestiges, the final

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00:00:40,137 --> 00:00:52,989

earthly remnants of a 300 year old warrior.

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00:00:52,989 --> 00:00:57,953

The English countryside has been populated by so many people for so long a time that

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00:00:57,953 --> 00:01:02,997

it has acquired a rich legacy of spirits and ghosts.

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00:01:02,997 --> 00:01:08,322

A 200 year old monarch may pace the library of a great fortress.

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00:01:08,322 --> 00:01:14,087

Henry VIII we are told still drags his gout-ridden foot through broken cloisters and cobwebbed

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00:01:14,087 --> 00:01:18,531

passages.

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00:01:18,531 --> 00:01:25,537

Long dead prisoners plead for mercy in empty dungeons.

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00:01:25,537 --> 00:01:31,382

Even druids still haunt Stonehenge.

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00:01:31,382 --> 00:01:41,551

Guillotine victims ride across the rolling plains carrying their severed heads.

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00:01:41,551 --> 00:01:47,156

Every generation has added its ghostly collection of vampires, phantoms and monsters of the

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00:01:47,156 --> 00:01:48,157

netherworld.

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00:01:48,157 --> 00:01:53,842

Today a roll call of specters stretches the length of the kingdom.

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00:01:54,002 --> 00:01:58,206

Perhaps it is the willingness of its citizens to believe in the supernatural.

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00:01:58,206 --> 00:02:04,771

Whatever the cause, Great Britain wrote one expert is the most haunted place on earth.

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00:02:04,771 --> 00:02:10,857

Ghosts have a tendency to stay in one place, usually the location of their demise.

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00:02:10,857 --> 00:02:15,261

Since most English castles were built many centuries ago, the apparitions that haunt

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00:02:15,261 --> 00:02:20,505

them have had enough time to scare enough people to become legends.

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00:02:20,505 --> 00:02:24,348

The people who own these castles continue to live in them.

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00:02:24,348 --> 00:02:30,154

Strain sights and hideous noises are considered part of the bargain along with poor plumbing

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00:02:30,154 --> 00:02:33,156

and drafty rooms.

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00:02:33,156 --> 00:02:37,960

Ghosts are accepted as eccentric members of the family and in many cases they were just

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00:02:37,960 --> 00:02:41,043

that before they died.

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00:02:41,043 --> 00:02:47,328

At Wolverton Manor for example we encounter the very rowdy ghost of Lord Thomas Trenchard.

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00:02:47,328 --> 00:02:51,973

This story is told by his descendant, Captain Thimbleby.

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00:02:51,973 --> 00:03:00,180

In the early 18th century Thomas Trenchard, after no doubt a very good dinner party with

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00:03:00,180 --> 00:03:04,544

a lot of port in his belly, had a wager with his friend that he could take a horse and

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00:03:04,544 --> 00:03:08,747

carriage up the great stairs which he indeed did.

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00:03:08,747 --> 00:03:14,272

And in fact some of the stairs have been repaired where the edges have been chipped off.

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00:03:14,272 --> 00:03:20,477

Now on earth he got down again, one doesn't know but he won his wager and we hear him

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00:03:20,477 --> 00:03:24,481

going up the stairs every nine again over the years.

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00:03:45,299 --> 00:03:50,384

A strange part of Wolverton Manor's ghostly carriage is that it has never been known to

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00:03:50,384 --> 00:03:57,109

return down the stairs, so much for noisy apparitions.

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00:03:57,109 --> 00:04:01,393

Authentic English ghosts are not known to physically attack people.

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00:04:01,393 --> 00:04:05,757

On numerous occasions however they have frightened someone to death.

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00:04:05,757 --> 00:04:10,861

This happened on a lovely country estate in Dorset and the story is told to us by Emma

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00:04:10,861 --> 00:04:13,123

Leavesley.

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00:04:13,123 --> 00:04:21,050

My family had owned this house for more than 400 years I think and there were legends that

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00:04:21,050 --> 00:04:27,056

something monstrous appeared in the middle of the night and was so frightening that

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00:04:27,056 --> 00:04:31,579

two of my ancestors had actually gone mad after they'd seen it.

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00:04:31,579 --> 00:04:33,141

I hated sleeping there.

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00:04:33,141 --> 00:04:37,785

I used to dread going to bed because I would always have nightmares there and I'd wake

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00:04:37,785 --> 00:04:42,109

up in the middle of the night and think they were real and there was definitely something

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00:04:42,149 --> 00:04:43,870

horrible about it.

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00:04:43,870 --> 00:04:50,236

Anyway, one night when my grandmother was a very little girl, which was about 1880 or

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00:04:50,236 --> 00:04:58,743

1890, she and her sister were living in this house, my grandmother at one end of a corridor

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00:04:58,743 --> 00:05:03,768

and her sister at the other end, probably the same room that I was in, maybe even the

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00:05:03,768 --> 00:05:10,133

same bed.

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00:05:10,133 --> 00:05:16,419

One night they went to bed perfectly normally having a very good night to each other and

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00:05:16,419 --> 00:05:22,424

what happened next, no one knows for certain but it was obviously absolutely horrifying.

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00:05:40,159 --> 00:06:05,942

My grandmother rushed down the corridor to see what was happening as she opened the door.

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00:06:05,942 --> 00:06:11,427

She thought she caught a glance of something so horrible that she nearly fainted but it

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00:06:11,427 --> 00:06:13,428

disappeared almost immediately.

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00:06:13,428 --> 00:06:18,873

The worst thing was that when she looked at the bed, her sister had stopped screaming

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00:06:18,873 --> 00:06:21,996

and she was just lying there dead.

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00:06:21,996 --> 00:06:26,880

I hated it as a story and I wish she'd never told me really because I still have nightmares

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00:06:26,880 --> 00:06:33,846

about it and I'm sure I feel something that that poor girl went through when I slept in

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00:06:33,846 --> 00:06:34,847

that room.

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00:06:34,847 --> 00:06:42,374

In most hauntings, sounds are more common than sightings and ghostly rituals are usually

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00:06:42,374 --> 00:06:49,100

performed by a single figure but in our next dramatization both sights and sounds occur

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00:06:49,100 --> 00:06:56,506

and two 18th century Englishmen are locked together for eternity.

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00:06:56,506 --> 00:07:01,911

Robin Wordsworth owns Bag Lake House and keeps alive the story of the double tragedy that

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00:07:01,911 --> 00:07:05,994

took place in 1759.

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00:07:05,994 --> 00:07:11,679

There was a man who lived here once called Squire William Light and he had the front

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00:07:11,679 --> 00:07:17,805

of this house built onto an older house in 1719.

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00:07:17,805 --> 00:07:21,127

This we know for a fact.

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00:07:21,127 --> 00:07:25,171

The rest of the story is really legend.

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00:07:25,171 --> 00:07:32,177

The idea is that Squire Light came out hunting perhaps a little drug.

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00:08:26,224 --> 00:08:32,230

The water was shallow but deep enough to drown a drunken Squire.

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00:08:32,230 --> 00:08:41,237

The Squires groom went searching for his long overdue master.

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00:08:55,250 --> 00:09:02,256

Squire!

77

00:09:02,256 --> 00:09:07,260

Squire!

78

00:09:07,260 --> 00:09:14,266

Squire Light!

79

00:09:14,266 --> 00:09:21,272

Squire!

80

00:09:21,272 --> 00:09:28,278

Squire!

81

00:09:28,278 --> 00:09:35,285

Squire!

82

00:09:35,285 --> 00:09:42,291

Squire!

83

00:09:42,291 --> 00:09:49,297

Squire!

84

00:09:49,297 --> 00:09:55,302

Squire!

85

00:09:56,303 --> 00:10:01,307

The groom's wife found him near the pond.

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00:10:01,307 --> 00:10:08,313

He told her his monstrous tale then died.

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00:10:08,313 --> 00:10:13,318

That's the story and it's still believed in the village.

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00:10:13,318 --> 00:10:17,321

People don't care to walk past this house at night.

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00:10:17,321 --> 00:10:20,324

The younger people.

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00:10:20,324 --> 00:10:30,333

And during the 40 years I've been here quite a number of level headed people have felt

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00:10:30,333 --> 00:10:41,342

disturbances of various kinds and seen things third foot steps which can't be accounted for.

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00:10:41,342 --> 00:10:47,347

After years of horrible unexplained sounds the local priest attempted to exercise both

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00:10:47,347 --> 00:10:50,350

Squire Light and the groom from the household.

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00:10:50,350 --> 00:10:53,353

His efforts were partially successful.

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00:10:53,353 --> 00:10:59,358

Local citizens believe that the Squire is now confined to the chimney and moans

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00:10:59,358 --> 00:11:04,362

complainingly when the wind blows.

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00:11:04,362 --> 00:11:11,368

The groom however lingers outside and faithfully calls his master.

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00:11:11,368 --> 00:11:18,375

Those who share the Squire's taste for whiskey claim that they see his specter rising from the pond

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00:11:18,375 --> 00:11:20,376

when the moon is full.

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00:11:20,376 --> 00:11:28,383

As we shall learn in our next story they should be thankful that he doesn't scream.

101

00:11:32,387 --> 00:11:38,392

Most castles are haunted by murky intangible apparitions.

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00:11:38,392 --> 00:11:44,397

In Marshwood Vale however, Betiscombe Manor is haunted by a very tangible human skull

103

00:11:44,397 --> 00:11:47,400

that refuses to be buried.

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00:11:47,400 --> 00:11:52,404

When provoked the skull's angry screams reverberate for miles.

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00:12:08,418 --> 00:12:15,424

Michael Pinney, the current owner of Betiscombe Manor, is a direct descendant of Azariah Pinney

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00:12:15,424 --> 00:12:19,428

who was exiled to the West Indies in 1685.

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00:12:19,428 --> 00:12:26,434

While there he purchased a slave and inadvertently acquired a haunt.

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00:12:26,434 --> 00:12:35,442

The legend of the screaming skull of Betiscombe is the fact that the manor is the only one

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00:12:35,442 --> 00:12:43,449

who is the legend of the screaming skull of Betiscombe is the legend of a negro slave.

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00:12:43,449 --> 00:12:48,453

There is no doubt about that and that is how it first grew up.

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00:12:48,453 --> 00:13:00,464

It was the legend of a prince from Africa who was exported, went through the horror of the slave trade

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00:13:00,464 --> 00:13:06,469

became a slave, came back as a body servant and he then said to his master

113

00:13:06,469 --> 00:13:13,475

the restitution you've got to see is that I am buried in my own land, not here.

114

00:13:13,475 --> 00:13:15,477

I'm a prince in my own country.

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00:13:15,477 --> 00:13:22,483

Well, the legend says that he wasn't buried in his own land.

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00:13:22,483 --> 00:13:26,486

He was taken and buried in Betiscombe Churchyard.

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00:13:30,490 --> 00:13:35,494

The legend says that he was buried in his own land.

118

00:13:35,494 --> 00:13:40,499

The legend says that he was buried in his own land.

119

00:13:40,499 --> 00:13:45,503

The legend says that he was buried in his own land.

120

00:13:45,503 --> 00:13:50,507

The legend says that he was buried in his own land.

121

00:13:50,507 --> 00:13:55,512

The legend says that he was buried in his own land.

122

00:13:55,512 --> 00:14:06,521

Once buried, horrible screams rose from the grave.

123

00:14:06,521 --> 00:14:17,531

Louder and louder they grew until the skull, according to legend, worked its way to the surface.

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00:14:18,532 --> 00:14:25,538

Every attempt to dispose of the skull has brought misfortune to those living in Betiscombe Manor.

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00:14:25,538 --> 00:14:32,544

As recently as 1914, local witnesses claim that it has sweated blood.

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00:14:32,544 --> 00:14:39,550

Today, it resides on an attic shelf in silence, at least for now.

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00:14:39,550 --> 00:14:45,555

The ghosts of England are not restricted to drafty castles and lonely country estates.

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00:14:45,555 --> 00:14:56,565

In the very heart of London, a 17th century cavalier replete with plumed hat and pantaloons resides in of all places, a wine cellar.

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00:14:59,568 --> 00:15:07,575

In some form, a tavern has operated here for at least three centuries. Currently, it is called the George Inn.

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00:15:08,575 --> 00:15:17,583

Bill Grundy is a documentary filmmaker for the British Broadcasting Corporation.

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00:15:17,583 --> 00:15:26,591

It was the summer of 1975. I just finished making a series of television films about the ghosts of London.

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00:15:26,591 --> 00:15:34,598

And I came in here for a drink and the landlord came over to me and he said, like the films, pity it didn't, do I are a ghost?

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00:15:35,599 --> 00:15:38,602

I said, you got one here in the George Inn? He said, yes, we have.

134

00:15:38,602 --> 00:15:43,606

I said, do you believe in ghosts? He said, no, but my wife does. I asked him to explain.

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00:15:43,606 --> 00:15:48,610

He said, well, we've been here for years and there'd be no trouble at all.

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00:15:48,610 --> 00:15:58,619

But one day, between 10 and 11 in the morning anyway before we opened, he said my wife went

downstairs in the cellar and she came rushing back up, all white and trembling.

137

00:15:58,619 --> 00:16:02,623

And said, I'm never going in the cellar again. She said, it's the fellow down there.

138

00:16:02,623 --> 00:16:05,625

I said, we're not open yet. I can't see a man down there.

139

00:16:05,625 --> 00:16:09,629

And she said, no, this isn't an ordinary fellow. He's dressed like a cavalier.

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00:16:09,629 --> 00:16:17,636

I mean, standing in the corner of the battle vaulting now. My wife still doesn't go down that cellar.

141

00:16:19,637 --> 00:16:24,642

Grundy contacted Francis Hitching, an author and investigator of Strange Phenomena.

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00:16:25,643 --> 00:16:31,648

Hitching placed a camera and a videotape recorder in the supposedly haunted cellar.

143

00:16:33,650 --> 00:16:42,658

I've been investigating ghosts and other related phenomena for a number of years now and this sounds to me a particularly good and typical example of a ghost.

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00:16:42,658 --> 00:16:51,665

That's to say, we're here in a very old building, one of the oldest basements in London, certainly part of the old London, up there is the street itself.

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00:16:51,665 --> 00:16:55,669

And I dare say you can hear some noises which come across it from time to time.

146

00:16:55,669 --> 00:17:02,675

And the stories that we've heard, the two people, the witnesses, talking about somebody in Stuart costume.

147

00:17:02,675 --> 00:17:13,685

This is typical of the kind of appearance that you get. Somebody in costume appearing in an old building, sometimes at the same time, sometimes not.

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00:17:13,685 --> 00:17:18,689

And I feel that it's one that's worth investigating with modern equipment.

149

00:17:21,692 --> 00:17:27,697

Hitching sealed the doors from the inside and remained alone in the cellar throughout the night.

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00:17:28,698 --> 00:17:33,702

He focused his camera on a dark pillar in the middle of the room.

151

00:17:37,706 --> 00:17:42,710

Much to my surprise, we have found something. I'd like to have a look at it.

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00:17:42,710 --> 00:17:48,715

It's a very surprising image which is coming on the screen in just a few moments.

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00:17:48,715 --> 00:17:53,720

Now, I was here at the time that this was taken and I saw nothing myself.

154

00:17:53,720 --> 00:17:56,722

I think I was looking at the pillar at the time that it was there.

155

00:17:56,722 --> 00:18:02,727

But look, coming up on the screen is a most extraordinary something. What is it? Lights?

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00:18:02,727 --> 00:18:07,732

It may be... if it's a ghost, is that what a ghost looks like?

157

00:18:07,732 --> 00:18:13,737

As I say, I think I was looking at the pillar at the time but there it is emerging on there.

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00:18:13,737 --> 00:18:19,742

Nobody else was here and it's not a... it's not an earthly thing.

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00:18:19,742 --> 00:18:25,748

It's nothing that could be created with a torch. It's got curious images which goes up like that.

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00:18:25,748 --> 00:18:33,755

I think it's one of the most remarkable ghostly manifestations that's happened in my experience looking for them.

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00:18:34,755 --> 00:18:40,761

Whether or not it's something that can be the same ghost that's gone away now.

162

00:18:40,761 --> 00:18:43,763

Whether or not it's the same ghost as they saw.

163

00:18:43,763 --> 00:18:48,768

Whether it's one of these manifestations that happen sometimes when people go out trying to look for things

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00:18:48,768 --> 00:18:58,776

and instead of specifically what they're looking for, some other thing appears out of the fabric of the building.

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00:18:58,776 --> 00:19:05,782

I just don't know. Until today, my theory was that under conditions of extreme emotion,

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00:19:05,782 --> 00:19:10,787

that's to say great pain, great anguish, even great happiness,

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00:19:10,787 --> 00:19:15,791

that somehow this emotion imprinted itself in the solid fabric of buildings

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00:19:15,791 --> 00:19:21,796

and people were able to recognize it and it came out in the same way that clairvoyance and psychometrists, doublers,

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00:19:21,796 --> 00:19:26,801

can pick hold of a solid object and tell you a lot of things about the people who were last there.

170

00:19:26,801 --> 00:19:32,806

That's until today. But today I've seen this thing and I can't explain it.

171

00:19:32,806 --> 00:19:36,810

And so my explanation yesterday has been torn away.

172

00:19:36,810 --> 00:19:42,815

What I believe tomorrow, I just don't know. I'll have to look at that again and again and perhaps one day I'll find out.

173

00:19:48,820 --> 00:19:54,825

What are ghosts and why do they keep repeating the same actions over and over again?

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00:19:54,825 --> 00:20:01,831

One theory is that a haunting is a violent release of energy somehow frozen in space and time.

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00:20:01,831 --> 00:20:07,837

When weather conditions are exactly right, the action is played back like a recording.

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00:20:07,837 --> 00:20:13,842

Impossible. So were Xeroxing and Holography just a few short years ago.

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00:20:13,842 --> 00:20:18,846

In fact, so were videotape replays like the one you're watching right now.

178

00:20:18,846 --> 00:20:22,850

People have been seeing and hearing ghosts for thousands of years.

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00:20:22,850 --> 00:20:25,852

Soon we may know how and why.

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00:20:25,852 --> 00:20:33,859

What a tremendous game that would be for science and what a tremendous loss for storytelling.