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Ghost hunters target Elizabethan museum

By Steve Peacock

A WELL-DRESSED spook with anger issues has been giving ghost hunters a regular telling off during haunting hunts in the centuries old Totnes museum building. The angry ghost has become a bit of a regular for paranormal groups, which have been carrying out ghost checks at the Fore Street complex for the past 4 years.

A invisible cat has also become part of the museum's spooky reputation during the relatively regular late-night ghost hunting sessions – along with playful children and a distinct feeling of seasickness.

And even daytime visitors to the museum have reported that their children will not go anywhere near the kitchen at the rear of the building which has long had a reputation for being haunted.

Paranormal groups from across Devon and Cornwall and even further afield have been setting up their equipment in the museum to check out its haunting qualities at the rate of around four or five a year – shelling out £200 a time to the museum trust for the privilege, said tour guide Kathy Alexander.

Kathy, who mans the museum while the paranormal team are carrying out their investigations, explained that over the last four years a 'pattern' of ghostly experiences had become apparent – with the different groups having similar experiences.

The last ghost hunt at the museum, involving a paranormal group from Plymouth, took place less than a fortnight

ago.

'Many of them have picked up what is described as a very well dressed and imposing person in the forehall on the first floor,' she said. 'Apparently he is quite scary – quite forceful and intimidating.'

'Groups have reported things like picking up a playful lad called Tom in the room, hiding under the bed there but as soon as this figure shows up he shuts and disappears immediately.'

'They have spoken to this man making it clear this is his "domain" and explaining why they are there.'

Making another regular appearance is an invisible cat, said Kathy.

'There is definitely a cat or cats, because people feel it rubbing around their legs, and there are definitely children,' she added.

'Another thing is that quite often people get a feeling that they are at sea and everything is moving – almost a feeling of seasickness. We don't know whether somehow that is to do with the spiral staircase which is built around a ship's mast.'

'It seems that over the years a pattern has built up from the various groups involved.' The rambling, Grade-I listed Elizabethan House and Museum dates back to the 16th century and was once home to a wealthy merchant.

The ghost hunting groups are booking in on Saturdays between 10pm and 2am, said Kathy.

They set up cameras along with sound and electromagnetic equipment in various rooms.

Some are more technical than others and often they are made up of those who are the technical member and those who are psychic or sensitive.

Kathy said she kept an 'open mind' on the ghost issue, adding: 'there are many theories about ghosts and spirits.'

But she said of one of the paranormal events in the museum: 'I had one particular incident where a smell of perfume followed me around for 15 minutes and there was nobody in the museum wearing perfume.'

She said she had talked to museum volunteers who were able to tell her about the feedback they had got from the visitors who tour the building.

'They have had a couple of incidents of visitors' children refusing to go into the museum kitchen because they are too frightened. I think it more to do with the stairwell there than the kitchen.'