

MOSTLY GHOSTLY INVESTIGATIONS



BACK ON THE STREETS

Having launched the popular Dumfries Ghost Walk last Halloween, our intrepid paranormal investigators have taken to the streets again to give more people the chance to explore the dark side of the town – and as [Kathleen Cronie](#) reports, increasing numbers of participants are reporting strange experiences and encounters in some of the paranormal hotspots

We decided to hold two walks on April 13, 352 years to the actual day when nine women accused of witchcraft were strangled and burnt at the stake at the Whitesands in Dumfries. This date was very poignant to us as we have spent a long time researching, discussing and reflecting on the story. We feel that this horrific episode in the town's darker history should never be forgotten. We also wondered whether the significant date may trigger any anomalous activity as some spirits are said to return on the anniversary of their deaths.

We were surprised when our first report of unusual activity came outside the old Kings Arms Hotel. A young girl in the group came forward and told me of a voice she had heard. She described it as saying something like: "Hello, where are you?"

We can't say for sure whether this was paranormal – but there weren't many people on the streets and none of the rest of the Mostly Ghostly team heard the voice. Interesting stuff!

During our second walk that night, one lady reported a cold draught in Shakespeare Lane – her hair had noticeably moved yet there didn't seem to be any obvious cause. She commented that the lane was pretty sheltered, which only increased her nervousness.

When we arrived at the Theatre Royal, we were lucky to be able to deliver our presentation in the foyer – where the same woman reported feeling edgy while she stood listening. She felt as if she was being watched by some unseen presence...

When it came to the site of the last public executions in Scotland, one lady refused to go too far into the area as she had always felt uncomfortable there. She used to work as a cleaner in the building, which is now occupied by Giles Insurance, and always hated tidying out the back. This eerie location has seen paranormal activity before – on our Halloween preview walk, one guest felt a cold hand on her face while another said later: "I felt someone pressing against me on the right-hand side a couple of times. I just presumed someone was standing too close to me. I didn't say anything and then when we were walking off from that spot, someone mentioned that they'd felt something down at the same place and another guest said she had as well. Then I told them what I'd felt; quite weird!"

On our Easter Sunday walks, things really started gathering momentum, with a series of peculiar events. I was standing on the metal steps by Giles Insurance and had just started delivering my presentation when two women approached me to say that they'd suddenly become warm all over. I carried on, but could see that the ladies were distracted.

At one point, one of the women reached up and touched the top of her head. She told me afterwards that she'd felt a definite tap or prod. Another woman later came forward and reported seeing a bright flash of light above her head, just before she said she'd felt the tap. The first woman's friend told us that she'd hardly heard a word of the talk as she'd felt very detached from the situation. Her friend she had seen my skin vibrating "like a fast wave effect, like the pattern you get if you throw a rock into a pond – the ripples".

She had never seen anything like this before and only my skin was affected, she said. But I had felt fine throughout the presentation. One of the women's daughters also reported feeling a tightness in her chest, like something pressing against it.

While the Witches' Anniversary Walks were relatively quiet, with no smell of burning peats or cloves down at the Whitesands, Easter Sunday was far more active, with the activity focused on one location of great historical importance. Maybe next year, on the 150th anniversary of Mary Timney's execution, we will return to the old jail and see if anyone will make contact... [D&G](#)

■ *Mostly Ghostly Investigations will be running Dumfries Ghost Walks every Wednesday and Thursday throughout July and August at 7.30pm. Meet at Midsteeple Plainstones 15 minutes beforehand. For ticket prices and more information – or to report any paranormal activity you'd like the team to explore – see www.mostlyghostly.org or call 07751 722008.*



Photography by Allan Devlin

