

GHOST HUNTERS

Paranormal investigation group Mostly Ghostly has been celebrating its first anniversary in some seriously spooky locations, including the Theatre Royal in Dumfries and a haunted farmhouse near Castle Douglas. **Kathleen Cronie** reports

Photography by Angus McDougal

The Theatre Royal in Dumfries has a plethora of alleged paranormal occurrences and was the location we chose for our Mostly Ghostly launch investigation on Halloween night last year.

We recently returned to Scotland's oldest working theatre, which dates back to 1792, to share our work with the public.

Twenty people took part in the evening – An Introduction to the Fascinating World of Paranormal Investigation – which was also a joint fundraising venture with the theatre. It began with a presentation by John Hill on the theatre's history, before I spoke about the realities of a paranormal investigation.

During my talk, the theatre lights went down and a moaning, ghostly form appeared from the wings complete with flowing white sheet... Mary Wood's 'ghost' added some light relief to the proceedings with Derek McCall's arrival on stage to 'catch' the phantom in a large fishing net scoring a round of applause.

We returned to the serious business of paranormal investigations with a look at the different types of ghosts, hauntings and theories about recording apparitions.

We then split up to conduct a number of parallel experiments throughout the theatre. In the foyer, we used dowsing rods to try to pick up spirit energies: most people were able to elicit some sort of response and one lady got impressions of a balding man in a red jacket who used to lock up the premises.

During our stairs vigil, one woman felt a strange sensation around her elbow and her friend felt a light touch on the face. Another guest picked up the sense of a fire in the theatre with people running down the stairs in panic. There is historical evidence of a fire in the building.

The other group conducted a short EVP (electronic voice phenomena) experiment on stage, and during the second part of the night, Mary asked if there was an opera singer present. No-one else said they had heard anything at the time but when we later played back our tape, a strange hollering sound could be heard in the background.

Down in the basement, participants tried crystal dowsing, with one guest experiencing



The Mostly Ghostly team in the haunted bedroom at The Globe Inn in Dumfries: John Hill, Derek McCall, Kathleen Cronie and Mary Wood

visibly significant vibrations along the length of the chain, while the crystal inside the wine bottle moved when certain people placed their hand above it.

Our final vigil involved everyone together on the stage to focus our collective energies and invite spirit communication. We lit candles to create a warm, reassuring glow in the eerie darkness. Three of us felt drawn to the balcony and while there, one lady saw a shadowy figure sitting further along the row.

Another guest decided to join them and emerged breathless and slightly ashen. He'd been spooked by what he described as a 'sudden presence' on the stairs and the sound of footsteps – as if there was someone a couple of paces behind.

Our second high-profile investigation was for a Halloween special with West Sound FM, which invited listeners around the region to volunteer their homes or businesses for a paranormal investigation. A farmhouse near Castle Douglas was selected and we were joined by West Sound's Cameron Murray and DJ Gavin Wallace.

From our arrival, strange things began to happen. The front door opened slowly following a bang and the bottled crystal we

had brought started swinging despite being on a heavy wooden table on a stone floor.

During the night, several people witnessed shadowy figures moving around, temperature variations were reported and powerful draughts were sensed in an upstairs doorway. At one point, a coin was found displaced on the staircase, footsteps were heard and some of us experienced a sense of something invisible passing very close to – if not through us!

To hear everything else that went on, listen to the podcast from the investigation on the West Sound website: www.westsoundradio.com

Mostly Ghostly also celebrated its first anniversary with an investigation of the beautifully preserved Amisfield Tower. It was an eventful night which I'll tell you about in next month's edition.

■ *Have you seen a ghost or been plagued by a poltergeist? Do you know of any haunted happenings in your neighbourhood? Members of Mostly Ghostly would love to hear from you – call the team on tel: 07821 158942 or email mostlyghostly@hotmail.co.uk.*