



The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

ISSUE
NO
10
MAY
2008

Investigators' e-Bulletin

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AAI Renewal Reminder!

This is just to remind all AAI's that may have forgotten to fill in and send their renewal application form, together with a passport sized photograph of themselves to the deputy N.I.C., that this is your final chance. Failure to do so within the next two weeks will result in you being removed as an 'active' AAI and any cases we may receive in your area will not be offered to you!

Everyone should have received a letter detailing the renewal process and an application form printed on the reverse of the letter, in with your copy of March ASSAP News. If, for some reason, you did not receive your renewal form, you can download one from the AAI page of the ASSAP website once you have logged in.

PASSWORD REMINDERS:-

The main ASSAP website (members section) can be accessed by using:-

username: `assapmember`

password: `haunted`

The AAI section of the website can be accessed using:-

username: `aa1`

password: `approved`

The following article is a very good demonstration of how we can all be guilty of pre-conceived ideas about people and places and of how we should always judge people for who they are and not the public image they project. A good example of this fault is a 'certain Living TV programme', but here, Kieron Savill tells us what made him change his mind about - Most Haunted!

'Most Haunted..... Most Surprised'.

By Kieron Savill, AAI

The alarm sounded abruptly. Like most mornings I had hit the snooze button several times.

"Just five more minutes" I murmured to myself.

The room was cold and the thought of leaving the warmth of the bed was less than appealing. As I lay there I suddenly became aware of several red blinking lights scattered around the bedroom. Not an unfamiliar sight really when you study the paranormal, but at 7am in the morning it just didn't quite feel right. As I fumbled around for my glasses and brought the room into focus I surveyed the various torches, cameras and walkie-talkies that were on charge. It was about this time that my partner Melanie awoke, asking what time we had to be at the 'Fort'. It then dawned on me that this wasn't a normal working morning and that today we would be working at Coalhouse Fort in East Tilbury.



Melanie and I had worked on the paranormal team at the Fort for about a year, hosting some twenty or so paranormal groups. We would normally get to the fort around 7p.m. and work through the night until the following morning. It is an interesting job and we both feel lucky to have the opportunity to do what we do. There are not many people who have the chance to study a location in such detail over such a long period of time.

The different groups that we meet are fascinating too. Believe me; we have seen it all in the last twelve months. Good groups, bad groups, so called 'scientific groups' that utilise no scientific methods; psychic groups that believe everything they hear, the lot! You name it and we have experienced it. Some of the groups arrive in military style black uniforms, huge "Maglites" attached to their belts and every possible 'gizmo' you can imagine. Others are more like a day out with the local Women's Institute, screaming at everything they encounter and non stop nattering.

Although we are there to guide them around the different parts of the Fort safely, we do join them on their vigils and sometimes we do find ourselves helping them and trying to educate them in some way (in the ASSAP method of course!). Maybe it's an ASSAP thing but sometimes we can't help ourselves. If I had a pound for the amount of groups that point laser thermometers around the room and then somehow come up with the room temperature, I'd be able to buy Maurice Gross's old E Type Jag! At 3am, sitting in a dark, cold underground tunnel listening to someone call out "Is there anybody there?" I sometimes get a little tetchy.

Today was different though, today we were hosting a group that would be at the fort for two days. Today we were hosting the team of "Most Haunted".

It was a lovely bright, crisp December morning as we approached the Forts main gate. At 9 a.m. some of the crew had already arrived. As I unloaded our equipment and various extra items of warm clothing that we were hoping we wouldn't need, I observed the crew members unloading a large van.

The familiar bald head of Stuart Torvell appeared from inside the van. Dozens of large crates were unloaded, each jammed packed with equipment. It was like a military operation as a large petrol generator vibrated into life in the corner of the parade ground, echoing around the casemates of the fort. Cables then followed from the generator down into the tunnels.

As we made our way up to the tea-room of the fort I passed a member of the crew about to enter the tunnel. Just as I was about to say "Would you like me to escort you into the tunnel system as you really shouldn't go in there alone" he had disappeared into it. The Fort was built in the 1860's and remained in use right up until the 1960's but after that it became derelict and fell into disrepair. Many parts of the Fort have become unsafe and that is why we have to escort people around and not let them enter any dangerous areas. Eventually the Fort project volunteers hope to raise enough money to restore the fort and repair the areas that are falling down.

As I went to follow the chap into the tunnel, another one appeared from it, then another from a different exit and then another from an exit across the parade ground! We were going to have our work cut out for sure so we hastily made our way up to the tearoom where hopefully Simon would be waiting. Simon is a lovely fellow and for the last couple of years has been in charge of all paranormal events at the fort.

To Simon and the rest of the Coalhouse paranormal team, having *Most Haunted* at the fort was a bit special. Having them there and the thought of the fort being on TV felt like a bit of a reward for all the hard work we had put in. Due to Karl Beattie's production company Antix having contractual problems with Living TV, they had cancelled on us three times previously, so it was good to finally get them there.

Like everyone (I guess) that is interested in the paranormal, we all have our views about *Most Haunted*. We all admit to watching it in the beginning. At the time it wasn't easy to find any new media on the paranormal so MH found the perfect niche, but then it apparently become boring and it lost its credibility or that's what you hear these days. As more and more people became interested in the subject they quickly out-grew the appeal of the show. Watching the ever theatrical Derek Acorah and countless examples of orb footage began to turn people off. Or did it? I wonder now how many people that criticise the show, actually still watch it? They just will not admit it to their peers. The reason they watch it is because whichever way you look at it, MH is entertainment, like any other successful TV show. It is successful. Why otherwise, would Living TV commission a tenth series?

I have to say though, that I was no different from anyone else, I regarded MH with a touch of disdain. Their unprofessional methods, lack of real evidence and showman type performances had tainted my belief of the programme. My once prized MH Live DVD featuring Woodchester Mansion had long been relegated to a dusty corner of the shed.

We found Simon in the tearoom buried behind more crates of MH equipment. He was hurriedly filling cups with steaming hot chocolate to keep the hard working crew members refreshed. More vehicles were entering the fort and I decided to man the main gate and keep the prying eyes of the public away. As I went to leave the tearoom a small blonde lady stood in the doorway. "Hello, I'm Yvette" she said.

It's not very often that I get to meet a celebrity, but you like to think that when you do you won't treat them differently to anyone else. At the same time it's nice to rub shoulders with them but the last thing you want to do is make a fool of yourself. Now running through my head at this time was me saying something along the lines

of "Hello, my name's Kieron, I'm an investigator with ASSAP" unfortunately my mouth didn't listen and all that came out was a cringe worthy "Alright?" I could have kicked myself! Obviously you can take the boy out of Essex.... But you can't take Essex out of the boy.

Yvette Fielding entered the tearoom shortly followed by husband Karl Beattie and Cath Howe the makeup lady. They all seemed very pleasant and I left Melanie and Simon to make them welcome while I made my way to the main gate.

The parade ground was a frenzy of activity as more equipment was unloaded and assembled. More crew arrived and I watched with fascination as a large weighted boom was constructed. This must have been 30 feet long and swung around with a camera attached to the end. This is what they used when filming aerial shots and views from unusual angles.

The last of the crew arrived including Scottish Paranormal's Ryan O'Neill. He was standing in for parapsychologist Ciaran O'Keeffe who was absent due to just becoming a father. The remaining two people to follow on later that day would be Historian Lesley Smith and whoever the Medium was going to be following David Wells's decision to leave the show. As the last car entered the fort I closed the main gate and returned to the tea room where the cast were assembling. Yvette was by now having her make up applied by Cath while Karl was busy planning out the various shots with the rest of the crew. While Yvette was having her makeup done she began practicing her opening lines.

As you may have seen on previous shows, the introduction is filmed during the day where Yvette introduces the location and then gives a brief history and goes on to explain about the paranormal activity there.

As she went through her lines she got to the Coalhouse paranormal activity part. "Tell me if this is correct?" she said as she then rattled off the list of occurrences that had been reported.

We assumed that this information had been gathered by some researcher beforehand. As she went through the list it became apparent to Melanie and me that a lot of what she said we had never heard about. Was this the first sign of MH faking something? Smiles crept onto our faces as we shook our heads at what Yvette was saying.

Something then happened that shocked me. Yvette amended her script, and wrote it again, deleting the parts that we didn't agree with. This really took me by surprise, I

didn't expect for one moment that they would be interested in our input and opinions. Once Yvette's makeup was finished it was time to start filming and the crew made their way outside and to the far end of the North Parade ground to film the opening scenes.



Yvette went through her lines, "I'm Yvette Fielding and welcome to a new series of *Most Haunted*" and continued through her newly written script. At the end she finished with, "And all this from the incredible haunted location in Essex that is, Coalhouse Farm". "CUT!" Screamed her husband Karl as giggles spread through the rest of the team.

"Does it look like a bloody farm?" he jokingly barked at her. I guess even the professionals don't get it right all of the time. I wondered if I had just witnessed a future "It will be alright on the night" clip?

The team then broke for lunch and it was at this time that I had the chance to sit down with Yvette and Karl and talk with them about the show and about their views on the paranormal. They were very easy to talk to and never dismissive of anyone's views. For some reason I had expected them to be quite blinkered in their ideas on the subject and dismissive of anyone else's views but their own. Surprisingly, they were quite the opposite. They welcomed input from the Coalhouse team and soon quite an interesting discussion on all things paranormal ensued. Topics ranged from infrasound and EVP to Karl's surprising admission to his lack of belief in mediums!

It was then that I started to see the bigger picture of *Most Haunted*. For all the criticism it receives, it is just a TV show. It entertains millions across the world. The people that make it are not that different to the rest of the paranormal society. They have a successful formula, so why should they change it?

Daytime footage continued to be filmed during the afternoon and as it began to get dark Historian Lesley Smith arrived and a rather 'larger than life' lady by the name of Johnnie Fiori. She would be the show's medium for the night. If you thought Derek Acorah was theatrical then you will be in for a shock with this lady as she made him look quite dull! She was a veteran of a *MH Live* and was currently on stage with the West End show *Hairspray*. "What tunnels? Black people don't go underground" an American 'Whoopi Goldberg-esk' voice boomed into the tea-room. "Get my agent, nobody mentioned no damn tunnels!" she continued.

The team now complete, they left the Fort for the rest of the evening to have their evening meal and a break at a local pub leaving just myself, Melanie and Stuart Torvell at the fort. When the crew returned later the vigils would start. Stuart had not stopped all day so we made him a cup of tea and he took a well earned breather sitting down for a chat with us.

As with the others he was a thoroughly nice man and there wasn't an ounce of so called "Woo" in him. He was very down to earth. Stuart really was a hard worker and went on to tell us about all the places he had visited with MH. Because he was always so busy he never really got time to explore the places he had been to. I have to say that I have a lot of time for Stuart. He seemed a very genuine man and I got the impression he was quite hurt by some of the accusations that had been written about him. I have seen hundreds of people working at the fort that have reported witnessing paranormal activity. Most of the time it is clear to me that they are probably mistaken and that there is a perfectly natural explanation. From just my short time speaking to Stuart I am quite convinced that he is genuine in his experiences.

I asked Stuart if he thought this would be the last series of MH and if the show had probably run its course? He laughed and said that the show was 'far too successful to end and would go on for a long time yet'.

The team returned later and preparations started for the filming of the vigils. I watched with slight envy as Ryan O'Neill was handed a very expensive looking thermal imager to play with. It looked far more fun than the basic Cellsensor EMF meter he had. I wondered to myself if he knew about twisting the probe that Dave Wood had mentioned at one of the ASSAP training days? I felt quite sorry for Ryan. He was new to the show and he was obviously quite nervous. I would have loved to have had the chance to accompany him and help him out. Of course, I would have been in charge of the thermal imager though.

At the back of all the Coalhouse staff's minds was the possibility of being involved in the vigils and being in front of the cameras. Sadly this wasn't to be. I wasn't sure at first whether I would want to be filmed anyway, but by the end of that first day I would have jumped at the chance to be honest! As I wasn't present at the vigils I obviously cannot comment on what happened during them. Like everyone else I will have to wait for the show to be broadcast in February 2008. Melanie and myself have done over a hundred vigils at the fort between us so we have a pretty good idea of what to expect. We look forward with anticipation to viewing the MH footage.

At the end of the filming and when all the equipment was being packed away, Karl approached me. He said that he thought that Coalhouse was a very special place and that he admired the volunteers for what they did in trying to save it. He offered to give us the services of his production company and help us in any way he could. He would send a film crew to us and produce a DVD of the fort if we wished. I thought that was a very nice gesture and we hope to take him up on the offer.

Spending this time with the Most Haunted crew has really changed my mind on how I will view the programme. I'm not saying I will make a point of watching it in the future, (well maybe the Coalhouse one,) but I will certainly think twice when I read and listen to all the negative things that are said about it. It's surprising how a total lack of sleep, sub zero temperatures and an excessive consumption of at least 40 cigarettes can so drastically change your opinion on something. Opinions changed that is, of the people behind the show. Not of the authenticity of the reported events. However we thoroughly enjoyed our time with the whole crew, they really were a pleasure to work with and I wish them every success in the future.



The Most Haunted team!



Kieron Savill himself!

Thank you Kieron for a genuine 'inside peep' into the real people behind one of the most talked about shows on TV!

AAI PERSONAL PASSWORDS

With your new AAI ID card you have been given a personal password. As we have stated, this password is for your client to verify who you are with ASSAP. Your client can call either Bill Eyre or Cherill Penton using the numbers on the back of your ID card.

Please make sure you keep your password safe and remember what it is!

Ask Another AAI

Issue 9 of this bulletin requested theories as to why batteries discharge on vigils. Thanks to [Andrew Homer](#) for offering the following thoughts on this matter.

"Whilst I am not saying this is the answer in every case I certainly think that a prime culprit is the temperature. You mention Woodchester and having done a couple of investigations there myself I know just how cold it can get!

Basically, batteries use a chemical reaction to produce power and the speed of this reaction is directly affected by temperature. The colder it gets the less efficient the reaction becomes. I have read that a 10 degree drop in temperature can mean up to a 50% drop in battery performance! Therefore, in cold locations batteries can run down to a point where they can no longer sustain operation of the equipment much more quickly than would normally be the case. Furthermore, when recharged and the equipment is tested in normal room temperatures again full performance is restored thus adding to the 'mystery'.

All batteries are susceptible to this but I believe that the newer NIMH types are particularly poor performers in the cold. In addition, rechargeable batteries have a slightly lower voltage than non rechargeable types (typically 1.2 volts rather than 1.5). This might not sound much but, for example, equipment designed to operate off 6 volts using AA batteries is already operating at 1.2 volts below the ideal. Therefore, it is not difficult to see how a further reduction due to the cold can easily render such equipment either unreliable or completely inoperable."

A Notice For All AAI's

The Investigators' Bulletin is for AAI's only. It is written by AAI's, for AAI's and the people mentioned in the articles are AAI's.

Ask Another AAI

I have recently been involved in a discussion about the method of filming using camcorders on investigations. The majority of people I know like to hold their cameras in their hands, enabling freedom of movement and allowing them to film all areas of the room, but other people say you should place your camera on either a tripod or a hard surface to reduce the 'human factor'.

What are your opinions about this? Please e-mail Cherill (me) at deputy.nic@assap.org, stating the reason why you prefer whichever method. Maybe we can get a Bulletin discussion going!

CURRENT CASES

- Terry Hewitt has been building up a picture of the incidence of alien big cats in Leicestershire. He has himself seen what at first appeared to be big cats on two occasions, managing to film the creature on one of those occasions. However, the filmed example subsequently turned out to be a misidentified domestic cat. Terry has also collected details of this type of sighting from Vera Brewin, has been passed a photograph of a big black cat taken by Lee Colville in his own garden and is in receipt of filmed footage of a large cat, taken by the client of Terry's tea shop case (see issue 9).
- Michael Lewis has been to interview the landlady of the pub in Greater London where outdoor apparitions had been reported and this investigation is ongoing.
- Michael is also looking into a case in Greater London involving a lady who has reported her flat as being haunted.
- Still in Greater London, with regard to Tom Hagan's investigation of the house with the strange damage being done to walls, it ought to be possible to narrow down whether the damage is being carried out paranormally or by a member of the household by leaving a camcorder or hidden camera running over a protracted period of time, facing the main wall in question. However, we are having difficulty in finding a member who has the expertise to set this up, so if any reader is willing to handle this operation, they are requested to e-mail or phone Bill Eyre, so that they can be put in touch with Tom and the client.
- In Dorset, Peter Symonds was unfortunately unable to pursue the case relating to electrical anomalies, owing to illness, and so the case was handed to Wendy Milner, who has been to interview the client with assistance from Nicky Sewell.
- In the West Midlands, a case was reported involving children seeing and speaking to 'ghosts'. Cherill Penton and Simon Royce-Dexter have been to interview the children's mother. It is looking as if the phenomena are person centred, revolving around one of the children.
- In North Yorkshire, Simon has been to interview a lady who has reported seeing 'orbs' and experiencing electrical effects and audible and olfactory phenomena. The client has been asked to keep a diary of further incidents.
- Sightings of Bigfoot have been reported in the area of Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, the main sighting having taken place not far from Cherill's recent home and so she is keeping tabs on this matter.
- In the case of Kieron Savill's investigation of anomalous noises and electrical phenomena in Essex, he has been provided with some anomalous photographs taken by the client and these have been passed to Maurice Townsend for comment.
- Bill is currently mentoring Pam Hoddy with regard to a case in Derbyshire in which a young girl has been experiencing regular (almost nightly) distressing

incidents which at first appear to be night terrors. However, they only occur when she is sleeping at home. This observation, together with information about a murder having occurred in the girl's bedroom prior to the family moving in and phenomena having been experienced by other persons in other rooms of the house, raises the question of whether something of a paranormal nature is behind the matter and so a simulative test and mini vigil are being planned.

Hints and Tips

Hopefully, before you undertake an investigation of any location, you will have interviewed the witnesses (if any) and you will have taken a good look around the building/place/area and taken any base readings etc. that you think may be necessary. It helps if you can take photographs of the area to give you a better understanding of design, floor plan and health and safety aspects of the areas you will be covering, so you can study these before the actual vigil.

If you take photographs, please ensure that you scrutinise them carefully - as carefully as you would the photos from your vigil because, as was the case in one of my own outdoor personal investigations, you may find an anomaly on the pre-investigation photographs!



If you do happen to find an anomaly, go back as soon as you can under the same conditions (time of day, weather, day of the week, etc.) and do as Stefan Lobuczek (the ASSAP Secretary) did in this picture - check out the exact spot of the anomaly (even if it means getting your feet wet).

Hopefully you will be able to find the cause of the anomaly, but if not, you will at least be able to eliminate anything that you do find on your return visit from your investigation as the cause! Besides which, it can also be fun too!

Please note the change in the name of this Bulletin, from Investigators' Bulletin to Investigators' e-Bulletin. This is because most of the AAIs now receive this Bulletin by e-mail.