

was a sentence said, but I could not make out or remember what it was. My colleague and I just looked at each other; she said "Did you hear that, it came right from right behind you"? All residents in the ward at that time were fast asleep. Being on regular nightshift I got to know every sound, every movement of the residents and it was definitely none of them or any staff who were coming into ward at that time of night.

Another experience that I experienced in the ward was a cold area approximately in the middle of the passageway which you could walk through. The ward was kept at a constant 60F as there were thermostats placed up and down length of it. I am certain that there were no drafts or breezes or open windows, because we had to check and make sure this did not happen. When the hospital was closing down some of the wards in the villas were empty, for example the one next to Throsk ward, and it was just through the wall. On some nights you could hear banging, clattering and other loud noises, so I would go and investigate to see if perhaps there was an intruder, or maybe animals in the ward making the noise. All windows were closed tight, there were no beds or furniture or curtains at windows either, it was very dark, but as far as I could tell there was nothing to make any noise. I always felt there was a presence when I was taking a walk around the ward.

Comments about this account

While the impressions of 'cold spots' dotted around the ward and the reports of anomalous noises in apparently unoccupied locations may have rational explanations, the voice heard by Mr Ransome and his unnamed companion is something else again. What caused the voice is open to speculation, but the fact that it was heard simultaneously by two people as a spoken sentence and without any prompting must surely help classify what they heard as a genuine paranormal occurrence. Of course the possibility remains that it might be due to something natural, but on the other hand equally it might not, but whatever it was (a pity the gentleman concerned could not actually make out what was being said), it made a sufficiently strong impression on him that it became lodged in his memory. My own feeling is that what occurred probably was supernatural.

The Account of William Murray

I read an article on the Falkirk Herald's website about the research you're undertaking on the ghostly goings on at the former asylum/hospital in Larbert. I don't know how much use the following will be of use to you, but I have a story about a strange event that occurred there in the 1950s while my grandmother was briefly employed as a nurse. It's a story she was fond



of telling and one my grandfather would tease her about endlessly.

I'm not sure whether or not I believe it (I'm something of an open-minded sceptic, you might say), but my grandmother believed it, and she was not a woman prone to jokes or lies (or a woman to suffer lies or flimflam from those around her), so I suppose my default position must be that there's 'something' to it. In any case, my grandmother still seemed spooked when she first told me the story when I was young, and that was decades after it had happened. Although she never saw anything with her own eyes, the story was relayed to her by people she worked with and trusted, one of whom remained a close friend for years afterwards.

There was a little room in the hospital (I still balk at calling it an asylum, even though that was its official title for most of its existence!) that contained books. Not quite large enough to be classed as a library, more of a reading room, or perhaps it was just a room with a few books in it, I'm not sure. My grandmother said there was a patient in the hospital who would always complain of a chill when she entered that room, and often reported a strange feeling of being watched. The patient often would have to be escorted out of the room, shaking and whimpering. The patient wasn't taken seriously, which is hardly surprising given the context of the location and her mental health issues (hallucinations weren't exactly a rare occurrence in Bellsdyke, as you will appreciate, and in any case their cause was always attributed to medicine and science, not the supernatural).

However, one night a male member of staff reported experiencing the exact same thing (my grandmother swears she once felt something 'a bit off' in that room, too, although as I said she never 'saw' anything). The staff member was a Scandinavian temp, the one who became close friends with my grandmother. I seem to remember he was a porter,

although I wouldn't swear to it. I do remember his name, though, Per Enggleson. I've no doubt stayed it in the memory banks thanks to it being a little more exotic than your average Stirlingshire name! (my grandmother and Per remained in touch for many years, until Per left the area in the late 1960s/early 1970s)

In any case, my grandmother says that Per tried to put the strange experience in the room out of his head; chalked it down to his imagination running wild on account of hearing the stories. He was on rounds a little later in the evening and again returned to the room only to find a full-torso, free-roaming and vaporous apparition floating above the ground: a stern-looking female librarian. The ghost appeared to be concentrating on a book, and never paid much heed to the human intruder. Not at first, anyway. Per was apparently frozen to the spot and couldn't find it in his throat to speak, much less scream. But – after a few long seconds - he did speak, managing a feeble 'Hello', to which the apparition responded with a loud and irritated 'Shhhhhhhh.'

Per walked out of the room and made his way up the hall to where there were other staff members, whereupon he urged a couple of men – I think they were doctors, although I can't properly recall - to accompany him back to the room. Understandably, Per feared he'd lost his mind – or was in the process of losing it - and was desperate to prove that the apparition was real. Thankfully – if thankfully is the appropriate word to use – the other men saw it too. They all stood incredulously before the spectre, until one of the men Per had brought to the room told the other two that he had a plan, and knew exactly what to do. Led by this man, they all crept towards the apparition, whereupon the man suddenly sprang forward and shouted 'Get her!'

After that, the apparition became malevolent, and seemed to transform into something altogether more monstrous than an