

old librarian. The men all ran from the room, the apparition was never seen again (as far as I know), and, of course, they were reluctant to tell too many people for fear of being thought of as lunatics themselves. Per in particular was badly affected by the occurrence, and by my grandmother's account does not appear to be the sort of man who would invent such a tale. All very strange indeed. Stranger still, a few years ago I attended a spiritualist church with my wife Janine – just out of curiosity – and the medium told me that my grandmother was in spirit around her, and that she could see a row of books, and someone saying 'shush'. Although I didn't believe it to be anything but coincidence, it certainly raised the hairs on the back of my neck, and still gives me pause for thought.

Observations on this account

While this account, although absolutely fascinating, it is not firsthand therefore to a large extent one must take it at face value, that said I have no reason to doubt that the account is a faithful retelling of the events described. That being the case what was seen by both the original witness (Per) and the people he took into the room must have been quite traumatic for all concerned. The fact that the entity reacted violently to the perceived 'attack' by the witnesses also serves to elevate this sighting to another level, suggesting that whatever it was it was apparently sentient and able to react in real time to a perceived threat.

Was it a ghost or was it something else entirely, something on a par with what the youngsters mentioned earlier saw watching the hospital? Might this have been some kind of elemental creature drawing sustenance from the troubled emotions that must have flooded the place? In other words might this have been demonic rather than ghostly? The answer is 'who knows', because there is almost no chance that the individual concerned can be contacted for further interview, so this account must, tantalisingly, as with much of the paranormal remain a matter for debate and speculation.

The Account of Mrs Ann Allan

Mrs Allan worked at the Nurses Home (a residential facility for the nurses who lived too far away to travel on a daily basis) as a night warden in charge of the home and was responsible for running of the home at night, which included the security arrangements.

During my time as a night warden in the nurse's home, where I worked for several years, I often experienced strange events. These included the feeling of being watched, something that happened quite



regularly and another common occurrence was the sound of footsteps that would approach my office; they would stop at the office door, but there was never anyone there. Sometimes I was sure that one of the nurses, perhaps returning from a night out and wanting a chat and a cup of tea, was dropping by the office, but many times the footsteps stopped and there was no one there.

At first I felt rather nervous, but eventually I just ignored it. Sometimes when I did my patrols in the early hours around the corridors of the old building I sometimes glimpsed a shadowy figure watching me, but that might just have been my imagination. Other than that there is not really much else to say, although sometimes the nurses would arrive at the office sure that they had seen something, a figure, in the building. I would try to reassure them and get them back to their bedrooms.

Conclusion

From the responses I received it seems that although Bellsdyke Hospital was quite a hot spot for paranormal phenomena, it seems that the unreported experiences of doctors and nurses in general might also reveal more about the situation than one might think. Again there is no ready or obvious explanation why, but perhaps it does hint that the human condition is much less tenuous than we think and those who instinctively dismiss the possibility of any form of afterlife are quite wrong. While there is no hard and fast scientific evidence to prove that the paranormal is a reality, there are an increasing number of people who have had first hand experience of phenomena they simply cannot explain or rationalise way.

As we have seen, the medical profession appears to be an untapped source of material about this most enigmatic of subjects and perhaps they fear a measure of

rejection by their peers if they talk of their experiences. From what they told me there appears to be a range of phenomena occurring, the person who is on the point of death regularly seems to actually 'see' other people in the room with them, people who are completely invisible to anyone else. Sometimes they are members of their family who are already deceased and sometimes they are strangers seemingly there to act as guides to the afterlife; it's very difficult to tell since there is no effective method of corroborating this information.

That said, one doctor told me that although he could not actually see anyone he did sense something, a presence if you like and it was not at all threatening and his patient was quite calm and seemed happy. However, as the subject loses slowly its 'out there' image and aspects of particle physics seem to prove the existence of alternate realities, perhaps they will feel more inclined to step forward and share their stories and experiences.

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