



Muncaster Castle

Para.Science and the BBC at Muncaster Castle



Following a series of phone calls from the BBC, para.science found themselves invited to spend a night in a haunted castle. Deciding we would be mad to turn down such a generous offer, we hastily organised days off work, spousal consent, and all the other matters investigators find themselves sorting before getting down to the real work, and set off up the M6. Which was our first mistake. A carefully placed jack-knifed lorry found us admiring the scenery of the motorway embankment for 2 hours in a traffic jam, broken only by numerous unsuccessful attempts to phone both the BBC and the castle (well we didn't want to miss dinner!)

Introduction

We all met up in the castle car park (eventually), and made our way down the drive to the castle.

After being introduced to everyone, we were fed and watered in admirable style and decided on the night's tactics. We had an interesting diversion via the archeological dig on-site, despite the group's resident archeologist-in-training being unable to negotiate the local terrain (although this was rectified the next morning - try and keep a trainee archeologist away from a trench pictured right!).

But back to business. Ian, the presenter, had been nominated to spend the night in the haunted tapestry room. We set up equipment in various places to try and cover all the known areas where phenomena have occurred.



The rest of the evening was spent discussing a myriad of topics, including the castle, the ghosts, and investigations in general as well as various off-topic discussions, whilst filming was going on around us.

In the early hours, Ian decided to retire to bed. Imagine our surprise when 10 minutes later we noticed on one of the monitors that Ian was getting back up again. Following his progress, we were even more surprised when he sprinted down the corridor as if the four horsemen themselves were on his tail! A de-brief ascertained that he had felt very uncomfortable in the room, a feeling which progressed very quickly to terror. We have been unable to find any evidence of anything paranormal happening in the room, but cannot say whether the incident was due to expectation and therefore arousal (of the psychological kind), or whether Ian did in fact "pick up" on something in the room.

Of course, we felt duty bound to spend the rest of the night in the room with him, which had a fortunate outcome for at least one of the group, who took the opportunity to get her head down and have a couple of hours sleep in the very comfy bed, spooks or not! (well I did have to drive home afterwards!)

bedroom.



Bed being tested by investigator before being hijacked by another investigator

The following morning, refreshed by a hearty breakfast, we discussed the details of the night (both on and off camera!). The group took the opportunity to observe the equipment and setting up of a BBC crew, before facing the final task - being interviewed!



The BBC show how it's done (*left*) and Para.Science show how it's really done (only joking....!!) (*right*)

After packing up our multitude of equipment, we had time for a chat with Peter Frost-Pennington before setting off back home (with a small detour to the local church for photos).



So, an enjoyable "day out" for the group! If anyone wants to see the evidence, you might catch a glimpse of us on Inside Out , broadcast on BBC1 on monday evenings at 7.30pm. And please visit the castle, it is a wonderful building set in spectacular scenery and the family are extremely welcoming to visitors. But one warning - whilst the haunted tapestry room is available to sleep in, the castle does have it's own resident paranormal investigator, so don't expect to pick up a case!

For more information on Muncaster Castle visit their web site at www.muncastercastle.co.uk - details of the castle, the world owl centre, and the gardens. Please visit, it really is worth seeing!

Big thank you's to Patrick and Phyllida Gordon-Duff -Pennington, Peter Frost-Pennington, Clifford, and all the family and staff who made us very welcome and put up with us taking over their home for the night.

Also thanks to Sally Scorer, Ian Aspin, the rest of the BBC crew (sorry, can't remember all your names!), and also Jason Braithwaite