



Greater Pittsburgh Paranormal Society™

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Greater Pittsburgh Paranormal Society Investigative Technique Manual

Carl Sagan once said *"The suppression of uncomfortable ideas may be common in religion and politics but it is not the path to knowledge. It has no place in the endeavor of science"*. Carl Sagan, Cosmos

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The Approach:

GPPS made the decision early on to approach paranormal phenomena from a neutral, scientific angle. There would be no assumptions made, before or during investigations, as to the nature of the phenomena being researched. Experience has shown this to be a sensible decision. If you persist with a neutral approach, you are more likely to be rewarded with a realistic picture of a real paranormal investigation.

We do not use Ouija boards, dowsing rods, or any other form of communication that does not coordinate with our methodology. Please understand that while we have a high respect for psychics and mediums in this field, we choose not to add psychics or mediums only because we are trying to find physical evidence of the paranormal. By this, we don't mean we are looking for a ghost in a jar. Physical evidence that is useful includes video footage, photographic evidence, and audio.

Decisions to add a psychic to an investigation would have to be made by the client, and will be referred by GPPS who will be happy to accommodate their needs by finding one that is both reputable and caring.

Paranormal:

The word paranormal comes from the words "para" meaning beyond, and normal. So the term paranormal really means something that is beyond the normal scope of science or being beyond a scientific explanation. This term is used to refer to unexplainable events. These would include but are not limited to ghosts, ESP, telepathy, UFO's, and Bigfoot.

A typical Haunting:

The following list represents common events that occur around a place termed as "Haunted"

Ghosts (generally looking like normal people but sometimes seen walking through walls or in period costume)

Odd sounds: footsteps, bangs, scratching, moans, screams, music, whispering

Odd sights: flashes of light, shadows, floating lights, things seen in the 'corner' of the eye

Odd smells: often unpleasant, sometimes sweet

Odd feelings: headaches, static build-up, cold areas, touches by unseen things

Object movement: doors, taps and light switches found open/on, objects lost and sometimes recovered, objects falling (i.e. pictures, ornaments)

Other stuff: pet reaction to 'unseen' things,

Even though this list is typical of a haunting, it is extremely rare that any case would involve more than 3 or 4 of them together.

The Interview:

The interview is essential in deciding whether a client's experience warrants serious investigation. The good news is that a well-constructed interview is not boring. In fact, it gives us a chance to be something of a psychologist in addition to being an investigator. Our job is not to become a therapist; our job is to separate out those who experience quirks of their own mind from those who present genuine events that warrant a formal investigation. Since an investigation is no minor expenditure of time and money, we want to be certain that we're, well, not chasing shadows.

Make your clients feel comfortable with you but never at the expense of your professionalism. Make sure you have plenty of paper with pencils for the person to draw what they may have seen.

The Questions:

What should they be? Actually, the questions are straightforward. The secret isn't in the question it is in the answer to the question. Don't let the client begin telling extended stories, gently remind them to stick to the questions. Make sure you listen for fine details to notice any inconsistencies. Remember that if you find a flaw in a story it doesn't mean that it's false. They may have been uncomfortable or simply used the wrong word as a description. **Do not** ever accuse someone of lying. Let it go then ask the same question again and see what the answer is.

Basic Questions

1. Address of site
2. Name of witness
3. Mailing address if different
4. Phone Number
5. Email Address
6. How many occupants at location
7. How many pets
8. Occupants names and ages
9. Occupants occupations
10. Occupants religious beliefs
11. Time of occupancy at the location
12. Age of the site
13. How many previous owners at the location
14. History of the site
15. How many rooms in the site

16. Has the house been blessed
17. Has there been any recent remodeling (if yes explain)
18. Any occupants on prescribe medications (anxiety, depression) if yes please list.
[Confidential]
19. Any occupants using illegal drugs [Confidential]
20. Any occupants drink alcohol heavily [Confidential]
21. Any occupants interested in the occult (Ouija, séances, psychics, spells)
22. Any occupants currently seeing a psychiatrist or in therapy. [Confidential]
23. Any occupants with frequent or unexplained illnesses (if yes explain)
24. Have any religious clergy been consulted: if so who?
25. Has there been any media involvement: if so who?
26. Have there any other witnesses besides the occupants (if yes names and relationships)
27. Have there been any odors, sounds, voices (If yes please list)
28. Has there been any movements of objects (if so where, when and what)
29. Has there been any apparitions, if so where, when and what
30. Has there been any uncommon cold or hot spots: if so when, where and what
31. Have there been any electrical or plumbing problems: if so when where or what
32. Any occupants having nightmares or trouble sleeping
33. Have there been any physical contact
34. Are pets affected: if so, how
35. Who witnessed the phenomena:
36. What was the witnesses reaction to the phenomena:
37. Did anyone else witness the phenomena
38. How long is the average duration of the phenomena:
39. How often does the phenomena occur
40. Do any of the occupants feel the phenomena is threatening
41. What do the occupants believe is happening
42. Do all the occupants agree on what is happening
43. What would you like to see accomplished from our visit.

This is just a sampling of questions that can be asked. Taylor your questions to the situation at hand and above all, respect the client and their needs.

The Location:

Finding the Owner

If your wanting access to a vacant property and you don't know who the owner, there are two ways to find out who owns the property. The first and easiest would be to ask the neighboring houses. Often times they are acquainted with the property owner and are even watching over the property for the owner.

The second way is to go to the county courthouse and pay a visit to the tax Assessment Office. In this office you will find maps to all the properties in the county. You will need to know the town/borough name, street name (address if at all possible) and nearest cross St. There will be a list of all towns with a number across from each town name. These numbers are the book number for that town.

Pull out that book and start looking for the map that has the street your looking for on it. This can be a long and tedious job so allow plenty of time. Once you've located the property on the map you'll need to write down the info from the book, map#, page #, detail #, block #, parcel #. Most of these offices have computers you can go to and put these numbers into and the name and contact information will show up on the owner.

History of the property.

To check the history of a property you are investigating you will need the owner's complete name and address of the property. Go to the Recorder of Deeds Office in the county courthouse. Tell the person at the counter you need to see the deed for this person and property. Once they pull up that deed you will find the name/book/deed number for the person they bought the house from and the date of sale. By looking at each deed you can trace the property back to the original deed. You'll want to make notes on all of the property owners names and dates of sales. Sometimes the deeds will explain the transfer of deed is due to death. All of this information will help you when you go the library to pull up old newspapers to search or obituaries.

Dos and Don'ts

So you want to be an investigator, that is great, but before you go out to snap that next picture or record that EVP there are a few things you should know.

1. Never go ghost hunting alone.
2. Always let someone know where you will be.
3. Always carry id.
4. If you feel uncomfortable, leave!
5. Get permission before going onto private property or to be in a cemetery after hours.
6. Reschedule your ghost hunt if it is going to snow, rain, or if it is foggy. Also check the pollen count. Moisture and pollen can cause anomalies in photos.
7. Say a prayer of protection at the beginning of an investigation or hunt.
8. If you have a large group break up into pairs or smaller groups.
9. Carry walkie-talkies or cell phones. You never know when you might need them.
10. Announce why you are there. Tell the ghosts you would like to take their photo.
11. Don't use drugs or alcohol before or during an investigation or hunt.
12. Don't smoke near where you will be investigating. Make a designated spot for smoking. You don't want to photograph smoke and think it is an ecto mist or spirit.
13. When trying to record EVP's never whisper. Talk in a normal voice. You won't scare the ghosts if you talk. And you don't want to mistake a human whisper for a spirit.
14. Always use new tapes in the recorder.
15. Have extra batteries and make sure all equipment is fully charged.
16. Wear a watch so you can note times of events.
17. Wear clothing suited for the weather and always wear comfortable shoes.
18. Don't wear jackets with strings. The strings could get in the way when taking photos and be mistaken for something paranormal, especially if you are shooting downward.
19. Don't wear perfume or cologne while ghost hunting. If using an insect repellent make sure it is unscented. Some have noticed scents or smells when there is ghost activity. Perfumes may mask these scents.
20. Tie back long hair. When a piece of hair gets in front of the camera lens it will look like a vortex.
21. Remove camera straps. Many times straps get in the picture and can be mistaken for a vortex, ecto, moving orb and ghosts.
22. Look for things in the way like spider webs, wire, ropes, tree limbs. They can appear on photos as something paranormal when they are in close range of the camera lens.
23. Always clean camera lenses. Lint, dust specks, smudges and fingerprints can look like ecto mist, orbs, and other ghostly anomalies.

24. Be aware of the temperature when photographing outdoors or in an unheated building. If it is cold, hold your breath while taking a photo and for several seconds afterward. Remember, if you can see it so can the camera.
25. Always know where your fingers are when taking photos. A thumb or finger can appear to be a ghost when caught in front of the lens. It is a big let down to find out it's not paranormal after all.
26. Research the location. If you are going ghost hunting after dark, you should check it out during daylight hours. Make note of any dangers such as holes, broken glass, loose boards etc.
27. Be objective of your findings. Rule out any natural causes that may have caused anomalies such as insects, lights in the distance, spider webs, and reflections.
28. Thank any ghosts that may have posed for your photos.
29. Say a closing prayer of protection according to your religious beliefs. We usually say something like "In the name of God we command you stay here. Do not follow us"
30. The most important tip of all, always respect the dead.

Equipment Basics

What to bring on to an investigation

The minimum equipment:

This is the minimum amount of equipment allowed on a investigation. This means that you have to have at least these to attend a Investigation.

1. Still image Camera. If a 35 mm use at least 400-speed film.
2. Extra film and batteries for the camera
3. Flashlight with spare batteries
4. Watch
5. Log sheets or notebook along with a pen or pencil for filling them out.

More advanced equipment:

These items are completely optional and you are in no way obligated to have any of the below items. These pieces of equipment are the most commonly used beyond what is on the minimum equipment list.

1. Video camera
2. Tape recorder
3. External microphone and tapes
4. Digital audio recorders.
5. Thermometer (to detect rapid temperature drops and cold spots)
6. Motion Detectors
7. Barometer (cold spots will also have strange pressure readings)
8. Electromagnetic field detector (EMF).
9. Night vision equipment.
- 10.2 Way Radios
11. Motion activated camera
12. First aid kit
13. Cellular phone. Keep it turned off, only use it for emergencies.
14. Polaroid Camera.

Audio recording equipment:

Being digital or tape, a general everyday Dictaphone can pick up on noises that aren't audible to the human ear. Through experience though, GHE have found tape to be a lot more productive than digital recorders, maybe because of the magnetic qualities of the tape.

Compass:

A compass reacts to disturbances in the electronic field. Obviously it goes without saying, never use them near electric equipment because your likely to get a false reading. But if you're in an open area and the compass is veering off its north facing point, this could denote paranormal activity in the area.

Control Object:

Some hauntings or investigations may contain some sort of poltergeist activity, this is where a control object may come in useful. Just place a small object in an area, and mark off its edges

so that you know if it has moved or not. Sometime an object in keeping with the ghosts time period is more likely to move than other objects.

Dark Covers:

Some locations may contain a lot of shiny surfaces; if they create a problem just cover them up.

Flour Or Fine Powder:

You can use this to spread a thin coating across a surface to see if you can register any imprints on it.

Compass:

A compass helps you determine which direction you are pointing along with Spirits.

EMF Meter:

A lot more sophisticated than a compass, an EMF meter can pick up on small disturbances in the electro magnetic field and background radiation. These are also relatively inexpensive.

Hydrometer:

Useful for picking up on any changes in the air humidity.

Infra Red Boosters:

Although not essential, these can certainly increase the range and clarity of your recording equipment. These are great to measure surface temperatures of hot, hazardous or difficult-to-reach objects, without touching them.

Laser Thermometer:

These are excellent at pin pointing hot and cold spots from a distance. There are many different types of thermometers and they do many things that are very useful to an investigator.

Motion Detectors:

These can be very handy indeed. They just work on the principle of something breaking the infrared beam. Always try to film an area that has motion detectors in it because if the beam gets broken, you may have something on tape like a ghost!

Notepad And Pens:

Definitely essential to log information and events as they happen. Make sure that you have a nice sized pad and a few pens with you just in case one decides not to work!

Photographic Cameras:

Probably the most accessible and vital piece of equipment there is to have. Digital cameras are very cheap now days and so are 35ML cameras! With the age of digital technology, it has made it easy to take hundreds of photos in one single investigation. We find either type of

camera, be it film or digital, can pick up on paranormal activity. Just remember keep a very steady hand when taking the pictures otherwise your camera can produce effects that aren't paranormal.

Spare Film/Batteries:

It's best that you have extra batteries with you on your investigations. Spirits, entities, etc. can and will drain your batteries very quickly into an investigation and have been known to interfere with electrical equipment. If you don't have extra batteries, your investigation will end rather quickly if this happens! It's best to have extra batteries for your camera, video cameras, recorders, etc. You can never go with too much spare equipment! Also, you don't want to run out of film. When you start taking pictures, you don't realize how quick you go through 35ML film and even on your digital camera.

Video Cameras/Camcorders:

Most cameras/camcorders now come with a night vision facility, usually called night shot or O Lux. Almost all investigations take place in the dark so your camera needs to be able to see in pitch black. Also, infrared can see things the human eye cannot. Video cameras/camcorders start pretty cheap at \$79.00 to as much as you wish to pay for one, but in order to get a decent camera/recorder you don't need to pay the big bucks anymore! You really don't need an expensive video camera/camcorder to catch ghosts on cameras! If they are going to show up, they will if it is expensive or not! But, this is an investment and in all reality, the better equipment you have the better it will serve your purpose!

Walkie-Talkies:

If your in a large group and you separate, this is the best and cheapest way to keep in touch. A good place to find Walkie-Talkies is at Radio Shack. You can get them from \$6.00 to \$200.00. Honestly, you don't need the \$200.00 radios. They come in 2 packs and have ranges starting at 3 miles. This is perfect for you to use when going on investigations when you need to separate.

Paranormal encyclopedia and definitions

Agent - A living person at the site of a haunting. Some human agents act only as witnesses to paranormal events while others are believed to be the method by which the haunting occur, such as with Poltergeist-like haunting.

American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena - Founded in 1982 by Sarah Estep to collect objective evidence of survival after death. Research is primarily centered in Raudive voices which are voices that spontaneously appear on audio recordings or the audio track of video recordings which are purported to be communications from the dead.

Apparition - A spectral image, or supernatural manifestation, that is better known as a ghost.

Thought to be the soul of a deceased human, or animal, it is an imprint with distinct features. They are usually connected to residual haunting rather than spirit related ones.

Astral Body - An exact replica of the physical body but composed of psychic matter. The astral body is the representation of the subject in out of body experiences reported in psychic research.

Astral Projection - Often known as "out of body experience". It is believed to result when the astral body, or spirit, separates from the physical body.

Astral World - The level of existence that immediately follows physical death.

Aura - A field of radiant light, or energy, believed to surround living creatures.

Autography - The phenomenon of direct writing by a spirit.

Automatic Writing - Phenomena in which people write without conscious thought. Many feel that it is spirits writing through the body of a living person. Parapsychologists feel that the phenomena is due to automatism.

Avatar - In English, the word has come to mean "an embodiment, a bodily manifestation of the Divine". However, the Sanskrit word means "the descent of God" or simply "incarnation".

Banishment - A type of ritual spell, or form of magic that gets rid of negative spirits, emotions and outcomes.

Banshee - An Irish or Scottish attendant death fairy associate with certain Irish and Scottish clans. Banshees appear as women, young and old, ugly or beautiful, but most reports have them with blood red eyes, caused by their weeping for the dead of one of the members of their clans. Sometimes the Banshee rides a pale horse followed by a hearse. At other times, they stand vigil at waterways, wailing and crying for their dead.

Bilocation - Appearing to be in two locations at one time. Often associated with astral projection.

Channeling - A modern term for medium-ship whereby spirit entities convey philosophical advice, spiritual advice, or healing through mediums.

Clairaudience - Receiving paranormal messages through sound/voices.

Clairessence - Having the supposed ability to smell that which is not present.

Clairgusance - The gift of smell. People with this gift can smell things that are not physically present.

Clairsentience - The gift of sensing. It is like a radar that is on all the time. People with this gift can psychically feel the environment as they go through their daily lives.

Clairvoyance - Having the supposed power to see objects or events that cannot be perceived by the senses.

Cold Spot - An energy area associated with a temperature change.

Collective Apparition - The witnessing of an apparition by two or more persons.

Crisis Apparition - The appearance of an apparition within moments of a crisis such as death, sudden illness, or accident.

Crossroads - A place of spiritual danger, where devils, witches, vampires and ghouls lurk

Deja Entendu - A French term meaning "already heard" is used by psychical researchers to characterize the feeling that a distinct sound in the present is an echo of the past.

Deja Vu - A French term meaning "already seen" is used by psychical researchers to characterize the feeling that some scene or experience in the present is an echo of the past.

Dematerialization - The sudden disappearance or fading of a person, object, or spirit in full view of witnesses.

Demon - A hostile and resentful entity, allegedly of non-human origin, and which some believe to be a fallen angel.

Demonology - The study of demons or evil spirits sometimes coupled with a branch of magic that deals with such beings.

Direct Voice - A spirit voice, audible within the normal range of the human ear, without a visible source of agency.

Discarnate - Having no physical form or body

Dowsing - The oldest form of divination known to man, possibly thousands of years old. Dowsing is the action of a person - a dowser - who uses a rod or stick called a dowsing rod to locate such things as underground water, buried metal, oil, or even locating ghosts. Dowsing is not based upon scientific or empirical laws or forces of nature, and even experienced dowsers will admit that the reasons the procedure works are unknown.

Ectoplasm - A semi-fluid organic material which is a product of psychic energy which usually forms as a fog like mist, solid white mass, or vortices.

Electric Phenomena - Phenomena with properties resembling electricity.

Electromagnetic Field - The electrical force that surrounds or permeates life. Many believe areas that are haunted will show high electromagnetic readings. Scientists dispute this, saying most areas and all living things radiate electromagnetic fields.

Electromagnetic Field Meter (EMF Detector) - A device that detects the changes in the Electromagnetic Field. This field is around everything, from TV's to power boxes. It is thought that ghosts and other paranormal phenomena will disrupt the EM Field when present. The normal reading for paranormal activity is between 2.0 and 8.0 mg. Above this is usually man-made in origin.

Electronic Video Phenomena - Term describing the appearance of paranormal images on television sets (typically when the television is turned off).

Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) - Sounds or voices recorded on magnetic tape which is only heard upon playback. Discovered by Konstantin Raudive. Usually recorded in a range from 0 - 300 Hz (Human speech is generally within 500 - 2000 Hz, and has never been recorded below 300 Hz.)

Elemental - A term used by Spiritualists to describe angry or malicious spirits. Others refer to them as "earth spirits".

Empath - An individual who is particularly sensitive to the psychic emanations of his or her surroundings, even to a degree of telepathically receiving and experiencing the emotions of others in their proximity. Obviously, psychic empathy can be regarded as a mixed blessing, and the empath must learn to gain a measure of control over this ability.

Exorcism - Stated by Edward Smedley in Occult Sciences (1855), exorcism is "to bind upon oath, to charge upon oath, and thus, by the use of certain words, and performance of certain ceremonies, to subject the devil and other evil spirits to command and exact obedience."

Extrasensory Perception (ESP) - A term denoting awareness apparently received through channels other than the usual senses. Phenomena related to ESP include clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition.

Fetch - According to Irish and British belief, the spirit double or apparition of a living person, also known as a wraith. It exactly resembles the individual whose death it is supposed to foretell, but is generally a shadowy or ghostly appearance.

Folklore - Historical events passed by word of mouth that have become so skewed that they've lost their honest meaning and have become fairy tales, legends, beliefs and superstitions.

GESP - Abbreviation for General Extrasensory Perception, a term that encompasses both telepathy and clairvoyance.

Ghoul - A ghoul is a type of ghost that haunts graveyards and the crossroads and eats human flesh.

Ghost - The generic term used for a number of different paranormal or supernatural entities.

Ghost Hunter - A person who uses standards set by researchers to search for haunted areas, in probable locations such as cemeteries, abandoned buildings, old churches, battlefields, old schools, etc.

Ghost Lights - Strange balls of light that appear in specific locations, often for an extended period of time, but which have no explanation. They are thought to be of natural origin, and not actual ghosts. However, they still remain a mystery to science, even to this day.

Ghost Researcher - Someone who is part folklorist, part historian, and part detective when examining ghosts and hauntings. Not as interested in collecting physical evidence or proof, someone who is simply collecting reports and stories dealing with ghosts and hauntings. The only difference between a "researcher" and an "enthusiast" is the level of study and time expended in pursuit of information.

Haint - A southern mountain term used to describe various types of ghosts that haunt the areas.

Much folklore surrounds stories of "Haints" in the Appalachia. Most "Haints" are thought to be menacing spirits, much like the "boogers" that haunt mountain hollows.

Haunting - A repeated manifestation of supernatural phenomena occurring over a period of time in a specific location. It may include apparitions, sounds, smells, cold spots, moving or disappearing objects, etc.

Hex - A magic spell among German people that is meant to stop someone from attaining something you'd rather they not attain. A hex might be used to protect your livestock and your family from the Evil Eye or some other evil intentions. Hexes also protect you from starvation and poverty. The best person to cast a hex was a Hexenmeister or witch.

Holzer, Dr. Hans - Famed ghost hunter, parapsychologist, and author of many books related to the supernatural.

Hygrometer - Also known as a Relative Humidity Gauge, it is a device used with a thermometer to record indoor and outdoor humidity levels.

Incubus - A spirit entity that many believe to be a demon or ghost that has sex with human women while they are sleeping or unable to move, speak, or cry out.

Intelligent Haunting - When spirits seem to live in a specific area, and act with free will, as well as show intelligence (i.e., not residual). Spirits don't necessarily haunt the place they die at, but could haunt the most comfortable place for them to stay (i.e., their old home). The spirit will interact with witnesses at a location and attempt to make its presence known.

Kinetic Energy - The energy that spirits use to move objects, throw things, etc.

Levitation - The paranormal elevating of a person or object in apparent defiance of gravity.

Lore - Collective beliefs and legendry relating to a subject, as in "vampire lore".

Lucid Dreaming - The ability to have control and consciousness in the dream state.

Lucidity - A faculty by which paranormal knowledge may be obtained. It is a collective term for the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometric, and premonitions.

Malevolent - A spirit that wishes to hurt a human or that has ill intent.

Malicious - A spirit that is evil or spiteful, usually non-human. These spirits will destroy things of personal or financial value for the sake of hurting others.

Manifestation - The appearance of an entity when it takes form. It can also mean the outbreak of activity.

Materialization - The sudden appearance or physical formation of a spirit in full view of witnesses.

Medium - A psychic through whom spirits can communicate. There are two types of mediums: light and deep trance.

Metaphysics - Derived from the Latin word *meta* which means beyond. Literally means that which is beyond the laws of physics.

Movement (Paranormal) - Movement where some contact is applied but not enough to explain the motion or movement without perceptible contact (telekinesis).

MUFON - The Mutual UFO Network

Near-death Experience (NDE) - Individuals who have shown many of the characteristics of death (stopped heart, flat brain scan, etc.) but have been brought back to consciousness often report experiences that seem to have a bearing on the questions of individual survival of death and possible existence of a human soul or surviving individual consciousness.

Necromancy - The practice of communicating with the dead to obtain knowledge of the future, others' secrets, etc. An archaic term, the necromancer was said to employ magic spells and conjuration to summon, then banish, the spirits of the dead.

Paranormal - Beyond the range of normal experience or scientific explanation; Above or outside the natural order of things as presently understood.

Paranormal Researcher - Someone who uses their own theories/ideas to test new research methods, protocols, and equipment. A true researcher is not biased to an old idea, but works to disprove or prove further the old idea, to expand the knowledge of the community. Typically, a researcher does not work to prove a paranormal occurrence as genuine, but to disprove the occurrence legitimately. Only when all possible false-positive contaminants have been ruled out can something be defined as a true anomaly.

Parapsychology - Derived from the Latin word *para*, which means beyond, parapsychology literally means beyond psychology. It is generally defined as the scientific study of paranormal phenomena. Term coined by J. B. Rhine.

Phantasmagoria - Term generally used for a shifting series of imaginary or fantastic images as seen in a dream or fevered imagination.

Phantom - Another name for "ghost" or "spirit", although many use the word to refer to apparitions that have been seen wearing cloaks or robes.

Phasmology - The scientific study of ghosts/ spirits in aspect to the paranormal

Phasmaphobia - The fear of ghosts

Phenomenon (Phenomena) - An event that is an outward sign of the working of the laws of nature or an extraordinary happening.

Phouka - A type of Irish fairy that kidnaps people out of their beds at night to take them on a rollicking ride across the countryside. A Phouka often appears as a pale, gray hairy beast. Sometimes the Phouka appears as a big dog or a goat or horse. Victims are usually tucked safely back inside their beds at dawn, in many ways similar to reports of alien abduction.

Poltergeist - Literally means "noisy ghost" in German. Although it actually refers to traditional ghosts and hauntings, and in other cases, it can be used to describe the actions of the human agent. It manifests as noises, knockings, moving objects, fires, marks on body, or general disorder. Often purported to be associated with the release of kinetic or psychokinetic energy of pubescent adolescents.

Poppet - A magical doll made in order to cast spells in Witchcraft and Voodoo

Portal - An opening that somehow bridges the physical world with other dimensions such as the realm of ghosts, aliens and anything supernatural.

Portent - An event or object seen as an omen to a future event.

Precognition - Knowledge of impending events; also referred to as a prediction, premonition, and prophecy.

Precognitive Dreams - To have dreams of events or incidents before they happen.

Premonition - A paranormal impression or warning of a future event. Premonitions may range from vague feelings of disquiet, suggestive of impending disaster, to actual visual or auditory hallucinations.

Psi - Greek letter used in parapsychology to indicate psychic or paranormal phenomena such as extrasensory perception (ESP) or psychokinesis (PK).

Psychic - An all-encompassing word that is used to describe a person who is allegedly sensitive beyond the normal means. Such a person may be able to see and hear things that are not available to most people.

Psychic Surgery - The supposed ability to paranormally perform invasive surgery using no conventional medical tools. The psychic surgeon uses either an unsterilized knife, or his bare hands, to appear to make an incision and remove some internal matter. Once the operation is finished, there is no sign of an incision, nor are there any unpleasant aftereffects (e.g. infection).

Many of the investigated cases have turned out to be fraudulent, involving sleight of hand tricks to make the operation appear convincing. However, it is possible that, in some circumstances,

the ritual nature of the "surgery" could help effect a cure through the equally mysterious placebo effect.

Psychokinesis (PK) - The ability to move physical objects utilizing only the power of the mind. In many poltergeist-like cases, human agents affect objects in an unconscious manner.

Psychometry - To touch an object with your hands and get information about the object, its creator, its owner, or its history.

Psychoplasm - Alternative term for ectoplasm.

Radio Voice Phenomenon (RVP) - To receive the voices of a deceased human being over a regular radio (CB, AM/FM, and HAM, etc)

Rapping - Phenomenon of knocking or tapping that typically accompany poltergeist disturbances.

Raps - Unexplained knocking sounds associated with poltergeist activity.

Reciprocal Apparition - A rare type of ghost sighting when both the spirit and the human witness see and respond to one another.

Remote Viewing (RV) - Ability to access distant or shielded information primarily of visual character, such as natural or structural features, via an unknown mental process. RV can include other sensory modes, such as feelings, motion, or sound. Some individuals associate specific approaches or protocols, with RV. Other similar terms: remote perception, enhanced perception, extrasensory perception (ESP).

Research Site - A true research site is one where a controlled environment can be established, and then visited frequently (normally on a regular basis, weekly, biweekly, etc.) to test new theories and research ideas. To a researcher, the benefits of a long-term research site is being able to find norms for that location, therefore deviations from that norm can be found recorded as data. This isn't possible on an investigation, where one may only visit a site only a few times.

Residual Energy - Energy left over after a person has died, sometimes in a home or even on a piece of furniture associated with the deceased. This appears to be the kind of ghostly energies that manifest in spirit recordings where ghosts are seen to be doing the same task over and over again.

Residual Haunting - Not technically referred to as a haunting, but more of an energy imprint. When a spirit is seen doing the same thing at specific intervals constantly. Perhaps the spirit is trapped repeating a specific moment in life, or perhaps it is just a flash from the past during a traumatic moment in someone's life.

Second Sight - Paranormal perception at a distance in time or space also known as Extrasensory Perception (ESP)

Sensitive - Often interchangeable with "psychic", this word refers to a person with psychic powers, but lacks the ability to communicate with the dead like a medium. However, mediums are sensitives.

Shroud - The white flowing robe that a ghost is said to wear. In fact, shrouds were the sheets in which corpses were wrapped for burial. The ghosts that are most likely to wear them therefore, are older graveyard spirits. Most other ghosts, however, appear in normal, everyday clothes.

Sixth Sense - A term used to describe a hidden sensibility or a perception of things by an unknown mechanism that's effects are the only perceivable portion. It includes clairvoyance, premonition, monition, psychometry, dowsing, and telepathy.

Simulacra - A word used to describe the faces and shapes that are often reported in photographs and in almost every kind of inanimate object including doors, buildings, clouds, trees, and bushes. Usually, it is nothing more than the imagination of the witness making the texture of the object into a face or figure; also referred to as matrixing.

Skeptic - One who instinctively doubts, questions, or disagrees with assertions or generally accepted conclusions. In parapsychology, one who insists on ruling out all possible natural causes for a phenomenon.

Sleep paralysis - A medical disorder where one awakens from sleep to find something pressing down on their chests, obstructing normal breathing and hindering them from moving.

Smells (Psychic) - Smells ascribed to a paranormal origin due to a lack of cause.

Specter (Spectre) - Another term for a ghost.

Spectral Flames - Luminous phenomena seen in cemeteries and around churches, believed by some to be paranormal.

Spirit - Another term for a ghost or discarnate being. The principle force within a living being, the soul.

Spirit Photography - A term used for both legitimate attempts to capture ghosts and paranormal energy on film and also for the work of fraudulent photographers during the Spiritualist era.

Spirit Possession - Also known as a Walk-In, when a discarnate or earthbound spirit enters the body of a living person, but usually never completely.

Street Lamp Interference (SLI) - The phenomenon of streetlights inexplicably blinking off as you pass beneath them.

Subliminal - A term for sensations beneath the threshold of consciousness, too vague to be individually recognized.

Succubus - The female counterpart to the Incubus, the Succubus attacks unsuspecting men while they sleep, raping them. Often when the man opens his eyes, he sees a decrepit hag with stringy white hair and boils all over her body.

Supernatural - Events or happenings that take place in violation of the laws of nature, usually associated with ghosts and hauntings.

TAPS - The Atlantic Paranormal Society

Telekinesis - A term denoting the ability to move material objects by implementing psychic force.

Temperature Changes - Marked changes of temperature sometimes occur as paranormal activity or in conjunction with paranormal activity.

Tulpa - From the Tibetan language; it refers to any entity that attains reality solely by the act of imagination; a thought form. If its creator wishes, this creation may become physical reality through intense concentration and visualization. However, care must be taken to only bring to reality what is beneficial to the world, let its destruction becomes more problematic than its creation.

UFO - Unidentified Flying Object, also known as a "flying saucer".

Urban Legend - A mysterious or shocking story that is told over and over again, is embellished, until it creates a reality all of its own. Although urban legends are typically bogus, sometimes the spirit world responds to the telling of the tale and molds reality accordingly.

Vortex - Tornado-like Ectoplasmic manifestations.

Wicca - The 20th and 21st religion of Witchcraft that is steeped in the ancient Celts and other similarly spiritually minded people throughout the world. Wicca merges ancient pagan festivals and beliefs with 19th, 20th, and 21st century occultism. Some claim Wicca is merely a nature religion made up primarily of gentle folk lore who believe in horoscopes, wear capes and flowers in their hair, revere the Lord and the Lady and hold a special significance for Stonehenge.

Winds (Paranormal) - Breezes and currents of air associated with a haunting that have no natural explanation or cause.

White Noise - A hiss-like sound, formed by combining all audible frequencies. Often used as a background to EVP recordings.

Women-In-White - These are unhappy spirits associated with human suffering. Many times such forces are put into place after a murder or a suicide has occurred, but Women-In-White ghosts can also be linked to the death of a child, an unhappy love affair and any number of events that would bring about extreme sadness or depression.

Wraith - An apparition that is generally supposed to be an omen of death.

Xenoglossy - Speaking in a language unknown to the speaker in the normal waking state. It is different from what is commonly called glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, which is typically a form of vocalized religious expression.

Zener Cards - A pack of twenty-five cards bearing the simple symbols in groups of five (star, circle, square, cross, and waves) used in testing extrasensory abilities under laboratory conditions.

Zombie - The result of the reanimation of a corpse. Usually associate with the practice of voodoo.

