

Adelaide Hills Ghost Stories
Madison White

The Adelaide Hills is renowned for its beautiful historic buildings, but some people think those buildings are home to things that go bump in the night.

In communities all throughout the Hills there are stories and rumours that linger about ghosts and hauntings in some of our most important old buildings.

Alison Oborn is the founder and lead investigator of the Paranormal Field Investigators, a group that seeks to investigate suspected haunted buildings. She and her team have been called to locations throughout the Hills to investigate suspicions of paranormal activity.

“We don't do clairvoyant type stuff, we're very level headed,” Alison said.

“When people call us in we bring all our equipment – thermal cameras, infra-red cameras, voice recorders, electromagnetic field readers. We try to monitor the place to see if there is any interactivity. We also look into the history of the place to see if there is a ghost who would be the best candidate.

“We tend to be more on the rational side and if we can disprove things we will.”

Alison and her team are experts on haunted places and have found that many of our old pubs and hotels are hotspots for paranormal activity.

“Pubs are very common places to find ghosts,” Alison said.

“People often wonder why but when you think about it some people live their whole life at the bar. That can be why you tend to get a few spooky things there. Jails are also very popular and asylums – any places with a lot of death and tragedy we find are more often reported.”

One of pubs that has more than a few stories to tell is the Macclesfield Hotel. Owner Mary Rhode had a few unearthly spirits knocking around her hotel, leading her to have the building cleansed late last year.

One of her most notorious guests was a female spirit named Rosemary whose story was told to Mary by the gentleman who performed the cleanse.

“She was pushed down the stairs and broke her neck,” Mary said.

“It must have been over 100 years ago. The pub was built in 1841 and the second level was built in 1875. She was having an argument with a man who wanted her to make money for him. She told him that she wasn't that sort of girl and so he pushed her.

“She was really angry. She said he got away with it because he knew the coppers. The person who did the clearing for me was telling me she was so happy because she hadn't spoken to anyone for so long – she was angry and all alone.

“I had another lady come in a month after the gentleman told us about her and she told me exactly the same story, knowing nothing about the pub. She walked up the stairs and braced against the wall saying she couldn't go near the railing because someone was murdered there.

“We had another spirit who was a matronly lady. She was very angry, the sort that would hit children and things. My husband nearly fell down the stairs twice because he felt like someone had pushed him.”

Since the cleanse Mary says the negative spirits have left the hotel, however there are some that are a little more reluctant to pass on.

“The lady who cleans for us brings her four year old daughter with her in the mornings and she can see the spirits,” Mary said.

“She was sitting on the couch in the lounge and she told her mum that there was a lady sitting next to her just watching her. She wasn't scared but I sat next to her and asked the lady to leave for her and she left.

“We are pretty good now, we still have some stuff like flickering lights but the spirits just visit now. We still have them in the cellar because every time I go down there I get goosebumps, but on the whole the place has a pretty good feeling to it – all the spirits we have are quite friendly.

Pubs and hotels aren't the only places that have stories about ghosts. For years there have been rumours about a haunted room at Mount Lofty House, something new owner Tony Barradale is quite familiar with.

“It's one of those old wives tales that has gone around over many years,” Tony said.

“People say they hear odd noises from time to time but nothing harmful or threatening – it's more a bit of fun. We do supposedly have a ghost and his name is George. From what we have been told he is quite hospitable, very friendly and he has been noted a few times in the heritage wing which is over 160 years old.”

Another favourite old building for many Hill's residents is the Hahndorf Academy building.

Long before it became a country art gallery in 1967, the building was opened as an English and German school in 1857. Between 1917 and 1937 the building was used as a hospital and nursing home, with over 100 babies being born in the building over the 20 years.

With such a varied and complicated history it is no wonder that there are some stories of lurking around the ancient halls. One of the most well known stories is that of the lady in white who reportedly used to appear at the top of the staircase.

Gallery Director Kate Wake says that she hasn't seen or heard much of the lady in white for some time, but that she definitely believes that there are ghosts in the building.

“I believe that we do have ghosts and I believe that I've heard them,” Kate said.

“I've met people who have sensed some spiritual activity. I think it's up to the individual person but some people can sense these things and some people can't. We have had a few stories of people experiencing things upstairs – there is a child and two adults up there who people have encountered.”

“My experience is that I heard some heavy breathing while walking through the downstairs gallery. I later realised that the gallery I had walked through used to be the labour ward when the building was a maternity hospital. I got to thinking – back then lot women would have died during childbirth

and there would have been a lot of stillborn births.

“I think buildings that are this old definitely have some secrets.”

There are many locations throughout the hills that have been reported to teams like Alison's Paranormal Field Investigators for spirits and ghosts. For more information visit www.paranormalfieldinvestigators.com