

A prayer

**Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it
the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels
dwell with us
and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing
be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen

When nastiness has been around (or perhaps still is)

If people are involved with evil, we are not surprised when there are unpleasant results. Similarly, if something horrific has happened in a place in the past, if individuals have been involved with evil actions, or have led a particularly nasty way of life which has affected other people, it may be that something of that evil may stick to the place. There may be an unpleasant 'feel,' or an evil smell, or a ghost re-enacting what has gone on there. This can continue for a very long time after the event, and may even be a sort of anniversary occurrence. It seems as though the very bricks and mortar of a place can hold something of the dreadful events of the past.

Evil spirits?

What you have read above is *absolutely nothing at all* to do with the idea of people being possessed by an evil spirit. That is *very rare indeed*, and is another matter altogether. Most people's experience of the paranormal has to do with the activity of humans - alive on this earth or departed to another state - who may need our help.

So what do we do?

Throughout the country there is a network of Christians trained and authorised by the churches to deal with these situations. If you haven't got a connection with any other church, contact your local Church of England vicar, who can get in touch with the local team of people who specialise in this sort of ministry. Or ask for help from the Churches' Fellowship. Their details are below.

Further advice and information
may be obtained from

The General Secretary of the CFPSS:
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The Churches' Fellowship

for Psychical and Spiritual Studies



Occasional Leaflet 3

Deliver us from evil ...

by **the Reverend Mike Pennington**

This leaflet aims to help people who think there may be a ghost or spirit disturbing them or their home. Those who find their lives being upset by strange sounds or sights, or unusual things happening in their homes or work-places, may look to the Churches' Fellowship for guidance. The Fellowship and its members have a wide experience in this field, and can usually help.

Ghosties and ghoulies ... and things that go bump in the night

There are some odd stories about, and sometimes they are a bit scary. Tall tales are told, and Hallowe'en has what most people see as a bit of fun to brighten up the autumn darkness. But when it *really* happens to you, it is no laughing matter.

Whom can you tell? You may be afraid that people will laugh at you, or think you are on the way to mental breakdown, or that they will wonder why you are inventing such unlikely stories.

Will anyone believe you? The answer to that is 'Yes, they will' — as long as you talk to the right people. More about **that** later. Psychological disturbances happen to all sorts of people at all sorts of times.

What might happen

There might be noises you cannot explain, that sound like rappings or footsteps. Or things might disappear, and then be found in the most unlikely places. Things might move round the house of their own accord. Ornaments appear in strange places. Curtains twitch. Cupboard doors fly open and things hurtle out from the shelves. Washing machines switch themselves on and off. TVs change programmes. Clocks do funny things. A door-bell rings by itself. The contents of a drawer are found in a rubbish sack. Voices might be heard, but you cannot *quite* hear what they are saying.

These are all the sort of things that come under the heading of 'poltergeist.' The word means 'noisy ghost,' though most experts agree that such things are nothing to do with a ghost at all. So if you think that getting someone in to do an exorcism will solve the problem, forget it! If there isn't an evil spirit, you can't exorcise it. These strange things seem, in some way which is not fully understood, to be the result of people in the house being in a state of tension. Perhaps they are worried about family relationships, or about work. Often there is a young person coming onto the verge of adulthood, and finding the bodily changes difficult to cope with. It is not imagination. It is not all in the mind. These are real things happening. They are possibly caused, quite unconsciously and unknowingly, by turmoil in someone's life.

But, first of all ...

Get rid of all the possible ordinary explanations. Make sure that there is nothing wrong with the TV or washing machine; that nobody is simply playing silly tricks; that the catch of the cupboard door is secure; that there are no draughts round the window; and that in a room which always seems cold the radiator has been bled. If strange things are still happening, then you may have a problem. Never fear; you can get help.

What about real ghosts?

Unlikely though it sounds, sometimes it seems that people who have died are trying to make contact with those of us who are still

alive on this earth. Perhaps they are unhappy. Perhaps there is something on their mind that they need to get rid of. Perhaps - even - they don't realise they have died!

When this happens, it often means that the person who is trying to make contact has had a very intense relationship with a particular person or place. They need to be helped on their journey. It is almost as though we need to say to them something like, 'Sorry, Dad, but you can't hang around. You don't belong here any longer. You've got bigger things to be concerned with now.' Cases like this usually seem to settle down quite quickly.

But sometimes you might see what looks like a video-recording from the past. It is always the same tape, with the same people in it. It is as though you are watching a bit of history without being part of it. This can be a bit eerie, especially if, since the time when the event you are witnessing took place, something has been built in the middle of the 'film-set.' So you might see someone walking in what was once a garden or a field but is now a house, and they walk through a wall instead of bothering with the door.

That does call for questions to be asked. Usually, cases like this seem to involve an impersonal 'trace' which some event or other has left behind, and do not imply any conscious thought or personal activity by the people who seem to be taking part.