



The Ghost That Haunted Itself

Jan-Andrew Henderson , Jan-Andrew (J.A.) Henderson

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Greyfriar's Cemetery in Edinburgh has a centuries-old reputation for being haunted. Its gruesome history includes witchcraft, body-snatching, desecration, corpse dumping, and live burial. In 1998, something new and inexplicable began occurring in the graveyard. Visitors encountered "cold spots," strange smells, and banging noises. They found themselves overcome by nausea, or cut and bruised by something they couldn't see. Over a period of two years, 24 people were knocked unconscious. Homes next to the graveyard were plagued by smashing crockery, moving objects, and unidentified laughter. Witnesses to these incidents ran into the hundreds. The section of Greyfriars where the attacks occurred is now chained shut, but the poltergeist still grows stronger.

The Ghost That Haunted Itself Details

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From Reader Review The Ghost That Haunted Itself for online ebook

Claire Beresford says

Very entertaining. Was not just some boring book of facts. Really expressed the views and thoughts of the characters. Had some great moments of out loud giggling due to visitor response to the poltergeist activity and the general interaction between the characters. Description of the tomb and graveyard made you feel like you were there.

Suzanne says

I read a review of this book years ago and was so intrigued by it. I couldn't get this book out of my head. I had read another of the author's books and just couldn't stop thinking about it. I finally ordered it probably about 3 years after I saw a review for it. This is seriously one of the scariest books I've ever read, because the events in the book really happened. This isn't a work of fiction. This is the story of the Mackenzie Poltergeist in the Black Mausoleum of Greyfriars cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland. The original review I read said not to read it alone at night. I didn't listen to the review and I was so freaked out. I still would like to go on a ghost tour and see the black mausoleum. If you like spooky stories, this is the book for you.

Neena says

This book centres around the relatively modern legend of Poltergeist Activity surrounding The Black Mausoleum in Edinburgh's Greyfriar's Kirkyard and also Bluidy George McKenzie's tomb - an imposing, scary structure that's hundreds of years old that rests close the end of a garden wall.

George McKenzie was one of the main people involved in the persecution of the Covenanters and due to apparent, potentially dangerous paranormal activity within the Covenanter's Prison which is now gated off and chained shut to the public in Greyfriar's Kirkyard. The only access you can get is via a tour which is talked about in this book.

The things I really like about this book is that it's well written and very gripping and yet it's not the usual "Come on our wonderful tour - all of the hauntings are so true" - it's actually pretty sceptical about the reported hauntings and does let you make up your own mind and also provides a number of case studies from tourists (and probably had the opposite desired effect with me as I'd been planning to go on this tour and after reading this, I didn't go in the end - not out of fear but out of the seeming lack of respect of the tourguides themselves who appear to mock the people who pay their wages and look down on them and also the way they find it acceptable (even though they admit themselves that it's totally disrespectful) to stand on other tombstones and use them as convenient stages for their "show" - don't forget that these tombstones are all ancient and due to the porous sandstone in which they are made from, they are all now falling into serious disrepair due to weathering and vandalism).

However, I do really recommend this book - it's one that certainly deserves reading!

Lisa says

Those of you who know me well know that I don't scare easily, but the first night I started reading this book I literally had to put it down and turn on the TV! I was so scared!

Henderson's aptitude for storytelling makes this book entertaining and yet believable. For those of you headed to Edinburgh, with the slightest interest in the paranormal, should read this book and then tour the Greyfriars Kirkyard. Fascinating read!

Anna120984 says

really repetitive
quite a struggle to read as it didn't go into any real detail

Jo says

Snippets of stories about the Mackenzie poltergeist of Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh. Mostly centred around the City of the Dead ghostwalk that takes place in the burial ground and experiences by the guides and visitors on them. Quick read at around 200 pages and left me wanting to do the walk even more.

Denise Bijl-Klompenmaker says

Pretty good book for fun, but a lot of 'extra' details.

Liz Kerry says

Very interesting book. I had not heard of the Mackenzie Poltergeist before I read this and now I want to visit Greyfriars Churchyard. Excellent read for anyone interested in the paranormal.

Alisa Kester says

A little disingenuous, since the "Ben Scott" who features so prominently in the book and the author, Jan-Andrew Henderson, is actually one and the same. This makes me feel that much of the book could simply be hype and advertising for the ghost tour he owns/runs. Still, he writes well, and it made an interesting story.

Johnny Guerrero says

I really thought this book would scare me , it didn't but it was good . I wanted MORE scares !!!

Matt says

The Ghost That Haunted Itself is a collection of encounters documented by the operators and owners of the 'City of the Dead' tours in Edinburgh, Scotland. Specifically the phenomena experienced by people on these tours while visiting the black mausoleum in Greyfriars Kirkyard. The mausoleum is said to be inhabited either by a poltergeist or the late tombs owner, George Mackenzie (known as Bluidy Mackenzie for his persecution of the Covenanters).

The Mackenzie poltergeist, as it has become known, has been active since 1998 when a homeless man apparently broke into the mausoleum in search of refuge from a storm. Ever since strange things have been happening to people who visit the tomb. The most common forms of activity involve people passing out and being attacked in some fashion, often resulting in mysterious injuries which appear and disappear without warning or pain.

The book also features the origin story of the 'City of the Dead' tours, and owner/operator Ben Scott's experiences and struggle to understand what is going on during these tours.

I'll give credit to this book for addressing other possible causes for the hauntings in Greyfriars, though an attempt at a deeper examination wasn't really made. It was mostly just a few ideas thrown around by the author. But the book was entertaining and easy to read, the author's storytelling was quite nicely accomplished. But herein lies a slight problem.

The beginning of the book states that some names were changed on request to protect those involved and that the author used his discretion and changed a few where he felt it was necessary. After finishing the book I went and researched the Mackenzie poltergeist a little on my own and found some archived newspaper articles which struck me as a little odd.

It seems that author Jan-Andrew Henderson neglected to disclose that he is the owner of the 'City of the Dead' tours. Making him "Ben Scott". After locating a biography on the author, it was fairly apparent that there is no disputing this fact.

I have a slight problem with his failure to acknowledge this, as knowing it could influence the way you read the book. Ultimately one could view the book as promotion for Henderson's tours, making his claims questionable.

Ultimately, people do faint in the black mausoleum, people do receive cuts and feel sick. It could very well be mass hysteria, some very efficient storytelling on behalf of the 'City of the Dead' tour guides inciting it (Henderson seems fairly capable of this), it could be pheromones, negative energy absorbed by the stone in the Covenanters Prison, maybe even the ghost of Greyfriars Bobby tormenting guests for uncovering his cockup (wrong grave apparently, poor boy). But it's an interesting book about a curious spot in a rather beautiful city. And if nothing else, Henderson tells a good story.

Elaine White says

I really enjoyed this book. As well as being spooky and entertaining, as it tells the story of Ben Scott and his venture to start the City of the Dead Tours, it gives an accurate history of Old Edinburgh and its experiences with ghosts.

The book skirts the line being being flippant about ghosts ever existing and being completely convinced that ghosts are real. This is probably Bloody Mackenzie's fault, the poltergeist of the narrative. He is sometimes ludicrous, sometimes playful, sometimes downright spiteful and sometimes he disappears for months on end.

However, I'm a firm believer in respecting what you don't know. I've seen a ghost and although it didn't frighten me, it cemented my already open mind in a position of 'Just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it's not there'. That, to me, is how this book reads. There's a lingering respect for the supernatural world, a flitting, in and out of belief and disbelief. Just as I'm sure there is with Ben Scott. Sometimes it's only too easy to believe that a lingering spirit is being malevolent, and sometimes it seems silly. But at all times, the possibility is there.

And that's what really spoke me with this book. The more I read about Blood Mackenzie, the more I'm convinced that ghosts are real. Some of them are just too nice to make themselves known; some like Mackenzie just like the limelight too much to give it up.

This is the second book I've read by Jan-Andrew Henderson. I also read her *The Town Below the Ground* recently and both have proven to be fantastic. The more I read of this author, the more I'm looking forward to what they write next.

Erin says

I bought this book after doing a City of the Dead tour in Edinburgh, and I almost wish I could have read it first. A good read, whether you believe in the the Mackenzie Poltergeist, but contains some nice history of Greyfriars Graveyard, and an insight of the guides that lead the tours.

My rating is likely a bit biased as I loved the tour and have visited the location, but the next time I am back in Scotland, I am definitely doing another tour with them (and likely buying another book!)

Catherine Cavendish says

A fascinating account of much haunted Greyfriars Cemetery in Edinburgh, told with healthy doses of humour. You can make your own mind up about what may - or may not - lurk in the shadows of the Black Mausoleum in the Covenanters' Prison... but it's beyond doubt that a lot of visitors have experienced apparently inexplicable events. Thoroughly enjoyable whether you are planning to visit or simply looking for a scary, but fun, ghost book.

John says

Not so much scary, as moderately creepy. Most of the entries consist of summaries of tour parties where someone fainted and/or came away with scratches/bruises from being "touched" by an entity in the haunted mausoleum, with little variation; although, there were a couple of stories of activity in the building immediately adjacent to MacKenzie's crypt; those began after the crypt was disturbed by an intruder in 1999. I would be more interested in reports from psychics giving specifics of their findings, than repeated description of manifestations.
