

BORLEY RECTORY

for The Midnight Society



presented by

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INTRODUCTION

Being in the market of writing dark fiction, it follows that much of my time is spent mired in the shadowy stuff. What you have in front of you is the results of my efforts researching, documenting, and dallying in everything from the arcane to the supernatural.

I've been writing fiction for several years, and have acted as a contributor for a number of online publications in the same timespan. Where possible, articles have been researched and referenced with citations.

You're holding a sampling of the the fun stuff that fuels my practice that other institutions, organizations, communities, and blogs were kind enough to publish.

If you'd like to work with me, make a suggestion for future articles, or alert me that the world is ending and I ought to backup my hard drive, feel free to send a note.

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BORLEY RECTORY

for The Midnight Society

You can leave out the ghosts and give me a derelict, once-enchanted-looking building, and I'd find a story in the remains. I won't complain if there's a haunting, but old houses, churches, barns, asylums, mansions, greenhouses, theatres, and the like are magical places all on their own. I set my creative roots often in settings, and let my imagination take me to the worlds where those old ruins once cast formidable shadows on their inhabitants. Settings become characters. Settings have their own stories locked away in the walls.

Sometimes, you find a skeleton in a closet, if you're lucky.

In honour of the abandoned, I hope to bring back to life a few settings over the next few weeks. Today we start in England, on the outskirts of a small town that lends its name to a particular structure that was built at the end of the 19th century.

FAMOUS HAUNTINGS: BORLEY RECTORY

In 1862 when Borley Rectory was first built, it took over the site of an ancient monastery. It's said that the site has been haunted since even before Reverend Bull and his family moved in — the first apparition being that of a nun who walked the grounds regularly and was known by local villagers. Thing is, if you know your history, nuns weren't put up at monasteries. The story goes that this poor soul lived nearby at Burrs and was in love with one of the monks who lived at the old site. The pair tried to elope, but being caught, the brothers executed her sweetheart and bricked her up in the walls of the monastery.

It's speculated that Rev. Bull built a summer house facing the nun's walk to watch the processional, but the spectral nun took to peering into the windows of the rectory, startling the serving staff. By 1938 the legend was confirmed to have no historical basis, and is simply a



romanticization of the Victorian Gothic-style rectory.

Among the things that could not be argued were the phantom footsteps in the upstairs hallways, and the ghostly figures that often crossed the garden in broad daylight, and a stage coach that would appear on the drive. The manifestations were described as unsettling but no where near as invasive as what would happen to the Rectory in later years.

I hate to get ahead of myself here, but sometimes you just need to say it like it is:

Because... you know... poltergeists.

By 1927, the house passed on to another reverend and his family; the Smiths. With a well-earned reputation, the couple brought in renowned paranormal researcher Harry Price to investigate, which seemed to coincide with a boom in poltergeist activity at the rectory.

After two years worth of objects moving of their own accord, rappings, and phantom touches in the night, the couple decided it was too much and abandoned their home. It was another year before Borley was occupied, and a couple and their daughter took up residence. Reverend Lionel Algernon Foyster, his wife Marianne, and their adopted daughter Adelaide experienced the lion's share of paranormal activity.

Here's a shortlist, because there really is far too much to go into further detail without writing a novel about it:

- Bells ringing
- Phantom dog
- Phantom footsteps
- Whisperings
- Doors opening and closing of their own accord
- Sounds of crashing glass and furniture
- Flying bricks through windows
- Flying candlesticks being thrown into walls
- Flying bars of soap



- Lights in various parts of the house flickering on and off
- Disappearing utensils that mysteriously reappear
- Various articles of unidentified origin tumbling down the stairs
- Books being replaced by other books
- Jewelry unlatched from wrists and vanishing
- Strange smells (notably lavender)
- Various articles thrown at house's inhabitants (brushes, books, etc.)
- Milk jugs emptied

The list goes on...

For a very detailed account of all the paranormal goings-on at Borley Rectory, which I'd like to remind you is referred to as "The Most Haunted House in Britain", you can read the full transcript of Harry Price's book at <http://www.harrypricewebsite.co.uk/Borley/>

You might note that there is indeed a film about Harry Price's account of the goings-on at Borley during his time spent there.

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ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

The Midnight Society

“Famous Hauntings: Borley Rectory” was written by Kira Butler, and appeared at
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<http://midnightsocietytales.com/2015/01/17/famous-hauntings-borley-rectory/>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kira Butler writes speculative fiction for adults, new adults, and young adult readers. She especially appreciates dark urban fantasy and low key horror, and likes to write about everything in between. She lives in Montreal, where she is working towards the completion of her first young adult horror novel.



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