



# The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 9 Issue 2

## From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: Happy Lucky 13!



James

Happy New Year! Amazingly, 2012 will mark the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Ghosts of Ohio organization. Thirteen years! And while I'm sure there will be all sorts of references to "unlucky number 13" thrown around in the coming months, the simple truth is that when it comes to The Ghosts of Ohio, luck's got nothing to do with it.

If I try really, really hard, I can remember all the way back to early 1999 when I first moved to Ohio. I'd been involved with several other paranormal groups prior to my move, and my original intent was to just join an existing one in Ohio. Unlike today, where it seems like you can't walk 10

feet without bumping into a ghost hunter, paranormal groups were few and far between back then. Not finding a group that I liked, a weird idea popped into my head: why not start your own group? Years later, I still giggle to myself at how naïve and arrogant I was to think starting a paranormal research group would be easy. Almost 13 years later, I'm still learning how to do things. Thankfully, I've done more things right than wrong as our numbers, both within the organization as well as our fan base, continues to grow.

Interesting story about the name, The Ghosts of Ohio. Seems like a no-brainer, but the name actually came from a long list of potential monikers that I pondered over for weeks. The deep meaning to the name is that I wanted to create an

organization that behaved much like ghosts in that while we were always there, only those who truly believed would be able to see us. In other words, The Ghosts of Ohio would always be lurking in the shadows, only stepping out into the light to be seen when someone wanted us there or needed help.

And that's where, over 12 years later, The Ghosts of Ohio remains: silently, patiently waiting for those in need to reach out to us. It's by no means glamorous and more often than not, it's a thankless job. But we wouldn't have it any other way.

Cheers,  
James A. Willis  
Founder/Director

## Ghostly Fiction: *Maybe This Time* Book Review



Janine

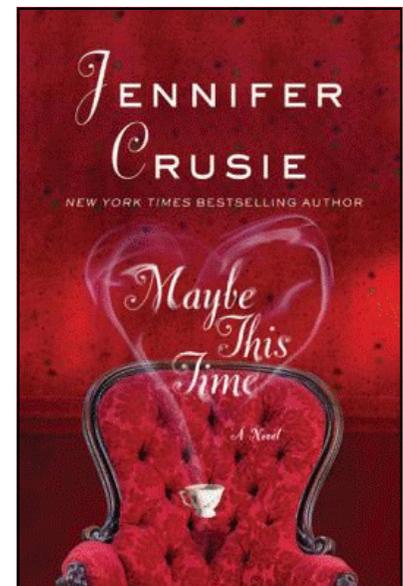
Best-selling author Jennifer Cruise's *Maybe This Time* is a funny romance novel, but it is equally a takeoff of the seriously scary classic ghost novel by Henry James, *Turn of the Screw*. James, an Englishman, published his novel in 1898. Cruise says her novel, published in 2010, takes place in 1992. There are a number of musical and style references to set that time.

The main character, Andie, meets with her lawyer ex-husband, North Archer, to let him know that she's to be remarried. He talks her into going to remote southern Ohio to take care of two orphaned children, Alice and Carter. They live in an old house that's been dismantled and imported from England.

Alice and Carter are both troubled children. Andie discovers Alice having a discussion with an empty rocking chair. The chair begins to rock with nobody in it.

There's also a creepy housekeeper who doesn't really do any housekeeping, and who drinks a funny tea spiced with peppermint schnapps. Eventually Andie wins over the children and meets several ghosts, the seductive and talkative Aunt May, Peter Quint, and Miss Jessel, who stands at the foot of Alice's bed at night, gazing at her with empty eyes. Peter and Miss Jessel are from the James novel. Presumably they are in the same house they haunted in England. Experts are called in. The medium, Isolde, is absolutely hilarious. She's a supremely practical woman who curses freely. (I did so want, at this point, to tell the characters that they needed to call in The Ghosts of Ohio, but I believe our fearless leader lived in another state in 1992.) We get into a little possession and a murder before the whole thing gets tied up, happily enough.

Honestly, I hadn't read Cruise before, and when I realized how much of a romance novel this was, I wasn't prepared to like it. I'm an English teacher and can be pretty snobby about



what I read. I did enjoy the book. With many Ohio references, it's fun for those of us who live here. The author plays with the classic ghost novel well, too, and ends the book with quite a delicious shiver. *Maybe This Time* is newly out in paperback and widely available.

Rating:

## Borley Rectory: One of the World's Most Haunted Buildings?



James

You can't do any research on the most haunted buildings in the world without eventually stumbling upon Essex, England's Borley Rectory. Amazingly, while the Rectory was demolished almost 70

years ago, its very name still conjures up images of headless ghosts, ghostly nuns, and bricks being thrown through the air. But was it really, as some will tell you, one of the most haunted buildings in the world? Read on and see what you think!

Construction on the building that would become known as Borley Rectory began in 1862 and was completed the following year. Overseeing the construction was the Reverend Henry Dawson Ellis Bull, who had first knocked down the old rectory (built by Reverend Herringham) and then constructed the new one on the same site. There are, however, reports of several other buildings having been on the site many, many years before Herringham's rectory was even built. In fact, some stories have buildings dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century existing on the Borley property.

Perhaps that is why, even before Reverend Bull had broke ground, the area was known as being haunted. The most popular story claimed that a 14<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine monastery once existed on the Borley grounds and that one of the monks entered into a forbidden relationship with a nun from a nearby monastery. When their love affair was discovered, the monk was executed and the nun was bricked up inside the walls of the convent. Apparently, their ghosts, especially the nun's, could be seen wandering around the grounds of where Borley Rectory was being built.

Indeed, the Bull family had not been living in the Rectory for very long when the children started reporting seeing the ghost of a nun that would suddenly vanish every time they tried to get close to her. They also claimed to have seen the disturbing image of a ghostly carriage being driven around the grounds by two headless drivers.



The Borley Rectory (circa 1892) with members of the Bull family enjoying an afternoon in the courtyard. Photo courtesy of the Harry Price Web Site—<http://harrypricewebsite.co.uk>.

Reverend Henry died in 1892 and his son, Harry, became rector until June of 1928 when he passed away. The rectory sat vacant until the following October when the new rector, Reverend Guy Eric Smith, moved in with his family. The ghostly activity continued, as well as various unsettling occurrences including Smith's wife finding a human skull hidden away in a cupboard. Servant bells would ring, even though the strings to them had been cut long ago.

The Smiths contacted the newspaper *The Daily Mirror*, who put them in touch with the Society for Psychical Research. On June 10, 1929, Society for Psychical Research member and investigator Harry Price made his first visit to the rectory. While there, Price and the Smiths are alleged to have experienced several instances of paranormal phenomena, including various objects, including rocks and even a vase, being thrown through the area. When Price left, the activity immediately ceased, causing skeptics (and even Mrs. Smith) to question whether or not Price was the one responsible for the ghostly activity.

The Smith family left the rectory in 1929 and were replaced by the family of the new reverend, Reverend Lionel

Foyster. For the next several years, the activity at the Rectory continued to increase at an almost alarming rate. The bells continued to ring and objects still flew through the air. But now, there were new occurrences that included windows shattering without any visible cause, mysterious writing appearing on walls, and people being locked inside of rooms...by doors that had no locks on them. The Reverend documented the activity as much as he could, and eventually sent his reports to Harry Price, which only made the ghost hunter want to investigate the building even more. So when the Foysters left the rectory in May of 1937, Price came up with a crazy idea; rent the building for a year and conduct one large-scale investigation.

And that's exactly what Price did. Through an advertisement in *The Times*, Harry was able to recruit close to 50 participants, whom he called "observers." For extended periods of time, including weekends, Price would lead a group into the Rectory and conduct experiments as well as just generally investigating the building.

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## Ghost-Hunting Gadget Review: The MEL Meter

Take a look at any of the current ghost hunting shows on television and chances are you'll see people running around with all sorts of strange gadgets. Some of them are just plain silly while others make you pause and wonder if you should be investing in one for your own ghost hunting kit. One such device is the MEL Meter, a handheld piece of equipment that allows you to measure ambient temperature and EMF levels at the same time. That in and of itself sounded like a good enough reason to bring one along on every investigation, but we wanted to know more about this device...and we were sure our fans wanted to know more, too. So we went out and purchased one and ran it through some field tests to find out, plain and simple, if this was an essential ghost-hunting tool.

To begin with, there are several models of MEL Meters available. But since The Ghosts of Ohio organization is still on the fence about the K-II meter, we opted for model # 8704R, which has an ambient temperature sensor and EMF capabilities (and no K-II). Out of the box, all you need to do is attach the temperature sensor, and you're off and running.

If you've ever been on a ghost hunt or investigation before, you know that more often than not, you find yourself fumbling around in your pockets or pack to find the right piece of equipment. What's more, you usually end up fumbling with the equipment as you try to juggle between them. The MEL meter helps alleviate some of that by being a combination ambient temperature device as well as an EMF. Basically, you get to carry around two tools in one hand. Being backlit also alleviates the need to carry a flashlight or other light in order to track the readings as you normally need to do with a standard Sperry EMF.

We did a side-by-side comparison of the MEL and a Sperry EMF (model #EMF-200A) using dedicated power sources (an electrical box and a laptop computer). While both the MEL and the Sperry were able to detect both electrical sources, the Sperry detected the electrical box and laptop roughly 18



The Sperry EMF (model EMF-200A) and the MEL Meter (model 8704R) with attached ambient temperature sensor.

inches before the MEL. This was the same regardless of whether we moved the devices to the source (walked the MEL/Sperry towards the electrical box) or moved the source to the devices (walked the laptop towards the MEL/Sperry). Simply put, the Sperry picks things up a bit further away than the MEL does.

But this might be due to the fact that there's also a slight delay between when the MEL detects a field and the Sperry does. When placing both the MEL and the Sperry on a table and waving an electrical device in front of them, the Sperry almost immediately registered a reading while the MEL was roughly 1.2 seconds behind. Now, that might not seem like a long delay, but it is something to consider when you're trying to chase an anomaly down the hall in the dark!

In terms of ambient temperature readings, the MEL's response was actually quite fast. But we did notice something interesting about the sensor. Since it's picking up ambient readings, it would also occasionally pick up the heat coming off our hand, especially if we were holding the MEL close to the sensor. What's more, it didn't take us long to see that by slowly moving our

hand higher and lower on the device, we could manipulate the temperature and even get it to hover at certain temperatures. Granted, we're only talking about a few degrees at a time, but it's just something to consider when you see people on these ghost reality shows asking the spirits to raise and lower the temperature. Or, for example, the shows where the "spirits" drop the temperature a few degrees to 66.6!

So to sum things up, as a larger organization that has a lot of different devices at our disposal, most notably our Vernier LabPro, the MEL Meter, while it's certainly found a home in our pile of gadgets, didn't really make it to the list of "essentials." But if you are a smaller group, or one on a limited budget, the 2-in-1 factor alone makes the MEL something to seriously consider. It is priced well under the price you'd pay for a quality Sperry EMF and ambient temperature gauge...and you won't have to worry about switching back and forth between devices in the middle of an investigation, either.

## Borley Rectory: One of the World's Most Haunted Buildings? - Continued

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Through a series of séances, the ghost of a young nun who claimed to have been murdered on the land where the rectory now stood came through. Taking control of the planchette during the séances, the ghostly nun, who called herself Marie Lairre, told investigators she was originally from France, but came to England after leaving the church so that she could marry. The ghost claimed to have been murdered in 1667. Once he was made aware of this, Price surmised that Lairre's spirit was the same one the Bull family had first reported seeing many years ago. Further, Price claimed that Lairre's spirit was the one responsible for the majority of the activity at Borley Rectory.

But Lairre's ghost was not alone. Another spirit came through during the séances, this one being more sinister than the nun. Along with other statements, this foreboding spirit, who gave himself the name Sunex Amures, said that he would set fire to the rectory at precisely 9:00 p.m. on March 27, 1938, after which the bones of a murder victim would be discovered among the ashes. Everyone gathered that night, but no fire broke out. That is, until the following year after Price and his team had left the rectory and a new owner, Captain WH Gregson, was living there.



The Borley Rectory in June of 1937. Price rented the home during this time to conduct large-scale investigations. Photo courtesy of the Harry Price website <http://harrypricewebsite.co.uk>.

One year to the day, March 27, 1939, the rectory caught fire and was heavily damaged.

After the fire, Price returned to the Rectory and began a pseudo-excavation to see if he could find the bones that Sunex Amures said would be discovered. Price did indeed find several bones, along with a religious medal. The bones were given a Christian burial in a nearby cemetery.

The shell of Borley Rectory remained standing until 1944, when the decision was made to demolish the entire building. Life Magazine was on hand for the demolition and one of the magazine's photographers managed to capture an image of what appears to be a single brick, hovering in the air as if it is being thrown or held by unseen hands. This would be the last officially "documented" ghostly activity reported while the building still stood. However, even today, visitors report seeing apparitions wandering around the grounds where the rectory once stood.

As for Harry Price, prior to his death in 1948, he penned several books on his investigation of Borley Rectory, including one entitled "The Most Haunted House In England." In the books, Price chronicled all the events he believed took place in and around the rectory and it is these books, more than any other source, that gave rise to Borley being one of the most haunted places in the world.

But was Borley really haunted? The jury is still out. Shortly after Price's death, several members of the Society for Psychological Research, including two men who were close to Price, came



Harry Price watching for the ghostly nun at Borley Rectory. Photo courtesy of the Harry Price website <http://harrypricewebsite.co.uk>.

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## A Ghostly Christmas Ship: The Rouse Simmons Mystery



James

The three-masted schooner ship Rouse Simmons, named after a Kenosha, Wisconsin, businessman, was built in 1868. The Rouse Simmons would haul various materials, mainly lumber, back and forth across Lake Michigan until 1910, when Christmas tree dealer Herman Schuenemann bought an interest in the ship. From that point on, every November, Herman used the Rouse Simmons to bring thousands of Christmas trees from Michigan over to Chicago. Unlike most Christmas tree dealers of the time, Herman sold his trees directly to the public, usually selling them right off the docks near Chicago's Clark Street Bridge. What's more, Herman was an extremely generous man and would heavily discount his trees, often even giving some away to those less fortunate. For that reason, Herman soon acquired the nickname Captain Santa and crowds of people would flock to the docks upon catching a glimpse of the "Christmas Tree Ship" on the horizon. To help the crowds spot the Simmons more easily, and to get in the Christmas spirit, Herman would often adorn the ship with holiday decorations, including electric Christmas lights and even a tree mounted on the main mast.

In mid-November of 1912, as he had done in previous years, Herman began loading the Rouse Simmons with close to 5,500 Christmas trees and set off from Thompson Harbor, Michigan to make the week-long journey to Chicago. The day the boat pulled away from the docks, November 22, the weather was bad, with rumors of a severe storm building offshore. But having made the trip numerous times before, Herman was



"Yuletide Cargo", by Eric Nils Forsberg  
In 1911, the "Christmas Tree Ship", the Rouse Simmons, arrives in Chicago at the Clark Street Bridge.

used to the sudden violent storms that kicked up in Lake Michigan during the fall and winter months and was not worried in the least.

The following day, November 23, the Life Saving Station at Kewaunee, Wisconsin, reported spotting the Rouse Simmons, clearly in distress. It was riding low in the water and its sails were tattered and torn. A rescue team was scrambled, but before it was able to be dispatched, the Rouse Simmons vanished. It was never seen again.

That is, until 1971. For while the occasional Christmas tree would wash ashore over the years (and in 1914, Schuenemann's well-preserved wallet), the fate of the ship remained a mystery. But in 1971, diver Gordon Kent Bellrichard happened upon the wreckage while searching for another ship that had gone down in the area. Since then, various parts of the ship have been

brought to the surface and preserved at the Rogers Street Fishing Village Museum in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

But those wanting to see the Rouse Simmons need not visit a local museum. For there are those who claim that every holiday season, the ghostly ship rises out of the waves and once again makes its way across Lake Michigan. While sightings have been reported throughout late November and into December, the ghost ship will apparently sometimes make a special appearance on Christmas Eve, where it can be seen silently gliding along through the water.

Artist Eric Nils Forsberg will be doing a "one man show" at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The event will run from June 3 through December 31, 2012. Check out Eric's website. [www.forsbergart.com](http://www.forsbergart.com)

## Investigations and Consultations: Now Scheduling for 2012

The Ghosts of Ohio is beginning to schedule investigations for 2012. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) or visit our website to fill out an investigation

request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an Investigation? The Ghosts of Ohio now offers consultations. Let us sit down

with you to discuss your current situation and what help we may be able to offer.

For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>.

## The Ghosts Give Back: Firefighters for Tots and A Merry Scary Christmas!

The Ghosts of Ohio celebrated another exciting year in style with our annual Merry Scary Christmas party. The Ghosts of Ohio members and families celebrated the holiday with food, fun, laughs, and the "spirit" of giving. This year was the 8th annual holiday party, and as with tradition, the Ghosts members generously brought gifts and toys for needy children.

On Saturday, December 10, the gifts were hand-delivered to the NBC4 Studios in Columbus and donated to the 34<sup>th</sup> annual Firefighters For Kids Toy

Drive, a partnership of the Columbus Division of Fire and NBC4. Each year, new, unwrapped toys, gift cards, and monetary donations are collected and distributed to needy families across central Ohio.

This year, The Ghosts of Ohio collected and donated 38 new, unwrapped toys, putting a smile on all our faces for a job well done.

In addition to the giving, there was food and beverages for all ages and tastes, from wings to meat and cheese, to homemade cookies and Krispie treats, to

roasted weenies, to chips and dips. The evening carried on with great conversations, rare holiday movies, and games with the Ghosts members.

All who attended left with a great appreciation for all we have accomplished over the last year and gratitude for the strong friendships that we all share. Happy Holidays!



## Borley Rectory: One of the World's Most Haunted Buildings? - Continued

*Continued from Page 4*

forward and publicly announced that Price himself was responsible for most of the reported paranormal activity at Borley. In the book, *The Haunting of Borley Rectory*, while stopping just short of calling Price an out-and-out fraud, it openly stated that Price's research work was shoddy at best and that he often made statements that were either incorrect or else were not backed up by historical or scientific data.

For example, despite exhaustive research, no one fitting the description of Marie Larrie has ever been found. Indeed, skeptics believe she was simply created based on the old story that a nun had been murdered on the property.

Even the most intriguing aspect of the Borley story, the predicted burning of the building, appears to fall apart under close scrutiny. True, Sunex Amures' prediction was a whole year off, but believers point to the fact that it's still pretty convincing that it burned exactly one year to the day. However, after the fire was extinguished, rectory owner Captain WH Gregson stepped forward and claimed that he had started the fire accidentally when one of his oil lamps fell over in an upstairs hallway. There's also the fact that when the insurance company got involved, they investigated and found the claim to be



The Borley Rectory ruins one month after the March 1939 fire. Photo courtesy of the Harry Price website <http://harrypricewebsite.co.uk>.

“fraudulent.” As for the bones Price found during his subsequent dig, many people believed them to be pig bones, so much so that Price's request to have them buried in Borley Cemetery were rejected since they did not want to bury pig bones in “sacred ground.”

So it would seem that when it comes to the haunting of Borley Rectory, it is

up to the individual to determine whether or not ghosts were really present there. If nothing else, in today's world of four-hour ghost hunts, Harry Price's investigation of Borley Rectory represents one of the longest continual ghost hunts in research history.

For more information on Borley Rectory, please consult *The Borley Rectory Companion*, available at: <http://www.amazon.com/Borley-Rectory-Companion-Paul-Adams/dp/0750950676>

## Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2012

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to look into renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio (and beyond) for an entire night. Unlike traditional “ghost hunts,” where you are often forced to share the location with total strangers, every building we rent out will be totally ours.

How do you get in on all this spooky fun? It's simple, really. All you need to do is sign up for The Ghosts of Ohio newsletter—which is free...and which most of you have already done!!

For each investigation, we'll be picking several names from our list of newsletter subscribers and giving them the first shot at spending the night with us. All they need to do is pay the same registration fee that the members of The

Ghosts of Ohio have to pay in order to rent out the building (dollar amount subject to change based on individual venue).

In addition, we'll be drawing at least one lucky Grand Prize winner who will get to come along for FREE!

That's all there is to it! Of course, we might want to take a few pictures of you on the investigation and post them on our site so you'll be the envy of all your friends. But hey, that's a small price to pay for the chance to spend the night with The Ghosts!

If for some reason you don't have your own subscription, what are you waiting for? <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/newsletter.html>.

## Interact with The Ghosts

Need a spooky friend? If you have a MySpace account, swing by and add The Ghosts of Ohio to your friends list: [www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio](http://www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio).

And for those of you who use Facebook and/or Twitter, you can find The Ghosts of Ohio on those sites, too:

### Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Columbus-OH/The-Ghosts-of-Ohio/60704381381?ref=mf>

### Twitter

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# Merry Christmas And A Happy Boo Year!



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## Got a Scary Story to Tell?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!



## Got Ghosts? Request For More Information

From time to time, The Ghosts of Ohio learns about a haunted location that, try as we might, we just can't seem to dig up any additional information on. That's when we turn to one of the largest groups of Ohio ghost experts out there—our newsletter readers! That's right, we're asking you to let us know if you have any information (or better yet, have had a personal experience) at any of the following locations. If you have, shoot us an email at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org). And who knows? You just might get the chance to investigate the location along with The Ghosts of Ohio!

- Coopermill Manor**  
(Zanesville/Muskingum county)
- Dead Man's Curve**  
(Columbus/Franklin county)
- Demon Tree**  
(Carlisle/Warren county)
- House of Mary**  
(near Rockbridge/Hocking county)
- Shades of Death Forest**  
(Cadmus/Gallia county)

## Coming Up—Next Issue: February

- Ghosts and Valentine's Day
- Review of Latest Crop of Ghost Reality Shows
- Ghostly Encounter at the Moonville Tunnel



## Administration

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