



Pub's spooky secrets are to be unlocked

Team to carry out investigation into paranormal events

By Elizabeth Barrett

THE SECRETS surrounding mysterious ghostly activity in a pub in Brenchley, are set to be unlocked by a team of professional paranormal investigators tomorrow evening (Saturday).

The Halfway House on Horsmonden Road, has long been rumoured to be haunted by spirits and both locals and former landlords have witnessed first-hand strange and inexplicable goings on within its walls. Dating back to the 17th century, it is said the former coaching inn and resting place for those travelling to Rye, was also at one time a morgue.

Speaking to the Kent and Sussex Courier on Monday evening inside the busy but dimly lit bar, current landlord

Richard Allen said: "I've personally not witnessed anything but there have been a number of reports from others. I have an open mind. There does seem to me to be too many people who say they have experienced something here to completely pooh pooh it."

According to Mr Allen, one previous landlord ended up on the receiving end of apparent poltergeist activity, after laying the tables in the restaurant area as usual one night only to arrive in the morning to find "the chairs all over the place and the tables messed up".

Incident

In another incident, one former barman was sitting in the pub alone before closing time when a tankard began to move mysteriously across the bar of its own accord, then smashed on the floor. Thinking the jug had slid over a wet surface, he checked the bar and "it was as dry as a bone".

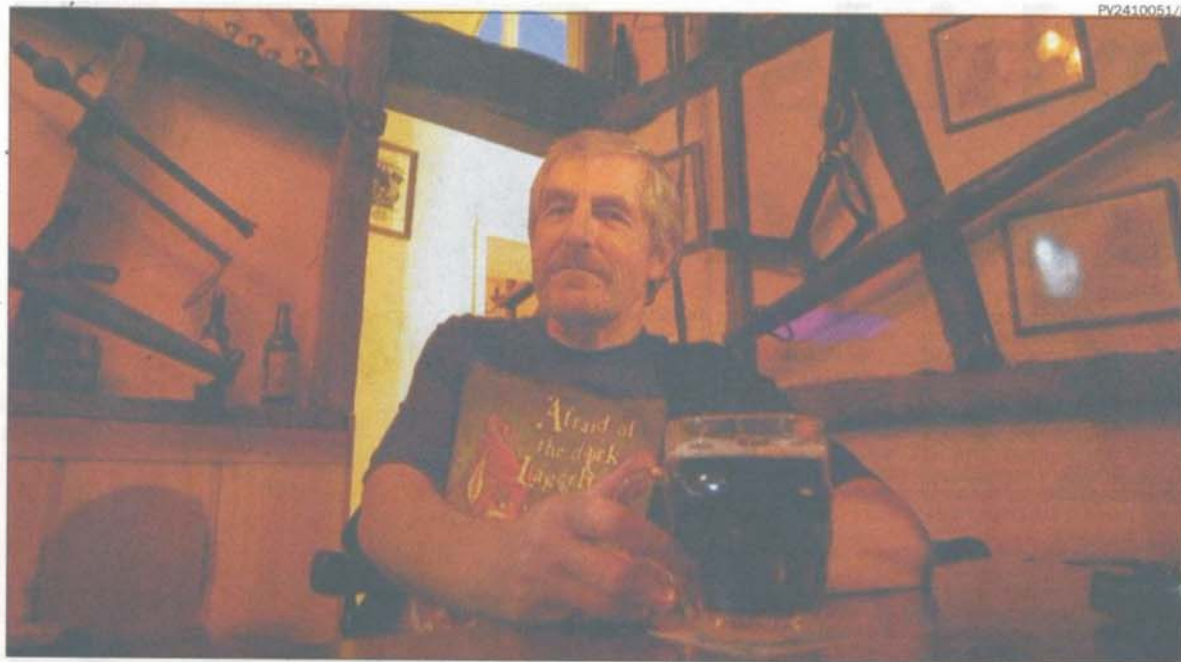
"He thought never again. He was convinced," said Mr Allen.

One of the pub's chefs has also been unable to explain how he heard the bar bell go while locking up and turning the toilet lights off one night, only to suddenly remember the bell had been removed.

Current barman George Bowles, 20, said: "I've heard a lot of stories. I was once in the cellar and thought I saw something but other than that I haven't seen anything at all. I don't really believe it all, but when I'm here on my own I do wind myself up about it."

Mr Bowles said he had been told about a former chef at the pub who claimed to have heard the sounds of coffins being dragged upstairs during his time there.

One regular Michael Noakes, 63, who lives on Horsmonden Road and has been drinking at the Halfway House for almost 50 years said: "I've feel there's been so many instances recounted there has to be something in it. One landlord said he saw an apparition of an old lady."



HAUNTED: Richard Allen at the Halfway House in Brenchley on Monday

Leading the overnight investigation during the weekend, which will be witnessed by 24 members of the public, will be Donna Gearing, 37, a medium from Ghost Search UK.

Mother-of-two Mrs Gearing from Romney Marsh claims to have been seeing and hearing dead people since the age of six. "It wasn't through choice. I began to see objects moving in my room, people sitting on the end of my bed or stroking my hair. It scared the life out of me," she said.

After years of fighting the earthbound spirits and low en-

titities (malevolent spirits) which she seemed to attract, she decided to set up a group to try to capture evidence of what she could see, feel and hear.

Filmed

She now conducts regular filmed investigations across the country and sends footage of her findings to the Metaphysical Research Society to be analysed.

Describing her initial visit to The Halfway House she said: "I went there a few months ago and the minute I walked through the door I felt it was a nice place with no low

entities. It seemed quite a busy pub for spirits."

Mrs Gearing said on entering the cellar she came across "three male energies", then later a tall man. Elsewhere in the building she saw "two children, one female and an additional three male energies".

Spirits, she said, were people who may have died suddenly "and not realised they have died and were still carrying out duties" or people who may have "enjoyed their working life there and chosen to stay to maintain that or find a safe haven".

The lock-in investigation in the pub is due to start with a

séance just before midnight "to charge up energy" for spiritual contact and participants will have the opportunity to film footage alone in certain "highly active" rooms until 6am and use dowsing rods and pendulums.

"I'd love to catch a full ghost manifestation on film and would love the spirits to step forward to give people evidence. If we can open up people's minds that there is life after death that will be half the battle won," she said.

For more information visit www.ghostsearchuk.co.uk or call 08707 203833.