



SCAREDY CAT SKEPTIC

1 Temple Newsam
Episode Pack

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1 June 2023 | <https://scaredycatskeptic.co.uk/scaredy-cat-skeptic-podcast/episode-1-the-ghosts-of-temple-newsam/>

TRANSCRIPT - EPISODE 1: TEMPLE NEWSAM

Hello my spooky bitches! And welcome to the official Episode One of the Scaredy Cat Skeptic podcast. I'm Emily Dewsnap, militant sceptic and all round wimp. And this episode I'll be taking you on a journey of blue ladies, glowing orbs, and grumpy old women. And that includes the spookiness that I even saw myself. Yes, that's right. My first attempt to disprove the existence of ghosts has failed because I only went and bloody saw one. Two, if you count the photograph I took and I'm quite excited to tell you about it.

A BIT OF A DESCRIPTION OF TEMPLE NEWSAM

But first: what the chuff is, Temple Newsam, when it's at home. Well, I'm going to tell you. Temple Newsam is a large Tudor, Jacobean stately home in Leeds, West Yorkshire. The house is an eye-catching, bold structure and a grade-I listed building, which means that it's defined as a building of outstanding national architectural or historic interest.

It sits proudly on its 1,000 acre estate and houses myriad treasures. Of course, in a house with a history so vast, there are many stories and mysteries surrounding Temple Newsam, and we couldn't wait to explore. As we walked up to the house, we were struck by how imposing it was. It's a massive structure, and while its décor inside is a cacophony of fancy and ornate furnishings, the exterior has a distinctly functional feel to it.

It's beautiful in its own way. But unlike other stately homes, such as Chatsworth House, it screams of robust solidity over picturesque fancy. The building is laid out in a square C shape, giving it two distinct wings. It's undeniably impressive, with more than just a hint of the foreboding around the edges. If you're of a certain mindset, you might even say it looks like a stereotypical haunted asylum in a horror film.

It almost feels brutalist in style, although it was built way before the brutalist architecture of the 1940s and 50s. Way ahead of its time. Around the top of the roof, a religious quotation stands proud, quite a stark early iteration of today's "Live, Laugh, Love" signs.

THE POEM/PRAYER ON TOP OF TEMPLE NEWSAM

*All glory and praise be given to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost on high
Peace on Earth*

Goodwill towards men

Honour and true allegiance to our gracious king

Loving affection among his subjects

Health and plenty be within this house

It's a bold statement to scream from the rooftops. It adds an almost sinister feel as you stand in the courtyard. Straining your eyes to read the pale words high above. As if you, the outsider to this household, are an unwelcome intruder in a sacred space.

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However, once you pass through the doors into Temple Newsam, you're instantly welcomed into its warm embrace. It suddenly becomes clear and the remarkably cosy interior that the standoffishness of the outer walls is merely a facade. The inside is just utterly magical. Beautiful wooden floors gleam, exquisite antiques adorn every room, and the faces of previous owners look over the guests with benevolence.

TEMPLE NEWSAM IS SUCH A COSY PLACE, EVEN THOUGH IT'S MASSIVE

The whole place is really gently lit, which makes exploring the House an immersive experience. It has the quiet reverence of a church or a library. Temple Newsam also has a vast art collection. There are obligatory portraits of the heirs and residents of Temple Newsam throughout the ages, but there are more often modern art exhibits scattered throughout.

Despite the disparate time zones with the art, the modern art is beautifully suited to its surroundings. So you almost don't notice that there are several different periods and styles of art in one small space. When we visited, there was a spring birds theme throughout and it was wonderfully seasonal and uplifting. Especially after, you know, the grim seasons of January and February.

As well as the House, there's a lovely cozy cafe, a home farm, extensive parks, gardens, lakes and even a golf course. Hours of fun. Well, days, if you really want to do everything.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GHOSTS OF TEMPLE NEWSAM

I'm just going to give you a brief history of Temple Newsam, because it has just this extensive history and it's well worth digging into that if you're interested. But for the purposes of this podcast, I'm just going to give you a brief overview and then talk about the ghosts that reside there, because I know that's why you're really here.

Temple Newsam House dates back to the 11th century, or rather the grounds to 1086 was the first mention of Newsam in the Domesday Book when the Knights Templar owned the land. And that logo, as I keep calling it, is liberally dotted around the house. There's also the most fabulous knot garden with Knights Templar logo bushes. My partner, Tom, keeps laughing at me and insisted I should be calling it Insignia.

It's all branding, right? You can tell I was in marketing for years, can't you? You can take the girl out of marketing, but you can't take the marketing out of the girl. The house itself was built in the early 1500s by Thomas Lord D'Arcy and back then was the largest house in Yorkshire. I mean, it's got to still be one of the biggest houses in Yorkshire. I don't know what would be bigger than Temple Newsam, to be honest, especially not now that I've seen it.

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TEMPLE NEWSAM WAS PIVOTAL IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

Given the age of the place. It's changed hands many times. Notorious Ginger, and early incarnation of Donald Trump himself, King Henry VIII, seized the House in 1537, but not before casually beheading Lord D'Arcy for treason. But it's okay because it was for religious reasons.

It's actually a really interesting story in its own right. Lord D'Arcy was a campaigner in the Pilgrimage of Grace, a movement dedicated to the Catholic Church. They weren't happy that King Henry had chopped their religion up and smushed it back together in his own interests – i.e. famously inventing the CofE branch of Christianity to get divorced. And they started an uprising.

It would take me hours to go into this particular topic, but give it a Google if you get a chance. It's an important part of history and one that isn't talked about that often. I don't really think.

PASSED FROM PILLAR TO POST

King Henry gave his new Yorkshire house to his niece, Margaret, on her wedding to Matthew Lennox. I mean, as wedding presents go, that's pretty extravagant. Pisses all over that toastie maker Auntie Ethel bought them.

Following their wedding, Margaret Matthew had a son called Henry. I mean, when you live in a 42 bedroom house your Uncle Henry gave you, it would be rude to call him anything else. Margaret, Matthew's son, Henry, grew up and had the audacity to marry Mary, Queen of Scots. This wasn't going to do it all. By then, infamous ginger and shameless hobag (I mean virgin, sorry) Queen Elizabeth I resealed the house and chucked them out. She then did what millennials fear the most and handed this huge home to an agent to rent out on her behalf.

This went on for quite some time. The striking building was passed from pillar to post among the elites, with all their bickering and disagreements over what is essentially the same flipping belief system.

TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE AND ITS MANY GUISES

Throughout the years following these tiffs, the House took on many guises, including a planned sewage plant and a makeshift WWI hospital. There was also a huge mine at Temple Newsam during WWII. This was known as an Opencast site and was all in aid of the war effort. The enormous eyesore has since been filled in, thankfully, and replaced with a golf course, which, according to the reviews, is pretty good. If hitting little white balls is something you're interested in. You can probably tell by my tone that it's not my hobby of choice. I hate it. I absolutely hate golf, but whatever floats your boat.

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Finally, after WWII, the house was open to the public and many events have taken place there over the years. In more recent times, there have been shows and music festivals, which have no doubt confused the hell out of the ghosts that reside there.

THE SECRET WARREN OF TUNNELS UNDER LEEDS

Temple Newsam is a building of many secrets. One of the things I find most interesting about Leeds is the secret tunnels. I've lived in Leeds for 20 years and at times of our jobs I worked for Clinton Cards for a couple of years while I was at uni, and there was always this rumour that the bricked up tunnel in the basement storage room led to a meeting hub underneath Millennium Square.

And after doing some digging, I was very surprised to find that this was actually true. All the shops on Commercial Street lead there and what I didn't realise, until I visited Temple Newsam, is that the tunnels underneath Millennium Square also lead all the way to Temple Newsam.

I'll probably do a blog post about the tunnels themselves. I seem to remember that some friends and I were planning on setting up for ghost walks around Leeds after we discovered the tunnels in the first place. But that was nearly 20 years ago and nothing ever came of it. Maybe now we've got a podcast, we can entice some people into a Leeds ghost walk. Surprised nobody else has done it, to be honest, There's one in Harrogate.

THE GHOST STORIES OF TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE

Anyway, the ghost stories of Temple Newsam. I'm just going to give you three.

Temple Newsam is said to be the most haunted house in Yorkshire as well as the largest and with a history that varied, you know, it's no surprise. It's had so many owners, so much tragedy, so much loss, so many wars. I'll just give you three ghost stories to be getting on with. Two of those are the most common that you hear in Temple Newsam. And one of those is a first-hand account from somebody who works there.

THE ETERNAL SCREAMS OF PHOEBE GREY

TIMESTAMP: 00:09:01:22 – 00:09:25:00

Phoebe was a young maid at Temple Newsam in the 18th century. One night in 1708, the house was opened up for a great party to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough's victory at the Battle of Blenheim.

One of Phoebe's duties was to take a drink up to the house nanny every single night at the same time. So, Phoebe hauled herself up the many flights of dark stairs, candle in hand with said drink on this particular night.

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Just imagine for a second how dark and scary that would be. There's no artificial light anywhere, no light pollution. And the back staircase at Temple Newsam is fairly narrow and it winds up the many flights. The only light source would have been Phoebe's feeble candle. And the candles used by servants back then really would have been weak. Usually the lower classes would use tallow candles.

Tallow is made of rendered beef or pork fat. They were so smelly that they were eventually banned altogether. And anyone who's ever cooked with gelatin will have an idea of that vile stench. The first time I ever used gelatin, I was like: "What is that?" And these candles gave off an awful lot of smoke, meaning that not only was the light really poor, it was partially obscured as well.

PHOEBE WAS A DEDICATED SERVANT AT TEMPLE NEWSAM

So young Phoebe would be out of breath from a trip up those numerous steps and probably eager to return to the brightly lit party. Because we're talking about a very spiritual, religious time you know. Before a lot of the scientific discoveries that we know [about] now. So she would already have been jumpy and the near pitch black of the stairwell as she was returning down the back staircase.

She was accosted by an estate worker called William Collinson. He had seen her leave the party and followed her up the stairs, lying in wait halfway up. Phoebe had been fighting off William's advances for some time and had just recently told him in front of several members of the household that she wanted nothing to do with him. But on this fateful night, he was determined still to kiss, and he was not taking no for an answer.

All right Brock Turner! The legend says "Steal a kiss". But I think we all know what that means, right? When Phoebe pushed him away, screaming, William grabbed hold of her and tried to keep her quiet. He held her so tightly that she suffocated. Although some sources say there was a scuffle and she banged her head. Nobody really knows. Because to hide what he had done, William stuffed her body down the well in the cellar. Charming boy. He then did a runner.

William Escapes the Scene of the Bloody Murder

When neither William nor Phoebe returned to their posts. People began to assume that the pair had run off together. However, given the furious interaction they'd had recently, where Phoebe had told him she wanted nothing to do with him, some people were suspicious. Several people brought up the fact that Phoebe had repeatedly said she was not interested in William.

So a search of the property began. William obviously hadn't hidden Phoebe very well because the body of the poor girl was found later that evening. And then they realised what must have happened and a manhunt ensued. William, after committing the gruesome murder, had then gone on the lash. Thirsty work, murder. He was found in a local pub where he was merrily getting sloshed. And on being discovered, admitted what he'd done to Phoebe

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From Leeds, William Collinson was taken to York for trial. He was convicted and sentenced to death. If you visit York... and visit, we show because there are ghost galore. Yorkshire, oh, really is such a fascinating place. It's got such a rich folklore. If you visit York, you can see the holding cell where William was held until his death by hanging.

THE CURSE OF THE TIME LOOP GHOSTS AND OTHER SPOOKINESS

And thus our ghost story is born. On dark nights, it's said that you can hear the screams echoing down the back staircase. This is followed by a thump, thump, thump in the stairwell, which people consider to be the sound as the body is dragged down the stairs. Phoebe screams are also still said to be heard by the cellar to this day

Many reports of these noises have been made by different people in different circumstances. People who work at the house, visitors to the house, people who have no idea about this ghost story whatsoever. It's all very strange. This type of ghost is commonly believed to be in a time loop, repeating the same pattern of behaviour over and over on key dates and at key times. Given the number of times the screams have been reported on the stairs near the cellar, it would seem that these particular spirits are doomed to live out that miserable night every single day at Temple Newsam. Although whether they adhere to daylight savings, I don't know.

In that same area of the house, some other strange happenings have been reported. For example, the night porter regularly hears loud hammering on the door that's usually reserved for deliveries. He doesn't answer now because every time he goes to see who it is, there's nobody there. So there's just no point and he just doesn't bother getting up any more.

Other members of staff also refuse to go into that section of the house, claiming that they feel a dark and malevolent presence. The ghost of Phoebe Gray isn't the most reported sighting at Temple Newsam, however. And that brings us to the ghostly blue lady of Temple Newsam.

THE SPIRIT OF THE BLUE LADY ROAMS THE HALLS OF TEMPLE NEWSAM

TIMESTAMP: 00:14:55:17 – 00:15:12:10

Scaredy cat sceptic may have been born in Leeds, but its creators were not. So I had no idea about the myths surrounding the Blue Lady. It's become something of an urban legend, apparently, among school kids in Leeds. And has taken on a life of its own. And they chant "Blue lady, Blue lady, you killed your blue baby," which is so far from what actually happened that I... I don't know. I guess it's a case of just the story evolving legs over time. No idea.

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Anyway, according to the stories, if you repeat that phrase several times, you are looking at a mirror. Bad things will happen. We're not sure what exactly, but probably best not to aye? Not quite bloody Mary, but spooky, nonetheless.

The story behind the Blue Lady is said to actually be quite tragic, but personally I think the poor lass who was squeezed to death by a sex pest and then stuffed in a well has more right to claim tragedy. Let me know what you think when you hear this.

LADY MARY INGRAM AND THE BLUE LADY OF TEMPLE NEWSAM

The blue lady is believed to be the ghost of Lady Mary Ingram, a young girl who lived in the house in the late 17th century. One evening when she was just 14 years old, Lady Mary was on her way back from a party when her carriage was ambushed by highwaymen. Her favourite necklace, a present from her godfather, was ripped from around her neck. She was absolutely distraught and on returning home, fell into a deep slumber.

When she woke up, she couldn't remember the robbery and couldn't understand what had happened to her necklace. We've all been there, love. I can't tell you the amount of specs I've lost on a night out, and have no memory of taking off.

I lost a shoe once. Just one. I spent years looking for that shoe, but it was nowhere to be seen. I must have lost it on the way home. But... just one shoe. One high heel shoe. Many questions. Zero answers.

But yes, understandably, Lady Mary was terribly upset at the loss of such a prized item. She spent days wandering the house searching for the pearl necklace. She unpicked cushions and lifted up floorboards. She was absolutely consumed by the loss...

LIKE A HAMMERED CINDERELLA... EXCEPT SLIGHTLY LESS ELEGANT

Just to return to the shoe momentarily. I really was genuinely upset about it. I loved those shoes. Limited edition Ted Baker Mary Janes. Like a little wiggly line up the front. Like a 1940s court shoe. I've still got the other one. You know, as if one day the missing shoe's just going to clop home. Stranger things have happened at sea.

Anyway, Lady Mary took it one step further and was so distraught she refused to eat. She died two weeks later, but at least nobody could say she hadn't reached her goal weight. I'm joking. That is the patriarchy talking. Fuck diet culture. Fuck it hard. In the arse.

That is, of course, a horrible story and one of some very shocking mental illness. It's already becoming a motif of this podcast. Every single time I write a blog post, it comes back to "This could be mental illness." And when you think back over time, we've only really just started scratching the surface of mental illness. We don't really know the impact of it even now. So I think in the future a lot of these things will boil down to mental illness.

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Mental illness and the supernatural just seem to go hand-in-hand. The sad ghost of the blue Lady is said to roam the halls of Temple Newsam, still searching for her missing jewelry. A portrait of Lady Ingram hangs in the Gothic Room at Temple Newsam. And that's where she's most often seen. The Gothic Room is actually the only room at Temple Newsam that gave me the willies. But I think it's because the wallpaper is so hideous. It made me feel like I was going to have a migraine. It's a bit off brand of me not to like the Gothic place, but it felt like the least gothic room we'd been in. And it was just so busy and so cold. And I did not like it one bit. Not for ghostly reasons.

THE ROCKABILLY GHOST SIGHTING

TIMESTAMP: 00:17:52:15 – 00:18:11:16

One Sunday morning, Julie, a visiting assistant at Temple Newsam, was on cleaning duty.

She was happily vaccing the carpets on one of the lower corridors near the kitchen when a movement in the corner of her eye caused her to look up. She was surprised to see a young woman standing at the end of the corridor. Julie said that she was particularly taken aback because there wasn't supposed to be anywhere else down there. The house wasn't open.

The woman was wearing a pencil skirt and sporting an updo. But more than that, there was something distinctly vintage about her appearance. The woman looked Julie dead in the eyes and then turned and went into one of the rooms off the corridor. So Julie followed her to tell her she wasn't supposed to be in the house at all because it wasn't open yet.

Upon entering the room, Julie realised that it was clearly empty and that there was only one explanation for the woman she had seen. It was obviously one of the house's many ghosts. Given that the house was a hospital during WWI, and an Opencast site during WWII, it doesn't seem to be a huge stretch to assume that what Julie had seen was the ghost of a site office administrator.

SCAREDY CAT SKEPTIC SEES DEAD PEOPLE

We Saw Some Very Strange Things at Temple Newsam

I think the important question here is did we see ghosts at Temple Newsam? And as the sceptic, it's hard for me to say yes, but... kind of, yeah. We saw a couple, actually, in one way or another.

So first in the narrow corridor of the first floor (or second floor, if there are any Americans out there listening) there hangs a dingy looking painting of a dog hunting a hare. Except it doesn't it doesn't look like a hunt. It basically looks like a... it looks like a dog fisting a rabbit. My partner, Tom, gleefully pointed this out to me and I started giggling, because I thought we

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were on our own. But off that corridor, there are several interlocking rooms that you can't get to from that side. You have to walk around the bottom, curl back on yourself, and then you can walk back up through the rooms.

So Tom walked on a little bit further and I'm still laughing and I'm about to start recording. And then I'm just going to play you... I'm just going to play what happened.

THE LADY VANISHES

TIMESTAMP: 00:20:25:23 – 00:20:57:13

So we're here at Temple Newsam. It's late. And we're the only people... What? No in...in there. Yeah, that one. What the fuck? No, she's in there. What the fuck? No, she's in there.

—

Um... so I've just had a bit of an experience. It's late, and only my partner and I left at Temple Newsam. Other than the people that work here and they're all downstairs. And I've just seen an old lady in one of the rooms, but Tom's just been back to check and she's not there. There was nobody there. I swear there was a very solid, very real, very old lady standing in that room. I looked right. Well, she looked right. Me, too. It wasn't... It wasn't a trick of the light. I couldn't tell you what she was wearing, but it was something dark because it was a dark room. And she had gray hair. And it was up in a neat bun. And she looked a bit stern, but that's because we were telling filthy jokes. Um, we've just gone and checked the rest of the floor. There was an older couple up ahead. Oh God, I can't believe I'm saying this. There was an older couple up ahead, but that wasn't what I saw. She was really old, like really, really old. Like a raisin.

And there's no way she could have gone all the way up that corridor in this time. What is even happening right now?

I'm a bit shaken, actually. I don't really want to hang around here just talking about her, you know, just in case. How has this happened on my first podcast trip? I'm the sceptic. What are you supposed to do in these circumstances? Oh, my God. Oh, I feel really weird and creeped out. Oh, okay. I'm going to. I'm going to sign off and finish recording at home because I'm not very coherent at the minute. Sorry, folks.

SAFELY HOME, WE UNPICK WHAT HAPPENED AT TEMPLE NEWSAM

So I'm recording at home now. When we finally reached the end of the corridor and turned back on ourselves to work our way through the interlocking rooms, there was one older couple up ahead of us. They were right up the other end, but neither of them was the little old lady that I'd seen, and they were the only other people on that floor at the time. I hadn't actually realised that they were there at all, or I wouldn't have tried to record.

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It is quite dark in that section of the house, so I have to assume now that it was the lady from that couple that I saw and my brain just filled in the gaps and saw her as older than she was. Because she was this tiny, little wrinkled old woman with her hair pulled back in a bun. And she was wearing something dark. I don't know what I... I wasn't paying attention because I was embarrassed that we'd been joking about fisting.

But yeah, the woman up ahead of us was wearing jeans, and I just don't think that that little old lady could have got that far up ahead. But you never know. It must... There must be a logical explanation for it.

So, yeah, what I'm assuming is that I saw the old lady from this couple. The older lady – we're talking 50s, not massively older. And my brain just filled in some gaps. And I saw her older than she was. Because if I don't assume that, I now believe in ghosts and the podcast must come to an end. No, seriously, though, I'm sure it was a brain burp except there's more.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF GHOSTS AT TEMPLE NEWSAM

When we got home, I posted photographs and videos we'd taken. Just on Facebook. I didn't want to post them all over because the podcast hadn't been released by that point. So I just wanted to share with friends and family that we'd been out for the day. I hadn't actually noticed anything at the time, or even when I was looking back through the photographs. But then I received some messages from people pointing out a couple of spooky anomalies.

The first of these was in front of a painting of Isabella MacColl, or the Viscountess Irwin. The photograph itself isn't great, because it's really dimly lit in Temple Newsam, like I said, and you're not supposed to use flash photography, so it's a bit grainy. However, clear as day on the left hand side is a strange blue light.

I assumed it was some sort of flare on the lens, but I have no idea what could have been flaring. We didn't see anything that was flashing. I'm very photosensitive. I would have noticed. I checked in with Barry Dodds, ghost hunter extraordinaire, and he confirmed that it was not a flare. It wasn't anything on the wall – we'd have noticed, mostly because the wallpaper in that room is a rich red and the anomaly is... well it's blue. I can't believe it.

It's absolutely typical for me, that is: in trying to disprove the existence of ghosts, I've gone and bloody captured one on camera. It's not in any of the other photographs, so it's not a glitch with my phone. It's a mystery.

TEMPLE NEWSAM IS A MYSTERIOUS PLACE

I'm refusing to knee-jerk to ghosts! But it is pretty bloody spooky that I captured the blue thing in the home of the Blue Lady. And I promise you, this podcast is not going to be gimmicky. There's going to be no faking anything. So let me know what you think. Or if you've had similar experiences at Temple Newsam.

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A similar sort of Orb appeared in one of the videos I took in that room as well. Although that very much does look like light bouncing off something. I have no idea what it could have been. The candle lights reflecting off the small silver torch that they give you for the tours.

THE TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE STAFF HAVE GHOST STORIES

I'll post the pictures into the show notes and you can have a look for yourself. Some members of staff at Temple Newsam refused to go into some of the darker areas of the house, including the stairwell where Phoebe Gray was killed.

Many people report sightings or overwhelming feelings of dread. I honestly didn't feel like that at all. Even when I saw the old lady, I felt like the house all over had a really friendly feel to it. Except for the Gothic room, but that was just for migrainy reasons. Granted, it is positively humming with history. The air is thick with it. It has that really satisfying old smell. And despite the high footfall, Temple Newsam thrums with stories of bygone eras. It hasn't been eroded at all by the footfall of thousands of people visiting. It still just feels like you're stepping back in time. You can kind of almost imagine you're in a time slip. It's like you're almost transported back for a moment.

WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE TEMPLE NEWSAM CELLAR TOUR

But even in the depths of the cellars, with their winding underground passages and creepy nooks and crannies, I felt right at home, honestly. We took the cellar tour and I highly recommend it. The tour guide was an absolute gem. He spent time with us specifically to talk about the ghosts, and then led the whole group underground to check out the cellar and underground passages. And that crosses underneath the courtyard. It would have allowed the servants to get from one wing of the building to the other without having to go through the halls and things like that.

But it would have been absolutely terrifying for them carrying heavy plates of food underneath the house with tallow candles. Terrifying. But actually, like I said, I had a really nice feel to it down there. And you get to go underneath the courtyard and come out on the other side, if you do take the tour. It's really good.

I spoke to several of the assistants while we were there, actually, not just the tour guide. There was one young guy who said that he hadn't seen anything as solid as a ghost. But it had some really strange experiences, including, like, doors closing and opening on their own. And the feel of hands touching his back sometimes when there was no one there. He agreed with me that if there are ghosts present, they aren't malevolent.

SCAREDY CAT SKEPTIC RATINGS FOR TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE

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So I'm going to give you our rating for the whole thing now. So these are ratings for Temple Newsam in general, including its spookiness rating

Potential ghosts seen by Scaredy Cat - 2

This was our first podcast outing and I was impressed we came back with potentially ghostly evidence. I wasn't expecting that at all.

Total Score Factor - 2

While we heard many tales of ghosts, and even maybe saw a couple, this place just doesn't feel frightening at all. It was very quiet when we visited and we were often the only people in one section of the house. But I'd be quite happy rocking around there on my own. We did go in broad daylight, so whether I'd be quite that happy to be there alone at night is not something we can just easily determine. But of all the places I've been supposedly haunted, that's the least frightening.

Value for Money - 10/10

While we heard many tales of ghosts, and even maybe saw a couple, this place just doesn't feel frightening at all. It was very quiet when we visited and we were often the only people in one section of the house. But I'd be quite happy rocking around there on my own. We did go in broad daylight, so whether I'd be quite that happy to be there alone at night is not something we can just easily determine. But of all the places I've been supposedly haunted, that's the least frightening.

Family Friendliness - 9/10

I've marked it as a 9. Just because there are so many places for children to hide and there's a lot of stairs for children to fall down. And there's also a lot of nude paintings dotted around. And while I have zero issues with nude, are children seeing naked bodies? Because as far as I'm concerned, naked bodies are not pornography. Pornography is what you make of naked bodies. I know that some people do take issue with it. A lot of people take issue. in fact. You wouldn't believe the messages I've had on my art accounts. Corrupting children, apparently.

There are actually designated areas for children and they can sit down there. There are spaces for dressing up in vintage costumes and there are kids books that are available to borrow while you're in the house.

Accessibility - 6/10

So Temple News is amazing, but if you're in a wheelchair, you might struggle. There are lifts, but they can't get you into every nook and cranny. The corridors are narrow and the floors are uneven in places. It's understandable, given the age of the house. It's a grade-I listed building. There's only so much they can do. There's only so much they can modify. However, there are ramps and entrances to the disabled parking, close to the venue Disabled access is also available at the shop, the cafe, and the farm. The members of staff are really great as

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well, and where possible, they've done everything that they can to make sure it's as inclusive as they can make it.

You can't take electric wheelchairs into the house, but if you need one, they'll provide a manual wheelchair at the door, but then you're kind of left to your own devices and some areas you just can't access them unless you're on foot. They're up tiny, narrow, winding staircases

Time Spent - 4 hours

And that was just for the house. We spent a good four hours exploring Temple Newsam, and even then we just didn't do the justice it deserved. I could have spent another four. Happily. I could have spent another four hours.

Beauty Spot - 7/10

I'm very conflicted about this. Temple Newsam house is imposing, and Tom kept saying it looked like a prison from the outside. And you can see from the photographs just how stark it looks if you haven't been there. However, the inside is very beautiful and we were all really impressed with how well the building's looked after.

And the grounds are stunning, too. It's a rolling 1,000 acre estate, so it's perfect for walks and picnics and you don't have to pay to get into the grounds. But if you do pay to get into the house, it's warm because the house needs to be heated to avoid damp. So if you're trying to save on heating bills, get yourself down there to warm up. £8 a day. Bargain!

Customer Service 9/10

Can't really fault it. The staff in the house are knowledgeable. Every single one of them was happy to help and answer questions. They spent loads of time with us. The staff in the cafe seemed a little bit lost, but we got there in the end.

LISTENER STORIES

TIMESTAMP: 00:32:15:09 – 00:32:36:19

So I've got some listener stories. I didn't get any Temple Newsam specific ghost stories. But I'm just going to tell you a couple that we got in the inbox and thank you to everyone who sent your stories through. I can't tell you how much it means that we've had this response already.

THE BLOOMING FLOWERS - MICHAELA FROM WARWICK

So I was contacted by Michaela from Warwick with a spooky spring tale.

Michaela says When my mum first moved into the house that she died in, my nana gave her a rosebush. She was really proud of her garden and my mum wanted to give gardening a go and my nana said that the roses bloomed every year. So it was a good start for the garden.

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This was over 30 years ago. My dad's lived in that house for ages now, but the rosebush my mum planted never had any flowers on it. It carried on growing and was a great big tangle of thorns, but my mum could never get it to grow any flowers. She kept it anyway because she felt like she should keep trying. We knew it could grow roses. We've seen it. It became a running joke. Every spring my dad would start taking the piss out of her for being a rubbish gardener. Even when my Nana came over to have a go with it, she couldn't get it to bloom. And my mum was really annoyed by it, especially since the rosebush had loads of massive roses on it when it was at my grandparents.

THE GHOST OF A LOVED ONE AT THE MOMENT THEY DIE

Cut to about ten years ago and my nana passed away. She had pretty aggressive cancer, so it was less than a year from her getting the diagnosis to passing. It had just spread so far before they found it that they couldn't do anything. We were basically just waiting for her to pass. On the night she passed, we got a phone call about 4 a.m. stating that she had passed and my mum looked really shocked.

Obviously she was upset, but it shouldn't have been a shock. They'd only given her a few weeks to live at the start. But my mum seemed really dazed so I asked her what was wrong and she said that when the phone started ringing she was having a dream that Nana had come into the bedroom and opened the curtains. And it was a sunny spring day and she said, It's time for that rosebush to bloom.

And then the phone started ringing and she woke up. So she'd basically seen her mum at the moment she died. Nana passed at the end of March for the funeral was the first week in April. The day that she went turned out to be a sunny spring day like my mum had dreamt about. We felt silly but we checked the rosebush and there were no roses, so we decided the dream was a coincidence.

A SPOOKY COINCIDENCE CASTS DOUBT

After the funeral, a week later, we went back to my mum and dad's house with some of the people from the wake and as we walked down the garden path my mum stopped and went, Oh my God. The rose bush had buds on it. That year the bush bloomed with these huge pink roses on it. But the year after it was back to just being a nasty looking shrub.

Three years after my Nana died, my grandad died. We think he died of a broken heart because he was fit as a flea normally. But once she went he just started to turn into an old man. We kind of knew he wasn't dealing with it. He also died in the march and on the way back from the funeral it happened again.

Except this time the roses were red and they were huge that year. The rosebush hasn't bloomed since. Just those two times. I really feel like it was my nana and Pops. Why would that happen otherwise?

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NOT AN ISOLATED INCIDENT

Some of this stuff has happened over the years, like when my daughter was old enough to speak and she kept going into the garden to play. Not even my mum's garden – ours – we could hear her talking like she was having a conversation. She even paused when the other person should be speaking, and when we asked her who she was speaking to, she looked me dead in the eye and went: "It's pops Mummy. He said you like flowers."

Also, my nana loved magpies when she was alive and the day after pops passed, a pair of magpies moved into the garden. When my mum passed last year, they were cackling like mad when we were clearing the house out. Going absolutely berserk. It was so loud. You can't tell me that was a coincidence. I mean, that's terrifying. Well, no, it's not. It's nice. It's a nice tale, but it's made all the hairs on the back of my arms stand up.

The sceptic in me is trying to go coincidence. But Michaela is right. That is very weird.

NO TRACKS IN THE SNOW - TERRI FROM ABERDEEN

TIMESTAMP: 00:36:42:21 – 00:36:59:15

This one is from Terry from Aberdeen, and she's called it "When An Intruder Doesn't Leave Any Tracks in the Snow."

NOT AN ISOLATED INCIDENT

I was in my early 20s and staying with my parents one Christmas, when a really scary thing happened to me. I'm 43 now and I still remember it like it was yesterday. For some reason. I hate the house my parents live in, but I put it down to not wanting them to move out of the house I grew up in. The new house was near a cemetery and it felt really cold all the time. I just didn't like it.

So this one Christmas, my brother and his girlfriend had a bagsied their, one spare room and the other one was full of clutter. So I was on a blow up mattress in the living room. I quite liked it because I could make sure nobody was sneaking a look at the presents. My brother used to do that all the time when we were kids.

I'd had a bad year. My first long term boyfriend had given me gonorrhoea and that's how I'd found out he was cheating on me. Oh, Terry. All the signs were there. But I was young, so I had to move out and find somewhere to live. And all I could afford was this grotty shared flat with people I didn't know.

I wasn't keen on any of them either. I think I was depressed, but I didn't know that at the time. One of the new flatmates kept saying she was psychic and she could see a dark shadow following me around all the time. It was a shitty thing to say to someone. It made me feel really

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weird and I wasn't sleeping well because of it. So a blow up mattress wasn't going to help me sleep.

A CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY

It must have been about 5 a.m. on Christmas morning and I'd been up all night tossing and turning. I heard a tapping noise and just couldn't place it. It sounded like someone throwing stones at the window. I wondered if someone had forgotten their keys, but everyone was home. My brother had come crashing in at 2 a.m., waking me from the only sleep I managed to get that night.

So I knew for sure he was back. The dog was fast asleep and snoring on my legs. I looked around for the source of the noise, but I couldn't see anything. Then I realised I hadn't closed the curtains properly. It was hard to make out, but it looked like there was someone standing in front of the gap in the curtains. The tapping started again, six taps, and then it stopped.

I froze because we weren't expecting anyone until the afternoon and it was 5 a.m.. I started to get out of bed to see what was going on, thinking it might be something important like a gas leak or something. I grabbed my phone, which was a flip phone back then, so there was no torch or anything.

A DOG BARES ITS TEETH AT A CREEPY INTRUDER

I woke the dog up when I moved and she was instantly on guard. She whined at the window and then started snarling. I've never seen her like that. She's a big dog, a daft old labradoodle. But I don't think I realised how big she was until that moment. She looked so fierce. Then I heard the tapping again louder this time. So I told the dog to calm down. I went to the window.

I really didn't want to. Something felt so off about it all. There was a weird smell like rotting, like gone off eggs or milk or something really sour and off. Just foul.

My heart was racing. I called out "Hello," but there was just more tapping. I reached the window and I could see a shape now. It was definitely someone there. I pulled the curtains open and jumped out of my skin. There was a man standing there with his face inches from the window. It was very dark out, but there were street lights and I could see these weird, wide-open eyes looking right at me. At that point, the dog launched herself at the window and I started screaming.

SCREAMS OF TERROR AWAKEN THE HOUSEHOLD

And the next thing, the whole house is up and running down the stairs. I was crying by this point and just about managed to point and say that someone was outside. My brother and dad went out to check, but when I looked back to the window, there was nobody there. They came back in really annoyed and said I'd been dreaming.

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I tried to explain that I hadn't slept at all, but they didn't believe me. It had snowed overnight and there was a thick layer of smooth snow everywhere. When we turned the porch light on, the only footprints were the ones from my brother and dad. They were not in front of the window. Everyone told me off and said I'd been making things up. Except my now ex sister in law who said she believed me.

She later admitted to me that she'd heard the tapping on the window too, but thought it was me making a cup of tea or something. That's not what woke her up, though. She said she felt someone shaking her awake and thought it was my brother, but he was asleep. She said at the same time she also felt warm breath on her ear and a gruff man's voice say: "He's here," or something like that.

SCREAMS OF TERROR AWAKEN THE HOUSEHOLD

And even though everyone said I was tripping, they could all smell the weird rotting smell. My mum spent most of Christmas Day cleaning out the fridge and pulling furniture out to try and find what was causing the smell. The dog wouldn't leave my side that day and every time I went near the window she started whining. I couldn't help it, though, I was desperate to see something that would prove I wasn't dreaming.

I kept seeing a lone figure in the cemetery and feeling creeped out, but it's a way off, and people often visit graves at Christmas, so I don't know if it was anything. There was someone there, though. I know what I saw. I know I saw him. I'll never forget those eyes either. They were so weird and staring. I want to say they were yellow, but that could have been the street lights.

When I think back, the man was short and stocky and he didn't have a top on. Why would anyone be out in the snow in Aberdeen on Christmas Eve at five in the morning naked? My brother's wife wouldn't go back to my parents after that. So that was the last Christmas we all spent together. And then she left him anyway. And I don't blame her. I still go there sometimes, but I won't stay in that living room ever again.

UNDERSTANDABLE FEAR

I don't blame you either. I mean, from a sceptical perspective, it's Christmas Eve. People go out on the lash. It's Scotland – people drink a lot in Scotland. No judgement. People drink a lot here, too. So it could have just been someone hammered coming home from the pub, got lost, maybe. Maybe was trying to get into one of the next door houses or something like that.

The lack of footprints is strange, although lack of sleep can do very strange things to your mind. I know because I have a lot of sleep issues. Yeah, I don't know. That's a weird one. It's very creepy.

SO MANY THANKS!

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So just some thank yous. I just wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone who has emailed me their stories. I really wasn't expecting quite so many. We got some real bangers. I've been really struggling to sleep myself since I've been reading them. Don't worry, we will get to you at some point. We'll just put it into the order in which I received them to begin with and we'll take it from there.

For anyone wanting to send us their tales, feel free to send voice memos. So if you'd rather we put your story in your voice on the podcast, just send me a voice memo and I'll edit that in. Or if you just want to email us, I will read them out for you in my mixing Mancunian/Yorkshire twang.

And this is your shout. We want to know what you think of the podcast. Do you have any suggestions, any improvements? We are just starting out so all comments are welcome.

If you have any suggestions, give us a five star rating on Apple, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

SHARE YOUR STORIES

And more importantly, do you have any stories you want to share? Visit the website for more information. ScaredyCatsceptic.co.uk. And that sceptic with a K. There is a contact page to submit your stories and there's also an email address on there. If you prefer, You can also DM us on social media. We are on Twitter @Scaredysceptic, because Scaredy Cat Skeptic was too long. We're on insta TikTok Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn @ScaredyCatsceptic. I'm old, so I'm really struggling with TikTok at the minute, but I'm hoping to get some more content on there soon. Although whether I'll be posting every day, I don't know

If you've got a location you think we should visit in the UK, drop us a line. We're just sticking to the UK at the minute, because I can't justify flying around the world just yet for the start of the project. But we will start taking other places on board.

At some point, I really just want to go to the Isle of Man to see Jef the talking Mongoose. Don't forget to like subscribe and all that good stuff and I look forward to sharing more spooky tales with you.

Special thanks to Tom Bramall, the concept Art for Scaredy Cat sceptic Mode. Thank you to Sammi McEwen for her insights into the spiritual side of things. I always ask for her advice and she's agreed to be on the podcast and to do some guest blogging for us.

Our music is by Diamond Tunes.

SEE YOU NEXT TIME. HAPPY HAUNTINGS.