



NEWS RELEASE

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GHOSTLY SPIRITS AWAKENED DURING GHOST FEST'S OPENING WEEKEND!

Mary King's Ghost Fest – the annual Edinburgh paranormal festival that runs until Sunday 18 May - has got off to a flying and somewhat frightening start!

Strong evidence of paranormal activity has been obtained during the 'An Evening with Richard Felix' events (with Living TV's Most Haunted historian) held at the weekend at the famous underground attraction The Real Mary King's Close, along with an eerie ghostly figure captured by the Closes' new infra-red static camera.

The city-wide ghost festival sets out to uncover and explore the dark tales and strange paranormal activity at some of Edinburgh's most haunted locations, with a packed programme of events. This is exactly what happened at the weekend, with members of Mary King's Close staff excited by the findings.

During the Richard Felix events, it appears that clear spirit voices were captured by Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) experts – *Ghost Finders Scotland* - and Richard Felix down in the famous Mary King's Close.

Using simple digital recorders, members of the investigation team and staff asked questions in an attempt to ascertain if any spirits were present. When the recordings were instantly filtered onto laptops and played back, the results were outstanding with voices clearly audible. One of the loudest of these was recorded in the house of Andrew Chesney, the last resident of the Close, who vacated his house under duress from the City authorities in 1897. One of the staff asked 'Are you sick of seeing us yet' and the reply came back 'yes I am!'.

It seems that the investigation may have stirred up more activity from the 'other side', as later that same evening a clear ghostly image of a tall, human figure, standing in the doorway of Mary King's reconstructed residence at the top of the Mary King's Close, was captured by the attraction's static camera. Introduced just a few months back, to allow visitors the chance to have their picture taken down in the famous Close. The camera uses infra-red technology to produce a picture in the dark setting. The scary image was taken around midnight when no-one else was in the Close, just a couple of hours after the Saturday night investigation finished.

Since the camera was installed there has been a variety of what appear to be ghostly images and 'orbs' in some pictures, some standing alongside visitors! However, the ghostly character that was captured at the weekend is the clearest to date.

Celebrity historian Richard Felix, who owns Derby Gaol (a heritage visitor attraction) was intrigued by the photograph. He commented:

"The frightening thing about this picture is that it resembles so closely the ghost that I saw in Derby Gaol, a very hazy figure with no features, neither male nor female. Dimensions appear to be right and

the photo was taken at about 12 midnight when there was definitely no-one else in the Close at the time. Although I'm not a great believer in ghost photos I find this one very convincing."

Mark Turner, expert paranormal investigator from Ghost Finders Scotland attempted a scientific explanation of the image:

"I am currently conducting a study into occurrences of alleged apparitions appearing in infrared photographs. Cameras, to varying degrees, are able to pick up light from the infrared end of the light spectrum from approximately 720nm to 940nm. This is above the visible spectrum with the human eye only being able to respond to light between 390nm to 700nm.

"The most successful results for paranormal research appear to come when filtering out all other light except infrared. I have uncovered many intriguing cases where these apparitions have appeared in IR photographs taken at suspected haunted locations and the photograph taken at Mary King's Close is a fascinating example that helps to strengthen the reasons for continued research. The photograph, captured when there was nobody else present in the Close, clearly shows a large figure appearing in a doorway. Mary King's Close has been no stranger to past alleged paranormal occurrences and with the installation of the new infrared camera system, it could be that this section of the light spectrum may have far more to reveal to staff and visitors alike. Could it be that these ghostly figures have been around us all along but have remained unseen, hiding in the infrared wavelengths of the light spectrum? "

Mary King's Ghost Fest continues until Sunday 18th May – why not come along and see what dark secrets lie below one of the world's most haunted cities? Or have your picture taken down in Mary King's Close....if you dare!

For the full programme of further events and details of how to book please visit www.marykingsghostfest.com or call 08702 430160.

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For further media information, images or to arrange a visit to the Real Mary King's Close please contact: Heidi Folland or Jenna Oxley on 01904 527700 or email joxley@continuum-group.com, or holland@continuum-group.com

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Real Mary King's Close is an important historic site and quite unique, hidden beneath the Royal Mile. It consists of a number of underground Closes which would have originally been very narrow walkways with houses on either side stretching up to 7 storeys high and dating back several centuries. In 1753 the Burgh authorities decided to develop a grand new building, the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers). The houses at the top of the Closes were knocked down and part of the lower sections were kept and used as the foundations for the new building, leaving a number of dark and mysterious underground Closes and ancient dwellings steeped in mystery!

Pictures are available in an attractive souvenir frame and folder to take home for just £6 each, or £9 when purchased together with a guide book.

Mary King's Ghost Fest takes its name from one of Edinburgh's most famous residents, Mary King, who lived, at the top of one of the Closes off the Royal Mile until her death in 1644. The Close, later named after her, was preserved when the City Chambers was built over the site in 1853, and what remains today is a strange underground time-capsule of small houses and spaces, steeped in mystery and shrouded in dark stories. The Real Mary King's Close is thought to be one of the city's most haunted locations, as well as an award winning visitor attraction, so it is therefore fitting that a number of key events are to take place at this venue throughout the festival.

Mary King's Ghost Fest is managed and funded by Continuum, operators of Mary King's Close attraction. Event support is provided by Mercat Tours, City of the Dead Tours, LA Events, National Library of Scotland, Ghost Finders Scotland, Edinburgh Playhouse, Cameo Cinema, Full Moon Investigations, The Scottish Mining Museum and Lothian Buses.

For more information visit www.realmarykingsclose.com or call 08702 430160.