

# HAUNTED UK PODCAST

## Season 4

### Episode 33 – Working with the Unknown.

*'When there were almost a hundred people working around you every day, you never really had time to take notice of strange things going on. Rumours would circulate about a particular room or the gossip about yet another caretaker leaving after two months, but you just got on with it and carried on. It was when the numbers started to drop because of relocation that things REALLY began to get noticed'...*part of Carole's story regarding her experiences at her previous place of work.

This is episode 33 of the Haunted UK Podcast, and in this episode, we'll be listening to the remarkable story of Carole and her eerie encounters at work.

Listener' Stories episodes have always been a favourite of mine and judging by the listener figures – also a favourite of yours. There are so many that have been sent through and read out over the season finales, and all of them are amazing... but every now and then a few come along that are so detailed and thorough that they need their own episodes...and this is another one of them. The story was initially sent in by Carole, which isn't her real name, towards the end of 2022 and it was so enthralling that I asked if I could feature it as part of a full episode. She agreed but asked me to not mention her real name and to also change the names of those involved as well as the location of where this took place.

The final draft of the story has been fully approved by Carol and she is happy for me to tell it to all of you in this episode...so here is Carole's story, as told from her perspective.

I haven't had many jobs over the years. I've always been fortunate enough to enjoy the people and places I've worked at. In the early 80s I started working for a mail-order company which had begun to grow quite quickly; their new premises was to become a springboard for what they are involved with today. Back then, sales came from advertising, full colour catalogues, and leaflets. These were handed out in towns and cities and also distributed via mail drop personnel. At the time it was an entirely new and exciting way to buy items such as clothes, furniture, gardening equipment, toys... all sorts.

As the years went on, the company merged and changed its way of operating; changed its ethics of customer service and also ... *changed its location*. The move meant that I'd have to travel around 40 minutes to get to work, instead of the 10-minute bus ride that I'd been used to for nearly two decades; but before all of that could happen stock had to be sold, office staff had to be moved and

the building needed a new owner. Bit by bit the warehouses and offices were emptied, and the staff were re-located to take up their new roles.

A very small handful of us were asked to stay at the old building until its sale was finalised. I really didn't mind this at all – even though I would be pretty much alone for my entire shift in the offices answering phone calls. The company began operating a 24-hour customer service helpline which would run from both the new building and the old one, with the old building handling the night calls from 8pm to 6am...this was my new shift.

Don't get me wrong, working nights and through the early hours was a bit of a pain, but the money was very good – and I didn't have the hassle or bother of being part of a large office set-up anymore. The building was originally constructed in the late 1800s but had been modified and modernised over the years to help it take on its various roles. There was always kind of a creepy element about it though...

...It's difficult to put a finger on it but there was something about it that, if you were alone, made you look behind you and made you move a little quicker than you normally would. Stories of things moving around and sightings of strange figures out of the corner of the eye had been a rare source of gossip over the years; but it really wasn't something that people took much notice of – but back then there were more people around, the place was busier... and it was never opened up at night.

It worked out that there were only six people in the building at any one time. One security guard who was in a cabin at the gatehouse, Darren who was the night caretaker, and four office staff (including me.) The four of us had our pick of the best offices across the third floor which was at the top of the building; this meant that there was a lot of space between us consisting of corridors and adjoining offices ...but this is what we all signed up for and were expecting...to be able to work alone and pass the time in between calls.

I chose to bring books in to read, others brought radios and CD Players and got through the night that way, but it wasn't long before things started to come to our attention...strange things. A couple of weeks into my shifts I began noticing that when I would return back from the toilet, or from speaking to a colleague, items in my office would seem to move around. My pen would never be in the same place, my chair would be tucked under when I knew that it was a few feet away from my desk before...things like that. You just assume that it is someone messing around with you, but in this case, there were only four of us in those offices and all of us were in different areas of the third floor. Now I'm not saying that it would have been impossible for someone to pull pranks, I'm just saying that it would have been difficult.

So ...the first really frightening experience that I had was in the early hours of a Thursday ... around 2.30am ... I'd made a coffee, took it back to my office, put it on my desk ... made my way to the toilets which were towards the centre of the third floor down a long corridor – this corridor had double fire doors every 50 feet or so with two narrow glass panels stretching almost the whole height of the door – and that's when I saw her. Way ahead of me I could see, a woman with blonde hair wearing a white blouse, black skirt - initially I thought that it was Gill who was also on shift that night. I couldn't tell for definite as the glass in the fire doors obscured a lot of the corridor, but I was certain that it was Gill...

I saw her turn and disappear into where the toilets were, so I picked up pace so I could say hello and have a chat. I got through the next set of fire doors and through the toilet door to find the room completely empty. I could have sworn that I'd seen her enter these toilets but there was no sign of her at all; however, one of the taps on a sink over on the far-left side was on full blast ... so I went over to turn it off. As soon as I turned the tap, the room went completely ice cold...then the lights went out. The only light was a very dim green fire exit sign that was lit above the door that I'd just come through. I had goosebumps all over me and had the horrible feeling that there was something else in that room with me...*'you're being bloody stupid'*, I thought, *'let's just go to the other toilet block'*.

I began to walk towards the door when the tap came back on full blast, and as I spun around in the direction of the noise – completely in shock – I saw something in the far corner of the room, something dark, tall, and looking as if it was hovering intently just off the ground. It sounds mad, but it looked like a long dark cloak just floating there. Absolutely petrified, I quickly moved for the door, suddenly the lights came back on – and I quickly turned around again in the direction of the dark figure... but there was nothing there at all.

The room felt normal again. I really wasn't sure what had just happened. *Had I imagined it?... was I just tired?* I walked back over to the tap and turned it off, then left to go to another toilet block. I was in two minds whether to drop in on Gill and tell her what had just happened, but I decided against it.

For the next few nights things were fine and I tried to keep myself as busy as possible between phone calls. One evening I had a visit from Darren, the caretaker. He'd been with the company for around eight months and was waiting to be transferred to the new building – just like the last of us. Now, we did have a bit of a problem keeping caretakers, with many not lasting more than six months. Even when the building was at full capacity caretakers would come and go on a regular basis.

Again, there were always rumours about the basement, but who hasn't heard stories of a haunted basement or cellar? I'd personally never been down there – I never had the need to, but I'd been told that it was a huge space, stretching to almost the whole footprint of the office section of the building. All the heating systems, power fuse boxes and water pipes were down there, as well as additional storage for items such as exhibition and advertisement boards which were only used a handful of times during the year.

Anyway, Darren sat down in my office with a coffee, and we were chatting away when I asked him jokingly, completely out of the blue, *if he thought that the building was haunted?* He slightly leant forward on his chair and said, *'I'll tell you this now Carol, I hate it down there in that basement; I really hate it. I've worked in some of the spookiest places you can think of...tunnels, abandoned buildings, but nothing has got to me as bad as down there.'*

I must admit that I was fascinated...creeped out, but fascinated; so I probed him further. He continued, *'I've got no idea what it is down there, but there's something that watches you...follows you around...you can feel it, all over your skin...it's horrible...and I think I've seen it.'*

But that's not all ...It was what he told me next that made me want to get out of the building as quickly as possible. He said that the first couple of months seemed fine. He wasn't someone who scared easily; in the past he had had a few strange experiences which could be related to the paranormal – but he wasn't a huge believer by any means. He said it was around 2.30 in the morning and he was in the far reaches of the basement tidying up some mesh fencing panels which had been left out in the car park after contractors had finished using them. There was the usual humming noise of the heating and electrical systems going on in the background as he worked, but he could also hear a clicking noise which he'd never heard before. According to Darren, it sounded like the noise a Geiger counter made when it was near radiation.

He put his brush down; started walking back down the corridor towards his office near the basement steps at the side of the building. He said that every now and then, it sounded like it would change direction and then stop, but it would then start again from the same direction.

When he got to his office the noise stopped completely ...but then he heard the distinct noise of footsteps coming from the corridor which led down the entire width of the building.

Hardly anybody came down to the basement, so his initial thought was that it was one of us trying to find him because of a problem upstairs...*but why didn't we phone down to him like we always did when something was wrong?* He said that these footsteps were quite loud, as if someone was wearing high heels. He began to walk down the corridor to see who it was...

...Now just as in the main building, the basement is separated out into various spaces linked together via corridors with double fire doors every so often, so it's difficult to see down the whole length of the corridor... but in the distance, Darren thought he could see a woman...with blonde hair...wearing a white top and black skirt!!!

I did my best to keep a poker face, but inside I was absolutely stunned.

Darren continued to tell me that he saw this woman get to the end of the corridor and turn left, which is the only way she could have gone. Now around 20 feet down this left-hand turn is another fire door which leads into a room full of racking and filing cabinets. Apparently, there were all sorts of documents down there going back years, but more importantly, it was a dead end... the only way out was to go back the way you came.

Darren told me that he opened the door, and the lights were off... *'strange'*, he thought, *'why hadn't she switched lights on?'* He felt around on the wall by the door and found the light switch and flicked it on. In a few seconds all the fluorescent lights blinked into life... but there was no sign of the woman. He called out to ask her where she was...but there was no reply...it was then that the Geiger counter clicking sound started again, and it sounded like it was coming from the back of the room.

Darren began to walk towards the area where he thought the sound was coming from ... and then suddenly, only a few feet in front of him, a figure ... who looked like the woman he thought had come into the room, went rushing past in front of him from behind some racking shelves. Darren admitted that he was getting more annoyed than creeped out because he thought that the prank had gone on long enough... until he came to the end of the racking shelves at the back of the room.

As Darren recalled, the clicking noise was now as loud as a car engine idling. As he turned towards the direction of the noise, he froze in terror. In front of him, in the corner of the room was a blurry black mass that stretched from floor to ceiling... just floating there. He said that he couldn't move, and whether that was down to him being terrified or down to the power of whatever this thing was – he just didn't know. As he stood there for what was probably just a few seconds, but seemed like hours, this black mass began to move towards him...and that's when the clicking noise got so loud that it became unbearable.

Darren said he snapped out of whatever force was keeping him rooted to the spot and ran like mad for the door. He ran all the way back down the corridor, past his office and up the steps which led outside...and that's where he stayed for at least half an hour... pacing around, completely confused and not sure what he had just experienced.

He could see from my face that there was something wrong, and when he asked if I was ok, I decided to tell him what I'd seen a few nights earlier. We both spoke for at least another hour and couldn't believe that our sightings were so similar... *had we really seen the same entity?...was that what it was?* In a move that seemed like complete madness, I asked if he could take me down to the basement to the room where it had happened, and he agreed. He said that he'd only been near that area once since his sighting, and that was only to shove his arm around the door to switch the lights off. We both went down and nervously took a look around, but nothing happened, and the atmosphere felt completely normal...a little cold, but I suppose you'd expect that from a basement.

Little things continued to happen over the next few weeks and Darren and I began chatting more openly about the paranormal and our experiences. We even began to bring books to work specifically about paranormal and supernatural phenomenon so we could try to delve a little deeper into what we'd seen. Nothing major occurred over this period, but we were informed that the sale of the building was moving along at a good pace; the buyer had reached an agreement with our company and his insurers were to begin moving stock into our large, empty warehouse.

It turned out that the buyer was a car dealership and little by little the warehouse began to fill up with at least a few hundred nearly new cars. The keys to all of these were obviously kept off site at a secure location, but close enough to the building so that, if something went wrong like one of them getting damaged, the keyholders could come out and attend. It was around this time that the next creepy series of events happened.

I can't specifically remember what night it was or what time...I think it was around 11.45pm. Anyway, it had been a really quiet night up until then and boredom was beginning to set in with all

of us. I'd been down to the basement to see Darren who was sat in his office reading and we spoke for 10 or 15 minutes then he followed me back up the stairs and outside. He was taking a cup of tea to the security guard at the gatehouse, so I continued back up the stairs to the offices.

I made my way to the kitchen and met a colleague there and we chatted for a short while before we both went back to our separate offices. I can remember sitting there reading a newspaper when the phone rang on my desk. It was an internal call because it was one of the office extension lights that was flashing on the phone... but it was coming from an office that wasn't being used. I picked up the phone and said, 'Hello'. At first there was just a crackling static noise...then a voice which sounded like it was part of the static said '*I'm not leaving*'... then the line went dead.

Chills went all over me, but I was determined to find out if this had a rational explanation. I knew where this particular phone was, so I immediately made my way to that office as quickly as possible. I went to open the door, but it was locked, and the office was in darkness. I could see the phone on the desk on the far side of the office through the window, *but who would have made the call and then locked the office back up?* I quickly went back to my own office and called Darren down in the basement as I knew he would have a set of keys to get in.

I went back to the other office and waited outside for Darren to arrive with the keys. A few minutes later we were unlocking the door and inside... only to find out that the phone wasn't even plugged into the wall. Darren asked if I was 100% sure that I had heard a voice and was I also sure that it came from this office... I was positive, but we were both completely stumped as to whose voice it was and how it could have come through a phone that wasn't even connected to a line.

A few days later and another incident occurred that really shook up one of my colleagues in the office. At the time, I think I was looking through some records to close a customer file down. Anyway ...I heard a loud scream and then saw Julie run past the room I was in and down the corridor which led to the stairs to get down to the ground floor and outside. I can remember that on that particular night the weather was awful, and it was pouring down outside.

I stopped what I was doing and went after her thinking that she'd had some extremely terrible news or something like that. I found her sat in her car with the engine running and in tears. I knocked the window, and she told me to get in the car as she wasn't going back inside. I got inside and asked her if everything was ok, to which she replied that, '*there was no way she was going back inside that building after what she'd just seen.*'

She was really shaken up – she was panicking and crying... something had frightened her so badly that she was insistent she was going to quit her job *on the spot*. I calmed her down a little and asked her to tell me what had happened. By this time, the rest of the office staff were standing by the door looking out over the car park at us. I persuaded Julie to come back inside, and we'd go to the kitchen and have a coffee. She agreed but made me *swear to her* that I wasn't going to leave her on her own. I gave her my word and we went back inside. We sat down in the kitchen – she was incredibly jumpy ...distressed... traumatised. Shakily, she began to tell me what had happened and started with

something along the lines of *'you're going to think I'm mad'* ... but little did she know what Darren and myself had already witnessed.

She said that she'd got up to go to the toilets after finishing a call with a customer. Whilst washing her hands the lights in the room started to flicker... Now this next bit could have come straight from a scene in a horror movie ... but Julie swore that this is what had happened to her.

As with most toilets and washrooms there were mirrors above the sinks, and as Julie looked up when the lights began to flicker, she saw a blonde-haired woman in what looked like a long white cotton night dress standing facing the wall directly behind her. Julie quickly turned around – shocked to see someone else in the room when she thought that she had been alone. According to Julie, within a couple of seconds the woman turned around to face her...but she had no face...it was just a dark void. She then screamed and ran out of the room.

So, this was now the third person that had seen a blonde-haired woman... not in the same clothing, but almost an identical description of what Darren and I had also experienced. This made the other office staff members nervous, so we decided to all move into a central office and stick together...but the night after, Julie didn't come into work.

She didn't turn up the night after that either, but a few nights later she came back – but only because she couldn't afford to leave. We made a point to go to the kitchen and toilets in pairs – to any outsider this would have looked ludicrous, but this was the only way that we could all be comfortable and to be honest, it worked for quite a while. Let's face it, who's going to listen to a small handful of people who refuse to work in a building because it's haunted...certainly not our employers.

Whatever it was that was haunting the building only seemed to focus on people when they were alone, so we really made the effort to stay as a group for as long as possible throughout our shifts ...but even this approach didn't stop what was about to happen. Again, I can't believe that I'm saying this, but it was Halloween ... and the weather was atrocious.

I don't think it was even 10pm when we were all sat in the office together when we heard a car alarm go off. We all looked at each other in silence then one of us mentioned that it must be one of the cars in the warehouse. We all left the office and went out to where the lifts were towards the centre of the third floor. There was a large window that gave you a great view over the whole warehouse, but we couldn't see anything, apart from a set of car indicators blinking, because all the lights out there were off.

When most staff had moved the lifts had all been switched off, so the only way down to the warehouse was to go down one of the fire exit staircases to the ground floor. We'd made a point of calling Darren who in turn alerted the security guard in the gatehouse, and we all met outside one of the warehouse doors. Darren opened the door, and we followed him into the bank of light switches a few feet away.

All the lights came flashing on, and we made our way to the car whose alarm was still going off. We checked the doors and boot, but everything was locked and whilst we couldn't really tell if someone had broken in, we were sure that nobody had. We all walked back to the warehouse door to go back up to the offices and call the key holder for the cars ...when the alarm stopped.

It was really weird, there was just the sound of the rain coming down onto the huge roof above us. The security guard made a comment that it could be an automatic reset or something, but then we heard a dull kind of thud. We couldn't pinpoint exactly where it was but the security guard called out, *that whoever it was should come out now as they were trespassing, and the police could be called.* The thud repeated itself...then again...and then again, then another car alarm went off.

I think we all seemed to get the same feeling at the same time, and there were lots of cries of, *'let's get out of here and lock up and call the keyholders...let them sort it out'*. As we got to the stairs to go back up to the offices, Darren and the security guard said that they were going to take a look around the outside of the building just to make sure that this wasn't someone who'd managed to break in.

Neither of them found anything, and we never found an explanation for what was setting the car alarms off either. We never physically saw anything so we can't definitively put it down to ghosts or poltergeists – but I think we all knew in the back of our minds that what went on that night wasn't something normal. Weeks went by with not much else happening, and it wasn't long before we were given our moving date to the new premises, and I have to say that in a strange kind of way...we were all going to miss the place. I can't explain it, but it was as if we were leaving something behind. We were asked to go in one Saturday morning to collect any personal belongings as the contracts and keys had been exchanged and we wouldn't be returning...our time there had finally come to end.

Our manager came over to make sure that all was in order before we left, and as we were carrying boxes downstairs he said, *'I've got to be honest, I won't miss this place'*, to which I replied jokingly something like *'Yeah, I bet. New building, plush offices...you lot have been living in luxury over there.'* He chuckled and replied, *'Well there is that, but I couldn't wait to get out of this place when the move was first announced.'* *'Bad experience?'* I said. *'You could say that, but you wouldn't believe me if I told you...'*, and he laughed again.

That weird goosebump feeling washed back over me again, and I just couldn't resist asking him what he meant. The now familiar starting sentence of, *'You're going to think I've lost my mind but...'* commenced the story. It was around three years ago, and our manager had been working late with some of the warehouse staff on moving a complete section of products to a new location which they'd set up earlier in the day. He couldn't remember why, but he said that he needed to go up to the second floor to get some paperwork.

As he entered the office block where the lifts were, he heard a door close to his right. The cleaners had been and gone so there shouldn't have been anyone left in the building. Out of curiosity he decided to walk down the corridor to where he thought the noise had come from – only to see the fire exit door to the stairs slowly closing. He said he opened the door, sprinted up the stairs and shouted up to say that the building was private property and now closed.

Arriving on the second floor, he quickly opened the fire exit door; all at once he saw a distant figure far down the corridor suddenly make a sharp right turn and go into an office. He heard the office door open and click shut. Now desperate to find out who this potential intruder was, he half jogged and half ran down the corridor and in his momentum smashed into the office door – unbelievably, it



was locked! Ruefully, he said he hit his nose pretty hard, and it started to bleed. He quickly regained his composure and peered through the window in the office door but saw nobody. He admitted that he was starting to get creeped out, so decided to just go back downstairs and return to the warehouse as quickly as possible. But it wasn't over yet...As he turned around and started to walk back down the corridor, he heard the office door open again but this time ...slam shut.

He said that he was literally frozen to the spot and didn't want to turn around... but something in his head told him that he needed to look at what was behind him. He turned around to see nothing at all, but then the atmosphere in the corridor completely changed. He described it as a feeling of being watched, but also of something making the environment so incredibly uncomfortable that he just wanted to run...but couldn't.

Then, about 10 feet in front of him, a black cloud-like mass began to form. Slowly at first and quite transparent, but as it grew in size it also grew in its density...becoming darker and darker. He said it got so large that he could hardly see the corridor behind it. After what seemed like minutes, but was probably only a matter of seconds, this huge inky mass took off at a ridiculous speed down the corridor away from him, seemingly able to penetrate through the double doors as if they weren't there.

He then recalled that the atmosphere returned to normal in a split second...as if nothing had ever taken place; so, he bolted as quickly as possible back to the warehouse; but just before he got there, he said that he took a moment to gather himself and calm down. The last thing he wanted to do was to cause any type of panic... but also, *who would have believed him anyway?*

I told him that I believed him, because I'd had my own experiences in the building, but I left it at that. He was intrigued to find out what and I told him that we'd catch up at the new site and have a chat, but we never got around to it. As far as I know the building changed hands a few more times before being finally demolished as part of a new development which is now a large industrial estate. I did try to do some detective work with Darren to try and find out if there had been any accidents or deaths in the old building, but we couldn't find anything. Maybe we were digging in the wrong place...who knows.

I've never experienced anything else which you'd call paranormal since, but I do still wonder if whatever was in that building has somehow stayed on the land and is now roaming around in one of those new industrial units. For the sake of the people who work there, I really hope not. I've since moved onto retirement and am enjoying pottering around in my own little world.

Unfortunately, I lost touch with many of the people I worked with, including our little group who had our own set of creepy adventures inside that old building... except for one... Darren. We're still good friends today, and I know he'll be listening when this story airs. Thank you for helping me craft this whole series of events into something a little more structured, and I really hope the listeners enjoy my story.

A massive thank you to Carole for initially sending this story in and then for allowing me to work with her in putting this together as a full episode. The paranormal is an extremely tricky topic to be able to judge your own reactions to. *What would you do?... how would you react to situations such as these?? Would you freeze...panic...faint?? Let us know!*

It also fascinates me that, out of a large workforce, only a small handful of people ever experienced anything. This is a similar story, in small parts, to one that happened years ago at an old Kays

Catalogues' distribution centre, but in this workforce there were thousands, not hundreds and although the experiences were of a similar type in nature, only a handful of people ever saw anything. *Are these individuals somehow chosen or gifted with the ability to be more sensitive to their surroundings than others? Do they possess some sort of sixth sense?* If we are to believe that something like the stone tape theory is an acceptable avenue of science, then this suggests that past lives or, in some instances, moments in time can be somehow stored or absorbed into the surrounding environment. These moments or snapshots of someone's life can then be accessed and replayed by someone who is sensitive to their existence. This could explain why, when the majority of ghosts are seen, they are repeating the same pattern over and over again. For instance, a phantom hitchhiker will always tend to haunt the same stretch of road and disappear in almost the same area with every occurrence. *But what about poltergeist activity? Are these same sensitive people able to somehow trigger these phenomena into action??*

*And what do **you** think about Carole's story? Do you think Carole and her colleagues were sensitive to something supernatural stalking the corridors of this very old building? After all there are multiple witnesses – all seeing something very similar. Or do you think there is a more rational explanation? Or have you ever had a creepy experience in your workplace? Have you also worked with 'the unknown'? Or even, do you recognise the events in this episode yourself? Have you also encountered the ghostly blonde lady in the basement?* Let us know your theories and stories – we would love to hear from you! Contact us at on Twitter @hauntedukpod or on our Instagram page.

As with all types of paranormal activity...unless you've experienced it, it all comes down to what you believe. But if you do find yourself looking over your shoulder at work one day and you're not sure why...always keep your wits about you... because the next person to see a distant phantom figure fleeing an old dusty unused office ...could be **you**.