Scotland's Greatest Ghost Stories

Research Pack

A toolkit on how to research your local haunts
BOO!

If you’re interested in uncovering local supernatural tales but you’re not sure where to start, fear not as we have compiled an easy guide with tips and examples of where and how you can discover spooky tales from your own area.

In this guide you’ll find useful website links, research portals, books, libraries and archive collections for any aspiring ghost detective.
Tobar an Dualchais/The Kist of Riches

http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/.

The website above gives you instant access to around 50,000 audio recordings from the sound collections of the School of Scottish Studies Archive, The Canna Archive and the BBC Scotland Archive.

A couple of general searches will give you a good idea of the type of material available. For example, searching for ‘supernatural’ will bring up around 300 recordings. Searching using different words will also give you different results, for example searching for ‘ghost’ gives you 340 recordings while searching for ‘ghosts’ only results in 125 recordings.

There are advanced search options on the website which will help you narrow down your search, for example you can search by subject, by: location, by fieldworker, by contributor and by the type of material (e.g. story, song, verse).

There is also an option to search for material by language: English, Gaelic and Scots, by default the website will include items in all three languages but you could search for material in Gaelic only for example.

You can also search by collection type, again the default search option will include material from the School of Scottish Studies Archive, The Canna Archive and the BBC Scotland Archive but you could just search one of these if you like.

This website is a wonderful resource and the best place to hear authentic oral versions of tales.
Get Chatting

Another great way to uncover supernatural tales from your own area is to ask people in your local community. Older relatives, neighbours and people with an interest in local history are bound to have some knowledge of local supernatural tales. You might be surprised by what you uncover by simply speaking to people in your own community.

Local historical societies are also a good place to try - they usually have a programme of lectures and publications that might help with your search.

Local historical societies usually have a collection of books on local history and folklore which might give you some ideas. Local historical and archaeological sites are also good places to explore and many have supernatural tales attached to them.

Visit the sites to find out more information from interpretation boards and staffed sites will have guidebooks for sale which will provide you with more information on the history of the site. Grand houses and mansions usually also have supernatural tales attached to them.

Other places that might have associated supernatural tales are schools, workplaces and sites where significant events have taken place, for examples battles or accidents.

Also, keep a look out for local guidebooks and walking books in book shops and tourist information centres where you will find out more about the history of your local area.
Libraries and archive collections are also a great place to search for local supernatural tales and include many different resources: books, manuscripts, copies of old newspapers, guidebooks and more. Some of the bigger libraries and archives have made some of their material available online but the best way to find out more about their collections is to visit in person.

The School of Scottish Studies Archives at Edinburgh University has a huge collection of material relating to the cultural traditions and folklore of Scotland. The archive also has a huge collection of books, publications featuring material from the sound and manuscript collections (Tocher and Scottish Studies), manuscripts and much more. There is also a tale archive which you can access by arranging an appointment.

The manuscript collections feature some excellent material collected by various people in different locations, such as the Donald John MacDonald manuscript collection which features material mainly from South Uist and the Outer Hebrides and the Robert Craig Maclagan manuscript collection of folklore from the West Highlands.

Find out more about the collections here: Here and have a look at the archive’s Twitter page where they share examples of the different collections online.

For older books that you may not be able to borrow from a library or archive collection, try having a look at some of the thousands of books digitised on the Archive.org website: Here
And the National Library of Scotland’s website: Here
There are many great compilations of Scottish ghost stories and folklore widely available in book shops, libraries and online.

A great place to start is by looking at the compilations produced by the History Press in collaboration with the Society of Storytelling and the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

There are a whole series of excellent books compiled and created by contemporary Scottish storytellers for different localities throughout Scotland, for example: Fife Folk Tales by Sheila Kinninmonth, Argyll Folk Tales by Bob Pegg and Orkney Folk Tales by Tom Muir.

Have a look at the History Press Website: [Here](#)

### Other titles

- Various (2019) The Anthology of Scottish Folk Tales
- Wojturska, R. (2019) Haunted Voices: An Anthology of Gothic Storytelling from Scotland – (there is also an option to purchase an audio version of this book)
- Bruford, A and MacDonald, D.A. (2018) Scottish Traditional Tales
- Banks, G and Blackhall, S. (2014) Scottish Urban Myths and Ancient Legends
- MacLellan, A and Campbell, J.L (2019) Stories from South Uist
- Williamson, D (2011) Jack and the Devil’s Purse: Scottish Traveller Tales
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Remember to save the following dates and to book your tickets for the ghost story workshop and sharing event!

Timeline

Research ghosts stories linked to your local area...

Mon 19 Oct - Take part in an online social media discussion with #SISFSaysBoo and tune in on Twitter and Facebook

Mon 19 Oct @ 6.30-7.30pm - Attend an online ‘How to Tell a Good Ghost Story’ workshop with storyteller Fiona Herbert

Sat 31 Oct (Halloween!) Oct @ 4-6pm attend an online sharing and listening event of all the ghostly tales

Contact storytelling@tracscotland.org for any other info