

# from Sydney's dark history

Cathy Morris

## YOU'LL BE SPOOKED BY THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT GAOL

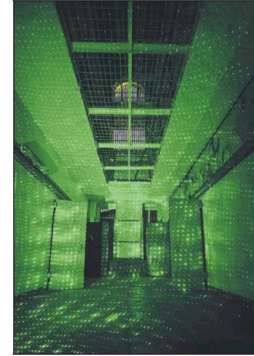
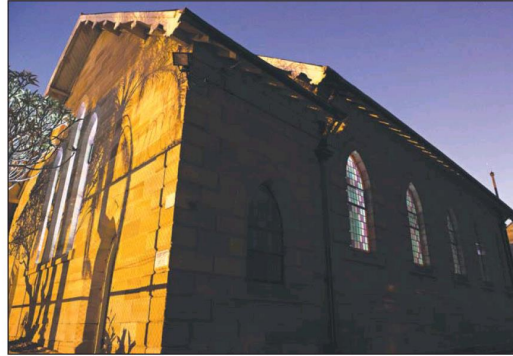
YOU'VE seen paranormal investigators on TV and now you can connect with the spirit world in one of Sydney's spookiest haunts.

A ghost tour company is taking groups through Parramatta Gaol on a mission to connect with the other side.

The gaol's dark history has been well-documented and stories are rife about apparitions and the presence of outer-worldly beings within its historic sandstone walls.

Tour leader Nic Hume from the Australian Paranormal Phenomenon Investigators leads night-time expeditions through some of Sydney's most historic buildings or "anything with a morbid history".

"We get people saying they have been touched and have had their hair stroked



Far left: Peta Banks helps tour leader Nic Hume detect paranormal activity at the gaol. Centre: The prison chapel. Right: Torches illuminate the chapel's interior during a ghost hunt.

Pictures: ELENOR TEDENBORG AND CHRIS MCKEEN

in some locations," she said about previous tours of Parramatta Gaol.

"People (have reported) hearing things like footsteps in one of the wings when we

know there is no-one else in that wing.

"There's been sightings of shadowy figures, people walking in the distance (and) whimpering coming

from cells when there's nobody in there."

Ms Hume said the group takes investigative gadgets with them to try to pick up any paranormal activity.

These include a transistor radio known as a ghost box, night vision cameras and voice recorders.

"We break them up into teams and give them equip-

ment so they can be an investigator, to see what they can capture."

Ms Hume said mumbled voices had been recorded, but so far no names had been picked up by the equipment.

Notable prisoners that have served time in the gaol, which was built in 1835, include notorious highwayman and murderer Thomas Kelly, Sydney crime boss George Freeman and the leader of the Toecutter gang Bill Maloney.

The gaol was closed in 2011 but much of the building and some of the cells "are pretty much just as they have been left", Ms Hume said.

The tours started in March and have proved popular, selling out every month.

The next tour of the Parramatta Gaol is scheduled for Saturday, December 6.

Details: [appi.org.au](http://appi.org.au)