

A recent survey revealed that 68% of people in the UK believe in ghosts and 1 in 10 people claim that they've actually seen a ghost. Being naturally sceptical about these kinds of surveys, I always **take them with a pinch of salt**, but it does seem that nowadays everyone wants to meet a real-life ghost.

So when my sister-in-law Pat suggested going on a ghost-hunting weekend, I didn't need to be asked twice. Pat was hoping to see her first ghost, while I just wanted a few days off to **recharge my batteries**. We were soon heading off to Brockfield Castle in Somerset, one of the UK's most haunted houses, to spend the weekend looking for ghosts - I thought it was going to **be a piece of cake**.

Brockfield Castle, a spooky old building in the middle of nowhere, certainly was a far cry from my modern London flat. There were eight other guests, and we all had dinner together on the first evening to break the ice. Our fellow ghost-hunters seemed normal enough - apart from one strange old lady who kept telling us to keep an eye out for werewolves (she must have booked the wrong weekend break). After dinner Tom, our guide, gave us a talk on the history of the castle, which is apparently haunted by two brothers who died in a fire over 200 years ago. Then we were taken on a tour of the castle's 37 rooms. Sadly the brothers were nowhere to be seen - perhaps they'd gone away for the weekend!

That night I **slept like a log**, but on the second evening things started to get weird. Pat and I were walking in the gardens after dinner when **out of the blue** she shouted, "Look, there's a ghost!" I thought she was **pulling my leg**, but she pointed to one of the windows. An old man was standing there, arms outstretched. We watched him for about a minute and then he suddenly vanished. When we told Tom what we'd seen, he said we'd been looking up at the room where the brothers had died.

Of course, Pat's first encounter really **made her day** and I have to admit that the experience **gave me food for thought**. However, as someone once said, for the believer, no proof is required - but for the sceptic, no proof is sufficient.

Look at the idioms **in blue** in the text. Match them to the definitions on the right.

1. *Not believe something to be accurate or true*
2. *Tell someone something that isn't true, as a joke*
3. *Be very easy to do*
4. *Do something to get new energy and enthusiasm*
5. *Completely unexpected*
6. *Make you think seriously about a topic*
7. *Make someone extremely happy*
8. *Sleep very well without waking*