

PARANORMAL BRITAIN



THE
POLICE
FILES

IF A GHOST STOLE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH OR A FAIRY WRECKED YOUR GARDEN, WHO WOULD YOU CALL? A PRIEST? GHOSTBUSTERS? WELL, SINCE 2013, 504 PEOPLE CALLED THE POLICE. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAW...

WORDS: **MATT BLAKE & JOEL GOLBY**
ILLUSTRATIONS: **DEAN BEATTIE**
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH: **EMILY CASEY, JOE BAKER & SOPHIE MORRIS**

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARANORMAL SIGHTINGS ACROSS THE UK SINCE 2013

	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
GHOST	48	93	57	198
WITCH	37	35	24	96
UFO	9	19	17	45
ALIEN	17	26	42	85
FAIRY	1	2	3	6
ZOMBIE	14	11	1	26
WEREWOLF	1	0	0	1
VAMPIRE	2	9	3	14
SPIRITS	1	3	6	10
POLTERGEIST	1	9	9	19
MONSTERS	1	3	0	4

➔ Chip-stealing ghosts, child vampires and fairies who move pot plants – these are some of the supernatural events reported to police across England and Wales in the past three years, an *FHM* investigation can reveal.

We sent an FOI (freedom of information) request to each of England and Wales' 43 police forces asking for the details of all 999 calls relating to paranormal activity since 2013. Of those, 28 forces sent us their X-Files.

And as our regional breakdown shows, paranormal beings are into pretty weird stuff. Of course, some callers may be pranksters who, the National Police Chiefs' Council says, are "not only foolish, [but] can put lives at risk. Police will consider the possibility of action against those who waste their time".

A proportion of callers may also have been mentally unwell, and we've tried to weed out the most obviously erroneous claims while keeping an open mind.

But the Catholic church takes the issue so seriously, it has 10 exorcists in England and Wales who banish between 80 and 90 evil spirits every year.

The Rev Dr Gareth Leyshon, an exorcism consultant for the Catholic church (who has a PhD in astrophysics) says, "To believe you've seen a ghost or other supernatural being does not necessarily make you mad – far from it. It is a very real issue for a lot of ordinary people."

After all, a 2013 YouGov survey found that 52% of British people wholeheartedly believe in the supernatural. Are you one of them?

NORTH-EAST



COMMON COMPLAINTS

Durham, Cleveland and Northumbria police forces receive a diverse number of supernatural crimes and complaints. In February, one man reported six UFOs in the sky above Lackenby (police note: "possible lanterns due to Chinese New Year"); in August 2014, a Billingham man reported he couldn't drive because of "fairies in front of my eyes"; in Middlesbrough last February, a woman reported ghosts had broken into her house and were hiding in

the loft. But the scariest-call of all came again from Middlesbrough in December 2012 (while this was clearly just out of our timeframe, this couldn't go without a mention): "Female reporting there are child vampires in her house. One is asleep on the settee with things on its eyes, the other one's head keeps falling off."

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

Don't know about you, but a child's head repeatedly falling off while it chills on the sofa in front of *Match Of The Day* is pretty unusual.

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

Vampires live among us, but they're not currently a threat. Hollywood movies will have you thinking vampires are 'roided-up mega warriors capable of biting our brittle human necks in two, sprinting up trees and beckoning animals like bats to do their bidding for them. But no, they are just children with very floppy heads. We, for one, welcome the inevitable war of the undead now, knowing a swift kick to the neck will disarm any and all vampires by sending their head spiralling into the Tees.

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	25
WITCH	5
UFO	2
ALIEN	14
FAIRY	1
ZOMBIE	4
WEREWOLF	1
VAMPIRE	1
SPIRITS	0
POLTERGEIST	1
MONSTERS	0

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

COMMON COMPLAINTS

Yorkshire is home to some of the country's more creative ghosts and fairies: complaint calls to West Yorkshire police include witches and wizards "wearing metal clothes" in September 2014; the previous June, a caller reported two ghosts playing a sprightly game of late-night tennis while another rang the same month to inform police that he was "lord of the water fairies and the bad frogs" (it's not clear if he was threatening a *Lord Of The Rings*-style toad rebellion or simply making them aware of his new job at a magical marine wildlife centre). In September 2013, one caller flipped the whole police vs ghosts dynamic on its head by telling South Yorkshire police that '999' is '666' upside down, which makes every member of the force a ghost. It's not clear if the ghost police investigated the game of ghost tennis, seeing as tennis isn't technically illegal.

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

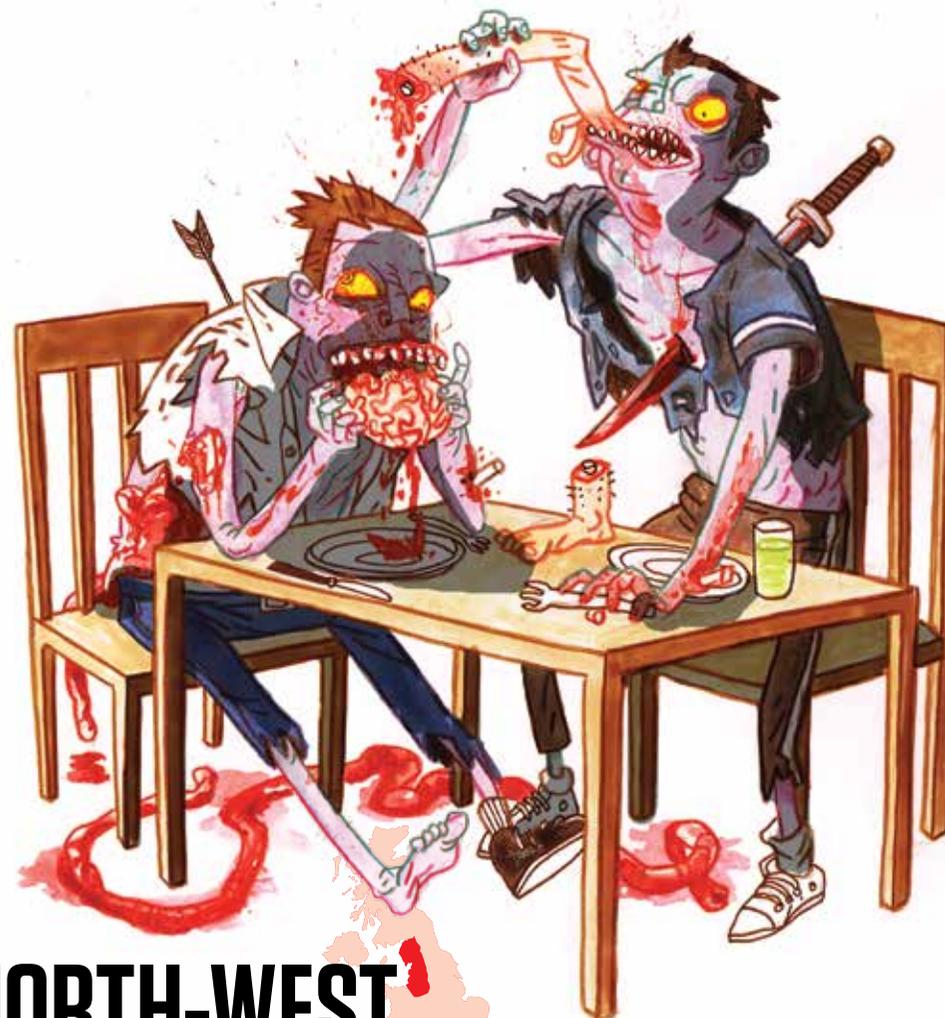
"[Caller had to] make us aware of a noisy, smelly ghost-like prostitute who can't be seen but can be smelt through the wall."

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

Yorkshire is the epicentre of ghosts, with its armour-clad wizards and its ghost prostitutes and spirit police. It's a wonder any actual live humans live in Yorkshire at all. Go there if you want to see the ghost of Fred Dibnah 'go Wimbledon' on the ghost of Richard Griffiths, while ghost whippets sprint between your legs. The ghost police will watch on, helpless.



SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	38
WITCH	10
UFO	3
ALIEN	37
FAIRY	3
ZOMBIE	4
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	0
SPIRITS	9
POLTERGEIST	5
MONSTERS	1



NORTH-WEST

COMMON COMPLAINTS

When the undead uprising inevitably decimates our green and pleasant land, we will know where it first started: Bootle. Liverpool and the nearby Merseyside town are a hive of lurching, reanimated corpses. In March 2013, a caller reported "four people in [their] flat, like zombies"; in October 2014, a call from Southport requested immediate police attention as there were zombies in the building; in Liverpool in May 2013, a report stated

a group of people in an alley, walking like zombies. And in February 2014, Cumbria constabulary got a call from a Carlisle resident claiming monsters were in their home.

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

Greater Manchester police had a caller in November 2014 claiming there was a ghost in their house and that "shampoo [had] gone missing as well as a toothbrush". Let is go mate, that's about £4.

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

Zombies exist and are real and the police are useless at

dealing with them. Because we know how the dead shall rise: some ancient and pernicious god, tired of seeing us all run around with clear eyes and iPhones and the power of speech, will condemn us to be slaughtered by a newly risen army of the undead, crawling in droves from their graves. And what will the police in Merseyside do? Judging by their current zombie response team, nothing at all. The dead shall rise, and we will be doomed. Get out of Liverpool while you still can.

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	42
WITCH	19
UFO	13
ALIEN	1
FAIRY	0
ZOMBIE	5
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	0
SPIRITS	0
POLTERGEIST	2
MONSTERS	2



THE MIDLANDS

COMMON COMPLAINTS

As well as the usual ghost stuff – a ghost, one caller told Derbyshire constabulary, stole his copy of *Call Of Duty* before another rang the police and solemnly asked for the Ghostbusters – The Midlands is also a UFO-cum-alien hotspot, with one caller in Derbyshire reporting an alien trying to inject them “with something” and another nearby who claimed their house was built by aliens. There was also an informer who asked Leicestershire police to put

him through to NASA after he spotted lights in the sky and was “worried an alien invasion was about to occur”. Then there was the caller who said they had trapped a UFO in their freezer and asked if there was anything the police wanted to do with it. Police protocol over what to do when you have a frozen UFO is unclear. Also, with 27 witch sightings, recorded mostly around Birmingham by West Midlands police (nearly half the UK total), the Midlands would appear to be the occult capital of

the UK, but then a police source told us this could also be explained by the fact that some police officers can't spell ‘which’, witch spells trouble to us.

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

“Caller stated that they had been a vampire.” Presumably they weren't any more.

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

Midlands people are waging an inter-terrestrial war on aliens and, judging by the fact that the area hasn't been destroyed in a hail of lasers, they're winning.

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	35
WITCH	27
UFO	13
ALIEN	15
FAIRY	0
ZOMBIE	9
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	5
SPIRITS	0
POLTERGEIST	0
MONSTERS	1

SOUTH-EAST

COMMON COMPLAINTS

The South-East is the witchcraft and wizardry epicentre of the UK, making it the place to go if you want someone cursing or need a dead rat properly dissected (police here also know how to spell ‘which’ properly, unlike their brothers and sisters in the Midlands). There were a whopping 35 black-cat-and-cauldron-related calls over the past three years in this part of the country, so it seems the South-East is where witches like to get their coven on and gather en masse. In April, Norfolk police received a call from a man who said he was “surrounded by witches” (there's a chance he was Gino Tonioli calling from the set of *Loose Women*, though). Thames Valley police, meanwhile, were dealing with an incident where a caller had been threatened with “wickedness and witchcraft”. Later that month, they received a call warning them about “parties for the witches”. Although, again, that could just be Jamelia and Coleen Nolan getting on the ale after a particular brassy *Loose Women* shoot.

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

Thames Valley police reported a caller who feared for their personal safety because of “foreign aliens”. Er, buddy, technically all aliens are foreign.



WHAT WE CAN GATHER

If Hogwarts exists, it's somewhere around Kent, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Suffolk. The South-East is teeming with witchcraft, but it's hard to know if they're friendly types (your Hagrads, your Sabrinas, Cher in *The Witches Of Eastwick*), or unfriendly types (big ol' Voldemort, the witches out of *The Witches*, the Wicked

Witch of the East from *The Wizard Of Oz* – though strictly speaking, she's got a lot of ground to cover geographically). Best thing to do is surround the South-East in a protective border of salt, fill it with charms, and etch warding runes on every surface to keep evil away. Oh, and evacuate the area and forbid anyone from living there in case they're cursed to death.

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	28
WITCH	35
UFO	12
ALIEN	11
FAIRY	0
ZOMBIE	1
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	8
SPIRITS	0
POLTERGEIST	5
MONSTERS	0

WALES



COMMON COMPLAINTS

On the whole, in the grand scheme of things: none. There was a person in Holyhead who rang North Wales police in March 2014 for help in removing a team of aliens from their roof and another in Flint in February who claimed his neighbour's son was "saying that there were demons" in the house. But Wales is surprisingly quiet by way of ghost sightings, werewolf attacks or monsters. There are a few by-the-numbers "Yeah, I think there's a ghost in my house?" calls, but generally it's very quiet. So we guess if you're going to murder someone, do it in Wales. They're never going to come back from the void and haunt you about it.

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

A caller told Dyfed Powys police in October 2013 about "a naked man in the garden" who they believed "may have been a ghost". Pour one out for that ghost: it's a tough break being torn halfway between Earth and the afterlife, and especially so with no clothes on.

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

If you want to live a life undisturbed by ghosts, ghouls, werewolves and monsters – and we think we can all agree that yes, it would be quite nice to live a life where we are not constantly being terrified by the mysterious forces of the immortal realm, with



all the clanking chains and howls of infinite despair – then Wales really is the place to be. If you want to bump into a load of bewildered students dressed as vampires – but vampires after a night out at a 70p-a-shot bar or after a particularly harrowing foam party, the oil paint

slipping down their face and bleeding into their clothes, too drunk to really know what a taxi is, unable to speak clearly through their vampire teeth – then Wales is also the place to be. So your choice is either real ghosts or annoying students. And they say Meryl Streep had it hard in *that* film.

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	19
WITCH	0
UFO	2
ALIEN	2
FAIRY	0
ZOMBIE	0
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	0
SPIRITS	0
POLTERGEIST	5
MONSTERS	0



SOUTH-WEST



COMMON COMPLAINTS

So, most ghouls and ghosts in the South-West are on the rob. In June 2013, a Plymouth man called Devon and Cornwall police because a poltergeist had stolen some nails from him; in Exeter the next month, police were called when fairies stole some garden plants. Then, in May 2014, arguably the biggest crime perpetrated from beyond the corporeal realm since that man in a painting went evil in *Ghostbusters II*: "Caller reporting ghosts have tried

to steal his chips". But it's not all thieving ghosts in the South-West. In October 2014, a panicked caller rang Gloucestershire constabulary shouting that "the zombies have invaded Tewkesbury".

MOST UNUSUAL CALL

"Caller reporting offenders in her property – some are fairies, some are invisible."

WHAT WE CAN GATHER

Now is the time for a Derek Acorah x Jeremy Kyle show. What with hoodlum Cornish ghosts and thug-like Devonshire fairies, you've

got a line-up for a really good episode of *Jeremy Kyle*, where every guest is slightly more ghostly and see-through. Imagine Derek Acorah communicating beyond our realm via his spirit guide Sam and trying to solve petty tiffs over who owes who £50 in child support and who shagged whose sister using that weird deep voice of his while Jeremy shouts "PUT SOMETHING ON THE BLOODY END OF IT" into the void. Admit it: you'd watch that. You'd watch the fuck out of that. **FHM**

SIGHTINGS	
GHOST	11
WITCH	0
UFO	0
ALIEN	5
FAIRY	2
ZOMBIE	3
WEREWOLF	0
VAMPIRE	0
SPIRITS	1
POLTERGEIST	1
MONSTERS	0