MARKS HALL
ESTATE

Spine chilling challenges

KEYSTAGE 3-4
ENGLISH

Introduction

"**I have heard, but not believ'd, the spirits of the dead may walk again.**"
The Winter's Tale, by William Shakespeare.

Marks Hall Estate rose to prominence in the Stuart period of English history (1603-1625).

These were volatile times; times of plots and machinations to bring down the monarchy, famously led by Guy Fawkes in 1605. In fact, one owner of Marks Hall Estate, Thomas Honywood was a leading parliamentarian during the English Civil War.

Literature also took a grim turn in the Jacobean era, with Shakespeare writing some of his darkest plays, including Macbeth and King Lear, and the emergence of metaphysical poets like John Dunne.

Today, Marks Hall Estate is still rich with atmosphere and history. From the haunting screeches of bats after nightfall in the woodland, to the eerie site of the lost Jacobean hall with its own chapel and burial ground.

Let your creative spirit roam wild… (da da dummmmmmm!)

Today's challenge is to research the history of Marks Hall Estate and write your own ghost story, inspired by what you find.

You could write it in the style of a famous historical supernatural writer like Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker or Mary Shelley. Or a modern day writer like Stephanie Meyer…

Old photographs of the Hall and Chapel which used to be on the Estate >

Tips and Resources:

Read more tips from creative writer Cornelia Funke by visiting her website.

1. Choose your tone Decide whether you want to go funny or grim.

2. Choose your ghost Do you want your reader to love or fear the ghost? Will you be on the ghost's side or will your hero be the hunter?

3. Mix it up We all know the classic ingredients for creating a spooky atmosphere. Of course most of the action takes place at night.

4. Give your ghost a life story Decide where your ghosts come from. How many are there?

5. Set some rules Yes, even ghosts need them.

Marks Hall >

6. Explore themes Don't forget about The Big Themes! A ghost story is very often about death and guilt, about life unlived, about loss.

7. Do your research Do you know that there are ghost hunters?

8. Create the right writing atmosphere Write at night, a very easy way to create just the right writing atmosphere!

9. There's more to a ghost story than ghosts A ghost story can of course deal with other haunting creatures too.

10. Ignore the previous nine rules Break all the rules! Ignore all the advice! Write a ghost story that's in bright daylight. Make it a ghostly robot.

Barbastelle bat - courtesy of Jon Dobson >

Did you know?

The earliest recording of Marks Hall Estate was in the Domesday Book of 1086 – that's just short of 1,000 years ago. Apparently, the estate was rented by a Norman named Nigel – or was it a Nigel named Norman?!

Share the scare!

Why not spook us on social media by sending us your spine-chilling tale?