



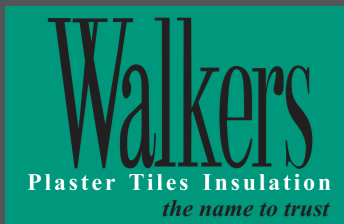
more than
just Tiles...



professional tradespeople
with superior workmanship



- Ceramic
- Mosaics
- Porcelain
- Glass tiles
- All natural stones
- Pebbles



Phone 5222 1255
fax 5222 1745
93 West Fyans St, Newtown
Mon to Fri 7am-5pm Sat 7am-noon

www.fcwalker.com.au



A night with the ghostbusters

At the Old Geelong Gaol, Sarah Bieske is game – but only just – for some spirited research

STANDING in a small, dark, cramped jail cell, surrounded by 20 people and silence, my body can't help but jolt at every creak and groan.

I wait, along with everyone else, not knowing exactly what we're supposed to feel or what we're looking for.

Heavy breathing breaks the quiet, then a gasp of shock, or perhaps recognition.

A woman to my right screams. She can sense the spirit we've been summoning. A man in his 20s, she says hurriedly, before escaping in a sweat to the open spaces of the outside corridor.

Everyone else is left still standing in the cell, all a little unsure of what has just happened and all feeling freaked out.

We're at Old Geelong Gaol close to midnight on a Saturday and we're on the hunt for ghosts.

aged women from the previous tour group trembled past me in the jail's forecourt vowing never to return, I started to think maybe this ghost tour thing wasn't for me.

My curious friend, on the other hand, is keen to find out what it was that made those women tremble, so I followed him, closely, inside.

After the 70 or so of us were split into three groups, we gathered in the courtyard, where we were introduced to Gary, Australian Ghost Adventures' resident ghostbuster.

He breaks the ice – and settles our nerves – by showing off his ghost-busting tools.

No, he doesn't have the vacuum packs they carried in the movie, but his gear is every bit as cool.

From thermal imaging cameras to electro-magnetic sources and infra-red thermometers, he's got every base covered if we happen

Our group seems to be fairly spirit-resistant, except for Maree, who grabs at her arm in pain. She says she felt a sharp poke, like a needle, in her upper arm.

I've seen the movie and sung the song plenty of times.

But I've got to say, right now, even with a real-life ghostbuster close by, I am feeling a touch afraid of those ghosts.

Before I arrived for tonight's tour, I made myself a promise not to get too caught up in the whole concept of ghost hunting.

It's not that I don't believe – in fact I'm quite open to the idea of a spirit world.

But I scare easily. Very easily. So when group of ashen-faced mature-

to stumble across anything paranormal.

We set off on our hunt, hoping to detect cold energies – apparently, spirits emit an electro-magnetic field and Gary has come across plenty in his 25 years in the business.

His fascination with the paranormal started out as just that.

But after experiencing things that couldn't be explained, he turned to science.

"I work with alternative people as well as scientific people," he says.

"For me, I just found that there were a lot



Photographs: BRAD WILSON

of things happening, but no one could explain why.

"We have an idea of what ghosts can and can't do, being an energy and so forth, and there are more and more ideas for equipment all the time, so we're opening new doors."

He leads us to a cell on the second level of the jail and tells us to go in. But he waits on the outside.

"You couldn't pay me to go in there," he says, after we have already stepped inside.

The story goes that two men died in that very cell back at the turn of the century. And Gary reckons he's met one of them.

"I never go in there," he says. "I was in there one night and I was sitting down and some kind of force lifted my head and pushed it back into the brick wall. I haven't been back in there since."

Much to my disappointment, I don't feel or sense anything other than a mild case of claustrophobia.

Next up is Ron, the sceptic. That's right – this tour guide is not sold on the whole idea of ghosts or spirits or the paranormal world. But what he does know is he has seen and felt some pretty spooky things.

"There's one section of Old Geelong Gaol that at night, when I clean up and pack up after a tour, you do feel some sort of a presence," he says.

"I just might be a bit more rational about it than others. But I have definitely felt some strange things over the years, that's for sure."

The third tour guide is Cherie, a medium who has been doing spirit readings for more than 18 years.

She says that after her first visit to the Old Geelong Gaol, she left unsure of what she was picking up on.

"I got female and freedom, a real sense of freedom and logically it didn't make sense," she says. "But later I was told the building was an industrial school for women and children in the 1800s."

"Nuns used to take them in and look after them while the men and sons were out looking for gold."

It's with Cherie that we're standing in the small, dark, cramped cell.

We slowly file out, still in silence after Maree's spirit vision.

We walk along a narrow upstairs corridor.

Cherie says it's not uncommon to feel resistance as you make the walk to the other side of the building.

At that, I stumble, a little off balance, into the wall. Was I pushed? I can't be sure, but more than likely it was just me being clumsy.

The last room we enter is one of the biggest in the gaol and also the room where most of the spirit connections are made.

Our group seems to be fairly spirit-resistant, except for Maree, who grabs at her arm in pain. She says she felt a sharp poke, like a needle, in her upper arm.

But there was no one, at least not visible, standing near her.

Cherie says it's normal that some are more sensitive to spirits than others.

Me, I think I'm immune.

I leave, still unsure whether I'm a believer or a sceptic.

The ghosts sure didn't want to talk to me tonight. But I do know who I'll call if I ever see one.

The next ghost tours at Old Geelong Gaol are on tonight at 7.30pm, 9.30pm and 11.15pm.

To book visit www.ausghosts.com