A REAL GHOST
The Binstead Haunting Re-Visited

Introduced and Annotated by Edward MacDonald

Binstead

Tree-shrouded and years- laden, Binstead House sits alone on a gentle swell of land overlooking the Hillsborough River in Marshfield. It is invisible from the highway. Only by following along a long clay lane can you catch glimpses through the leaves of white walls and shuttered windows. When constructed, some 150 years ago, Binstead was deep in the countryside, four dusty miles from Charlottetown.

In recent decades, though, the city has been creeping ever closer and now, modern subdivisions inch their way across the fields from St. Peter's Road towards the estate. But they keep their distance still, and the open fields somehow preserve the illusion of isolation.

A century's worth of renovations and additions masks the original architecture of the early-19th century building. Nevertheless, it remains a handsome house behind its palisade of hardwood trees. Nothing about it — except, perhaps, its age — suggests that Binstead was ever haunted.

It was.

This is the story of that haunting.

Introduction: A Tale for the Telling

Hauntings on Prince Edward Island have a habit of happening to someone else, at indefinable times, in houses that no longer exist or locales that have changed utterly. The ghost stories are handed down and around and embellished and refined until they are as much art as history. They become the stuff of folklore — and very important stuff at that. Meanwhile, the essential, underlying facts of the case tend to lose themselves in the story.

But sometimes, just sometimes, we meet someone who has encountered the supernatural firsthand, someone observant, reliable, and, perhaps, a little skeptical. Their accounts are concrete and specific, tied to times and places, people and events. They are reporting, not story-telling, and the result is often eerier than the best-told tale of the supernatural. It is also, to some extent, at least, verifiable. Such is the case with the strange occurrences at Binstead House in Marshfield, Prince Edward Island during the third quarter of the 19th century.

What follows is a rare firsthand account of the Binstead haunting. It was written by a woman who seemed perfectly willing to believe in the supernatural and published by a scholarly Society that was prepared to take her seriously. In providing names, dates, and details, she gives us the opportunity to examine an Island ghost story in its context and to do, as it were, an autopsy of the case. This is more revealing than one might think. Although the Binstead Ghost seems to have gone about its haunting quite oblivious to the current state of the world, the woman who observed it was very much a product of her times, and that fact definitely affected why and how she reported what she saw. There is, then, more than one story to be told here. The first concerns the narrator.

The Ghost Writer and Her Times

The haunting at Binstead was recounted by Mrs. Arthur Pennée, a respectable English matron of good Victorian stock. We know little enough about her or her husband; we know a good deal more about her family. Her father, William Ward (1787-1849), had been a Director of the Bank of England and a deeply conservative Tory MP for London. (A touch of historical whimsy: he was also one of his era’s most celebrated cricketers.) The eldest of her four brothers, William George Ward (1812-1882) gained a different sort of notoriety. He began his career as a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford and in 1840, was ordained an Anglican priest.

To his family’s dismay, he became a leading figure in the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, was degraded from his university degrees for his heretical views, and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845. A colleague of Cardinals Newman, Manning, and Wiseman, “Ideal Ward” left his mark as an outspokenly conservative, Catholic theologian and philosopher.

What effect all of this had on Ward’s sister is unknown. Her family’s prominence (another brother, Rev. Arthur B. Ward, had a distinguished career at Cambridge University) does suggest, however, that she was a woman of good breeding and social standing. She was born Georgina Mary Ward. It is typical of the Victorian era that she is remembered only by her husband’s name. She married Arthur Pennée (or Penny) in 1850. He appears to have been one of those Victorian gentlemen of indeterminate occupation. In the summer of 1855, he brought his wife and servant to Prince Edward Island. Six years later, they moved on to St. Anne de Beaupré, Quebec.

William George Ward spent his declining years at his estate, Weston
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A Real Ghost!

The English Society for Psychical Research is still vigorously pursuing its investigations and is about to publish Part XV. of its proceedings, containing articles on apparitions, duplicate personality, seances with the celebrated medium, D. D. Home, &c. The following case comes from Mr. W. Ward (and Lord Tennyson, for whom it was first committed to writing some years ago). It was sent by Mrs. Pennée, of St. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec, daughter of the late William Ward (a Consecrative M. P. for London), and sister of the late Rev. A. B. Ward, of Cambridge.

A Real Ghost! "A Real Ghost!" was front-page news in the November 28, 1889 Examiner.

Manor, near Freshwater on the Isle of Wight, where he lived, his biographer states, "in the intimate society of his near neighbour", Alfred, Lord Tennyson, English Poet Laureate. It was while visiting her family there, in 1884, that Mrs. Pennée wrote her account of the haunting at Binstead, reputedly at Lord Tennyson's own request. A few years later, W. G. Ward's son, Wilfrid, forwarded her testimony to the English Society for Psychical Research (SPR). Her story served to fatten its growing files on psychic phenomena.

Established in 1882, the Society for Psychical Research was dominated by a group of distinguished scholars and scientists who bound themselves "to examine without prejudice or prepossession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any generally recognized hypothesis." Among its early members, the Society also counted notables like Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone, future Prime Minister Arthur J. Balfour—and Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Their prestige and the professional reputations of the SPR's investigators lent the Society a necessary measure of credibility.

Although its approach was self-consciously scientific, the SPR's inspiration was essentially religious. Distressed at how recent scientific developments were undermining orthodox religion, many of the Society's founders sought to employ scientific methods to demonstrate that the world was governed by other forces than just the physical laws of matter and motion. They were determined to be critical and inclined to be cautious, but they were ready to believe.

The SPR tackled its self-appointed task with tremendous energy during the 1880s, investigating several categories of psychic phenomena (and exposing many frauds in the process). One of the SPR's activities was the systematic collection of case histories from persons that had encountered apparitions firsthand. Each was carefully classified and analyzed. Among them was Mrs. Pennée's account of the Binstead haunting.

Pennée's testimony was published in the SPR's Proceedings for July, 1889 as part of a report somewhat ponderously titled "On Recognized Apparitions Occurring More than a Year after Death." On November 28, 1889, the Charlotetown Daily Examiner published the account verbatim (with a short introduction) under the headline "A Real Ghost!"

As befits a report to a scientific society, Mrs. Pennée's account is relatively straightforward, even understated. Only in seeking to explain what she observed does she slip into lurid Victorian melodrama. This is what the Daily Examiner published:

A Real Ghost!

"It was in the year 1856 that my husband took me to live at a house called Binstead, about five miles from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. It was a good sized house, and at the back had been considerably extended to allow of extra offices, since there were..."
about two hundred acres of farm land around it, necessitating several resident farming men. Although forming part of the house these premises could only be entered through the inner kitchen, as no wall had ever been broken down to form a door or passage from up stairs. Thus the farming men’s sleeping rooms were adjacent to those occupied by the family and visitors, although there was no communication through the upstairs corridor.

It was always in or near the sleeping apartment immediately adjacent to the men’s that the apparition was seen, and, as that was one of our spare bedrooms, it may have frequently been unperceived.

About ten days after we had established ourselves at Binstead we commenced hearing strange noises. For many weeks they were of very frequent occurrence and were heard simultaneously in every part of the house, and always appeared to be in close proximity to each person. The noise was more like a rambling, which made the house vibrate, like that produced by dragging a heavy body, which one so often hears in ghost stories.

As spring came on we began to hear shrieks which would grow fainter or louder, as if some one was being chased around the house, but always culminating in a volley of shrieks, sob, moans, and half-uttered words, proceeding from beneath a tree that stood at a little distance from the dining room window, and whose branches nearly touched the window of the bedroom I have mentioned.

It was in February (I think), 1857, that the first apparition came under my notice. Two ladies were sleeping in the bedroom. Of course, for that season of the year a fire had been lighted in the grate, and the fireplace really contained a grate and not an American substitute for one.

About two o’clock Mrs. M. was awakened by a bright light which pervaded the room. She saw a woman standing by the fireplace. On her left arm was a young baby, and with her right hand she was stirring the ashes, over which she was slightly stooping.

Mrs. M. pushed Miss C. to awaken her, and just then the figure turned her face toward them, disclosing the features of quite a young woman with a singularly anxious pleading look upon her face. They took notice of a little check shawl which was crossed over her bosom. Miss C. had previously heard some tales concerning the house being haunted (which neither Mrs. M. nor I had ever heard), so jumping to the conclusion that she beheld a ghost she screamed and pulled the bed clothes tightly over the heads of herself and her companion, so that the sequel of the ghost’s proceedings is unknown.

The following spring I went home to England, and just before starting I had my own experience of seeing a ghost. I had temporarily established myself in the room and one evening, finding my little daughter (now Mrs. Amyot) far from well, had her bed wheeled in beside mine that I might attend to her. About twelve o’clock I got up to give her some medicine, and was feeling for the matches when she called my attention to a brilliant light shining under the door. I exclaimed that it was her papa, and threw open the door to admit him. I found myself face to face with a woman. She had a baby on her left arm, a check shawl crossed over her bosom, and all around her shone a bright, pleasant light, whence emanating I could not say. Her look at me was one of entreaty — almost agonizing entreaty. She did not enter the room but moved across the staircase, vanishing into the opposite wall, exactly where the inner man’s servants [sic] room was situated.

Neither my daughter nor myself felt the slightest alarm; at that moment it appeared to be a matter of common occurrence. When Mr. Penée came up stairs and I told him what we had seen he examined the wall, the staircase, the passage, but found no traces of anything extraordinary. Nor did my dogs bark.

On my return from England in 1858 I was informed that “the creature had been carrying on,” but it was the screams that had been the worst. However, Harry (a farm servant) had had several visits, but would tell no particulars. I never could get Harry to tell me much. He acknowledged that the woman had several times stood at the foot of his bed, but he would not tell me more. One night Harry had certainly been much disturbed in mind, and the other man heard voices and sob’s. Nothing would ever induce Harry to let anyone share his room, and he was most careful to fasten his door before retiring. At the time I attached no importance to “his ways,” as we called them.

In the autumn of the following year, 1859, my connection with Binstead ceased, for we gave up the house and returned to Charlottetown. I left Prince Edward Island in 1861, and went to Quebec. In 1877 I happened to return to the Island, and spent several months there. One day I was at the Bishop’s residence, when the parish priest came in with a letter in his hand. He asked me about my residence at Binstead, and whether I could throw any light on the contents of his letter. It was from the wife of the then owner of Binstead, asking him to come out and try to deliver them from the ghost of a young woman with a baby in her arms, who had appeared several times.

After I went to live in Charlottetown I became acquainted with the following facts, which seem to throw light on my ghost story. The ground on which Binstead stood had been cleared in about 1840 by a rich Englishman, who had built a very nice house. Getting tired of colonial life, he sold the property to a man whose name I forget, but I will call Pigott (that was like the name). He was a man of low tastes and immoral habits, but a capital farmer. It was he who added all the back wing of the house and made the necessary divisions, etc., for farming the land. He had two sisters in his service, the daughters of a laborer who lived in a regular hovel about three miles nearer town. After a time each sister gave birth to a boy.

Very little can be learned of the domestic arrangements, since Pigott bore so bad a name that the house was avoided by respectable people; but it is certain that one sister and one baby disappeared altogether, though when and how is a complete mystery.

When the other baby was between one and two years old Pigott [sic] sold Binstead to an English gentleman named Fellowes, from whom we hired it, with the intention of eventually buying it. The other sister returned to her father’s house, and leaving the baby with Mrs. Newbury, her mother, went to the States and has never returned. Before leaving she would reveal nothing, except that the boy was her sister’s, her own being dead. It was this very Harry Newbury that we had unwittingly engaged as farm servant.

He came to bid me farewell a few months after I left Binstead saying he would never return there. In 1877 I inquired about him, and found that he had never been seen since in Prince Edward Island.

The SPR’s Proceedings included two addenda, which the Daily Examiner did not print. In a letter dated September 24, 1887, Mrs. Penée added:

‘Another fact has come to my notice. A young lady, then a child of from 5 to 10, remembers being afraid of sleeping alone when on a visit at Binstead on account of the screams she heard outside, and also the “woman with a baby,” whom she saw passing through her room. Her experience goes back some 10 to 15 years before mine.’

The SPR also cited the contents of a second letter, dated St. Anne de Beau Pré, January 23, 1889, which stated:


(1) Mrs. Pennée interviewed Father Boudreault, the priest sent for by the C. family to exorcise the house. Father B., however, was on his death-bed; and although he remembered the fact that he had been sent for to Binstead for this purpose, he could not recollect what had been told him as to apparitions, etc.

(2) Mrs. M., who first saw the figure, has gone to England, and cannot now be traced. Mrs. Pennée adds: 'The lady in question told several people that she saw a woman with a baby in her arms when she slept at Binstead; and, like myself, she noticed a frilled cap on the woman. The woman whose ghost we imagine this to be was an Irish woman, and perhaps you have noticed their love of wide frills in their head-gear.'

(3) Mrs. Pennée revisited Binstead in 1888, and says, 'The tree whence the screams started is cut down; the room where all saw the ghost is totally uninhabited; and Mrs. C. would not let us stay in it, and entreated us to talk no further on the subject. From the man we got out a little, but she followed us up very closely. He says that since the priest blessed the house a woman has been seen (or said to have been seen, he corrected himself) round the front entrance, and once at an upper window.'

There, apparently, Mrs. Pennée's investigations ended.

A Tale of Mystery and Imagination

Reaction to "A Real Ghost" was swift and disapproving. On December 2, 1889, the Daily Examiner carried an invidious letter from Marshfield native D. Ferguson (probably the Hon. late Senator, Donald Ferguson). "If Mrs. Pennée's ghost story is no nearer the truth than what she is pleased to call 'facts', relating to the life and character of a previous occupant of Binstead, to whom she applies the fictitious name of Pigott," he wrote, "all I can say is that it is entitled to no credence whatever." He continued:

'Having known Binstead House and its occupants for over forty years, I am in a position to deny most emphatically the statement made regarding the party who sold it to Mr. Fellowes. This man, though not without his faults, will long be remembered by his old neighbors for his genuine goodness of heart. The insinuations of immorality and crime made by Mrs. Pennée regarding his domestic life at Binstead, are wholly without foundation. The statement that the house bore so bad a name at this time that it was avoided by respectable people, is grossly false. That household was presided over by a high-minded, Christian woman, and the character of the place and its visitors, during these years, will not suffer by comparison with the period when Mrs. Pennée's family were in occupation of the same house.'

Because he quarrelled with part of Mrs. Pennée's account, Ferguson discredited her entire story. This was not really fair. As Guy W. Lambert, a modern president of the SPR has observed, the 'average' ghost story consists of two elements: the account of the experience and the interpretation of it, sometimes during the process of observation, sometimes later. "The second stage is where most stories go astray," Lambert notes, "and the account becomes coloured by superstition and fanciful theories." This is precisely the problem Ferguson identified with Pennée's account. In interpreting what she saw, Mrs. Pennée slips into the quicksand of hearsay. Just how accurate is the background she provides for the strange phenomena she witnessed at Binstead? A dissection of the case provides some of the answers. It also involves some history.

In many respects, Mrs. Pennée's explanation was only as good as the information given her. On some counts, at least, she was reasonably well informed. The earliest record of the Binstead estate is a 1,000 year lease granted in 1807 by James Montgomery, Baronet, and Robert Montgomery, Esq. to one James Robertson. Charlottetown merchant Ewan Cameron purchased the lease in 1816. In June, 1832, the property, then known as Fasfern Farm, was offered for sale by his widow, Mrs. Jane Cameron. The eventual buyer was an English gentleman, John Livett, Esq. - the "rich Englishman" of Mrs. Pennée's narrative. By the following year, he had constructed a handsome pavilion-roofed dwelling house which he named "Binstead." (Again Mrs. Pennée's narrative is correct.) In 1838, he was appointed to the Island's Legislative Council, an indication of his standing in the community.

Why Livett disposed of Binstead is unknown. Perhaps, as Mrs. Pennée maintains, he did tire of colonial life. When the 1841 census was being com-

*Lambert is quoted in Leonard R. N. Ashley's introduction to a re-print edition of the SPR's Phantoms of the Living (1886), published by Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints (Gainesville, Fla.) in 1970.
ried, he was still living at Binstead but in May, 1842, he sold the property. Mrs. Pennée claims to have forgotten the next owner’s name, referring to him as “Mr. Pigot.” More likely, she deliberately concealed it, since she was determined to attribute the haunting to his rumoured misdeeds. There is no doubt, however, about the man’s identity. His name was Charles Braddock.

Charles Braddock was born in 1813, the youngest son of Samuel Clark Braddock and the grandson of Samuel Braddock, an immigrant from Chedleston, County Stafford in England. Four of Charles’s seven siblings died before they reached the age of 35, and in the end it was Charles who inherited Nan’s Villa, the family’s 240 acre estate in Charlottetown’s East Royalty, adjacent to Binstead. Three days after purchasing the lease on Binstead, Braddock sold Nan’s Villa to John Grubb of Charlottetown. His precise reason for exchanging Nan’s Villa for Binstead instead is unclear, but he realized a substantial profit through the transactions. (He bought Binstead for £1,450 and sold Nan’s Villa for £3,800.)

The evidence suggests that Braddock was a man of some means. He owned property on Lot 48, and during the 1840s, he dabbled in shipbuilding, constructing at least three vessels for the Newfoundland market. (Two of his sons, incidentally, would follow the sea, one to his death.) He also held shares in the Prince Edward Island Steam Navigation Company.

In September, 1849, Charles Braddock sold Binstead to one Robert Albion Fellowes, Esq. Thereafter, his fortunes appear to have declined. He apparently used the proceeds from the sale of Binstead to acquire the lease on “St. Cuthberts,” a 138 acre farm a little east of Binstead. (Indeed, he appeared to have been living there while the Pennées were renting his former home.) Before long, it was heavily mortgaged, and in 1859 he was compelled to sell the estate to settle his debts. When the 1861 census was taken, Braddock was still renting property in Lot 34. Death found him living with his wife and son, Horatio, at Scotchfort, Lot 36 on May 19, 1881. The death notice is cryptic only for those who seek riddles: “He trusted in the merits of his redeemer, and in his last conflict had victory.”

Braddock’s successor at Binstead, Robert Fellowes, was not, it would seem, much interested in the business of farming. (In the colonial census the previous year, he had listed his occupation as “gentleman.”) By 1854, he was offering the estate for sale or lease but there were no takers until the Pennées rented it in 1856, after coming out to Charlottetown the previous August. On their departure in 1859, Fellowes again took up residence after trying unsuccessfully to sell or let the property. In 1867, he finally disposed of Binstead for the sum of £1100 to John Clark Binns. Ultimately, it passed to William Carey, the “C.” family of Mrs. Pennée’s addendum, who requested a rite of exorcism while she was visiting Charlottetown in 1877.

As with other firsthand details in her account, Mrs. Pennée’s version of the exorcism incident is correct in those details, at least, which can be verified. Considering her brother’s prominence in the Roman Catholic Church, it is no surprise to find Mrs. Pennée visiting the Bishop of Charlottetown in 1877. Her “Father Boudreault,” was likely Father Charles Nazaire Boudreault, a native of the Magdalen Islands, who spent three years at the Cathedral parish after his ordination in May, 1876. And he was, indeed, on his deathbed when Mrs. Pennée returned again to Prince Edward Island in 1888. In fact, he would die in January, 1889 after a long illness. There is no way to tell from existing Church records if an exorcism was ever performed at Binstead.

**Murder Most Foul?**

What transpired at Binstead during Braddock’s tenancy can only be conjectured. Working backwards from the date of his departure, 1849, the terrible but unnamed incident that allegedly gave rise to the haunting would have occurred sometime around 1847 or 1848. Although she stops short of saying so, Mrs. Pennée clearly implies that Braddock kept the two serving girls as mistresses, that both had illegitimate babies, and that one sister and one child came to a violent end at Binstead and were buried under a tree beside the house. Her hypothesis is highly melodramatic, entirely in harmony with ghost story traditions, and virtually
untestable. Yet some observations may be made.

While it would satisfy the traditional ghost story's penchant for the macabre if Charles Braddock were the ogre that Mrs. Pennée makes of him, the recorded reality of his domestic arrangements seems to have been rather more respectable than the account given Mrs. Pennée. Braddock had a wife, Margaret (who, incidentally, would outlive him, dying only a few months before the Daily Examiner published Mrs. Pennée's narrative) and a sizable family of his own, at least four of whom were born during the seven years he resided at Binstead.

Donald Ferguson admitted that Braddock was not without his faults. In a manuscript history of Marshfield, William Bannerman Robertson goes further. "Charles Braddock Sr.," he writes, "was much addicted to the use of intoxicants but otherwise was a good neighbour." Here, perhaps, lies part of the explanation for Braddock's sagging fortunes, and for the bad reputation Mrs. Pennée attaches to him.

Another small point: a baby did die at Binstead during Charles Braddock's tenancy. On March 16, 1849, the Islander recorded the death two nights earlier of "George Whelock Braddock, youngest son of Charles Braddock, aged one year and four months." No inquest was required. Another son born later the same year (the year, incidentally, that Charles Braddock gave up Binstead) was named for his dead brother. Was this the seed of the elaborate story repeated by Mrs. Pennée?

The other key figures in Mrs. Pennée's narrative are the "Newbury" family. Two Newbury sisters are the victims of Braddock's supposed immorality, and one of them's son, Harry, is a reluctant witness to the later apparitions. The 1848 census lists only a "Newberry" family in the vicinity of Binstead, that of farmer Thomas Newberry in Charlottetown Royalty. Upon his death in 1850, however, he left considerably more property than the "regular hovel" Mrs. Pennée mentions. Nor were any of his four daughters old enough to have figured in a scenario such as she outlines. The eldest was only four when her father died. Unless some other, unrecorded Newberry family were involved, this is a serious blow to Mrs. Pennée's story. Even more damaging, because it relates to her firsthand experience, is the fact that the extant records contain no Harry Newberry (or Newbury), although Thomas Newberry did leave the sum of £5 to one Harry Hobbs, to be paid when he reached the age of 21. That Harry Newbury fails to turn up in surviving records does not necessarily mean that he never existed —

according to Mrs. Pennée, he did, after all, emigrate to the United States around the time she left Binstead and the documentary record for the period is spotty — but lack of confirmation of his identity serves to undermine her whole testimony. Strangely, Mrs. Pennée's addendum states that the woman whose ghost she saw was Irish yet Newbury does not seem to have been an Irish name. (Thomas Newberry's family, incidentally, were all born on Prince Edward Island.)

There is another, possibly unrelated detail, and it concerns Braddock's successor at Binstead, Robert A. Fellowes, Esquire (as he liked to style himself). When David Lawson came to Binstead in 1861 to take down information for that year's census, he found Mr. Fellowes most unco-operative. Lawson appended this note to the returns for Lot 34:

With respect to the first name on page 3 viz. Robert A. Fellowes — that individual at first refused to answer all my questions, saying that he would give an acct. of his farm and stock but that it was positively iniquitous [sic] to pry into a man's domestic concerns, and then added that he would give a return such as he could swear to — the net of bushes of produce retd. [returned] by him from a farm of 130 Acres of arable land is I believe far under the mark, and his return therefore so far in my estimation is not reliable and correct.

Why would Fellowes be so unfavourable about his "domestic concerns," then apparently lie about the very thing he professed not to mind addressing? His odd behavior adds another small enigma to the many which surround the Binstead haunting.

The Haunted, Haunting Kind

What happened at Binstead? This question is actually two. Was there a haunting? And, if so, what caused it? Mrs. Pennée had no doubts on the first score and passed straight on to the second question. We cannot be so trusting. Even modern scholars of the paranormal caution that easy credibility is more damaging to study of the subject that incredulity. Much hinges on Mrs. Pennée's character. Although other people are said to have observed the apparition, we must depend on Mrs. Pennée's word on that score. It is tempting to dismiss her testimony if for no other reason than because her explanation for the haunt-

ing seems so implausible. Extant information does not strengthen her case but it does not convincingly disprove it either. And Mrs. Pennée seems a credible witness. Her credentials are impeccable; she is obviously an intelligent woman; she does not seem given to irrationality; and she has no apparent motive for fabricating a story. Where the details of her story can be checked (hearsay excepted), it is accurate. The most serious challenge to her credibility is the absence of Harry Newbury from contemporary records, and while he does not exist there, that by no means proves that he never existed at all.

Certainly, the SPR took Mrs. Pennée seriously. The details of her story coincided with the most convincing cases culled from the Society's files on apparitions. After re-printing Mrs. Pennée's account, the author of the SPR report observed, "The list of cases cited in this and the previous paper, while insufficient ... to compel conviction, is striking enough to plead for serious attention to a subject which will never be properly threshed out unless the interest taken in it assumes a scientific rather than an emotional form." Members of the Society themselves disagreed about the existence of apparitions but many shared the opinion expressed in 1883 by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, an SPR authority on "phantasms of the dead":

I can only say that having made every effort ... to exercise a reasonable skepticism. I yet do not feel equal to the degree of unbelief in human testimony necessary to avoid accepting at least provisionally the conclusion that there are, in a certain sense, haunted houses, i.e., that there are houses in which similar quasi-human apparitions have occurred at different times to different inhabitants, under circumstances which exclude the hypothesis of suggestion or expectation.

Binstead was regarded as such a house.

Unless Mrs. Arthur Pennée — and others — were hallucinating or unless she deliberately fabricated an elaborate hoax, she appears to have seen something which could not, and cannot, be explained. While a great many details can be verified, investigation of the phenomena raises almost as many questions as it answers, and speculation about causes, while titillating, is unfruitful. The loose ends of the ghost story cannot be neatly tied together as in the hauntings of fiction. The mystery remains; Binstead keeps its secrets still.
Afterword

Mrs. Pennée's account of the Binstead haunting has already appeared once in print. James E. Harris excerpted the Daily Examiner's account for Folklore of Prince Edward Island back in the 1960s. That is where I first read it. The redoubtable Irene Rogers called upon her encyclopedic knowledge of Charlottetown and area to guide me to the original newspaper account, and furnished much valuable information about the house and grounds from her own files. Staff genealogist Orlo Jones helped me research the people involved and contributed to the article in many small ways. Leo Cheverie of the Robertson Library, University of Prince Edward Island lent assistance above and beyond the call of duty. My wife, Sheila Lund MacDonald, proved an intrepid co-investigator. Finally, the Durdens, who now call Binstead home, and Mr. Harold Heartz, who once did, have given their keen interest and gracious cooperation to the project.

The memory of the Binstead ghost lingers only faintly in the community of Marshfield. Ownership of the house eventually passed (around 1890) to the Heartz family, after whom it came to be called over the course of their generations-long occupancy. A surviving family member recalls hearing about a "hearsay" story and a proposed newspaper account as a child in the early decades of this century, but neither he nor his five brothers and sisters ever saw or heard anything unearthly while they were growing up in the house. Nor have the present residents ever been troubled by the supernatural. The "Real Ghost" has once again acquired an air of unreality.

Sources

Besides those mentioned in the text, the sources for the annotation included the usual stock in trade of the genealogist: the extensive files of the Genealogy Department at the Prince Edward Island Museum & Heritage Foundation (where a copy of William Bannerman Robertson's manuscript history of Marshfield is stored), census records, land registry files, wills, contemporary newspapers, Meacham's 1880 Atlas of Prince Edward Island, Assembly Journals, personal interviews. Further background on the Ward family came from entries in the Dictionary of National Biography and the Isle of Wight County and Diocesan Record Office.