

TOP SIX...

Ghostly hot spots

1 Adelaide Arcade: Just off Rundle Mall, the ornate arcade is said to be haunted by a man called Beadle. In the early 20th century Beadle, the Arcade's resident caretaker, was killed when his head was mutilated in the building's electricity generator. It was a grizzly end for the man. Ever since, there have been intermittent reports of sightings, strange noises including footsteps and objects being moved.

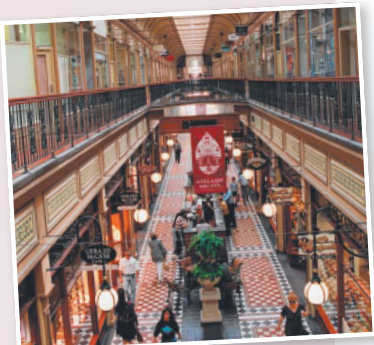
2 Old Adelaide Gaol: From unexplained lights to doors slamming, apparitions of guards and footsteps on stairs, this is one haunted place. Over the years it was operating, 45 people were executed by hanging – do some of those spirits stalk the tiny cells?

3 Kapunda: This is reportedly Australia's most haunted town... and this has led to a fair bit of vandalism from rogue ghost hunters over the years. The ruins of the former girls' reformatory, the cemetery and the St John's Church are all said to be haunted. There are ghostly rumours circulating – including one about an 18-year-old girl in the reformatory called Ruby Bland who died in hospital in 1909. According to official records she died of complications from a gallstone operation. But rumour has whipped this story into a tale about a girl who died when she was forced to have an abortion after the resident priest fathered the baby.

4 Old Spot Hotel: Rumour has it that this hotel – built in the 1830s – was also once the morgue and on November 2, 1993, Scott Pearson, a professional photographer, snapped what appears to be a ghost – a white, shadowy figure. Police forensics and photographic experts have all described the picture as “unexplainable”.

5 Pioneer Village, Tailem Town: This is Australia's largest pioneer village and contains 110 buildings, including churches and pubs. Many unexplained things have been happening: shadowy figures in the church, unexplained noises and EVP – electronic voice phenomena. Apparently, every horror movie could be filmed here.

6 Migration Museum: On Kintore Ave in the city, the Migration Museum was once the Destitute Asylum (from 1850s until 1917). Today, ghosts are said to still wander the building's staircase. One story goes that late one night, one of the museum's graphic designers saw a ghost sitting on the staircase dressed in a grey uniform.



Adelaide Arcade



Sixth sense



LIZ
WALSH

THERE she is; standing on the side of Anzac Highway covered in blood and desperately needing help. It looks like she has been in a car accident, but there is no wreck nearby. The young woman is wandering aimlessly along the road when two good Samaritans travelling towards Glenelg pull over to help. She gets in the backseat and the couple decides to take her to the nearest hospital.

They ask the woman where she lives, but she never answers them. When they turn around to see if she is all right... she is gone. Completely – and utterly – vanished. And the phantom hitchhiker of Anzac Highway has struck again.

For the people who have reported this happening, the experience of seeing her has been nothing short of terrifying.

“Ninety-nine per cent of your breathing, waking life is a familiar journey,” explains modern-day psychic Rebecca Dettman. “So when you hear, smell, taste or touch something that is not of this world, you know it and your whole body goes into animal mode; it's like you connect with your primal instinct. It's hard to describe.”

Alison Oborn is a paranormal researcher; a woman intent on finding evidence that ghosts really do exist. She has never seen the Anzac Highway hitchhiker, but she has had too many other strange, spooky and unexplainable encounters to ignore. And as the co-founder of South Australia's Paranormal Field Investigators team – a small but dedicated group of paranormal researchers – she is desperate to explain the unexplainable.

Oborn has been interested in the paranormal since her childhood spent growing up in a purported haunted house in England.

Love brought her to Adelaide and here, in the City of Churches, her love of the paranormal has thrived. You see, we are on fertile ghost ground.

The Anzac Highway hitchhiker is one of thousands of ghosts across the state who are said to wander and haunt our streets, churches, pubs, houses, old jails and other historic sites.

Oborn has sensed an angry presence standing next to her at the ruins of the former girls' reformatory at Kapunda (reportedly Australia's most haunted town), seen shadowy figures inside the church at the pioneer village in Tailem Town, been walked through by a presence at the Old Adelaide Gaol, been spoken to by a ghost called Jack in an old pub at Tailem Town and has been walked past. She's seen doors open by themselves, heard footsteps, unexplained creaking and felt like she was being watched.

Dettman says there are more exorcisms, house-clearings and ghost sightings going on in SA than the average person would realise.

“There are priests out there who have very colourful stories to tell, if only you could hear them,” she says. “And they are going out to the houses in Adelaide and across Australia and they are exorcising demons and spirits quite regularly.”

And according to the 31-year-old, South Australia is more sensitive to the spiritual and ghostly aspects of life than other Australian states.

“Let me say this as a spiritual person: Adelaide has a very interesting spiritual energy. It's been called the Crystal City, in part because there's a lot of quartz crystal to be dug up under the ground here and crystal is a conductor of energy... But there is something about Adelaide that really intensifies energies.

“In a spiritual sense, a lot of people will say

they come to Adelaide or live in Adelaide when they want to sort out heavy emotional issues.”

Dettman is a new age psychic. Gone are the stereotypical crushed velvet purple cape and the all-seeing crystal ball and in are the funky cocktail parties, pod casts and ABNs.

Apart from her psychic readings, workshops, blessings and occasional “house clearings”, Dettman runs *Psyched in Stilettos*, a blog that details the latest spiritual trends and cosmic news. The former journalist has been able to “download spiritual information” since childhood and has seen and sensed ghosts throughout her life.

Now living in an 1860s cottage in the Adelaide Hills, she has come face-to-face with a number of ghosts – one spirit, who used to live in the house, has even told her to plant carrots in her garden. She has done as she was told.

It's creepy when you really start to think about it, but it is Oborn's belief that the Old Adelaide Gaol – built in 1841 and decommissioned in 1988 – is haunted. Located in the northwestern corner of the Adelaide Parklands, it has stark, small cells, some with graffiti on the walls – a lasting reminder of the men who lived in these cramped conditions. There's barbed wire. A hanging tower and also trap door. Burial sites for the executed. And metal staircases.

It's no wonder that ghost tours have been running there for years.

“We've just had so much happen that we couldn't rationalise or explain, which is why – eight years after first starting investigations – we're still there,” Oborn says of her PFI investigations. The unexplainable happenings she talks of include video footage of a heavy, steel door opening and closing on its own, lights flashing inside electricity-free cells and noises of pool balls being played in the dead of night.

“I will always try and find rational explanations to most things,” Oborn says. “But the one I cannot rationalise is when I was taking a tour for two documentary film-makers. We were in the ‘new’ building, but it was still built in the 1870s and there is an old metal staircase there where I stand and tell the stories.

“I'd only just started the story about the apparition of a guard that is seen in here, and as I was

