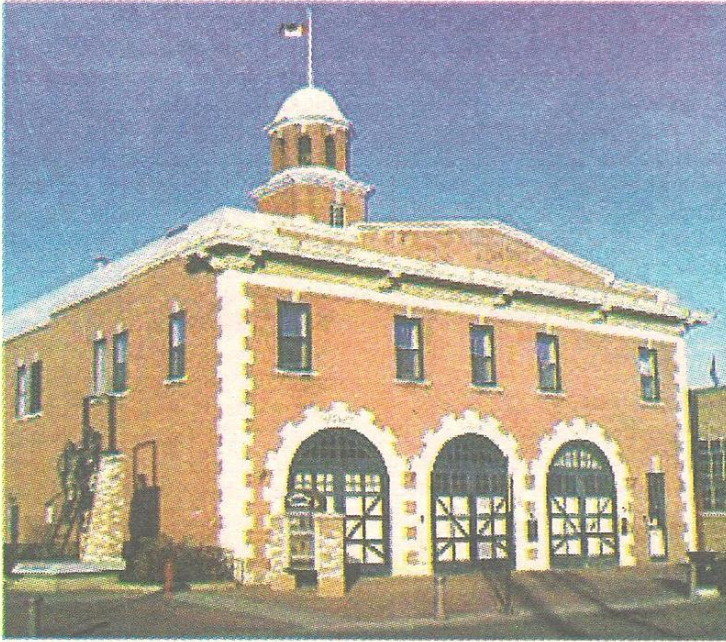


Things That Go Bump In A Canadian Night

by Ronald Wolf



The Walterdale Playhouse, Edmonton Alta.

Theatres and playhouses seem to be a magnet to visitors from the beyond and The Walterdale Playhouse is no stranger to the strange and the paranormal. Since the building is over 100 years old, it is certainly prime for those that bump in the night.

The Walterdale Playhouse was founded in 1959 by the Walterdale Theatre Associates, and it is one of Western Canada's oldest amateur theatre groups. Since 1974 Walterdale Theatre Associates has been located in the heart of Old Strathcona in the oldest fire hall in Alberta. Strathcona Firehall No. 1 (later Edmonton No. 6), which the associates converted into the Walterdale Playhouse.

Built in 1909, the firehall is now designated a Provincial Registered Historical Resource. This venue seats 145. In 1994 the theatre received an award for Outstanding Contribution to the Performing Arts. To those in the Edmonton community it is a

meaningful part of the arts and theatre culture enjoyed within the city.

Walterdale Playhouse (walterdaleplayhouse.com) is one of Western Canada's oldest amateur theatre groups. With the exception of a paid part-time Administrator, Walterdale Playhouse is operated entirely by volunteers with a love of theatre; members of any age and background have the unique opportunity to participate in all aspects of live theatre.

Richard Hatfield, Technical Director, emailed the following experiences he had with the playhouse. Usually when it comes to research I enjoy talking to the witnesses of the paranormal face to face or on the phone. But since time is extremely valuable, email will do in a pinch. Here, in Hatfield's own voice, are his experiences with the unknown. In this case the paranormal is the bumper and he is the bumpee.

As a tech at the Walterdale, I

have had the need to be in the building late with few or no other members of the team with me. While teching a few shows over the years, I was in the building alone quite late. I knew there was no one else in the building, but heard footsteps upstairs. I immediately went upstairs to check, but all the lights were off and no one was in sight.

A more recent unexplained situation was during our last show, "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" that I was stage managing. One night, I heard an excessive amount of moderate to heavy walking upstairs. Since that type of walking could be heard by the audience, I immediately announced over the speaker to the upstairs "Please, walk quiet upstairs!" All of the cast upstairs looked at each other oddly apparently and came up to me at intermission to say, "Everyone was seated for a while before you asked us to be quiet. There was no one walking around at all."

My entire booth crew heard the walking, so I KNOW it was not in my head. Needless to say there was a moment of "ok, well, that's odd..." As to not alarm anyone who may have "issues" with the unexplained, I basically excused it to that cast as "Maybe it was front of house that I heard." Of course there is no way it could have been them since they are on the main floor that is concrete and below where I am seated, not above.

All in all, I have heard some unexplained foot fall (and it is definitely an unmistakable foot fall/walking sound), but other than that, I have had no other experiences with our ghost. Quite frankly, I do not feel uncomfortable at all. If anything, the extra sounds that occur due to our friend from beyond when I am at the theatre after hours is somehow comforting.

When in Alberta, be sure to visit this historic building. When you meet up with a bumper, tell it, or them, Ron sent you.