



## THE BROWN LADY OF RAYNHAM HALL

### SPECIFICATIONS:

**Date:** Sept. 19, 1936

**Location:** Raynham Hall,  
Norfolk, England

**Photographer:** Cap-  
tain Hubert C. Provand  
and Indre Shira, Pho-  
tographers for *Country  
Life Magazine*, London,  
England

**Type Camera:** Unknown

**Other Information:**  
Location has a history  
of paranormal activity.  
Figure had been alleg-  
edly seen before, though  
not since the photo was  
taken.

Perhaps the most famous “ghost photo” ever taken, this highly controversial shot, taken at an English manor in 1936 and allegedly showing the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall descending a staircase, remains among the most thoroughly examined and investigated of them all, giving it a significant pedigree.

What makes it so compelling is that the photo was taken not by a ghost hunter looking to make a name for himself, but by two men sent by a London magazine to take some rather pedestrian shots of the architecture of the building. What’s also interesting about this photograph is that in contrast to most photos in which the figure is not seen until after the film is developed, the spectral figure of a woman descending the stairway was seen seconds before the shutter was snapped by Mister Shi-

ra. (Apparently Colonel Provand never saw the figure at the time because he was preoccupied with setting up for the next shot beneath the camera’s hood and only snapped the shutter upon Mister Shira’s command.)

The negatives for this photo have been scrutinized by literally hundreds of experts (and no small number of skeptics) over the years, and none have been able to find evidence of it being either a hoax or a double exposure. It has been, however, suggested the figure could be the result of a smudged fingerprint or grease of some kind smeared on the lens, though this seems like a stretch to me.

One interesting element usually missed by most observers (and seen only in the full, uncropped photo as shown above) is the free floating dark mass to the left of the spectre just be-

neath the framed photo on the wall. What that might be remains unknown, but it seems considerably less transparent than the other anomaly and every bit as spooky. Certainly, it deserves more careful examination

In any case, the “Brown Lady” remains among the best known and, in the opinion of many, the best spirit photo ever taken.