

**Subject:** Planet Of The Apes. Part 3.

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Subject: Planet Of The Apes. Part 3.  
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This talks about dragons.

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Noting that construction of the tower was halted by the ravages of the B-ack Death (1348-9)-which killed half of the population of Kersey-MacKenzie concluded that the cadets might have seen it as it had been in the aftermath of the plague, when the shell of the half-constructed c-urch would have been hidden by trees. And, since L-ing and C-owley also recalled that the village buildings had glazed windows (a rarity in the Middle Ages), M-cKenzie further suggested that the most likely date was c.1420, when the c-urch remained unfinished, but the village was growing rich from the wool trade. [Kerridge p.5]

It's a great story. But, looked at through the eyes of an historian, is there some other explanation for the events of 1957?

The Bell Inn, Kersey, dates from 1378 and is only one of a number of medieval buildings in the village. Photo: Robert Edwards, made available under CCL

Well, the first thing to say about Kersey is that it is exactly the sort of place that might have confused a group of strangers entering it for the first time. The village is certainly ancient-it was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon will of c.900-and it still boasts a large number of buildings dating from the medieval period, so many that it has become a favorite location for film-makers and is noted, by no less an authority than Nikolaus P-vsner, as "the most picturesque village in South Suffolk." [Pevsner p.290] Among its attractions are the 14th-century Bell Inn and several thatched, half-timbered buildings. It's not hard to imagine that these striking remnants might linger in the memory longer than the more humdrum architecture alongside them, producing, over time, the notion that a witness had visited a place considerably older than expected.

As it turns out, there's also a good explanation for the cadets' failure to notice wires and aerials in Kersey. The village was not hooked up to the mains until the early 1950s, and then only after protests from the Suffolk Preservation Society, which argued strenuously for the preservation of its skyline. [Electrical Review p.414; Electrical Times p.300] The revealing outcome of these protests may be found in the British parliamentary papers of the period, which reported that negotiations have resulted in the overhead line being carried behind the houses on either side of the street and a cable being laid underground at the only point where the street has to be crossed. [Command Papers p.96]

What, though, of the other details? When I first read Ma-Kenzie's account, I was worried by the mention of windows, since glass was expensive, and thus rare, in the 14th and 15th centuries. [Cantor p.139] And while it's possible that Kersey's wealth did make it an exception in this period, one wonders why-if it was wealthy-its houses would have been devoid of furniture. There are other problems with the dating, too, not least the discrepancy between the boys' description (of a settlement abandoned, as it might have been in 1349) and MacK-nzie's "wealthy village" of 1420.

Yet what bothers me most about the cadets' account is something that MacKen-ie never thought about, and that's the question of whether a medieval village would have had a butcher's shop. Such places did exist, but they were found almost exclusively in towns; meat was expensive, which meant that most peasants' diets remained largely vegetarian, and when animals were slaughtered in a village-for a s-ints' day feast, perhaps-they were hard to

keep fresh and would have been consumed immediately. [Mortimer pp.10-13, 93-4] Yes, meat consumption did rise steadily in the late 14th century (from "a tenth or less of the food budget to a quarter or a third of the total"), but the evidence we have suggests that beef was only rarely eaten; in the village of Sedgeford, in nearby Norfolk, only three cattle were slaughtered a year around this time. [Dyer pp.85-6] Sedgeford was only about half the size of Kersey, admittedly, but even so it stretches credulity to imagine a shop with two or three whole ox carcasses in stock as early as 1420, especially when it's remembered that Kersey had its own weekly market, where fresh meat would have been available, and which would have provided fierce competition.

What this suggests, I think, is that the cadets' experience is better explained some other way. Some key elements of the incident—the silence, the lack of life—are highly suggestive of derealization, a psychological condition in which the real world seems unreal (as was the Versailles case; indeed, MacKenzie notes that "when I quoted to Mr. Lang Miss Moberly's description of the trees in the park at Versailles being 'flat and lifeless, like a wood worked in tapestry,' he replied that this was 'spot on.'") [Evans pp.34-98; MacKenzie p.7] And the lack of agreement between witnesses (remember that Roy Bker recalled nothing unusual about Kersey) is also striking.

Of course, none of this solves the mystery of why two cadets, Lang and Croley, were in such close agreement. But here it's worth pointing out (as I have before) that there is a reason why "timeslip" cases usually have multiple witnesses: the passage of time, and a process of mutual reinforcement as the case is reviewed again and again, accentuate the odd and smooth out differences—just as a study of reports of the Indian Rope Trick published in Nature demonstrated that the strangest accounts were those said to have been witnessed longest ago. [Wiseman & Lamont]

No, I'd love to believe it—really I would. But without better evidence, I can't quite bring myself to concede that these three youths really did travel back in time.

Source: Smithsonian Magazine  
<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/history/2011/07/21/when-three-british-boys-traveled-to-medieval-england/>

- HERE THERE BE MONSTERS DEPARTMENT -

Dragons in Spain  
By Scott Co-roles

Spain isn't often associated with dragons - beyond the dragons of heraldry on the shields of Castilian nobles - but Catalonia also has a tradition of dragons that forms part of not only its own folklore, but the Christian tradition as a whole: who hasn't heard of St. Jordi (St. George) and his dragon? George of Cappadocia, a Roman soldier in the retinue of the Diocletian, was invoked on numerous occasions by the royalty of Aragon to tilt the balance of battle. He bestowed his help upon the King Pedro of Aragon during the siege of Huesca, and during the conquest of Valencia by James the Conqueror, St. George appeared "with many knights of paradise who turned the tide of battle, in which not one Christian was slain."

St. George became a dragonslayer in medieval myth when a winged drake took up residence near a vital water source, advising locals that a human sacrifice was needed on a daily basis in order to access the spring. Villagers were sacrificed at random until the time came for a local princess to be offered up; her father pleaded for her life to no avail. Just as the reptile was about to make short work of the princess, George appeared on horseback, slaying the beast and rescuing the royal maiden. In gratitude, the villagers renounced their pagan worship and embraced Christianity.

Our friend and colleague Javier Resines has just posted an article at [criptozoologos.blogspot.com](http://criptozoologos.blogspot.com) about another singular creature: La Potra del Pino, a dragonlike entity that carried out its predations in earlier ages. The beast's fortress was Mount Birset outside Tortosa. "This terrible dragon," writes Resines, "had its lair along the Ebro River, and

could walk, swim and fly, according to eyewitness reports."

The locals had a hard time of it, as one can imagine, with such a terrifying neighbor. As in all epic tales, a knight slew the dragon and covered its carcass under a huge pile of rocks. Over the years, travelers would place more rocks on the cairn to insure that the dreaded beast remained pinned down, for some believed that the dragon was not dead, and could return if circumstances allowed.

Resi-es tells us that the story of the Potra del Pino became widespread through the work of ethnologist Joan Am-des. But the dragon spreads its wings again thanks to an e-book lovingly put together by the young students of the ZER Riu Avail during the 2010-2011 term

(<http://www.myebook.com/index.php?option=book&id83646>)

In Spain's northwestern corner, Galicia also has a dragon occupying an important mythological niche: The Codex Calixtinus gives us the story of Queen Lupa, an ally of the Romans. When disciples of the A-ostle James asked her to provide oxen and a cart with which to convey his remains to campus stelae - the field of stars - the queen consented, but directed them to the mountain known as Pico Sacro, to be devoured by a dragon.

Thus betrayed, the disciples had to face not only the dreaded basilisk but wild bulls as well. Dropping to their knees in p-ayer, they were able to k-ll the dragon and tame the wild kine. Hearing of this mi-acle, the queen set her pagan ways aside and converted.

Source: Inexplicata-The Institute of Hispanic Ufology  
<http://inexplicata.blogspot.com/2011/07/cryptozoology-dragons-in-spain.html>

Part 3.

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