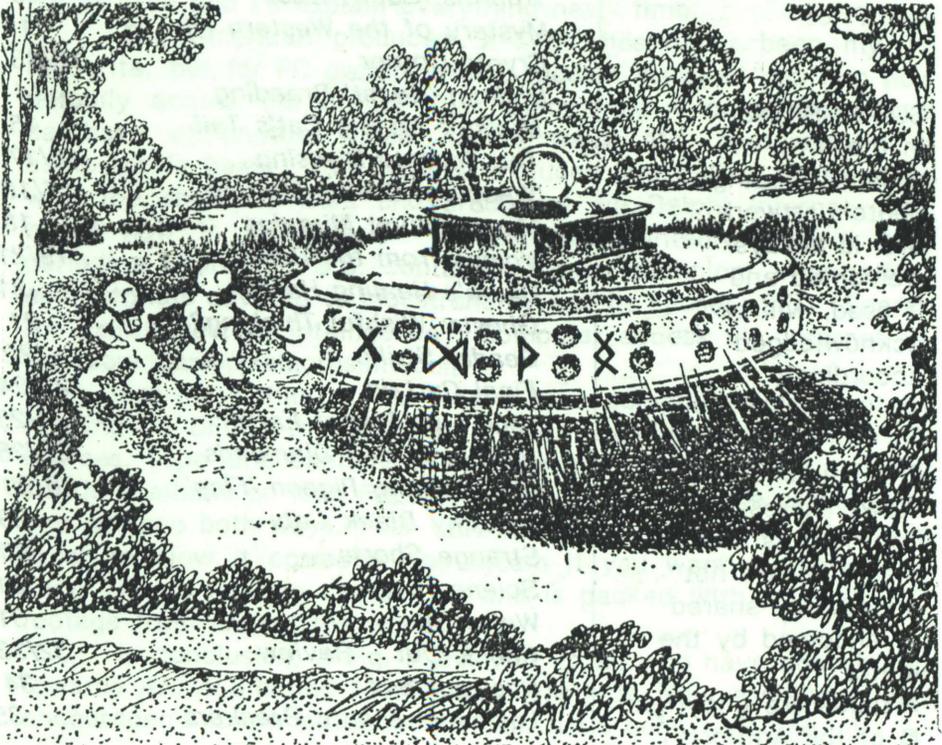


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# ANNALS



Issue #22 Oct / Dec 1994 Quarterly

# ANNALS

## OF THE ENQUIRING

Issue # 22  
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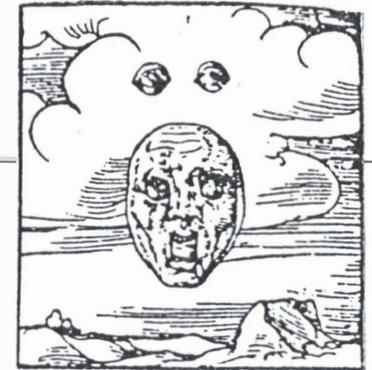
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# FIRST WORD



## EDITORIAL

Here's the last issue of *ANNALS* for this year, following my return from Canada and the USA. While there I investigated lake monsters, found that my old stomping grounds of Prince Edward County, Ontario, have been visited regularly by UFOs, met a man with four eyes, and finally ate an evening meal in a flying saucer! It's all true and I'll explain everything next time.

The American produced 'X-Files' has never been my TV favourite, but for PC owners with a modem installed you can now actually access the official files themselves - complete with a database of photos, video, sound track etc. (providing your computer is beefy). The service includes live online conferences with the show's writers and producers via Delphi Internet. Also brand new is SETIQuest - a quarterly printed/electronic mail periodical from the U.S. containing news, technical information, and tutorials devoted to bioastronomy and its subset, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). Computer access via Internet E-mail: squinqas@pixelacres.mv.com.

For more than a year I have been compiling video footage relating to UFOs, the paranormal etc., mostly from satellite TV sources. Tape One contains more than five hours of such material and is available on loan FREE to any subscriber who is prepared to pay postage both ways. Your VCR must have 'Long Play' facility in order to view it correctly and Nicam if you want stereo sound. Tape Two is nearing completion and is packed with original UFO footage from around the world.

In conclusion, a big 'thank you' to all who have contributed towards *ANNALS* during 1994. Please continue. Your assistance and encouragement, no matter how small, have been welcome. Δ

EDITOR: Gerry Lovell, 8 St John Street, Wells, Somerset BA5 1SW.  
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# UFO BRIEF

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## MAFIA, MARILYN AND UFOs

Perhaps it was only a matter of time before the perennial mystery surrounding the death of Marilyn Monroe should somehow become entwined in the UFO saga. Now we learn that the latest theory has her death linked to the fact that the late President John F Kennedy told her he had seen dead aliens at a US military base in the New Mexico desert. Investigator and author Milo Speriglio claims Marilyn was murdered by the Mafia to stop her planning to reveal to the world what she had learned. The actress made a fatal blunder by telling Kennedy's brother Bobby the day before her death claims Speriglio. *"We have a top secret CIA memo dated August 3, 1962, which refers to Marilyn telling Bobby Kennedy that she planned to hold a press conference to tell what she knew,"* he said. Adding that Kennedy patriarch Joseph gave hitmen the go-ahead.

## CORNY IDEA

American paranormal investigator Jon Erik Beckjord, currently based in Marlborough, was looking to lease a quarter acre of wheat from a Wiltshire farmer at the end of August, in order that he could cut messages in it and correspond with aliens. It is Beckjord's latest idea at communicating with what he thinks is responsible for producing some of the crop circles. He confidently predicted: *"The possibility of getting a response is very good."*

## ET (IT'S 10,000-1 YOU DON'T EXIST)

Britain's biggest bookmakers William Hill have hardly ever turned down a bet - no matter how bizarre it may appear. For instance, you can get odds of 10,000-1 on aliens landing and taking over the Government and 250-1 on Elvis making a reappearance. Another wild bet that the company accepted was a £25 stake at 1,000-1 on corn circles having originated from Phobos - one of the moons of Mars. Of course, the Loch Ness Monster always features in the betting and following revelations that the famous 'surgeon' photograph was nothing more than a cleverly concocted hoax, people are still betting. Some even think the story that the picture is a fake is itself a hoax.

## AIRBORNE GIANT

What was described as a "massive object", about the width of ten houses, was seen travelling northwards in the sky above Peasedown St John, near Bath, Somerset, at 2330hrs on the evening of July 27. Witnesses say it gave the appearance of having two rows of red lights and two rows of green lights surrounding it.

## NOCTURNAL VISITOR

A group of young campers located just outside Wells were puzzled at the aerial manoeuvres of a light in the sky above the city. The incident occurred after midnight on August 5, when members of the party first spotted a white light travelling from west to east. It had the appearance of a satellite but changed course and returned before when nearly above them, appearing to launch a smaller light that soundlessly and swiftly fell to earth at a point close to the huge Mendip TV transmitter mast situated on the hills above Wells.

## CANADIAN ABDUCTION

A 43-year-old Sarnia, Ontario, woman claims her young son was abducted from his bed two years ago by aliens. The boy, now 14, was returned with strange scratch marks that resembled cuts made with a knife. *"All I really remember is another light shining in my eyes and I saw a shadowy figure,"* he said. Later the woman took her son to a doctor because he was experiencing pain in his ear. She says the doctor removed something from her son's ear but didn't know what it was. *"We're wondering if (aliens) didn't put an implant thing in, like a tracking device, but we don't know, we have no proof,"* says the woman. (Source: *The London Free Press - July 4/94 - Credit: Cambridge UFO Research Group #48*)

## THING SHOW

A UFO exhibition, based on files donated by the late Ken Rogers covering historical aspects of Warminster's famous 'Thing', closed at the town's library November 5. In spite of the fact we now learn that the celebrated UFO, as pictured on the cover of newspaper reporter Arthur Shuttlewood's *'The Warminster Mystery'*, was yet another fake. Ken died in January and was involved, almost from the very beginning, in recording many of the events surrounding this area of Wiltshire.

## UFO 3

In June of this year the United States Military launched its UFO 3 via a Atlas rocket. During 1993 UFO 1 and 2 were placed in orbit. All three, in fact, are simply defense communications satellites and UFO is merely an abbreviation for: UHF Follow-On.

# BECKJORD 'ALIEN' PHOTOS

## GRAB MEDIA ATTENTION

Ostensibly organized to discuss crop circles and "signs of our times", the fourth annual Crop Circle Conference held in Glastonbury on August 5,6 and 7, was dominated by media coverage of American Erik Beckjord's collective photographs of alleged alien entities.

The paranormal researcher displayed his picture evidence gathered during 14 years of investigating the UFO phenomenon, which he claims mirror the 'Grey'.

This included a snap of a long-armed creature taken by a policeman on Ilkley Moor, Yorkshire, in 1985. It appears to have three sausage-like fingers which are webbed and there is also a flat-topped triangular head.

The policeman claimed to have been abducted while out walking and then returned to the same spot. As he walked home, he turned to photograph the creature which was apparently following him.

Beckjord's personal pictures are of a flat-headed grey creature that were taken in the High Sierras of California in 1980 at a camp site 100 miles from Lake

Tahoe.

The creature appears to have two large dark eyes, a long nose, a triangular face and little or no chin or mouth. It was not visible to Beckjord at the time of taking his pictures.

Other photo's include one alleged to show an object in the centre of a triangle-shaped feature located in a cornfield at Avebury, Wiltshire. Beckjord believes it shows the head of a grey peeking out of the corn.

And a similar head appears in a computer-enhanced photograph of a UFO, shot over Vancouver Island in British Columbia, he maintains.

Beckjord operates a UFO museum in Los Angeles, while having investigated such phenomena as Big Foot in the US and Canada and the Loch Ness Monster. He is currently researching crop circles.



# GRINDELL-MATTHEWS

## & HIS DEATH RAY

By any standards Harry Grindell-Matthews was all that an eccentric scientist should be. Working in a remote laboratory in the Welsh mountains he claimed to have invented, among other things, an electronic beam which earned him the nickname 'Death Ray'.

Born in 1880, Grindell-Matthews was educated at Bristol Merchant Venturers' College and at nineteen volunteered for the Boer War, in which he was twice wounded.

Trained as a research scientist, specialising in electricity, he was intrigued by the possibilities of radio telephony, then in its infancy, and as early as 1911, from Ely racecourse, Cardiff, he succeeded in conversing with airman B.C. Hucks in a plane two miles away and travelling at 600 mph.

Grindell-Matthews, like many other inventors before and since, often failed to develop his ideas commercially. As soon as he had successfully solved a particular problem, his mind would leap ahead with a fresh idea.

Following the onset of World War 1 his experiments in developing a robot boat controlled by a light beam, using a new light-sensitive material, selenium, brought him quickly to the attention of the British Government.

He proved his claims in trials at Portsmouth, using a larger steamship which was controlled by a naval searchlight more than five miles away.

The Government coughed up a first instalment of £25,000 on the proviso that Grindell-Matthews could further develop his device and produce an aerial torpedo as an answer to the Zeppelin - but no more seems to have been heard of the idea.

After the war his probing mind went off in yet another direction - the problem of talking film and in 1921 the inventor made a talkie of Sir Ernest Shackleton delivering his farewell speech before setting off to Antarctica.

In 1924 Grindell-Matthews really set the world a-buzz when newspapers got hold of the rumour that he had invented an invisible ray which would, as one report put it: 'Stop a motor working, kill plant life, destroy vermin, explode gunpowder, fire cartridges and light lamps.' Inevitably, invention and inventor were dubbed 'Death Ray' and the man himself quickly became the centre of fantastic

public interest. Although he himself said: 'I knew I had at present little more than an interesting pea-shooter', the public wanted to believe that he had the ability to control armies, to make aircraft fall from the sky, in effect, the power to stop war.

It was the suggestion that the new device could cut out aircraft engines in flight that caused the Air Ministry to request an official test. Grindell-Matthews happily obliged, but the men from the Ministry were unimpressed, stating that all the inventor had demonstrated was that he could stop at will a small motorcycle engine from some fifteen yards - no mean feat as it happens. Nevertheless, they were prepared to offer him £1,000 against further tests - on a petrol engine that was to be provided by the Government.

The inventor declined however and announced shortly after that he was heading off to France. A Lyons company having made a 'princely offer' for his secret, which he now claimed could kill or disable men at a distance of four miles. He did fly to France but meanwhile his associates obtained a High Court injunction, preventing him selling the device.

Questions were asked in the House of Commons and one sceptical MP enquired whether it was true that a Ministry official had placed himself within ten yards of the ray, which was supposed to kill at a distance of several miles. A Government spokesman replied that it was true and added, amid laughter, that the official was doing well. Whatever the truth about the ray's lethal properties, in July 1924, Grindell-Matthews announced that he had lost the sight of his left eye as a result of his experiments. In that month he arrived in New York, thoroughly disgusted with the neglect he had suffered in Britain and doubts cast upon the validity of his experimental work. The following March he returned briefly to England to announce he had sold his death ray to the United States and was going to settle in that country.

No more was heard of the remarkable Welsh inventor until on Christmas Eve, 1930, when late shoppers in the Hampstead Heath area of London were startled to see a beam of light shoot up to the cloud base, about 6,000 feet up. The light continued to play on the cloud and then took on the form of a rather voluptuous 'angel' with outstretched wings gliding across the sky. Traffic stopped and crowds gathered to gaze in awe at the sight. The angel vanished shortly after, only to be replaced by the words 'A Happy Christmas'. Grindell-Matthews was back.

He had been operating his latest invention from a pair of film location trucks and had already demonstrated his 'sky projector' in New York. by throwing a picture of the Stars and Stripes and the

American eagle on to the clouds.

'The advantages of the machine in war time for conveying coded messages to airmen are obvious,' he pointed out. 'It also has many possibilities, for example, for electioneering purposes, for advertising, and also for announcing important items of news.'

Other demonstrations followed, including a huge glowing clock showing the correct time in the sky at Blackheath. But the sky projector proved to be yet another nine days' wonder and, once again, Grindell-Matthews was to drop out of the limelight.

He re-emerged five years later giving newspaper interviews from a bungalow-laboratory 1,500 feet up on Tor Cloud, a barren mountain in South Wales. Reporters told their readers how they, exclusively, had penetrated the ring of armed guards, barbed wire fences and secret-eye burglar alarms around the hideout, to learn how the inventor of the death-ray now planned to defend London from against any foreign attack.

This was to be accomplished by firing rockets to a height of 30,000 feet where, at that altitude, aerial torpedoes would release a brood of bombs suspended from parachutes by 500 feet of wire.

Just how this was to be achieved is another matter but in July 1935, 'only a certain amount of experimental work remained to be done' and 'foreign governments, as well as the British, are eager for news of his work', it was reported.

Two years later, in addition to his air defence scheme Grindell-Matthews was reportedly perfecting apparatus that would detect submarines thirty miles away. By 1939 he was 'only seeking new and more vital propellants' for his rockets.

But by the time he died, aged sixty-one, during September 1941, in Clydach, Glamorgan, German bombers had repeatedly attacked London and other cities without any apparent hindrance from invisible rays or bombs suspended from sky hooks.

The inventor's personal life was shrouded in as much mystery as his work. In January 1938, he became the fifth husband of Madam Ganna Walska, a wealthy Polish opera singer of whom one unkind critic wrote: 'better seen than heard'. Madam Walska was referred to by the newspapers as the '£25,000,000 bride' because of the fortunes of her four previous husbands.

While the evidence to back Grindell-Matthews' claims for his death-ray and aerial torpedoes never really surfaced he was still an exceptional inventor. Talking films and such minor inventions as electronic burglar alarms and automatic street lighting can be attributed to his work.

A national newspaper after his death carried this simple notice: 'An electrical research worker who claimed to have invented a 'death ray', Mr Harry Grindell-Matthews. has left £522.' Δ

# ATLANTIS: SOUTH WEST?

An extraordinary theory has been put forward by researchers from the Family History Club of Great Britain who think they know just where Atlantis is - in the South West of England. And they want West Country people to tell them where the ruins now lie.

Displaying a remarkable ignorance of the known facts, Club historian Tracey Park claims to have studied all the stories and thinks Atlantis must have been located in Devon or Cornwall.

"The legends all came from people who lived around the Mediterranean between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago. They said they travelled to a mysterious land beyond Gibraltar where there were seven consecutive rings of land and water," she said.

"Bearing in mind that in those days people didn't sail away from the sight of land, because they thought they'd fall off the edge of the earth, it meant that they probably visited the South West of England. And their descriptions of the land fits with what the West Country looked like at the time.

"We know there are no undersea ruins in any sea or ocean and we know the way the continents move hasn't caused anywhere to sink," she added. "So now we think Atlantis could be on the mainland."

She explained that 2,000 years ago West Country people often lived in ancient settlements and built canals and lakes around them for protection. These were the well-documented lake villages such as has been discovered at Glastonbury.

"It's not impossible that Atlantis was an earthwork settlement surrounded by concentric rings of water," said Tracey. "One day it was probably flooded out and destroyed - hence the legend.

"We found an old settlement in Avebury, Wiltshire, it was so huge the modern day village only covered a quarter of the old site - so Atlantis could have been pretty big.

"We think it was on land and in the following thousands of years it's been dried out and reclaimed. It could be anywhere in the South West now and we want people to look for ruins and any evidence of an old settlement - it could be Atlantis."

The Club's theories seem immensely flawed to anyone who has carried out even the most elementary research into the legend and sadly it would appear as if this group's resources are doomed to be absorbed in a fruitless search for the cyclopean ruins; which either exist in the imaginings of a Greek writer or, perhaps after all, do lie somewhere undiscovered in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. Δ

## MYSTERY OF THE WESTERN ISLE

WRITING in 1684 the Irish historian O'Flaherty recorded his belief in the enchanted island of Hy-Brasil as follows:

*From the Isles of Arran and the west continent often appears visible that enchanted island called O'Brasail and, in Irish, Beg Ara.*

*Whether it be real and firm land kept hidden by the special ordnance of God, or the terrestrial paradise, or else some illusion of airy clouds appearing on the surface of the sea, or the craft of evil spirits, is more than our judgments can pound out.*

*There is now living, Murrough O'Leay, who imagines he was himself personally in O'Brasail for two days and saw out of it the Isles of Arran, Golam Head, Iross-beg Hill, and other places on the western continent which he was acquainted with. The manner of it he relates, that being in Iross-Ainhagh, in the south side of the Barony of Ballynahinshy, about nine leagues from Galway by sea in the month of April, A.D., 1668, going alone from one village to another in a melancholy humour upon some discontent of his wife's(!) he was encountered by two or three strangers and forcibly carried by a boat into O'Brasail, as such as were within it told him - and they could speak both English and Irish. He was ferried out hoodwinked in a boat, as he imagines, till he was left on the seaside by Galway, where he lay in a friend's house for some days after being very desperately ill, and knows not how he came to be there.*

*In the western ocean, five or six leagues from the continent there is a sand bank about thirty fathoms deep in the sea. It is called in Irish, Imaire Bay, and in English, the Cod-fishing Bank. From this bank about twenty years ago, a boat was blown southwards by night; next day about noon the occupants spied land so near them that they could see sheep within it, and yet durst not, for fear of illusions, touch shore, imagining it was O'Brasail, and they were two days coming back towards home.*

*Some few generations ago, the crew of a fishing boat passing an island which they did not know, landed thereon to refresh themselves. They had no sooner landed than a man appeared and told them they had no business there as the island was enchanted. They therefore returned to the boat, but as they were going away the islander gave one of them a book with directions not to look into it for seven years. He complied with the request and when he opened and read the book he was able to practice surgery and physic with great success. This man's name was Lee, and the book remained as an heirloom with his descendants." Δ*

# CRYPTO CORNER

## **WEST SOMERSET BEAST**

Sightings by four people of a black panther have been reported in the West Somerset area of the Quantock Hills. The incidents all occurred in the space of a few days during early August and took place at Goathurst, Hawkridge and Bincombe Hill.

Jenny Kivvy, 24, a police secretary, was the first to spot the creature after she stopped while driving along Bincombe Hill near Over Stowey. She said: 'I knew it was a panther, there was nothing else it could have been.'

Jervis Hughes, 63, saw a panther emerge from a hedge on to the road between Goathurst and Broomfield. He said: 'I've seen panthers previously and there was no doubt about this one.'

A black panther-like animal was also spotted near Hawkridge Reservoir by Mary Lee and Jill Henderson. Mary, of Bridgwater, said: 'We were sitting chatting when my friend spotted something moving across a field. It was jet black and looked like a cat but it was so large the tail must have been two or three feet long.'

*(Source: Sunday Independent Aug 7/94)*

## **BRIDLINGTON BEAST**

Armed police scoured the Yorkshire Wolds on August 17 after receiving reports that a lion or puma was seen near Bridlington. An area of three square miles was quickly sealed off and RAF search and rescue helicopters were drafted in to join the hunt. In spite of contacting local zoos, police received no reports of any missing big cats.

## **WILD WALLABY DEATH**

One of Britain's few wild wallabies has been killed in a road accident in Devon after seven years on the run from a private zoo. The red-necked wallaby has lived rough in the countryside since escaping from its original home in Holcombe, near Teignmouth in a mass break-out.

Most of the other wallabies which escaped at the same time are thought to have succumbed to the English weather, but the one remaining animal has often been sighted in the area.

The stray wallaby's life of freedom ended in mid-August when he was found dead in a garden more than 24 hours after being hit by a motorist driving from Teignmouth to Exeter.

Driver Don Gable was so surprised when the wallaby jumped out of a hedge in front of his car that at first he feared he had run over a human. He and his family then spotted the badly injured animal bounding away across a field and, although the RSPCA were called, they were too late to catch it.

RSPCA Inspector Len Parkin resumed the hunt and the wallaby's body was eventually found in a garden a quarter of a mile away. It was then sent to a Ministry of Agriculture laboratory for a post mortem and to assess its age.

'If the animal is young it might just prove they are breeding out here,' said Insp Parkin. 'Unfortunately, the people who lost the wallabies in the first place are very cagey about how many went missing and when.' *(Source: Sunday Independent - Aug 21/94)*

## **SMART CATS**

In July (I do not have the exact date), a large cat-like creature was spotted crossing fields near Quay, in Cambridgeshire, according to a report in the *Cambridge Daily News*. At about the same time, large paw prints closely resembling that of a puma were photographed in the vicinity of Oxford.

## **CORNWALL'S SEA GIANT**

For nearly 20 years, Cornish people have been reporting sightings of Morgawr (sea giant) off their coast and still there is no proof.

Two Falmouth women, Mrs Scott and Mrs Riley, watched a hump-backed creature with stumpy horns and bristles struggling with a large conger eel in its jaws off Pendennis Point in 1975.

Two years later, Duncan Viner, a dentist, saw a 40ft monster swimming off Rosemullion Head. Since then, a fisherman of 40 years' experience, George Vinnecombe, has seen a similar creature off Lizard Point and a local writer, Sheila Bird, also claims to have seen Morgawr, off Porthscatho in 1985.

## **SUPERIOR LIFE FORMS**

There is a theory among some scientists that giant sea creatures can actually read each other's minds. In fact, according to them, the squid is believed to have developed a form of telepathy that makes them the smartest beings on Earth. Investigations so far indicate that there could be superior life forms at the very depths of the ocean and squid are already known to communicate with each other across great distances. The theory concludes that these intelligences have made a conscious decision to avoid all contact with man. Oxford Scientific Films is currently documenting the subject for BBC TV. Entitled: 'Incredible Suckers' it will be aired early next year..

## BODMIN 'BEAST' NOW BREEDING

The woman who captured the *Beast of Bodmin Moor* on her video camera earlier this year says she spotted a cub accompanying it last August and thinks that an even larger male stalks the area as well.

Rosemary Rhodes, who operates a farm at Commonmoor, Cornwall, says there have been 30 confirmed sightings of mysterious large cats on her property since 1991.

These have included pumas and lynx, in addition to what she is sure are large black panthers, or melanistic leopards and their offspring.

'There are acres of dense woodland here packed with rabbits, rats and deer - there's an ample food supply for several large cats. And when food gets short the animals come onto farmland and attack sheep.

'But I've had a terrible time getting the ministry to believe me,' she said. 'I've sent them sheep carcasses and they still say there's no evidence - what do they want, the creature to pose for a photo?'

As a result of dead and maimed sheep, Rosemary has had to sell her 50 strong flock but is happy for the cats to continue living in the area as long as the Ministry of Agriculture accept their existence and warn people of the dangers.

Don Rogers, who worked on



Rosemary's farm, said he came face to face with the Beast: 'I found a dead sheep one morning. Something had dragged it into a ditch,' he said. 'As I turned something caught my eye. I saw a huge black cat, caked in mud, crouching in the grass a few feet away.

'It was about 3ft high and 4ft long, not including the tail - and it definitely wasn't a puma. I see them at night. They're smaller and a sandy brown colour.'

Rosemary says people are still sceptical and won't believe until the creature is caught - or attacks someone.

But North Cornwall Lib Dem MP Paul Tyler said: 'There should be a warning system so if a creature is seen farmers can protect their livestock.'

□ On September 2 a huge cat-like creature was spotted on a golf course at the China Fleet Club, Saltash, Cornwall, by a group of off-duty police officers.

## MINISTRY ON BIG CAT'S TAIL

Finally, following appeals from Cornish farmers who are fed up with the ongoing loss of their sheep, the Ministry of Agriculture seems to be taking the existence of big cats with increasing seriousness.

At a conference in Bodmin on August 31 the Ministry's man, Mike Higham, was given an account of the Beast's alleged activities - which included an attack on a woman walking her dog last year - and ideas to run it to ground.

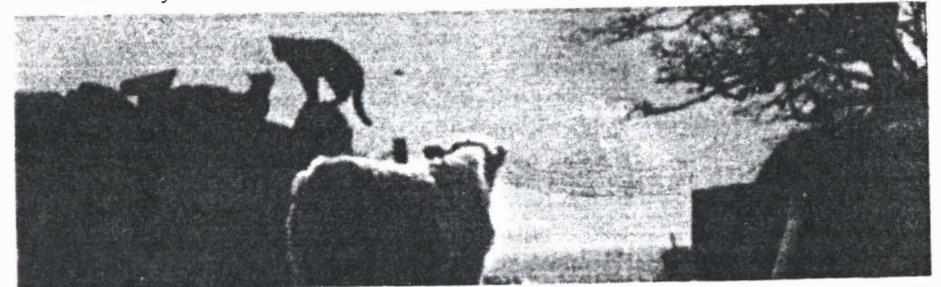
As a result, an early warning and recording system may be set up to ambush the animal, while a report on its activities is to be considered by Angela Browning, the junior Agriculture Minister.

The Beast, which may or may not be related to the Beast of Exmoor - first sighted in Devon more than 10 years ago - and sundry other big cats said to be roaming Britain, has been plaguing residents of the moor for 18 months.

Conference organiser and MP for North Cornwall, Paul Tyler, says that Mrs Browning's Ministry will discover there may be more than one Beast - and possibly cubs - roaming the West Country. Sightings of feral cats, including possible panthers and leopards, have been reported in 26 counties in Britain in recent years.

One of the speakers at the conference was Pc Peter Keen, a Devon and Cornwall police dog handler and an acknowledged expert on big cats. He has seen a mystery animal in Cornwall three times and believes, 'we are looking at the second or third generation of big cats. The terrain, habitat and climate of Bodmin Moor is ideal for them'.

While the Beast may be tracked down by the early warning system, it could be seen off by a simpler weapon: the donkey. Pc Keen heard of the Donkey Method in America. He said: 'There they often put a very nervous female donkey in a field with sheep. If a big cat comes near, the donkey kicks up such a racket it frightens the cat away.' Δ



# THE TORONTO BLESSING

## *RELIGIOUS HYSTERIA OR WHAT?*

It is a phenomenon that has been labelled controversial by the British press and even the phrase "mass hysteria" has been used, but the "Toronto Blessing" is sweeping through whole congregations of Christians in this country.

In June, newspapers picked up on the fact that worshippers at Holy Trinity Church in Knightsbridge, London, started behaving in an unusual fashion. An account in the normally staid *Church of England Newspaper* describes how a recent service ended in chaos as members collapsed *en masse* and were then overcome with uncontrollable laughing. It has been universally dubbed the Toronto blessing because it began in Toronto, Canada.

It has been slammed as religious hysteria by some psychologists who say young children in particular should not be introduced to the phenomenon.

This follows reports of the blessing having been introduced at an evangelical festival in August at Shepton Mallet, Somerset, where more than 1,000 children between the ages of five and ten attended.

The Rev David Gardner, minister of Burwell Baptist Church, who also attended the festival, wrote in the *Baptist Times*: "Children fell to the floor, resting in the spirit - some heard the voice of Jesus and saw visions. Some children began to cry. Later on they said they were not sad or frightened but very happy."

He said one nine-year-old boy had a series of visions including one of Satan in a cage.

But Dr David Stratton, a senior lecturer in psychology at Leeds University School of Education, said: "Brain washing is too much of an emotive term but I see this as a form of mass hysteria. Normal adults can be induced to report things that did not happen if the circumstances are right and it is just the same with children.

"As a psychologist I would say that this is a contagious emotional experience. It is linked to hypnosis because in such a setting people can become susceptible and, in particular, children's emotions can be whipped up."

The uncontrollable laughing associated with the Toronto blessing is nothing new or unique and should not be described as a sickness, real or imaginary, but a charismatic experience - the product of

religious evangelical fervour.

In 1964, the *Central African Journal of Medicine* carried a report on an epidemic of uncontrollable laughter or crying among young people in the Buboka district of Tanganyika.

Dr Alexander Rankin, the local medical officer, says this involved more than 1,000 persons who, for more than a year, collectively and repeatedly developed behaviour exactly as that described at Holy Trinity. He was sure they were all mentally ill and blamed it on primitive superstitions.

Likewise, in East Africa, something similar happened several years later when two psychiatrists were summoned to deal with what they called "The Mysterious Madness of Mwinilunga". Again, local children began not only to laugh and cry uncontrollably, but also to recite poetry for hours on end.

A native healer decided the children were being poisoned by a local cook, who was nearly lynched and had to be rescued by the police. Psychiatrists told the parents their children were mentally ill and the outbreak stopped.

Mass hysteria, also known as mass psychogenic illness, is an inappropriate term to describe the Toronto blessing. For such ecstatic collective behaviour could really be serving another purpose - the feeling of group satisfaction through a religious ritual.

*During World War II, female inhabitants of an isolated Australian town became victims of the "Phantom Anaesthetist of Mattoon", who supposedly sprayed them with an invisible gas paralysing them from the waist down, even through closed windows.*

*In 1983, thousands of children in the West Bank began to feel faint and then collapse after rumours that they were being poisoned with Israeli nerve gas spread through several towns.*

## **'WEEPING' STATUE MIRACLE**

Hundreds of people are flocking from all parts of Ireland to a Co Wicklow village to see a statue of the Virgin Mary which is reported to be weeping from inside an enclosed glass case.

The owner of the 3ft high statue, retired post mistress Mary Murray, 78, of Grangecon, claims that blood weeps from one eye and water from the other. She said it had been sealed inside the case for more than four years and no one had interfered with it.

Ms Murray reported that the statue first began to weep on

Tuesday, May 10.

To many in the crowds, who filed reverently past the case in the weeks that followed, the face on the statue appeared moist and smeared with blood. While for other visitors to the village there appeared no sign of blood or tears.

Ms Murray believes that a miracle in her kitchen has been timed to comfort people in their grief. "They come here depressed and sad. They pour out their hearts and go away uplifted," she said.

*(Source: Belfast Telegraph - May 16 / The Sunday Times - May 22/94)*

□ Religious hoaxes are not entirely unknown in Ireland. Another statue of the Virgin Mary nearby in Tullamore wept blood for weeks and attracted thousands of devotees, some of whom claimed to have been cured of ailments.

Later, it was found that the blood was flowing from a pig's bladder that had been concealed in the statue's head by pranksters.

## MOUNT OLIVAT MIRACLES

It was an ordinary afternoon at the Mount Olivat Deliverance Centre and Mrs Emiline Roberts was performing miracles as usual. Small and squat in her red gingham dress, she reached into the bodies of her faithful with her bare hands, drawing their "illness" from them with all the impassivity of a midwife.

From some she squeezed stones, nails and rusty bolts; from others shells and pieces of crumpled cloth. From one man's scrotum she drew a 4in-long piece of wire, from another's head a pencil stub, the length of a little finger at least, glistening and tangled over with thick, black hair.

Behind her, on either side of the altar, the band crashed and tambourines shimmied. It was just another day in Moore Town, home of the Blue Mountain Maroons, on the island of Jamaica.

Colonel Harris, their chief for 30 years, claims descent from Grande Nanny, Maroon queen and national hero of Jamaica, a legendary warrior woman who confounded the British with her magical powers, catching their bullets, so they say, in her bottom - and sending them back with interest.

The Maroons are descendants of runaway slaves who form a homogenous group within Jamaica. In the 18th century they perfected guerrilla warfare against their overlords with such success that in 1739 the British were forced to sign a treaty with them. "Spooky" is how most islanders would describe the Maroons.

## VOICES FROM THE DEAD

John Macklin

- - - on tape

The tape ran slowly through a bank of expensive electronic equipment, producing a noise sounding like a cross between an express train and an angry bull.

Within seconds the technician operating the machinery had broken down the noise into phonetics and reconstructed it without atmospherics.

"It says: 'I love you, darling'," he reported.

Mrs Victoria Stevenson burst into tears. Later she would swear that the voice on the tape was that of her husband Bob, recorded a few weeks earlier. But the reason for her grief and shock was not hard to find: her husband had died six months previously.

Voices of the dead mysteriously intruding onto blank recording tapes are the current preoccupation of an increasing number of scientists who have become involved in psychical research.

As one expert puts it: "Theoretically, if a voice from the dead can obtrude into the consciousness of a human medium, there is no reason why it shouldn't be recorded on tape."

That is why some 400 researchers in different countries are now studying a total of 70,000 cases of voices and sounds claimed to have come from beyond the grave.

Trinity College, Cambridge, even awarded a grant to scientist David Ellis to investigate the phenomenon, following a spectacular series of experiments by a German expert, Dr Konstantin Raudive, who claimed he had frequently obtained spirit voices on tape.

Dr Raudive declared: "Anyone with a tape recorder can attempt to listen to the dead. This is how you do it. You sit in a quiet room, insert a clean tape or cassette into your tape recorder, switch on, and announce yourself.

"You say: 'This is - - -. I invite communication. Please speak'.

"Then you sit in silence and run the tape for 10 minutes at full volume. Stop it, play it back, and listen. If there is no sound, you repeat the procedure."

He admits that generally any noise on the tape comes from an electrical or mechanical source - but "in a tiny proportion of cases there is no logical explanation for the noise."

And dozens of psychic experts who have heard the tapes have been unable to condemn them as fakes.

The case of Mrs Stevenson, which came to the notice of

researchers in 1970, was soon exciting similar interest and controversy. The astonishing story began a few months after Bob Stevenson died. His wife Victoria was naturally distraught: "At first I was alone and afraid. But then, somehow, I sensed Bob's presence very close to me."

A few weeks later her feelings were apparently confirmed when a relation interested in psychical phenomena came to stay at the house and immediately declared: "Bob is here. I feel him all around."

On her advice, Victoria Stevenson bought a tape-recorder and took it with her to a seance with London medium David Young. The tape was turned on at the moment the medium claimed to have made contact with Bob Stevenson.

Afterwards, when the spool was played back, a strange noise was heard in the middle of the tape. This was the noise which the electronic device later translated as "I love you, darling."

On the advice of the Churches' Fellowship of Psychical and Spiritual Studies, Mrs Stevenson got in touch with David Ellis in Cambridge. By then her husband had "spoken" again during another session with David Young.

Ellis was intrigued and excited by what he heard. He reported that the voices were much clearer than those on the Raudive tapes, and arranged to do an experiment under controlled conditions. But it was unsuccessful and no further contact with Bob Stevenson was obtained.

Obviously there's great scope for electronic trickery and the doctoring of tapes - to make them sound as though something unearthly is trying to communicate.

No expert can be 100 per cent certain that a tape has not been interfered with, but one claimed to have been made at a north London seance just ten years ago, has so far withstood the most rigorous scientific scrutiny.

It is said to have been recorded during a seance conducted by the noted medium Norah McGough and I am one of the few outsiders to have heard it.

In it, Mrs McGough is allegedly speaking to the dead mother of one of the members of the seance, Miss Eunice Gregory.

Mrs McGough: "Is that really you, mother? Have you really come back to us?"

There follows a sighing noise, something like wind passing through trees, and what Miss Gregory claimed to be her mother's voice saying: "It's me, Eunice. I am by your side and I ..."

The voice, masked by what appears to be some kind of atmos-

pheric interference, is thin and metallic and the first reaction was that it had been spliced into the original tape at a later date.

But exhaustive tests could not confirm this. And even the most sceptical critics are now agreed that, if genuine, the McGough tape is among the most convincing evidence we have that communication is possible beyond the grave ...Δ

## DIANA'S HEALING HANDS

A music festival organiser claims Princess Diana's hands have the power to heal and says she cured him of painful arthritis and has miraculously healed several sick children.

Raffaele Curi, 43, who helps run the famous International Festival of Spoleto in Umbria, Italy, says he was cured by the Princess during a Royal visit to the festival.

"Princess Diana has a great, unusual talent. She is a natural-born healer with the power she possess in her hands," he said. "She has an exceptional power, and I know she has cured many people, mainly children and others suffering from persistent pains.

"When I told her I suffered from arthritis in the shoulders she told me to stand very still and held her outstretched hands for a few minutes over my shoulders. The pain disappeared miraculously and never returned since."

The power to heal became a part of the mystique of the monarchy, claimed by Elizabeth I and afterwards James I.

Charles I was said to have touched 70 people in one day, and one of the earliest recollections of Dr Samuel Johnson was of being taken to touch Queen Anne in 1712. (Source: *The People*-Apr 24/94)

## GHOSTS - WISHFUL THINKING?

Millions of people have their palms or tarot cards read to find out what the future holds, or try to contact departed loved ones through mediums.

According to Psychologist Dr Susan Blackmore, who studies psychic phenomena, it is the *wanting* to believe that is the psychic's greatest gift.

"They throw out all sorts of guesses which have a high degree of probability of applying to you," she says. "They pick up on body language. For instance, they might show you a tarot card with children on it, and say this concerns your childhood. If you cringe or sit back it is more likely you had an unhappy childhood.

"They will say something along those lines and you exclaim, 'How on earth did you know that?'" she adds.

# DEADLY STRIKE

Eight children were hurt on Sept 1 when lightning struck the tent in which they were camping in Kent. A week later a freak storm over Faversham, Kent, sadly claimed the life of a two-year-old girl, whose young mother had been picking potatoes with other casual workers in fields. It was the latest of a growing number of strikes in Britain this year.

A mother and son were nearly killed by lightning while 40 miles apart in August. Mickey Capp, 47, was struck TWICE when sea fishing off Deal, Kent, while back home in Southend his mother Gladys, 71, had her house set on fire as the result of lightning.

In July a four year-old-boy had a narrow escape when a bolt of lightning tore through his bedroom as he slept. The headboard of Thomas Morgan's bed in Ludlow, Shropshire, was shattered by the bolt as it smashed through the roof and two walls, leaving a trail of brickwork and plaster

An angler struck by lightning escaped with just burns from his melted gold chain. The bolt bounced off the water and enveloped Peter Weaver in blue flames as he sailed across Rutland Water, Leics, in May. He said: "There was this amazing pain and coloured lights flashing in my eyes."

According to records, in one day alone during July this year there were 82,000 ground strikes recorded in the UK. By the end of August there were 337,784 strikes - more than in any of the past five years.

On average five people have been killed each year in England and Wales since 1960, while this compares strangely with the 20 a year recorded during the late 1800s. But this may well reflect the marked decline in rural employment in 20th century Britain, where field workers have long since been replaced by machinery..

While the odds of being struck are 600,000-1, it can hurt as temperatures of lightning strikes reach 30,000°C, or five times the heat of the Sun's surface. (Sources: *Today - May 5 / Belfast Telegraph - July 25 / Today - Aug 11/94 + others*)

## JUST A TICK

The world got a breather from the march of time at midnight GMT on June 30 when scientists added one second to official time to make up for fluctuations in the Earth's rotation.

# FINAL CURTAIN

Researched by Owen O'Shea

- - - Coincidence

Most people are interested in unusual coincidences. They like to hear of these rare occurrences, and they like to tell of them.

In any discussion on remarkable coincidences, one question inevitably crops up: Why do unusual coincidences occur? All sorts of explanations may be put forward. Some even believe that supernatural forces at work are the cause of rare coincidences.

Mathematicians believe however that coincidences - however extraordinary - are almost certain to happen from time to time. Their main argument for this belief is as follows: There are five billion people in the world today. Most of these people are engaged in hundreds, maybe thousands, of activities each day. Consequently, strange events will - sooner or later - occur. Putting it another way, in a world where billions of things occur each day, it would be strange indeed if strange things never happened.

Although the above is a mathematical explanation as to why strange coincidences occur, nevertheless, some of them are so uncanny as to border on the unbelievable. Here's a famous one and it's quite true ...

Charles Francis Coghlan was born on Prince Edward Island, which is off the east coast of Canada, in 1841. As a boy he was interested in acting, and made his stage debut in 1860. In the next few years he became internationally famous for his acting ability. Although his acting career involved considerable travelling, he mainly resided at his home on Prince Edward Island.

In 1899, Coghlan was appearing on stage in Galveston, Texas. On November 27 of that year he died there, after a short illness. His coffin, which was lead lined, was placed in a vault on Galveston Island.

On September 8, 1900, a fierce hurricane battered the Islands. Fields were flooded, cemeteries were submerged, and vaults were burst open by the relentless flood waters. Coffins were swept from their vaults, and some, including that of Coghlan, floated out into the Gulf of Mexico. From there it drifted south-east. Eventually it was carried into the Gulf Stream.

Once it was in the Gulf Stream, the coffin began moving north. Eventually it reached the waters of Newfoundland, off the eastern coast of Canada. Most likely, strong winds here blew the coffin out

of the Gulf Stream, so that it drifted aimlessly.

In October, 1908, a number of fishermen left Prince Edward Island to go fishing in the Gulf of St Lawrence. The fishermen spotted what they considered to be a large box drifting towards shore.

Once ashore, they examined the box, which was covered with shellfish. They soon realised that this "box" was, in fact, a coffin containing the body of a man. A silver plate on the coffin revealed the man's name as Charles Coghlan.

This was a name very familiar to the fishermen of Prince Edward Island. For this very same Charles Coghlan had been born and reared only a few miles from where the coffin had drifted ashore.

The fishermen were astonished. For Charles Coghlan had - in his coffin - floated two thousand miles across the stormy seas to come home! Shortly after, he was laid to rest near the church where he was baptised.

Now, what sort of coincidence would you call that? Δ

## **LONG LIVE PLANET EARTH XII XI X IX VIII VII VI V**

The odds look good on at least one further issue of ANNALS being published before the world ends. And that is in spite of doom-laden predictions earlier this year, from American evangelists among others. Such predictions come thick and fast, especially as the millennium approaches, but they have been with us for thousands of years.

In 1993 it was the rantings of former student journalist Marina Tsuygun, leader of a Ukranian sect called the Great White Brotherhood, that captured our attention. November 14 came and went in uneventful style.

Another scare came on October 28, 1992, when the South Korean Christian Sect named it as the day of global retribution. It did indeed follow swiftly for errant preacher Lee Jang Kim, who was then jailed for defrauding others that had either given away or given up all their worldly possessions.

Quitting jobs and selling their homes proved a costly lesson for members of the True Light Church in Carolina. They could only express profound "shock" as the Earth kept on turning at the end of 1970.

Camping out on Mount Blanc in July, 1960, turned into a waste of time for 90 spiritualists who had hoped to avoid a non-existent cataclysm that year.

It must have been a chilly time for the 30 men, women and children, clad only in white sheets and waiting for the end in a

British Columbia farmhouse on January 9, 1951. The sect, known as the Children of Light, had locked themselves inside some 14 days earlier.

A delve into my files next finds the Biblical Pyramidists, who believed the measurements of the Great Pyramid in Egypt forecast the end of the world, fixed the moment as September 15, 1936.

American Robert Reidt convinced many people that February 6, 1926, would see the demise of our planet. A week later - Friday the 13th - some 144,000 people would instantly go to heaven without dying, he predicted. Thousands prepared for the worst and many hanged themselves rather than take their chances of being among the angels. As the day drew to a close, Reidt retired to bed, saying: "It doesn't look as if anything will happen today." He later blamed it on a "technical hitch".

Signs saying "Repent - the end of the world is nigh" became a joke which only began to be taken more seriously after the nightmare of WWI.

Doom mongers were again thwarted in 1843, January 1, 1601 and 1524. They almost always blamed miscalculations for their failures as the world continued to survive their pessimism.

January 1 always seemed a likely choice of date and was once again selected for the year 1000. At that time it was belief in the return of Christ and as the date drew nearer, kings gave up their thrones, nobles their estates and merchants their wealth. Millions came trembling into the churches as Armagedon approached - but nothing happened.

Now Sister Marie Gabriel, a Polish-born nun, joins the list of failures. She may have predicted in July, 1986, the crash into the planet Jupiter of a comet, but Shoemaker-Levy did not trigger of the catastrophic events she foretold would follow.

Sister Marie, who lives in North London, spent a fortune on newspaper adverts in an effort to alert an unsuspecting world and warned people to wear dark glasses and stay in their basements for five days.

There was only one way the Earth could escape this final calamity according to the 53-year-old nun. But I have not noticed any voluntary reduction in crime or pornography and as far as I can tell packs of cigarettes and beer are selling as well as before. So maybe retribution still awaits around the corner. Any bets on December 31, 1999?

But just let us spare one final thought for the old man reportedly observed carrying a sign predicting the end of the world, as recorded in the *Daily Sport*, Sept. 5. It seems he was run over and killed while crossing a road in Barcelona, Spain. Δ

# MYSTICISM and DIAMONDS

Eric Bruton

Powerful material and spiritual powers have been attributed to gemstones from the earliest days and recent times has seen a resurgence of these thoughts. They were believed able to cure diseases, avert calamity, and to be able to ward off evil spirits, It was thought that the arbiter of a man's fate could be carried by him in his purse in the shape of a precious stone.

For many centuries before the spread of monotheism, man was believed to be a microcosm of the universe. He was its counterpart and for every part of his body there was a corresponding part of the universe. At the moment of dissolution of his body in death, his soul if pure, united with the great universal soul - the Buddhist's *karma*. If his soul were impure, it passed through a number of transmigrations during which it animated animals, plants, and even some minerals, until it was purified and was absorbed into the universal soul. That is why gemstones were thought to have life.

These beliefs from ancient India spread through the East, then came to Egypt and to Greece and were influential in Europe in the Middle Ages, particularly through the activities of the alchemists.

Plato, the Greek philosopher, believed that precious stones were truly living beings and were produced by a sort of fermentation as a result of vivifying spirits descending from the stars. Distinguishing diamond from other stones as a kind of kernel formed in gold, he supposed it to be the purest and noblest part of the metal that had condensed into a transparent mass.

Later, Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, divided precious stones into male and female specimens. It was a logical development of the belief in them as living beings.

Even as late as 1876, Indians were told: 'Like men, diamonds are divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.' The division into caste were made by colour.

There were astrological significations of precious stones. In a table of planets given in the 17th century, diamond is equated with the sun thus: Planet: *Sun*. Metal: *gold*. Precious stones: *diamond, sapphire, jacinth, lodestone*.

A curious belief about the diamond was that, if held in the mouth, it caused the teeth to drop out. Diamond was supposed to be of service to lunatics and those possessed of devils. It also repelled the attacks of phantoms and made the sleep of the wearer free from nightmares.

Another benefit of diamond was its ability to baffle the magic arts and to cause lawsuits to be settled in favour of the wearer. It was not explained what happened when both parties wore diamonds. If a house, orchard, or vineyard were touched at each corner with a diamond, it was thought to be protected from lightning, storms and blight.

A property of some diamonds known in Roman times, if not earlier, and regarded as proof of diamonds' magic, was their ability to glow in the dark after being subjected to strong sunlight for a time, that is their phosphorescence after exposure to ultra-violet light.

The ancients declared that the magic powers of diamond were so superior that a lodestone would lose its magnetism in the presence of diamond. Diamonds, when rubbed, will pick up small pieces of paper and other light objects because of the static electrical charge induced in it, is easily proved. (When rubbed on wool it becomes electrically positive.) Probably it was this fact that lively imagination developed into superior magnetic powers. No one thought of experimenting to discover whether the fact was true. Intellectual theory was supposedly vastly superior to practical experiment, particularly in Greek times. The value of experiment was not generally appreciated until the 18th century.

Probably the earliest medicines were herbal and animal, but mineral substances were undoubtedly employed at an early date. Many pharmacopoeias acclaimed precious stones as among the most valuable remedies.

Diamond was reckoned to have the power of resisting all poisons. If taken internally, however, it was supposed to reveal itself as a deadly poison. One belief was that a diamond grew dark in the presence of poison because particles emanating from the poison gathered on the surface of the stone, being unable to penetrate it.

Diamond has held this contradictory position in the view of several ancient authors. St Hildegard, in the 10th century, maintained that a precious stone would only heal a person if held in his hand while making the sign of the cross. It would also heal if taken to bed and warmed by one's body, or if held in the mouth, especially when fasting, if breathed upon, or if worn next to the skin. He added that a diamond held in the mouth of a liar or scold would cure his spiritual defects.

Pliny recorded that diamonds were found in a Valley of Diamonds, a belief that was based on an earlier legend of how Alexander the Great, during his campaign through India about 350BC, retrieved diamonds from a pit guarded by snakes whose gaze would kill a man. The snakes were killed by Alexander's soldiers

using mirrors so that the snakes' gaze fell on themselves.

Sheeps' carcasses were then thrown into the pit. The diamonds adhered to the fat and vultures lured by the meat picked it up with the diamonds attached. The soldiers followed the vultures to their roosts and recovered the diamonds from nests and droppings. The Valley of Diamonds legend seems to have originated from writings of the Bishop of Constantia, Cyprus (c.315-403) and was later repeated by Marco Polo.

The story has survived until today in the fable of Sinbad the Sailor, who was thrown into a diamond valley to die. He saved himself when he saw merchants throwing flesh into the valley. Wrapping some diamond-studded flesh around his body, he allowed a vulture to carry him to safety.

Professor Samuel Tolansky, an authority on diamond, has suggested that the Valley of Diamonds legend was deliberately encouraged by Indian diamond merchants in Golconda, the trading centre, to disguise the true sources in riverbeds of the surrounding country. Δ

## *DISAPPEARING PIGEON 'FLAP'*

Just what lies behind the mystery disappearance, involving thousands of racing pigeons across the United Kingdom in the past few months, has prompted fanciers to come up with an out-of-this-world explanation.

Richard Tovey, of Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, reports that 25 of his birds have failed to arrive home. He and others think that the Shoemaker-Levy comet collision with the planet Jupiter in some way interfered with the pigeons' homing instincts.

"The last time I can remember such a bad spell of losses was just after the Chernobyl explosion," he said. The cosmic theory has developed from the belief of some experts that the uncanny and unexplained ability of pigeons to fly home is linked to the Earth's magnetic field.

"Pigeons do rely on the earth's magnetic field to fly in the right direction, but they also combine this with monitoring the sun and smell," said Tovey, regional secretary of the South West Royal Pigeon Racing Association. "It is very easy for them to be thrown off course if any of these factors are disturbed."

One local racer from Street, Somerset, released 41 pigeons and only one returned. While a Yeovil breeder, Brian Frost, lost 28 out of 41 birds.

Earthbound technology is blamed by Mark Palmer, of the Central

Counties Pigeon Flying Club, who believes state-of-the-art equipment such as mobile phones and fax machines was confusing the birds by damaging their homing instincts.

"In July we liberated a group of birds who were meant to return to Birmingham but ended up in Wolverhampton," he said.

Professor George Rowlands of Warwick University's department of physics perched on the fence on the question of what was affecting pigeons' sense of direction.

"We do think they are affected by the magnetic field as they have a little 'compass' in their brain which tells them where to go.

"I doubt if the Jupiter explosion has produced this effect, and I think it is stretching things a bit to suggest that mobile phones are to blame."

Certainly mobile phones and faxes would have no affect at all. The former requires a fraction of the power used by CBers or Amateur Radio enthusiasts in its transmissions, for example. Faxes utilize standard telephone or landlines and therefore have no bearing on the matter whatsoever.

But is there a more down-to-earth and far more mundane explanation than the bird-brained theories enunciated so far?

John James, president of the Gloucester Association, has this to say: "You can forget outer space - people lose their birds when they fly them in the wrong conditions."

He said too many birds in the air at the same time could also cause problems.

So, while this year's losses are undoubtedly real, it seems unlikely that galactic collisions or even the existence of a pigeon's Bermuda Trangle is in any way the root cause of the birds' disappearance.

## *UNLUCKY BLACK CATS*

Catnapping stories have surfaced throughout the UK from time-to-time, with foreigners bearing the brunt of accusations. Now black cats in increasing numbers are falling prey to 'devil worshippers'. According to a report in the *Sunday Independent*, of Sept.4, upwards of 20 cats - all black - have vanished from villages around the country town of Stroud, Gloucestershire. Frightened villagers are keeping their pets indoors for fear they will never see them alive again.

Next we have 'worried' RSPCA officers who 'fear devil worshippers could be stealing the cats off the streets to use in satanic rituals'. A further theory, and somewhat less sinister, is that illegal fur traders could be operating in the area.

Will Moggie ever replace Mink? I doubt it somehow.

## INVASION OF THE INSECTS

Exotic pests are set to invade Britain, now that the Greenhouse effect is pushing up temperatures, according to Greenpeace. This could lead to plagues of deadly black widow spiders and malaria-bearing mosquitoes.

Sandflies, which can spread a parasitic disease, have already been found in the Channel Islands. Cockroaches are rampant in many tower blocks and could colonise sewers, bringing with them the risk of food poisoning.

Entomologists say pests are more likely to survive milder winters, breed and multiply. Meanwhile, poisonous spiders like the recluse, which hides in crannies, could set up home here.

Crop destroyers like the Colorado beetle, which attacks potatoes, will be tougher to keep out of the country. Mosquitoes may also breed in estuaries like the Thames and broads of East Anglia.

## HARD TO SWALLOW

A woman has been charged with murder after her husband was eaten by a 20ft snake.

Battered wife Anita Pele slipped the giant boa constrictor into his bed as he slept, says a report in that venerated tabloid the *Daily Sport*, Sept.1. The reptile then strangled 31-year-old Dino Pele before swallowing him whole.

Medics called to the flat found the snake snoozing on the bed with a man-shaped bulge in its stomach, but after killing it and cutting it open, 15-stone Dino failed to respond to resuscitation.

His wife claimed in a Buenos Aires court that he beat her every night for 12 years.

## UNDERWATER MYSTERY

The Swedish navy spent weeks in August trying to trace the source of a mystery sound wave formation in their territorial waters. A former naval commander said it was hunting for what it thought was suspected Russian intruders and used air, surface and underwater resources in their efforts.

Sweden has sought similar intruders periodically over many years, always believing that Soviet submarines or submersibles were responsible. Just why they would need to risk detection in order to invade Swedish waters in an ongoing clandestine manner has never been made clear.

Now an unnamed source has concluded the noise was caused by animals - possibly seals or otters.

## SCIENCE EYE



THE UNIVERSE is 20 billion years old, roughly twice as old as commonly estimated, say a group of American physicists. Their view echoes that of many cosmologists, who are beginning to think that the Universe is older than standard observational tests suggests.

(Source: *New Scientist* - Aug 20/94)

A NEW generation of airliners will soon be running on natural gas. Russian scientists have designed an engine they say can switch from aviation fuel to gas. Tupolev's Valentin Klimov said: "We are solving a big ecological problem."

AN INFERTILE woman has given birth to a baby after it was grown from a chicken's egg. The egg - just the same as those found on supermarket shelves - produced 8lb girl, Federica. Italian doctors are claiming a world first with their revolutionary treatment.

(Source: *Today-Sept 8/94*)

THE GERMANS could have been exporting car technology to Britain as long ago as 1300BC. Archaeologists believe they designed Britain's oldest wheel which was dug up Sept 7 near Peterborough, Cambs.

## WEIRD BITS

They certainly don't come weirder than the Filipino seamstress who snipped off her husband's penis with a pair of scissors after they had checked into a hotel to discuss their marriage problems. (Source: *Belfast Telegraph*-Aug 1/94)

While a Chinese dwarf experienced a "miraculous" growth spurt after what the Worker's Daily called an unprecedented transplant operation. Tian Yu, 15, who had not grown in eight years, shot up 1.8ins in just 14 weeks and is now 4ft 3in-tall after doctors transplanted cultured pituitary gland cells from an embryo into his brain in March. (Source: *Belfast Telegraph*-July 26, 94)

☒ **SPECTRAL** - A new magazine from Wales dealing specifically with ghosts, poltergeists and hauntings. Always difficult this, launching your own publication, but presentation cannot be faulted in this pilot issue. 'Real-Life Experiences', consisting of first-hand accounts of the paranormal was most interesting. Worth a look.

A5, 32pp. Subs: Sample £1.75, 1yr (4 issues) £6.00. Editor: John Anderson, Spectral, PO Box 18, Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan, CF44 8YG.

☒ **INFO JOURNAL** - From the presses of the world's oldest Fortean organization, the 'Journal' has been expanded and improved following major reconstruction among its leadership last year. A large format, quality production, that is essential reading for all Forteans.

A4-ish, 62pp. Subs: 1yr (3 issues) US\$16.00 o'seas. Editor: Michael T Shoemaker, The International Fortean Organization, PO Box 367, Arlington VA. 22210-0367, USA.

☒ **DELVE** - Every issue is unflinching packed from bow to stern with subject matter that will interest readers of *Annals*. Highly readable and often includes nostalgic reprints of material from those unique decades of early contemporary research.

A4-ish, 20pp. Subs: Unsure. Issue 9 had no details. Suggest sending US\$3.00 for sample to: Editor, Gene Duplantier, Delve, 17

Shetland Street, Willowdale, Ontario M2M 1X5, Canada.

☒ **THE CROP WATCHER** - Crop circles have not had their day, and this magazine can always be relied upon to unmask what lies below the surface. Issue 22 provides details of a new Scottish Ice Ring case, a rare eye witness account of a crop circle forming, and details of various worldwide hoaxes.

A4, 28pp. Subs: Sample £1.50, 1yr (4 issues) £6. Editor: Paul Fuller, The Crop Watcher, 3 Selbourne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 7TY.

## 3rd STONE

*A magazine with an upfront, no nonsense approach to ancient sacred sites and symbolic landscapes with a nod and a wink to folklore, ufology and parascience.*

Latest issue £2.50 from G.E.M, PO Box 258, Cheltenham, GL53 0HR

A GEM PUBLICATION  
YOU'LL NEVER HEAR SURF MUSIC AGAIN

☒ **THE GATE** - Consistent and always carries interesting Fortean accounts in addition to articles covering UFOs, the paranormal etc. The October issue includes: 'Allah And The Aliens' and 'Deliver Us From Evil' - hostile UFO contacts. The Gate features original artwork throughout.

A5-ish, 20pp. Subs: 1yr (4 issues) US\$10.00 o'seas. Editor: Beth Robbins, The Gate, PO Box 43516, Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143, USA.

☒ **MAGONIA** - Erudite, incisive, enlightening, witty and an absolute bargain regardless of a impending modest price rise (the first in 5 years). 'Screen Memories', by Peter Brookesmith (Sept. issue), is an illuminating re-investigation of a well recorded aircraft/UFO near-miss incident over Kent in April 1991. Two well-known UFO investigative scribes are verbally mauled, chewed and spat out, as Brookesmith presents analysis at its best of facts that simply needed to be exposed and properly evaluated.

A4, 20pp. Subs: 1yr (4 issues) £5.00. Editor: John Rimmer, Magonia, John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8H.

☒ **ENIGMAS** - Strange Phenomena Investigations could never be accused of 'armchair' investigation and this energy, particularly by its enthusiastic editor, is reflected in each issue. Details of ongoing case research work, strange-but-true tales from its readers, and regular updates keep everyone informed. The August-September issue maintains that standard.

A5, 44pp. Subs: Sample £2.00, 1yr (5 issues) £10.00. Editor: Malcolm Robinson, Enigmas, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, Scotland FK10 2TT.

☒ **THE CAMBRIDGE UFO RESEARCH GROUP** - Much more than a newsletter record of this Canadian group's meetings and activities, it also incorporates a varied selection of articles, clippings etc., of broad interest. A mighty weighty tome it is, at about 50 pages an issue in its plastic wrapper, and when it hits the deck on delivery must surely raise a bruise on the Richter Scale. The June issue carries a report on recent guest speaker Anna Mitchell-Hedges' mysterious Crystal Skull. This is accompanied by earlier published features relating to the mystery artifact. Sadly the Newsletter is ceasing with issue #49..

A4-ish, 50pp. Exchange only. Editor: Bonnie Wheeler. President, Cambridge UFO Research Group, 170 Strathcona Street, Cambridge, Ontario, N3C 1R4, Canada.

☒ **FORESIGHT** - Latest issue (Oct/Dec 94) includes rockets in the Middle Ages and Indian Vimanas. Diverse topics, while the underlying theme addresses World transition and evolutionary change.

A5, 16pp. Subs: Unsure, suggest sending £1 + any used stamps towards charity to: Editors John & Judy Barklam, 44 Brockhurst Road, Hodge Hill, Birmingham B36 8JB.

*Exchange Magazines  
always welcome and will be  
reviewed in this column.*

## NOSTRADAMUS:

YOU'VE READ THE BOOK, NOW SEE THE MOVIE

In the bleak depths of the Dark Ages, he predicted the rise of Napoleon, the birth of Hitler, and the assassination of President Kennedy. While his contemporaries burned witches and fled the Black Death, he accurately foretold man's walk on the moon, and the advent of AIDS.

Nearly 500 years since the birth of Nostradamus, the world's most spine-chilling visionary continues to fascinate millions. Now the gripping story of Michel de Nostradame is the subject of an epic movie that promises to turn the seer into a star.

British production company Allied Entertainment has just finished post-production work on the film Nostradamus, which is due to open in the United Kingdom and US later this year.

More than 20 million people worldwide already read his predictions in books and magazines, and his works have been translated into more than 30 languages. But few people know about the dramatic life of the legendary prophet.

Persecuted and tortured for his predictions, Nostradamus penned his warnings for the future in code "in order not to frighten the masses". But despite his condemnation by the Church, his original manuscripts are now, ironically, protected by the Vatican.

French actor Tcheky Karyo, who plays the prognosticator, became convinced he was possessed by the dead visionary's spirit. He believes Nostradamus was simply scientifically ahead of his times. "Few people know that Nostradamus was a doctor who cured the plague using natural medicines. He was a man who believed in science, in being rational and in finding the truth," said Karyo.

Forces of darkness also pervaded the set when production moved to Romania, reported the cast and sets were devastated by torrential storms shortly before filming was due to begin.

Film producer Edward Simon says: "Nostradamus is a contemporary figure. In his letters to his son he alluded that man would only comprehend his position on this planet at the end of this century, which is astonishing because, as we know, ecology is raising its head everywhere and we are becoming aware of the planet and the choices that have to be made."

His prophecies continue to hang over our heads: he predicted that later this year a Russian spacecraft will crash on America; a major war will explode in 1999; and, by the year 2,000, man will land on Mars. Δ

## Leftovers & Late Breakers

Twelve men ordered a takeaway pizza - and ate the delivery boy. "All we found was his bones," said police who raided a disused factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Carlos Sanchez, 19, had gone to the factory from the city's Petito pizza parlour. Nine devil worshippers escaped, but police arrested three they found dressed in white gowns sitting around a table by candlelight. (Source: *Today-June 2/94*)

It has been reported that a group of drunks in the eastern town of Artyom, Turkey, killed three of their companions and ate one of them. (Source: *Ceefax-June 9/94*)

Angler Luigi Puretto, 27, who hadn't had a catch in weeks, went to a clairvoyant who gave him a 'magic' potion. When Luigi drank it while starting to fish, at San Vito Lo Capo, Italy, he dropped dead. (Source: *Daily Sport-Sept 5/94*)

A man kept the bodies of a friend and his grandfather packed in dry ice in a shed behind his Colorado home, hoping some day to bring them back to life. Trygve Bauge was deported to his native Norway in May, after officials were led to the bodies by his mother in the remote town of Nederland.

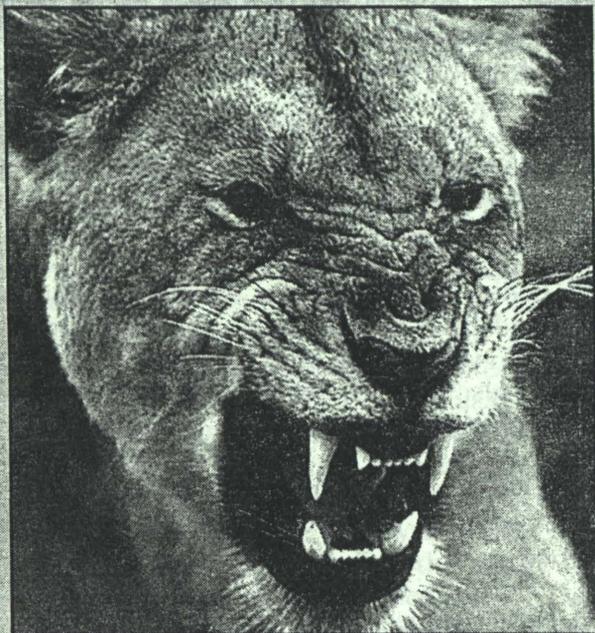
An elderly woman has been found frozen to death after falling into her top-loading freezer in the Sydney suburb of Punchbowl. (Source: *Teletext 3-May 29/94*)

A 57-year-old cancer patient died of burns after laser surgery set off a fire in his throat, an inquest in Melbourne was told. Valentino Aiello had been fitted with a plastic tube in his throat to help his breathing a few months before undergoing the surgery in July, 1992. It caught fire during the operation and he died 12 hours later. (Source: *Teletext 3-Mar 20/94*)

Three students claim they saw a bright bowl-shaped object, with something underneath it, hovering over a road in Taunton, Somerset at 0315hrs on Sept. 8. They had finished watching a video when they heard a humming, droning sound. The object was reported to be hovering lower than a church tower and was bright and luminous white with lights all around.

(Source: *Somerset County Gazette-Sept 9/94*)

**HAVE YOU SEEN**



**THIS CAT!**

A PURPLE PEOPLE EATER PRODUCTION © 1994