

Common Ground.

A new journal

# Common Ground

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Studies at the Fringe of Human  
Experience.

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Thanks to the support, advice, ideas, and active involvement of a remarkable variety of writers and researchers in the paranormal field, our show is on the road.

Involved in 'Common Ground' are people from the S.P.R., from BUFORA and UFOIN. There are Fortean and Christian Parapsychologists: there are established researchers from fields as diverse as earth mysteries, religious mysticism, and out-of-body and death-bed experiences. Many of them write articles for other journals and magazines; several edit their own. All have agreed to try to help to establish an inter-disciplinary source of information, discussion, criticism, and co-operation, based on the elements of reported human experience that are common to all our areas of study.

The subtitle, 'Studies at the fringe of human experience' sums up some of our problems. We are working in new, different, and difficult research fields. It is hard to establish the veracity and objectivity of reports made to us, and to determine what meaning and significance, if any, they may have. Our aim is to provide a means by which we may begin to be able to deal with these problems, hopefully affording us all some pleasure in the process. We hope that we will be enjoyed by a wide, discerning, and above all contributing audience. We look forward to hearing from you.



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Hilary Evans has, over the last few years, become one of our best-known speakers and writers in a number of areas of paranormal research. A leading member of the Society for Psychical Research he was the first to prepare a report on the Psi-UFO interface for that Society, and later went on to found the S.P.R. UFO Research Group. A social historian and self-made librarian, he recently had the opportunity to spend some time in South-West Wales, to draw his own conclusions about the 'Dyfed Enigma' or 'Welsh Triangle'. The discoveries he made, and the inadequacies of investigation that they imply, offer little comfort to those concerned about standards of investigation in this country. We are delighted to be the first journal to present these remarkable, but disturbing, facts.

## TREAD THOU IN THEM BOLDLY by Hilary Evans

A few steps in the tracks of the Dyfed enigmatists.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a UFO case whereunto three full-length books have been devoted must be a very splendid UFO case indeed. The West Wales flap of 1977, comprising as it did more than fifty incidents, accompanied by all manner of astonishing effects and marvellous manifestations ranging from silver-suited entities to the teleportation of cattle, from Men in Black to offshore UFO bases, presents itself as one of the richest and most varied, as well as one of the best authenticated, of all events in the history of UFOlogy.

It was, therefore, with a sense of real excitement that I set out, now that four years have passed since those remarkable incidents took place, to reassess them in a deeper perspective. What I discovered, treading in the footsteps of those who had investigated the case at the time, was every bit as astonishing as I had expected; but in a quite different way than I had anticipated.

### The incidents summarised.

The West Wales flap may be said to comprise some fifty incidents, spread mostly over the first half of 1977 but continuing until about October. There

were of course sightings reported from the area before that, and they have continued since; but there was a very marked increase in alleged UFO activity during that period.

What is more, although a good number of reports were the customary unconfirmed lights in the sky, a high proportion were more interesting. There were several sightings of UFO's on the ground, and the sighting which can be said to have triggered off the entire flap was one of these. Fifteen children at Broad Haven Primary School claimed to have seen a grounded UFO in a field near their school during their lunch break, and it was still there when school finished at 3.30p.m. Though the staff did not believe the children at the time, one teacher was to see a UFO in the same place some two weeks later, though only for a few seconds and in pouring rain, some distance away and partially obscured by bushes and trees.

The Broad Haven sightings aroused national interest from the media: the little seaside village was invaded by reporters and photographers, as well as by

investigators competent or otherwise. UFOlogy was fortunate that the local BUFORA representative was Randall Jones Pugh, a retired vet who had become the acknowledged local expert in the subject, widely featured in the local press, and consequently apt to be called when any UFO event occurred. After the Broad Haven incident, he reported that his phone hardly stopped ringing, and he was to be personally involved in all the major events throughout the flap.

These were comprised of a high proportion of sightings by children, but also a wide variety of cases of all kinds. The UFO's seen were predominantly of the cigar or domed disc type, though egg-shaped and even more bizarre forms were also reported. Several cases included entity sightings, though there was little contact and no hostile manifestations.

The most extraordinary incidents were those associated with Ripperston Farm, an isolated group of buildings where two families lived and a herd of cattle was maintained. The Coombs family was the only one of the two households to be affected; but in the course of the months they saw several UFO's, both in the air and on the ground; were chased while in a car by a glowing 'football'; were visited by a white-suited 'entity' which peered into their sitting-room while they watched a late-night movie and was later seen by the children in the fields while playing roly-poly; suffered a wide range of mechanical trouble with cars, television sets and electrical equipment; experienced frequent teleportation of cattle (often the entire herd of more than a hundred) from a securely fastened yard to a neighbouring farm; saw a disc UFO dive into an offshore rock where sliding doors opened to admit it; and watched entities climbing up and down the side of that same uninhabited rock, leading some investigators to claim that it was the first identified UFO base on Planet Earth.

Such were some of the facts, as reported.

### The Investigation.

Press coverage was maintained by the local weekly, the Western Telegraph; its treatment was excellent - objective, neither sensationalising the incidents, nor ridiculing the witnesses, but preserving an admirable neutrality. Not so the national media: the SUN, for example, spoke of 'the terror triangle', and was careless in its reporting, while other newspapers twisted testimony and added their own invented details.

Coverage in the ufological press stemmed chiefly from R.J. Pugh, and mainly comprised a factual transcript of what the witnesses claimed, with a minimum of comment or evaluation.

Eventually, three full-length books came out. One (1) was by Pugh himself, in collaboration with the well-known writer on the paranormal, F.W. Holiday, who also lived locally. Their book was the only one to appear in hardback; it combined factual reportage with some interesting speculation, chiefly regarding the ley-line connection, the Vallee-type 'goblin universe, and the animal aspect. Like Pugh's reports, it was uncritical in approach.

The widest-read of the three books is probably Clive Harold's The Uninvited (2), a paperback devoted almost entirely to the Coombs family's experiences. It is told in narrative style, with invented conversation, more like a novel than a factual documentation, though the first words are, 'The story you are about to read is true', a statement somewhat open to question. There is a quotation from Wordsworth to establish literary credentials, and the author's overall attitude is expressed in this statement: 'You will find no explanations for the events reconstructed here, for there are none'. This too, as we shall see, is debatable.

The quality of Harold's book really depends on reading it from

cover to cover, not an undertaking for the sensitive. Here is a representative passage: the family are watching a UFO as it hovers over their cowsheds:

'Without saying a word, the family left the car . . . It was Pauline who broke the trance-like silence first. "Beautiful, isn't it?" she whispered, "Isn't it the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?" Billy reached out in the darkness and took her hand. She glanced sideways at him and smiled gently, then looked over her shoulder at the group of children behind them. "Watch," she whispered . . .'

Much of Harold's research was carried out in collaboration with Peter Paget, author of the third book, The Welsh Triangle (3). As its title suggests, this work makes no attempt to play down the incidents. It covers the Ripperston events in fair detail, stressing the author's personal involvement with the family, though he came on to the scene long after Pugh and Holiday. It also seeks to set the incidents in a broader context, drawing upon the author's experience as, 'Editor of one of the leading UFO magazines'. The journal he refers to would appear to be The Fountains Journal, which was published in that hive of the UFO industry, Warminster: I understand that only two issues appeared.

It is Paget who is responsible for the Stack Rocks UFO base theory, which he presents as fact rather than speculation. He quotes Einstein rather than Wordsworth; the quality of his approach will perhaps be apparent from this extract:

'I felt moved. There was something about the way she related the story, a simple sighting which I had read from many parts of the world many times before, which made very clear to me that her experience had touched her deeply, had given her some kind of profound realisation. It was, perhaps, the kind of thing so many of us spend half our lives searching for: the unquestionable certainty that somewhere, we don't know where, there is somebody else, something else, out there!'

One turns back with relief to the relative sobriety of Pugh & Holiday with their bibliography and index, their objective reporting and their informed speculation. But in the context of a flap like West Wales 1977, is that enough?

#### Re-investigation.

Even before I set off I was prepared for inconsistencies. One of the central incidents was the Coombs (or Coombes: opinions are divided) car chase from St.Ishmaels to Ripperston (consistently misspelt by Harold). The journey is some three miles long, yet Harold has the tired Pauline relieved to see a signpost telling her she has only seven more miles to go. He has her driving a Zodiac, Paget a Hillman Hunter. The date was 16 April (Harold), or 16 March (Pugh) or 12 April (Paget): in this instance I go for Harold's date, but my mind is open as regards the age of the second boy (Pugh 10, Paget 12) . . .

Trivialities, of course: but they don't encourage belief when the same investigators speak of more important matters. And the date could be very important, according as it pre-dated or followed-on other sightings.

An interview-by-interview account of my re-investigation might be fun to read, in an Agatha Christie sort of way: but it would be apt to confuse. An incident-by-incident procedure would be of value as a record, but would not make my point. For what is important about the Welsh 1977 events - for the student of the paranormal - is its unique demonstration of how a number of factors can combine to escalate a handful of minor incidents into a sensational scenario totally out of proportion to its original components. Consequently, I propose to approach the events from the angle of these distorting factors.

#### Inconsistencies and discrepancies.

If a witness is age 10 in one account and age 12 in another, one is inaccurate. A comprehensive list of such inaccuracies in the published accounts would fill a small book; none can be regarded as more than approximately accurate.

#### Exaggerations and enhancements.

Most reporters imply that Billy Coombs was the manager of Ripperston Farm; in fact he was simply a herdsman, one of three employees, and with no superior status. The cover of Harold's book represents Ripperston as a kind of Wuthering Heights, giving a totally false impression of a house which is no more sinister or isolated than the general run of houses in a farming community.

Author's licence? But hardly conducive to a balanced appraisal of the events, and the same goes for the emotion-charged phrases. Paget is free with 'an uncanny silence', 'an air of unreality', 'a secret beyond one's imagination', and the like: the characters in Harold's book are forever clenching their fists, biting their tongues, feeling mesmerised, haunted by thoughts, sighing, shuddering, gasping . . . . .

#### Omissions.

These may relate to the witness. It is known that Billy Coombs had a Police record before he came to Ripperston, and that he was eventually dismissed for stealing. While this does not necessarily invalidate his testimony, it is permissible to surmise that a man who is careless with other people's property will also lack respect for what he tells people. Yet no report mentions the fact, which speaks well for their humanity, less well for their concern for truth.

Other omissions relate to circumstances. Stack Rocks, into which a UFO was seen to dive one evening, face east: so the witnesses at the time of the sighting were facing west, into the sun, while the rock itself would be in shadow. . . . nobody mentions this

Nor do they clearly indicate that Rose Granville, who confirmed the presence of entities on the rocks and their unusual size, was 5 kilometres distant. Her attention was drawn to the rocks by a flash in the sky over the rocks: but investigators fail to point out that the sky over St.Bride's Bay is full of RAF jets from the nearby Brawdy airfield, who use the rock as a marker for turning into their landing approach, as official maps indicate. There must be flashes in the sky over Stack Rocks several times a day.

#### Gullibility.

A thirteen year old girl named Deborah Swan was playing with friends in the park, when they decided to see if they could find this 'Outer Space Thing'. Two turned back because 'it began to get scary' but the others continued and, lo and behold, there across a field was a UFO like a football, brilliant gleaming silver, moving backwards and forwards . . . . It is one of the rare cases in the literature of UFOlogy of a would-be percipient going out and finding a UFO in a matter of minutes: Deborah's story is just one which is accepted at face value by the investigators, without a murmur of doubt.

#### Unsubstantiated explanations.

If you accept the story of the UFO vanishing through sliding doors into Stack Rocks, then it might be reasonable to surmise that they contain a secret extra-terrestrial UFO base, as Paget does . . . . in one of my favourite passages, he writes: "Here we were, sitting in a Welsh farmhouse built of solid slate, talking with amiable, hospitable country people who had no interest at all in the far-out recesses of space . . . . and yet one mile distant from where we were sitting had been discovered possibly the first UFO base on earth. . ." Though he spent six months in the district, Paget never found time to take a boat out to the Stack Rocks, as did BBC reporter Brynswor Williams, who failed to see any evidence of such an installation. Altogether, Paget

accepts the alien outpost with the same equanimity as he would the opening of a branch of Safeway in Haverfordwest High Street.

#### Simple improbability.

Some material is included in reports which can perhaps be neither proved nor disproved, but whose admittance to the body of evidence casts a dubious light on the rest. The daughter of the proprietor of the Haven Fort Hotel is reported as seeking to change her bedroom because the windows rattle mysteriously . . . but this is a hotel perched on the cliffs in one of the most windswept places in Britain, where windows of even the stoutest building must surely rattle . . . One wants to say 'Come off it' to the investigator who produces this as evidence for the paranormal, and equally to the teacher at Broad Haven school who, on the grey, overcast day the UFO was seen two or three hundred yards away, saw 'a little whirlwind of dust' come across the play ground when it went, 'almost as if they were saying goodbye'.

#### Defective investigation.

Until I saw Ripperston Farm for myself, I had not appreciated that the Coombs' cottage is actually joined to its neighbour, where there lived Billy's fellow-worker Brian Klass and his wife Caroline. It is a fact, though hardly believable, that throughout the 1977 flap nobody asked the Klases their opinion of their neighbours and fellow workers, never enquired if they too had had such experiences.

What would they have learned if they had made such inquiries? They would have learned that cattle were continually escaping at Ripperston: this is confirmed by the farm manager Richard Hewison. There is no need to premise any supernatural explanation. Nor, as investigators have suggested, would it have been impossible for Billy Coombs not to have heard the cattle tramping past: on a windy night they could very easily pass unheard, even if one didn't have the radio or television on.

Also from Brian and Caroline they would have got some clues as to the

mysterious entity which peered through the window and ruined the Coombs' late night movie. Two jokers from the Round Table of a neighbouring town had already played a trick on Rose Granville of the Haven Fort Hotel, and it is generally accepted in the neighbourhood that the same people were responsible for playing a trick on the Coombses. True, I have no definite proof that this is what happened, as those responsible have not openly admitted it: but what is important, from the point of view of impartial investigation, is that the possibility of such an explanation is not mentioned by any of the writers, though a few minutes talk in any local pub, not to mention a direct question to the Klases or the Hewisons, would have shown that this is the version accepted by people on the spot.

#### Outright lies.

Finally we come to the most serious fault of all: outright invention, for the sake of proving a theory or composing an attractive story. Some instances are trivial: thus both Paget and Harold, seeking to show how sinister the Stack Rocks are, state that snow is never known to settle on them. But the Hewisons showed me, from their photo album, a view of the Rocks - with snow covering them.

It is Caroline Klass who is the subject of the most outrageous invention. This is in connection with the visit of two men whose appearance is transformed by both Paget and Harold into one of sinister aliens, seemingly from a different world, akin to the notorious Men in Black. In fact, the visit was perfectly natural. The men were not locals, to be sure, but neither were they foreigners, nor particularly sinister. They did not move in an impossible manner, drive a mysterious glass-domed vehicle, display psychic abilities - all this is absolute fiction. As for the final touch, as to why Pauline Coombs, who arrived only a few seconds after they left, failed to pass them - this is explained by the simple fact that

Caroline directed them along a more direct route leading away from the farm by a different road.

I have picked out only a few examples, and recounted them briefly: a full investigation would no doubt reveal far more than I was able to learn in my brief visit.

For the student of the paranormal, the moral is clear. Investigation must be comprehensive, it must be objective, it must be critical. That which was directed at the Welsh sightings was none of these things. Once again, the need is emphasised for a network of trained, experienced, responsible investigators: which is another reason for urging a federation of groups into a mutually supportive, standard-sharing co-operative organisation. Until we have such an organisation, the Pagets and the Harolds and their kind will be able to get away with it.

Was there anything at all to the Dyfed enigma? Was it nothing but distortion and exaggeration, wishful thinking and gullibility?

#### References.

- (1). R.J.Pugh & F.W.Holiday, The Dyfed Enigma. Faber & Faber 1979.
- (2). Clive Harold, The Uninvited. Star Books 1979.
- (3). Peter Paget, The Welsh Triangle. Granada-Panther 1979.

## The S.P.R. Dispute

On 25th. April 1981, the Society for Psychical Research held its A.G.M. at Kensington Library. The media, and a number of members, had managed to set it up as a gladiatorial contest between Professor A.J.Ellison, the Chairman of the S.P.R. Council, and Mr. Hugh Pincott, former Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. 'Psychic News' clearly knew more, and featured the Council's dispute with the redoubtable Mostyn Gilbert.

Over the past few months attempts have been made to rally support to two sides, one the 'academic', concerned with a strictly scientific, lab-oriented approach, the other, possibly more concerned with 'spontaneous' phenomena, and, perhaps, willing to risk both science and reputation in the cause of communicating with the public, actively involving members, and increasing membership. More personal feelings clearly underlay these divisions, too.

The meeting was a shambles. Its business was conducted, just, but individuals of whom one expected better, on both sides of the dispute, substituted assertion for reason, and abuse for argument.

The voting on resolutions showed a clear majority - some 8 : 1. - in favour of the wishes and intentions of the existing Council. It cannot be argued that the Society is being dominated by a minority of its members. It does not seem likely that the present problems will be easily resolved, but we will all hope something constructive can emerge from this unpleasant and unfortunate episode.

## ABSTRACTS

We feel that abstracts from journals, magazines, and other publications are a vital part of the development of 'Common Ground'. On this occasion only two individuals have been involved in compilation, and there is no doubt that we will have missed much that is relevant. For future issues we hope that if you come across anything that you feel ought to be mentioned, in any source not included in our 'journal listings', you will be able either to send us a copy of the article or item concerned, or your own abstract of it! This issue, we have tried to cover roughly the first three months of 1981.

Aquarian Arrow. No.10. Pagan satire and criticism, but leavened with an honest and moving account of the editor's tragic involvement with EST training. Salutory reading.

Awareness. Autumn 1980. Comparisons between the Andreasson Affair and H.G.Wells's 'The Time Machine', suggesting Wells was a contactee! The Notts. 'mass-hysteria' incident speculatively linked with UFO's. Very general piece on UFO's and ley-lines.

BUFORA Journal. Vol. 10. No.1. February 1981. Interesting photographic case from New Zealand. Bernard Delair on the multi-witness event of 31.12.78. - UFO or Cosmos 1068 re-entry? (He says UFO). (Norman Oliver says this article generated more response than any single item since he has been BUFORA editor).

Christian Parapsychologist. Vol. 4. No.1. March 1981. Two complementary articles on spiritual aspects of out-of-body-experiences, one by Sue Blackmore. First-rate reviews, as usual.

Earthlink. Vol. 4. No.2. January 1981. A motorised lawnmower-stop case. A reincarnation family tree traced back to 63,000 B.C. An update on the UMMO messages-by-post-from-space affair. Usual fascinating, if bizarre, contactee material and CE reports.

EVP News. No.26. March 1981. Exclusive account of a new, though complex, method of obtaining the EVP, developed by Michael Vinter.

Flying Saucer Review. Vol. 26. No.5. Encounter on Lord Mountbatten's estate. Chinese UFO photo. Extensive report on stranger-about-the-house entity observation in Argentina. Postscript to the classic Injarvi, Finland CE3. Mini entities in Malaysia. A British UFO-burns-witness case. Review of the NUFON/UFOIN one-day CE4 symposium.

Fortean Times. No.34. Winter 1981. Strong on monsters & strange creatures this issue. Also phantom hitch-hikers, Doc Shiels, and synchronicity.

Frontiers of Science. Vol.2. No.6. Alvin Lawson on 'Archetypes and Abductees', plus the use of psychics in support of archaeology.

Investigation. No.2. Quality UFO entity reports in depth by Andy Collins, Nigel Watson. Commentary by Jenny Randles, Janet & Colin Bord.

Magonia. No.5. Roger Sandell on the history of conspiracy theories as a social force, and a complex UFOIN case from Len Maisey, where the witness seems to have been cursed by all manner of apparitions, inexplicable experiences, and hallucinations.

Mersey News. Nos. 18 & 19. 18. An unknown lane encountered on the Wirral, a review of German UFOlogy, Spring-heeled Jack in Liverpool, ball-lightning reviewed, and attacks on Jenny Randles for speaking out about misidentifications to the media.

19. JR defends her position, Dr. Bob Morrell on evolution, Danny Chevaux recounts a mystery-men-on-a-foggy-lane-experience, which the witness thinks was a precognitive temporal play-back (don't ask me - I only type this stuff. KM.) of the first moon landing! Colin Hodge on ancient astronauts as God-substitute and the basis of 21st.-century religion.

MUFON UFO Journal. No.154. December 1980. A thorough exposure of the 'Billy' Meier, 'UFO's - Contact from the Pleiades' nonsense. UFO's and U.S. radar, and an update by Stringfield on 'Alleged Cadaver Photos'.

Northern UFOlogy. No.80. January 1981. Theme of 'UFO's exist because . . .' with reasons given by Brian Fishwick, Hilary Evans, Pat Austin and Jenny Randles, and responses from Charles Bowen and Lord Clancarty.

Northern UFO News. Nos.81 & 82. February & March 1981.

81. Report by Jenny Randles on her lecture to the House of Lords sub-committee. Catalogue of northern UFO groups.

82. Nigel Watson comments on the conspiracy novel, 'Genesis', by W.A. Harbinson. Entity and Animal disturbance case from North Wales.

Pursuit. Vol. 13. No.4. Autumn 1980. Original comments and theories about animal mutilations, and manipulation of UFOlogists through groups and magazines. Also 'Wild-man' material.

S.P.R. Journal. Vol.51. No.787. February 1981. Accounts of investigations involving metal-bending effects, lucid dreams and ESP, and ESP testing under Ganzfeld stimulation. Also the 1980 annual report of the Society.

Sunday Times. 29.3.81. 'Mother Earth's Flying Saucers'. Michael Pye. Psychologists and physicists have combined in Canada and America with a computer study of earthquakes and UFO sightings. The result was a theory that certain quartz-bearing rock under pressure produces an ionic effect in the surrounding atmosphere which produces light phenomena. Experiments have produced 'mini-UFO's' in the laboratory. The article summarises this important work, which seems to have been otherwise ignored. Attempts are made to use it as an explanation for the New Zealand radar/visual, photographic case.

UFO Insight. Vol. 2. No.1. January 1981. The international working party meet in Denmark, an inside report. Paper on UFO's and computers presented there by Bertil Kuhleman. Interview with Per Anderson. A demystification of the astronaut UFO sightings. Brief account of a new Cheshire EM (radio interference) case, splendidly analysed in detail in a special supplement issued subsequently.

UFO Research Review. Vol. 6. No.2. A thorough, intriguing report about a series of sightings in Derbyshire, August 1980. A model of its kind of investigation. No abuse of paranormalists at all.

Viewpoint Aquarius. No.101. March 1981. Report of Quintin Fogerty, New Zealand, UFO sightings, with interpretations involving, it seems, Alternative Three, assorted prophecies, and bases on the moon.

Zetetic Scholar. No.7. December 1980. Almost impossible to abstract. 166 pp. of good sense written by leading writers, which certainly needs your support. The new dialogue is based on J. Richard Greenwell's article 'Theories, Hypotheses, and Speculations on the origins of UFO's'. With twenty-three critical commentaries in this issue alone.

It is hard to see that any one in the past five years has done more for British UFOlogy than has Jenny Randles. A genuine concern for standards in both the investigation and the reporting of UFO events has had a lasting effect not only upon UFOIN itself, but also upon the other national UFO organisations, and upon a number of magazines, too. Seeming to attract to herself a degree of controversy that seems quite unreasonable, I suspect that even the recent high-quality, single-subject, nuts-and-bolts case histories produced by FUFOR and NUFOIS result from her diligence; it has become necessary for her critics to work to the same standards as she has set herself. Here she presents a number of the problems that afflict researchers in several areas of paranormal research, ranging from the difficulties of presenting research in a way that does not devalue it, to the recurrent patterns of group behaviour in three major cases, and the doubts which that behaviour, and its results, must raise in the mind of any observer or investigator.

## A SPOOK IN THE FAMILY.

by Jenny Randles

These are hard times, and financial pressures are biting deep into the publishing world. Paul (Whetnall) and I have certainly learnt this over the last year, as we engaged in a battle with Neville Spearman, the publishers.

The subject of our concern was a book, which we contracted to write on a bizarre series of UFO contacts involving the Sunderland family of Oakenholt, North Wales. We entitled it 'WINDOW ON ANOTHER WORLD', but this has since been demoted to a subtitle and, in the interests of commercial viability (of which, as a professional writer, I have to take some account) it has been relabelled dramatically, but not incorrectly, 'ALIEN CONTACT'. (1).

Our ideas, as represented by draft number one of the manuscript, met with a rather negative reception from the publishers who, for some reason, argued that UFOlogists do not buy UFO books! Rather, they are bought by a mythical entity known as 'the general public', whom we had to seek to please, and they would simply not be interested in the do's and don'ts, problems and difficulties, of a CE4 investigation. Had the publishers had their way entirely we would either have had to rescind a

year's work (which in my circumstances was unthinkable), or let our sober study be turned into something akin to 'The Thing from Another World'. As it is we are not entirely satisfied that the book will not create such an impression, to a certain extent, despite many long nights of drafting and re-drafting. But at least we preserved some sanity, some account of our methodology, and some comparative analysis of the CE4 enigma, seen through the eyes of this case. It all offsets what is admittedly an incredible story, which I agree was great fun to write in the Neville Spearman style. (2).

Of course, even had we been given the chance to say exactly what we wanted, and how we wanted, there would have been limitations. One cannot, in a book, where real names are used, claim that Witness X lied, or cheated, or hallucinated whether you think it or not. The story would either never get published, or you would face at best an unpleasant situation, and at worst a lawsuit! So we had to be careful and try to let the facts speak for themselves. Not that that will prevent

one hundred readers interpreting them in one hundred different ways!

Similar circumstances apply here, to a lesser degree. I am not going to enter into direct accusations of any description (and in a sense it is true that I have no right to). What I wish to do is discuss more fully the sociological role of the family, and compare it (as we do to a limited extent in the book) with two other recent British cases, which bear a more than superficial resemblance. Both are what I would call CE4's, though some UFOlogists would be prepared to lynch me for that, because one contains not a sign of a UFO, or even allegedly alien beings.

Readers are referred to the only detailed published account of the Sunderland family story. (3). though this tells only about half of the alleged events. Briefly, two young children, in early 1978, after what they term a 'mental trigger', told their parents independently that they had seen landed UFO's and entities. Subsequently a third child related a contact (this is not yet published), multiple apparently psychic events occurred around the house (apparitions, psychic-photography, time-slips and some mild P.K.), and the two primary witnesses became more deeply involved, experiencing actual events and even supposed visits to alien realms. The mother, Marion, became a focal point . . . . not just for the relation of stories, but as a feedback source for beliefs, a staff of support, and a participant herself in several strange occurrences. The story is extraordinary, and I can well understand why publishers had little desire to see it 'diluted' by in-depth psychoanalysis. That can be boring; the story, whether true or not, is far from that!

The two other cases to which the story relates are both well-known, having been the subject of at least one book each. But both came to the public attention well after most of the Oakenholt story had unfolded, and there is no viable question of their having influenced the latter case in any way. Paul and I were involved with the Sunderlands from October 1978 onwards, and have been riding along as the events took place. Relatively little 'new' occurred after Summer 1979, although such 'normal' things as UFO's landing, abductions to alien planets, and messages about the future destruction of earth, continued in abundance! The two comparative cases centred on the same time period, 1977-1979, and were published in book form in July 1979 and Spring 1980 respectively.

The first is the UFO poltergeist of Ripperston Farm in Dyfed, S.Wales. (4). Here multiple UFO sightings were said to have centred on a family, escalating to landings with traces, apparitions, and electro-magnetic interference of a very serious nature. There was no direct contact, and the story never came close to the extremes claimed by the Sunderlands, fizzling out fairly rapidly. But the family were apparently forced to leave their home, and there has till recently been little reason to suspect that the case is not basically genuine, if a little exaggerated by the author of the report.\* He is a journalist, and if his publishers were anything like ours, then it is easy to see why the book resulted as it did. (5).

(continued)

\* Recent research appears to cast serious doubt on the objective reality of the Dyfed claims. But it is not particularly important, in the context of this article, whether there is any objective reality behind Dyfed, Enfield, or Oakenholt. In the case of experiences such as these the socio-psychological factors appear to swamp almost everything else and we are studying, at best, heavily contaminated accounts. It makes little ultimate difference whether the stimulus for the experience is an alien contact, a psychological hallucination, an imaginative speculation, or probably even an outright lie. Paul and I expand on this point in the final chapters of our book.

The second case involves a poltergeist in a more traditional sense. This centred on a house in Enfield, N.London, and involved a long and violent series of raps, moving objects, destructiveness, obnoxious behaviour, levitation, and direct-voice phenomena. (6). The investigators report contradicts views of other members of the S.P.R. who had visited the family and were convinced of trickery by the children. (7). The authors admit this did happen at times, but that the children were simply imitating the real experiences. From our experience, whilst it is difficult to be certain, we find this plausible. We also think that children tend to use the 'poltergeist' to their own ends in order, for example, to gain attention and sympathy. Under the circumstances this is hardly behaviour we should fail to expect. We felt that the main failure of the Enfield case, though enforced to a degree by the family's distress, was the investigators' desire to practically live with the experiments. They were, therefore, quite incapable of giving a detached view. Paul and I were always aware of this danger and we guarded against it in ways we explain in the book. Essentially, we only spent four full days out of two years with the family (in the Enfield case, which only lasted half as long, this time-factor was increased by at least ten!). We could stand accused of inadequate investigation (the family have indeed hinted at this), but we feel our actions were justified (8).

What I want to do is to look at some of the more interesting correlations between these three cases. The family make-up is remarkably similar, with a more than average number of children, of both sexes, in a narrow age-band, roughly six to sixteen. We wonder if this large family factor is important. Perhaps there is a greater need for children to gain attention when it is spread more thinly?

In all cases the mother seems the dominant parent. This may be (as at Enfield), because of a divorce, (though the father still visits the children), or it may be, as in Oakenholt, that the father is absent a good deal - in this instance away on long weekends with the Territorial Army. In the Ripperston

case it just seems to be a psychological dominance. Typically, whilst the father is mild-mannered and somewhat aloof, the mother 'leads' the family in a more 'dynamic' fashion, and is easy-going. I would with trepidation, add that there are signs that she is more willing to accept bizarre things, (this may or may not be equated with gullibility).

Another factor is common to the Enfield and Oakenholt cases. There is a degree of background tension due to serious illness. Pete, in the Enfield case, is away at a special school because of this. Barry, at Oakenholt, is disabled, and both he and Nerys had to struggle with deadly diseases to survive their formative years.

In each case the phenomenon acted through a primary focus; - Janet at Enfield, Gaynor at Oakenholt. Both girls are of a similar age, and both underwent puberty at the peak of the activity. In the latter phases the phenomenon transferred itself to others in the family. This inevitably feeds suspicion of a 'follow-my-leader' syndrome, or merely of attention-grabbing by children who felt that the others were considered 'special' because of their claims. Shirley McIver, UFOIN's sociological advisor discussed such matters with Paul and I when we met to discuss the case. We wrote of her ideas in the book, and her suggestion was that the mother figure (seemingly reflected in Gaynor's alien contact - Arna) could have led to unconscious fabrication by the children, since it seemed that she wanted to hear their stories, and that the children would want to 'please mummy'. Unfortunately, these comments were deleted from the manuscript. Marion vehemently denied that they were possible and said that they called into question the integrity of her family (which was a point we could scarcely dispute). The publishers also said Shirley's comments were irrelevant, and that we might just as well ask some one on the street for their opinion. To the publisher

all that truly counted was the family's view and, at a pinch, ours! This is an opinion Paul and I do not share.

The final factor of note is of a similar nature. We found clear evidence that the claims of the Oakenholt children matched the expectations of the investigators. For example, after Marion read, 'UFO's; A British Viewpoint' (with its theory that UFO contacts were exteriorisations of inner processes, perhaps manifested by energy transfer from the witness) (9), Darren (who claims not to have read the book) said he felt the entities needed him to help them appear. They drained energy from him in order to manifest. Furthermore, UFOIN member Martin Keatman (and later Andy Collins) became very involved in the case, and spent far more time with the family than we did. When Martin told them of his concept of 'acceptance levels' (UFO contacts take a form acceptable to the personal beliefs of the witness) both Marion and Gaynor accumulated this into their expanding scheme, and the messages that came from 'Arna' and 'Parz', her alien friends, subsequently reflected this too. It did not seem a conscious process, but there was also evidence of it at Enfield. Similarly at Ripperston, where the final event ( a CE4, and the only one to occur) came immediately after Pauline Coombes was informed by a UFOlogist of the existence of CE4's!

We believe that a great deal of data can be obtained from these cases. That is why we persisted with publication, despite still extant fears of what it might do to our reputations; our reputations have to be secondary to providing UFOlogists with the material, which can then be compared with such cases as Enfield and Ripperston. We believe this process will suggest the way towards answers.

It might be argued that we have chosen these three cases to suit our purpose. This is a fair point. In the book we refer to many other CE4's in the lengthy comparative chapter. But book length treatments, or adequately extensive reports, are few and far between. The fact is that these were

the only such cases which came to our attention from the U.K. in recent years. The Andreasson Affair, in the U.S.A., has many similarities, despite the anticipated cultural differences, and does not appear to deviate from the pattern. (10). We would very much like to hear of other cases (some of which, like Enfield, will have been reported outside the UFO context). I personally would envisage this CE4 study as an ongoing project and would love to hear from others who would like to work with me on it - preferably with ideas!

In conclusion I might note that I sense a distinct psychological parallel between Marion Sunderland, Pauline Coombes, and 'Mrs.Harper', the three mothers, which in themselves correlate with other CE4 witnesses. Marion is so like Jessie Roostenberg (of the classic 1954 CE3) (11), in appearance, temperament, and even voice patterns. I get an uncanny feeling of deja vu from one to the other. This could be an illusion and I would like to hear what others, who have seen both, would say. In addition the other two ladies bear striking similarities to two other British CE4 percipients, whom I had already linked together, temperamentally, in my book UFO Study (12). These are Joyce Bowles, who took part in a sadly under-investigated complex poltergeist CE3/CE4 saga at Winchester in 1976/77 (13); and Jean Hingley, whose 'Mince Pie Martians' contact of January 1979 is one of the most amusing, but if traces are any thing to go by, intriguing, CE4's of recent years. (14)

I would like to see a psychological/sociological/personality profile test conducted on these female British contactees (and note how they, unlike the mainly male UFO reporters, predominate in the CE area - surely not coincidence).(15)(16)(17)(18). Can anyone out there help devise and administer such an experiment? It seems to offer positive, experimental paranormal UFOlogy, instead of cataloguig LITS, or devising airey-fairey theories. We'll be turning scientific next!!

#### References to 'A Spook in the Family', by Jenny Randles.

- (1). ALIEN CONTACT, by Jenny Randles & Paul Whetnall, to be published by Neville Spearman in 1981 (Autumn).
- (2). Whilst part one, the story, is semi dramatised with an eye on serialisation rights, parts two and three, investigation methodology and analysis do offer a more restrained appraisal of what might otherwise seem like SF!
- (3). FLYING SAUCER REVIEW. Vol.25. Nos.3&4, 1979.
- (4). THE UNINVITED, by Clive Harold. Star Books, 1979.
- (5). A more sober, but far less detailed account is found in the book, THE DYFED ENIGMA, R.Jones-Pugh & F.W.Holliday, Faber & Faber, 1979.
- (6). THIS HOUSE IS HAUNTED, by Guy Lyon Playfair, Souvenir Books, 1980.
- (7). Letters column in S.P.R. Journal, December 1980.
- (8). See 'Ethical factors of a UFO investigation', INVESTIGATION 1, 1980.
- (9). UFO's: A BRITISH VIEWPOINT, by Jenny Randles & Peter Warrington. Hale 1979.
- (10). THE ANDREASSON AFFAIR, Ray Fowler. Corgi (import), 1980.
- (11). Sadly, never fully documented, though I believe Stephen Banks is recording a full report for UFOIN. See THE HUMANOIDS, by Charles Bowen, Spearman, 1969.
- (12). UFO STUDY, by Jenny Randles, to be published by Hale, June 1981.
- (13). FSR. Vol.22. No.5. Vol.23. No.1. 1977.
- (14). FSR. Vol.25. No.6. 1980. (UFOIN report still in progress).
- (15). Miss Z. Manchester, CE4. See MUFOP N.S. 1976.
- (16). Mrs.Lainchbury, Bolton, CE4. See FSR. Vol.22. No.3. 1977.
- (17). Mrs.Hamilton, Belfast, CE4. See FSR. Vol.22. No.6. 1977.
- (18). Gateshead CE4. See INVESTIGATION 1, 1980, pp.2 - 6.

## The Third Secret of Fatima.

We were greatly intrigued by the 'Trappist Monk' hijack of an 'Aer Lingus' airliner, with over 100 passengers on board, on Saturday 2nd.May. Happily, the attempt ended without loss of life or limb, but we hope that when the culprit finally appears in court, the reasons for his anxiety to establish and publicise the Third Secret of Fatima will be taken thoughtfully into account.

In orthodox Catholic publications, the third secret is generally avoided, and barely officially acknowledged; it is more among the areas of extreme Catholicism, where greater weight is placed upon visionary experience, and direct revelation, that the matter is discussed.

The story goes, that on 13.7.1917. Lucia do Santos, one of the three visionaries of Fatima, received a secret from the Virgin Mary. This was passed from the local Bishop to the Vatican, and on the 25th. anniversary of the vision, in 1942, Pius XII is said to have revealed a part of the secret, but, against apparent instructions from the visionary, to have kept secret a further part. As that which was revealed concerned the rise of Russia and the power of Communism, there was, and is, great interest in the supposedly hidden part.

Purportedly, it referred to appalling, worldwide war in the latter half of the twentieth century, to the rise of Satan, to division within the Church, and the only gradual victory of Christ. I am informed by a French correspondent that in 1977 Christ himself appeared to state that the secret, 'must be known by all by now', and clearly there is a widespread feeling that important facts are being wilfully, wrongfully, withheld, against the wishes of Christ and His Mother. There are probably many more individuals, similarly convinced, who would be prepared to risk their lives, and those of others, to ensure the revelation of the secret.

Perhaps we could take the same approach as Private Eye - a fiver to the first person to supply CG with the real Third Secret of Fatima!

When we first sent round circulars to discover if 'Common Ground' might be both viable, and of some use to researchers, one of the most popular ideas raised was that of providing specialist advice and information about the areas of knowledge closely related, in a number of possible ways, to the area of paranormal research itself. We certainly hope to include at least one such piece in each issue of CG. In the following article there is a disturbing sequence of facts relating to hallucinations which should be born in mind by anyone, particularly, involved in investigating supposed abductions by aliens, and any other experience that involves the subject supposedly travelling to an unknown destination while in an apparently altered state of consciousness. However, the considerations raised have a much wider relevance than that.

Dr. Sue Blackmore, of the Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol, is one of the U.K.'s few full-time parapsychologists. She is at present writing a definitive book on out-of-body-experiences, and is also researching death-bed experiences for the S.P.R.

## HALLUCINATIONS AND ILLUSIONS.

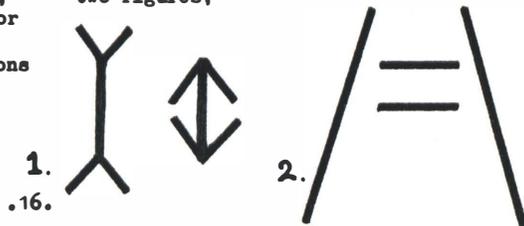
Sue Blackmore

Hallucinations have long been studied by psychical researchers as well as psychologists. In fact, one of the first studies carried out by the S.P.R. in the 1890's was the 'Census of Hallucinations', and there is still much to be learned about the paranormal from the study of hallucination and of illusion.

Even defining an hallucination is difficult; roughly speaking it is an apparent perception with no corresponding object. In other words seeing, hearing, or feeling something which is not physically there. Of course, hallucinations may be perceived through any sense - sight, hearing, touch, and so on, but I shall talk mainly about vision. Some people only count as a true hallucination one which convinces the person that it is real, but such hallucinations are relatively rare. Very often, especially with the use of certain drugs, the person sees something and knows it is hallucinatory, but this does not make it go away, or seem any the less realistic. These have been called pseudo-hallucinations but I shall refer to both kinds as hallucinations.

I have included illusions as well because, in many instances, people do not hallucinate in the absence of any stimulation, when there is nothing else there at all, but they mistake one thing for something else. For example, I frequently think I've seen my cat out of the corner of my eye when in fact it was only a coat on a chair, or a cushion on the floor. This is not really an hallucination, but it might be called a kind of illusion. Nevertheless the two are related and might be seen as ends of a continuum. At one extreme are full-fledged, totally-convincing hallucinations, perceived in the absence of any stimulus at all, which are very rare. At the other are various types of simple illusion to which almost everyone is subject.

Starting with the simple illusions, almost everyone sees the two lines as unequal in length in the following two figures; -



.16.

(The vertical lines on the first example and the horizontal lines on the second). These were specially designed to trick the eye and brain, and they do so very effectively because of the way in which the visual system works. In these examples the brain is carrying out its normal processes, but in the particular situation these are inappropriate, and an error results. Other errors occur just because of the complexity of the task, and the short-cuts the brain has to take in organising perception. All the time it is analysing the masses of information coming in and trying to make sense of it in the easiest way. Usually any mistakes are short-lived. One looks again and sees the cushion, not the cat; one asks, 'What did you say?' and on the second or later attempt comes to the right conclusion about what is meant. We constantly test reality, not only making sense of what we see, but separating 'reality' from imagination. Although most people are capable of at least fairly vivid imagination they rarely confuse it with the 'real thing'. However, under certain conditions these distinctions do break down, and that is what we are interested in here.

When we mistake some everyday object for something else, three factors are important; the nature of the object; the conditions under which it is seen; and the state of the person looking. Obviously, unambiguous and familiar objects are the least likely to be confused. When we are familiar with something we need hardly give it a glance to identify it, but new things, old things in unfamiliar surroundings, such as a toothbrush in the washing-up, take a longer look, and can be mistaken for something else.

Then when anything is seen very briefly, in poor lighting, or on the periphery of the visual field, or in any other way degraded, mistakes are more likely. The brain has less information to go on and will make 'guesses'. Sensibly enough its guesses will be reasonable in the circumstances, and since the brain is only doing what it normally does all the time, they can be very convincing guesses too. One sees what one expects to see. This is a very powerful effect, and occurs all the time.

For example, what is the following letter? **B** And this number? **13**

Similarly, I see my cat in reasonable places, on the chair and not the ceiling. A hungry person sees food, and a thirsty one water.

Next, the condition of the person is vitally important. If you are fresh and alert you are less likely to make mistakes, but when tired, under stress or after taking certain drugs, such as alcohol, the brain gets lazy or changes its responses, and more mistakes get through. Disc-jockeys competing for the staying-awake record have mistaken coats for piles of live snakes, and cups of coffee for steaming lakes full of monsters. These are extremes, but we all know about pink elephants, and interestingly it is often small animals and caricature people that are seen in hallucinations, but more of that in a minute.

So we can see that these illusions/mistakes tend to occur when an unexpected object is seen under poor conditions by a person who is tired, stressed, or drunk. And what is 'seen' will often be what is expected, hoped for, or feared.

Turning now to hallucinations it is interesting that there is a lot of consistency in what is experienced under different conditions. Hallucinations can occur with sleep deprivation, during sensory deprivation (when a person is kept for some time in the dark in a soundproofed room, or even floating in a tank of tepid water) and when taking certain drugs such as LSD, mescaline or hashish. Of course, hallucinations also occur as symptoms of certain types of 'mental illness', but I shall not consider these. Remarkably similar hallucinations can occur in fevers, when waking up or falling asleep, and in crystal gazing. This has been known since the last century when people experimented with opium and hashish, but recent systematic research with hallucinogenic drugs has confirmed the early findings.

.17.

In the early stages of typical hallucinatory experiences simple geometric forms predominate, and are seen even in total darkness. They tend to take four forms, the spiral, the tunnel, the cobweb, and the lattice or checkerboard. Colours which begin with blues and yellows shift more to red as the experience deepens. Next more complex imagery may be seen against a background of, or within, a tunnel form. Often a tunnel has a light at the end of it, and the person seems to be travelling along it with complicated visions seen only at the edges. This is particularly interesting because the tunnel is a common feature of near-death experiences, in which it is often interpreted as a pathway to another world, and the light at the end is seen as Christ, or some other religious figure. Tunnels are also sometimes forerunners of mystical and out-of-the-body experiences, and Robert Crookall, among others, has interpreted them as being caused by the astral body drawing out of the physical. However, since there are sound physiological reasons for expecting tunnel forms in hallucinations, many people would prefer to reject the more esoteric types of explanation.

When the hallucinatory experience gets yet deeper, more complex imagery begins to appear. This is imagery from memory, and is often characterised by scenes from earlier life, by caricature people and animals, and pleasant sunlit scenery. At first the images may be seen within a tunnel perspective and are described, by subjects in drug experiments as 'like . . . ' something or other, or 'as if . . . ', but gradually this gives way to complete identification with the hallucinations, and the subjects describe them as totally real. They may fly around over hallucinated scenery, take part in imaginary dramas, and sometimes experience mystical states. In some experiments it has been found that subjects taking hallucinatory drugs have frequently seemed to leave their bodies.

An understanding of hallucinations can give a better insight into various supposedly psychic phenomena. I have already mentioned near-death experiences. Since there are many physiological changes occurring when a person is close to death, we would expect them to hallucinate. Some features of the typical near-death experience, such as the tunnel, can be seen as typical of hallucinations in general, and require no special, paranormal, interpretation. What now becomes important is to use what we know about hallucinations to determine whether every aspect of the near-death experience can be best seen as hallucinatory, or whether there are aspects which do point to a life after death.

I have been particularly interested in out-of-the-body-experiences (OBE's). It is now my opinion that they are best understood as a form of altered state of consciousness in which the 'astral world' is created from memory under hallucinatory conditions. I think the evidence better fits this view, than that something leaves the body in an OBE. But whether this proves to be the right interpretation or not, the study of hallucinations can assist us in the investigation of OBE's.

This also applies to the visionary element of apparitions, hauntings and some kinds of clairvoyance and UFO perceptions, and we should be able to find out if these bear the hallmarks of hallucination, or contain elements only explicable on paranormal grounds. Finally, if many of these events are actually hallucinations, it may still be that the hallucinations themselves act as vehicles or mediators for the action of psi. This may be so as much for OBE's as for crystal gazing or for apparitions. If it is so, then we clearly need to know a lot more about the relationship between ESP, psychokinesis, and hallucinations.

## Are you there, Lobsang Rampa?

Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, alias Dr. Kuon, alias Cyril Hoskins, died on 25.1.81. in Canada, where he had lived for some years.

Since his first best-selling book, 'The Third Eye' was published by Secker & Warburg early in 1957, the Tibetan Lama from Thames Ditton had been an easy target for both the media and for more serious researchers. Within a year of the book's publication, by which time it had earned him some £20,000 in royalties, a group of Tibetan scholars retained a private detective, Clifford Burgess, to investigate Rampa; they felt that much of his work seemed decidedly un-Tibetan.

Burgess, and John Pitt of the 'Psychic News', found Rampa's claims to be less than proven. Far from him having attended Chungking University, which oddly enough had presented him with a scroll written in English; or having received a surgical operation while a novitiate monk to increase his psychic ability, or met the Abominable Snowman, or flown as a pilot in the Chinese Air Force, or returned in time to witness the creation of the earth, he had in fact been living a quiet, clerical life in England, his only experience of Tibet or monastic life being through his reading.

However, the evidence that he had been born the son of a plumber in Plympton, Devon, later working as a clerk first for a firm of surgical instrument makers, and then for a correspondence school of engineering, did not deter the prolific Rampa.

He produced a second book, 'Doctor from Lhasa', recounting a number of impossible experiences, and then a third, 'The Rampa Story', which was designed to explain the problems raised by the investigations of the author's early life. In this gem, Rampa explained how his body had been that of Cyril Hoskins but that he, Rampa, following negotiations on the astral, had taken it over when Hoskins fell out of a tree at Thames Ditton in 1949. In return for his body, Hoskins received a considerable karmic credit and Rampa, newly arrived from Tibet, started writing books in English, and living with Hoskins's wife!

Remarkably, this appalling tale, far less clever than the Casteneda mythos, failed to deter the great majority of Rampa's readers. He went on to write some nineteen books, all of which sold well, and must have been taken seriously by a fair proportion of their readers. Naive, inconsistent, and wildly inaccurate they may have been, but the mixture of mysticism, clairvoyance, healing, reincarnation, astral projection, and adventure a la Biggles seems to have proved irresistible.

More than a few of us now involved in the paranormal will have been influenced in some way by Lobsang Rampa; there was a time not twenty years ago when his were almost the only books on the subject that were generally available. And as many of us know from dealing with witnesses, it is not always the objective reality of an experience that matters, but the effect that experience has on its percipient. So what if it wasn't all true?

For now, two speculative questions come to mind. If Rampa had been hypnotically regressed, in the manner of UFO abduction and time-lapse experiments (and time supposedly stood still as Rampa took over his new body), would he have believed sufficiently strongly in his Tibetan existence for that to be recounted under hypnosis? And if the human personality can and does survive bodily death, which set of memories, knowledge, and understanding persists? The real, if hollow, existence as Cyril Hoskins, or the unreal, complex, but broadly effective life as a Tibetan Lama? Are you there, Lobsang Rampa . . . . ?

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A FEW BOOKS SUGGESTED BY SUE BLACKMORE, RELATED TO THE ABOVE ARTICLE.

- Crookall, R. The Study and Practice of Astral Projection. Aquarian Press, 1961.  
Crookall, R. The Interpretation of Cosmic and Mystical Experiences,  
James Clarke & Co. London, 1969.  
Moody, R.A. Life After Life. Bantam Paperback, 1976.  
Blackmore, S.J. Parapsychology and OBE's. SPR London, 1978.

## JOURNAL LISTINGS

We don't intend, unless popular demand persuades us otherwise, to run this section every issue. At this stage we imagine it appearing about once each year in such a complete form though, perhaps, we could bring prices and other relevant details up to date more often, and would certainly wish to feature new publications as soon as possible.

The small, or medium at best, specialist magazine is the absolute life-blood of the whole paranormal field. Unpaid, overworked editors around the world do us all an immense service in collating and distributing reports and commentaries about a whole variety of phenomena. We hope that by listing all the publications we can think of, with some details on how to obtain them, we may encourage the exchange of information and ideas between disciplines. The bias is strongly towards U.K. publications at this stage, as what is included is what a few of us can personally vouch for. However, if you can think of others that ought to be here, please send in the relevant details. Also, if you do send for anything as a result of this listing, please mention 'Common Ground'. They may send us a free issue!

Ancient Mysteries. Journal of the Institute of Geomantic Research. Varied, intriguing research material covering earth mystery & related fields. Tremendous, cheap, occasional papers, too. £3.75p./ \$12.50.p.a. from IGR, 142, Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD.

Ancient Skills & Wisdom Review. Approx. quarterly. Reviews in detail books and publications in various areas of paranormal research. Often perceptive. £2.p.a. from, Paul Screeton, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cumbs.

Aquarian Arrow. An occasional, well-produced magazine for, I think, complicated pagans. Some good satire and criticism, often excellent reviews. 95p. from, Pallas Aquariana Ltd. BCM-Opal, London, WC1V 6XX.

Awareness. Quarterly journal of Contact (U.K.). Interesting general articles, and a few case reports. Also annual UFO Register, with statistical analysis of world events on the Contact files. Supplied to members by, Contact, 48, Crown Road, Wheatley, Oxon.

BUFORA Journal. Whatever your feelings about the organisation, the BUFORA Journal, and the concomitant Journal of Transient Aerial Phenomena remain good reading. Many reports, news, and sighting summaries. Comes with membership from, BUFORA, 6, Cairn Avenue, London, W5 5HX.

Christian Parapsychologist. Journal of the Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies. Learned, intelligent, and very worthwhile. The soundest Christian approach to the paranormal. Very good news and review sections. Specimen copy 60p. Sub.(4 issues), £3 from, CFPSS, St. Mary Abchurch, London, EC4N 7BA.

Earthlink. Independent quarterly (formerly magazine of the Essex UFO Study Group). Intriguing, wide range of content from serious scientific contributions, CE reports (from several countries) and pseudo-scientific or religious contributions. Sub. £2.75p p.a. (single issue £1.) from, 16, Raydons Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 5JR.

EVP News. The only U.K. journal of the electronic voice phenomenon, very topical, closely in touch with current research. Absurdly cheap at £1. for 6 issues from, Alan Cleaver, 6, Izane Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.

Flying Saucer Review. The world's most famous UFO journal, and rightly so. Though some unusual opinions and comments have begun to creep in of late, FSR still attracts the best UFO writers and researchers to its beautifully-produced pages. Essential reading even for the non-UFOlogist interested in human reactions to anomalous experience. Available for £1. per issue, or £6 annual sub. from FSR Publications Ltd. West Malling, Kent.

Fortean Times. The Journal of Strange Phenomena. 56 printed pages of solid Fortean information, enquiry, philosophy, and humour. Must be the best Fortean journal in the world.. 1 year (4 issues) £4./\$10.00. Airmail add £3./\$7.50. Sample issue £1./\$2.00 from, Fortean Times, DTWAGE, 9-12, St.Anne's Court, London, W.1.

Frontiers of Science. Bi-monthly from CUFOS. Broad range of material, rather commercially approached. High standards, and 'name' contributors. \$3 an issue from, 8, E. Street, S.E., Washington D.C. 20003, U.S.A.

Guernsey UFO RESEARCH Group circular. Small circular with news on the sporadic UFO activity of the Channel Isles, and reprints of items from France & the U.K. 15p. per issue from, Geoff Falla, Highcliffe, Avenue Beauvais, Ville au Roi, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

Investigation. The UFOIN Journal. Intelligent reports and ideas; concerned with standards of organisation and behaviour in UFO research. 50p an issue from, rtin Keatman, 31, Stuart Close North, Walton, Stone, Staffs.

Irish UFO News. Irregular publication of the Irish UFO Research Centre, with details of Irish UFO activity and articles about paranormal phenomena in that country. From, John Hind, 19, Cairnashill Avenue, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Journal of Religion and Psychical Research. From the Academy of the same name. Strong religious orientation, good writers, plenty of varied and original material. \$2 an issue from the Academy, 326, Tunxis Avenue, Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002, U.S.A.

Lantern. Quarterly publication of the Borderline Science Investigation Group. Concentrates on Leys, earth mysteries, hauntings and folklore in East Anglia. Often touches on other mysteries, e.g. UFO's. Sub. £1.20p, from, 3, Dunwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4RZ.

Ley Hunter. The earth mystery journal par excellence. Beautifully produced, well-written, concerned, and original. £3.60p./\$11.50 p.a. from, TLH, P.O. Box 13, Welshpool, Powys, Wales.

Light. Journal of the College of Psychic Studies. A dreamy, romantic approach to psychical/mystical experience. Many claims of survival of death, but seldom such objective proof. Quality contributors, and production. £3.75p. (4 issues) from, Light, 16, Queensberry Place, London SW7 2EB.

Lincolnshire Dragon. Quarterly of the Lincolnshire earth mysteries research group, with earth mysteries, UFO's, and Fortean. 50p. per issue from, 16, Packhorse Lane, Swineshead, Boston, Lincs, PE20 3JE.

Magic Saucer. Bi-monthly magazine with articles, stories, and letters, written for, and often by children. One or two odd, semi-religious, ideas but a good range of material, and some name writers. 25p if deliverable by bike from Kidderminster, 41p. by post, from, 8, Ely Close, Habberley Estate, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY11 6EJ.

Magonia. Formerly MUFOB, the conscience and inspiration of British UFOlogy in the 1970's. Still excellent stuff - anarcho-ufology, with overtones of sociology and good, old-fashioned cynicism. Cheap, too! £1.75p for four issues from, John Rimmer, 64, Alric Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.

MAPIT Skywatch. A good journal of information, discussion, and disagreement among British UFOlogists. Sensible articles, too. Sample for 50p. from, David Rees, 92, Hillcrest Road, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire.

Mersey News. Bi-monthly newsletter of MIGAP (Merseyside UFO Group), with local sightings and general articles on a wide range of subjects, sometimes only loosely connected with UFO's. Details from, Brian Fishwick, 133, Hinckley Road, Islands Brow, St. Helens, Merseyside. WA11 8JX.

MUFON UFO Journal. Famous writers, good production, and much original, investigative research material. Monthly. \$16 p.a. from 103, Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas, U.S.A.

Northern Earth Mysteries. An improving quarterly with ambitious content and quality writers. 30p. an issue from, 61, Clumber St. Hull, Humberside.

Northern UFO News/Northern UFOLOGY. Alternate monthly productions from the busy typewriter of Jenny Randles. Research, opinion, and news reports from all over the U.K. £3.60p. p.a. from JR at, 8, Whitethroat Walk, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6PQ.

Pegasus. Bi-monthly magazine of the Surrey UFO Group, SIGAP. 50p. an issue from, Omar Fowler, 149, Mytchett Road, Mytchett, Camberley, Surrey.

Probe Report. Glossy quarterly (with photos) from south-west Probe group. UFO's and other phenomena from the area. £1.80p. sub. Single issue 60p. from, Ian Mrzyglod, 16, Marigold Walk, Ashton, Bristol, Avon. BS3 2PD.

Psychic News. The 'Spiritualist Newspaper', but much more than that in it. At only 17p a week ordered from your newsagent, it shouldn't be missed. Can be opinionated, even gullible, but covers most areas of the field, weekly, and so usually in touch with current events.

Pursuit. Journal of the Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained. Very wide-ranging, sometimes speculative, generally excellent. \$15. airmail from, Pursuit, P.O. Box 265, Little Silver, N.J. 07739, U.S.A.

Quest. 'A journal of Britain's magical arts, and pagan traditions'. Mostly written by practising members of the Craft. Frequent accounts of experiences that can only be regarded as paranormal. Sensible correspondence courses, and details of meetings, etc. £3. for 4 issues. Single issue 75p. from, BCM-SCL Quest, London, WC1N 3XX.

Society for Psychical Research Journal. Important research, thoroughly and elegantly presented. At least, it's probably important, but half of it is written in a manner that defies general comprehension, particularly with regard to its statistical content. Good reviews & letters. Best borrowed, perhaps, but can be purchased from the S.P.R. 1, Adam & Eve News, Kensington, London, W8 6UG. Enquire about price, or student membership, possibly cheaper!

UFO Insight. Approx. quarterly publication of FUFOR (Cheshire). Serious Journal of an ambitious local group, with high ideals of scientific and instrumental investigation. Very detailed local reports, interviews with personalities, and critiques of other work. Very worthwhile at £1.80p. for 6 issues from, Mark Tyrell, 277b, West Street, Crewe, Cheshire. CW1 3HU.

UFO Research Review. Journal of NUFOIS, Nottingham. Nuts and bolts bias, good, considered material, astringent editorials. Only 25p from NUFOIS, 443, Meadow Lane, Nottingham. 1980 UFO abstracts also available at 25p.

Viewpoint Aquarius. UFO's, mysticism, and Madame Blavatsky. A little odd, but cheap and intriguing. 50p. an issue from Fish Tanks Ltd. 49, Blandford Street, London, EC4W 7BA.

Zetetic Scholar. Bigger, and better, than the average paperback, this is one of the best and most thorough publications in the field. Infrequent publication allows time for the development of the 'dialogues' which are such a feature of ZS. Articles and commentaries on a variety of subjects, many by people you've heard of. Extensive book reviews, and great value at \$9 an issue from, Dept. of Sociology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, U.S.A.

# THE E.V.P.

Most of the information given out by psychics and clairvoyants in the guise of messages from other worlds ranges in quality between meaningless and insignificant. Much of the history of UFO research is tainted and confused by the rubbish that contactees almost invariably feel themselves duty-bound to pass on to a waiting world, which then ignores them. Many mystics and visionaries in history have been regarded as mad or sick because of the nature of the secrets entrusted to them by angels, gods, and archetypes. Either the messages are worthless from the very beginning, or they lose terribly in the communication!

All these problems seem most likely to have derived from the fact that they are channelled through human beings, but is it really as simple as that? It seems that when messages are recorded on electronic equipment, through a variety of inputs, such the same difficulties recur. Alan Cleaver, an active member of the S.P.R., a professional journalist, and editor of EVP News (see our journal listings), discusses this remarkable, confusing, phenomenon.

## . . . . . But Are The Voices Lying?

by Alan Cleaver

For 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Robert Dixon of Ohio University scans the sky searching for radio signals from other intelligences. The most modern equipment is used, but by the time he has finished one complete scan of the sky, the technical advances in equipment would make it worth while starting again. So far no signals have been discovered.

Once a week, for half an hour, Gilbert Bonner of Hastings, England, turns on his domestic radio, and tunes it to a random frequency. He then listens out for paranormal voices. The number of paranormal voices he claims to have recorded to date; 10,000.

The Electronic Voice Phenomenon, or EVP, is the name given to the investigation of tape-recorded sounds, often interpreted as voices, that may have paranormal origins. Researchers use a variety of methods to contact the voice entities, but many claim to have made at least a first tentative

contact, and one respected researcher claims to be carrying on regular conversations with the voice entities. But arguments as to the origin of the voices continues among researchers.

At the moment there are three popular theories as to the origin of the voices: -

1. That they are the voices of the dead.
2. That they are from another, non-terrestrial, intelligent life-source, e.g. aliens from outer space, or from a parallel universe.
3. That they are created by or through the subconscious mind of the researcher (possibly using existing broadcast sounds as a form of construction material), in much the same way as Ted Serios is believed to create pictures on film by thought. There are, of course, those who believe the voices do not exist; that they are not paranormal, but are merely the product of the vivid

imagination of the researcher, hearing specific sounds amid white noise.

It was in 1957 that a Swedish film director, Friedrich Jurgenson, picked up his first signals. Initially they were just fluctuations in the volume level, but the sounds later became recognisable to him as voices. These voices were received and recorded through an open microphone, but Jurgenson kept receiving a voice telling him to use the radio.

Following the instructions of the voice, he tried tuning in to the voices using a domestic radio - with some success. What was more, the 'radio' method had distinct advantages over using a microphone. The radio voices were generally much louder and clearer, and whereas you could not hear microphone voices till you played them back, with the radio method they could be heard straight away. So, Jurgenson developed this method. He published his findings in 'Voices from Space' ('Rosterna fran Rymden'), which unfortunately has never been translated into English. However, the book did have important consequences.

'Voices from Space' was read by Latvian-born Dr. Konstantin Raudive, who was greatly impressed by it. Dr. Raudive visited Jurgenson, and after a time started his own experiments which, too, were successful. Raudive wrote a book on his experiments, 'Breakthrough' (Colin Smythe, 1971). Though it was 14 years since the early work of Jurgenson, the English-speaking world had known little of it. For a time it caused considerable interest, from the media as well as from the psychic research field; two years later it was virtually forgotten - those who had expected to establish a telephone-type link with discarnate entities had been disillusioned by the work and problems involved.

However, a small number of persistent researchers have carried on the work for several painstaking years, and though the voices seem to be taking time to develop, the existence of the phenomenon is hard to deny.

So, who are the voices? Where are they talking from? What do they have to say? The obvious answer is to ask the voices, and find out from them who they are. An obvious answer indeed - but I suspect the voices are lying!

To Friedrich Jurgenson, Konstantin Raudive, and many of their followers the voices are those of the dead. Consider these voices received and interpreted by Raudive:-

"Seelisches Land". (Trans. Land of the Souls).  
"Eine no tote". (Trans. One who is not dead).  
"Koste, te tara mote". (Trans. Konstantin, here is your mother).  
"James Joyce".  
"Winston Churchill".  
"Toti". (Trans. The Dead).  
And in reply to Raudive saying some people do not believe in life after death a voice retorted,  
"So sind sie". (Trans. That's how they are).

David Ellis, of the S.P.R. could listen to the same voices as Raudive and hear a different interpretation. Voices which Raudive believed were dead friends talking to him, Mr. Ellis concluded were 'indistinct fragments of radio transmissions, mechanical noises, and unnoticed remarks aided by imaginative guesswork and wishful thinking'. He added "There is thus no reason to postulate anything but natural causes to explain the voice phenomenon."

Mr. Philip Rodgers of Grindleford, near Sheffield, also received EVP, but believed their origin to be from UFO's. Indeed, that is where the voices said they came from; -

1st. man (excited), "Got Home Service on! How are you?"  
2nd. man, "Goot".  
1st. man, "What's your name on the (unintelligible)."  
2nd. man, "It's on Home Service".  
1st. man, "Right! From Space!"  
Metallic male voice, "How's tricks?" (few minutes pause)  
2nd. man, "Space. Take part in air arm. Yar-var nianna donnova - ionosphere."

Another man, "I've gone! (long whistle) Yonskaler yes! You touch (indistinct) (pause). You've jammed it. Go on!"  
Woman (quickly), "He's shifting in time-space."  
2nd. man, "Shut-up." (n.b. This man speaks with a Yorkshire accent which becomes very broad for these two words, making them rhyme with 'book'.)  
Man (sotto voce), "My stoicranz is stuck."  
2nd. man, "Space."  
1st. man (sarcasm), "Good old Einstein".

This is just a sample of a transcript of a Rodgers recording which even Ellis admitted, 'For the most part I remained baffled by them all'. Ellis writes in his report on the EVP (The Mediumship of the Tape Recorder, David Ellis, 1978.) that the words 'space', 'in space', and 'from space', occur often on recordings, but no planet or other location has ever been mentioned. 'In addition to this sort of internal evidence, there have been reports of UFO's sighted within a few hours of his major recordings', the report says. Unfortunately, when the report was compiled, Mr. Rodgers was no longer obtaining recordings, making further investigation impossible.

Richard Sheargold of the S.P.R. says the voices will tell the experimenter they are from wherever the experimenter wishes them to be from! He believes the voices are from the sub-conscious mind, or more exactly, 'self-generated, semi-autonomous thought forms.' If the researcher wants voices from dead friends, he will get them. And if he wants them from men from outer space, Sheargold believes they will claim to be just that.

For example, Mr. Sheargold has contacted the dead: -

"Catharine"; a friend who died over 40 years ago.  
"Kosta"; nickname of the late Raudive.  
"Nita here dear"; deceased cousin of Sheargold's.

He has also contacted the living!

"Mr. Wilson"; fellow researcher.  
"Kobler"; leader of German research group.  
"Eleanor"; Eleanor O'Keefe, Secretary of the S.P.R.

"Pincott"; (musical voice), former Hon. Sec. and Treasurer of the S.P.R.

A theory such as this formulated by Sheargold, and by fellow-worker Michael Vinter of Norfolk, would easily explain voices received from a variety of origins, and as Mr. Sheargold put it; if you wanted a voice from Sherlock Holmes that would be perfectly possible. But I still believe many questions would remain unanswered.

There is the problem of the supplying by the voices of information unknown to the researcher (I hear the cry of 'super-ESP theory', already). Samples of this are rare, but they nevertheless exist. The classic must be Michael Vinter's 'Anna Nanji' voice.

On hearing that Dr. Dada Nanji was coming to visit him from Sweden Michael Vinter asked the voice entities if they had any messages for Dada. A woman's voice is heard in the background of the recording, and at one point it says, "Here is Anna, dear". It meant nothing to Mike, but he wrote it on a piece of paper and handed it to Dada when they met up, asking if it meant anything to him. Dr. Dada Nanji broke down and cried. 'Anna' was the name of his late wife whom he had been trying to contact by EVP. This voice is even more remarkable because of its similarity with the Anna Nanji spirit voice which has come through at a Leslie Flint direct voice sitting.

So the access of entities to information unknown to the researcher has to be born in mind. Raymond Cass, from Hull, has other examples of this clairvoyance - including voices showing apparent precognitive ability. And if it is true - and reports suggest it is - that Jurgenson can hold two-sided conversations lasting 20 minutes with the voice entities, it is either an astounding example of someone talking to himself, or the entities have some kind of independent existence.

It was at first believed the mode of speech used by the voice entities could provide a clue as to their origin. It is now thought, however, that their peculiar rhythm, and occasional musical mode is dictated to them by their method of communication; that they have to resort to this curious way of talking when they modulate existing noise to 'create' their voices.

The riddle of multi-lingual or polyglot sentences is not so easily solved. They seem to have abandoned this in the lengthy dialogue with Jurgenson. It had been suggested that the entities were from outer space, and listening to Earth broadcasts had concluded there was just one Earthen language, and presented receivers with a polyglot mixture.

Perhaps we, too, are suffering from this 'homogeneity' as Charles Fort called it. Perhaps we are looking for one origin for the EVP, when in fact there are two or more origins. Who are we to believe? Richard Sheargold suggests that the idea that the voices are 'just delusions' can be rejected out of hand - that 'no-one who is not completely bigoted or utterly ignorant can any longer hold this view'. But

should we take into account the opinion of those who hear only radio intrusions, holding their theory as valid as that of the person who hears his dead mother calling to him?

I believe it is too early for British researchers to worry too much about the origin of the voices, and I would wish the emphasis to be changed from 'who' to 'how'. Indeed, many researchers do concentrate now on how the voices come through - whoever they may be. But there is a constant pressure demanding speculation about the origin of the voices.

Once we can dependably and repeatedly hold lengthy conversations with the voices - as it seems that Jurgenson now can - then we can attempt to find out more about to whom we are speaking.

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My thanks to Gilbert Bonner, Richard Sheargold, Spencer Wilson, David Ellis, Raymond Cass, Michael Vinter, and Cyril Luck, and everyone else working with EVP for their help.  
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## Tulpas.

Now, you are thinking, where have I seen that word Tulpas? Well, you may have seen it in Clark & Coleman's, 'The Unidentified', or Stephen Jenkins's 'The Undiscovered Country', or Rogo & Clark's 'Earth's Secret Inhabitants'. Or, indeed in several articles written in the past ten years. In these, the Tulpa, a sort of Tibetan thought-form, becomes a part of the mythos of the paranormal; like the Norfolk Regiment, the Great Lakes Triangle, and the Hill Star Map. Like them, it is virtually unsupported by fact or investigation.

All the references to Tulpas quote one book - 'With Mystics & Magicians in Tibet', by Alexandra David-Neel, later re-issued as 'Magic and Mystery in Tibet'. The authoress had, at the time of publication, spent 14 years in and around Tibet, was a professed Buddhist, and her adopted son was an ordained Lama. The book, one of many she wrote, is little more than a collection of occult traveller's tales, by an individual immersed in the native culture, and convinced of its psychic achievements and skills.

Even so. Tulpas take up only 5 pages of a 288-page book. She describes them as 'magic formations generated by a powerful concentration of thought', and while she does claim to have created one herself, in the form of a monk, which was once seen, briefly, by an unnamed independent witness, she admits that, 'I only relate what I have heard from people whom, in other circumstances, I have found trustworthy, but they may have deluded themselves in all sincerity.'

If ever we hope to be taken seriously we are going to have to stop taking snippets of anecdote out of context, and quoting them like established facts.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Well, that's it for CG 1. Hope you've enjoyed it! New baby permitting, the next issue will be out towards the end of August. In it, we hope to have some contributions on the collation and use of research resources, and a discussion of the nature of abnormal psychology and mental illness as they impinge upon and raise problems in case investigation. We will try to set up a research scheme into psi and spontaneous phenomena in their most available form - your local (Spiritualist or home-based) medium or clairvoyant. Perhaps, in due course we can use the results for our first occasional paper or special issue. We will certainly have a critical analysis of the 'Control-system' theories of the UFO phenomenon, as recently put forward by, among others, John Keel, Jaques Vallee, Jerome Clark, D.Scott Rogo, and the Editor of FSR. It is time these were considered in the broader context of mystical and 'occult' experience to which they seem to belong, and that some of the material used to support them was examined with care and common-sense. There should be two or three other major articles.

We've learned more than a little from producing this issue. Next time, the abstracts will be more like abstracts, and less like lists of contents. We will, contributions permitting, have a letters section, and possibly a list of events relevant to all or several of us. Next time, I may have worked out how to divide a page into two equal columns before I start typing!

Considering the calibre of writers whose material we are hoping to publish (though it is the quality of the articles, not the reputation of the authors that will determine what goes into CG), it is embarrassing that we cannot afford to pay them. We are not so rich that we can afford to subsidise CG in the long-term, nor so idealistic that we would contemplate doing so; and we don't wish or intend to start carrying advertising. Hopefully, we should soon be able to pay a token five pounds or so, but I'm not promising anything! Please be assured that as soon as we can, we will. We do not really expect something for nothing.

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If one glaringly apparent fact has emerged from this issue of CG, it is that what looked like some of our very best cases may have been far from what they seemed. The criticisms of both the family and the investigators in the Enfield case have been considerably stronger than is hinted at by Jenny Randles. She herself voices her doubts about a number of aspects of the Oakenholt case. Hilary Evans has, almost without exception, left the whole Dyfed business washed-up and hollow; no more has happened there than happened anywhere else. That it is such cases that respectable publishers wish to buy

books about is disturbing. Indeed, they also bought Frank Johnson's, 'The Janos People'(Spearman, 1980). Happily, the public is not so easily taken in. The solid and informative, 'UFO's; A British Viewpoint' (see Jenny's article) has sold well; 'The Janos People', I understand, has not.

I hope it is also becoming clear that the links between the areas of the paranormal are so close that they may be best ignored by the serious researcher. Alan Cleaver's piece on the EVP is relevant to a number of specialities (who remembers the tapes in 'The Scoriton Mystery?'). Sue Blackmore's discussion of hallucinations shows clearly in how many claimed experiences the consideration of mistaken or deluded perception is a prerequisite to the drawing of any kind of conclusion from an investigation. Jenny Randles' comments on the behaviour of a family under investigation apply to the incidence of any kind of repeated spontaneous phenomenon. We certainly have a great deal to offer each other in terms of information and guidance; if our most publicised, most dramatic cases are so open to doubt, what of those to which we have appended the label 'paranormal' or 'unidentified' as the result of our investigations? What if they, too, were to be researched in the same depth as was Dyfed by Hilary Evans and, previously, BBC Wales producer Brynmor Williams? Is there an implication that the genuinely paranormal or unidentified is so rare as not to be worth the bother of investigating? Is there no case, event, or perception to which the 'paranormal' or 'unidentifiable' labels would, eventually, belong, given sufficiently exhaustive investigation?

While being something of a sceptic, I don't think that we are wholly wasting our time seeking out the paranormal, nor do I intend to let CG become too involved in destructive criticism. Nevertheless, we hope that we might in due course become known as a journal which will publish material critical of claims of paranormal experience, without being too disappointed by the evaporation of a favourite tale, or using one case to devalue another, or rejoicing in the gullibility of any group or individual. My own interest in the paranormal started with reading and re-reading Pauwels & Bergier's 'Dawn of Magic', and I have been repeatedly disappointed ever since! But I am also enthralled by the few genuine cases that have emerged over the years, and intrigued by the ways people respond to what apparently happens to them. Enthusiasm, and enjoyment of investigation need not equate with believing what is simply not true. Please contribute to Common Ground, with abstracts, letters, journal listings, events, and articles, even with money; we could make a real difference to the analysis of paranormal phenomena, and to public, academic, and media attitudes to what we do, and enjoy doing, in the course of that analysis. Thanks,

Kevin McCune

**NEXT ISSUE — 36 PAGES!**