

Common Ground

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**Studies at the Fringe of Human
Experience.**

Being only too well aware of the dangers of publishing predictions, I've hung on till the 9th of May to type this; however, we still don't know what the outcome may be, though at this point invasion seems inevitable. Of course, the predictions are only a part of what I consider a key article on the nature and importance of divination, and its potential role in comprehending individual and group potential. As a Tarot man by inclination, I feel there is far more to be gained from a good pack of cards than from a stack of expensive biofeedback equipment.

Rod Sorrell, now sojourning in Sri Lanka, is a lay psychotherapist, writer, and psychic consultant, with an original, interdisciplinary approach to his work. I will be happy to forward any letters or enquiries on to him in due course.

WHAT IS DIVINATION? BY ROD SORRELL

Divination: 1. The art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge usually by means of augury or by the aid of supernatural powers.

Divination: 2. Unusual insight or intuitive perception. (Latin *divus*-god). (1).

Some people can see into the future directly, but for most of us direct perception is not sufficiently reliable for practical purposes. To augment this lack techniques are used which give advice on or indications about the future.

The earliest divinatory technique we know of is the casting of lots or dice as a means of making decisions.

"The lot is cast into the lap,
But the decision is wholly from the Lord."

Proverbs. Ch.16 verse 33.

Carbon-14 dating has shown dice to have been in use as early as 40,000 B.C. in Korea and China (2). Since then a vast number of different techniques have been employed. Some, like the casting of lots, have maintained their popularity; whilst others, especially the messier ones like the reading of intestines and livers, have fallen from favour.

The method that I most often employ is the "I Ching" (pronounced YEE JING); I also use the Tarot, Dakini oracle and casting of lots. It depends on the type of situation being enquired of as well as the personal affinity and familiarity developed for a particular technique by the individual.

Before getting into specific types of divination and examples we shall take a brief look at the various explanations given for how an apparently chance, random, and arbitrary act such as the casting of lots or spreading of cards can form a link between the mind of the questioner and the situation being enquired of. Explanations tend to fall into three broad categories; - First the spiritual, or "by the hand of God". As we saw in the biblical quote above and in the derivation of the word from the Latin *Divus* - god, the connecting agency may be gods, spirits (good or evil), angels, devils, or the Almighty Him or Herself. This is the more traditional or historical viewpoint, held for example by the European magical fraternities with regard to such methods as the Tarot and geomantic divinations. (3)

Secondly the psychological, or "no man is an island". It is a commonly held psychological belief that below the conscious mind are our individual unconscious thoughts and feelings; and below that is a collection of archetypes and complexes held in common with other people. These mutually held images may be the common ground forming the connecting link between people separated in time and space. This is also known as the "One Hundredth Monkey Phenomena" from the well-documented example of new cultural traits developed by the Macata Fuscata monkeys of Koshima Island being transmitted to a troupe at Takasakiyama on the mainland without there being any physical connection between the two groups of monkeys. (4). The first link I made between my psychological training and the psychic was through Carl Jung's "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle" (5). It was through his influence, though I never met him, that I decided to investigate this subject.

The third connection is the physical, or "the universe in a grain of sand". It is a proposal of the "new" physics that every particle is in instant and complete communication with every other particle, and that each particle contains within it the reflection of every other particle. (6). In other words the part contains the whole. This concept is expressed in the hologram. Briefly the hologram is a laser produced photograph of a three-dimensional object. When the hologram is illuminated it produces a three-dimensional projection of the object hologrammed which can be viewed from any direction just like a regular three-dimensional object. If a small portion of this hologrammic plate were to be chipped off and illuminated then, unlike a regular photographic plate, the original object hologrammed would be reproduced in its entirety. Each part of the hologram contains the pattern of the whole. Thus the Tarot cards, for example, could be thought of as the part containing and reflecting the pattern of the whole universe.

My personal view of the matter is that each of these three approaches are different aspects of a multi-dimensional patterned connectedness that incorporate and transcend these partial explanations; and though woefully incomplete, they do at least give us some directions for future research.

A divinatory tool such as the Tarot or I Ching is a matrix, paradigm, pattern, or symbolic code-book of the universe. In order to enquire into an unknown area it is necessary that your book of answers contain every possible answer. If card number 13 of the major arcana of the Tarot - "Death" - were not in the pack, then the tarot would be unable to indicate the ending or death of a situation and so would be incomplete. Every divinatory system is such a symbolic code book, and it is no good if half the pages are missing.

The code book that I am going to use in the examples that follow is the one traditionally used in China. It is the I Ching or Book of Changes ("I" means change and "Ching" means book). There are many translations of this classic, the most notable being the Wilhelm/Baynes edition with a foreword by C.G. Jung. (7). It is a philosophical-divinatory system that describes itself as "the pattern of heaven and earth". The I Ching contains sixty-four chapters each indicating a particular transformation or change. Each chapter comprises six paragraphs which further detail different aspects of the overall theme of the chapter. Furthermore each chapter is centred round a Kua (Chinese for image or symbol) or hexagram. The kua is a six-lined figure made up of all the possible combinations of divided - - (YIN) and undivided — (YANG) lines. The philosopher Leibniz was the first to see in this pattern the binary system by which computers do their calculations. Yin - - equates to 0 and Yang — equates to 1 in the binary code.

Other such patterns or maps are the 64 codons of the genetic code (9), the unified field theory of elementary particles and forces (11), the table of elements (10), numerology (12), the alchemical transformations of western occultism (13), the Tarot (14), and the Dakini Oracle (15) and (16). All of these have been linked together with the I Ching to form a meta-pattern covering all aspects of existence.

"I would sit for hours beneath the hundred year old pear tree, the I Ching beside me, practicing the technique by referring the resultant oracles to one another in an interplay of questions and answers. All sorts of undeniably remarkable results emerged, meaningful connections with my own thought processes, which I could not explain to myself." C.G. Jung. (17).

By the random division of a pile of yarrow stalks or the tossing of coins in a prescribed manner one or more of the chapters and paragraphs of the I Ching are indicated as being relevant to the query. In all 4096 (64x64) variations of answer are possible; a "language" that can be expected to provide us with a fair degree of accuracy depending upon the ability of the diviner to obtain and to interpret the answer in relation to the situation being enquired of correctly. In that we are working with the principle of connectedness it is clear that the diviner is part of the answer even if the question is not about him or her. If I ask a question and I am confused about what I am asking then I will get a confusing answer. It is rather like a friend dropping by for a cup of tea and asking "What've you been up to today?" Then you hear a knock at the door and you open it to be confronted by a grim-faced policeman who similarly asks you, "What've you been up to today?". The question is the same but your response is likely to be coloured by the attitude of the questioner.

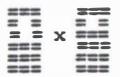
There are no more observers - we are all part of the experiment. Therefore one should be in a meditative state, at least at the alpha level and ideally at the delta level when consulting any form of oracle. This also goes for the interpretation in which right-brain lateral thinking ability to analogise or link the 5,000 year old imagery of the I Ching to the present situation is an essential requirement. As it says in the Ta Chuang or Great Treatise on the Book of Changes (7)

"First take up the words,
Ponder their meaning,
Then the fixed rules reveal themselves,
But if you are not the right person,
The meaning will not manifest itself to you."

There are three overlapping ways in which a divination can be judged for its accuracy. The first is, "Is the answer consistent with the question?" For example a day or so ago, on 29th March 1982, I was listening to "Today in Parliament" on the radio. There was a debate on replacing the ageing Polaris nuclear defence system with the more powerful and expensive American Trident system. I decided to ask the I Ching's opinion on this Trident situation. Now an opinion and a prediction are two different things. The first is a philosophical question, and the second is predictive. It might be the wise course to say, buy the Trident system, but that does not mean to say that the government will decide upon the wisest course of action. In this case it was a general philosophical question which could be followed up with more detailed questions if I wished to.

Q. What is your opinion of Britain replacing Polaris with Trident?

A.


kua 26 kua 14

The answer is kua 26 (or chapter 26 of the Book of Changes), with the fourth line of the kua (the lines are counted from the bottom upwards) moving from the yin mode to the yang mode. This means that we pay special attention to paragraph four of Chapter 26. Also to be taken into account is chapter 14 which results from the fourth line moving from yin - - to yang —.

Chapter 26 of the I Ching is called "The Taming Power of the Great" or "Potential Energy". Its subject matter is the correct handling of stored up energy or power which fits in well with the subject under discussion. The Tarot equivalent of this kua is the Princess or Page of Wands who " . . . never forgets an injury, and the only quality of patience to be found in her is the patience with which she lies in ambush to avenge. (3). This sounds like Margaret contemplating a second strike to me! Kua 26 also equates with Dakini 60. (The Dakini oracle is a tantric system of divination of 64 dakinis each of which corresponds to one of the Chinese kua). (15) and (16). Dakini 60 is related to Vishnu the Hindu Lord of Preservation in his tortoise incarnation and is called "Taking Up Arms"; it represents " . . . a position of great strength, taken to overcome all adversity . . ." (16).

Kua 14, the second image arrived at, is called "Possession in Great Measure" or "Sovereignty". The Dakini equivalent is Dakini 61 which is called "Survival". The Tarot equivalent is the Prince of Wands whose qualities are " . . . swiftness and strength . . . inclined to act on impulse; sometimes easily led by external influences; . . . a prey to indecision." (3). This sums up the problems involved in using nuclear strike forces, and all these ideas fit in with the sense of the question. The moving line in the fourth place of kua 26 refers us to the fourth paragraph of chapter 26 of the I Ching which gives the picture of a headboard being placed over the horns of a young bull. The commentary on this paragraph states that "Before a bull's horns grow out, a headboard is fastened to its forehead, so that later when the horns appear they cannot do harm. A good way to restrain wild force is to forestall it." (7).

This indication of restraint advises against the purchase of Trident, and a superficial glance at the answer as given here shows a close correspondence between the answer and the question. In other words the answer is an intelligent one, as if a great sage were talking to us through the medium of the I Ching, which is how we are encouraged to approach it in order to evoke the optimum response.

The second way of judging the accuracy of a reading is by comparison of the kua received with other kua received on the same or similar subjects. A cross-referencing which demands that one keep meticulous records. For example, kua 35 is called "Progress" or "Rising above the Horizon". It describes " . . . a time when a powerful feudal lord rallies the other lords around the sovereign and pledges fealty and peace." (7). In the Tarot this kua is represented by the Prince of Discs or Pentacles who " . . . is energetic and enduring, a capable manager, a steadfast and persevering worker." (3).

In the Dakini oracle this is represented by Dakini 5, Ganesh, the Hindu God who signifies " . . . organisation and the pathway through all obstacles." (16). This kua is also associated with tryptophan, the amino-acid that is therapeutically useful in treating acute puerperal and other depressions. (9). All in all, this denotes a person or situation of some considerable practical achievement, rapid progress and success. This kua has consistently cropped up in connection with political successes. I received it three times for Ronald Reagan when I was involved in predicting the results of the 1980 U.S. Presidential election. I also received this same kua in connection with Jimmy Carter's success at maintaining the democratic nomination for that same election and with his holding on to Alabama and Minnesota in the same presidential election. Margaret Thatcher also received this kua for the May 1979 United Kingdom General Election, whereas James Callaghan and the Labour Party received that same kua turned on its head, kua 36 which is called, appropriately enough, "Darkening of the Light". (7)

This sort of cross-referencing is very useful in developing an understanding of the significance of different images or kua in the divinatory pattern. These remarkable coincidences also illustrate the third way of judging the accuracy of a prediction, and that is of course by the actual results.

Extensive research into electoral predictions have shown that this form of divination is accurate. (18). One prediction I made as long ago as December 1979 was that George Bush would become President of the United States; we will see what happens. (18). I was asked by Kevin McClure to include something timely, of interest and controversial. As I now write it is 6.00p.m. on the 2nd April 1982 and the Falklands dispute with the Argentine has just blown up. At this moment Argentina claims to have occupied the Falkland Islands and the British government claims they have not. I consulted the I Ching on this matter at 9.45 this morning and here is a brief analysis of the current situation which I have just completed from that reading.

Analysis of the Falkland Islands Crisis.

Overall situation.

kua 24



Return, or The Turning Point.

The end of the old and the beginning of the new. As Britain is the established or old government this indicates that Argentina will be successful in her action to take over the Falkland Islands.

British Situation.

kua 23



Deterioration, or Splitting Apart.

Britain will lose the Falkland Islands. Margaret Thatcher or the government may fall.

Argentinian Situation.

kua 38



Contradiction, or Opposition.

Actual or latent conflict. Two opposing sides in a stalemate. Success in small matters. They have taken the Falklands, diplomatic relations will be severed and the situation with Britain will develop into an extensive stalemate. This phase will eventually be transcended and things settle down.

Falkland Islanders Situation.

kua 27 kua 24



x



Return, or The Turning Point.

Nourishment, or the Corners of the Mouth.

Seek a compromise. Impulsive action will lead to failure. Those who stay will have to come to terms with the new regime. Many will be aware of the danger in this and leave to start a new life elsewhere. Resisting the change will be disastrous. Attempting to regain the Falklands will result in a defeat that will have repercussions for at least ten years.

I make no claim for the infallibility of predictions. This subject is still in its early research stages and mistakes are to be expected. Cancer research has been in progress most of this century and consumed billions of pounds in research with very little to show for itself. Few people condemn cancer research as a fraud. The difficulty that research into anomalous areas has to deal with in a world dominated by materiality and profit is in producing a definite and practical result; otherwise it is not considered "real". That is why I have oriented this article towards the rather narrow and mundane area of political predictions. In a more enlightened area we would be discussing this same subject as a Tao or path to personal understanding and enlightenment, a subject I consider far more pertinent. On the other hand the I Ching describes itself as "the pattern of heaven and earth" (7), thus making itself all inclusive.

We live in an age in which a quantum leap has been taken as regards the information available to us, but the way we process that information has not changed. This has made life so complicated that it is almost impossible to make the correct decisions with the logical step-by-step method of sorting it all out. New techniques of decision-making are needed, not to supplant but to supplement the logical process by either confirming the conclusions arrived at logically or by indicating directions to be investigated or attended to. Had some early sign of a crisis arising in the Falkland Islands been confirmed by the I Ching, then more attention might have been diverted to the area and an unnecessary crisis averted. This is the practical function of divination; and if it is shown to be practical it will be used, and if it is used then the whole area of anomalous research will benefit.

I would like to end this article with a quote from the Ta Chuang or Great Treatise on the Book of Changes (7) in order to give some sense of balance to an article which of necessity has been rather one-sided.

"Since in this way (by the use of the I Ching) man comes to resemble heaven and earth, he is not in conflict with them. His wisdom embraces all things, and his tao brings order into the whole world; therefore he does not err. He is active everywhere but does not let himself be carried away. He rejoices in heaven and has knowledge of fate, therefore he is free of care. He is content with his circumstances and genuine in his kindness, therefore he can practice love."

Ta Chuang Chapter 4, Paragraph 3.

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DO DEAD MEN TELL TALES?

American scientists claim to have built a machine, called a Spiricom, which allows conversations, lasting more than an hour, with the dead. It doesn't matter how you dress it up in pseudo-scientific language, that statement is still going to sound absurd and unbelievable, and therein lies the danger. The temptation is to dismiss it without seriously considering the evidence; but having examined the information available, I am 90% convinced that they have achieved what they claim. There is an obvious parallel here with the invention of the telephone; when Graham Bell announced he had built such a device it sounded so absurd to the American public he was jailed for fraud. It is not my intention here to discuss whether the Spiricom is genuine or a hoax, though I do suggest that the absurd claim that the Americans are developing a television link is best ignored at the moment. Whether genuine or not the tapes are convincing enough to make a large section of society believe life after death has been proved: to convince them there is nothing to fear from death. This could be a dangerous thing if the information is released in a haphazard way. We could see an increase in suicides; questions about abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment suddenly become much easier to answer. Whoever perfects the Spiricom should control the way it is released. Perhaps the Americans are already doing this; they kept quiet for ten years and held a special, closed conference in March 1982 to decide how to release details. The tapes have some unique characteristics if they really are communications with the dead; the voices exhibit hostility - I have never heard of other communications from "the higher levels of consciousness" to show hostility at all. Secondly, the voices supply highly technical information on how to build the Spiricom; normal communications with the dead, even through EVP, have shown only messages of "love, peace, and charity", or banal statements like "She loves Elvis". Thirdly, all through the communications there is a slave/master relationship between the American scientist and the dead. With the dead as the master. The only way to move forward now is to build a Spiricom in this country. With this aim ASSAP is holding a meeting, possibly in Leeds, of interested electronic experts. Please write if you want to help. There has been no patent taken out on the device so it is free to all, though the equipment is likely to cost several thousand pounds. What the Spiricom has demonstrated is where British EVP researchers went wrong; they debated too much about who they were contacting instead of discussing how to make contact with them. And where we have failed most is in not seeking help from the people we were trying to contact. The Americans assumed it was the dead, and then sought help from the dead through various mediums. That brings me on to a personal statement which may upset those who prefer a more scientific approach. Once the work on building a British Spiricom is underway I am going to presume a/. We are contacting the dead and b/. Contact with the dead is possible. I am not going to debate whether we are contacting other intelligences (such as from UFO's) or if the Spiricom is a hoax. Taking this as a working hypothesis has enabled the Americans to make tremendous advances. If researchers in other areas used this technique perhaps they too could "leap-frog" in the development of their work. But I hasten to add that it would be a severe setback if those working on the Spiricom just wanted to contact their dead Auntie Gladys. The people with that sort of attitude we can do without.

Alan Cleaver

I'm not really sure that Mark Moravec runs all of Australian ufology, or whether that is merely an impression he creates with his output of first-rate articles covering all aspects of UFO research, particularly with regard to the human element; Mark was one of the first researchers to attack the ethics problem in any depth. The following article considers another of the important fringes of investigation.

PSIUFO PHENOMENA MARK MORAVEC

UFO phenomena are controversial. Paranormal phenomena are controversial. Put them together and you are guaranteed to get fireworks as people with their individual, differing beliefs get stuck into each other. In this emerging era of scientific ufology, it is time to put a hold on our beliefs and to examine the data dispassionately.

PSIUFO phenomena are those cases where UFO and paranormal phenomena apparently overlap. These cover UFO cases involving alleged mental communications, poltergeists, apparitions, healings, ghostlights and time lapses/abductions. For a number of years I have been engaged in collecting and analysing data related to the alleged UFO - Paranormal connection, and the result of this research has recently been published by the Australian Centre for UFO Studies under the title PSIUFO Phenomena: A Study of UFO's and the Paranormal (Moravec, 1981b). In this article, I will preview a number of the study's findings.

First, a look at Australian psi UFO cases. 88 cases were located, most of these involving ghostlights, mental communications, and apparitions. At the opposite end of the spectrum, I have thus far been able to find only one case of alleged paranormal healing. Generally, a greater number of psi UFO cases have been recorded since the early 1960's. This is to be expected, given the modern development of a network of UFO investigators. 43 cases involved multiple percipients. Here, the type of case is important. For example, cases featuring mental communications tend to involve single percipients only, whereas ghostlights more often had more than one percipient.

The reliability of individual cases (usually ignored in most catalogues of reports) was rated according to levels of documentation, time lapse before investigation, witness credibility, supporting physical evidence and strangeness. Whilst a quarter of the cases were merely historical anecdotes or unconfirmed media accounts, half of the cases were either uninvestigated, or investigated more than five years after the event; and the majority of cases had no supportive physical evidence. The good news was that over a quarter of the cases remained as cases of high total merit. In other words, there might be something to the UFO - Paranormal connection, after all. At this point, some case examples would be appropriate; -

One of the earliest cases of a ghostlight occurred circa 1838 in the Port Phillip district of Victoria. A party of travellers "saw a fire a little way off." One of the travellers and his servant rode out to investigate. "They rode boldly up to the spot where the fire, as they thought, was burning, but it was as far off as when they started. In short, it turned out to be an 'ignis fatuus', or jack-a-lantern, and kept them upwards of an hour trotting in vain pursuit . . ." (Case One). An interesting historical account, but difficult to assess after this lapse of time.

But limited merit cases are not confined to the nineteenth century. For example in 1974 it was claimed that a Launceston teacher had met the occupants of a UFO and afterwards gained extraordinary ESP powers. This is an anecdote only (case 62). Nothing much we can do with this one!

In contrast to such little documented cases as the foregoing, let us consider the strange events which took place at Norah Head, New South Wales, on the night of 8th June 1975. Three boys and a girl were camped in a gully. At 3a.m. the boys heard strange, continuous 'jet' noises. Shining their torches around the area, they observed a small illuminated object, some two or three feet in diameter, emerge from the bushes in the gully. Eventually two smaller objects, oval in shape, emerged from the larger object and approached the group. Within a few moments, further objects had emerged and soon a large number of these smaller objects "attacked" the group, avoiding attempts to deflect or spear them. The boys' fears eventually overwhelmed them and the group fled from the area. Most interesting of all, the girl claimed not to have observed any of the foregoing events! (Case 64).

Yet it would be too easy to dismiss this case as a hoax. A qualified UFO investigator went to the sighting location within hours of the alleged incident. He was impressed by the fear still manifested by the percipients. Indeed, the teenage boys, when first relating the details over the telephone, had begun to cry. If the incident is not a hoax or misidentification, then the apparent selective perception of the objects by only three of the four people present has important implications for our attempted interpretation of the phenomena.

A case of a different kind, this time a "time lapse", occurred on 5th February 1979. A young man was driving through Lawitta, Tasmania, when the bonnet of his car was lit up by an intense white light from overhead. The car radio went dead, the lights went out and the engine stopped. Later that night the man was found by police in a Hobart city street. They went to speak to him because he had no lights on his car. The man did not know who he was, where he had come from, or where he lived. The police searched him, found his address on personal papers, and took him to the hospital, where he was said to be suffering from shock. He had a high pulse rate. When doctors shone a light into his eyes, the young man started to recall what had happened at Lawitta. He stated that after the car stalled he spent ten to fifteen minutes trying to get it started. He could not recall driving to Hobart (Case 85). (Who was the fool that said that UFO experiences aren't important enough to be worth investigating?)

A psychological interpretation of the incident (in this case, the experience has all the hallmarks of a fugue state of mind, which involves amnesia and a physical wandering) is complicated by the apparent physical effects on the vehicle. The car had a flat battery and an unexpectedly low oil level. An alternator switch and headlight wiring were found to be damaged.

For reasons which I detail in my report, I think that a large proportion of psi UFO cases can be explained in psychological terms, e.g. as instances of hypnompic/hypnagogic imagery; psychotic hallucinations; fugues; and other psychological processes occurring during altered states of consciousness. (See also Moravec, 1980, and Moravec 1981a for further discussions of these aspects.) However, as the last two cases indicate, a psychological interpretation may not be the total answer. Paranormal and/or physical factors may also be necessary to account for some UFO experiences.

Before closing, mention should be made of some of the implications for investigation. Psi UFO cases tend to be much more complex than your average 'down-to-earth' UFO event. A good knowledge of psychology and parapsychology (or at least access to such knowledge) is essential. Coincidence, spurious media correlations, unconscious fantasy, psychopathology, hallucinations during altered states of consciousness, the influence of the percipient's prior knowledge of UFO and paranormal lore - all these factors and more have to be considered. The necessity of an intensive examination of the percipient's background brings to the fore the ethical issues of the percipient's individual rights and well-being. In short, it ain't easy, but it makes for an interesting and worthwhile challenge.

The continued study of Psi UFO phenomena will probably result in a greater understanding of the workings of the human mind. It will probably also tell us something about the nature of both UFO's and paranormal phenomena.

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- Moravec, M. PSI UFO Phenomena: a Study of UFO's and the Paranormal. ACUFOS 1981b. (Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the above 137-page report may do so by ordering from ACUFOS, PO Box 546, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia. Cost is \$15 Aust. payable by international money order.)

Following pertinent comments from a number of people whose opinion I respect, I have agonised for weeks about what to do with the promised 'Journal Listings' for this issue. In view of the fact that the whole lot would have taken some seven extra pages, and cost over £60 extra to print, I eventually decided that I just couldn't justify the space or the outlay; it would have meant an inferior production or cutting out two articles, and that just isn't on. I hope you'll approve of this compromise; most good publications are going to appear anyway.

ABSTRACTS

Bufo Bulletin. No.003. March 1982. A better 20-page issue with a fair variety this time. The new Bufo investigation system explained. The final draft of the code of practice in full. Nigel Watson's historical report. Manfred Cassirer with some scepticism of EM effects. Bufo have now appointed a professional journalist as editor from 004, so we can expect a step back toward the standard of Bufo publications we are happily accustomed to. Available with membership from BUFO, 6, Cairn Avenue, London W5 5HX.

Christian Parapsychologist. March 1982. A consistently high standard of content, style, and presentation is maintained by CP. Here we have "Psychical Research & Religion" by the editor, Michael Perry, some peculiar remarks on exorcism in "Psychic Troubles and Pastoral Care" by the Bishop of Guildford and John Richards, and the usual first-rate variety of notes and reviews. Published quarterly at £3 p.a. from CFPSS, St. Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane, London, EC4N 7BA.

Flying Saucer Review. Vol.27. No.5. March 1982. I am not sure what to make of FSR these days. It is becoming more international in scope (this issue has pieces on Chinese ufology and more Soviet reports). Yet it seems to be sacrificing a good deal of objectivity as price for this. This is fine provided one realises that this is happening and does not accept the stuff, which Gordon Creighton so tirelessly transcribes, at face value. But I wonder just how many readers do? I am also rather disturbed at recent British reporting. A pretty dull case from Poole is included here with some prominence. It comes from an ex-UFOIN investigator, who left because he lacked time; and it involves a group of children with no other back-up. There is also a piece on "mystery" circles found in Wiltshire. Probe of course, have already discussed these at some length in recent issues, and explained them! It is a great pity that FSR seems to have ignored this . . . worse, probably not even read it! The present trends at FSR need checking; can it really still be seen as the best UFO journal in Britain?

Fortean Times. No. 36. An indispensable journal this - the best in the field anywhere in the known universe. This issue has a real Rickard classic, an excellent investigation, fully illustrated, of the infamous "Christ in the Clouds" photos that have appeared in numerous papers and magazines in the past 60 years. Also Hermits, Embeddings, Bleeding Statues, Do-it-yourself surgery (a revolting item, this - amazed even a reporter from the News of the World!), and acres of other fascinating stuff, including humour, cartoons, contacts, and more. £1 an issue, £4 p.a. from EM Fortean Times, London, WC1N 3XX.

Lamp of Thoth. Vol.2. No.2. A great favourite of mine, this. A packed, esoteric pot-pourri of practical and theoretical magic, divination, ritual etc. Several name writers, humour, common-sense, and an agony column in every issue. Here, Gerald Gardner, Gematria, Third Eye, Tao, Qabalah, John Dee, contacts. £1.50p a copy from 4 - 8, Burley Lodge Road, Leeds, LS6 1QP.

Lantern. No. 36. A fine example to us all of what talented individuals can do with a local (East Anglia) journal on a small budget. Here, "The Old Man of Hopton" - ghost or legend? Haunts at Thurne, Witchcraft at Lowestoft, UFO news, and the Harleston Stone. Only £1.50 for 4 issues from 3, Durwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4RZ.

Ley Hunter. No. 92. Still appears to be published on utility wallpaper, but the TLH self-sufficiency producing is gradually improving, and the contents of this issue are up to the standard of the best of the glossy issues. 40 pages this time, including contributions from Paul Devereux himself (on the engrossing Dragon Project), Philip Heselton, Paul Screeton, John Glover, Nigel Pennick, and the Bords. A high-quality coverage of the whole Earth Mysteries subject. £3.75 for 3 issues from P.O. Box 13, Welshpool, Powys, Wales.

Magic Saucer. Nos. 19 & 20. An intriguing magazine, excellent value-for-money, and outgrowing its "aimed at children!" connotations. Some fears are being expressed (not least by your editor!) about how right it is to give children pseudo-religious philosophy such as is included in a typical MS. For it is certainly not your usual UFO magazine, and UFO's actually form just a part of the content. But I think children have a lot more sense than many adults, and there is no reason why they should not see the sort of things we adults toy with. From some of the letters they have better ideas about their nature than many adults. For all the varied articles (on fairies, spirit bodies, vegetarianism, among others) I find the letters and personal reports the best part of each issue. There is a pro and con debate on hostile UFO's which may raise the heartbeat of a few mums and dads. The kids will probably love it! If you disagree with the content, start writing some articles of the kind you would want included - I'm sure Crystal Hogben would love to have them. (Jenny Randles). £2.43 p.a., 41p an issue from 8, Ely Close, Habberley Est., Kidderminster, Worcs.

Meeting the Third Millennium. Spring 1982. Steiner-based journal, part-moral, part-millennial, which has a very nice 'feel' to it. Intriguing article by Charles Bowen here - "Deception is the Name of the Game" - Flying Conspiracy Review? Also transplants, mercy-killing, Darwinism, and comments on "Holy Blood". 60p an issue from Roma Browne, 2, Riverside, Forest Row, Sussex.

MUFON UFO Journal. January 1982. One of the best U.S. UFO journals, though it is apt to be a little preoccupied with internal politics and the mentioning of "names". This issue has a Texas family abduction case with religious overtones, vehicle effects, triangular UFO's, UMMO, and overheating in car batteries. \$16 (U.K. rate) from 103, Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas 78155, U.S.A.

Northern UFO News. No. 94. Legible at last, Jenny Randles having obtained a new duplicator! Essential and valuable information on what is happening in British ufology, with a lengthy editorial each issue. Here Jenny looks at the problems of retrieving "secret" material from the government, and how the issue is confused by Lord Clancarty, who makes Adamski look like a sceptic. Also the promising "Case Histories", no.2. being about the Woodside Ufocal. £4.20p.a. from 8, Whitethroat Walk, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6PQ.

Probe Report. No.8. March 1982. It is hard to believe that this journal has its origins with a local group of about half a dozen members based on Bristol. In its eight issues it has become indispensable to any thinking ufologist. Here we have a major piece on whirlwinds and circular landing traces; really just a postscript to previous articles but it totally shames the FSR contribution in the coincident issue. Also some fascinating photos of a whirlwind actually creating "saucer nests", which should leave a few saucer-freaks open-mouthed. A super demolition job on a Devon photo case, with the full backing of Ground Saucer Watch and their computer enhancement techniques (their computer images are included in the article). And then to show that Probe are not just debunkers, (or more probably agnostics), there is an unexplained Warminster investigation with possible EM effects - also brilliantly investigated. A four-issue sub. to Probe costs only £2, and with letters, news, and book reviews, it really has to be excellent value. (review by JR). Send to 16, Marigold Walk, Ashton, Bristol.

Psychic News. This isn't actually an abstract - with a weekly publication there is just too much to choose from. For those of you who only remember PN as a mish-mash of items from clippings agencies, Tit Bits, Weekend, and the News of the World, with opinionated editorial material and a lot of fuss as to whether or not Spiritualism is spelt with a capital letter, it must be pointed out that things have changed considerably since the passing of Maurice Barbanell. The whole range and timbre of the paper has improved since the editorship was taken over by the lucid and imaginative Tony Ortzen, and some real journalism, investigative reporting, and original thought has been allowed to emerge. Added to this the ASSAP Secretary and Newsletter Editor Alan Cleaver has recently been made PN assistant editor, and is bringing a wide range of psychic research material to the paper, long before any of the quarterly journals can print it. While PN remains at base a Spiritualist newspaper, it is sure to be of great interest to anyone involved in the paranormal field. It costs only 18p from your newsagent, or send for a sample copy to 23, Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5BB.

Quicksilver Messenger. No.6. An attractive, professionally produced Earth Mysteries journal from and drawing from S.E. England, particularly the Sussex Coast. Here we have a John Michell interview, "Megalithic Holidays" on Malta (good idea that), and "The Hove Grail", + Nigel Pennick and reviews, etc. £1 each issue from QSM, Garden Flat, 46, Vere Road, Brighton, Sussex

Society for Psychological Research Journal. February 1982. Still very far from cheap (you'll have to work out from membership details the cheapest way to obtain it), this is the most readable issue for years;- the Journal has a new Editor, and it really shows. The leading article here is one I tried to procure for "Common Ground", but was beaten to it; it is a major piece by a highly perceptive psychiatrist about human problems arising in paranormal events and investigations. Also items about the Flixborough Disaster, Ganzfeld, Poltergeists, and the control of bacterial growth by P.K. Write to the Secretary, S.P.R. 1, Adam and Eve Mews, Kensington, London, W8 6UG.

UFO Research Review. 1982. No.1. (journal of NUFOIS, Nottingham). All of us who have been closely involved in ufology for more than a few years will have viewed with sadness and regret the plight of those individuals who, finding themselves unable to cope with the demands and complexities of what is a very testing subject, or to maintain senses of proportion, reason and humour, have resorted to various extremes of belief, often of evangelism of one kind or another. It is particularly unfortunate when this happens to a respected figure in the UFO field.

In this first issue of the Review for some time (and in the past it has made an impressive contribution to nuts and bolts ufology) there seem to be clear signs of apparent psychological imbalance; one or more of the individuals involved in the compilation of this issue may well be unable to handle the difficult task of considering or presenting two sides of an argument, and it is certain that the editor has not seen fit to control this imbalance. Also, the publication is physically horrible - it is barely legible in parts, and looks like a list of something from Exchange & Mart.

It may be that this is actually NUFOIS's way of retiring from research and investigation. Certainly, their decision not to operate the Code of Practice (on the specious grounds that the whole world cannot be made to operate it) will hugely devalue such limited standing as this group still has. Mind you, in that the Code entails a need for objectivity and open-mindedness, I can see that there would have been problems in some group members, at least, operating it.

Leaving sympathy aside for a time, it must be said that the two items in this issue which really catch the attention are an attack on the ASSAP Leicester meeting, based on a poster sent to Robert Morrell, and written well before the event, and a 'review' of 'Alien Contact' by Randles & Whetnall. Both are quite unacceptably abusive. The comments on the Leicester meeting are along the lines of "pantomime" and "world of make-believe". The participants-to-be are described as "uncritical". The piece is said to be by one "Peter Finch", who is not known to any researcher I have spoken to about him. Whoever he may really be, it is plain that he is very ignorant of his subject-matter. He clearly knows nothing of Hilary Evans' demolition of the Dyfed Triangle, of Paul Begg's debunking of the Bermuda Triangle and other idiocies in his well-known "Into Thin Air", or of Bob Cracknell's attacks on the sillier aspects of Spiritualism. He plainly had no idea what would emerge in Jenny Randles' careful critique of regression, or of Sue Blackmore's single-handed demystification of the out-of-body-experience in print and lectures over the past ten years. Actually, "Peter Finch" owes a few apologies.

The review of 'Alien Contact' is by the same hand, and apart from its rudeness is brief and largely meaningless. It does, however, introduce a couple of new anomalies to us all. Can anyone tell me what, or who, the "Sugar Plumb Fair" (sic) may be? Or why Morrell, the "Review" editor, is still involved in British ufology?

Walrus. No.18. A blessed intellectual relief after the twaddle reviewed above. The journal most in the tradition of the sixties underground press, basically duplicated, but full of intelligent and original thought on an amazingly wide range of subjects related to earth mysteries, anomalies, and the paranormal. Here, we have everything from Alfred Watkins to the Blasphemy Laws, to Rosicrucians, to Geomancy, to Pagans and more. To me, this is what 'freethinking' is really about, not the strangled cynicism that usually goes under that name. Also when you send off for this one, ask for a list of Nigel Pennick's more traditional, but thoroughly excellent, geomantic publications. For Walrus send £2.25p for three issues to I.G.R. 142, Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD.

Zetetic Scholar. No.9. The vast and highly impressive journal of CSAR, the U.S. equivalent of ASSAP. At 116 A4 pages, full of natural goodness, it dwarves our efforts, but then I don't have the backing of a university! This issue has a strong bias towards the Starbaby/Gauquelin/CSICOP/Mars Effect controversy, which is perhaps of greater interest on the other side of the Atlantic, but is none the less informative and, if the Mars Effect is eventually verified, of high importance. There are also features on Gerald Croiset (be cautious with psychic detectives is the message), Patterns of Belief in the Anomalous, Defining the term UFO (a bit awkwardly) and the usual wide range of letters and discussion. The journal is on a very tight budget, and needs, and justifies, wide support. It is available for \$9 an issue (U.K.) from Dept. of Sociology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, U.S.A.

EXTRO. Vol.1. No.2. A glossy, bookstall SF magazine of considerable quality, though I wouldn't normally mention it in CG. However, this edition has a long, informative, and funny article by John Grant (who regularly appears in our pages) on the subject of pseudo-science as it relates to SF, examining a wide range of more or less daft theories, the way they are put over, and why some do, and some don't gain acceptance. I think Grant is particularly good dealing with the abuse of popular science to achieve fame and money. Try and find 'Extro' and take a look at his approach (the stories are pretty good, too!).

We have heard much in recent years of that strange, hybrid, and to me broadly untenable creature known as Christian parapsychology. It has become accepted through usage, but the supposed links between the experiential quality of the broad range of spontaneous phenomena, and the basic belief in salvation by intervention continue, in the main, to elude me. So far, it only seems to be Christianity that has raised sufficient contradictions to the main body of reports of paranormal experience for such an exercise in justification to take place, but I would be most interested to hear of parallel movements within other established faiths.

In the following article, Magda Graham, editor of 'Nine Worlds', former editor of 'Occult World', and compiler of the annual Directory of Mystical Societies, Alternative Religions, and Occult Groups and Publications, introduces us to what I might begin to describe as Pagan parapsychology; another view of the relationship between mankind, our abilities and potentials, and the anomalous experiences that happen to us, and anomalous talents some of us display. I am very pleased to be able to include this approach in 'Common Ground'.

Today's Occult is Tomorrow's Science

MAGDA GRAHAM

A few hundred years ago, what would anyone have called a telephone or television? Magic, probably. Similarly, what we now call supernatural or paranormal is really quite natural and normal, but it utilises powers which we cannot yet understand or control. The study of the Occult is the quest to attain and use those powers; a quest which takes many different paths. Within the broad spectrum of occultism, there are numerous religions: for instance, Witchcraft, Odinism, Satanism, Voodoo, all entirely different faiths though often confused by outsiders. And some occultists prefer to avoid commitment to a formal belief.

An aspect of occultism frequently encountered is clairvoyance (literally, 'clear-seeing') popularly known as an aspect of fortune-telling. Clairvoyance deals with past, present, and future, and consists of ascertaining information by means which are not, at present, explicable. Aids to clairvoyance include Tarot cards (cartomancy), tea-leaves or coffee-grounds (tasseomancy), and palmistry (cheirromancy). These give basic guidelines, but the clairvoyant faculty is needed for their interpretation. Some methods of clairvoyance are no longer in use, such as anthropomancy, divination by the entrails of a sacrifice; some are of dubious validity, such as tiromancy, divination by cheese; a few are of use in activating the subconscious, such as libanomancy, divination by the smoke of burning incense, pyromancy (fire), crystallomancy (crystal), and hydromancy (water). Happenings of the past are written in the present, though not always obvious, and "coming events cast their shadow". The theory that all actions, words and thoughts which have ever taken place or which are yet to come are stored in the Akashic Record or Astral Light does not take into account the fact that the future is not predetermined and can be altered by conscious effort.

Healing is the aspect of occultism most in demand, though several of the healing arts are at last becoming accepted as science, not magic. Herbalism, the use of plants, is probably the oldest healing skill, and a very important study in the religion of Witchcraft. Centuries ago, all herbalists were in danger of being executed as witches, since the ruling religion of Christianity held that any attempt to cure illness was an interference with divine will. Homeopathy is based on the principle that 'like cures like' and that a sick body, which rejects strong doses of medicine, can absorb very small amounts. It is the treatment of disease by minute doses of a drug which, in a healthy person, would produce the symptoms of that disease.

Colour therapy has its psychological use, as is acknowledged in the interior decoration of hospitals, though it is debatable whether it can cure physical complaints. Spiritual healing is otherwise known as "the laying on of hands", convenient to dismiss it as psychosomatic but, even if it were, it would still be of use and benefit. Acupuncture is the theory that, when very short needles are inserted at specific points on the body, they exert an influence on the meridians, channels of energy circulating around the body. The needles restore the equilibrium of the energy channels when the body is suffering imbalance through illness or harmful habits such as smoking or over-eating. Expert instruction in the physical and psychological implications is required before one undertakes the practise of any form of healing, and this also applies to other areas of occult study.

Science has attempted to explore certain phenomena such as telepathy (the transmission of thought without speech), psychokinesis (movement of objects by the power of the mind) and psychometry (deduction from an object of facts relating to its owner). The results of tests have not been conclusive, but laboratory conditions, which must inevitably induce tension, are not ideal for the production of psychic phenomena. Ufology, Earth Mysteries, ghosts and poltergeists are also subjects which could respond to scientific investigation. We do not regard scientists as The Enemy (though we may sometimes find them as annoying as they find us). We acknowledge that science has made great improvements to the quality of life; a few scientists acknowledge the aid that occult theory has given to their work.

In the study of the Occult, one must try to steer a middle course between credulous acceptance of every claim and the stultifying refusal to believe anything which cannot be personally demonstrated. However, there are many popular myths which have no part in Occultism. Vampires and werewolves are medical/psychiatric problems, not supernatural. There are mysteries at sea, but no more in that indefinable patch of Atlantic called the Bermuda Triangle than anywhere else. King Arthur was a Christian propaganda weapon, Glastonbury ditto. Most prophecies (especially the quatrains of Nostradamus) are so vague that they can be interpreted in any way that the enquirer chooses. Stonehenge was completed a thousand years before the invasion of the barbaric Celts. The Druids (Celtic priests) were primitive savages, not custodians of great wisdom. The pyramids can be measured to fit any theory or none at all. Earth's civilisations developed without the assistance of "astronaut-gods".

Blood sacrifice and drug abuse are known as "the two great taboos". Sacrifice of life, whether human or animal, is illogical; whatever deity the celebrant is invoking, this is done in the belief in that Power's creative force, so the immolation would surely offend Him rather than incline Him to aid the purpose of the ceremony. The argument that the destruction of Life is required to create the 'shock-waves' or heightened atmospheric vibrations essential to the performance of an act of Magick is no longer valid, as alternative methods have been found to be more suitable. These alternatives include what is known as Sex Magick, though this is vastly removed from the popular fantasies of an orgy. Normal sex, whether hetero- or homo-, however many people it involved, would not generate sufficient power. Regarding drugs, this is the way to delusion, not a quick and easy mystical experience. Truth does not come in a white powder.

And "here be dragons", as ancient cartographers marked the craftily-shaded unexplored areas. Strange animals inhabit this planet with us: Nessie, Yeti, Black Shriker, Sasquatch, Surrey Puma, Kraken, Bigfoot and others. My family has its own "pet", the White Wolf, who comes to guard and guide us if we must walk a lonely road at night. The bansidhe (banshee) warns of death in a specific clan. Though it seems unlikely that these creatures are mortal beings, they can, like UFO's and ghosts, be seen, heard, even felt. Time slip? Fourth Dimension? A materialised thought-form that can bite?

Reincarnation is a generally accepted belief, and many cases of 'far memory' cannot be dismissed as cryptomnesia, genetic memory, or telepathy. The inconclusive results of hypnotic regression cast doubt upon hypnosis, not upon reincarnation. Atlantis probably did exist: one of the most secretive groups claims that its abilities (which include the power of longevity, halting the ageing process of the body) are derived from Atlantean teaching.

To find a point of agreement in Occult religions, one must go back to the first principle. Something brought us in to being, and this is the greatest mystery of all. The Life Force, the infinite and incomprehensible power that is the beginning and the end of all things, cannot be personified in human terms. Mankind on Planet Earth is merely one of Its developments and it would be illogical to expect It to resemble us in form. A modern analogy could be a super-computer with access to energy sources which enable life to be produced. But Man needs a God to whom he can relate, a more sympathetic and approachable deity than this distant and inconceivable omnipotence. Therefore, Man created the Gods in his own image. This is not to say that they are false gods, for they are aspects of the Life Force.

But Occultism is not just learning strange facts and stranger theories. Knowledge is only beneficial when it can be used, and it is the use of Occult Knowledge that is called Magick. "Magick is the Science and Art of causing change to occur in conformity with Will". So Aleister Crowley, one of the most famous Magicians of modern times, defined Magick. Incidentally, Crowley added the "k", the eleventh letter of most alphabets because, numerologically, eleven is One Beyond Ten, the mystic number of Chaos. It also represents the ancient Egyptian word usually transliterated as "khu", magical power. "The number Eleven is that of force; it is therefore that of contest and so also of martyrdom" - Eliphas Levi, a French Occultist whom Crowley claimed as a previous incarnation. Magick consists of achieving the desired result by means which are not explicable within the confines of present scientific knowledge. All thinking-processes generate a form of electro-magnetic energy; it is this energy which Magick controls and directs. A very simple form of Magick is called "positive thinking" or optimism; conversely, pessimism sets up a negative current and one is therefore working Magick against oneself.

It is unfortunate that Magick and Ritual have become almost synonymous. Ritual may be needed to amplify the force of the desire and direct it to its goal. But most ritual is a beginner's ploy, however impressive it appears. A true Adept rarely needs ritual. Supposing he had to utilise Magick in an emergency - for instance, to prevent an accident. There would be no time to set up the Circle. He would simply direct a current of energy; whereas the lesser accomplished would need to use ritual as a psychological prop, to work himself into a frame of mind in which he could direct a current of energy. The first essential is to have faith in yourself. To accept the fact that you have abilities within your own body and mind which will enable you to achieve more than you at present believe possible. When an orthodox scientist pontificates about the brain, approximately 95% of which remains dormant throughout life, who would dare disbelieve him? So, when an unorthodox scientist (that is, an occultist) points out what great work that active 5% does in maintaining your life and suggests that the tremendous reserve potential could make you a super-being, why should that seemingly logical progression be unacceptable? Only because so few have the knowledge to activate the dormant brain. You do not have to set up altars to strange gods with unpronounceable names unless you want to. To discover and do your own True Will is the art of Magick and thus you must first search for that will behind the facade of false values and ambitions which we all erect. Upon analysis, most goals and ideals are revealed as illusory. "This above all, to thine own self be true".

Reviews

The question of "good" and "evil" is often raised by outsiders. After two thousand years of hate campaign by the then powerful religion of Christianity, we are naturally portrayed as "evil". In an inept attempt to counter this long-established mendacity, two neat little classifications were devised: on the Right Hand Path are the goodies, practising White Magick, and on the Left Hand Path are the baddies, practising Black Magick. The problem is that Occultists do not fit into these categories. What is good and what is evil? It depends on your own viewpoint, on your side of the fence. No-one can make definitive pronouncements because there is no central authority in the Occult. Every religion, every society, is independent, and often the fragmentation goes further. In Witchcraft, for instance, almost every coven is autonomous: there is no need for an "Inner Council" or similar eidolon because Witchcraft is the ancient faith of Britain and two thousand years' domination by an alien creed cannot suppress the inherited memory. On the other hand, Satanism appears to be a single autocratic world-wide organisation, the headquarters of which were, till recently, in Britain.

Because the orthodox religions offer no real answers, people are seeking enlightenment from alternative ways and often not finding it, especially in the recent fashion for Eastern gurus, nirvana in three easy lessons. Others who also lack the ability to seek further than the pseudo-occult publicity mongers, place their faith in mediumistic communications of platitudinous philosophy and simplistic political manifestos delivered to their leader by a "discarnate master" or a "representative of the Inter-Galactic Council". The corporate image of Occultism has hardly been worse since the establishment stopped burning us at the stake, partially due to irresponsible ego-tripping but mainly due to the media, which portrays us all as eccentric dupes led by sinister sex-maniacs and buxom blonde high-priestesses. At the lowest "occult-social-club" level, your local coven provides harmless fun, friendship, and an escape from everyday routine. At the highest level, there are a few truly powerful societies, but they are inevitably very secretive and membership is by invitation only. In the middle are the majority, seeking answers to such questions as where did we come from, how can we improve life for ourselves and others, and where do we go from here? Far from anti-social, but persecution still exists and Britain is generally regarded as being the least free country in the Western world. We are not questing for converts; we claim the right to think for ourselves, therefore it would be hypocritical to attempt to deny others that right. Most of us are willing to answer queries, though demands for death-curses and love-spells (a frequent occurrence in any clairvoyant's mail) will evoke a lecture on the ethics of free will and personal responsibility. We are neither sinister dissemblers nor selfless crusaders. Groups which insist that the philanthropic must be the only motive are deluding themselves, and the first step in Occultism was written in the Temples of ancient cultures: KNOW THYSELF. Be aware of the powers immanent in your own being. And what, if anything, you would like to do with them.

BACK ISSUES

In response to overwhelming pressure from a waiting public I have, at immense expense, and with a considerable sense of pride, reprinted the first issue of 'Common Ground', which originally came out in August 1981. It contains the original investigation by Hilary Evans of the Dyfed Enigma, Jenny Randles on her problems in compiling 'Alien Contact' and the response of families to a wide range of anomalous experiences, Sue Blackmore on Hallucinations and Illusions, and Alan Cleaver on the old-fashioned (pre-Spicom) Electronic Voice Phenomenon. Plus all the usual items. The cover is better than the original, though the finish is not quite so professional as that of recent issues. If you would like a copy, please send £1 to the usual address. The only other issue still in stock is no.4. but if you particularly want nos. 3 or 2 to be reprinted, do mention it, and I'll see what I can come up with.

The 'Common Ground' reviews section has not been contrived merely as a method of obtaining free books for the Editor and his chums. Reviews, as such, are likely to be long, and are going to have to contain some original thought and imagination rather than just being a note of the book's contents. Reviews of bad books by unknown authors will be rare, because they would only waste space; bad books by known authors, or those of whom we expect better, will appear in all their glory. Nor will reviews be limited to books alone; manufacturers of powerful philtres for the achievement of all my worldly desires please note!

INTRUSIONS; Society and the Paranormal, by Hilary Evans. Published in paperback by Routledge & Kegan Paul at £5.95. Reviewed by Hugh Pincott.

In "Intrusions" Hilary Evans examines a wide range of cases from earliest history to the present day, showing how ordinary people have regarded the paranormal in contrast with "official" attitudes, and how society as a whole has attempted to deal with happenings that are inexplicable in terms of current scientific or religious theory.

Many studies of the paranormal have foundered through failure to distinguish between "a fact and the report of a fact". While "Intrusions" delivers to us very many interesting facts (wisely, without comment as to their possible truth or explanation), the book is more concerned with society's reaction to the report of facts. And that "people believe them to be true is a matter of the greatest interest".

The author maps the course of people's exposure to alleged paranormal events, and plots the turning points in the cycles of belief. From pre-Christian myth and primitive notions, through Greek and Roman politics, by way of Mediaeval superstition, pausing at the tyrannical theocracy of the Inquisition and Witch-hunts, skirting the Reformation where "visions and miracles are ceased", we arrive in 1700 neatly at the border between abject belief (in many things) and the "age of infidelity" where public scepticism was the norm. Perhaps coincidentally, this date was also the pivotal point between the pre-scientific and the scientific eras. Now, the best minds of the time had climbed out of the bog of superstition and vague metaphysics, out of the irrational and on to the clear uplands of law and ordered thought.

But "few had any intimation of what was really happening - a new authority was being set up in place of the old." Society's response to the authorities of the day is one of the book's recurrent themes. In pre-science times magicians, shamans, and the Church demanded and received readily the respect of the rank and file, but their successors in the new age, notably scientists and medics, had to work very hard to command the respect of the populace.

Maybe this preoccupation with respectability is an important factor in explaining why the majority of scientists still refuse to look even at reports of facts. Why did T.H. Huxley, the doyen of Victorian scientists refuse vehemently to join a distinguished team to investigate Spiritualism? Or Lord Kelvin declare with equal hostility: "I believe that nearly everything in hypnotism and clairvoyance is imposture, and the rest bad observation."? Perhaps for the same reason an American astronomer recently objected "to being quizzed about this obvious nonsense" of UFO's. His colleague gives us more than a clue: "I find it tough to make a living as an astronomer these days. It would be professionally suicidal to devote significant time to UFO's."

As in the 1700's when "the professional medical establishment was in the process of consolidating its monolithic position and desperately anxious not to let slip the respectability it had at last gathered round itself", so many of today's academic parapsychologists refuse to acknowledge the potential or relevance of those fields of study which have not already been admitted to their repertoire. In the centuries between, many questions have been asked, but no answers given. Little wonder then that personalities like Harry Price captured the public imagination more than the mandarins of the S.P.R.

Hilary Evans concludes: "The failure to cope with the paranormal on society's behalf must be reckoned one of science's discreditable acts of omission - for it is not only a failure to society, to whom it is responsible for providing explanations, but also a failure to itself. In refusing the challenge of the paranormal, scientists have had to behave most unscientifically."

But if not the scientists, then who? Just as Victorian science was largely the province of the educated amateur, so it seems that in ufology, for example, "the data which we have is largely the result of private effort, the fruit of thousands of small-scale investigations by unpaid amateurs." The author observes that "all over the world, tens of thousands of self-appointed, self-trained investigators have been doing, and continue to do the scientists' job for them."

"Intrusions" is an important work, and is one of the half-dozen volumes that should be on the bookshelf of all serious students of the anomalous, be they ufologists, psychical researchers, or seekers of earth mysteries. The book examines the common thread that runs through each of our studies: it guides us and helps us to see our subject in a more clear and meaningful perspective. Written in a scholarly yet eminently readable fashion, the book includes a useful index, 142 references, and 52 superb whole-page illustrations. "Intrusions" deserves to be read widely, and it is a pity that its price might put it beyond the range of the "man in the street" from whose standpoint its theme and material is constantly judged.

CEROS TALKS FROM BEYOND; a tape of spirit guidance through Paul McElhoney. Available price £4.60p inc. p&p from Psychic News. Reviewed by Kevin McClure.

This is an intriguing item, consisting of nearly an hour of what is said to be intelligent communication from a mind and personality that has survived bodily death. A personality, indeed, that is last said to have lived on Earth near Rome in the 16th century.

While the accent of 'Ceros' is clearly not Italian, it is most certainly consistent throughout the 58 minutes of the tape - a rare event in trance talks, where the accent of the purported guide usually commences in a pidgin Canton or Mohican or Olde English (for monks) or whatever, and deteriorates after a very few minutes to the medium's normal manner of speech, changing again only at the end of the talk. It also presents coherent and reasonable material; a little twee, perhaps, and certainly not notably new or different, but acceptable and affecting in a Patience Strong sort of way. It will please and comfort many.

Unfortunately, though we have a drawing of 'Ceros' (sort of furry and jolly, rather like one of Maurice Sendak's Wild Things), I do not believe that he has any existence separate from that of Paul McElhoney's own consciousness. Indeed, I must make it clear that I cannot recall any instance in which I feel that such a separate existence has been established or verified. Certainly, there is no evidence in the tape, or in any of the written material I have seen, that would support such a contention in this case. My own view is that the 'Spirit Guide' is a form of psychological support, a way out from responsibility, from both being responsible for what is said and, and this is far more important, from coping with being able to work out and put over sound and perceptive advice. If the followers of 'guides' could consider that the medium might, on his or her own, be quite capable of imparting wisdom and advice, and be prepared to accept it in that way, then mediums might be able to avoid the unconscious need to dress up their own perceptions in the guise of those of strange, and rather unconvincing, non-human visitors.

ALIEN CONTACT: WINDOW ON ANOTHER WORLD, by Jenny Randles and Paul Whetnall. Published by Spearman at £5.25. Reviewed by Hilary Evans.

"One day, I hope we shall know what they mean" (Marion Sunderland).

It is a fact that a good many people, spanning differences of age, geographical boundaries, and socio-cultural-economic brackets, are having extraordinary experiences which they associate, rightly or wrongly, with the occupants of unidentified flying objects of extraterrestrial origin.

You and I, who have not had such experiences, may doubt whether these objects and occupants are 'real'; and if real, whether they are of extraterrestrial origin. But we cannot deny the reality, to those to whom they occur, of these experiences. Something other than hoaxes or misinterpretations of natural phenomena is triggering or causing them; and for humanitarian reasons, if for no other, we should find out what is causing so many people so much anxiety and distress.

It would seem, wouldn't it, to be a job that scientists, by vocation and training, would be best equipped to do. But they, for the greater part, don't think so. Establishment response to these reports is somewhat more intelligent and sympathetic than it used to be, the media less inclined to scoff or belittle. But it remains a fact that there is no official or quasi-official body to whom people like the Sunderland family can turn for an explanation of what is happening to them: instead, it is to the concerned amateur.

Fortunately, while amateur by definition, many UFO investigators are very knowledgeable in their field. It is arguable that no anomalous phenomena in history has been so copiously documented as the UFO, and while much of that documentation is exploitive and irresponsible, much too is sober, dedicated, and thoughtful. And few have shown themselves more aware of the depth of the UFO problem and its social relevance, than Jenny Randles, co-author of this important new book.

Consequently it is the more regrettable that the publishing climate in Britain is such that people like Jenny have no chance to give the public a proper account of the issues. In the USA the market is large enough for serious books to get published along with the trash; in France and Spain a different publishing tradition makes it possible to publish specialist books economically, heaven knows how. Here in Britain we have a worst-of-both-worlds situation in which publishers feel forced to seek a popular market for specialist books.

Paradoxically, the very fact that UFO's are a matter of wide public interest works against the publication of serious works on the subject. It has encouraged publishers to go after the mass market with irresponsible and sensational books, thus spoiling the market for serious work. So we are fobbed off with worthless, dangerous rubbish like that of Paget and Harold, or uncritical anecdotalism like that of Shuttlewood; serious writing is kept for the pages of small-circulation periodicals like MAGONIA and PROBE REPORT.

To this there have been honourable exceptions from the publishing houses of Hale and Spearman; the former published two earlier books in which Jenny was involved, the latter published this which she has co-authored with Paul Whetnall. But even here there is a pressure towards compromise, and this new book reflects the author's dilemma. It is not a bad book: it is far better than anything produced by the other writers just mentioned. But there's an uneasiness about it which reminds me of the famous portrait of the actor Garrick, torn between Tragedy - a dour matron pointing the way to heaven - and Comedy, a scantily-dressed blonde urging him towards an earthly good time.

Is it possible to write a book of this kind in a way which is both serious and popular? The success of THE UNEXPLAINED shows that there is a real, big public for authoritative accounts of matters which are sensational enough in their own right to need no further souping-up. And there are books - Fuller on the Exeter sightings and the Hill case, Fowler on Andreasson, Rogo & Druffel on Tujunga Canyon - which successfully aim at wide readership while retaining factual credibility.

Credibility is, in brief, the yardstick. When you read Paget and Harold on the 1979 Welsh sightings, or Jimmy Guieu on Cergy-Pontoise, you know things can't have happened the way they tell it. And so, reading in this book a passage like this : -
"She had no doubt. It was a UFO. 'Oh,' she thought wistfully, 'another one'. At midnight it was still there - maintaining its silent vigil", I feel my mind, ever watchful of my interests, raising a protective screen of scepticism between me and the report.

Could the authors have got round this? Yes, if they had taken note of such books as Salisbury's THE UTAH UFO DISPLAY, arguably the best account of an investigation in the literature. It's a dramatic, exciting book - yet it carries conviction from start to finish. How? Because all the witness statements are edited from tapes and presented as such, not turned into storybook narrative.

I trust the authors of the present book enough to know that they have not invented their material: I don't doubt for a moment the honesty of their intentions. I can only say that, for me at least, the first half of this book fails to carry conviction. On page 123, however, the authors change gear from narrating an extraordinary UFO case, to analysing it, and the reader finds himself in another world entirely - a world of critical analysis, of evaluation. The challenges presented by the Sunderlands' experiences are boldly faced, the various options set out lucidly and fairly. Here is our most perceptive ufologist giving us the full benefit of years of experience and study, and the result is a splendid contribution to the subject which deserves to be read carefully by anyone who is interested in anomalous phenomena, UFO's or otherwise.

For, as the authors demonstrate, the Sunderland case is much more than a UFO case: it is relevant to any and every kind of investigation of anomalies. Consequently, despite my reservations about the way the case itself is presented, I have no hesitation in urging all of us who are concerned with the anomalous, and especially with its effect on those who experience it, to study this challenging case through the eyes of these perceptive investigators.

A DICTIONARY OF GHOSTS, by Peter Haining.
Published by Hale, at £9.50p.

Reviewed by Kevin McClure.

In his time, Peter Haining has been responsible for books for which the highest form of praise would only have been "popular". This one, however, is very different, and being the sort of attractive, beautifully illustrated book liked by librarians, it will make a change from all those wretched road books of ghosts and hauntings that plague Leicestershire libraries, at least.

In 271 pages, and 136 well-chosen illustrations, Haining runs alphabetically through many of the most important cases and individuals in the area of spontaneous visual phenomena, clearly delineating and explaining what is fake, or dubious, and what remains genuinely unexplained. Of particular worth is his determination to provide, wherever possible, suggestions for further reading on each subject.

Since I received this book I have found it particularly useful in explaining aspects of our subject to interested non-experts, and it has proved extremely popular. That is not to say that all the photos are well-known; there are several that were new to me.

Even if you cannot afford this book in its present format, at least try to ensure that your local library has one; you will be doing a number of casual readers, and our own hopes of respectability, a service.

MIRACLES. A PARASCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO WONDROUS PHENOMENA, by D. Scott Rogo.
Published by Dial Press, New York at \$17.95. Reviewed by Kevin McClure.

Except for one flaw, almost inevitable in Rogo's recent work, this is a thoroughly excellent book, better than most of his forays into popular ufology. Divided into three main sections - Miraculous Talents, Miraculous Events, and Miraculous interventions - it further subdivides to cover in general a number of classical, religious-based, personal phenomena; these include levitation, stigmata, and bilocation. He also includes physical phenomena, such as the appearance of divine images, statues that bleed and madonnas that weep, and the apparently visual manifestations of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In addition, there is an impressive section on miraculous healing, and a selection of more detailed case studies; 'The Miraculous Hailstones of Remiremont', 'The Miracle of Saint Januarius', and the EVM appearances at Garabandal and Zeitoun'. Parascientific is a good word for its style and approach; clear analysis without forced or unnecessary obscurity.

Of course, there are few of us to whom all these subjects will be strange: they have been the substance of several excellent books of the past decade, including Clark & Coleman's 'The Unidentified', and Rogo's own 'Haunted Universe'. It is not a work of great originality, and we cannot expect it to be. It owes a great deal to Herbert Thurston, to Eric Dingwall, to Bob Rickard, Fodor, Summers, and a good many others. It says much for Rogo's integrity that full and thorough references are given throughout, not only to established authors, but even down to our own efforts on the Welsh Lights!

The book's particular strength lies in its clarity and its completeness. While not attempting to present an exhaustive analysis of every case - and this is an area where subjective responses often substitute for objective reporting - it will meet the highest requirements of 95% of its readers. I would go so far as to say that there is not much point any of the rest of us trying to improve on what Rogo has produced here. In a field of enquiry as vast as ours, we need to recognise when we should be satisfied; formal lab. research into psi could have been treated that way many years ago, and we would have missed nothing notable.

Rogo writes, as always, very well, with respect for our intelligence, and for the sensitivity of religious material; in most areas, this book shows every sign of thorough comparative research using, and presenting, a range of interpretations and explanations for each important case. He also reaffirms his belief in what I might call, 'the continuity of phenomena' - that such things have always occurred, but that the manner and style of their occurrence change and adapt in accordance with their geographical, social, and historical location. He presents strong evidence to support the idea.

The flaw that I mentioned does not detract from the strength of the book. It is, simply, another example of Rogo's tendency (encouraged, no doubt, by his publishers) to attempt to come to a clear and impressive conclusion based on the hugely complex and often contradictory material included in the book; the one simply does not seem to support the other, and it is regrettable that a more Fortean - or inconclusive - approach to the final chapters of books of this kind cannot be permitted by publishers or accepted by a popular readership. I have recently heard from Jerry Clark as to his opinion of the presentation of the 'Phenomenon' theory in the books with which he has been associated, and it is a very low opinion indeed; I can only presume that a researcher so broadly competent as Rogo clearly is must also wince when he sees in print the sort of wishful theorising that ends this book. Writing of 'The Phenomenon' as a source of creation, change, and power, he concludes; -

"Now, one could reasonably point out that this might well be a description of God. That would indeed be a difficult point to argue".

It sure would.

★★★★★★★★★★

RESEARCH PROJECT

Jenny Randles

I am very grateful to those few readers who responded to my research proposal in CG3, supplying personal coincidences of their own and a few ideas too. But I would like all readers to continue (and a few more to contribute, too!) Whenever something 'coincidental' happens, write it down and send it to me at; 8, WHITE THROAT WALK, BIRCHWOOD, CHESHIRE, WA3 6PQ.

What have we learnt so far? Well, I think we have reached the stage of isolating six categories of coincidence, which is something! There may well be others, of course. The number of coincidences I have recorded in the first four months of the project (certainly compared with all those readers have sent) suggests that unless I am something extraordinary (which I trust not!) then many of you must be letting coincidences from these six categories slip by, without recalling them, recording them, and sending them in. So please try to do so.

Let us take a brief look at the six categories so far isolated. I can do no more than sketch them, pose a few questions about them, and give brief illustrations. The file is still expanding.

TYPE ONE . . . in reverence to Jung I will call synchronistic. These seem to be simple (but puzzling) juxtapositions of events in time and space, which have no obvious causality.

The actual publication of my CG article provided one! For Robert Anton Wilson published an article on this same unusual subject (in SCIENCE DIGEST) within a few weeks. But here is a really baffling synchronicity involving myself;

Our family had an 11-year old Alsatian cross who was deeply loved. On January 25th. we had just discovered he was very ill, suffering from severe heart trouble. The vet told us it was only a matter of time, but he had been put on tablets and stabilised the week before. At about 7.30p.m. he began to worsen (in fact he almost died that night, keeping us up all night, and did die within a few weeks). At 7.45p.m. I got a call from Brenda Butler, a UFO investigator in East Anglia. We had hardly ever communicated before, or since. We discussed a case and then suddenly she cried out, "I have an emergency I have to go to". Two hours later she called back and apologised. Her 9-year old Alsatian had suffered a severe heart attack. This was something that had occurred previously, but her condition was being temporarily controlled by tablets. She had a sudden attack that night but had been brought round by medication. The obvious conjunction of events here was, to me, awesome. The only idea I can suggest is that Brenda said to me, "I don't know what I would do if I lost her (the dog)". The emotional bond between us and our dogs may, perhaps, have had something to do with the otherwise 'coincidental' link between Brenda and I that night It is as if we were both just parts of a greater whole (a kind of collective consciousness, if you like) linked at such a subtle level that we do not normally perceive it. Is this how such remarkable events can be explained? One or two in this category on the file already are mind-boggling.

TYPE TWO . . . I call idea reinforcements. These really follow on from the first type and cover situations where some idea is reinforced into the collective consciousness by several 'individuals' expressing it at the same time. In this sense the coincidence of 'coincidence articles', already mentioned, is probably best regarded as a type two coincidence, really.

I have noted this kind of thing so often in my paranormal research. Almost every time I have an idea I think is original someone else comes up with it too. It really is as if an idea appears when its time is right. And when that time is right (in some collective unconscious sense beyond the threshold of our rules of normal happenings) several people (who may be linked like Brenda and I were by being in the same frame of mind) pick it like fish from a pool and express it into our consciousness. It makes one feel that there is a much more fundamental reality underlying our dull 'normal' world within which we all live. At times we do, as I said, fish in the pool of this reality.

A number of examples from traditional science exist (such as the simultaneous 'coincidental' discovery by two astronomers of the planet Neptune - the astrological symbol of collective consciousness, incidentally!) But here is a nice little simple anecdote;

In an issue of NORTHERN UFO NEWS last year I wrote an editorial comparing Frank Johnson's book about an Oxfordshire UFO abduction (The Janos People) with Arthur Koestler's impressive book about man - in which he discusses UFO's for the first time - called Janus. I suggested the link was more than coincidence. Andrew Pickering, editor of LINCOLNSHIRE DRAGON, a journal of the paranormal, apparently decided his appetite was whetted and went to his library to find the book. It was there alright, Janus (despite having a different Dewey classification) sat cover to cover on the shelf with my own UFO's; A British Viewpoint! Andrew took the hint, read Janus, and found the concepts in it of value. This seems to be how idea reinforcement works, and if the same kind of thing had not occurred to me more than once I might be startled.

TYPE THREE . . . I call manipulative. Again, there is a clear overlap with the previous type of coincidence as Andrew was presumably 'manipulated' into reading the book. But this covers a more general kind of phenomenon where something seemingly beyond our personal consciousness leads us to a person or place we wish to find. Stephanie Bishop told me of several such experiences she has had. For example;

Some of her friends told her once that they had a visitor from America at their meditation centre and that visitor would have liked to have met Stephanie. Four years later Stephanie was staying at a community across the other side of Britain when she was moved to sit at a table with some strangers and join a discussion about astrology. After a while the conversation turned to communities and the Americans amongst those at the table mentioned Stephanie's friends. Immediately each introduced the other and were delighted at having established contact so coincidentally but was it really so coincidental? I doubt it.

TYPE FOUR . . . is what I call telepathic coincidences. Most of the coincidences included in my CG3 article were of this form and they are probably the most common. The fact that they occur so often in dream states must be significant. These are situations in what may, in one sense, be termed coincidence, because later events coincide with dreamed events, really be an example of dream precognition of that event. In my 1982 experiments I have so far recorded three clear examples of personal precognition in this fashion, to add to many others I have had. It appears to me to be a fact that these things take place, and cannot be explained by conventional science or the laws of chance. For example;

On January 19th. I awoke at 7a.m. in a doze, and recall my father saying, "The cats have gone out!" as he left for work. I fell back asleep and had a dream in the long dream-sleep stage I saw myself climbing winding stairs and finding a cat at the top. I then went out on to a balcony and sat on a wall that I 'knew' was perched very high above the ground. On this was a black cat. I was worried by the height and tried to persuade the cat to jump to me. It did. End of dream. Clearly a dream stimulated by recall of my father's words (although he says them many mornings, or else "The cats are in", less often, just to advise me of the position regarding them).

At 9a.m. I got out of bed to let the cats in. Our black cat was on the roof of a house opposite. On top of this roof is a row of bricks like a wall. The cat had never been on the roof of a two-storey house before. We live in a bungalow, and previous to moving to Warrington had lived in a community of bungalows. It was not something I had ever even considered, this cat being one who is good at heights; the other cat, who did not go on the roof, is a bad climber. I frequently have to balance precariously to rescue him from the roof of the bungalow now! The emotional as well as factual tie-in here is interesting.

This experience actually illustrates what I think is a vital tip in the search for paranormal dreams. I have found that they happen to me most often in situations such as this, where I waken briefly, fall immediately back to sleep for an hour or so and then waken fully. This is partly because the stage of sleep towards the end of the night - ie. 6 or 7a.m. - has the longest period of REM (Rapid Eye Movement) activity, during which dreams occur. This means a dream of about an hour's duration can take place, making it easier to recall on awaking. The surfacing into consciousness (where stimuli can be half-picked up - such as my father's parting words) facilitates a spin-off dream from these and, it would appear, a state of 'half-awake - half-asleep' consciousness (possibly hypnopompic) where time jumping is easier. Try it. Set your alarm clock for ninety minutes before you ought to get up (it's easier at weekends). Let it wake you, then fall back asleep after turning on the radio for a few seconds (to give you a stimulus to work on). Record the dream you have on waking. I think a few of you might be rather surprised!

TYPE SIX . . . the final kind of coincidence I call timeloops. So far I have only one example, but it is truly fascinating. In some respects it is a follow-on from precognition; but it is not quite precognition, as this illustration from London reader Simon Rothwell shows;

In late 1980 Simon was having a series of talks with a psychotherapist. He advised Simon to record his dreams after the first session. The most vivid one Simon had was as follows. He was looking at the underside of his own arm and hand and noticed a long white scar running all the length of the forearm. A pronounced blue vein ran parallel with this. Next time the psychoanalyst requested Simon's dreams, and he told of this one. "Could this be what you saw in your dream?", Simon was asked, at which the psychoanalyst pulled up his sleeve and displayed the precise scar and blue vein of which Simon had dreamed!

Of course, this raises many questions. Simon says that in his dream he was certain the arm was his own; so it was not a straight precognition. And, of course, we do have a time-loop here. For had Simon not dreamed about the scene he would not have caused the doctor to reveal his arm to him. A marvellous chicken and egg situation to throw all you theoretical paranormalists out there into a tizzy!

Do I have an answer to this puzzle? I can suggest one which Lyall Watson proposed. What if the mind actually creates reality? In other words our consciousness does not perceive what is there, it moulds what is there into being. So Simon's dream effectively manipulated reality and created the scar on the arm of the doctor. Of course, you ask "How can this be?" There either was, or was not, a scar. But quantum mechanics (the physics of the eighties which is threatening to do to traditional science what Darwin did to the Old Testament) actually predicts just this. Both realities would exist. Our consciousness may be capable of shifting us into the reality which suits the occasion, like a train crossing a complex junction of points. Read Dr. Paul Davie's super book OTHER WORLDS (Abacus, 1982).

I had better not get bogged down in theoretics or I will consume the rest of these pages, but your own thoughts on the issues raised would be useful to the project. And I think the time is right to extend the range of what we are doing. Since the various types seem to blend in to one another, and since

precognition clearly has a role to play and may manifest in coincidence studies, let us begin an ASSAP Disaster Premonitions Bureau. Here is what I want you to do.

When you have a very vivid dream of a disaster that you think may (just may) relate to a future disaster in the real world (fires and plane crashes are good bets to look out for on my own limited experience) then IMMEDIATELY write the details down. Do not bother about personal events since they are hard to verify. Stick with dreams about world events or national disasters. Get someone to read it and co-sign that they have done so, then post it RIGHT AWAY to me at the address given at the start of this article. The postmark (which I will keep) will be evidence of precognition, as will the countersignature that you have obtained. It will be interesting to see if we really can build up substantive evidence of disaster precognition. You may find that many of you do have precognitive dreams without realising it. And, of course, we may just be able to see something important coming. I doubt if we can stop it happening - but it is worth trying.

To conclude, I will describe a curious dream of mine from March 5th. which may have been a subtle hint by my subconscious about solutions to these problems. In the language only dreams can emulate, here is what I got;

I dreamed that I had been dreaming, and had awoken to consciously remember those dreams. In my dream that I was dreaming I was remembering that I had been remembering my dreams!

If that did not make too much sense to you, well, it does not to me either. This is how I wrote it down immediately after it had happened, when my still semi-active dream consciousness clearly was more able to interpret it than I can in my waking state. But it was rather like the picture an artist does of a scene, which has to include himself painting the picture, and so on; an infinite regress. Maybe there is something in this after all. The only dream, in the dream of a dream, that I can recall, is of picking up a book called ALIEN and throwing it away in disgust. What was this telling me? That we look for answers outside of ourselves, when the secrets of the universe are inside our heads? I wonder.

Please, keep that data flowing in!

AN ARTICLE ABSTRACT

I am very grateful to Dennis Bury for the idea of asking contributors of work for which I cannot find space in "Common Ground" to provide a brief abstract along with their address, so that any readers who would like to read the article or report concerned can send an s.a.e. to the author for loan of same. The following abstract is of "Science, Philosophy and the Psychic" by John Best, Ph.D.

The common negative intellectual attitude toward the psychic is traced to its scientific origins, and it is shown that the recent quantum developments in science totally undermine this attitude. For lack of exact acquaintance with these developments the attitude persists uncorrected. The author stresses the role of energy in the new physics. Moreover he subjects the new standpoint to a logical critique that finds its inspiration in Plato's analysis of sense perception. The modern physical outlook withstands the test, whereas the older physics fails.

A logical development of Plato's analysis then exposes mind and matter as different but not totally unrelated fundamental entities - and mind as something falling in the general category of energy. This extension allows of the mind-matter interaction to be understood, and on a quantum mechanical footing. It is thus shown that science - contrary to popular and mistaken idea - does not negate human survival, rather it provides the clue to understanding survival.

Write to; Dr J.E.Best, White Gables, Wallingford Road, South Stoke, Oxon. RG8 0HY.

LETTERS

From Peter Rogerson.

As a local history librarian, I cannot share Vernon Harrison's faith in the claims for 'drop-in communicators'. He appears to believe that national and local archives and local history libraries are hidden sleepy places, inhabited only by frock-coated librarians, and grey bearded sages. The reality is quite different, as all these records are in constant use by the thousands of people engaged in the fascinating hobby of family history. Yes, documents often have to be asked for, but that presents no problem, and in many libraries and record offices directories, printed parish registers and many general histories are freely available on the shelves.

The fraudulent medium out to fabricate a 'drop-in communication' has a far easier task than the person tracing their ancestors. He or she can pick up information at random from numerous different sources. For example they could go to St. Catherine's House, get the death certificate, for a few pounds, of someone who died in their locality soon after a census year, go back to the nearest large library, look up the census, check on death notices, etc., and can soon build up a nice biography. There are numerous secondary sources available from which again names can be taken at random, and where the task of discovering the exact source of pieces of information by a subsequent investigator is well-nigh impossible.

Now it is true that the task of doing this would have been somewhat more difficult during the 1940's, when the bulk of drop-in communications by Alan Gauld are alleged to have occurred (PSPR vol.55 p.204), and it might well have been rather more difficult for the average citizen to get hold of records. But the chief protagonist in this affair was a local government officer of sufficient rank to have his own secretary. In those days, at least, the sort of person who would have greater than average access to a library's archives department.

When critically examined the whole affair looks decidedly odd. I pass over the extraordinary claim that an educated man with his own secretary had 'never heard of Crockford's' (p.297), but note the presence of such danger signs of fraud as direct voice, cabinet and trumpet, and the tendency of the phenomena to diminish when outside investigators arrived on the scene.

The communications themselves strongly suggest that the information is being taken from printed or written sources, even to typographical errors - 'Biedermann' for 'Biedermann' for example (p.309). My immediate suspicion as a source of both the typo and the obscure first name 'Gustav', of which much is made, is a catalogue card for one of his books, compiled by a known-all cataloguer. Vernon Harrison makes much of the case of Harry Stockbridge, but makes several errors in doing so. He says that the information was "found scattered among several records, all old and difficult of access". In fact, as far as they could be traced from records the facts found came from just two, a school roll of honour and local papers, with a strong probability that all the information could have come from an as yet unearthed source; and that as the official record got Stockbridge's date of death wrong, where did the correct date of death come from? Answer - school roll of honour, or local papers.

The apparent difficulties presented by these cases are caused by the fact that the checker constantly finds that he is evaluating the problems from his own perspective of trying to find information about a given obscure personality, and not the medium's, of using information gathered at random about people.

From John Best.

Dr. Harrison has, in his article "Credo", served the cause of progress admirably: an elegant article and a vitalising breath of fresh air.

There exists a most definite sense in which it is true to say the vehicle of psychic research has left the track and come to a wheel-spinning halt. It is no accident that this has happened; and it is right that Dr. Harrison should take into account the Victorian background of thought and belief which, pursued, has led at large not to paradise but to sour disillusionment. There is no going back to the Middle Ages and the time of faith. Since then the world has committed itself to knowledge; but, as Solzhenitsyn emphasised in his recent Harvard speech, the entire humanistic and materialistic view of man's existence and purpose on earth simply does not work. So, if this knowledge is unreliable, what will lead us on? Solzhenitsyn, at the end of his speech, confidently anticipated the inspiration of a new dimension of self understanding - that transcends the material.

Against this statement I note, with the greatest interest, Dr. Harrison's assertion how restarting the quest of psychic discovery, and so looking for the ultimate truths concerning human being, we must enlist the aid of the communicators themselves. Like that, he avers, we shall probably be embarking upon a quest which is "the most important that man has ever contemplated". I am certain this is right.

Dr. Harrison is right, too, in reminding us of the words of Arthur James Balfour. Embracing the scientific materialism which was our inheritance at the start of the century, and dazzled by its achievements, we have fallen into the religious form of error that worships a new realisation of truth as though it were total truth: and so was free of all that is not-truth. New realisations are not free in that way. If we permit them to lure us into acceptance of the false as acceptance of the truth, then - the truth being essentially coherent - we must inevitably deny so much of what otherwise could impinge as a vital realisation of yet further truth; we build for ourselves only a tomb.

It is because of the misapprehension lying at the base of materialistic thinking that workers in the psychic field have felt the necessity to invent hypotheses of the most incredible kind in explanation of the facts of psychic research. Dr. Harrison has earned the thanks of all by his critical and masterly review of these hypotheses in relation to the evidence - in which review such notions palpably wither away.

That I hold the philosophy of scientific materialism in scant regard is not to be discounted by saying I am not a scientist; I am, by training and long practice. Rather, were I so accused, I would accuse my accusers themselves of failing to know the developments that have overtaken physical science these past fifty years - or of not perceiving the implications of these developments. The new physics has replaced the old for the simple reason that it can explain on a vast scale physical facts before which the old physics could merely stand impotent. This highly competent new physics entirely subverts the thought patterns that inspired the outlook of scientific materialism. Moreover, I am satisfied that it adopts a form of fundamental thinking which, so far from requiring any suggestion of human survival to be set on one side, is not only sympathetic to survival but is cooperative in helping psychical phenomena in this context actually to be understood.

We are at the stage of correcting past misconceptions - and are poised for momentous advance.

From Cynthia Bach.

As I have only just read CG 3 & 4, you will understand why it is sometime after their issue that I have put pen to paper by way of comment on subjects discussed by various writers.

Firstly, for Jenny Randles to state so categorically that there is not evidence for the survival of death is indicative that she has not perhaps looked in the way that could give more satisfaction. This information can be sought on other levels (and just as valid ones) than that of the every-day mind. This subject is vast and with so many implications that there will not be room here to go further, unless someone wishes to know more in future.

Secondly, the otherwise excellent article by Vernon Harrison speaks scathingly of E.S.P. and "Super E.S.P." as only sporadic and unreliable. Again, further research could show otherwise. I can give two small examples of personal experience which may be E.S.P. - may be communication. I am not too certain what category they may fit into - but they were accurate.

For the past year my husband and I have been asked to give philosophy and clairvoyance at local Spiritualist meetings. As I feel the quality of the philosophy and teaching that my husband gives is of a very high standard, I have attempted to give the clairvoyance in the manner which I feel gives the best results for me; or rather, the best information to the recipients. That being so - and I do not class myself as a brilliant clairvoyant or as one working with "Spirit Guides" - I make use of meditation several days beforehand and extend my mind to the meeting hall where we are shortly to visit. I visualise the seating layout and am drawn in meditation to people (90% of whom I will not know) and the positions they will occupy. This method has worked well, and information has had pretty consistent accuracy. Twice, however I have, in a dream (or certainly while asleep) seen a person where they will sit, and relevant accurate information for them. The first experience was the sensation of a lady whose legs were badly burned, and she seemed to impress me so strongly that I felt the burns myself. It was indicated that this was for a gentleman in a certain place in the hall (I had not been to this particular hall before), and indeed he accepted this lady as being his mother to whom this accident had happened.

The other incident was of seeing (in the 'dream') a little girl wearing a yellow dress, having died at the age of 7 - 8 years. Although on this occasion I was familiar with the meeting hall, I had never seen the recipient before, and once again her position had been precisely shown. She told me that the little girl had died two days before her eighth birthday. These facts can be confirmed by a number of people.

The "pattern" of coincidence (?) of these events could well be worth researching, as mentioned by Jenny Randles in CG 3; it would need a great deal of work, going into many levels of what at first sight could be judged as "unscientific" type phenomena. When one realises through accumulation of these phenomena that a picture is being built up of what man is on many levels, and that many facts of hitherto "unproven" understanding, one is faced with the fact that we know very, very little about the deeper side to our lives, and our universe, and our spiritual knowledge.



It has always surprised me that the works and theories of Velikovsky command such a degree of interest among students of the paranormal; it concerns neither spontaneous nor mental phenomena, and appears to have no real relationship with any other of our interests, except in that it is regarded as having been in some way repressed by 'the establishment'. Actually, I have remained unimpressed by what I have read of Velikovsky, and find his conclusions only loosely relate to logic, common-sense or, indeed, the evidence. Nonetheless, its place in our field is firmly established (possibly because belief in it possesses some sort of quality of the anomalous) and I can do nothing to change that now. I am, therefore, happy to welcome John Grant's contribution to this issue, an extended review of The Reversing Earth by Peter Warlow, Dent, 1982. £8.95p.

Not such a Tippe-Top idea John Grant

Velikovskianism seems all set to make a sudden resurgence into popular awareness again after a decline over the past decade or so. Moreover, the neo-Velikovskians are - refreshingly - beginning to apply some of the tools of science in their arguments: such knotty subjects as physics and mathematics are beginning to make their appearance. Unfortunately, they are doing so alongside all the inherited pseudo-science and woolly thinking, the pretentious massing of obscure and unreliable (and unreliably dated) data, which have traditionally marked Velikovskianism off from most more 'orthodox' science.

Most readers will be familiar with the primary thesis of the late Immanuel Velikovsky (1895-1979); here is a crash course for those who aren't. In its simplest form, as expressed in Velikovsky's first published book, Worlds in Collision (1950), the notion is that some 3,500 years ago the planet Venus was born as a comet, spat from a volcano on the planet Jupiter. This comet lurched around the solar system before settling into its current orbital position; most notably, it had several close encounters with the Earth, causing great upheavals, dividing the Red Sea, spattering the landscape with flaming petroleum, and in general making life sheer hell for our ancestors.

Worlds in Collision produced an over-reaction from the scientific establishment - at times almost a hysterical one - for the simple reason that Velikovsky had cast his net far and wide in search for supporting evidence for his theory: since no scientist was prepared to sit down and do a comparable amount of research in order to demolish a theory which seemed so patently to be a load of rubbish, they all simply cried 'Rubbish' and stamped their feet. (However, astronomers noted that, while the astronomy was nonsensical, the archaeology seemed pretty convincing; and the archaeologists similarly liked the astronomy, but thought the archaeology stank.) This has had two unfortunate effects. Firstly it has led to the Velikovskians being able to establish the superficially plausible claim that there is some kind of vendetta against them - and against 'the master'. Secondly, the furore obscured the fact that Velikovsky was making two important points - that there have occurred catastrophes in the past (an idea pooh-poohed by some disciplines until recent years), and that we may be able to find clues to the nature of these in ancient writings, oral legends, and the like. The flaws in his reasoning were, of course, that his imagined catastrophes were, to say the least, of a fanciful nature, and that it is all very well to derive clues from oral legends, but quite another to use them as a means of overturning the conclusions of extensive and accurate research.

Peter Warlow's The Reversing Earth is in many ways the most interesting neo-Velikovskian book I have come across - a lot more interesting than 'the master's' work, for a start. He is concerned to prove that, in the last 13,000 years or so, the Earth has flipped over on its axis some five times; in his argument he employs the conventional Velikovskian techniques and, indeed, a deal of the traditional Velikovskian lore.

Turning over spinning objects like planets is a difficult task in the ordinary way. Anyone who has played with a gyroscope will know that the object displays a distinct aversion to being turned upside down, and the spinning Earth can in many ways be viewed as a gyroscope. But Warlow points out, quite correctly, that such an inversion would not fit some of the recorded legends, which stress that in the past the Sun rose in the West; then came the catastrophe; then the Sun rose in the East, as it still does today. Simply turning over the 'gyroscope' would not affect the Sun's rising in the East. (If you have a ball to hand you may find it helpful to play with it to see what I mean.)

Warlow therefore draws our attention to a toy called the tippe-top. This looks rather like an apple with a fat stem - you've probably had one in your cracker at Christmas in the last few years. The tippe-top has two delights. Firstly, if you spin it on the table, 'stalk' upwards, it quite quickly flips itself over and spins upside down, balancing on the 'stalk'. But the really exciting thing is that, as the toy does so, the direction of spin is not affected; if the initial spin was clockwise, looked at from above, the final spin, with the toy inverted, is also clockwise - exactly the opposite of what 'common-sense' would expect. Moreover, the tippe-top is only too keen to flip over, unlike the gyroscope.

Here, Warlow tells us, is an easy way to turn the Earth over - and one in better accord with the legends than the probably impossible straightforward one. Problems arise, though, if you start thinking of what is actually happening to the tippe-top. The mathematics - and, indeed, the physics - of the situation are difficult; but we can note that the tippe-top has a table to rest on and interact with, and that it is operating in a relatively powerful, steady gravitational field. Unfortunately for Warlow, there aren't any tables in space for the Earth to interact with, and no immediately obvious powerful gravitational field.

The first point he ignores, the second he attempts to deal with by invoking Velikovskian events. In one of the sillier parts of the book - in stark contrast to some of the more sober and intellectually stimulating stuff - he suddenly announces that Velikovsky was probably right in his ideas about the origins of planets: big planets like Jupiter were spat from the Sun, and little ones like Earth were spat from the big ones like Jupiter. Since he is here attempting to provide a causative agent for Earth-flipping, and without a causative agent the whole theory becomes . . . er . . . superfluous, it is astonishing that this aspect receives only scant treatment, in the concluding pages of the book. Moreover, his supporting evidence is sketchy, to say the least. He points to the fact that quasars have jets of material emerging from their cores (he omits to mention that only some quasars have these jets), and says that stars and big, gassy planets may behave analogously; but quasars (galaxies with highly energetic cores) are different objects in every respect from stars and planets, and the jets of material associated with them seem certainly to shoot out from the rotational poles and to keep travelling that way, as opposed to the situation were planets to play cosmic billiards, in which case they would have to shoot out equatorially from their larger 'parents'. Warlow points out, too, that most novae (exploding stars) seem to have left us with two stars in orbit round each other - another analogy with spat-out planets - although he fails to mention that most stars are members of binary pairs, anyway.

There are other problems with the interplanetary-billiards scenario. For a planet of Earth-mass, like Venus, (a considerably greater mass than that of a comet, by the way) to have an effect on the Earth as appreciable even as that of the moon, it would have to pass within a distance of about 2,500,000 miles of us. Now the Earth's orbit is of length about 5,800,000 miles, so Venus would only have about one chance in 115 or so of having even this effect upon our planet, per transit of our planet's orbit. (This assumes Venus is travelling in exactly the same plane as the Earth's orbit; since it probably wouldn't be, the odds against rise interestingly - but let's be charitable. At the same time, let's note that Venus would probably have to travel more or less directly 'underneath' the Earth for the tippe-top effect to work - assuming the 'table' . . .). These odds aren't very good. If we allow Venus, say, five transits of the Earth's orbit before settling down, the odds against it having even the moon's effect on us are still about 25:1 against.

And this leads me to the question: where are all the planets? If the Earth has flipped five times in 13,000 years this implies, on average, a close cosmic miss on average every 2,600 years; but only one new-born planet in 25 will come anywhere near us! So new planets must be popping out from somewhere every century, and must have been doing so throughout most of the Solar System's history. There must be tens of millions of them out there!

There are other howlers in this book, some of them essential to Warlow's argument, some of them not. There is a certain naivety about the way in which he thinks large-scale glaciation works, and a similar innocence of the way in which sedimentary rocks are laid down, and fossils formed. In the latter context, he makes much of the discovery in 1976 of a virtually complete fossil whale arranged vertically in a diatomaceous deposit: how come, he says, the whale rained down around it - and, moreover, didn't rot the while? (Diatoms are unicellular marine creatures; their corpses can make up large sediments.) The flaw in the ointment is, of course, that in places on the ocean bottom deep diatomaceous ooze build up: a well-aimed whale can be stuck into such an ooze, being submerged very swiftly, all nice and neat for becoming a fossil. (More likely, the whale went horizontally into the ooze, and the compacted sediments were later moved through 90 degrees by folding or faulting.)

There are simplistic ideas, too, about the physicist's notion of entropy, about the nature of electromagnetic forces, and about the evolution of mythology - this last being perhaps the most important. Warlow points out that many oral legends change little over many generations. He ignores the fact that they can change very swiftly in the early days. An example of this is in his book, in fact. We're probably all familiar with the celebrated case of the Piri Re'is map, dating from the early 16th. century and, according to von Daniken and the rest, showing parts of the southern hemisphere with fantastic accuracy . . . including, it's claimed, the true coastline of Antarctica, as if the snows had melted. Warlow, in the middle of a discussion of civilisations dating from long before the ones we know about (these cultures, including Atlantis, were wiped out in catastrophic Earth-flips), cites the legend of this fabulous map. The map's accuracy is indeed 'fantastic', as Warlow would have noticed had he looked at it: it has the Amazon in twice, for example, and the 'coastline' it shows for Antarctica is quite unlike the real one. In short, the legend of the map's accuracy was greatly exaggerated in the early years after its discovery (more accurately, its analysis and popularisation in 1966), and is now handed down, in a static form, much as are the oral legends.

I mentioned the Velikovskian claim that there is some sort of vendetta by 'orthodox' scientists against them. This paranoia surfaces often in this book: virtually all scientists are uniformitarians, we're told, by which is meant that they don't believe in catastrophic events. There was a dogma of uniformitarianism until a few decades ago, but it seems to have died - and quite right too! Nowadays astronomers talk happily of impacting comets causing extinctions like that

of the dinosaurs; physicists and cosmologists are more interested in violent events (e.g. supernovae - stars exploding with very big bangs - and their remnants) than in virtually anything else; the heart of large-scale geology is plate tectonics, an inherently violent process (it gives us earthquakes and volcanism); planetary scientists are crucially interested in catastrophic phenomena (e.g. meteoritic impacts); environmental scientists are interested in runaway greenhouse effects . . . and so on, and on, and on. Warlow seems unaware of much of this shift, and so in many boring parts of his book drags out those old bugaboos, the uniformitarians, suggests they're still going strong, and belabours them. It's an old trick of pseudoscientific writers - ascribe idiotic opinions to your opponents, and then say they're idiotic, on the basis that then anyone who opposes your ideas is necessarily an idiot, too - and it does Warlow little credit that he has resorted to it so frequently.

In light of the above - and I could fill several pages with further criticisms - it may seem strange that I'd recommend this book to you. But, at its best, it is extremely intellectually stimulating; parts of it I thoroughly enjoyed reading. Some of Warlow's reasoning is very interesting indeed, and should be carefully thought about before being dismissed. They say that Fred Hoyle has played an important part in cosmology because so much has been learned in the process of 'proving Fred wrong'; the same applies, to a much lesser extent, to this book. I found myself having to think really hard about my understanding of the various phenomena involved, and in doing so I learned a lot; I think any reasoning reader would find the same.

That said, there is one moment of high hilarity which I must share. The Pythagoreans had a cosmology in which the Earth and the planets orbited the Sun, and the Sun itself orbited a 'central fire' of some kind. Or, at least, that is the conventional explanation. Warlow reinterprets the system, to tell us that the Pythagoreans were really saying that the planets, including the Sun, all orbited this 'central fire', which he says was another sun. (Such systems may exist in the Universe.) The other sun, he suggests, may really have existed, because the ancients weren't clots. He identifies it with what is now the planet Saturn.

Saturn's a bit small, these days - but I suppose it could once have been a star, only it went supernova. But had this been the case the lethal radiation would have sterilised the Earth - the least of the problems, actually, because the bang would have vapourised our planet. The Pythagoreans might not have survived this particular catastrophe.

To be fair, Warlow presents it only as a hypothesis

END TIMES BULLETIN

The end of June 1982 will see the publication of the first issue of a new journal, the 'End Times Bulletin'. Running to about 16 pages, it will be devoted to recording and analysing the output of the wide variety of 'last days' and millennial movements that are becoming increasingly numerous all over the world. Predictions and prophecies of various concepts of the physical or spiritual 'end of the world', and of the return or intervention of a variety of religious and pseudo-religious figures have been given over a period of hundreds of years. As we approach the year 2000 we are meant to be close to, or even within, the timespan most often given for the fulfilment of these prophecies. 'End Times Bulletin' will be edited by Kevin McClure, and if you wish to receive the first two quarterly issues, please send £1 to 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester. Any news items, old prophecies you know have come true, or other relevant material will be very gratefully received, and credited in print. More news next issue.

Closing Remarks

Yet again, a particular issue of 'Common Ground' seems to have developed its own private approach to the paranormal; in this case, by concentrating in large part, not on spontaneous phenomena as objective experiences, but on the role of the individual, not only in responding to experiences, but in helping to make them happen. Indeed, in initiating their occurrence. This is a little odd, because I, who chooses what appears here, normally shy away from that aspect of our subject, preferring the safety of general scepticism, with the occasional admission that one or another particular case may be, at best, 'genuinely unidentifiable' or 'inexplicable'. Meanwhile, I am happy to believe in all sorts of things like survival and PK and reincarnation (sometimes) and in the ability of a middle-aged Welsh evangelist to send balls of white light buzzing round the skies of North Wales ten years before the First World War! I'm hardly alone in this contradiction - it is in the finest traditions of the Society for Psychical Research, at least - but it is still something of a puzzle to me. I suppose it is all a matter of intellectual honesty but I wonder how many of us, given the opportunity, and a guarantee that it would work - would join a circle to develop with a medium an ability to communicate with the dead? And how many of us would rather stand back and observe? And why? Is the ability to perceive what we describe as paranormal really an emotionally-based one? And are we, in saying that we are being scientific, really refusing to put into our research the element of emotional commitment and belief - trust, even - that could make all the difference. I do respect Alan Cleaver for his outspoken decision on Spiricom.

I have said before, in CG2, that all is not financially well with a number of the leading organisations concerned with paranormal and anomaly research all over the world. Faced with the problem of choosing between higher subscriptions and lower memberships, or the same level of subscriptions and a deficit, it seems that there just isn't a right decision to be made; the struggle goes on in all the cases that I mentioned previously.

What is beginning to disturb me is that, even at this early stage in our development, it is beginning to become apparent that the Association could well end up facing similar problems and decisions; and that even before the end of our first year in business. What has been described as the 'paranormal recession' has, it seems, no favourites.

Now, I would be willing to accept it as inevitable, unavoidable, and whatever, were it not for the outstanding, and continued, success of the weekly publication, 'The Unexplained'. There is no doubting its excellence, the quality of many of the (often previously unknown) authors that it uses, and in some cases helps to support. Its picture researchers are devoted, and its editors careful in the extreme. Those of us who are in a position to judge are usually pleasantly surprised by the high literary and research standard of what appears. But in the end, it is a specialist magazine about the paranormal, covering very much the same range of interests as does A.S.S.A.P. Yet 'The Unexplained' sells in huge quantities while, at the time of writing, we have barely 300 members, despite a determined attempt to advertise, and some very attractive literature to be sent to prospective members. The level of our subscription was set almost dangerously low (Geoffrey Howe's financial problems are simple by comparison) so as not to exclude anyone who really wished to join and, a central facility for meetings, a library, and so on aside, we offer all that any other similar group in the U.K. can offer, in a more open and less daunting manner. Given sufficient numbers - and I fear that 300 is simply not sufficient to manage more than a specialised, if sparse, investigation system, and the odd meeting in the South of England - there is really no limit to what we could do. Yet, to refer to the editorial in CG3, I cannot yet see that we can claim to speak authoritatively to the media on behalf of paranormal research in this country; and that must be a priority.

The one thing that has delighted all of us involved in the inception of A.S.S.A.P. is the remarkably high level of education, experience, and background in our subject that has emerged in membership applications, and I think that this is the moment to harness, if only in an advisory capacity, some of that vast array of talent. If you can, personally, find ways of publicising A.S.S.A.P. then please do so - if you need support, literature, etc. it is yours for the asking. But even if you cannot do that, can I please ask you to put your minds to the problems outlined above, and to try to think of ways in which we can communicate more effectively, to bring in members and develop an active and influential organisation, that will both advance research and investigation and put over our ideas and approach to the media and the public. What was your first impression, what attracted you, what made you think twice about joining, and so on. How can we improve these things?

Please write to me at the 'Common Ground' address, and I will pass on all your ideas to ensure they have maximum effect within the Association. All of us now involved are in part responsible for its future.

KEVIN McCLURE.

NEXT ISSUE

Tony Ortzen, Psychic News Editor, on Researchers.

Robert Gilbert on Arthur Guirdham, the Cathars,
and Reincarnation.

A remarkable case of demonic haunting and exorcism.

Kevin McClure on the remarkable Peace Prophecies
made by Spirit Guides in 1938 and 1939.

And much more that we haven't even heard of yet.