

Common Ground

LOCATING GHOSTS

Salzburg UFO Colloquium

REVIEWS

THE NO-WAR PROPHECIES

LETTERS

Alan Garner - Suburban Shaman

KATIE KING

ABSTRACTS

Children & the Paranormal

SPIRICOM

No. 6

CONTENTS

	Page
THE VIEW FROM THE GAISBERG - Notes on the 1982 Salzburg UFO Colloquium. Hilary Evans.	2
CHILDREN AND THE PARANORMAL. Michael Goss.	4
ABSTRACTS AND JOURNAL LISTINGS.	10
THE 1939 NO - WAR PROPHECIES. Kevin McClure.	14
PROOF! Tony Ortzen.	19
REVIEWS.	21
LETTERS.	23
ALAN GARNER AND THE SHAMANISTIC PROCESS Paul Screeton.	25
LOCATING GHOSTS. Tony Booth.	30
BREAKTHROUGH! AGAIN? Latest information on the Spiricom machine. Alexander Macrae.	32
CLOSING REMARKS. Editorial.	35

Common Ground

The ASSAP Journal of Record

No. 6 .

You will probably notice as you read this issue of 'Common Ground' - which I, with my customary humility consider to be the best yet - that material has been somewhat squeezed in. This is unfortunate in a way, because I had intended to introduce some graphics and a more attractive layout with this issue but, simply, there was too much good material offered for me to turn it down! Even now, I have had to hold over the promised exorcism case history; the article on Arthur Guirdham and the Cathars has also been delayed, but due to the author's prior commitment to his publisher; it should be in no.7. along, I hope, with a piece on similarities between SF novels of the first half of this century and later UFO sighting reports.

The next year is going to be a very important one for 'Common Ground', as it is for A.S.S.A.P. With this issue, over half the CG subs fall due, and if yours is among them there will be a little cross on this line _____. There will also be a leaflet about CG and 'End Times Bulletin'. The sub. rate given on it for CG is £4 within the U.K., but if you are already subscribing as an A.S.S.A.P. member you can renew, direct to me, for the reduced rate of £3.60p, on this leaflet; please make it clear that you are a member when you complete it. I very much hope that you will all renew - and I hope that you will be able to do so as soon as possible. Provided this exercise goes well, and there is a good response to some advertising I have organised for the early part of September, there should be some changes for the better in the near future. If I can increase the print-run sufficiently, then I can start using typesetting, with all its benefits, include proper illustrations, and certainly increase the number of pages. Whatever happens, there will be one special, double issue during the year, in which we will survey the state of paranormal research all over the world, with contributions from many well-known figures. The sooner I know for sure how many readers there are going to be, the sooner I can make firm plans. So far, support for CG has been excellent; please keep it up!



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THE VIEW FROM THE GAISBERG

Notes on the 1982 Salzburg Colloquium on
HUMAN SCIENCES AND UFO PHENOMENA.

At the reception desk there were picture postcards to prove that from the Gaisberg one can obtain a spectacular panorama of the Salzburg Valley. Alas, the four days of the Colloquium were four days of fog thick enough to hide the bathing pool which looks so tempting in the brochure but into which none of the participants were bold enough to plunge.

Metaphorically, however, they plunged boldly into some of the most challenging depths of ufology, and were rewarded by being able to share a dazzling view of some of its most puzzling aspects. For those of us who spend too much of our time huddled over our lonely typewriters, wondering is there anyone out there who gives a damn for our ideas, get-togethers such as the Salzburg colloquium are wonderfully encouraging. Four days of non-stop talking and listening, to people as concerned as yourself, recharges the batteries with enthusiasm and tops up the fuel tank with fresh ideas.

The emphasis throughout was on the psychological aspects of ufology, but this is not to suggest that all notions of UFO reality had been abandoned. Most of the participants were experienced investigators in their respective countries, and none doubted that, underlying the high-flying hypotheses, was an everyday experience to which they must ultimately relate.

Dr. ALEX KEUL of Vienna set the theme by describing work he has carried out in conjunction with our own Ken Phillips, showing that witnesses in Milton Keynes and in Austria, at least, respond similarly to Rorschach testing for witness evaluation, which encourages its suitability as an investigative tool. The theme of witness assessment was sustained by Italy's PAOLO TOSELLI, who analysed the various factors which intervene between the 'input' - the alleged sighting experience - and the 'output', the ultimate report of that experience. The state of the witness, both immediate and long-term; socio-cultural attitudes of the individual and his milieu; personal memories and antecedent experience - not only must these be enquired into and allowed for, but so must the matter of the image which the witness is unconsciously seeking to present and which may distort the way he reports his experiences; and after him comes the investigator, who in turn may colour his presentation of the case because he would like to be seen as hard-headed, or scientific, or sympathetic, or whatever.

Such subjective factors are not easily evaluated. However, suggested Dr. DON JONDERI of McGill University, Montreal, signal detection theory offers an objective yardstick. A portable tachistoscope, inviting the witness to respond to a series of briefly projected cards, can in the course of a simple 15-minute test, which any investigator can soon learn to administer, provide a measurable index of the witness's reliability or otherwise as a UFO percipient.

Professor ALVIN LAWSON, of California, also claimed that his birth-trauma theory is testable and thereby provides investigators with an effective yardstick. His claim that UFO abduction accounts reflect birth trauma experiences was probably the most controversial offered to the colloquium, but thanks to his wealth of supporting evidence, few found fault with his basic premises: such doubts as were felt related rather to their evaluation. This, Lawson accepts cheerfully: he has no vested interest in his claim, which he would be as happy to see falsified as not, for it is the very falsifiability of his theory which makes it a step towards putting abduction research on a scientific basis.

CLAUDE MAUGE of France considered the role of the psychiatrist in the face of the UFO phenomenon. He raised the vexed question - to which, indeed, all participants repeatedly returned - whether UFO witnesses have any built-in psychological disposition to such experiences.

It was unfortunate that Britain's MALCOLM SCOTT was unable to be present, for the abridged version of his paper, which was read to the conference, provoked lively controversy. His suggestion that 'protection is the name of the game', defining the underlying motivation which may serve as the stimulus to some categories of UFO report, offers a very suggestive line of thought which many delegates would have liked to debate with its suggester.

It also happens to tie in with the ideas presented by another English participant, HILARY EVANS, who drew on the work of two fellow-delegates, Lawson and Meheust, in proposing a model to account for abduction reports in terms of 'mimetic projection'. He likened the action of the subconscious mind in such cases to the insertion of a pre-recorded video-cassette into the real-time perceptive process of the conscious mind, causing the percipient to believe he has undergone an actual experience which, in our prevailing cultural context, is likely to take the form of an abduction scenario, the fine details being provided from the percipient's own hopes and hang-ups.

This in turn slotted in nicely with the observations of French author BERTRAND MEHEUST, whose correlation of UFO reports with pulp science-fiction stories has been one of the most stimulating contributions to the subject in recent years. Those who were intrigued by his earlier work will be excited to know that he has just completed a follow-up study which relates UFO reports to folklore-related incidents.

Two other authors of French-language UFO books were present. JACQUES SCORNAUX of Belgium, co-author with Christiane Piens of A la recherche des OVNIS, maintained the most resolutely sceptical attitude of any participant and ensured that no kite-flyer got too carried away. THIERRY PINDIVIC, author of the thought-provoking Le Noeud Gordien (UFO's - The Gordian Knot) was there to confess that since he wrote that book in 1979, he has almost totally revised his ideas: we look forward to its successor.

Developing and changing ideas are of course an inevitable aspect of ufology, and nothing is liable to modify ideas faster than attendance at such a conference. What was remarkable, however, was the degree to which ideas were shared. Throughout the four days there were no serious disagreements, no head-on collisions of ideas: all criticism was constructive, and for the most part one theory complemented another, making this surely the most harmonious UFO conference ever held.

At the same time it was a very lively one. Though all were agreed that the psychological element is an essential part of the UFO problem, there were none who were prepared to say that the UFO problem is nothing but a psychological one, and discussion provoked a variety of ideas as to how the physical and psychological dimensions interact.

Along with the sharing of ideas, it was noteworthy how much the delegates shared in the way of knowledge and experience. Here were ufologists from France, Belgium and Italy, Austria and England, Canada and the United States, bouncing names and cases, reports and theories, from one to another across the table, drawing on a common frame of reference. What the participants shared as ufologists was far more significant than any linguistic or cultural differences that might separate them. A theory hatched by a ufologist from Stoke-on-Trent may be matched by one being born in Sydney or Stockholm: ufology, like the UFO's themselves, has little respect for political frontiers.

HILARY EVANS

* The Proceedings of the Salzburg Colloquium will be published in due course by Roberto Farabone, who, together with Francesco Izzo and Alex Keul, was responsible for bringing the conference into being.

There are certain articles that have appeared in previous issues which have clearly become favourites, and which are mentioned by name when people order back issues. "The Milne Position", by Michael Goss, was one of these, and it is interesting to note that material that are closely related to real events and situations are generally the better accepted. I feel sure that the following article, which picks up and develops a number of themes that we have mentioned previously, will prove to be another such example.

CHILDREN and the PARANORMAL

by Michael Goss

There is nothing quite so difficult to create as a good ghost story - and as for coming up with an original one, the odds are heavily against it. As a genre the "supernatural story" is locked tight within a canon of narrative conventions and its conclusion - even the "shock ending" or "twist in the tail" - is predictable, if only for its studied unpredictability. Stereotyped characters, incidents and settings loom large and nowhere more prominently than in those stories written with children in mind.

Yet by all accounts the books sell. Repetition of stock themes is no deterrent and may even act in a story's favour. Children, it would appear, respond not to the artifice of the telling but to the very idea of the thing; the plain fact that a tale is based round some kind of haunting, for example, may be recommendation enough. All of which occasionally misleads some of the more serious researchers of these dark and mysterious matters into believing that children ought to be "educated" towards a better understanding of psychical research.

The appeal of the supernatural - the term preferred amongst the children themselves at the expense of the more modern and quasi-scientific "paranormal" - remains reasonably constant throughout their school career; though predictably most noticeable in the 11 - 12 age range, it does not wholly succumb to the onset of scepticism or more material interests during adolescence, and it may even be strongest in those approaching "leaving" age. And though this interest may appear superficial to adults, it actually goes somewhat deeper than that.

At the same time, the "experiments" children perform with or upon each other - the perennial attempts to contact the "spirits" with glass and cards being a good and familiar instance - are hardly conducted in what might be styled a "scientific" spirit; observance of ritual - like smashing the glass at the end of the seance - would be a better expression. The practitioners will explain that they do it "to see what will happen", but they bring to the exercise their pre-existing beliefs and superstitions which determine how the "phenomena" will be interpreted. For among secondary school children there is a deep-rooted if undefined acceptance of what parapsychologists call the survivalist concept: the belief that we survive the act of death and can sometimes communicate with the living. Psychical researchers have spent over 100 years trying to get watertight evidence on this question; kids don't need that sort of evidence, because they already "know" the answer. "A' course there's spirits," a mature young gentleman told me. "I mean - everyone knows that . . . It stands to reason."

Faced by this assurance - or what some might term credulity - parapsychologists occasionally argue that the young should be provided with more solid information on the world of psychical research, which (like any science) prides itself on being a world of observed fact. Yet the children, though responsive to the prevailing notion that scientific investigation legitimises the subject it enquires into, regard rationalist approaches to the supernatural as in the main irrelevant. They frankly disbelieve the often-negative findings of investigators, especially where they impinge upon or imply a threat to their preconceptions about ghosts. Confronted by one of the Society for Psychical Research's reports on an apparitional incident - which will typically be brief, inconclusive, and decidedly undramatic in character - they nonetheless insist that the old, stereotyped, interpretation whereby the ghost is explained as the spirit of a dead person is the only one worth thinking about. In vain might parapsychologists point out that belief in apparitions-as-spirits is a folklore tradition corroborated by only a handful of cases in their files; that there are other, often more convincing hypotheses to explain why people see ghosts, and a great many of these hypotheses to boot. The children will listen, but somehow the message loses a lot in translation from parapsychological jargon.

Children approach the paranormal enthusiastically, we all know, but why? If, like many adults, they hope to find in it something which supports their private belief-systems, what kind of evidence will they accept? Or again, given the undoubted popularity of the subject, are there grounds for providing more formal guidance concerning it?

I had a brief insight into the answers to these questions when supply-teaching in secondary schools in the Thurrock (SE Essex) area. A supply teacher is usually in an anomalous position - half in, half out of the school system - and perhaps my case was more anomalous than most. I soon found that my reputation as a parapsychologist had preceded me, thanks to the power of rumour and more particularly to an article about my Society for Psychical Research activities in the local paper. The journalist had dubbed me the Grays Ghost-Hunter, which beyond gilding the lily somewhat struck me as about as good a description as any.

It wasn't too surprising to find myself beset with requests for ghost stories and when the time was right - covering an English lesson where the theme was germane, perhaps, or the odd fifteen minutes towards the end of a double period - I went along with it. I told them only the stories of which scientifically-aligned bodies like the S.P.R. would have approved: accounts (simplified only where necessary for the comprehension of my audience) which according to the refined criteria of parapsychology were reasonably well-evidenced or authenticated, never disguising the fact that most real-life apparitional encounters lack the neat, tidy conclusions and narrative flourishes of their far more melodramatic fictional counterparts. I gave them a few current research theories to think over as well. Had they ever heard that some scientists believed ghosts to be mental pictures (hallucinations) rather than physical objects and/or spirits of the departed? Or that others explained certain cases in terms of telepathy, waking dreams, or even malobservation

Beyond everything else, I tried to stress the basic "normality" of research into the paranormal - even at the risk of boring my audience. Perhaps unrealistically, I wanted to disabuse them of the hallowed image of the psychical researcher, becloaked and mystic, who armed only with crucifix and book of arcane lore wrestles against unholy powers before a backdrop courtesy of Hammer Films. I wanted them to see that the "Cinderella Science" as one of its chief practitioners has aptly called it, was not all about exorcisms or magic circles, indeed if it was anything whatever to do with them. In this I had partial success. Obviously Mr. Goss didn't fit the Peter Cushing image, though there was suspicion that anyone, however ostensibly normal, must be a trifle weird to engage in that kind of work. It was hard for them to credit that the world of psychical research was as sombre as I described it. Perhaps Mr. Goss was only telling half the story? Maybe other real-life investigators had enjoyed more fittingly bizarre adventures, closer to those they'd read about in the Armada ghost books?

Overall, the response was fascinating: attention (often of the rapt variety) minimal interruptions, a willingness to "get something" out of what they were hearing. At the same time, though, the listeners were slightly puzzled as to why the scientists found difficulty in "explaining" ghosts. To those who already believed in such things - around 50% or more on average per class - it was pretty evident that ghosts were spirits of the dead, full stop. It wasn't that they were incapable of entertaining any alternative idea: it was merely that the alternatives didn't impress them. The more "psychological" interpretations gave the older ones pause for thought, but the survivalist preference or preconception soon reasserted itself. Yet it isn't fair to say that when confronted by the speculations of science the children retreated into the more familiar realms of gothic fiction. Aside from being more dramatic and a good deal less complicated than explanations founded on psychological niceties and theorisation, the survivalist hypothesis - as most psychical researchers concede - has some measure of evidence to support it, at least with regard to a number of cases. So perhaps the kids were right, after all.

This state of uncertainty concerning causes is integral to parapsychology and is a powerful criticism of any move to set up the science as a legitimate subject for the future school curriculum. (And it'd be a curriculum of the very distant future, at that). While a few researchers may decry the lack of solid information made available to children in this area, the facts remain that, (a) there is little by way of solid information which the science can offer to schoolgoers and (b) in any case, they may prefer a less circumscribed approach as purveyed by the fiction and folk beliefs to which they are exposed.

Parapsychology on the secondary school curriculum is an inconceivable prospect, and for many reasons. Even allowing the subject some validity (which many won't) and stepping round the accusation that so amorphous or all-embracing a discipline - with its relationships to aspects of nuclear physics, sociology, history and abnormal psychology, to name but a few - would demand too much prior knowledge for anyone beneath graduate level to tackle, there is the prime objection that psychical research has no coherent body of facts to impart. The Society for Psychical Research painstakingly disclaims any corporate opinion, which means that within its ranks committed believers in the paranormal can jostle elbow to elbow with persons who scathingly disbelieve the existence of anything of the kind. Their common ground is, or should be, a desire to obtain scientifically-viable evidence in support of their views, or even against them. Unluckily, and despite its rationalist objectives, psychical research is notoriously prone towards subjectivity in its assessments of phenomena; the most trifling incident can give rise to a multitude of interpretations, pro and con. This lack of consensus opinion effectively undermines any suggestion that parapsychology has reached a point where its tenets can be passed on to children. Just what are those tenets?

The method, comes the reply: you should teach the methodology of research into the paranormal, thereby developing the child's critical faculties. After all, science isn't just data, it's an approach to life; any science sets out to explore and definitions only come later. Ignoring the problem that most of parapsychology's research methods are rather improvisational and that few are universally employed by investigators, it is still questionable whether any secondary science subject could justify itself for long without a back-up of hard facts to support its theses. Admittedly some of the "facts" taught to school-children are of dubious validity; quite a few ceased to merit the name outside school textbooks several years ago. None the less, a subject - and especially a science subject - needs hard data subscribed to by consensus expert opinion if it is to be taken seriously: parapsychology is lacking that desired commodity.

Protean, mercurial, it is still looking for an Einstein to make sense of it. Take telepathy, for instance, the most rigorously tested and scientifically analysed of all paranormal phenomena. Arguably, no other variety of psi event has received so much heavyweight appraisal, yet even within the most informed echelons of the

parapsychology establishment there is no agreement as to whether it actually exists and (among those who believe it does) still less agreement as to how it functions. Here too the methodology is variable rather than standardised and as yet unable to conform to that much-talked-of mean, the Repeatable experiment. The basic flaw is that psychical research, unlike other sciences, cannot profess to deal in proofs, only in evidence. Again, many of the "proofs" found in secondary school physics and chemistry are really inferences from experiments judged "right, within the limits of experimental error", but

Needless to say, the "credulity" displayed by children is only a more concentrated or obvious manifestation of that which applies to most adults. This may explain how and why psychical research is still, spasmodically but always falsely, portrayed as a trafficking with the powers of darkness. In turn, this antique accusation is a product of the age-old confusion between occultism and science and occasionally it erupts in the form of parental protest over what their children are taught at school; anything evocative of the supernatural is immediately suspect and may be blamed for mental ailments as disparate as nightmares and depression. In one local case, exception was taken to a project question which comprised about one-sixteenth of an English assignment sheet entitled Mystery and Imagination, and a concerned clergyman arrived to contest with the Head of Department the "suitability" of encouraging young children to perform the pseudo-ESP test known as colour-guessing.

Perhaps the protesting parents feel that such "experiments" may betray the pupils into an unhealthy interest in the Other World which has a detrimental effect on their overall mental equilibrium: a view with which most of us can sympathise, though we may feel the dangers are exaggerated. Equally probable, though, is the suspicion that the objection stems from the parents' own fear of the Unknown, particularly the credo that psychical research lays one open to invasion by evil spirits and/or Satan.

This protective monitoring of what goes on in school is all very well, but it ignores the fact that the love of wonder and the search for entertainment that is "a bit different" will quite likely lead the very same children to experiment with less palatable forms of "phenomena" out of school hours. "Sir, have you ever done the ouija?" I was frequently asked, as if no-one who had not could rightly call himself a ghost-hunter. Yes, I replied, and I'd not commend it to anybody. Not so much because Spiritualists say it only attracts low, nasty spirits who may hang around afterwards to give you a bad time; nor because psychologists believe it may cause harmful repercussions in the vulnerable minority. Mainly, it's superbly boring and (from a research standpoint) it proves next to nothing.

Waste of breath. Half of them had already "done" the ouija - for a laugh, of course - and others were doubtless to follow suit before they were much older. Calling the ouija a damnable alliance with Evil or a quite negligible contribution to what we know of automatism (unconscious muscular action) carried no conviction. They'd either try it or they wouldn't, regardless of my advice and strictures. And those veterans of the glass and letters who'd already tried it didn't agree that it was boring - not a bit of it. To the contrary it was great, good, ace, kushti: very exciting, that is.

Scan the popular Sundays for a month or so and you'll probably find ample evidence that improved ouija boards are high on the average adolescent's list of time-filling devices. "Vicar warns schoolboys . . . Dangers of the Occult . . . Trifling with Unknown Forces"; the articles also provide fuel for those who stress the mental and spiritual perils of psychic experimentation. Allowing for media inflation, the incidents - always extreme ones and not typical of the average teenage seance - do imply that the ouija can be a problem, albeit (arguably) a much lesser one than glue-sniffing or chicken scratch.

But it's doubtful whether representing the ouija as the tool of Satan will discourage its use among children; indeed, for some that kind of verdict will only add to its appeal. Nor is "corrective" talk of automatism likely to carry much weight, since the experimenters hold a prior conviction - augmented by their reading, as in adolescent picture-papers - that it is the spirits who move the glass, not unconscious muscular action. Perhaps we ought to accept, however, that no matter how firm the group commitment may be at the time of the "seance", the attraction is only temporary. The ouija is likely to have only transitory glamour, simply because the children involved have too many other distractions to occupy their time. It's unfortunate that in isolated cases a combination of subconscious nervousness and other factors make the first experiment sometimes the one which does the damage, reinforcing the "psychic peril" lobby's objections to parapsychology as a whole.

More or less the same goes for the playground hypnotists. There can be few children who haven't at some time or another dangled a shiny object in front of a friend's eyes "to see if it worked" and - by the law of averages - occasionally it did. For it takes less than moderate skill to put a suitably susceptible person into a trance; the real talent lies in understanding what happens when you've done so. Needless to say, panic sometimes ensues - either in the subject or the hypnotist; more rarely a mini-disaster follows. The reason for these experiments is obvious: curiosity. Their source of inspiration: most likely, something on T.V., but perhaps a family visit to see a stage hypnotist in action at the local theatre. Such was the model for the eleven-year-old Sheffield school boy who, according to the Sunday Express of 9 July 1978, put a girl first into a trance and then in to hospital.

Contrary to the publicity afforded to such extreme incidents - and perhaps contrary to the still-widespread suspicion towards hypnosis itself - these transitory phases of schoolyard experimentation seldom result in harm. Watching two schoolgirls, probably first year, whiling away a long, crowded bus-ride by giving each other suggestibility tests identical to those used by professional hypnotists, I asked myself if they really appreciated the force behind what they were doing - but the question was really beside the point. To them it was fun to get their friend's hands glued together by a sort of pre-teen magic, but that was as far as it went.

The two girls on the bus summed up what most school-children feel about the challenges of the Unknown. It's a bit of fun, it's mildly anti-authority (in that they feel adults would disapprove of it). On the other hand, it wasn't necessarily something they'd like to learn about in class. The belief that you are the personal envoy of "higher powers" (e.g. a spirit) or that you possess secret abilities (e.g. to hypnotise) not common to your fellow man has an important effect of boosting your self-image - a very potent force in the young. If this conflicts with what the scientists have to say about the psychic world, then it's only common sense to ignore the scientists, who usually can't give you a plain statement of fact about anything that's really interesting. If people disapprove, so much the better - and in any case, they don't understand that it's just messing about.

In some respects children have an advantage over most scientists: they retain the power to suspend disbelief during the seances, to commit themselves to possibilities. The majority of psychical researchers try to do the same, but find they cannot; the critical faculty won't take a back seat. Above all, the young can cheerfully "compartmentalise" their psychic adventures, removing themselves from the reach of adult rationality for a time and usually returning none the worse to it afterwards. Thus the psychic realm is at once their escape-route and a place in its own right. Again, few adults can make this transition so successfully; real life is too intrusive, only children can tolerate the contradiction between the greyness of everyday existence and the alluring colours of the Other World. The catch-all phrase for their temporary flight from this reality is "a bit of a laugh".

It would be pleasant to introduce children formally to the scientific study of the paranormal, yet in some senses they know more about it than we do. They sense, for example, that at root it is inexplicable, and while a few of us are puzzling over all the alternatives they actually revel in the confusory nature of the business. Some researchers into experimenter effect have postulated that psi tends to be what you want it to be, fact or fraud: children have known that for years. And it is unrealistic to ask children to think critically about a subject on which we have very few concrete, well-evidenced ideas - and most of those open to dispute.

Childrens' love of the supernatural, either in the form of creaking, jaded ghost stories or the triviality of the ouija is perhaps a positive sign: an affirmation of growing curiosity in a world which has circumscribed outlets for curiosity, an anti-rationalist statement, and possibly an anti-societal one, too. It is an exercise in imagination, not a sortie into the dry, cold, almost scientific world of the parapsychologist.



A PEACEFUL POLTERGEIST

The following, intriguing item comes from the front page of the Church of England newspaper, the Church Times, of 30.7.82.

A small, humble symbol of peace lay on the high altar of St. Paul's Cathedral during the Falkland Islands service on Monday morning, unseen by the vast congregation.

It was placed there by the Dean, the Very Rev. Alan Webster, who had told of its strange story when he preached in the Cathedral the day before.

The symbol was just a little souvenir medal with a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary on a red ribbon; but it came from the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lujan, Argentina - which was visited by the Pope recently - and there may be more to it than meets the eye.

The unknown woman who posted it to Dean Webster was given it by a friend from Buenos Aires years ago. In the letter she sent to the Dean she wrote: "It lay unworn, but, when they started fighting, I put it on, and told everyone it would only come off when they stopped. It was my symbolic prayer for peace.

"The evening of the cease-fire I was changing my clothes, and cooking, when something shot with great velocity across the room and landed behind my bed. It wasn't the jewellery I was wearing, so I forgot it and had supper.

"An hour or so later, when the cease-fire was announced on T.V., I felt gratefully for my beloved medal to take it off. It had gone - and lay face downwards behind my bed. Startled and humbled by this pointed acceptance of my act of peace, I reflected on the inner dynamism of symbolism, particularly those symbols we choose ourselves.

"I'm now rather in awe of this little medal and would like to offer it to you for the altar, or your pocket, at that service, as a link between nations - different religious expressions of the same God. Our Lady will look after it."



Though this quarter has not brought forth an issue of 'Fortean Times', unashamedly my favourite magazine, I am convinced that I have never seen quite such an output in three months. Bearing in mind just how long it takes to put even the smallest magazine together (and don't I know it) the standard and quantity of publications is amazing. I can only apologise to those that I can't find room to include, but would encourage all of you to send for whatever you can afford. Somehow, a steady flow of enquiries and subs makes it all worthwhile, and without these magazines, bearing in mind the less than constructive attitude of publishers to our subject, there would hardly be any communication between us. So, let me present . . .

ABSTRACTS

AFU Newsletter. April 1982. Now almost entirely in English this is a very good way to find out about ufology in the surprisingly advanced Scandinavian countries. In this issue, aside from case reports, there is an expose of an American story regarding a Swedish Air Force military chase of a UFO, proven most effectively to be an outright hoax. Also a quite amazing interview with Juri Lina, who has had several articles on Soviet sightings published in FSR. Juri tells of how, thanks to his UFO interest, he was persecuted and threatened by the KGB and eventually had to flee the country by entering into a set-up marriage to a Finnish girl to get him out of their grasp. Living now in Sweden he continues to investigate, research and campaign for freedom. But he is still not safe. His life has already been threatened by a KGB agent who attended a lecture. If they ever make a film about the life of any ufologist, surely Juri should be the subject! There is also a very valuable full bibliography of published articles in English referant to Soviet UFO's. Write to; PO Box 11027 S-600 Norrkoping 11 Sweden 23.

Ancient Skills & Wisdom Review. No.15. Soppo title - it's really, as always, an intelligent and worthwhile collection of reviews and abstracts from publications covering much the same field as CG, written by a journalist of standing in his line and ours. £2 p.a. from Paul Screeton, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25 2AT.

Broad Spectrum. No.1. Though the editor of this new and useful mag. is said to be Arthur Senior, I'm sure I detect the hand of Magda Graham here. Primarily a collection of reviews, it is leavened by short and intelligent articles, with a mild new age/pagan bias, letters, and interesting ads. Many thanks for the kind remarks about CG; if the N.o.W. sends for a copy, I hope it combusts spontaneously in their in-tray! Quarterly, 50p from Hamilton House, 30, Coop St. Blackpool, Lancs.

Bunkers Under London by Nigel Pennick. Not a journal, as such, but Nigel Pennick is an old favourite, and many of us are interested in railways and other forms of transport, and more in a good mystery. The author translates this combination into action in this follow-up to 'Tunnels under London'. A beautifully researched, detailed, illustrated study, historical and contemporary, including insights into official reactions to wars and rumours of same. Excellent value at £1 from the author at 142, Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD.

Christian Parapsychologist. June 1982. CP never lets you down; even without any articles, its letters and reviews would be worth having. Here, however, is Renee Haynes on the intriguing subject "Are unusual phenomena signs of holiness?" treating on Rasputin, Marming, and a number of more traditional 'religious' psychics. Well-argued and evidenced, the answer given is "No". I wish the followers of Sai Baba would read it. Sample issue 60p from CFPSS, St.Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane, London, EC4N 7BA.

Flying Saucer Review. Vol.27. No.6. A slight improvement this time, but mainly due to a comprehensive report on the extraordinary Rendlesham Forest case, a really odd possible CE3, compiled by Jenny Randles. I was in on the early, rumour-ridden stages of this case, and while there was plenty of smoke, I don't think anyone yet has been and found the fire. Otherwise, much the same menu as usual. Much agonising about

the 1954 B.O.A.C. Labrador sighting as if it really matters, now, in 1982. A Soviet satellite case: another 1954 sighting; and two reprints from other journals, one in translation. At least the Editor has had the courage to print adverse comments by Ian Mrzyglod. Maybe better things are on the way; they certainly need to be. Bi-monthly, £6.90 p.a. from FSR Publications Ltd, West Malling, Maidstone, Kent. It's worth supporting, but do press for a new outlook, while subscribing.

International UFO Reporter. May/June 1982. This bi-monthly glossy publication is the new regular outlet for CUFOS and has many similarities with Britain's 'Probe Report', except that I.U.R. (edited by Allen Hynek) is almost exclusively devoted to CUFOS case histories. Some excellent investigations are fully presented in this typical issue, with well laid out factual data, maps, photos of the site, etc. There are also often scientific and trigonometric drawings to enable specific calculations to be made. When an identification is found it is given space. This is a very worthy venture, reflective of how FSR was in the good old days. For information on US UFO case histories it cannot be bettered. Sub. is \$20 (surface) and \$25 (air mail), from P.O. Box 1621, Lima, Ohio, U.S.A.

Lump of Thoth. Vol.2. No.4. Described by the News of the World as a "lump of filth" (since when its circulation has healthily increased), this is certainly another controversial issue, and invaluable, too. Always the most telling of the Pagan/Magic/Witchcraft journals, with a high and literate standard of contribution, this issue has much to say about the N.o.W. "investigation" into "the occult" in the U.K., and the lies, deception, and outright fraud utilised by the reporters in preparing it. Magda Graham, a contributor to CG5, was among those deeply upset by the lies told about her in the paper, and her comments are touching. It is most unfortunate that at a time when the N.o.W. has made a conscious, and laudable decision to treat 'parapsychology' in an adult and constructive manner (and for this thanks to Maureen Lawless), other reporters are treating 'believers', with much the same essential views, as if they were pimps or drug-dealers, and ruining lives and relationships in the process. Lump of Thoth is not kids'stuff, it is not naive, or cuddly, or New Age, and nor is it for the faint-hearted. However, I would urge you to try this issue, complicated as the story is, if only to see how outsiders are treated, even now, by some representatives of a Sunday national. Single issue is £1.75 from 4 - 8, Burley Lodge Road, Leeds, LS6 1QP.

Magonia. No.9. Nigel Watson on Ufology and Romanticism (erudite, is Nigel), John Harney looks at the relation between theory and belief in 'Deserts of Arid Speculation', and Ian Cresswell and Granville Oldroyd have a neat stab at 'Close Encounters and Dream States'. Also 5 pages of the rather boring INTCAT ufology; I'd have more faith in it if I felt that any of the Editorial team believed in UFO's! Anyway, subscribe now to receive the special abduction/regression/birth trauma issue. Ridiculously cheap at £2 for 4 issues from one of our highest ufologists, John Rimmer, at 64, Alric Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.

Ley Hunter. No.93. Just arrived, ruining my alphabetical order. You don't get to no.93 in this field without being good, and TLH is good. Another excellent issue, running to 40 pages, with masses of regular features, commentaries, and reviews, plus articles on The Merry Maidens, New Zealand Earth Mysteries, and Avebury, 'The Dancing Stones'. Paul Devereux, the Editor, has a corker of a book coming up, entitled EARTH LIGHTS, which promises to be the first intelligent attempt to explore the links between UFO's, the earth itself, and earth mysteries; keep an eye out for it. The magazine is available at £3.75 for 3 issues from P.O.Box 13, Welshpool, Powys, Wales.

Malaysian UFO Bulletin. No.4. This litho publication is edited by Ahmad Jama-ludin, in English. Ahmad has had several articles published in FSR. It is a useful insight to happenings in a part of the world rarely heard of in UFO terms. The current issue includes a large number of case reports from the islands in the area, including abductions and a physical trace event where the witness's hair fell out! (including photographs) There is also a major discussion on the

relationship between UFO's and earthquakes. There is no subscription, but serious researchers may be able to obtain copies (especially on exchange) from Ahmad at; - **Makmal Diagnosa, Veterinary Dept, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia.**

MUFON UFO Journal. April 1982. Still the best US UFOzine I receive, this is a particularly good issue, with Wanderer's 'Birth Trauma' article (see 'Closing remarks'), 'Are Abductions Pre-Arranged' (are they what? KM), Ufology in Italy, 'What do we want from Contactees?', several full case reports, and a report on the 1982 Symposium. Monthly, \$16 p.a. from MUFON, 103, Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas 78155, U.S.A.

New Times. No.4. The Positive News Journal. I've been a little remiss in not finding this till recently. A London-based, professionally-produced New Age journal, that to judge from the development evident in the first few issues will go places. Optimistic, healing and holistics oriented, it is available at 60p from 188, Old Street, London, ECL.

OSEAP Journal & Centre Update. Issues no.1. These two new publications are the long-awaited product of OSEAP (formed from the merger of FUFOR and MAPIT). As such they replace UFO Insight and Skywatch, both respected magazines. Whilst it is somewhat unfair judging on first issues (notoriously hard to obtain first articles for) these do leave a feeling of disappointment. Centre Update is to slim Skywatch style, but is really just a list of books, plus a very odd and hard to figure-out selected list of abstracts. It is only to be offered to subscribers in future if specifically requested. OSEAP Journal is the main offering, a very neat 16pp A4 litho effort. Unfortunately the content this time is thin. Bertil Kuhleman writes about Project URD (the Scandinavian computer project) and William Spaulding about GSW computer-enhancement photographic techniques; but both articles have been published many times elsewhere in revised forms. There is a useful reprint (from 'nursing Mirror') of Dr.Keith Hearne's critique of the validity of hypnosis (already abstracted at some length in CG). However, we will hope that more competition in the serious UFO field will mean further improved standards.

Probe Report. Vol.3. No.1. An issue fundamental to serious research of aerial phenomena. It contains the 14 pages of Hilary Evans's seminal "Balls of Light" essay (see 'Closing Remarks') Any ufologist worthy of the name should have a copy of this item. Not room for much else, but some intelligent reviews, letters, and a good 'case closed' by a UFOIN investigator who works at the Royal Greenwich Observatory. Sub. is still only £2.50 for 4 issues from 16, Marigold Walk, Ashton, Bristol, BS3 2PD (also available with BUFORA membership for only £1 p.a. extra).

Psychic News. An increasing trend is evident towards trying to prove that good old-fashioned physical mediumship is around again, but sad to say it all appears to be hearsay, with even a respected stage magician being prepared to accept the veracity of 'apports' received in pitch darkness. Low point of recent issues came on 31.7.82, where Paul McElhoney's guide Ceros is reported as having gone to an unidentified pet-shop in Manchester, accompanied by a spirit child named Bonny, where he bought two Koi carp which were then apported into the fish-tank of PN's correspondent. All of this, of course, is about as likely as soldiers growing out of dragon's teeth, but it gets worse. Ceros is reported as commencing the consequent seance by saying "My Bonny's fish lie over the ocean". This is not the stuff of which survival proof is made. Nonetheless, PN is essential reading; one day, one of these stories will be verified. It is available price 18p through your local newsagent and (possibly due to a misunderstanding of the word 'terminus') at London's mainline railway stations.

Sangreal. Vol.5. No.3. An impressive issue, concentrating on the growth of the concept of magic in Western society. Also, analytical psychology, palmistry, and the meaning of the Sangreal. The editors also arrange outings for interested readers. 75p an issue from 1, St.Martin's Court, Chickerell Rd, Weymouth, Dorset.

Society for Psychical Research Journal. June 1982. Better yet, I'm delighted to say; John Beloff deserves considerable applause. Eight separate, intelligible features, including precognition of a sea disaster, lucid dreams, sighted hands, and Eusapia Palladino, plus excellent reviews, and even a letter by me (KM). I really must pay my sub! Contact The Secretary, SPR, 1, Adam & Eve Mews, London, W8.

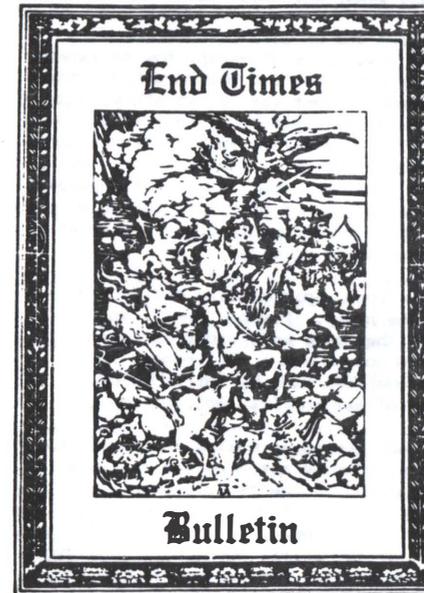
UFO Research Review. Not much reviewing of UFO research at all, but editor Bob Morrell, ufology's answer to Benson Herbert, goes on and on at great length about ASSAP. Heaven knows why, considering his utter scepticism. What next? Uri Geller on Thomas Paine? Available from 433, Meadow Lane, Nottingham. If the editor thinks you're important enough, he'll probably send you a copy free!

From 'BUZZ' magazine, August 1982.

One of the latest obscure sects to appear in the United States of America has been nicknamed by outsiders as 'The Garbage Eaters'. The strange cult, led by a character named Brother Evangelist, spend their time hitching rides from state to state, sleeping in empty houses, beating their women and children, and scrounging for scraps of food from dustbins and dumps. The Citizens Freedom Foundation, an American group formed to fight the influence of destructive cults, have claimed that the 'Garbage Eaters' are very dangerous.

END TIMES BULLETIN

The first issue of this new 16-page magazine came out in August. It has been warmly greeted by reviewers and readers alike. No.1. has articles by Kevin McClure, the editor, Jenny Randles, and Andy Collins, together with items from all over the world. Subjects include the prophecies of Nostradamus, The Rapture (the removal of Christians from the earth prior to the Tribulation), and 666 and the Mark of the Beast. No.2. will be out in late September. If you are interested in the end of the world send £1 (\$4) for a 2 - issue sub. to Kevin McClure, 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester.



I was born several years after the end of the last war, and it is impossible that I should be able to understand what it is like to live in a country involved in full-scale conflict, with a constant threat to life, home, and loved ones. But I do think that, in view of the tensions and apprehensions of the past twenty years, I can to some extent appreciate what it must have been like to live in Britain in the twelve months or so immediately before the outbreak of war on September 3rd, 1939. I hope so, anyway, because there is no doubt that the wishes, dreams, and failures briefly catalogued in this article were closely dependent on what was going on in the public mind in that fearful year; and I do not want to seem insensitive in presenting

THE 1939 NO-WAR PROPHECIES

by Kevin McCullure

"For some years now I have told you there will be no war in your country, and I repeat there will be no war," declared White Hawk, guide of Kathleen Barkel, in a trance address at the Queen's Hall, London, on Sunday. "But the unregenerate, those who deny God, must go their way."

So ran the lead story in 'Psychic News' on 19.3.38, next to an account of remarks made by Silver Birch, the spirit guide of the Swaffer/Barbanell home circle, made while the Germans "were massing on the frontier, ready for their march on Vienna."

The period between the two world wars had been one of good fortune for the religion of Spiritualism. The demonstration of physical mediumship, now so rarely claimed and proven, was quite common, and widely witnessed and photographed. The bereavements of the Great War had provided a ready support for Spiritualism, and Spiritualism had not failed those who sought its help. Guides, of individuals or circles, were powerful and important figures, with a different role and function than that I have observed since I became involved in Spiritualism in 1969. Now, it is seldom that a named guide will make a public statement that is more than purely philosophical, and it is interesting to consider the output of Ceros, the guide of Paul McElhoney, in this light. In the 1930's the pronouncements of guides were specific and wide-ranging, not above politics and world affairs.

And they received excellent publicity, too. Then, Spiritualism had two full-scale weekly newspapers on wide public sale. The names, 'Psychic News', and 'Two worlds', are still, of course, familiar, though then they were under different and disparate editors. But what they clearly had in common was a willingness to feature prominently specific predictions and prophecies made by spirit guides. And, too, an overwhelming concern with the fear of war and its implications.

In 'Psychic News' on 14.1.39, Silver Birch was quoted as making an unequivocal statement, in his "first sitting since Christmas, when he attended the festival of guides in the spirit world which is held twice a year." The article runs in part, "Silver Birch then uttered his prophecy about dictators. "In all the hours of darkness, he went on, "when it seemed that there was no hope, no glimmer in the sky, we said to you that we who see through the eyes of the spirit were quite confident that there would be no war and that the clouds would lift, and we pointed to the signs that heralded a new world. I repeat these words to you, for you are just

beginning to see the signs yourselves. It is true that there are still dark clouds that prevent the sun of the new day from shining in your midst, but they will be dispersed and you will see the flag of freedom planted once again in countries where it has been absent for too long."

On 7.1.39, while it was perhaps still possible to believe that the intentions of Hitler and Mussolini were not wholly evil, 'Psychic News' led with two more prophecies. The first, from Spiritualist National Union President Frank T. Blake, said -

"In the darkened skies, filled with the clouds of war, even now may be seen a rift through which the light of Peace is dimly shedding its rays. That rift will spread during the coming year and the radiant light will shine upon a world bathed in the glories of Peace before the year 1939 has passed."

The second came from Red Cloud, the guide of famed medium Estelle Roberts. "He", it was said, had correctly forecast that the crisis of September 1938 would pass.

"At this stage he made his prophecy of the Crisis, with a remainder of his message given during the black weeks of September that there would be no war. "We have returned from the spirit world to succeed and not to fail," he declared "There will be three upheavals during 1939", he said. But, like the apostle of old, he went on, "I see a new heaven and a new earth."

On 15.3.39, Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. Prague was occupied, and the country dismembered. A week later, Memel was taken over, and on the last day of the month, Britain extended a unilateral guarantee to Poland in the event of German aggression. On 7.4.39 - Good Friday - Italian troops invaded Albania, and on April 28th Hitler cancelled the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, and the German-Polish non-aggression agreement of 1934.

WE WANT PEACE

The editorial in 'Two Worlds' of 5.5.39, presumably written by the Editor, Ernest W. Oaten, is titled "We Want Peace", and says, "We have not the slightest doubt that people in the spirit world are doing their best to influence the world in favour of peace. There are no war-like elements over there."

On May 22nd Germany and Italy signed the 'Pact of Steel'. Japan was asked to join the alliance. Increasingly, the British public was convinced that appeasement was a failure, and that war was inevitable. Nonetheless, the message of the certainty of peace was echoed by guides and mediums all over the country, and I think it is the hand of the ever-confident Maurice Barbanell that comments in the July 22nd 'Psychic News',

"A reader takes us to task for admitting that spirit guides are not infallible. They declare that they are human, still, and are liable to error. At the same time, I am confident there is no possibility of error when the prophecy is so unanimous. From every well-known guide and from home circles all over the world there has come the assurance that never again will England be involved in war. While individual spirits are fallible when dealing with lesser issues, I refuse to believe in the possibility of a mistake in this particular instance."

The same issue features another piece which I think is by the same author; -

"Only by seeing what is ahead can the spirit guides say what is to come. They do not invent prophecies for our amusement or to demonstrate their cleverness Because guides have extended vision and live in a world one stage nearer the realm of causes, they can accurately predict what is to come Again, say the politicians, a new error approaches. But the same guides who before declared there would be no war in which England would be involved, forecast minor crises - all with a peaceful outcome. Nearly is not good enough in prophecy. 'Psychic News' has always placed reliance on the guides who stand behind Spiritualism. They have never failed to prove their claims, and they say they "foresee a period of peace" - not 50% peace and 50% war."

WORLD PEACE NOT TO BE BROKEN

I suspect that the forthrightness of the 'Psychic News' statements - and if they are by Maurice Barbanell, then the pronouncements of Silver Birch, his own guide, must have influenced their content - has much to do with that paper's unwillingness, even now, to publish first-hand prophecy. Yet compared to what, as Britain, France and Russia signed a mutual assistance pact on 24th July, was appearing elsewhere, its unfortunately strident tone seems relatively reasonable.

'Two Worlds' of 18.8.39 carries the headline "World Peace Not to be Broken - Will there be a World Peace Pact?" Beneath it, 'The Londoner' says, "Spiritualists are in a large measure fully convinced there will be No Great World War. This fact has been given from our platforms during the last twelve months by scores of mediums; but there are still the fearful, not only around us but among us . . . I make no apology for giving readers three most reassuring messages which I have heard given from our platforms within the last month." Two of these messages are simple and prophetic. And wrong. But the other, seen with the jaundiced eye of the historian, can only be regarded as absurd. . . .

"I am in a large hall. There is a long table in the centre, and seated round are representatives of all nations. I see our Prime Minister (Mr. Neville Chamberlain) in the chair; a large Golden Cross is above his head. A document lies on the table in front of him, and one by one each member present comes forward and signs. It is a peace pact. The Prime Minister fades away and in his seat appears the radiant form of Jesus, a golden crown upon his head. On either side appear the spirit forms of Buddha and Confucious, representing the East. Then Jesus, followed by Buddha and Confucious, walked through the lines of the representatives of the nations, while high up in the hall appeared an angel choir singing the 'Hallelujah Chorus'. Interpretation World Peace Pact, signed with Love for the whole world." It would have been hard to have been more wrong, about people or situations.

LORD NORTHCLIFFE SPEAKS

In the same issue was flashed a news item, in the 'Londoner' column. . . .

"There will be no world war, said Lord Northcliffe to Londoner at a seance on Wednesday last. "The efforts you are making on your side of life in getting yourselves into a state of preparedness have greatly helped us on this side. I restate emphatically, THERE WILL BE NO GREAT WORLD WAR."

On August 23rd Ribbentrop and Molotov shocked western Europe by signing the Russo - German non-aggression pact, with a secret annex to the treaty on how the two powers would divide Eastern Europe. The August 25th 'Two Worlds' explained further the message from Lord Northcliffe, which had been passed on by his Lordship to one "Bert", the guide of West Hampstead medium Mrs. Winifred Ellis, who had in turn passed it on. He had said, so Bert said, so Mrs. Ellis said, apparently, "By your clean thoughts and the elimination of fear from them, coupled with the will to "be prepared", you will create an insurmountable bulwark against the enemy."

Hitler had intended to invade Poland on August 26th but found Mussolini, not for the last time, insufficiently prepared. The order to commence the invasion was finally given on the last day of the month, and German troops went into Poland in the early hours of September 1st.

'Two Worlds' of that date (though it had presumably gone to press two or three days previously) sounded a rare note of caution in its editorial; -

"The realm of prophecy is always an uncertain realm. It does not follow that because the spirit world envisages the continuance of peace, that this will follow automatically. Spirit people make mistakes, for they are but human beings gazing upon the scene from a higher vantage point. But the thousands of messages which have come through the veil in the last few months have been almost unanimous in the opinion that despite the clouds in the sky, peace will be maintained."

A WINTER WITHOUT WAR

However, in the same paper Frank T. Blake, on the S.N.U. News page, continued in the more common vein of reckless optimism. Ignoring all the pressures of common-sense, and with a certain self-importance he affirmed -

"Winter is coming. It will be a winter without war. We have, therefore, to prepare a Peace Programme. Spiritualism played a great and truly national part in giving comfort and hope to those who were bereaved in the Great War. Spiritualism - although perhaps unrecognised by the authorities - has played an equally great and national part in keeping the peace during the last few years of international unrest. Our winter programme should be one of extensive propaganda. The spread of Spiritualism means the assuring of peace. Spiritualism is the greatest and most powerful peace movement in the world."

Sadly, it is the lead story in 'Psychic News' of September 2nd - the day before war was declared - that presents the rashest, most utterly mistaken, appraisal of the Peace Prophecies. Among quotes from Silver Birch, "Mr. Jackson" (a stand-in for Silver Birch when he was out of communication for two months), the late Earl Haig, Red Cloud, and the automatic writing of Geraldine Cummins the writer, who we can only presume to be the Editor, stated; -

"As prophesied by the spirit guides, England will not be involved in war." Mr. Jackson was reported as saying; -

"I am asked to stress all that had been said before. There is no need for fear, only for perfect calm. War does not come to your world. Be calm, confident, and resolute, for all that has been prophesied from our side of life will be fulfilled. You are approaching the stage where you begin to see the fruition of these many prediction, based on laws that cannot be set aside."

Earl Haig had apparently spoken on August 23rd. "The present crisis will be over within 14 days - that is, the mental danger. The physical danger is over now." The article ended, "Long before the present crisis arose, the spirit world prophesied it, and the guides have foretold the fate of Europe. Just as past events have proved their predictions to be correct so, too, will the future vindicate what they have foretold."

WHAT WENT WRONG

The disappointment, for all those involved, must have been acute; almost like waiting atop a mountain waiting to be saved from a deluge that did not come; except that the outbreak of war was a far greater shock than would have been the mere failure of prophecy alone. There is no doubt that these dramatic failures had an equally dramatic effect upon Spiritualism as a whole. Had it not been for them, we might still have a markedly different form of Spiritualism. Now, we rarely see verifiable physical phenomena; we seldom hear predictions; mediumship is largely mental, and most often based upon a more or less direct relationship between the medium and the deceased; it is not often that guides do more than pass on philosophy and advice. Few would think of believing in their infallibility: even fewer could present any evidence to support such a belief.

In the space I have available, I cannot hope to consider in depth the reactions to the outbreak of war. But I have little doubt that it was people who wanted peace, and that even if there are guides, they played only a minimal part in the genesis of the peace prophecies. The desire, the need for peace, was strong enough to create a trickle of predictions that peace would, indeed, continue; a trickle that became a torrent with the help of the success of the September 1938 prophecies, and the interest of the specialist media. I suspect that the decline of Spiritualism that has undoubtedly occurred over the past forty years can be traced to this one sequence of incidents above all others. Yet it is natural enough to want to believe in national and individual safety; quite understandable that mediums who remembered the First World War would not wish to countenance a second. It is only a shame that in this case believing did not make it so.

CLIMBING DOWN

The two weekly papers we have been quoting from had, till now, followed much the same line, both in content and in editorial. But now they diverged sharply. With a few honourable exceptions, 'Two Worlds' initially almost ignored both the prophecies and their failure. Then it moved on to explanations and plain, old-fashioned excuses. Misinterpretation, poor communication. It was said that the prophecies were a tactic devised by the guides to secure peace; that prophecy was not really an important part of Spiritualism. That Spiritualists were far too credulous: that the prophecies had been made too public. Worse, and even less reasonably, obscure prophecies from obscure guides were exhumed and printed, to prove that there had been clear predictions of conflict, after all; it just happened that the 'Two Worlds' editor hadn't chosen to publish them.

Though 'Psychic News' did, in due course, print some of this gaggles of excuses, it says much for the integrity and determination of its Editor, who a week before had been utterly convinced of the continuation of peace, that within three days of the outbreak of war, he had committed the following to print. I shall leave his words to close this article on a note of reason and honesty. From Page 1 of 'Psychic News', dated 9.9.39

"Spiritualists are facing their blackest week. This is a time when their faith, founded on personal experience, is being strained to the uttermost limits of human endurance.

For many months, nearly all the great guides made two definite prophecies: "There will be no major war in Europe. England will not be involved in war."

The second prediction has been shattered. It would be possible to equivocate by saying that this land of ours has not been invaded or bombed at the time these words are written. That is not our intention. Neither do we think the prophecy be so distorted.

This forecast was not made by one isolated, obscure spirit guide. It was repeated again and again by all those in whom Spiritualists had placed their faith for guidance.

Even as recently as last weekend, and after the Prime Minister's declaration that a "state of war" existed, the spirit messages continued to affirm that peace would prevail at that late hour. And the messages came from three mediums whose integrity has never been disputed.

No word has yet come to us from the spirit guides whose predictions we unhesitatingly printed, because in our long experience they had never been proved wrong on such major issues.

They would be the first to declare that they are not infallible. They are human beings who, in spite of their evolution, are still liable to err. They claimed to see the future and to know the outcome. They were right in forecasting the date of the trouble, but after that they were wrong in regard to England not being involved in war.

Every person has the right to place his own construction on what reliance is to be placed on spirit prophecy. But is it right to condemn the spirit guides without a hearing?

It may be that in the days to come many of us will have to remould part of our philosophy. The belief in the spirit world's ability to forecast may have to be abandoned.

Our advice is: do not be rash. It is very easy to destroy. It is very hard to rebuild. Mediumship is a fact that has withstood endless challenges for over 90 years. Survival has been proved thousands of times, and there is abundant testimony to spirit healing. The cured sufferers are with us as living witnesses. There will be many debates as to who has failed - the spirit guides or earthly beings. It is the duty of Spiritualists to remain at their posts and guard the truths they have won after years of bitter fighting.

Whatever the future holds in store for us all, let us remember our loyalty must be to truth and truth alone. Then, we cannot fail."

There is no doubt that the previous article, while saying nothing against the religion of Spiritualism itself, can have done little to encourage the popularity of spirit guides, at least as they used to be regarded. It would be wrong, however, to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Spiritualism is the only religion to depend as much upon proof as upon faith, and it contains much of the best proof for the existence of a continuous occurrence of paranormal events. I asked Psychic News Editor Tony Ortzen to write for GG on any aspect of the subject that he felt needed bringing to light; he chose to examine the value of psychical research.

PROOF! by Tony Ortzen.

One of the most frequent criticisms I have heard hurled against psychic phenomena is that they are not repeatable. This is wrong. Psychic phenomena are repeatable in the sense that so-called inexplicable happenings have occurred in all cultures throughout history. Of course, the 'not-repeatable' argument is valid in the sense that phenomena will not appear on demand in the laboratory or seance room. By their very nature, psychic happenings are both fickle and fleeting. And throughout history psychic phenomena have captured the imagination and investigative skills of some of the world's greatest thinkers. Let me take one case at random. It concerns eminent scientist Sir William Crookes, the spirit materialisation Katie King, and the medium Florence Cook. Sir William was one of the greatest physicists of the last century. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1863, received the Royal Gold Medal in 1875, the Davy Medal in 1888, Sir Joseph Copley Medal in 1904, and the Order of Merit in 1910. At different times he was President of the Royal Society, the Chemical Society, the Institution of Electrical Engineers, the British Association, and the Society for Psychical Research. Sir William is probably best known in our field for his research into the Katie King materialisations.

He painstakingly recorded the seances at which he sat. In his "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism", Sir William gives a thrilling picture of the seances he attended. At one D.D. Home seance, "a small hand and arm, like a baby's, appeared playing about a lady who was sitting next to me. It then passed to me and patted my arm and pulled my coat several times." At another time, a finger and thumb were seen to pick the petals from a flower in Mr. Home's button-hole, and lay them in front of several persons who were sitting near him. "A hand has repeatedly been seen by myself and others playing the keys of an accordion, both of the medium's hands being visible at the same time, and sometimes being held by those near him." The hands and fingers do not always appear to me to be solid and life-like. "Sometimes, indeed, they present more the appearance of a nebulous cloud partly condensed into the form of a hand." Two pages later he describes, "phantom forms and faces." I can do no better than to quote Sir William's words.

These are the rarest of the phenomena I have witnessed. The conditions requisite for their appearance appear to be so delicate, and such trifles interfere with their production, that only on very few occasions have I witnessed them under satisfactory test conditions. I will mention two of these cases. In the dusk of the evening, during a seance with Mr. Home at my house, the curtains of a window about eight feet from Mr. Home were seen to move. A dark, shadowy, semi-transparent form, like that of a man, was then seen by all present, standing near the window, waving the curtain with his hand. As we looked, the form faded away and the curtains ceased to move. The following is a still more striking instance. As in the former case, Mr. Home was the medium. A phantom form came from a corner of the room, took an accordion in its hand, and then glided about the room playing the instrument. The form was visible to all present for many minutes, Mr. Home also being seen at the same time. Coming rather close to a lady who was sitting apart from the rest of the company, she gave a slight cry, upon which it vanished."

REVIEWS

Writing from his Mornington Road, NW London, home on March 30th 1874, Sir William describes a Florence Cook seance thus: "After

"After Katie had been walking amongst us and talking for some time, she retreated behind the curtain which separated my laboratory, where the company was sitting, from my library which did temporary duty as a cabinet. In a minute she came to the curtain and called me to her, saying, "Come into the room and lift my medium's head up, she has slipped down." Katie was then standing before me dressed in her usual white robes and turban head-dress. I immediately walked into the library up to Miss Cook, Katie stepping aside to allow me to pass. I found Miss Cook had slipped partially off the sofa, and her head was hanging in a very awkward position. I lifted her on to the sofa, and in so doing had satisfactory evidence, in spite of the darkness, that Miss Cook was not attired in the "Katie" costume, but had on her ordinary black velvet dress, and was in a deep trance. Not more than three seconds elapsed between my seeing the white-robed Katie standing before me and my raising Miss Cook on to the sofa from the position into which she had fallen."

But perhaps the most outstanding observations are the differences Sir William noticed between the medium and the spirit form. As he records: "Katie's height varies; in my house I have seen her six inches taller than Miss Cook. Last night, with bare feet and not tiptoeing, she was four and a half inches taller than Miss Cook. Katie's neck was bare last night; the skin was perfectly smooth to both touch and sight, whilst on Miss Cook's neck is a large blister, which under similar circumstances is distinctly visible and rough to the touch. Katie's ears are unpierced, whilst Miss Cook habitually wears earrings. Katie's complexion is very fair, while that of Miss Cook is very dark. Katie's fingers are much longer than Miss Cook's, and her face is also larger. In manners and ways of expression there are also many decided differences.."

In the last chapter Sir William says that to every test he proposed, the medium "at once agreed to submit to with the utmost willingness . . . I have never seen anything approaching the slightest symptom of a wish to deceive." To imagine that a 15-year old schoolgirl should be able to carry out for three years fraudulent mediumship - Crookes terms it "so gigantic an imposture" - is dismissed. Several fascinating points arise from taking Sir William's testimony. Obviously, he cannot now be put into a witness box and cross-examined; neither can we have a rerun of the supernormal phenomena he witnessed. So what do we do? Do we accept Sir William's word? Or simply, because a century or more has passed, do we dismiss his documented details as entirely worthless? My contention is this. There comes a point, especially regarding historical happenings, where one simply has to act on the basis that someone was telling the truth; there comes a point where, because events cannot be restaged, one must accept the description of them by others. Though I dislike intensely blanket generalisations, a criticism that could be levelled against some psychical researchers is that they are simply not trusting enough. They refuse to believe an event because they were not present! They refuse to believe a report because they did not write it. This does not mean psychic researchers have to be gullible believe-alls. But what I find astonishing is that some will invent fantastic theories rather than accept the simplest phenomena with which they are presented. The super-ESP argument is a classic example. How can anything be survival proof, say its adherents, when the details were known to someone on earth, no matter how remote their link with the sitter or communicating entity? It is an absurd theory; there is nothing on earth that is not known to someone or recorded somewhere. Sir William Crookes devoted much of his life to Spiritualism and the paranormal. And if you do not believe his testimony, why should someone accept yours 100 years hence? It is a point well worth thinking about.



BEYOND THE BODY. An Investigation of Out-of-the-Body Experiences, by Susan Blackmore.
HAUNTINGS AND APPARITIONS, by Andrew Mackenzie. Reviewed by Kevin McClure.
Both published by Heinemann, on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research. £8.50.

These are the first two of four books which form an important part of the Centenary celebrations of the S.P.R. I shall be returning to them in CG7, as part of a consideration of the Society's achievements; by then, the other volumes will have appeared.

Both are excellent books. While those of you who have been involved with the Society for many years will find many of the apparition cases familiar, few will have the up-to-date knowledge of the cases that Mackenzie's book imparts. The majority, however, are in for a treat and, possibly, a surprise. It is too easy to forget the amount of research into spontaneous cases undertaken in the past by members of the Society, and we simply have much of the best of it presented here, in an intelligent, but not exclusive manner.

Cases are drawn from almost the whole of the hundred years; some, such as the Cheltenham Hauntings, are classics, others are much more modern, but none the less informative. For many CG readers an excellent summary of the Versailles story will be of great interest. This possible time-slip/time-lapse case, quite exhaustively investigated, has much in common with current ufo cases, even down to the "Oz" effect, where reality, sound, and ordinary action are set aside for a period, during which the percipient receives apparently paranormal information. Here, the author brings us right to the present with theories and explanations, but certainly still believes many elements of the story as originally presented. If only investigators had been using regression hypnosis when the case was first publicised!

Mackenzie primarily restricts himself to the business of case studies, but his consideration of theories is cogent and wide-ranging. The book could almost be subtitled 'The Best of the S.P.R.' I sincerely hope that libraries will take this chance to present real standard work on hauntings in place of the nonsense they usually buy. And I hope that researchers in other disciplines will take time to learn how investigation was undertaken in these most important cases.

As anyone who saw Sue Blackmore speak at Leicester will know, she contrives to maintain a remarkable balance between personal enthusiasm for her subject, and professional scepticism and objectivity. Many were left confused by a parapsychology Ph.D. who could both tell her audience how to have an OOBE, yet explain that the experience resulting would probably have no objective reality! In this book, which is undoubtedly the best overview of this tantalising subject, she takes a single-minded course through the pitfalls of historical cases, astral projection, lucid dreams, near-death experiences, visions of the dying, the tradition of the human double, experimental work, imagery and hallucinations, and the various methods claimed to induce the experience in its many forms. Never once does she lose her way: never once does she seem to miss any important factor. It has the ring of a genuine investigation because that is just what it is; like most of the best investigations, it started with the need to explain an experience she herself had (and in which I, for some possibly synchronous, possibly random reason, managed to get involved. It appears to have had a marked effect on both our lives).

This is where the particular value of this book lies for those of us involved in dealing with claims of paranormal experience. Sue has always worked on the basis that whatever the investigator may think of the experience, it is real, and of great import, to the experient. It is us, the investigators and researchers, who give the tag 'paranormal' in the light of our experience and opinion, or who conclude that some more conventional explanation is sufficient. In current cases we may be able to convince the witness we are right; in historical cases, which are if anything more important, we can only guess. If we all make use of the lessons of this personal, but thoroughly scientific investigation, we may have a clearer idea what we ourselves are aiming to achieve, and how to achieve it.

MAN KIND IN AMNESIA, by Immanuel Velikovsky.
Published by Sidgwick & Jackson, at £7.95.

Reviewed with passion by Jenny Randles.

I have never been a convert of Immanuel Velikovsky and his earth-shaking books about global catastrophe in the ancient past. Indeed, I have only read one of his works, the first and most influential (Worlds in Collision) - and that a long while ago. I was aware that he had recently died, and so did not anticipate any new books from him (except maybe via automatic writing!) and I probably cared even less. However, I have learned to trust to my intuition (if that is all it is). Quite often I have been 'led' instinctively to books which have a great deal of relevance to the present stage of development of my own research. It no longer surprises me to find what I need or want 'by accident'. For I suspect it is not an 'accident' at all. The theory clumsily known as PMIR (Psi-Mediated Instrumental Response) appears to me quite validated. Our subconscious is capable of manipulating our actions (without conscious awareness) and using powers of ESP that on a rational level we probably do not believe we possess.

So it was that I found my hands clutching the new Velikovsky book at my most recent foray into the Peter Rogerson infested waters of Warrington Central Library (he works there in the reference section!) I did not muse on the thought that I had found Worlds in Collision a catastrophic bore. I did not even look to see what this posthumous offering was about (more of the same colliding planets, I assumed). I did idly notice that the book was only a few days old and had obviously not been read by anyone previously. But when I opened it up I soon discovered why my PMIR had been geared into action.

In recent months I have been coming to some strange conclusions (far distant from where I once expected my study of various anomalies would lead). These link the pregnant threat of global holocaust (care of our friendly neighbourhood nuclear war) with paranormal occurrences. There are deep personal reasons for my feelings (which I will not go into here), aside from my more empirical deductions. But in Alien Contact (the last of my books presently in print) I suggested that alien visions might be psychodramas emergent from the mind, which on a deep level had picked up precognitive ripples and set PMIR in motion. Some future catastrophe was fast approaching and the mind was duly advising us of that fact, in the most effective and dramatic way it could.

I have found myself enlarging on this idea in virtually everything I have written since, including an (as yet) unpublished novel which develops the thesis into the end times to see how things might progress. Even my most recent UFO book (which I suppose ought to have had nothing much to do with this) contains a few distant echoes of these concepts. And in articles of late I have been looking at the creative culture of modern society and finding evidence that sensitives might also be detecting the warning signs and translating them in personally suitable fashion. Consequently I was most interested in Velikovsky's new book. For here he argues what in most senses is the opposite of myself, but in many fundamental elements we have the same idea. He believes (as a psychiatrist, which he initially was) that much of our present social trauma is due to shock amnesia on a global scale. We have repressed the memory from our "collective unconscious" (in a Jungian sense) of the planetary cataclysms of the past. We do this because we cannot face the fact that our earth is unstable and vulnerable. But since what is repressed has to be relived (a psychodynamic doctrine) we are driving ourselves towards Armageddon to face up to our inheritance - doom!

This view is, of course, an extremely disturbing one. Velikovsky himself says he kept it until this late because he knew how unpopular the concept would be (which is saying something considering the extraordinary degree of aggression shown against his previous books . . . even though in some respects he has proven to be a better scientist than the scientists!) The very act of forgetting past events

is sufficient ammunition to instil total antagonism against anyone who rekindles those ghosts from the mental past. But, of course, if Velikovsky is right these archetypal engrams must be rekindled, if we are to avoid going through a grisly action replay. The book cites a good deal of apparent evidence from ancient philosophers through to more modern social enigmas (such as the mass suicide which shocked the world from the Guyanan bush in 1978). He uses this to argue that some men have had insights to the ancient disasters. Had he been aware (or willing to consider) the many aspects of the paranormal which merit consideration, he would have had much more strength to his theory. Perhaps his most persuasive discussion is of reactions to tornadoes in Topeka, Kansas. The city was devastated by one in 1966 and is always prone to those deadly whirlwinds. But most citizens seem not only to ignore the threat, but to revel in it. People actually find things to do outdoors when a storm is announced as being imminent, as if placing themselves in a position of maximum danger.

One can, I trust, see the parallel with our present apathy towards the threat of nuclear war. To any logical person such a war must be seen as inevitable (if not sooner, then later. There is just too much that could go wrong to cause it. Yet in the main it might be said that we anticipate the prospect and do little to lessen it. It is scarcely conceivable that we are toying with the fate of our world. But we are. Velikovsky discusses cycles of war and claims to have found a 26-year periodicity. 1914 (WW1) 1940 (WWII) 1966 (Vietnam & Middle East). This extrapolates to 1992, a date which shook me when I worked it out. For it fits so neatly with prophecies by the likes of Nostradamus, Cayce, Dixon, and the fact that we are running out of Popes (just two more after the present one who is prophesied as 'De Labore Solaris' . . . i.e. the pope from Poland at the time of the time of the labour movement Solidarity) (that's pushing the Latin a bit isn't it? KM) Even more personally perturbing is that 1992 is the precise date given for Armageddon by the young psychic Gaynor Sunderland (who seems to know about these things).

I am, of course, aware that Velikovsky's results could be interpreted in line with my theory of pre-action, just as mine could be tied in with his retro-action. Or maybe Peter Rogerson is right when he argues that all this fear is just symptomatic of a global paranoia. I think it is more than that. But the cause is less important than the effect . . . and this warning seems to me to be crystal clear. I never thought I would be supporting Velikovsky, but as this important book shows, there will be no second chance. If we fail to heed these echoes in our mind mankind may receive its suicidal wish . . . and very soon!

LETTERS

From Dr. Vernon Harrison.

In his letter (Common Ground, No.5, May 1982, page 28) Peter Rogerson says that I appear "to believe that national and local archives are sleepy, hidden places, inhabited only by frock-coated librarians and grey bearded sages". I believe nothing of the sort. I use these places. I do say that one does not normally enter them without good reason and a clear idea of what are the questions to which one seeks answers. They are not the haunt of casual browsers.

Rogerson says, in connexion with the Harry Stockbridge case, that "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". The second part of this statement is pure supposition, inadmissible as evidence: the first is patently false. The statement that Stockbridge was "Tyneside Scottish" is found neither in the roll of honour nor in the local papers, nor can the personal details be derived from these sources.

In regard to the date of death, the local papers and roll of honour were contradicted by the War Office official list published by HMSO. Local papers are not notable for

their accuracy, and one would normally give credence to the official list; but the final authority was the death certificate. We have to assume that the hypothetical perpetrator of the fraud was able to steer clear of an erroneous date in the official list and an erroneous rank in the local papers.

Of the four sitters present when the information given in the roll of honour and local papers was given, only Miss A.H. had been to Leicester (for one day). There is no evidence or even suspicion that any of them had ever been to examine the school war memorial and roll of honour, let alone the local newspapers of 34 years previously.

The possibility of fraud has already been examined adequately by Dr.Gauld. As in legal proceedings, one must ask, cui bono? The usual motives for fraud, money and publicity, are absent in this case. There

From Paul Devereux.

I note a comment on page 14 of CG 5 that Ifear could be part of a new ufological myth: "... Hilary Evans' demolition of the Dyfed Triangle". This is the second or third time recently that I have come across this sort of reference to Hilary's visit to Dyfed in various publications. The fear I expressed in an earlier CG seems to be coming to pass - namely, that Hilary's useful and correct-ive study of the "Dyfed Enigma" is passing into ufolore as a demolition job. It was no such thing. Hilary showed up suspect, pulp-paperback reportage for what most of us knew it to be, and showed that the 'human interest' element in the events - the claimed experiences of the family at Ripperston Farm - were particularly dubious. He laced this with a number of his views about the likelihood or other wise of certain other UFO events reported during the 1977 wave. These one can take or leave as one likes, because they have as much but no more weight than the reports



is no evidence that any of the sitters derived any benefit as a result of the sitting. We have to postulate that one of the four must have gone to Leicester surreptitiously, done the substantial amount of research necessary to establish the facts reported, rigged the ouija board at the sitting and then allowed the records to remain on file unexamined for some twenty years, long after the original circle had disintegrated - and all this to no purpose. A person acting thus must be plain daft.

If the Stockbridge case were unique, this might be the explanation; but "drop-in" communications are by no means rare. The fraud theory will not do.



made by the alleged witnesses themselves. I attempted to point out that in at least one or two cases Hilary's own views were as loose as the reports he was criticising.

I just mention this as there is sometimes a tendency to endow 'healthy scepticism' (which it isn't always) with more value than the testimony of alleged experients, and myths reflecting scepticism are of no greater value than those reflecting gullibility.

(Editor's note. I may be at fault here; Hilary Evans has never, himself, made so much of his Welsh expedition. Nonetheless, I do think that he demolished the nonsense of a "Dyfed Triangle", whatever that meant, and that while it might still be appropriate to speak of a 'flap' (UFO parlance), it is hard even to regard what survives as credibly reported and investigated as a wave. I think the whole business is best regarded as an exercise in how not to investigate objectively.)

I'm not going to make any attempt to place this article "in context". Most of you will be familiar with the work of Paul Screeton, if not through CG, then probably from his own Earth Mysteries books, or from his work as former editor of the 'Ley Hunter'. I expect that a good many of you subscribe to his invaluable 'Ancient Skills and Wisdom Review'. All this is my excuse for not trying to explain what a "suburban shaman" may be. The article tells you what one does, and if you want to find out why Garner, in particular, should be one, read his first five childrens' books. They are absolutely superb, and a joy to read.

Alan Garner and the Shamanistic Process by Paul Screeton

When writer Alan Garner made a move to kill an actor it was a dramatic form of neo-dissociation, or as Garner intellectualised it, "a Western European's experience of a primitive catastrophic process." Its cause and resolution sheds much light on shamanism, a subject with which Garner is familiar.

In fact when sketching out the framework for a book, I had decided Garner already fulfilled certain criteria for being a "suburban shaman". He wrote books for children to read in their homes and mixed the everyday world with the realm of myth. In particular, "The Guizer" revealed a sympathy with the Trickster archetype, though its presentation was a dubious enterprise. A gallant failure, I guess. I had also read of strange events surrounding a production of "The Owl Service" for television and a later T.V. play. So when I came across the transcript of a talk he had given, full of self-revelation and mental turmoil, I felt doubly justified in choosing him as a topic.

"Inner Time" is a lucid account of a psychological phenomenon associated with the shamanistic process. It was delivered as one of a series of lectures at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in early 1975.

Perhaps, like me, you saw and enjoyed the television adaptation by Garner of his novel "The Owl Service". He began work on transferring the words into pictures in the autumn of 1968. The process produced an unexpected malaise. Eventually the scripts were completed and filming began in April the next year. He found filming on location equally unpleasant. He felt "pain, a threat from no direction, and a threat with no shape." Garner began arriving late for shooting, experienced nausea and then was regularly physically sick. It developed into a threat of paralysis and rage against the actors.

The symptoms combined in one moment of blind fury. A particular actor was incompetent in Garner's opinion and when it came to filming a delicate climax he was clowning about, antagonising everyone and lacking any emotion for the sensitive scene to be shot. Garner cracked. He wanted him dead and he would see to it he was. Garner recalled daylight blanking out except for a clear line around the actor's head. A cry from some primeval bestiality broke through and he moved to attack. But the sound engineer inserted his microphone boom between Garner's legs and gave him a flick into a puddle. Lifting Garner to his feet, he observed, "I know, but wait till next week. We still need him."

From then until filming was completed Garner kept a low profile. It was all over on June 21st; summer solstice. Garner's psychological health deteriorated further. He slept, he became like a zombie, then went seemingly mad. With sufficient nous to diagnose that he needed help badly, he sought a psychiatrist.

It is necessary to use Garner's own words: "what happened to me was something normal; yet it was superficially so close to the esoteric and the occult that it could easily be misrepresented and misunderstood. And if 'normal' should be thought too imprecise a word, let me define it as 'that which is found to be common among a group or species.'"

What Garner precipitated would be familiar to Australian Aborigines. They would say he entered "Dreamtime". Not insanity, but the conscious awareness of a dimension. The veil of illusion had been rent. A psychotherapist performs a shamanistic function in our disordered society, and it was to an experienced practitioner that Garner went. With clinical precision 'Mr. Smith' needed to ask only one question: in what tense and singular or plural was "The Owl Service" written. It being in the past tense and the third person. When filming, that distancing dissolved, and two times were present at once. The time bomb ceased its ticking and exploded.

Scientology aside, and in strictly clinical terms, 'Mr. Smith' simply removed an engram. An engram being, in neuro-physiology, the term for a hypothetical change in the protoplasm of the neural tissue. It has been posited as accounting for memory. Some experience or stimulus creates it. The brain files away all our experiences, pleasant or hurtful. A smell, a sound and our other senses can reactivate an engram or it can surface through a dream, drugs, or hypnosis. We may wish baleful engrams stay forgotten, but once imprinted they live on in inner time. This inner time creates illusions. Pleasantly memorable encounters from timeswidely separate in calendar time can be recalled simultaneously. Similarly the starry sky we see is composed of bodies existing at different times, with many of those flickering lights having been extinguished aeons ago. Engrams are, however, infinite. Put out the candle and tomorrow it burns bright again.

The psychoanalyst C.G. Jung would have known equally how to deal with Garner. "When I see a man in a savage rage with something outside himself," he noted, "I know that he is, in reality, wanting to be savage towards his own unconscious self."

That is the engram store from which occasional attack is normal. It is the unconscious where during childhood and adolescence in particular we store our fears and aspirations, likes and dislikes. What we prefer not to face or cannot comprehend we force into forgetfulness. But maturity brings with it memories, nagging prejudices and elements of passion which retain the same vitality as at the moments of repression. Their hidden nature creates the illusion that they play no part in our lives, but they can be dominating the conscious mind, causing confusion, depression and generally upsetting the physical and mental health of the individual. They must be faced, be challenged, be overcome, be exorcised. There is a strong case to be argued that engrams can be transmitted genetically. That is beyond the scope of this article, but an inherited inner time could explain Jung's collective unconscious and psyche of a given race.

Garner concluded that writers unconsciously plant encapsulated engrams in their characters. When an engram is manifested simultaneously in inner and outer time, and as when Garner moved to assault the actor, the disorientation can lead in the direction of madness. A memory trace of Garner as character from some place in 1950 met himself as in the actor on a Welsh mountain in 1969. From a one-dimensional engram was created a fourth dimension scenario as the inner-time coordinates were identical, but had been externalised to the present.

"Mr. Smith" explained in simple terms to Garner that energy holding an engram can be released, one's coordinates can be recast, and not to be afraid. Leaving Garner as someone to walk in "Dreamtime", and "to be the vehicle of myth, to go voluntarily (and now knowingly) to inner time, and to come back increased instead of diminished . . ." Sensibly Garner also warns that "no one should be seduced into foolhardy experiments by any superficial lure in the experiences I relate."

We now come to the crux of the matter. Is Garner a bona fide shaman, or at least partially one? He comments: "For what I am, and what Mr. Smith does, in other societies is seen quite differently. To the shamans of Turukhansk I should not fulfil their recruiting standards."

I feel Garner, despite his subsequent argument to the contrary and sympathetic portrait of the traditional shaman, is too modest. He allowed himself to become a keen and willing channel for mythology, chose to live on a site dating back to neolithic usage and below the brooding Alderley Edge, opened doors of perception which all writers of any worth cannot fail to do, and was spiritually reborn. Certain commentators have noted the relationship between mystical vocation and nervous instability, but it would be wrong to assume a shaman must be a neuropath. In fact, the receipt of shamanistic gifts presupposes the resolution of a psychic crisis; an integration bringing about initiation, which one must assume occurred in Garner's case. An illness or epileptic attack can reveal the vocation, and initiation becomes the cure. Hence the argument that shamanism is a mental ailment is clearly absurd, for they become shamans because they succeeded in getting well.

When choosing Garner as a subject, I recalled that somewhere I had read that he had been seriously ill as a child. This suggested another clue to his special capacities. In his self-revelatory address he had reported a second trauma, and revisiting "Mr. Smith". This was triggered when his opera "Potter Thompson" was about to go into rehearsal and malaise returned. His analyst took him back to the engram and it led him to visualise himself, aged six, vomiting after eating the top half of a teacake covered with blackcurrant jam. He then developed the first symptoms of what was later diagnosed as spinal and cerebral meningitis.

Garner did indeed spend most of his early life ill in bed, and the wartime blackouts may equally have formed the mental stimulus to create his worlds of mystery and fantasy. He says he was "thrown back on myself", won scholarships to Manchester Grammar School and, after National Service, to Oxford University. Endurance plays a major role in Shamanism and despite his early bedridden past, drove himself to become Northern Counties Sprint Champion.

That early solitude and precarious balance between life and death may well have manifested itself on the psychic plane as a parallel to the torture and abandonment of initiation, only to be another factor in the arsenal accumulated awaiting triggering. He found following his mental maelstrom an explosion of literary projects, and "I am told my work is richer now, less diffused."

For those unfamiliar with the literary output of Alan Garner, a brief resume seems in order. The earliest novels were "The Weirdstone of Brisingamen", and "The Moon of Gomrath". Garner's preoccupation with myth saw even more powerful expression in the following three novels: "Elidor", "The Owl Service", and "Red Shift". His method was to take a traditional ballad or other encapsulation of myth, and bring it to life again in a fresh context. Accusations of opportunism or shallow imaginative capacity are groundless, for any writer of fiction will tell you elements will conform to an objective pattern with the author's subjectivity merely the icing on the cake. This inability to come to terms with this process whereby a myth can select its teller, and rather than he tell it his own way have it told as the living myth demands, is what Garner believes caused him to appear to go mad.

In addition to the traumas experienced by Garner on the set of the making of "The Owl Service", others found it a "jinx", as journalists love to call it. Rosalie Horner explored this for 'Daily Express' readers. "The Owl Service" was based on a Welsh legend about a woman transformed into an owl and a strong strand was provided by Garner's mother-in-law, who rescued a dinner service with a strange aura from a barn attached to a Somerset family home. This was owl-patterned and guests said they got indigestion when they ate off it, and found the birds on it staring at them. "The plates seemed a perfect kind of battery waiting to be switched on," said Garner.

Garner spent a holiday at Bryn Hall, in North Wales, and realised this was just the sort of place he had been trying to visualise for the book. Long after publication, he learned that a film crew had been in the attic there and found a brass knocker in the form of an owl. Equally strangely, one character's mother is called Nancy and in the gardener's house on the estate the name "Nancy" was discovered on a beam. Chance? Occult intervention? Who knows?

But it was the real-life tragedies to follow which are even creepier. The memorable photography was by David Wood, who died at the age of 44. The character Gwyn was played by Michael Holden, brutally murdered in a Mayfair public house in 1977. Gwyn's step-sister was played by Gillian Hills, who had strange experiences and chose to opt out of acting, as apparently did another performer in the series, Francis Wallis; at least in 1978, when the original black and white showing was rebroadcast by Granada in colour. Then in 1980, his television play "To Kill a King" was screened. It was about a writer who wakes up in the middle of the night to face a nightmare that ends his career as a writer. It was filmed in his 15th Century home, Toad Hall, bought for £500 when he quit Magdalen College, Oxford, which has what he called a "presence." In an earlier article it was a long-dormant poltergeist. "An old woman who lived here when it was two tied cottages told me she had seen a picture float from the wall into the middle of her room. I asked her what she did and she said, 'I put it back.'" Shots also showed the artifact in his "back garden", the radio telescope of neighbouring Jodrell Bank. As they filmed, no doubt astronomers were discussing black holes, quasars, white dwarfs and the mystery of the red shift.

"Red Shift" was a post-breakdown, multi-layered novel and despite what others may say, I feel his work since has become too abstruse for me - never mind the children at whom it is aimed. Recently I saw a huge stack of his £4 published price "The Guizer" reduced to 75p in a Leeds remainderer's (CG even introduces you to new words!) bookshop. This work was trumpeted by Hamish Hamilton and is a diligent, crafted, but exceedingly boring book. Slimmer volumes have also appeared and they, too, leave me cold. No doubt there is a "message" but it eludes me. Nevertheless, though his work is not easy, he seems to find particular nerve points to write upon, and his output never fails to leave me intrigued, if not puzzled.

This abstruseness is apparent in a reply to journalist Michael Moynihan, regarding the then forthcoming "Red Shift", when Garner commented on one passage that: "The two young people meet once in a church and quarrel. It is a church near here, where there was a massacre during the Civil War. They do not know about the massacre and the reader will not know. But it will be in the writing. I often go to the church and sit there, hearing the screams." Unless he was spinning a yarn, which I doubt, this suggested shamanistic contact with the dead.

Writing is a funny business. Garner suggests its motivation could be the discharge of engrams. I wrote four novels during puberty and early adulthood, partly to gain a better understanding of myself and my situation. Not that they were embarrassingly puerile - though they hardly had the publishing world agog but coming from a very personal period of my life were no doubt too egocentric and lacking a critical perspective. Perhaps, the pen is mightier than the sword and a re-reading would only open old wounds and create a plethora of stigmata of self-consciousness and regret. If I didn't exorcise the engrams then, I'm not risking unleashing them now!

Garner also suggests that adolescence is especially a time when "the potential universe is open to our comprehension". I agree. No doubt this is why shamans are chosen and trained at such a critical age. Of that period in his life Bob Dylan sang: "I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now." Or Garner's self-described "maturity is a decline from adolescence".

Suppressed engrams, developed prejudices, these conspire to make us old before our time. We miss opportunities. The shaman catches the energy released at puberty and holds on to it for his and the community's benefit. Adolescence is where we choose between the world of security and engrams, and the wider vistas of danger, facing our fears and finding the light. This is free will, and our Western education has no place in its curriculum for it. Not so, primitive tribes. Our survival pattern is geared to the monopolistic, capitalist slave economy, and Garner's analogy of the Aborigine applying Dreamtime techniques to crossing an arid desert naked and yet being unable to cross Sydney alone is apposite. As Garner says, the Australian Pitjantjatjara exist simultaneously with 20th Century city dwellers, but our cultures are essentially 20,000 years apart.

Along the way of so-called civilisation, the dominant breed of supposedly enlightened minds created ever more sophisticated technologies at the expense of the numinous. The complexes, neuroses, hang-ups, engrams, call them what you will, they remain. Few remain humble.

Garner does have that quality, at least with regard to his work. He calls himself a survivor, better equipped to work following his traumas. He understands it "comes through me, not from me", yet he can retain a proper pride in his craft of what could be called translation. He closed his I.C.A. talk by stating:

Perhaps the artist's job is to act as a cartographer for all navigators, and I simply plot the maps of inner stars."

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BACK ISSUES

There are now three back-issues of CG available, at £1 each. I hope, within the next couple of months, to be able to reprint no.3. as well, so if you are ordering any of the others, you might care to enclose £1 extra, and I will send a copy on to you as soon as it is ready. The three issues in stock are;

No.1. May 1981. Hilary Evans on the Dyfed Enigma, Jenny Randles on Oakenholt, poltergeists, and the response of families to anomalous phenomena; Sue Blackmore on Hallucinations and Illusions, and Alan Cleaver on the EVP.

No.4. February 1982. Dr.Vernon Harrison's major article 'Credo' on survival and Super-ESP, Janet & Colin Bord on the Bigfoot/UFO Interface, John Zimmer on publicity seeking in witnesses, Alun Virgin on Ouija Boards etc, and Robert Gilbert taking apart 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail'.

No.5. May 1982. Rod Sorrell on Divination and the I-Ching, Mark Moravec on Psiufo Phenomena, Magda Graham on pagan occultism, and Jenny Randles reporting on the ongoing research project into coincidences.

Please send £1 for each issue (cheques & P.O.'s payable to 'Common Ground') to Kevin McClure, 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester. Thanks!

Like so many of the other authors who write for "Common Ground", Tony Booth is someone I have often corresponded with over the years, but have never met. One day, we shall have to have a meet of all our contributors! Tony is an experienced and established researcher in the North-West, and runs the Paranormal Research Society (who can be contacted at 4, Heaton Road, Bradley Fold, Bolton, Lancs.). His particular interest is the investigation of hauntings.

LOCATING GHOSTS by TONY BOOTH

Anyone who has attempted the unenviable task of investigating ghost phenomena will appreciate that there are immense difficulties encountered in commencing such a project. Unlike many other forms of paranormal research, the apparatus is itself the subject. It is a relatively simple matter to prepare a subject and location for researching ESP; one has merely to obtain a suitable volunteer and serene surroundings, and prepare a format for the experiment. Similarly with, say hypnotic regression, or dowsing, or spirit communication experiments - they all adhere willingly to scientific study and method. But ghost phenomena are different. We cannot hope to produce them at will, in suitable surroundings or at convenient times. Essentially, we cannot prepare for them.

Ghosts are, in one sense, the very essence of all paranormal subjects. They were one of the very first kinds of phenomena to be recorded, one of the first to be investigated seriously, yet we still know little more now than we did a century ago. In researching the subject-matter we find a reason - they are unpredictable, inconvenient, and most difficult to investigate. They are the original enigma shrouded in beliefs, human bias, and a dogmatic trait of illusiveness. Parapsychologists examining the subject find their cause lost before they start, for one of the most complex problems of their investigation is simply to find them.

So where do we start? The media, naturally, supply a constant stream of reports. Newspapers, magazines, and the airwaves appear to have an unquenchable thirst for ghost stories, the consumption of which is almost phenomenal in itself and therefore, not surprisingly, rarely satisfactory in its appraisal of facts. It is an unfortunate truth that most reports are subject to journalistic expansion. That is to say, they tend to exaggerate - well, I suppose they do have to sell newspapers, and what would Sunday be without a good ghost story? Alas, this doesn't help the serious investigator.

Nevertheless they cannot be ignored; newspapers and magazines do offer names and places, and that is a starting point. One must then become detective, and sift through the facts, interview proprietors, and find some way of discovering the reality behind the reports. This in itself is a task requiring patience and an insight into human psychology, for we have to find out who might have been exaggerating - the newspaper reporter or the witness to the phenomenon. Publication of ghost reports often means someone, somewhere is to gain by it. If it's the newspaper, this is easily found out by interviewing the actual witnesses. However, if it's the witness, then only good observation and analysis will detect it.

From my experience, a careful check of details often uncovers the fakes. Managers of pubs, clubs, and so on frequently contact newspapers to inform them that their particular building is haunted, and give a credible background story to

enhance it. This is all part of promotion. A ghost report gives free advertising, sometimes in the national press, free 'word of mouth' publicity and an eye-catching gimmick for the public to remember the location. Clearly it is financially beneficial to have a haunted building frequented by a paying public. The best way of discovering the frauds is to enquire about possibly investigating the site - you will get a resounding 'no'. If you prove the building is 'not' haunted then they have lost their publicity.

But ghosts don't just frequent pubs and clubs of course. One of the most common reports received by newspapers is the haunting of homes, places in which people live. Once again the frauds are easily uncovered. An examination of their home and a carefully-worded interview may uncover problems beside the so-called haunting. For example, they may wish to move from one council property to another, but have not been given permission by the local authority; creating a ghost may help obtain their desired move. Some may complain of nervous tension and even succeed in gaining a doctor's certificate to help matters. Other reports may originate through the occupants desire to attract attention to poor housing. The conclusion is always the same: if the report has been highly publicised, it should be highly suspect. An estimate of one report in twenty being authentic would not, I believe, be far wrong.

But there are other, often more trustworthy means of finding ghosts. One method is to search through pages of accounts of phenomena in ghost compilation books. The market is now more enthusiastic about publishing realistic stories of ghost activity in this form. Tourist boards have even published their own booklets giving details of locations and histories for each area of Great Britain. Well-known authors have produced compilations of ghost reports - one such is Andrew Green. These books offer the parapsychologist an easy method to obtain locations, and their publication is welcome. Most accounts are authentic, and are usually the result of some prolonged research undertaken by the author. Unfortunately, the investigator has still to play detective and sift through the reports, as many may well be outdated and dormant; quite often a simple letter of enquiry will be sufficient for this.

By far the best way of gaining information on 'hauntings' is by word or mouth. We all overhear ghost stories in our everyday life, but rarely enquire further than the description given. As investigators we are in a unique position - we are curious, and can ask questions others may assume answered. We can follow-up a ghost story overheard, either by tracing back through the people who have heard it or, if the data is available, go direct to the location and make enquiries. Reports by word of mouth very often become distorted, but the essential paranormal content is usually factual, and that is all we need.

Of course, experienced investigators will know that once you have overcome the problem of finding a location, another difficulty takes its place - how do you then obtain permission to investigate? For some proprietors it may mean giving the investigators total trust, leaving them alone in the building, hoping they won't damage or steal anything. The investigator has an immense task - he must convince a complete stranger that he is honest, trustworthy, and reliable. That isn't easy! It helps if you are a recognised society or club dealing with the serious study of paranormal activity, and have previous cases to use as references, but the simple fact is that if he doesn't want you to investigate, you never will. At the same time you must assess his credibility and attempt to find out whether the report is factual and authentic, for if you were to involve yourself in something that is purely a publicity statement then word will travel fast among parapsychologists, the press, and the media in general. Perseverance and patience will eventually bring about a location that appears authentic and where the occupants are willing to permit an investigation; that is the initial objective without which the enigma cannot even be tackled. The time you spend obtaining a location often extends beyond the limit of active phenomena occurring there, but no matter how many times you fail to obtain locations, curiosity will ensure that you continue to strive to find one - because you know that to examine ghosts you need first to find them . . . but isn't this where I came in?

Shortly after CG5 went out, containing Alan Cleaver's remarks about the Spiricom machine, I received an intriguing letter from Alexander MacRae, Director of the GEN Research Institute, on Skye. He made a number of pertinent criticisms of the claims so far made, the most direct of which related to the cost of the device. Alan had estimated "several thousand pounds"; MacRae felt that £30 would cover the cost of the basic blocks, excluding the tape-recorder. Consequently, when I heard that MacRae was to go and see for himself what was going on, I decided to ask him to summarise, briefly, his initial reactions when he returned

BREAKTHROUGH! AGAIN?

ALEXANDER MACRAE

I first heard that something unusual was happening in the world of the EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomenon) from Peter Jones and Richard Sheargold. Apparently some people in America had succeeded in producing prolonged 2-way conversations. *Psychic News* announced the inventors as the Metascience Foundation, and Alan Cleaver kindly lent me a sample tape. At first impressed, I gradually grew more suspicious. So I went to America to see the president of Metascience, George Meek.

Metascience's 'Spiricom' is much more complex than previous EVP devices. Their Mk 4 system is as follows; - a set of tones ranging from 131 to 701 Hz is used to amplitude modulate a transmitter set to about 30 Mhz. The transmitted radiation is detected by a receiver, the loudspeaker of which is in another room, together with a tape recorder. I won't bore you with equations, but amplitude modulation produces an interesting effect. Suppose you have a transmitter set to 30 Mhz, and you examine its radio spectrum. What you will find is one line corresponding to 30 Mhz, known as the 'carrier frequency'. Suppose, next, you amplitude modulate this carrier by a 1Khz tone - that is, you vary its energy level 1,000 times a second - then the spectrum now shows three lines, one, at 30 Mhz, the original carrier, plus two new lines, one on each side of the carrier . . . one at 30 Mhz minus 1Khz, called the 'lower side-frequency', the other at 30 Mhz plus 1Khz, called the 'upper side-frequency'. So, if you modulate a 30 Mhz carrier with 13 tones the result is 13 lower side-frequencies plus a carrier plus 13 upper side-frequencies - 27 lines in all - lines packed so finely it is like trying to measure the length of a finger in millionths of an inch.

What the interfering entity has to do is produce a voice-like sound, either by suppressing unwanted side-frequencies, or by enhancing wanted side-frequencies, and it has to manipulate those frequencies in pairs . . . if it affects the 9th lower side-frequency then it also has to affect the 9th UPPER side-frequency . . . if it was to affect only one side we would hear that peculiar and unmistakable distortion known as 'single sideband'. So this is a rather complex - and, to be quite frank - rather unlikely process.

What of those 13 tones . . . do they have an 'occult significance'? They are simply part of a typical glottal pulse spectrum. (Glottal pulses are impulses of air produced by the vocal cords. If you hold a finger to your neck and say the word 'speaks', then you will feel a vibration when you voice the sound '—ea—'. This is called a 'voiced' sound, and these are mainly vowels). Psychoacoustic experiments show that intelligence is carried less by vowels than consonants. For example, 'the rain in Spain' can be said as 'the rine in Spine' or 'the ren in Spen'

or 'the roin in Spoin', and still be understandable. One can even replace all the vowels with a neutral 'uh' sound . . . try saying, 'Thu run in Spun fulls munlu un thu plun'. It still has some intelligibility. But now replace the consonants, with a neutral 'd'. 'De daid id Ddaid daddd daidy id de ddaid'. Which is a little like listening to Beethoven's Fifth in Morse. But here's the rub . . . those 13 tones do not contain the frequencies needed to form consonants

Your knowledge of linguistics can help in EVP research. Take the example on the tape where the Spiricom operator is contacted by an entity said to be a Virginian who died in 1830. The operator says, "You sound like a robot", and the entity replies, "I do? Well maybe I am a robot". Hum

In England, prior to 1830, Regency bucks found it a good bird-pulling gambit to pretend to be French. Thus the drawling scnozz-orientated noise known as an 'upper class accent' entered the English language, along with other contaminations and affectations. In rural Virginia, though, the language remained pure. So should we expect a rural Virginian to say "I do", rather than "Do I?" Should we expect him to say "O.K." as frequently as he does, when this would have been a very new-fangled term in 1830, especially to a (presumably) elderly rural Virginian. More curious still is his familiarity with the word 'robot', which did not exist prior to 1923! The Spiricom operator, William, has a habit of saying 'Oh boy' frequently, and this mannerism is also heard in the entity (who twice asks for permission to laugh), but in a more exaggerated form. So what are we to make of all this?

In the Metascience publications it is pointed out that in the lower astral pranksters and mimics exist. One could have one's leg pulled by an entity claiming to have died centuries before, or equally, to be someone still alive. Although it may cause Great Aunt Agatha of the SPR to reach for the Society's smelling salts, Meek does not seem the sort of chap to call a spade an earth transference implement, or a spirit an altered state of consciousness, and by having the guts to try fitting the astral into an EVP hypothesis he has caused some puzzling features to be seen from a fresh viewpoint. For example, Ellis, Jones, and the writer have remarked upon the abnormal brevity of EVP communications. By attributing this to lower astral contact, Metascience conform well with the findings of Monroe and Swedenborg.

In the UK it was reported that the success of Spiricom was 90% due to the equipment. (it was also said that the equipment cost £2,000 - £3,000). But Metascience are not in the business of selling equipment, and as I understand it there are three principal elements in the Spiricom process; (1) The equipment; (2) The operator; (3) the 'Other Side' contact. In our discussions, Meek showed himself aware of the placebo effect (with regard to another Metascience device, and if a placebo can modify the physiological state then why not the presumably less intractable psychic state? Could it be that what we hear is the result of physical mediumship impinging upon the device, with the device having something of a ritualistic significance, like 'Aum mani padme hum', or 'Abracadabra'? There are other clues which seem to point to this possibility. (1) If we high-pass filter the Spiricom tape we get strongly accentuated speech; but if we replace the cassette with the one bearing the 13 tones, nothing gets through. This shows that the voice frequencies were not present in the original 13 tones. (2) When no entity is present then the 13 tones should come straight through, unmodified, as a background noise. They don't. That continual buzzing you hear is someone somewhere running a glottal pulse rate generator. (3) In EVP research the wide variety of different methods which depend largely on operator preference tend to support the view that if you have confidence in your particular method, then your expectation of results is that much higher. Again, some methods, such as that of the diode, should not work as well as they do - as is pointed out in the Spiricom manual, and by the writer.

and the same, and produces a thoroughly viable thesis that, as many of these examples seem to respond to human interest and intention, then it may be that the phenomena themselves have inherent intelligence, or external control. Evans says no more than that, but absurdly enough it has not been said so convincingly before. By arguing from evidence, for continuity, he strengthens his case no end.

The second example is the recent work of Dr. Alvin Lawson, soon to be presented in full in 'Magonia' (see Abstracts, again). Lawson was the originator of experiments on imaginary abductees, where he regressed intelligent, imaginative students who claimed no UFO experience, and found that they came out with 'memories' very similar to the 'memories' of those who claimed complex UFO encounters. He has now progressed from that to analyse many supposed UFO abduction-type cases, both claimed and suggested, and has found in them numerous consistent elements that suggest that the 'memories' of encounters with aliens are actually sub-conscious interpretations of the trauma of that most common of human experiences, birth. While the 'Birth Trauma' theory is not perfect - not yet - it already presents a strong challenge to many of the accepted patterns of UFO encounters. It, too, argues from evidence, and for continuity and common experience. Though it argues against the paranormal explanation, whereas Evans could be said to have argued for it, the method maintains great credibility. It may be much the sort of method that the worthies of the S.P.R. have tried to use over the years, but it is none the worse for that.

Though approaching what often appear to be engrossing exciting phenomena with an essentially scientific method may seem on the one hand obvious, and on the other rather boring, I feel that such a reminder is timely. Many of us involved in the various areas of paranormal research - particularly, oddly enough, those of us who edit and labour over many of its little journals and magazines - can trace our initial interest back to the latter part of the Sixties, when peace, love, dope, and 'the occult' all rested happily together in our newly open minds. Reading magazines of that period one comes across odd names in odd places; I would think that Colin Bord would like to buy up all the remaining copies of one issue of Gandalf's Garden! But that was what fired our interest, an interest that has been sustained ever since, while taking on more informed, more mature, even, in most cases, more sceptical characteristics. Consequently, it may seem rather cynical to carp on about the way in which we represent ourselves and our subject in public now. Nonetheless, I think I should do so.

I'm writing this the day after the BBC, on 'Believe it or Not', yet again managed to make ufology look thoroughly absurd. Knowing that some individuals who ought to be among our leading researchers - they certainly have the knowledge and ability to be - are chasing round the country seeking buried treasure, receiving and giving 'psychic' messages, even fighting "psychic battles" is no comfort at all; I am appalled at the thought of what the media will make of it when (not if) they find out. It may be that we are Christians, or Buddhists, or Theosophists, or Spiritualists. We may believe that there are people under the earth, or that the world is about to end, or that a new age is a-coming, or that ancient man knew all the secrets of the universe. We may even, some of us, believe that we have been 'chosen' to play some vital role in the future of the world, in conjunction with extra-terrestrials. But so long as we wish to be regarded as serious, credible researchers, and to represent a serious body, be it A.S.S.A.P., the S.P.R., UFOIN, BUFORA, or any other, any such beliefs must take a back seat. It may seem a little naive to regard our research as a cause, but if it wasn't in some way, then I doubt that so many of us would be prepared to put so much time and effort into it. It would be nice if we could all 'come out' with our hopes, beliefs, and convictions, but just yet they are only likely to meet with a gale of laughter. For now, I suspect that we should discuss them between consenting adults, in private. To the public, and the media in particular, we should present our strongest evidence, and our most cogent and convincing spokesmen and women.

KEVIN McCLURE.

Being as I can have this page printed for no extra cost, it seems sensible to fill it with some items that were too late to include elsewhere

I was very sorry to hear from Leslie Price of the death of Alun Virgin, who co-authored the excellent 'Ouija' article in CG4. Alun, who had one of the most comprehensive memories I've ever come across, was a mine of information on fringe religions and religious experience. He has helped me greatly on a number of occasions in my research, and I will miss his phone-calls greatly. Several of us will wish to extend our sympathies to Margaret, his wife.

On a happier note, congratulations to Sam and Bob Rickard (cast in order of effort involved) on the birth of their second son, Frederick on 17.8.82. As yet, there have been no reports of phenomena accompanying the birth.

An important event arranged jointly by ASSAP and the much-improved BUFORA takes place in Manchester on October 9th. This is a seminar on the subject of the Witness and the Investigator, and the day will include demonstrations, exercises, and mini-lectures on the subjects of interviewing technique, perception, and ethical relationships between witness and investigator. Though, due to the experience of those who are putting the event on (and because most research is UFO research) the material will be UFO-oriented, the questions raised will apply to investigation of any spontaneous phenomena: for a ticket and further details of venue, etc, send £2 (£1.50 for ASSAP and BUFORA members) to Peter Warrington, 5, North Avenue, Burnage, Manchester, M19 2WR. (Cheques & P.O.'s made payable to BUFORA Ltd please).

Finally, please remember to renew both your ASSAP memberships and your subs to 'Common Ground'. Your support is vital, and very much appreciated.