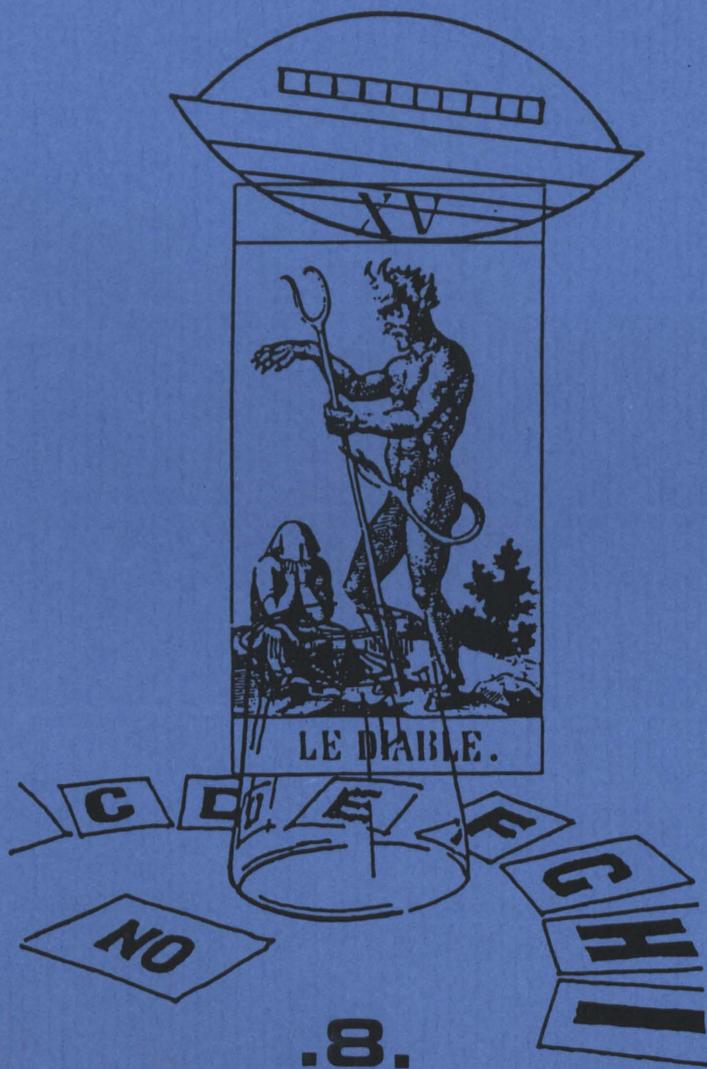


COMMON GROUND



The Radical Journal of
the Paranormal

COMMON GROUND

Eight

Firstly, sincere apologies are due for the long delay in publishing this issue. Perhaps it has been the curse of the Ley Hunters, or something altogether less exotic, but more or less everything that could have gone wrong with preparing the copy did, and we lost not only time, but a fair amount of money as well. To try to catch up with a schedule that never really existed anyway, we are putting out issue nine more or less simultaneously; news of future plans and changes appear on the enclosed insert, and are explained in the Closing Remarks of CG9.

In order to publish the majority at least of the excellent material we had to hand, the Journal Listings have been omitted from both these issues - apologies to both readers and fellow editors - but will be restored in all their glory in number ten. The improved appearance of most of the contents is entirely due to the excellent John Rimmer of Magonia Magazine who, working under the direct control of Boba Fett and the Intergalactic Bounty Hunters has done a great deal of typesetting to a very high standard in a very short space of time at a cost that amounts to commercial suicide. Without him, after having the whole thing typed by a dyslexic typist, the lot would probably have come out like Tintin, in manuscript! Next time, however, we will come to a firm arrangement over the size of margins!

We hope you enjoy this issue - things will get better yet . . .

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The Layman's Guide to the Archeological and Statistical Evidence for Leys

by Clive Potter

Orthodox archaeologists have often been criticised for poorly presenting their case against the ley theory, using ill-defined concepts and arguing in a non-scientific, often emotional way. Until both sides understand one another's terms reasoned debate is impossible, and the ley theory will continually be debunked as belonging to the 'lunatic fringe' camp, and supporters of the ley theory will at the same time attack archaeologists as being reactionary and archaic in their ideas and approaches.

The case against the ley theory needs to be established first, and there are several main arguments against it. The first is that current archaeological thinking is opposed to such interpretations of the available archaeological data; such concepts cannot be attributed to known human behaviour against the background of the prehistoric landscape.

It is assumed that leys were set out on the ground from point to point, implying that the landscape was sufficiently cleared for the marker sites to be inter-visible. Current archaeological work suggests that the prehistoric landscape was heavily forested, but there is also evidence which can be interpreted as implying the existence of large scale deforestation occurring as early as the Neolithic (fourth to third Millennium).

"Pollen analysis suggests a general distinction between the areas of the chalk in southern and eastern England as being an area of large clearings, and the rest of the British Isles where only small-scale clearings took place". [1] That there was regional variation in forest clearance is indicated by the environmental evidence, and the fact is that large areas of Britain remained uncleared. During the Bronze Age the environmental evidence indicates that the pattern indicated in the Neolithic was extended, and the landscape consequently changed. Round barrow cemeteries were often sited on false crests implying that there were large areas of open landscape. During the Bronze Age podsolisation of brown earth soils occurred, resulting from the exhaustion and subsequent leaching of the soil. The construction of large henges, for example, required large quantities of timber, and indicate large scale deforestation and forest planning, whilst the construction of barrows of turf again implying extensive tracts of open grassland. Settlement expansion probably started within the Neolithic and continued into the Bronze Age. "There is little environmental evidence available, but it is rather unlikely that clearance was undertaken simply for the construction of barrows." [2] In fact the building of such a monument was mainly undertaken in a landscape that had undergone a period of cultivation and abandonment.

The reality of landscape alignments and the extent of prehistoric man's abilities to survey and construct linear features can be illustrated by the existence of cursus (linear constructions of earthwork banks and ditches) and 'ranch' boundaries in Wessex and the East Midlands, which imply that the prehistoric landscape was much more extensively cleared, settled and organised than previously thought. "It is the fields and land allotments, however, which provide an overwhelming impression that within prehistory as well as in the Roman

period very large areas were subject to orderly arrangement." [3] Such features demonstrate the existence of a high level of organisation involved in the surveying and partitioning of the landscape during the prehistoric period. Even the river valleys, probably thought to have been unsettled, were utilised for grazing, and some deforestation and settlement seems likely, as suggested by the existence of crop-mark sites on river gravel areas such as ring ditches (ploughed-out prehistoric barrows or burial mounds). "On the uplands the occurrence of linear ditch systems suggests that woodlands were already limited, and probably precious, particularly when the Iron Age added to other demands the need for charcoal." [4]

The archaeological evidence thus seems to indicate that the landscape in prehistoric Britain was conducive to the laying out of alignments and indeed fits into current concepts of prehistoric land management practices, from the early second millennium of the archaeological evidence suggests zoning of the landscape. The view put forward by orthodox archaeologists that linear landscape features are not compatible with current archaeological knowledge concerning prehistoric man is limited; traditional ideas about prehistoric Britain are being continually revised, and the capabilities of prehistoric man have been brought into line with the available evidence which illuminates the complexities of prehistoric societies.

The evidence for prehistoric astronomical practices is also relevant here, since it demonstrates the scientific aspirations of prehistoric man and the work expended in order to achieve them. It also shows that mounds and standing stones were incorporated into astronomical alignments, thereby marking terrestrial lines. Furthermore it demonstrates that the capacity to organise the landscape was available in order to produce astronomical alignments, which were often aligned onto hilltops and notches at considerable distances from the central sites.

Parallels with foreign cultures also show the reality of landscape alignments. The Nazca linear landscape complex in Peru preserves a wide spectrum of zoomorphic, geometric and linear features. Elsewhere in South America linear features have recently been investigated which bear a striking similarity to the assumed ley pattern in Britain, i.e. extant lines connecting sites of holy significance, the original shrines sometimes having been replaced by later Christian churches. Such indications of landscape phenomena on other continents is highly suggestive of the response produced by different cultures to the same stimuli. What that stimuli was is uncertain, but it is self-evident that the ley phenomena, as described by Watkins, should be found across the world, is surely of some significance.

The third argument used against the ley theory is that the leys claimed by ley-hunters are only those derived from maps and therefore subject to their inherent distortion. This is a point which needs careful analysis, since any assumed ley must be demonstrated as being accurate on the map and on the ground; fieldwork is essential, and a suspected map ley can often be shown to have a definite basis when researched in the field. An example to illustrate this is recorded by Devereux and Thomson when searching for a mark-stone. They enquired about the stone from an old villager, but as well as giving them information concerning its location, also stated the fact that it was aligned with another one, although the subject of leys was not mentioned.

Accurate fieldwork requires a prismatic compass in order to check the accuracy of the bearing of the alignments, as well as large-scale maps showing field boundaries to pin-point the alignments across the countryside.

The error reproduced as a result of the spherical nature of the Earth is negligible with any alignments less than 50 kms. [5] When transferring alignments from one map to another errors can occur, but these can be minimised by using a movable head T-square and protractor so that the angle and point of departure of the line from the map can be determined, reproducing it on an neighbouring map.

Distortions in the accuracy of the line traced can also occur as a result of the width of the writing instrument. There is also the problem of the standardisation of the map symbols depicting archaeological sites, so that one cannot always be exactly certain of the exact location and extent of the feature. It is thus necessary to use large-scale maps in order to ascertain the degree of accuracy of the alignments traced.

The fourth argument against leys stems from the fact that they incorporate sites of mixed dates, such as churches and barrows. This is perhaps the principle argument, and will no doubt be the central issue in determining the validity of any one ley. It is reasonable to object to alignments which consists of sites which cannot be shown to be contemporary; the chronological span being in the order of about 5,500 years from the Neolithic to the late Medieval periods. In order for any ley to be demonstrated, the marker sites must be shown by excavation to have evolved from earlier sites, so that the contemporaneity of the ley sites can be established.

Before such evidence is produced it can only be stated that such a wide diversity of marker sites is only to be expected from an evolved phenomenon which has undergone considerable changes during the Christian period. Such site evolution can be seen in the Bolivian alignments which pass through both native and Christian shrines.

It may be possible that the knowledge of site location and geometry was preserved within an arcane organisation or set of practices, such as the Freemasons. Such geomantic practices can not only be seen in the oriented medieval churches and cathedrals, such as Kings' College Chapel, Cambridge (which is executed with precise regard to metrological and esoteric principles), [6] but also in the patterns now being uncovered by researchers such as Collins. It seems that prehistoric landscape patterns were perpetuated into at least the medieval period by various occult bodies, such as the Knights Templar, perhaps either as a result of experiencing mystical visions at ancient holy sites, or of the continuation of some occult knowledge. [7 & 8]

The absence of such evidence, however, does not necessarily imply that any alignment is a chance occurrence, since a particular alignment may be statistically significant and confirmed by field and documentary evidence.

It is possible that the ley tradition survived longer than individual leys, perhaps changing over time. Alternatively, all the sites on a ley must be shown to have been contemporary by excavations; continuity on sacred sites is much stronger since cultures tend to remain conservative in their approach to religion.

Any interpretation of leys must begin from a statistically significant alignment which contains mostly prehistoric sites. This has been achieved at Land's End, where John Michell has analysed only contemporary stone markers, locating each stone as accurately as possible using 6-inch maps and researching the sites extensively in the field and through documentary sources. One of the alignments, that of Boscawen-un, consists of six stones forming an alignment of four kilometers, of such accuracy that a thin line could be extended through each stone on a aerial photograph of the site. Many of Michell's alignments are astronomical, but there are also a number which

are not. Whilst it is apparent that only one outlier would be sufficient to provide a marker point in astronomical observation, it is significant that the Boscawen-un site itself has a total of seven alignments. [9]

The survey published by Michell (1974) has been statistically analysed by Heaton in an unpublished thesis (1976). The 22 alignments among the total of 52 sites cited were analysed using "the largest internal angle as a criteria for accepting an alignment" [10], and she concludes that the alignments found are not statistically valid.

Apart from Heaton's study, the Undercurrents Alternative Science Research Unit undertook a statistical programme to assess the accuracy of the alignments found by Michell, and to set a simulation programme. "The computer was used to calculate the best fitting straight line through each of 23,426 possible triads (sets of three points) by the standard statistical method of linear regression." The results confirmed all but two of Michell's alignments, the average width of the lines being 1 metre, the maximum being 7 metres, whilst seven alignments were exact fits. All Michell's seven alignments from the Boscawen-un circle were confirmed, whilst one stone (site 17) had a total of seven alignments through it. On the other hand the simulated programme produced only one tetrad, which was only two-thirds of the total number of alignments produced from Michell's data

The statistical approach is thus an uncertain one, and stems partly from the youthfulness of the subject, as well as the problems inherent in a statistical analysis.

The degree of accuracy is dependent on several factors. It seems that the degree of accuracy looked for and observed by Michell in the "old stones of Land's End" study may not be universally applicable, since "the setting out of thousands of working tracks and meeting places and their recording with rough stones does not seem to call for the highest standards". [12] It would seem that the problems of achieving any degree of accuracy in laying out an alignment would accumulate in proportion to the square-root of the total length of the line. Thus the expected lateral displacement of the alignment would be 1 metre in 50 kilometres, and this appears to be a reasonable criteria in testing the accuracy of leys if ranging rods were used by the 'dodmen'

Although statistical work is useful for assessing the number of expected alignments against the observed number of alignments, it cannot assess the degree of accuracy involved, since it allows a certain width of error which produces many near-alignments. [13] As Michell has shown, a true megalithic alignment is dead straight. Such statistical tests also ignore the intervisibility of such site alignments; a true alignment should have sites which are visible one from another, although some may have been destroyed or remain undetected. Only fieldwork and excavation can demonstrate the existence of such sites. Again, some alignments may have astronomical qualities which would remain undetected by computer analysis to assess the contrast between chance alignments and true alignments which are much shorter and have a greater number of sites on them.

The problems of marker sites being altered in some way are difficult to ascertain, and may be so irreparably displaced that they cannot be regarded as marking the exact line of the alignment. Sites on leys can be large, such as churches and hillforts, any original survey is assumed to have first been marked out with small features. As the ley evolved over time it is clear that the accuracy inherent in the alignment would have been reduced as the corridor was enlarged to take larger sites.

The other argument to counteract the assumed limits of accuracy placed on 'ley hunters' when considering alignments are the limits of accuracy one takes as marking a ley; the greater the width the greater the probability the alignment is a chance occurrence. It is thus equally possible that too severe a limitation can be placed on the degree of accuracy involved, since one may be missing an important piece of information. If leys were trackways (as perhaps some were, as one of their original or later functions), then it would be obvious that a greater accuracy would not be necessary. Indeed, in the Ansley area of Leicester it seems that the function of the large number of mark stones still existing is that of simple guide posts, the inaccuracy involved in one line of mark stones being 1/2 degree (although still very small when dealing with mark stones).

The problem of distortions involved, for example, in transferring map data, and in measuring alignments through large sites, can be quite considerable, involving errors of up to fifty metres or more if poor measurements are made.

Although leys could be laid out with a great deal of accuracy, there is the possibility as we have seen, that they were not. Since we do not know their function or methods of alignment, if they were to be visually correct then small errors may have been permitted. In any case, map inaccuracies may themselves contribute a linear displacement of 5-10 metres for sites 1 to 3 km. apart. [14]

It must be pointed out that even larger sites, such as hill-forts, have peculiar alignment characteristics, often falling into edge alignments along the earthworks, rather than being randomly distributed through the feature. It is the physical characteristics of the individual features themselves that must be determined in our concepts of the degree of accuracy involved, since it is that which has been aligned on the ley.

However, it is only through the statistical analysis of leys that the concept will be accepted by the archaeological establishment.

Barnatt [15] points at the possibility that if leys are "a manifestation of a natural force field similar to magnetic field flux lines, then men at any period could have intuitively detected its presence at nodal points and built sites there". The point is that no awareness of the system as a whole be proposed, a hypothesis that explains non-contemporaneity and non-visibility along lines.

To demonstrate the validity of a ley statistically, the alignment must contain the appropriate type of sites for the map on which it falls, so that its corridor is acceptable for that particular sheet. The potential number of other ley markers must also be limited, but it is also necessary to possess up-to-date information of the distribution of all relevant ley points in the area concerned in order to prove statistically the validity of the leys found; the number of sites on an O.S. map being restricted, as well as the fact that a large number of sites have been destroyed. Indeed, when a larger scale map was consulted concerning two alignments in the Newmarket area (West Suffolk), it was found that several barrows were exactly on the alignments.

Also the area map must also be restricted in order for a statistically minimum number of ley points to be shown. Finally, in order for a ley study to be statistically valid it is important to 1) list all the potential markers, 2) define the area, 3) record all the markers, and 4) make sure that the marker positions have been recorded accurately.

A statistical analysis of leys will only indicate the total number of possible alignments in a region. A statistical model cannot define the site population in a region since it cannot, without the appropriate information, differentiate between pre- or post-Reformation churches, for example, although if one does then one may be restricting oneself with the data, subjecting it to preconceived ideas. Confirmative evidence such as ancient crossroads, fords, ponds, wells, road alignments, parish boundaries and local folklore are also ignored by statistical analysis, and any true ley will be confirmed by such secondary evidence.

Since ley points vary in their size, it is necessary to impose some degree of tolerance when aligning lines through them, and this is particularly necessary in the initial stages of map work where standardised symbols restrict one's outlook on the reality of the landscape given by the map. Computers cannot assess true leys by their very nature of imposing certain degrees of tolerance on alignments, and so one cannot distinguish a near-alignment from a true ley. [16]

Finally, the length of a ley is important; the shorter the length implies that the number of chance alignments is reduced. For example, only 1 in 7 of chance four-point alignments is less than 12 miles long for a 1:50,000 map, and the proportion is halved for each point. [17]

Forrest points out that statistical analysis may be more than unresponsive to the realities of landscape alignments by virtue of the long periods of time in which the ley pattern has developed. Site evolution and destruction has been extensive, whilst leys themselves may occur in a random pattern of non-aligned sites. It may also be less extensive than is generally claimed.

The clusterings of archaeological sites, either due to geographical features or to differential preservation via the agencies of natural and man-made destruction, is usually reflected in the data; the proportion of prehistoric to later sites varying according to later destruction. The Cumbrian analysis, for example, did not prove or disprove the existence of leys in the region. [18] The statistical test applied to the Land's End data by Broadbent, that of using triads (sets of three points), has the drawback of not being able to relate to clustered points, and such clusters really have to be defined and subjected to arbitrary divisions in order for such tests to be relevant. "The detailed investigation of triads, tetrads, and pentads may be premature, or at least cumbersome to use as proof of the artificiality of leys. It would be easier to statistically establish the existence of leys by considering alignments of, perhaps, septads (sets of seven points)". [19]

To sum up the evidence for and against the ley theory, one must reiterate the central issue, which is that leys represent alignments of holy sites across the landscape which are unlikely to have occurred by chance. The statistical approach is a valid one and it will only be upon this that leys will be demonstrated as something more than chance alignments. The questions that have been raised include whether or not the key material is accessible to statistical analysis. The fact is that we have only a small proportion of the ley markers which have developed into permanent sites, and of these only a proportion have survived the continuous destruction of sites. The restrictions imposed on any analysis of alignments in a given region by the inherent subjectiveness of the parameters of the maps means that it is difficult to distinguish between chance and true alignments. [2] One of the tests that could be used to assess the validity of alignments is the possibility of predicting the positions of former markers, thereby producing the original alignments. This has been partly achieved by Michell at Land's End where he found stones previously unnoticed, one such stone standing on four alignments. Devereux and Thompson have

predicted a site at Seven Wells Farm, on the Sainbury alignment, Cotswolds; the alignment itself being statistically significant. The author has himself predicted a Roman road as a result of the analysis of the Old John ley (Leicester) in fact evidence is coming to light suggesting the presence of a lost Roman road from Market Harborough, through Leicester, and on to Derby; the Leicester section falling close to the ley.

However, orthodoxy shifts and reforms, and it may only be a matter of time before new evidence, and the reassessment of old evidence forces a psychological revolution to occur among the archaeological community. This is readily apparent in the type of evidence with which one is dealing, and it is true to say that:

"The human element is something which traditional archaeological methods can rarely hope to recover; we are left only with the results of man's actions, and we have to infer the thinking behind them in the light of our own experience and knowledge. The prehistoric behavioural environment is a subject of the environment as perceived by the people occupying the [environment] and this in turn is a subset of the whole phenomenal environment, which may include things which even we, in our modern scientific wisdom, may not appreciate." [21]

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The "Virtual Transitions" of Wm. Stainton Moses by Manfred Cassirer

The Rev. William Stainton Moses (1839-92) was unique in more than one way. A clergyman of the Church of England, he was an equally respected schoolmaster. He was also a founder member of the Society for Psychical Research, and a member of its Council, and later one of its Vice-Presidents. Frederic Myers, the father of psychical research, knew him personally, and vouched for the genuineness of his mediumship. If Home was never exposed, neither was Moses, though it is true that the latter sat in a rather more restricted circle, and Podmore's attempted exposure (based solely on circumstantial evidence) may be regarded as a failure, inspired by his obsessive distrust of physical mediumship. [1] Extensive evidence in favour of Moses' physical (and some other) manifestations was collected by Myers within two volumes of the S.P.R. Proceedings (IX and XI), and is thus conveniently accessible in compact form.

Stainton Moses' mediumship, though basically similar to that of other great sensitives, differs from it somewhat in the superabundance of paranormal fragrances and lights, as well as of assorted musical sounds regardless of the presence or absence of any instruments. There were also numerous apports, a variety of raps, and the passing of matter through matter (an impossibility according to Home, whom Moses regarded as honest but simple), and levitations of the medium.

What concerns us here are his "Virtual Transitions", or materialisations. Though of a sufficiently astonishing nature, these seem to have been confined to the so-called 'Spirit' or 'fluid' hands. [2] Often they occurred in conjunction with 'lights': there would, e.g. arise a luminous vapour with a nucleus carried by a materialised hand and finger (IX, 247). Alternatively, there was a hand with fingers inside a very large, bright light (IX, 275). A portion of the forearm might also be observed, as in the case of a big light held by a hand, the fingers moving freely (IX, 275 f.). This hand was real enough to grasp the medium's own (IX, 304). Exceptionally a 'shadowy arm' from the medium's elbow was seen knocking on a table, of the kind that Alic Johnson saw with Palladino, but would not accept at any price (IX, 305). What appeared to be a complete transition, in the form of a figure, is on record as having supported an otto of roses (IX, 312). 'Attouchements' (touches), so common with Eusapia, were rare, and a large hand stroking a sitter's face turned out to be that of another sitter (IX, 313), though elsewhere a hand, apparently paranormal, was felt on the table, (IX, 314). Such hands were normal enough in aspect: Mentor's [3] was 'well-formed' (IX, 320) and gave a demonstration of finger-movement as if of something unheard of (IX, 322). Sometimes two hands were shown, part of the forearm also being visible, one holding a bright light surrounded by 'Spirit' drapery (IX, 322 f.). Once more Mentor's hand is described as fully materialised and as perfectly normal in every way (IX, 324). His hand being

touched felt 'human'. On one occasion the customary 'Spirit' lights revealed more detail than usual. The forearm was bare to the elbow, the arm thin, swarthy and delicate (IX, 327).

Apart from their function as light-carriers the hands - always, as we have seen, described in such terms as 'real' and 'human' (XI, 49) - supported various other commodities such as luminous powder (XI, 58), apports in the shape of round beads (XI, 57), a sapphire (XI, 60), and a luminous crystal (IX, 314). Two materialised hands, 'distinct and unmistakable' feature in an attempt at healing (XI, 49). Stranger still - and nothing seems to have been too strange to happen with Moses - a hand was seen in action cutting a cameo during a sitting (XI, 62). Though the seances were dark ones, a candle was very often introduced to allow taking notes). A no less miraculous, and apparently by no means isolated accomplishment was Direct Writing [4], of which there are many recorded instances. It often arose in answer to specific questions (IX, 347); more rarely by way of communication or message. The sitter had merely to place a sheet of paper on the table, equidistant from all the sitters, or else put his hand on a piece of paper previously identified. A message would then usually be found at the end. On other occasions the paper was under the table, the pencil being sometimes purposely kicked out of reach. A small piece of lead would do as well as a pencil.

Myers' perspicacious comment (XI, 113) on all this was that materializations of hands, or direct writing in the script of the departed (which occurred both with Moses and with Home) 'have much actual cogency' as proof of identity. A tactile hand within drapery, and the sound of a moving pencil, were typically followed by the production of what was termed 'direct spirit calligraphy' (IX, 275), such efforts being often attributed to 'controls', notably Imperator and Mentor [3] (XI, 285 f. and 322 f.), the latter obligingly signing the seance record in his very own hand!

A remarkable example of Direct Writing which seems to have impressed Myers was the test conditions imposed by Charlton Speer. A message and signature of a 'distinguished musician' was found on a piece of paper which Mr Speer Jnr. said had never left his hand. Moses, without having seen it, was able to pick out the likeness of the artist in question from a great number of photographs. It was, no doubt, cases like this which Frederic Myers regarded as so suggestive of Survival.

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3. Mentor and Imperator were among the chief controls of this medium.
4. i.e., not done by any discernable human agency; also in some poltergeist cases (e.g. Bromley); cp., the writer's 'Research Brief', in Research in Parapsychology, 1976, p. 12.

Reviews

SWORD AND SORCERERS

The Sword and the Stone, by Andrew Collins. (The Supernaturalist No. 2, 1982)
The Green Stone, by Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman. (Neville Spearman)

Reviewed by Bob Gilbert

Guided in their ignorance by psychic messages of Hidden Wisdom, and after many sore trials in their Quest through time and space, the heroes gain at last a secret sword and a sacred stone - with the aid of which, amidst many further perils, an ancient Evil is finally put to flight and the well-being of mankind is assured. But wait, you will say, this is not quite correct, for the sword Anduril was mended, not found, and the Fellowship had to destroy a ring, not find a stone. Quite so, but this story is not, mirabile dictu, a retelling of Tolkien's Lord of the Ring, it is a sober record in fact of a latter-day Quest in the heart of post-industrial Britain (well, not quite post, for the industry of creating tales such as this evidently thrives). Here are Frodo and Gandalf (sorry, Andrew Collins and Graham Phillips) leaving their Hobbit-hole (sorry, flat) in Wolverhampton, obtaining trance messages concerning an urgent need to seek a lost relic of great power and gathering around them a suitable Fellowship for the Quest.

In its essence this is a Quest in the classic manner. The ancient Order of Meonia, its origins lost in Akhenaten's Egypt and in prehistoric Britain, survived through thousands of years with its most precious secret and relic - the Meonia Stone - intact. Surfacing with the mythical Gwevaraugh, a warrior queen of central England in the 6th Century B.C., the magical stone vanished again until the time of the Knights Templar, who were destroyed not for the usually accepted reasons, but because they possessed the stone, and hid itself again until the 16th Century. It reappeared with Mary Queen of Scots and among the English Roman Catholics who organised the Gunpowder Plot, and who also had links with the Rosicrucians of Germany. After the failure of the Plot, the stone was hidden by sympathisers and a variety of clues was strewn about for psychically stimulated researchers of our day to follow and to find the Stone. The psychic helpers of these researchers included the victims of a Magical Order of the last century who had been overwhelmed by Evil Powers bent on finding the Stone and perverting it to their own ends. This Order - unknown in the annals of the 'Occult Revival' - was based in the building occupied by Graham Phillips, and one presumes that in this manner are occult links forged.

Once on the trail of the Stone, Frodo and his companions (sorry, I must remember where we are) follow up the clues that take them back and forth across the Midlands to the finding of a sword hidden under a bridge at the Knight's Pool near Worcester, and the eventual discovery of the Green Meonia Stone itself close by, buried on the banks of the River Avon. Discovery of the Stone was not, however, the end of the Quest (although The Sword and the Stone ends at this point) for it became necessary to recover the power of the Stone by recharging it with the energy taken from it, for posterity's sake, during its flight from Egypt. This involves a series of bizarre psychic events at the nine sites scattered over central and southern Britain where the superstitious wandering priests of Akhenaten has psychically hidden their

nine lumps of energy. Once fully charged it was possible to use the Stone finally to vanquish the Evil Force that had threatened it, its keepers, and humanity at large for so many centuries. Good had triumphed over evil, and all was well. Or was it?

Magic stones are all very well, but one is entitled to ask for something more than their names. The mineral composition of the stone is unknown, for no-one has analysed it, and its history before 1979 - so far as objective evidence goes - is also unknown. Throughout the saga doubts rise up, and innumerable questions clamour for answers. Some of these relate to the astonishing psychic happenings reported in the books: clairvoyance, automatic writing and speech, materialisations and psychic attacks amongst other things, which, in the absence of the evidence of disinterested observers depends on the integrity of the authors and their associates. This, of course, must be accepted a priori unless one wishes to see them as either extremely credulous or as victims of self-deception attendant upon a desperate desire for wish fulfilment.

But the happenings apart, one must question the interpretation put on them. The Green Stone opens with a tale of a magical ritual carried out in Wolverhampton in 1875, a ritual that goes dreadfully wrong with fatal results. Possible, perhaps, but the records of Victorian occultism are remarkably complete and there is nothing whatever in them to justify this tale; the ritual itself bears no relation to any known ritual of that - or any other - time; there are no records of any of the named participants or of their occult involvements, and their wicked opponent is similarly unknown.

Equally unknown is the evidence for the distortions of history from the Gunpowder Plot back to Akhenaten, but as these revisions of accepted beliefs emanate from the entity known as 'Joanna', speaking through the entranced Graham Phillips, and as occult revelations are immeasurably superior to recorded history, we must necessarily accept them. If however (which heaven forbid) we should query these startling new 'facts' we would probably ask such questions as these: Why did English Catholics work in secret with avowedly Lutheran Rosicrucians who sought (if one agrees with the thesis of Frances Yates, which the Meonia people evidently do) to further the very Stuart dynasty that the Gunpowder Plotters strove to destroy? Why did the Rosicrucian Myth contain no reference whatever to any Order remotely resembling the Knights Templar from whom they are required by the Meonia tale to be descended? Why are so many competent scholars unable to see (as the authors of The Green Stone see) that the Holy Grail is a late accretion to the legend of the Meonia Stone? Why have archaeologists found no trace of Queen Gwevaraugh, indeed, why has she vanished so utterly, along with Akhenaten's returned megalithic missionaries and the Bronze-Age colony that dwelt in the decidedly Iron-Age hill fort at Bury Ring in Staffordshire? Is it perhaps because she dwells in the same part of the Akashic Record as the Aztec colony who crossed the Atlantic in stone boats to settle in Stretchford (the Midlands town so well-known to Daily Telegraph readers addicted to Peter Simple)?

Nor are historical questions the only ones. What are we to make of researchers who pounce on the wall-painting of David at Harvington Hall and pronounce him to be King Arthur because of his brandished sword and because David slew Goliath with a sling-shot? Do they not know that Goliath was beheaded with his own huge sword by David? (I Samuel, 17:51) Perhaps this ignorance of the Bible explains why much is made of rosaries, crosses, popish holy water and the invocation of saints, but no-one thought to call upon Jesus Christ to fend off evil (either now or in the magical battle of 1875).

Ignorance may also explain why the authors appear to accept the historical traditions of modern witches who date all the way back to 1952, but it must have been something quite different which led Graham Phillips to uncover the Meonia Stone alone and to tell his companions about the discovery much later and when far away from the spot: as for the medium for 'Joanna' and her curious revelations he was doubtless occultly chosen for this special act, and as the Stone is unquestionably hidden from public view, he has, perhaps, emulated Mr Somerton (of M.R. James's story The Treasure of Abbot Thomas) and returned the stone whence it came.

Whether or not this particular Quest has ended only time and the publisher's royalty statements will tell, but it leads to one final question: why did the Knights Templar not avoid their own downfall if they were prescient enough to provide sufficient historical ambiguities to nourish not only the lunatic Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, but also this curious fruit from the same tree.

The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow. Constance Cumbey. Huntingdon House (USA).

Reviewed by Kevin McClure.

Subtitled 'The New Age Movement and our Coming Age of Barbarism', this is a treat from the American evangelical movement, which seems able to see conspiracy and demonolatry in virtually anything that detracts from born-again Christianity.

In this case it is the New Age Movement that is targeted, in particular Marilyn Ferguson's The Aquarian Conspiracy, and the Benjamin Creme "Maitreya - the Christ is Now Here" proclamations. The former work has been influential, and makes a good starting point for such a discussion. Creme, of course, turned out to be purveying utter nonsense, rendering some of this book more or less irrelevant.

Like most serious studies from the intelligent end of the US Moral Majority, Hidden Dangers reads well and is, on the whole, closely argued, as in the section using Findhorn publicity material to equate its work with Satanism. You just know it can't be right, but the logic appears sound. This approach is less convincing when used to link Ferguson's work with Hitlerian Nazism in its aims and principles, though the point is well made that there is a strong, distasteful, anti-Semitic element in the works of Alice A Bailey, as publicised by the Lucis Trust.

At heart, this is a superior conspiracy theory, and is probably best read as such. However, the author's thoroughness is such that there are excellent listings of New Age organisations and peace groups, and a very good bibliography. The author's belief in the personal intervention of demons in the day-to-day affairs of mankind renders it interesting to anyone with a taste for spontaneous phenomena, and its arguments may well give the New Agers among you some pause for thought.

The Terror that comes in the Night. By David Hufford. University of Philadelphia Press, 1983. \$20. Reviewed by Hilary Evans.

"But then he was on top of me, and I tried to look up to see who it was or something. And here it was, like it was pressing down on my chest. And every time I would bend my head, I could see this - it looked like a white mask, I thought, Lord, it must be a Martian or something . . ."

Extraterrestrial rapist? Incubus? Wish-fulfilling dream? The experience of having an unknown presence enter your bedroom, get onto your bed and press down on you falls into no established category; which is why, though many one off reports exist, it has not hitherto been studied as a phenomenon in its own right. Instead, it has been relegated to the 'nightmare' file by some, to 'witchcraft' by others, and denied a life of its own. Some of us know it as the 'bedroom visitor', others - including the author of The Terror that comes in the Night, who bases his study on research carried out in Newfoundland - as 'the Old Hag'. But it is often far from hag-like, and frequently manifests elsewhere than in bedrooms.

If David Hufford had done no more than focus attention on a neglected phenomenon, he would have done a great service; but he has done much more. It is no exaggeration to say that this is one of the most important studies of anomalous phenomena to have appeared in a long while. What distinguishes it is the author's determination not to be shackled by traditional methodology; when he found that classic explanations in terms of folklore on the one hand and behaviourist psychology on the other, were simply inadequate to evaluate the real-life experiences that formed his data-base, he had no hesitation in rejecting them.

The inadequacy of traditional methodology is demonstrated firstly in the collection of material. Hufford found that when there is no received model for a phenomenon, it tends to go unreported. It was only when he lectured or wrote about his researches that other informants sent in their own accounts; and indeed in the latest (July) issue of FATE there is this letter from a reader:

"When I read the review of The Terror that Comes in the Night, I could hardly believe it. I had an experience of the Terror when I was a very young girl. I never realised that it happened to so many other persons and I never discussed it with anyone outside my immediate family for fear that people would think me strange."

Hufford's initial researches, carried out from a folklorist point of view while he was working in Newfoundland, disclosed the amazing fact that 23% of his sample students had had some such experience. Further research among other population samples confirmed this figure, and he realised that for lack of an adequate model, a widespread experience had been passed over, or relegated to inappropriate psychological categories.

How inappropriate those categories are he demonstrates in a chapter which assesses the two primary hypothetical models - that of the cultural source (= people have this kind of experience because they are conditioned by their cultural circumstances to have it), and that of the experiential source (= the cultural tradition comes about as the consequence, not the cause, of what people actually claim to experience). Hufford convincingly demonstrates that it is the latter which is valid here.

He then considers the phenomenology of the 'Old Hag' experience, relating it to other sleep experiences; he quotes a number of case histories which clearly distinguish it from other experiences such as the nightmare. This leads him to what he calls the 'psychological dis-interpretation' of the phenomenon, showing the inadequacy of any explanation along the lines of classical psychological models:

"Where do these conclusions leave our analysis? Can we say that sleep research has 'explained' the Old Hag? No we cannot. We cannot because what has been gained has been a description of psychological events that seem to account for the production of the state . . . the specific contents of the experience have not been explained. They seem if anything more odd than they did before"

In the following chapter, therefore, he considers the content of the experience, and shows how it can be assimilated to a variety of other experiences, including witchcraft, demonic visions, UFO-related entities and out-of-the-body experiences. This broad perspective is another of the merits of the book; how refreshing it is to find a psychologist who takes UFO-entity experiences, for example, seriously enough to see their relevance to other psychological processes. Welcome too is his recognition that the man in the street is not necessarily the complete imbecile that science too often seems to assume: speaking of the confusion that has hitherto surrounded the Old Hag phenomenon, he observes that "the situation is one in which folk observation is ahead of scientific observation".

Do not suppose, however, that Hufford is 'soft' on the scientific approach. This is a tough, scholarly book which respects the disciplines of scientific methodology. Some of us may feel he has not fully faced up to the implications of some of his own evidence - for example the indications of a truly objective dimension to the phenomenon, such as when an independent witness reports hearing the footsteps of the unknown entity; but perhaps Hufford felt he had already stuck his neck out far enough, and we can hardly blame him for that

The publisher's blurb for this book contains the prediction that it will become a classic, and for once the claim is justified. I urge every reader of COMMON GROUND to get hold of a copy. It is available direct from the University of Philadelphia Press, 3933 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA, at a discount price of \$20, including postage, and it can be paid for by Visa or Mastercard.

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The Anomaly of Astrology

by Jenny Randles

The worst transgressors, that for which scientists are least forgiving, is theory unsupported by evidence. Astrology and phrenology have deductive, rather than inductive, premises . . . [they] . . . are assumed; only weak statistical data and fervent belief produce any semblance of a scientific theory.

So wrote Steven Solnick ("Scientists, Heretics and Vigilantes"; Technology Review, 83,7, July 1981). Solnick is a young, up and coming scientist, a graduate of MIT and a visitor to our shores this year on an Oxford scholarship. But does he have a point?

Solnick does not stand alone in his rejection of astrology, which is probably the oldest science (or pseudo-science) in the world. The chairman of one of the committees launched by the infamous CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal) has contributed: "An awful lot has been proved wrong that the public doesn't know of, or want to know". That could stand to be the motto of CSICOP, and of course, astrology was very much in mind here. Yet, without astrology man would never have reached the Moon. For astrology was the only science of space for many times longer than astronomy per se, or astrophysics. A list of its supporters down through the ages prior to the twentieth century reads like the most illustrious of "Who's Who". And even in these embittered times for the subject, it has succeeded in convincing the likes of Carl Jung and Hans Eysenck!

I know that astrology is a crude mix of science and art, weaned on thousands of years of poorly remembered myths. I know that scientific research (what little there has been) has not exactly shown the whole thing to be valid. I know that what work seemingly has endorsed astrological doctrine (such as the voluminous papers and more popular books of French psychologist Dr. Michel Gauquelin) has only validated small proportions of tradition, much of the subject allegedly desiccating into a worn out heap of crumbling trash. I know all that, but I don't accept it!

I like to think of myself as a reasonably scientific-minded person. Certainly I had the truth of science bashed home to me at school and college. And when I taught geography to children I would never have dreamed of espousing birth-charts to them. But the scientific acceptance of astrology would mean a lot to me.

Of course a great deal of astrology is nonsense. The junk in newspaper columns (if you're a Libran you'll have a nice day . . . all five million of you!) is not treated as any but that by astrologers. And half the population of the world will probably have a nice day; so long as they don't live in some starving African nation (who presumably don't have such things as Librans!). The relationship between these "Daily Stars" features and proper astrology is rather like that between the Journal of Neuro-Physiology and the Beano. They have no validity in logic. No scientific support. And very, very little justification, even within the broadcast of minds and the most superstitious proponents of the subject.

So why do I hold back from dismissing astrology? What makes me refuse to be logical? Perhaps it is my intuition in overdrive. Maybe I am basically a rebel. But ultimately it depends on one simple fact. I am an astrologer. I have been for longer than I have been a ufologist (although for fairly obvious reasons I tend not to refer to one in the context of the other . . . except in my own research where the two can privately be conjoined very profitably!)

Over the past dozen years I have drawn up hundreds of birth-charts (in the way they are supposed to be drawn up) and I have watched the progressions develop in peoples lives. Whilst I have done some consultancy work for people with problems I have kept away from the public astrology . . . until very recently when my Radio City series has forced me to become more of a pundit. This has seen me working on the birth-charts of comedians like Stan Boardman and plotting patterns in the charts of Liverpool Football Club players Kenny Dalglish and Graeme Souness in order to give them the good news that they are going to win a cup competition. (They did . . . Mars had some lovely aspects in Jupiter!)

All of this effort has proven beyond doubt one thing. Despite scientific logic. Despite Steven Solnick. Despite CSICOP . . . ASTROLOGY WORKS! I don't know how or why (although I have my ideas). I see its many defects and I do make mistakes. But ultimately, and to a degree beyond my threshold of belief, it produces results far better than chance should allow. And its implications for many areas of the world (both paranormal and normal) are staggering. This is, of course, why some brave modern scientists are coming out of the closet and sounding out its potential.

It is much easier for me to accept the reality of astrology than it is for me to accept the reality of UFOs. I have never seen, close up, a categorical bona-fide UFO. I must depend upon trust in others who may have. But I have many times seen a person's character reflected in the pattern of symbols conjured up before me from out of my ephemerides. And what is more the process is repeatable. Anyone else should take the same book and birth data and draw up the same figures arriving at a similar (although not exactly the same) synthesis of psychological themes from it. Tomorrow I could take a different person and do it again, producing quite a different character synthesis which (it seems) will be apt for the person concerned, to a greater or lesser degree (although usually well above 50% accurate . . . when 50% accuracy would in itself be extraordinary).

Detractors will argue, with due cause, that there is a reason for this. Any individual likes being told he is "honest", or "affectionate", which is of course true. CSICOP experiments have shown the persuasiveness of such arguments. They have scrambled the readings, sending A's character analysis to C, and B's to A. Yet A and B have both still said "Wow! This is me". Usually this is done through a computer which juggles standard terms like "honest" and "affectionate" and that is one of the chief problems. Astrology cannot be done by computer. It relies in the end on human integration of factors mathematically calculated. It is perhaps one of the only true combinations of science and art. The science provides the raw facts. The art comes in deciding which counterbalances which, and therefore which facts emerge strengthened and which are weakened.

Real astrology has to be more precise than stereotyped wordings. Because everyone is a unique person. Those born very close together in time and space will share much in common. But there will still be factors which demark them as individuals . . . and, even more importantly, the environment does have an influence, people with almost identical charts will show similar traits but expressed in wholly divergent ways if brought up in totally opposing environments. That is why the astrologer has to behave like a psychologist and a sociologist in addition to his other chores.

Any person has negative character traits as well as positive ones. These need to be carefully explained and yet put over in such a way that an individual has the chance to overcome them. The job of an astrologer is to pinpoint potential (both good and bad) and help a person learn how to mobilize this to his best advantage. In this way an analysis might, for example say: "Your honesty stems from a loyalty to those close to you. But when it comes to loose acquaintances these are positively mistrusted and you may openly lie in order to keep them at bay. Yet you will tend to find ways of justifying your dishonesty to those you love". This sort of thing is far more specific and far less rosy. Yet it will still generate those shouts of "Wow! This is me".

Those wishing to see the truth of astrology demonstrated need only study a few basic texts (the Jeff Mayo book in the Teach Yourself series is how I began and is pretty good). They will work then on charts close to them and so learn why Uncle Fred swears he never changes his mind when you can see he does every five minutes. You can sympathise with mother when she flits about the house in a ceaseless pursuit for (non-existent) dust and grime (she may have an acute case of Venus in Virgo). At first these constant proofs and re-proofs of the reality of the subject come as a shock to the system. Then this shock is replaced by awe; and finally a sort of complacency tinged with anger at those (who never having tried to study astrology) proclaim you must be 'doolally' or (to be kind) 'gullible' for being taken in by such obvious rot. You come to appreciate why Sir Isaac Newton said to a detractor of astrology: "Sir, I have studied it. You have not".

I could go on now and cite a muster of case histories that provide ample evidence for the value of astronomy from my own files. And I am not a professional (or even regular) astrologer. But these would serve little purpose as the only real way to learn is to make the personal effort in trying it for yourself. I suspect many will not do this, just as many who scoff at the existence of UFOs, or the Loch Ness Monster, or poltergeists, would prefer to sit in their armchair watching Dallas rather than respond to the cries of amazement and go outside to see. It is not because they are lazy or blindly sceptical. It is that deep down their prejudices are fighting very hard to preserve the status quo. The universe for them needs to be a simple place, and accepting within its framework much that we know is true would to them be self-destructive. This is, incidentally, something that stands out in their birth-charts . . . so as an astrologer you can hardly attack them for being themselves.

There are many unanswered questions about astrology; and much still to be discovered to bring it into the modern era, removing the superstitions that still permeate it to a point. Of course serious astrological societies are doing just this; whilst CSICOP maintains their bitter fight against the upholders of irrationality. But what about ASSAP? Why raise the issue here?

Well, astrology is clearly an anomaly. And so by definition of our charter it is a subject we ought to be interested in. We could, I think, bring a new approach to astrological research by conducting experiments not as working astrologers who have a point to prove. And also not as biased sceptics who appear incapable of believing in the existence of anything that seems to be impossible. We could devise and conduct meaningful open-ended experiments that might contribute such.

The chief aim of this article is to rally your support. Firstly, to solicit ideas from readers for practicable experiments that ASSAP might be able to conduct. Secondly, to collate together the ASSAP membership and readers of this journal who have a knowledge and experience in the practical workings

of astrology. I know there are some. I would ask you to consider taking part in a mutual project (which we might call PROJECT ASTRO) and if you feel you can contribute, to write to me at 9 Crosfield Road, Somerville, Wallasey, Wirral, L44 9EB.

Let us see if we can make some small contribution to establishing the scientific art of astrology in its proper place within the world; free of the mumbo-jumbo that taints it, and available as a tool that will assist established science to tackle many problems.

Letters

From Peter Rogerson

CG7 was most interesting with its UFO related articles and reviews. From the figures supplied by Jenny Randles, it would appear that reporting of UFO experiences has declined as the recession has bit deeper, and the world situation has grown darker. So it looks as though Jerry Clark was right after all when he suggested that UFOs are just a pleasant diversion, and people are now too busy trying to keep heads above water for such fripperies. Have other hobbies shown a similar decline? There may be more complex explanations however. For example:

The number of sources recording UFO reports has declined as the recession forces small magazines to close and publishers cut back on their lists. Changes in social habits may affect the number of UFO experiences. If fewer people are out of doors during the hours of darkness, then one would expect the number of UFO experiences to fall. If some UFO experiences are largely psychological in nature the perhaps films such as Close Encounters, ET, and Hanger 18 can provide vicarious UFO experiences. Most of the more sensible ufologists are having graver and graver doubts as to whether there is any evidence for any extraordinary phenomenon at all.

I get the impression that for many people ufology is simply a form of entertainment, which perhaps accounts for the kind of nonsense epitomised by Warminster or the Green Stone affair. When John Harney first poured scorn on Warminster back in 1966 he was roundly attacked for being a cynic and it was clear that some of the leading 1960's ufologists were deep under the Warminster spell.

One interesting fact about Warminster which I have not seen commented on elsewhere is the role of the Moonies in promoting the legend. It is very significant that the person who first suggested to Shuttlewood that the phone calls from 'Aenestra' (is that how you spell it? I've sent my Warminster books to the ASSAP Library) should be taken seriously was Moonie convert Anthony Brook. (For Brook and the Moonies see Lofland's Doomsday Cult, revised edition). For some reason Shuttlewood's contact with the Aenestrians never featured in his later books.

From Douglas Payne

"Physical Mediumship Makes its Spirit Return"
by Alan Cleaver (Common Ground No. 7)

Top marks for Alan Cleaver's wonderfully lucid descriptions of some recent examples of physical mediumship (PM), and his acutely penetrating observations and analysis of a phenomenon whose spiritual and physical resurrection has long been awaited by excited paranormals everywhere.

It is indeed time that someone stood up to plead the case for a return to good old-fashioned research values. Values which plainly and unashamedly encourage people to put aside their natural misgivings about the validity of miraculous events and urge that they simply trust one another. It may be inferred from the article that physical mediums perform best in the dark, under the minimum of control, and in the company of a group of total believers. Scientists therefore are clearly wrong in attempting to switch on the lights in the seance room, particularly as the only excuse they can muster is that they otherwise cannot see what is going on. Scientists are also clearly wrong in attempting to lay down conditions which they claim will limit the scope for fraudulent activities. Above all, scientists are grievously wrong in sceptically appraising the belief consensus of a seance group. They are wrong because these actions have had the demonstrable and repetitive effect of inhibiting the manifestation of PM, and have also implied the possible presence of suggestibility, credulity, and maybe even a little dishonesty amongst seance room enthusiasts.

Yes, the study of PM badly needs to re-establish its integrity and, as the article makes abundantly clear, it can only do this by sitting in the dark, trusting others, and believing everything.

Incidentally, I'm relieved to see that trumpets are back. The example given of their use indicates masterfully that this piece of equipment is fundamental to research into PM.

The subject of PM is also apparently much wider than we previously imagined for it includes UFO close encounters, Men in Black and, wait for it, the Bunnyman. The connection between PM and other unusual phenomena such as these should have been discovered before now, and the writer deserves our undying gratitude for bringing it to our attention. The Bunnyman factor, for example, is of such obvious critical importance to PM research that it is a mystery in itself that no-one has introduced it up to now as worthy of serious consideration.

How can anyone deny that this might just be the breakthrough we have all been waiting for.

Earth Mysteries assessed

by Chris Ashton

An extended review of four recent Earth Mysteries publications:

The Power of the Pendulum, by T C Lethbridge. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. £2.95

The Legend of the Sons of God, by T C Lethbridge. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. £2.95.

The Megalithic Odyssey, by Christian O'Brien. Thorsons, 1983. £4.95

Ley Lines - Their Nature and Properties; a Dowser's Investigation, by J. Havelock Fidler. Turnstone, 1983. £3.95

These four books come from three authors who deal with the two areas of dowsing and astro-archaeology which both come under the research umbrella of earth-mysteries. On the face of it, it's hardly surprising that Christian O'Brien, as the product of an elitist education at Christ's College, Cambridge, should be involved in a variation on the theme of the diffusionist dogma. Diffusionism was largely discredited by the radio-carbon revolution but it is resurrected here in an extended speculation which has rather tenuous links with the author's survey of the Bodmin megaliths. Diffusionism, it will be remembered, said that 'civilization' spread from the Near East to Northern Europe, and this theory was based on the comparison of the sophistication of artifacts dug up in various places by archaeologists. However, radio-carbon dating found that the megalithic structures of North West Europe were older than, for example, the pyramids, and further research showed that they were built with a far higher degree of mathematical sophistication and astronomical sophistication.

Mr O'Brien breathes new life into this idea by suggesting that a group of supermen and superwomen were responsible for starting many engineering projects in the ancient world. The pyramids, the earth-works of Avebury and Silbury, the early stages of Stonehenge, the Ziggurats were all undertaken during a 200-year period, and O'Brien says that it was "the genius of the few that made it all possible".

The book is divided into two parts. The first deals with a survey of the Bodmin Moor Megalithic complex for their significant astronomical alignments. The author is a retired exploration geologist, and this first part is impressive enough, finding as he does many solar and lunar alignments through stone circles to cairns. The second part of the book is where the author gets into big time speculation. He concludes that the Megalithic complex of Bodmin Moor was a vital first step in the agricultural revolution which transformed man from a hunter-gatherer to a crop grower. O'Brien reasons that ancient man needed to know when to plant and when to move animals about. This is not altogether a bad idea in itself, but it doesn't really explain why he needed to build so many of the things in such a relatively small area. We're talking about ten extant stone circles and 88 cairns; that's a lot of work and a lot of man-hours on Bodmin Moor. Surely one or two stone circles and a few sighting cairns would have been enough for dating, and would have served well enough this not vast area? The amount of work involved doesn't justify the result. There must be other reasons.

According to the author, these "Itinerant sages" started off by building ziggyratts in Mesopotamia. Then moving north and west went via Denmark, the Boyne Valley, Salisbury Plain, Wales, and to Cornwall (Bodmin). He identifies them as being the chief culture heroes of the regions through which they travel. They're in the early books of the Bible, they're in the Celtic pantheon, in the Teutonic pantheon, they are the Tuatha De Dannan. To back up this case he takes the reader through a bewildering jungle of linguistics, in which the names of the heroes are found in different places and with different variations on them. He's written another book which goes under the title, which I find frankly obnoxious, of *The Genius of the Few*. But these few super human-olds (and the book does have a 'gods from outer space' feel about it) keep moving about. Why? Well, the author says it was because the areas in which they were living kept getting invaded by other races, but if they were so clever why did they let themselves be hustled about so much? The kind of elitist thinking that's inherent in this thesis can have distasteful overtones. The idea of the chosen few is a highly dangerous one, to which the 20th century continues to bear tragic witness.

The Fortean explanation for all that engineering work having begun round about the same time was expressed by Charles Fort himself when he said, "A tree cannot find out, as it were, how to blossom, until comes blossom time. A social growth cannot find out the use of steam engines until steam engine time". This explanation seems preferable to the 'master race' hypothesis.

The idea that the important advances in human consciousness have come about through the interference of 'higher beings' is widespread amongst occultists and mystics. In fact all the major religions of the world seem to have this as a basic motif. Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Mohammed - you name the religion, they've got the evidence of a direct line to God. Eric von Daniken was the man who popularised the idea that God was, after all, a spaceman. T. C. Lethbridge was working on the same idea at the same time as von Daniken and neither of them knew about the others work. Lethbridge was narrowly beaten to the printing presses, and Daniken cleaned up on that bit of speculation.

Lethbridge was the Director of Excavations for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and for the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. He combined these pursuits with an active interest in dowsing and psychic research. As a result of his open-mindedness in this area, and owing to his discovery of the Gog-Magog hill figures, a group of paranoid academics ridiculed him and he left Cambridge in disgust. In *The Legend of the Sons of God*, he uses his lifetime experience in archaeology, mixed liberally with his experiences of ESP and speculates as if with gay abandon around the theme of 'gods from outer space'. He talks about megaliths and pre-Colombian voyages to America. He pursues a variety of historical heresies and invents a few more. Throughout all this he takes snipes at the narrow-minded and dogmatic modes of thought he saw entrenched in the academic establishment.

Lethbridge obviously enjoyed speculating, and one of the reasons why he's worth reading is that he doesn't take his speculation too seriously. At several points in the text he refers to his main theme as a 'fairly tale'. There's no way this man is going to get a cult following because he keeps inviting the reader to disagree with what he's saying. He goes so far as to say, "My object in writing books is just this, to stimulate people to think, observe and experience for themselves and not just swallow the sayings of the authorities of the time as if they were the Words of God".

Many of the themes in this book are already known as part of mainstream heresies. If anyone is feeling that their imagination is getting dulled it could be one of two things: galvanise it into action, or convince yourself that a dulled imagination is not such a bad thing after all.

T. C. is best known for his work in dowsing, and in *The Power of the Pendulum* he uses this tool as a basis for an investigation into the comparative value of the scientific materialist world view and the religious world view. With only 110 pages of main text this seems like a grand aim, but you can trust this author to turn up some good original ideas in the process. He has at times the unfortunate tendency to slip into an 'either-or' type of debate. However, far from coming over as the dogmatist he includes in the text a statement that he is always ready to change his ideas if they are shown to be wrong.

The style of writing is pedestrian and highly anecdotal. He ranges through a whole series of subjects and ideas rather like a magpie trying to stave off boredom. As he does this he throws out all kinds of ideas, some of which are thought provoking, and others which are, frankly, laughable. Lethbridge as the nutty professor comes through when he says about cats that "their radar through their whiskers is so good" (p. 76). Lethbridge as the elitist comes through when he says "mankind in general is not advanced mentally to stand on its own two feet", and that "the ancient Greeks had a link with a higher order to keep them in order and decency" (p. 68). Try telling that to the slaves. This is dangerous piffle because it says that only a select few are capable of ruling. Don't forget that ancient Greece was an aristocracy functioning on the backs of slaves. The majority of humans in ancient Greece life was 'work, work, work' - no pay, no rights, no freedom.

He takes several shots at Darwinism, saying, "Many people regard Darwinian Evolution as too simple to be allowed on humanity" and he goes on to describe it as a form of religious belief. He dwells quite a lot on dreams and in the process he chucks most of Freud and Jung out of the window. Many New Age Wallies will squeal with delight at some of the things that T. C. says. But he is no wally himself. He urges his readers to think for themselves, not to accept dogma, "Enlarge your thinking, and extend your mind. Do not do so, or rely on other people's thinking, and you are more useless than a slug creeping about on the surface of the earth". He urges his readers to collect observed fact and that this scientific approach, he believes, will bring people closer to the faith of religious people.

J. H. Fidler is a man who has done just that, and in the early pages of *Ley Lines* he acknowledges Lethbridge as an important influence on his dowsing method. He has done some very interesting research into dowsable phenomena relating to stone. However, his work is marred by the typical confusion that dowsers make between a Watkins ley and a certain kind of dowsable energy. Thus in his third chapter, after having given Watkins's criteria for a ley as being five points over 25 miles he gets his pendulum out and finds a dowsable straight ley along some of his standing stones. Watkins's ley concept is now discarded and a ley becomes a dowsable overground line. And what he ends up with is a diagram, on page 35, with a two-point alignment. A ley line, for the main body of the text, is not what Watkins described at all. Watkins coined the word 'ley' to describe a particular phenomenon. This phenomenon was an alignment of ancient sites. Watkins used this set of criteria to argue his case in archaeological terms. It seems that he deliberately avoided drawing occult energies into his arguments because the case was strong enough to be argued in archaeological terms and in material fact. To call an energy

line a 'ley' is to confuse the issue. To be fair to the author though, after having talked of a ley in terms of energy lines for most of the text he then mentions the confusion between different kinds of leys - but after having added to it.

That having been said, the author has come up with some fascinating research and he has come up with certain results, together with a new set of questions, which are central to the whole study of geomancy. He finds that ley energy retards the growth of some seedlings and concludes that "It is inimicable to certain forms of life". He has found that the Scots Pine - frequently found growing in clumps on Watkins leys - is an interrupter of this kind of energy. He concludes from this that these trees must be in these particular places because they absorb ley energy.

He speculates that ancient man must have set down the ley systems so as to channel, and therefore rid areas of, undesirable energy. The interesting thing about this is that the parallel oriental system of feng shui holds straight lines as being pathways of sha - the negative energy - and, moreover, pine trees in the feng shui system are held as special protectors against this energy. Fidler puts to the test Baron von Reichenbach's idea that the 'Odic Force' (which von R. thought of as being something between light and magnetism) can be reflected by a mirror. Fidler finds that this is the case with the ley energy, and once again we find exactly the same idea in the feng shui system, where mirrors are used to deflect sha. Incidentally, ponds are also used to deflect sha and they are found as dewponds on Watkins leys - perhaps the busy Mr Fidler would like to check this one out too?

The crucial point that arises out of this study is that ley energy is not perceived or presented as being a good, wholesome enhancer of life. Rather, it seems to be the opposite. The life-enhancing aspect of the ley system would appear to be the pathways set out to channel a dangerous energy form and which it keeps concentrated and running in straight lines. He says, "As yet we have very little knowledge of the potential power for good or evil of this energy, although there are indications that it can be great. Until such a time as we have this knowledge, it is very undesirable to add to or alter the existing system (p. 118).

These words of warning come from a man who has studied these strange energies in a manner as objective as any which I have come across. If this energy really is as the author describes then it will have far-reaching implications for those who have until now considered it to be a benign force. Several groups have worked with the 'ley energy' and it will be interesting to see how the 'Fountain Group' who project good feeling into the ley system (with the aim of positively influencing human behavior) deal with this thesis. If this is the same energy that the Fountain Group are talking about, then it looks as if they've been barking up the wrong tree. If it isn't, then the whole problem of terminology is again raised, and becomes one which energy dowzers must seriously deal with.



Wide-eyed and Godless ?

Kevin McClure

The attitudes and assumptions of clergymen and adherents of other religions and beliefs have often caused problems for Spiritualists, and for those attempting to practise publicly abilities such as healing and clairvoyance. The local papers are often the ground over which such disagreements are fought out, strong statements are made by both parties to the argument but, in due course, the issue blows over till the next time. Psychic News has reported many such disagreements in the fifteen years or so that I have been a reader.

Rarely, though, do I have a chance to look at the causes of these disputes, to find out why apparently intelligent people can take such a hard and narrow attitude to a subject that they frequently seem to know so little about. Spiritualists make a point of providing evidence to support their beliefs, and their desire to publicise them. What sort of evidence can Spiritualism's opponents provide? What do they know, or believe, that we do not? What are they afraid of?

If you visit your local evangelical Christian bookshop - those in the Christian Literature Crusade (CLC) chain are among the most common - you may find out some things about Spiritualism that you never knew before. Take this example that I picked up in September at the CLC branch by St Paul's Cathedral:

"Spiritualism, and the practice of anything like it, is strictly forbidden in the Bible . . . The spirits contacted by mediums, or anyone indulging in that sort of thing are not the spirits of the dead. Communication between the living and the dead is not permitted by God . . . The spirits contacted are demon spirits - the spirits of devils that impersonate the dead, and possess the bodies of those who indulge in these practises."

These remarks come from a leaflet entitled 'Hello! Is Anybody There?' and no, it isn't American. It comes from Bury St Edmunds, and like many publications of this kind, the cover is adorned with an Ouija Board sort of design. The confusion between Spiritualism and the ouija/glass and card sort of experiments is almost total.

Also, like almost every other item of anti-Spiritualist propaganda I have come across, this leaflet depends heavily on quotations from the Bible - you probably know most of them - to support its case. That isn't really what I want to look at on this occasion, though it is worth pointing out that, of course, the Bible doesn't mention Spiritualism - it is a modern phenomenon, and a modern religion. What the warnings in the Bible were against were probably the sort of necromancy and commercial magic that Aleister Crowley practised, or would have liked us to think he did. That is a different matter altogether, and I hold no brief for it.

The important fact is that the people who are criticising Spiritualism and survival communication now are not the authors of scripture, wherever the value of scripture may be. They are writing and speaking in the 20th century, and making judgements about what is happening now, not 2,000 years ago or more. We have probably spent too much time arguing with them about the Bible. It is time we discussed the judgements they are making, and the source and value of their evidence.

One of the authors most frequently quoted in anti-Spiritualist literature is one Raphael Gasson. Supposedly a former medium, later an evangelical convert, he wrote a well-known book called *The Challenging Counterfeit*:

"Spiritualism is an attempt to communicate with what are presumed to be the spirits of the dead. Those who indulge in this cult give themselves up to demons, who pose as 'spirit guides' and 'loved ones' and Spiritualists become ready to give obedience to what are actually demons whether they realise it or not . . . The communicating spirit invariably gives all the required proof quite easily by mentioning things that the enquirer may not know himself, but which later prove to be true."

Actually, if Spiritualism were as easy as that, we'd have no problems at all filling churches. Was this man really a medium?

The Reverend Michael Green, one-time rector of St Aldate's, Oxford, is a respected fundamentalist theologian. In his substantial book, *I Believe in Satan's Downfall*, he defines Spiritualism:

"The third main area of occultism is spiritism or spiritualism - the meanings are synonymous, although spiritualism is generally used by those who wish to add a semi-Christian facade to their sorceries, such as the Spiritualist Churches".

The famous self-publicising exorcist Dom Robert Petitpierre, who I believe went so far as to exorcise Loch Ness, was quoted in *The Times*:

"I have found a number of places where council houses, for instance, have something wrong and people cannot live in them. Then I very often find that there have been Spiritualist groups or Spiritualist functions in them or in the house next door, and although spiritualists are very well intentioned, they can let in all sorts of undesirable things".

This idea of Spiritualism as a kind of crack in the defences of a pure Christian universe through which demons can creep at will, is a surprisingly common one. In *Occult Shock and Psychic Forces*, John Weldon and Clifford Wilson, two of the leading American evangelists writing about the paranormal today, see such intervention as very real indeed:

"Clearly another counterfeit operation relates to supposed communication with the dead. Sometimes the evidence of communication with departed friends or relatives seems to be very convincing, but again the Bible tells us that Satan can change himself into an angel of light, and that his servants can, too. The Bible teaching is that there are legions of fallen angels who serve Satan, and it seems possible that some of these actually accompany individuals, learning all about them, even knowing such things as their voice pattern".

It astonishes me that these people, who often write excellently, and appear to be well-educated, holding responsible and influential positions in society, can on the one hand believe in and accept angels of light and darkness, the 'effects' of Spiritualism seeping through council house walls, and fallen angels following people round to learn their voice patterns, yet on the other so completely ignore and damn the substantial amount of good evidence that exists for the survival of personality after bodily death.

Perhaps you will consider the quality of the evidence for such suppositions the next time you have the misfortune to encounter them. Ask our critics about the demons, about the fallen angels and the rest of it, and if they can only refer back to the Bible, ask for some details of cases that have occurred more recently. In the past fifty years for instance. It does seem that even the best minds can become dreadfully confused when restricted by blind belief.

You probably will receive a reply of some sort when you ask for more recent examples of the dangers of Spiritualism. And rather than being of the Biblical variety, about offending God and so on, you are likely to hear one or other of what I call the 'occult disaster' stories, based on what is supposed to have happened to innocent, usually young people who 'dabbled' in the 'occult', and paid a terrible price. Let us look at a few of these, bearing in mind that for those who tell them there is absolutely no difference between the religion of Spiritualism and two teenagers in a shed with a beer glass and a pack of Lexicon cards. John Allen, Training Director of British Youth for Christ, wrote in *Buzz* magazine:

"I remember a group of students from my own college who decided to play with a ouija board one evening just for fun. They enjoyed it for about three weeks. Then one night they ran out of questions and one of them asked the spirit, 'who was Jesus Christ?'. Immediately the glass spun off the board and smashed against the wall. And a heavy stone statue on the windowsill toppled to the floor and smashed in pieces. The students came running out of the room in terror."

This is from a widely distributed propaganda leaflet printed in Worthing, which makes it very clear that ouija and Spiritualism are one and the same:

"Some boys in a North London school in which I was teaching told me of the time they set out to prove whether there really was a spirit behind the game. So they challenged it to prove its existence by breaking a certain boy's leg. The glass shattered, and the boy in question, oblivious of this seance, fell down and broke his ankle. They never played it again."

The same story appears, with no further verification, in *Talk of the Devil*, a lurid book by Leicestershire evangelist Peter Anderson, as does the following:

"Fifteen year old Ann was an extremely healthy, pleasant girl, well-mannered and well-balanced, but she was found dead in bed with a polythene bag over her head. A suicide note sealed with wax held the secret of her tragic death. 'If it is possible for a spirit to return, I shall return. If there are no signs of ghostly disturbance within a week of my death then the spirit of the human body is beyond recall.' At the inquest the Lancashire coroner said, 'It has come to my notice that there is an interest in Spiritualism at this girl's school. I have been told that there has been involvement with a ouija board and girls are trying to contact the spirits. I hope that Ann's death will serve as a lesson to her school friends not to get involved with Spiritualism. It is dangerous.'"

And from another leaflet, *Ouija - It's no game*, which I have found all over the country:

"To psychiatric hospitals it's no joke. A hospital near Basingstoke asked for the help of a local minister. They had been unable to deal with young people who had been admitted, out of control and irrational, after contact with the ouija board . . . A friend of mine was rushed in a police car to the casualty department of a hospital near to where he lived. The boy on the bed stared vacantly at the ceiling. In between violent outbursts he had claimed to be Jesus and Moses. He and his friends had been playing ouija at their technical college.

"The Bible spells it out: any contact with the occult, i.e. tarot cards, fortune telling, astrology, spiritism, or anything else of this nature can create havoc. Even the third and fourth generations can be affected if it is not properly dealt with."

Such is propaganda. The nearest we come to evidence or verification in any of these cases quoted is the name Ann, and the places Basingstoke and Lancashire. A common name, highly populated places. The information is meaningless - it cannot be checked, and perhaps is not meant to be. Probably there is some factual basis for some of these stories, some element of real experience that has been blown up into a full-scale 'occult disaster'. Unless we press the matter with those who put these stories round, though, we will never know. I have personally attempted to obtain verific-

ation, or some sort of corroborative evidence for several cases of this kind; I have yet to be supplied with a name, date or place to fit any of them. Similarly, it is up to you, when someone tells you such a story, or objects to your church or your meetings on the basis of this sort of scaremongering, to press them for evidence, to ask for all the facts. If the tale is true there may be something to be learned from it. If not, the teller is deceiving or deceived.

Whatever other problems Spiritualism may have, it need not put up with innuendo and rumour masquerading as real experience: nor, sadly, does a religion benefit from a widespread public confusion with the playing of psychological parlour games. Often, Spiritualism has attempted to deal with the problem by negative methods: arguing about the meaning of verses of scripture, or just affirming its own beliefs. Surely it is better just to say, in as firm and public a way as possible, "Prove it", and then wait for results. Where can anyone in their right mind find acceptable proof of demons and fallen angels learning voice patterns? Only in their own imaginations. And was anyone's ankle really broken? I very much doubt it. Yet the people who spread these tales seem to command the attention of the media, and Spiritualists are too often portrayed as crackpots.

None of this is to say that Spiritualism has a corner on common sense, or is even right for the majority of the time: there are far too many recurring problems to make such a claim. Yet, just in case you think that pushing for evidence from Spiritualism's opponents is too much like hard work, bear one point in mind.

I have made it clear that I have collected many books and pamphlets about the sort of criticism of Spiritualism mentioned in this article, and have explained what they see as the dangers involved in the practise of clairvoyance and so on; but it doesn't stop there. Having explained the nature of Spiritualism's sickness, remedies are often suggested, and the methods for the 'cure' are often explained. The remedy is always some sick, crazy form of 'exorcism', or 'deliverance', to give it its trendy title. Yes, those who have been involved in anything regarded as Spiritualist are assumed to be more or less possessed by demons, which must then be driven out. I am sure you remember recent tragedies involving this practice.

By putting our own case with force and clarity, and revealing the dangerous imaginings of the wilder of our critics, it is possible that we may save another inadequate innocent from the excesses of exorcism and related rituals, which are usually made up and performed by individuals grossly ignorant of what they purport to be exorcising. If only one person is spared that, we will have performed a considerable service.

UFO Entities - Warnings of the Dark Age

by Paul D Murray

Steiner was of course right in his assertions and prophecies. The UFO phenomenon can only be viewed as part of a larger issue which encapsulates politics, history and countless other subsidiary components. The rise of communistic atheism and its eternal enemy the Revelation of the Son is a battle which has still to be concluded. The apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary are reminders that both sides can create illusions and perform miraculous deeds, but also, sadly, reminders too that the fight against the entities is one which is difficult to find a battleground for. The turning away from the concept of Revelation and any faith in the true salvation of the eternal soul makes Steiner's battleground of the human heart a most likely conclusion as this satanic century draws to a close. Consequently, following Steiner and others, it is difficult to identify the true forces of good and their opposites, but any student of the UFO phenomenon should know that there are many instances where physical harm has resulted from a 'close-encounter'.

Recently there has been much support gained for the 'debunkers', both through the media and 'scientific' experts, but this only calls into question a far larger issue of media control and mind control, probably on a vast scale, perpetrated by governments, whose role in the plunge towards Armageddon is highly suspect. In other words, anyone who throws aside hard facts just because they seem strange and out of the ordinary human experience is not really a seeker of the truth. The entities do exist but they are manifestations of the bigger global conspiracy which has been with us for longer than the UFO phenomenon.

At the extreme end of the Dark Age we have the assassination of Catholic President Kennedy, victim of Dark Age conspirators, whose plan for continuing global anarchy had to find a new man prepared to level Vietnam to rubble. The infamous MIB's were present. In FSR, vo. 23, nos. 4,5,6, Dr B E Schwarz gave a frightening account of the MIB syndrome. Were they not also present the night Robert Kennedy was assassinated too, after having dinner with Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate, the latter having been identified by Alex Sanders as a member of a witches' coven. A year later Sharon Tate and unborn child were horribly murdered by members of Charles Manson's Satanist Family at Polanski's home. Satanist Anton La Vey played the part of the Devil in Polanski's Rosemary's Baby and one does not have to be a genius to see unsightly connections between La Vey and the 20th Century Dark Age.

At this extreme side of the Dark Age we have the seemingly endless stream of senseless barbaric murders, becoming more bizarre by the year. Peter Sutcliffe, the so-called 'Yorkshire Ripper', claimed to have heard 'voices' when he worked as a gravedigger. The legal system found the man 'sane', but does this mean the voices were real? Like the wrath of the avenging God, Sutcliffe murdered thirteen women thinking all to be prostitutes. Why did it take so long to bring him to justice? Perhaps he was in actual fact not a sole murderer and his fall simply looked good. The original 'Ripper' of Whitechapel 1888 fame was conveniently passed off as being a lone murderer by the authorities. It took over 90 years for journalist Stephen Knight to unearth the

real story of a horrible Masonic conspiracy led by the Queen's surgeon William Gull, and the Masonic Police Commissioner and a Masonic Home Secretary. Anyone who has seen the police photograph of Marie Kelly's mutilated remains will hopefully believe the evil which Freemasonry represents. The system is the veritable ape of God and all God stands for.

Now we have the ridiculous situation of the Roman Catholic Church officially recognising this organisation. The Vatican's fight against Freemasonry seems to be all but over, for the New Order Mass, the new emphasis of signs in the form of hand-shaking, the Masonic Cardinals and the suspicious death of John Paul I who, just before his death was allegedly to have said, "They are all killing each other", have turned the once powerful enemy of Freemasonry into its Marxist puppet. The Catholic Church has become a Communist infested, and thus ultimately atheistic and materialistic, tool of the Dark Age Conspirators, who brick by brick destroy and eat from within the healthy body of Christ's Church.

Dennis Nilsen was found guilty of murdering six men who were 'down on their luck' in North London. Nilsen proceeded to take on the role of God and not just take life but also mutilate the bodies, dismembering and hiding the parts under floorboards, flushing down the toilets and burying remains in his back garden.

Nilsen was a probationer Metropolitan Police officer and probably used his knowledge of London's streets to seek out his victims. It is rather strange that the Yorkshire 'Ripper' was said to be no danger to men and that the natural corollary of this would be that Nilsen was no danger to women . . . was each trying to cancel the other out? The Whitechapel murders were ritualistic but notice how any reference to a ritualistic killing is speedily played down by the authorities, especially in the case of Sutcliffe, when the head of the hunt was asked that very question. More interesting is the time it took to bring both men to justice in a country which prides itself on policing techniques while innocent men and women met horrible deaths at the hands of, perhaps, 'lone maniacs' and 'motiveless' murderers?

At the less extreme end of this Dark Age plan are the seemingly less important occurrences of our everyday life in Britain. We have the continuing saga of feminist radicals trying to protest for 'peace' but generally using the platform for other strangely familiar practices: the obvious connection with the Soviet infiltration of Western society; the increasing tendency to corrupt the youth of the country through the educational system; the striving for a matriarchal society; rejection of any real moral standards, sanitary or otherwise. The Church again has been dragged into this debate and its Marxist leanings become easily apparent: a rogue Monsignor with seemingly nothing else to do but take on a full time job outside his 'priestly' duties. It is irrelevant whether they are victims of the conspirators or are co-conspirators in the slide towards the society of the Dark Age.

The education system has become a factory of egalitarian principles and places where discipline and morals are not taught. The casualness of the 'sixties has become the reality of today's 'comprehensive' system: produce lower standards, rid the schools of academics; generally undermine from within. Confuse the people so much that the young person has no morals and, as Lenin said, such a youth makes the best revolutionary.

The continuing fragmentation of society is gradually turning the 20th century into the satanic era. The rush for more materialistic benefits, the lack of prayer, the downright hypocrisy of people in authority all gather into a fitting backdrop for the arrival of the final showdown; the showdown Steiner talked of at the end of the 19th century. Perhaps the battleground will be the Earth herself this time, but can we say that the warnings were not there?

Closing remarks

The two preceding articles may, perhaps, be seen as being somewhat overstated: mine was, to an extent, written with 'Psychic News' in mind, and made a specific case in a specific context. But to take the ufology aspect, Paul Murray's approach finds clear support in the new editorship of FSR - and such an approach is not unprecedented. Think back to the 'UFO Control Theory' that I discussed in Semaphore Without Flags in CG2. So far as I know, of the four leading 'New Ufologists' quoted therein, only Jerry Clark has backed away from that theory in public. And while I did not see it as being essentially demonological at the time, the implications are almost identical. How many of you are there out there who believe that some apparently spontaneous phenomena at least are initiated or caused by some sort of coherent, intelligent, essentially evil force? A good many, I suspect.

My personal view is clearly expressed in Wide-Eyed and Godless? Sticking fairly rigidly to the principle that nothing can be proven without evidence, I can see no reason to assume the existence of the devil, demons, hell, or any of the rest of the panoply of traditional religious carrot and stick. However it may be dressed up. Whatever abstruse belief system may be introduced into the discussion; and I am becoming increasingly aware that Paganism is as full of bigots as any other religious movement. There is so little that we do understand about the UFO problem, so little that we do understand about the nature and content of apparent spirit/survival communication. To try to draw from such incomprehensible sources conclusions about the character and source of good and evil seems wildly presumptuous. Talk about running before we can walk.

Yet there is an interesting point here, an intriguing divide in the ways. We do obtain information from our studies, our investigations. Often it is weird, confusing, misleading information, with which we can do little. Sometimes it is more tangible, surprising, even a little revelatory: we have the feeling that we have found out something found out by few others. And maybe we are right. Very often - as in the cases of the apparent spirit-communication and apparent UFO phenomena mentioned above - the information we obtain appears to relate to areas of religious belief. Indeed, almost every kind of reported paranormal event and ability has been interpreted in such a way at one time or another. Christian parapsychology is one part of such an interpretation. The New Age Movement is another. And, oddly enough, the equating of paranormal research with the intrusion of evil into human life is probably the most potent - and primitive - of all.

I suspect that the 'religious' interpretation of our information is the most natural and the most immediate. But I do not think it is constructive or sensible. I have been deeply concerned to hear that some researchers and investigators in the South - certainly not unassociated with ASSAP - are performing what they call exorcisms, apparently for the good of the mental health of those they regard as 'troubled'. A lethal combination of belief, ego, and thrill-seeking seems to be the only explanation for anyone getting involved in such absurd and dangerous activities.

Elsewhere, Gordon Creighton, hammering what must surely be the penultimate nail into the coffin of 'Flying Saucer Review', makes it public that he "has known since June 1957 what the UFO entities are", leaving us in no doubt that they are not only demons, but card-carrying members of the Communist Party, too. The early reviews of my book about the Virgin Mary have met with responses that I never anticipated; the Catholics are, in general, quite impressed, a fact which delights me. Pagans, or whatever they call themselves these days (something to do with Earth Mysteries, probably. Ho ho), seem to be deeply offended that I haven't worked out that the Virgin Mary that neither they nor I accept has appeared is actually their Great Goddess, or female archetype, or something. Sorry, chums, but if the evidence for visions of the BVM doesn't argue for the reality of visions of the BVM, it certainly doesn't argue for anything else! On a more traditional level, again, a contrasting example of the confusion of events and belief is seen in the way in which idealised pictures of Christ hang prominently in most Spiritualist Churches, and in which many such churches regularly present readings from the asinine 'Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ'.

It seems to be vital that we should eschew this drawing of wild conclusions from difficult and confusing evidence: we should seek to assess our source material on the basis of the broadest possible consensus, and the religious belief held by any individual should not be permitted to sway that consensus. More of all this, and a rather important announcement in the Closing Remarks of CG9, when plans for the future of CG will be announced.

Kevin McClure