



DEAD OF NIGHT



Halloween: The Festival Of The Dead

issue 2 Oct 94



The Ship On The Mountain
Chasing The Unknown
The Lincoln Imp

CONTENTS

Issue 2 OCT 94

Editor
Lee Walker

Editorial Assistant
Steve Griffiths

Publisher
Quinta-Essensia

Published by:-
Dead of Night Magazine
156 Bolton Rd. East
New Ferry
Wirral
Merseyside L62 4RY
Phone(051) 644 7095

Cover Illustration
Lee Walker

Article Contributors
Lee Walker
Steve Griffiths
David Williams
Paul Williams
Ian Doyle

Art Contributors
Grant Walker
Dave Williams

Dead of Night Magazine
does not subscribe to any
one belief system.

All contributions should
be sent to the above
address.

Next Issue:
THE WITCHES OF
PENDLE HILL.

DEVIL DOGS:
Special Feature On
Phantom Black Dogs.

THE PROTECTOR'S OF
THE ARK.

SPECIAL FEATURES

**HALLOWEEN: THE FESTIVAL OF THE
DEAD.....4**
A Look At The Origins And Customs
Of All-Hallow's Eve.

THE SHIP ON THE MOUNTAIN.....18
Has Noah's Ark been found on The
Doomsday Mountain?

THE LINCOLN IMP.....29
A Personal Account Of The Famous
Demonic Entity.

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.....31
The Editor's tale of Animal
mutilation and an encounter with
'The Impossible'.

**A CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS...PART 2 OF
A SPECIAL PULL OUT**

REGULAR FEATURES

EDITORIAL.....3

CHASING THE UNKNOWN.....12
A selection of recent press
cuttings.

REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE.....20
Unexplained Phenomena in the 20th
Century; 1901-03

THE ROAD OF DREAMS AS MIRRORS....41
A bunch of classic Cosmic Jokes

DARK VISIONS.....43
A round-up of video reviews and
analysis of TV programmes dealing
with the unknown.

SWAPPING TALES IN DREAMLAND.....46
Letters and stories from our
readers.

EDITORIAL

'There's four new colours in the rainbow,
An old man's taking Polariods.
But all he captures, is endless rain...
Endless rain'

James. 'Sometimes'.



Welcome to the second issue of 'DEAD OF NIGHT', Merseyside's ONLY publication dealing with ALL aspects of Strange Phenomena.

There. That's quite enough trumpet blowing for this Editorial. Yeah. I know. Why am I apologising? No-one ever reads this bit anyway... But there you go.

The response to our inaugural issue was pretty positive on the whole. Thanks to all those people who bought a copy and passed on their opinions/criticisms. Can I just take this opportunity to whisper the teensiest of subtle hints however; If you have a point to make or a view to express, why not commit your thoughts to paper? The receiving of letters helps to make the compilation of this fanzine worthwhile, and also encourages debate, stimulates interest, and aids us in choosing the type of articles YOU'D like to see contained within these pages...

Oh, and it doesn't do any harm to our constantly battered ego's either. Quite a few readers were a little surprised at the amount of (ahem) humour we inject when writing about such a predominantly SERIOUS subject matter...

Well, let me just say that this jovial attitude is not intended to be in any way dismissive or disrespectful to what WE ourselves believe to be vastly important data...

Far from it.

The fact is though, we are seeking to spread the Gospel according to 'DEAD OF NIGHT' to as many potential converts as possible, (Oh please. That's enough of the Religious metaphors. You're beginning to sound like 'Sinister Simon' out of 'Brookside'. Assistant Ed), and if we were to start coming across as self-opinionated fanatics, intent on ramming cold, hard facts down right down the readers throats, many of 'em would be lost to such 'deeply meaningful' publications as 'More' Magazine and 'The Weekly World News'...

The old adage, 'You can never hope to appeal to EVERYONE' is an eternal truism... But that's never gonna stop us from trying, just the same. And besides... Most of the Phenomena we deal with IS extremely humorous. (The vast majority of modern day comedians could learn a lot from our resident 'Cosmic Joker').

And so, we'll continue with the quirky, colloquial style, if its all the same to you.

Unless of course we receive a mountain of mail telling us you'd prefer it otherwise...

In the meantime, hope you enjoy the mag.

Happy Halloween...

Lee. October 20th, 1994.

Halloween: The Festival Of The Dead.

"It's a Celtic word... Samhain.
It means, The Lord Of The Dead.
The end of Summer.
The Festival of Samhain.

Dr. Sam Loomis. (Donald Pleasence). HALLOWEEN II.



SEASON OF THE WITCH:

I guess for most people, the night of October 31st, is synonymous with all kinds of harmless frivolity. A time of fancy dress parties and bouts of 'Trick or Treating'. Of the faintly fabulous smells of roasted chestnuts mixed with the first bonfires of the season. Of cardboard silhouettes in shop window fronts depicting cackling Witches on broomsticks. Of skeleton masks and ghostly white sheets and the cold, jagged grins of Jack O' Lanterns!..

For others, concerned teachers and the clergy most prominent amongst them, it is a time of issuing fearful warnings to parents of the dangers their children face from (in all innocence) dabbling in the Occult, The Supernatural, and other, darker practices...

And for still others, it is a time of high celebration. Of fire and festival. Of ritual and ceremony. Of sacrifice and invocation...

But no matter WHAT the wildly differing views surrounding this date, one thing is certainly undeniable; Surprisingly few people are aware of the true ORIGINS of Halloween. The vast majority don't even know how it got its name or what it's meant to signify. And they are bemused still further by its long association with Ghoulies and Ghosties and Long Legged Beasties...

The point of this article is to help clear up some of that mystery and to try and list some of the many Halloween customs and superstitions (some that are quaint and some that ain't) along the way...And not a second too soon either...

'The Season Of The Witch' is almost upon us...



REMEMBERANCE OF THINGS PAST:
(The Origins Of Halloween).

The true origin of Halloween, All Hallow's Eve, Samhain (pronounced something like 'Sowen'), call it what you like, has its roots firmly implanted in the dim traces of the now long extinct worship of the Babylonian God, BEL, or BAAL, the ancient Phoenician Sun-God.

Why, I hear you ask?

Well, because the Asiatic countries, were deemed the Cradle Of Civilisation and all, they, perhaps not surprisingly, elected to export their beliefs far and wide to more barbarous nations. The direct result of this was, just like the peoples of the Middle East, Ancient Britons paid homage to the Sun and its heat giving properties. This was typified by the lighting of what were known as BELTANE FIRES, kindled on the pinnacle of the highest hills.

The reason for igniting them there was twofold; One, the Celtic Religion didn't hold with worshipping their deities in self-erected temples. They preferred the good ol' natural, open air in which to perform their ceremonies. And secondly, they not unreasonably supposed that the nearer they built their fires to the Heavens, the more effective would be its power in regenerating the Sun's dying heat thus ensuring its survival through the chill Winter months.



(Above); BAAL, The ancient Sun God and God of the Winter rains. The deity whose influence stretched across entire continents, reaching the Shores of Britain, and claiming the Island's Celtic inhabitants as its disciples.

The conflagrations lit up the skyline three times a year. On May Day eve, Midsummer eve, and on the last day of October. The Spring and Summer fires were built to celebrate the rebirth of growth and the continuance of life. The Autumn flames burned in thanksgiving for the gathering in of the harvests and in honour of the God they believed to

be looking after their interests. What's a little strange is that none of the aforementioned dates has anything to do with the Equinoxes and Solstices or with sowing and reaping. Perhaps the fact that Celtic man relied heavily upon cattle as their main source of food back then has something to do with that. Samhain marked the last day of Summer and was therefore the time when the cattle were brought in from the fields to spend the Winter under cover snug in their stalls. Also, in those far off times, November was regarded as the beginning of a new year, and because the Celtic day started at Sunset, and ran through to the following sunset, the fun 'n' games started on the eve of November 1st. The embers burned all the first week of November, and within their flames all the worries and heartache of the previous twelve months were symbolically consumed. The priests in those days, the Druids, decreed that when all the fires in the locality had been extinguished, every head of every household should take a portion of the ashes to rekindle them anew in their home. This ensured that they would be prosperous and blessed with good fortune throughout the coming year

DISPELLING A FEW 'BONNIE NIGHT' MYTHS

'Remember, Remember, the fifth of November.'

So runs the familiar childhood verse that I remember from my schooldays. We were also taught that Bonfire's were built to commemorate the failed 'Gunpowder Plot' hatched by Guy Fawkes and his not-so-merry-men... It was only in recent years that I learned the truth.

The fact is, King James the 1st, merely manipulated the abortive assassination of his government, so that it tied in neatly with the misleading concept that the common folk were burning effigies of Guy The Fenian Anarchist, rather than, (as the Pagans believed), The Spirit Of The Dying Year.

I learned also that Bonfires were originally called BONE-fires, for the simple reason that animals and even HUMAN BEINGS were once sacrificed upon these pyres as Thanksgiving offerings to the Old Gods.

Once it was lit, the entire community of the village, town or hamlet, would dance wildly around the fire in an anti-clockwise (or 'Widdershins') direction.

In North Wales and the Highlands of Scotland, EVERY family built a Bonfire and each person would throw a previously marked white stone into the calcinated remanants. Prayers were then intoned around the fire, and if next morning a stone was missing, it was said that its owner would be dead before the year was out. Also in Scotland, young boys out gathering fuel for their Bonfires would ask the people whose houses they called at for 'a peat to burn the Witches'. The same boys would dance around the flickering flames shouting 'Fire! Fire! Burn the Witches!!!'

As soon as the inferno died down, the ashes were scattered and when the very last spark had blown itself out and the land was reclaimed by the impenetrable darkness of night, the boys would take up the cry, 'The Devil take the hindmost'. They'd then give it toes in every direction... Bonfires too, were associated with the twin concepts of Death and Rebirth. They were kindled for the purpose of aiding their departed friends, whose souls were said to be imprisoned in Purgatory.

All of which leads us rather neatly to...

The Festival Of The Dead.

With typical disregard for any alternative religions, Christianity tried its damndest to do away with Samhain. When it discovered that it couldn't hope to achieve this, it tried, with some success, to incorporate the date into its OWN calendar.

They changed the name to 'All Hallow's Eve', the night before 'All Hallows' or 'All Saints' Day', (a commemoration of the saints and martyrs, first introduced in the 7th Century - Its date was changed from the original May 13th to November the 1st so that it would conveniently coincide with the Pagan Festival Of The Dead...Samhain).

It didn't stand a chance of eradicating the traditional ties with Death and Rebirth, however.

Winter, with its depressingly short quota of daylight and seemingly endless hours of darkness, conjured up images of the cold, ebon blackness of the grave...And for this reason, right across Europe, it was believed that for this ONE night, The Spirits of the Dead were given freedom to walk the city streets and the rural countryside.

Sir James Frazer, in his excellent book 'The Golden Bough', describes the occasion thus;

'It was the time of year when the Souls of the departed were supposed to revisit their old homes in order to warm themselves by the fire, and to comfort themselves with the good cheer provided for them in the kitchen or the parlour by their affectionate kinsfolk. (He doesn't say however, if this state of affairs was COMPLETELY desirable to these 'affectionate kinsfolk', or if it gave the inhabitants a goodly sized dose of the screamin' meemies...Doubtful Ed). It was perhaps, a natural thought that the approach of Winter, should drive the poor shivering hungry Ghosts from the bare fields and the leafless woodlands to the shelter of the cottages with its familiar fireside.'

The origins of the modern custom of 'Trick Or Treat' can be traced back to the old tradition of placing food and drink offerings outside for the Spirits whose homes no longer stand, or whose family and friends have moved away. These wandering bands of Shuffling Souls passed always to the West, the direction of the dying Sun as it sank towards the crimson horizon...

And they weren't the ONLY Things abroad...

Nor were they the worst...

The denizens of Faerie, were also given licence to cross the threshold between our world and theirs...And they did so in a multitude of guises: Hobgoblins and Spriggans. Boggarts and Brownies. Elf-Folk and Pixies. They leapt and danced from one FAERIE Hill to the other accompanied by the sweet, hypnotic sounds of their music. If you were unlucky or foolhardy enough to wander past one of these hills on Halloween, you were running the risk of being sucked into a Faerie Revel. They would likely welcome you warmly enough with gifts of wine and gold. But all too often, when you took the opportunity to look closely at their faces their true nature was revealed...They were usually the faces of neighbours and friends who had died over the years. When they saw that you recognised them, they'd shriek with manic laughter and drag you into their whirling dance. You wouldn't be able to escape their clutches

until you fell unconscious and awake inside a stone circle, your arms and legs heavily bruised from the endlessly grabbing fingers. In Scotland, it was believed that anyone who had been kidnapped by the Faeries could be brought back to Earth on Halloween night by the reciting of suitable spell outside the entrance to their realm.



Above: A friend tries to drag clear an unfortunate victim caught in a Faerie Ring. On the evening of Samhain, such creatures were given licence to revel and, to use modern parlance, 'Party on.'

SATAN'S DISCIPLES.

Of course, Halloween is best noted nowadays for its association with Witches...Complete with their ancient books of spells, black cats and proverbial broomsticks.

And not without good reason.

As we've seen already, Halloween is very much connected with Death, and because Witches believe that Death isn't the end, but is simply the door which opens onto another life, this date was considered one of the four Great Sabbats (the four great yearly feasts formerly celebrated by the Druids and our Celtic ancestors. The other three, just in case you're curious, are Candlemas: 2nd February. May Eve: 30th April. And Lammas: 1st August), in the Witches calendar.

Because of this, the Church, as we have already seen, tried to render the festival obsolete...They eventually succeeded, and it was only reintroduced into the Church Of England calendar as recently as 1928.

The fear of Witches and the magic they are said to practice was/is such that their effigies were being burned upon the bonfires well before anyone dreamed up the idea of committing 'A Guy' to the merciless flames.

At the aforementioned Sabbats, a gathering of Witches, a Coven, to give it its proper name, would pay homage to the Old Gods with much dancing and general merrymaking. The food and drink would usually consist of meat and cakes, washed down with wine and good beer. The meal is set out

on a white tablecloth, and the Leader...The Man In Black, (variously described as a man dressed entirely in, amazingly enough, Black, a person in a ritual Goat mask, or The Devil Himself), presides over this feast.

At the conclusion of the meal, the Coven danced to pipe music or the strumming of a Cittern (an old-fashioned type of stringed instrument, played like a guitar with a plectrum). The Man In Black would then teach the gathering the rudiments of The Black Arts, e.g. How to manufacture wax images, and bewitch crops.

He would also provide them with a greenish coloured ointment, with which they annointed themselves on the forehead and wrists. It's very likely this substance was a kind of 'Flying Ointment' made from a concoction of narcotic herbs. One whiff of THIS combo and it's no wonder the Witches believed they could fly!!!



Above: The Witches' Sabbath in all its glory.

HALLOWEEN GAMES AND CUSTOMS.

The big orange Pumpkins and purple turnips that ripen at this time of year have become extremely popular as a Halloween decoration ever since the Witches used it to frighten away prying eyes who'd come to spy on their secret meetings. They are very easy to hollow out and put a suitably scary, grinning face upon them. Place a flickering candle in its centre and you've got a visage that, viewed from a distance, closely resembles the Creatures that are said to stalk the hidden boundaries of darkness on this night. In the past, these decorations served a double purpose. They were useful as lanterns to light the way across the open fields and woodland, and they also kept 'the terror by night' at bay, in much the same way that Gargoyles on Church roofs are said to banish invading DEMONS.



EVEN IN WARTIME American forces serving in Britain during the Second World War celebrated Hallowe'en with the traditional hollowed-out pumpkins in which they lit candles.

In Wales, Samhain was regarded as one of the 'Three Spirit Nights', when the wind, "Blowing over the feet of corpses," bore sighs to the houses of those who were to die in the next twelve months.

A ceremony known as 'Leeting The Witches' was common in the Pendle area of Lancashire. Basically, what it entailed was to take a lighted candle about the fields around the house between eleven and midnight. As long as the flame remained strong and constant then there was nothing to be afraid of, for it meant that the power of any Witches in the vicinity was fast waning. But if the flame should go out, then the carrier was doomed.

This ritual was considered very dangerous because Witches would of course do all they could to douse the flame. Only the bravest people in the community were apt to volunteer for THIS nerve-racking business.

In many parts of Cheshire, Halloween was known as 'Nutcrack Night'.

Girls who were desperate to know the outcome of their current romance would place two Hazle-nuts on the bars of a roaring fire and name one for themselves and one for their lover. If they burned away together, all was well...But if one fell off the hearth...She'd best start looking for a new partner. Alternativley, you can line the hot grate with the nuts, giving each one a name of a prospective husband, and reciting, 'If you love me pop and fly...If you hate me, burn and die'.

There are several other methods of divining one's future love life on All Hallow's Eve.

You can light youřself a couple of candles on a dressing table, place them either side of a mirror, and then, after making sure you're eating an Apple whilst peering into the looking glass, the spectral image of your potential husband or wife will appear.

If you had the bottle, you might traipse on up to the nearest churchyard, and once there walk around its perimeter, carefully treading between the graves, a total of 12 times. After the 12th circuit, the Double of the man/woman of your dreams will appear.

Less frightening by far, is the simple flinging of an Apple peel over your left shoulder to see what letter it formed.

To ensure a dream of future lovers, a girl can place her shoes in the shape of a 'T', that letter being a powerful talisman representing the Scandanavian Thunder God, THOR. She is then to recite the words; 'Hoping this night my true love to see, I place my shoes in the shape of a 'T'.

In Ireland, The Isle Of Man, and Lancashire, a rather peculiar Love Ritual was played out by a man, who after obtaining some ashes, either from a Bonfire or from a cremated body, would sprinkle the charred remanants along a quiet country lane, before concealing himself in some nearby bushes, or other convenient hiding place, and wait...

'The first SINGLE woman to pass along the lane was destined to become his wife.

The origins of the popular game of 'Duck Apple' were also based in Love Ritual. You inscribe the letters of the alphabet upon the fruit, and wearing a blindfold, and with your hands tied behind your back, the Apple you managed to catch with your teeth would contain the initial of the person with whom you were fated to spend the rest of your life. Y'see, both Apples and Hazels were once considered Holy Trees. The Hazel signified Wisdom, and the Apple was the Tree Of Paradise. So it was appropriate that they should both be used in divining the future.

So there you are. A fairly comprehensive overview of what Halloween is REALLY all about. At least now you may be a little more aware of it's traditions...And THIS Samhain, when you're stuffing yourself with candy watching the late night Horror movie on the box, or slurping down that extra pint in the pub as you gaze dreamily at the flickering flames of the Bonfire...Remember, Remember, that long after the last firework goes spinning to the sleeping earth...Halloween is not just a meaningless game of 'Trick Or Treat'...

It truly IS 'The Season Of The Witch...'

(Below) A group of Witches on their way to the Halloween Sabbat.



Lee Walker. (With heartfelt thanks to Dave Williams for a goodly sized portion of additional research).

October 18th. 1994.

CHASING THE UNKNOWN.

(The very latest press clippings).

1994.

One of the main criticisms levelled at the first issue of our erstwhile mag was that there was a noticeable scarcity of up-to-the-minute 'Fortean' news.

Never one to shirk from a bout of constructive 'slaggin' off', your conscientious editor and his assistant have duly waded through countless copies of the daily papers in a relentless search for news-worthy items...And here, we present our findings...A welter of evidence that, whatever the massed hordes of detractors may say to the contrary, the type of stuff we report occurs with just the same degree of frequent regularity as during the more 'innocent' (aka Gullible) days of yesteryear...

So now, as the redoubtable Alan Partridge, ('Knowing me, knowing you...Aha'), might say, join us as 'DEAD OF NIGHT' prepares to embark upon the first round of 'Chasing The Unknown.'

MYSTERIOUS CREATURES;

My attention was drawn to this reputed sighting of a distinctly dubious nature, courtesy of a less than sincere 'Radio One' news filler last May.

I don't wish to appear overtly skeptical, but the fact that I've heard nothing since the publication of the clipping below, doesn't do a whole pile for its credibility. I remember reading somewhere that it was something of an enigma that none of the English Lakes have any reports of strange, unknown animals...I guess it was only a matter of time before some tourist conscious local dreamed up a suitably mysterious entity. It's just a pity they had to come up with the ridiculous 'Alice In Wonderland' type name... 'TIZZIE-WIZZIE' indeed!!!

In a Tizzie The Loch Ness monster may be about to be supplanted by an equally strange beast, the Tizzie-Wizzie — a hedgehog and squirrel cross said to be lurking on the shores of Lake Windermere.

Lake Windermere, Cumbria.
Liverpool Echo. May 19th.

WEIRD MEDICAL PHENOMENA;

And here's a tale to put you off your dinner for weeks... You wanna embark on a slice of instant dieting??? Read this...

A rotten headache

AFTER months of headaches a man went to hospital in southern China, where docs found he had more than 120 worms inside his skull from rotten food he had eaten.

Southern China. Daily Slur.
23rd March

CANNIBALISM;

And coming up, a novel way of acquiring courage...All you have to do is eat someone to gain some 'bottle'.

Gang ate victims

FIVE gangsters turned into cannibals to psyche themselves up for their crimes. Police said the crooks murdered at least four kidnap victims — despite being paid ransoms — and ate part of each body "to gain courage." The monsters, all in their early 20s, hated the rich. Police who arrested the gang in Cholla, South Korea, said they were plotting to seize a television station to broadcast complaints about injustice.

Cholla, South Korea. Daily Slur. 22nd September.

ANIMAL MUTATIONS;

Another example of Man's total lack of concern for the Planet which he inhabits and (supposedly) shares in company with countless other species...When will we ever learn???

Hunchback and chips

COD in the traditional fish and chip supper could be riddled with cancerous growths caused by North Sea pollution, environment group Greenpeace claimed yesterday.

Deformed cod, nicknamed humpy backs and described by researcher Dr Paul Johnston, as the "Quasimodos of the fish world," are regularly landed at English ports.

But there is no evidence to suggest that eating them will cause harm.

*North Sea. Sunday People.
18th April.*

ALIEN BIG CAT;

The usual tired old explanation proffered whenever a 'Panther' is sighted in Britain...

Wonder of wonders though, the local zoo's and circus's never actually report any of their animals missing...And neither are they ever re-captured...

HORROR IN GRAVEYARD

A YOUNG mum was badly scarred when an animal like a panther savaged her in a church graveyard.

Lecturer Sally Dyke, 32, a mother-of-two, suffered hideous scars when the savage creature sank its claws into her side leaving her bleeding heavily at Inkberrow, Worcs.

Police say the animal, which is still at large, may have escaped from a zoo or circus.

*Inkberrow, Worcestshire.
Sunday People. April 24th*

WEIRD HUMAN BEHAVIOUR;

Following on from our account in issue 1 (see page 38), of a 'Wolf-Boy', comes this piece about two brothers surviving in the midst of a dark forest since they were abandoned as children.

The wood life stinks

TWO brothers have been living in an Italian forest ... for 32 years!

Renzo and Franco Pelazza have never washed since their mum kicked them out of their Genoa home when they were 12 and nine.

But, now 44 and 41, the smelly long-bearded pair were sniffed out only this week by nearby villagers.

They said they lived in caves and hunted animals for food... adding: "It was a hard life."

*Genoa, Italy. Sunday People.
21st April.*

MORE WEIRD HUMAN BEHAVIOUR;

It's another of those total over-reactions, guys 'n' gals...

It never ceases to amaze me the extraordinary lengths some people will go to to express their grief, anger, sense of loss, or frustration.

Dying for love of dog

A MAN drank himself to death in a pub as he tried to drown his heartbreak over the death of his beloved rottweiler.

Bachelor Keith Mann, 39, went on a massive binge after being forced to put down the sick animal.

Mann passed out in the Grange pub near his home in Bermondsey, East London. Landlord Charlie Harold put Keith in a room to sober up, but when he checked later Keith was dead. Mr Harold said: "He only had his mum and his dog... it's tragic."

*Bermondsey, East London.
Daily Star. September 22nd.*

GHOSTS AND APPARITIONS;

Well, what would our 'Halloween Special' be if it didn't contain any contemporary GHOST STORIES? A quick rummage through our batch of clippings reveals quite a number of SPIRIT Snippets, which you'll find contained in the following pages...

Here's a fairly local account to get us underway...

Mystery of the school ghosts

GHOSTLY goings-on have startled pupils and staff at a primary school.

Security cameras at St Benedict's RC Primary School, Orford, Warrington, have captured unexplained apparitions in the playground late at night.

Some of the pupils believe they are witches.

Over a six-hour period, the cameras recorded a strange mist rising from the ground just after 9pm.

Pulsating

Then lights appear and begin to swirl and spin like smoke across the picture.

Around midnight, a glowing ball of light appears in mid-picture, pulsating like a giant jellyfish.

This eventually collapses in on itself and the apparitions gradually die down and disappear around 3.30am.

Maintenance operator Dave Mason was baffled when he checked the tapes.

He said: "There must be an explanation but we don't know what it is."

Orford, Warrington.
Liverpool Echo. 18th July.

SATANISM;

Nope. The following report is not another reference to the infamous 'Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster' rumours of a few years back... We're talking about a serious case of the loony-toons here...

SATANIST ATE HAMSTER

A MAN who ate a pet hamster and drank children's blood during a satanic ritual has been jailed for three years by a German court. Marcel Schauer, 31, of Nuremberg, said: "I only took blood when the children were naughty."

Nuremberg, Germany. Sunday People. 18th April.

KILLER KLOWNS;

Living proof that 'PENNYWISE THE DANCING CLOWN', wasn't destroyed by 'The Loser's Club' after all.

His spirit lives on today in the sewers below the town of Weddington... AND HE STILL FLOATS!!

Painted face of a killer

A DRAWING of the mask worn by the killer of a building society boss has been issued by police.

Carol Wardell's husband Gordon helped detectives reproduce the circus clown disguise worn by the man he says abducted his wife.

A police spokeswoman said: "We are hoping someone somewhere might have sold that mask to the killers."

Carol's body was found in a lay-by in Weddington, Warwick, early on Monday.

Police believe she may have died after the raiders forced her to open the Woolwich Building Society, Nuneaton. They made off with £15,000.



Wallingford, Warwickshire.
Today. September 7th.

WEIRD HUMAN BEHAVIOUR;
 Who says dreams don't have a
 direct influence upon waking
 life?
 Here's evidence that it
 DOES...

**Dad beheads
 his daughter**

A VILLAGER beheaded his teenage daughter after having a dream about making a human sacrifice. Hemu Vasrambhai, who later confessed to the killing, took the girl to a Hindu temple and attacked her with a cleaver. Vasrambhai, of Sapakada, India, was arrested after the girl's uncle tipped off police.

Sapakada, India. Daily Slur.
 3rd May.

WEIRD HUMAN BEHAVIOUR;
 This could possibly be a
 case of a frustrated
 Satanist in desperate need
 of some nail pairings for
 use in magical spells.
 According to Occult lore,
 such things were considered
 high efficacious in ritual
 magic...
 Then again, he might just be
 plain nuts...

**Creep robs three
 women of their
 toenail clippings!**

LIMA, Peru — A 27-year-old man was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct after three young women complained he had menaced them with a pair of nail clippers, demanding that they snip their toenails and give the clippings to him!
 Police say they have no idea what the man wanted the clippings for but assume it has something to do with a bizarre perversion.

Lima, Peru. The Weekly World
 News. 10th May.

RE-DISCOVERY OF 'EXTINCT'
 ANIMALS;
 Here's a new one on us. A
 Wart-Eating Insect that's
 reputedly been found alive
 and well, on a
 (synchronistically enough)
 nature reserve...

**Wart-scoff
 bug found**

A WART-eating bug which was thought to be extinct has been rediscovered.
 The family of 40mm long wart-biter crickets was found on a National Trust nature reserve in Wiltshire.
 A spokesman said: "One researcher had one of the insects on his hand which went straight to a finger wart and started nibbling."

Wiltshire. Daily Slur. 23rd
 September.

EARTHQUAKES IN BRITAIN;
 Although Earth tremors in
 the British Isles are not
 regular occurrences, neither
 are they as rare as is
 popularly supposed.
 Still, they are unusual
 enough to qualify as
 'Fortean' Phenomena, so you
 can bet the soles of your
 'Nikes' that we'll always
 include reports of 'quakes
 in these pages.

**AN earth tremor shook
 North Wales today.**
 The quake struck from seven miles below ground just to the west of Bangor at 5.11am and shook buildings for 20 miles around. There were no reports of damage.
 The tremor measured three on the Richter scale, said Dr Chris Browitt, head of an Edinburgh-based seismology unit.
 "It was about the same size as one recorded in same area on July 29, 1992."

**Quake
 rocks
 Wales**

Bangor, Wales. Liverpool
 Echo. July 19th.

REAL LIFE VAMPIRES;
And you thought these
"Creatures Of The Night"
were merely the product of
Horror films and literary
fiction. Think again...

Vampire left boy for dead

A DRUG-CRAZED teenager slashed a boy's neck with a razor and sucked the blood "to find strength to sort out my problems".

"Vampire" Benjamin Peck then hit his unconscious victim over the head with a TV set and left him for dead.

But the boy, 15, came round and dragged himself into a hospital.

Assaults

Yesterday Peck, 18, who told psychiatrists his girlfriend was a vampire and that the Yardies were out to get him, pleaded guilty to wounding.

He also admitted arson and three assaults.

Judge Daniel Rodwell, sentencing Peck at Luton Crown Court to 10 years' youth custody, told him: "The attack on the boy was hideous."

The judge said the offences were committed while Peck was living in a probation hostel but he still had access to drugs.

Luton, Bedfordshire. Daily
Slur. September 13th.

IMAGES THAT WEEP AND BLEED;
Religious Phenomena, akin to
the report listed below,
seems to be on the increase
over the last decade or so.

Blood riddle: An Italian
bishop ordered an inquiry into
a "bleeding" statue of Jesus
Christ found on a rubbish tip
in Sant'Antonio Abate near Mt
Vesuvius. The plaster figure
had red liquid in its eyes and
red blotches on its head, hands,
face, chest and feet.

Sant' Antonio, Italy.
Liverpool Echo. January.

HALLOWE'EN HORRORS:

Halloween teenager raped 'to save her from evil'

ELIZABETH RANDALL

A NAIVE teenager was raped as part of "satanic ritual" by a man who told her she had to lose her virginity to save her from evil spirits, a court heard.

The pretty brunette yesterday described how her nightmare began when Thomas Willis took her to the New Forest on Halloween.

The woman said she was driven to a clearing in the wood clutching a cross, a bible and garlic.

Willis left her locked in the car and set off — past a sheep's head on a gate post — towards a red light glowing through the trees.

"Later he came running from the woods with blood running down one arm saying the devil's bird had attacked him and that they were now coming after him and me," she said.

Naked

He told her witches and devils were after her and she could only be saved if she lost her virginity before midnight.

"I believed what I was told," the girl told Winchester Crown Court.

After raping her, Willis told her she was safe. Mr Henry Blacksell, prosecuting, told the court.

He said Olivetti service engineer Willis later claimed that evil people had come from Africa who could harm her unless she did what he said.

He made her dance naked in front of a window and then crawl on the floor, where he raped her.

Mr Blacksell said it was "a perverted course of conduct which exploited her naivety to satisfy his own sexual gratification".

Willis, of Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset, denies four rape charges dating from the 1980s.

The girl, now 27, complained to police last year.

THE NEW FOREST. Daily Slur.
23rd March.

DEMONOLOGY.

By the time you read this, Halloween will be fast approaching... Here's a goodly sized slice of evidence that all around the World, the belief in the 'Old Religion', hasn't died away completely...

Mad spirit doc killed his sister

DICK DURHAM

A CHINESE take-away owner killed his sister after jumping up and down on her stomach to exorcise the worms and snakes she believed possessed her, a court heard yesterday.

Mother-of-four Mrs Cheung Kiu Ho, 48, was rushed to hospital from her brother Chi Wah To's shop after neighbours heard screams.

But she died before she arrived from massive internal injuries, Norwich Crown Court was told.

Jailed

Her liver was split, most of her ribs were broken and her face was bruised.

To, 42, who was suffering from an induced panic and frenzy when he killed his sister, was said to be an expert on spirits because he had once been possessed by an evil monkey.

He was jailed for five years after he admitted manslaughter.

Norwich.

Daily Slur. 13th September.

LAKE MONSTERS;

Here's a rarity.

A Water Monster sighting in the ultra-secretive province of China.

Lake mystery

A MYSTERIOUS creature has been sighted swimming in north-east China's Heavenly Lake. Witnesses' descriptions vary from a 'blond-headed creature' to a large black 'thing'.

Heavenly Lake, China. Daily Mail. 1st September.

DEMONOLOGY.

It's the old 666 palaver yet again, me ol mateys...

Satan, your number's up

ONE plate that WON'T be available when the new M-registration plates go on sale next week is M666 — the Devil's number.

The DVLA has decided not to use any registration plates with 666 in after complaints that it causes disasters.

A record £15 million is expected to be spent on personalised M-reg plates.

Prices start at £345, plus an £80 handling charge.

UK General.

Daily Slur. 28th July.

Spook gives me willies

SPOOKED Christine Storey is sure a randy ghost is trying to seduce her.

The saucy spirit loves to snuggle up next to her in her bed and fed-up hubby Eric reckons the ghost is trying to steal his missus.

Christine, 47, of Sittingbourne, Kent, moaned: "I keep thinking Eric has got into bed with me. It gets all cosy but when I roll over there's no one there."

"The ghost even tests the bed first by pushing down on the mattress before getting in. He's obviously a bit fussy."

"It's not a violent ghost but after six months of sleepless nights we have called in the church."

Jealous hubby Eric, 48, said: "There must be something they can do to get rid of the ghost. He's trying to take my wife away."

"You can feel a real chill in the air when he comes into the room."

"Three in a bed may suit some people but it's not on when it's a ghost."

Rev Brian Shersby said: "I'll do what I can to help this couple by using the power of prayer."

Sittingbourne, Kent.

News Of The World September.

THE SHIP ON THE MOUNTAIN

by

S. Griffiths

Most of the world's major religions, somewhere within their content and belief, include an account of a Great Flood. Such accounts span the continents, even the Americas. In almost all cases, the flood was catastrophic and only a chosen few survived.

Mount Ararat, what it does say is that it landed in the region of Ararat. this is a large range of mountains close by the Turkish/Iranian border.

Just as there are differences in identifying the Ark's



Fig. 1. Was the Ark built of wood or of bound bundles of reeds? In this depiction, taken from a cylinder seal from the Jemdet-Naser Period in Iraq, Noah is seen feeding some of the animals. The curled over endpieces show a typical form of bound-reed boat common in the Euphrates/Tigris area.

Throughout time almost all parts of the Earth have been the scene of great storms accompanied by torrential rains, with, in their wake, great floods. In addition to these events, volcanism, tectonic activity and Ice Ages have resulted in rising and falling coastlines and in changes in the level of the sea. These events, like the great storms, also resulted in the inundation of vast areas of land. However, for the most part, such events occur gradually, taking a considerable span of time to become obvious; on no account can they be considered as catastrophic. In all of the religious accounts, the Flood is recorded as a catastrophe, and it is interpreted as a form of Divine punishment.

landing place, there are also arguments with regard to its size. The Bible tells us that the ship was 300 cubits long, 50 wide, and 30 in height. Uncertainty exists over the actual cubit cited. Generally the cubit was a measure equivalent to the length of a human forearm, something between 18 and 22 inches. However, another unit, also called a cubit, was used by both the Egyptians and the Jews of old, their cubit was approximately 20.6 inches long. If the Ark had been built to the Jewish?Egyptian measure, overall, the Ark would have been about 515 feet in length, 86 feet wide and with a height of 51 feet. Most scholars seem to agree that the main proportions were approxi-



Fig. 2. The Ark, as it was depicted by the Sumerians in their version of The Great Flood. Its apparently vertical planking seems to agree with the building style of the Ark which Fasold has described.

Christians believe that the final resting place of their Ark, that of Noah, to be Mount Ararat, in English, The Mountain of the Ark. the first ten chapters of Genesis contains the story of the Flood. The Babylonians believe that the Ark landed on a Mount Nisir, (see Appendix, Gilgamesh and the Flood), while the Moslem believe that it landed on a mountain named Djudi, in Arabia. Although it is said that the Bible says that the Ark landed on

mately 450 feet long by 75 wide, giving a length to width ratio of 6:1. In practice, such a ratio would offer much greater stability to the Ark, as well as making it much more seaworthy, against the characteristics of the more boxlike structure indicated in the Babylonian Ark.

There have been a great many expeditions to Mount Ararat seeking the resting place of the Ark. One dedi-

cated hunter, Eryl Cummings, has visited the site no less than 15 times. He tells the story of an Armenian peasant, George Hagopian. He related to Cummings and an author, Rene Noorbergen, the following story.

In 1902, as a boy, he had been taken, by his uncle, to visit the site where the Ark came to rest. He lived close to the foot of Mount Ararat, however, the journey took 8 days, even though they were travelling mounted on donkeys. He recalls the year readily, because it was 'smooth', that is, there was little or no snow lying on the hills, as a result, they were able to camp at the landing place site. He described the remains as being more like a tall building than a ship. He told how he had been lifted aloft by his uncle, to give him a better view of the site. He claimed that the Ark was about 1,000 feet long, 600 wide and 40 or more feet high. The whole site was covered with moss, and, that a series of holes, at least 50 in number, ran along the length of the site's centreline.

In 1960, a Captain Gregor Schwinghammer, a pilot with the 428th Tactical Flight Squadron, American Air Force, was

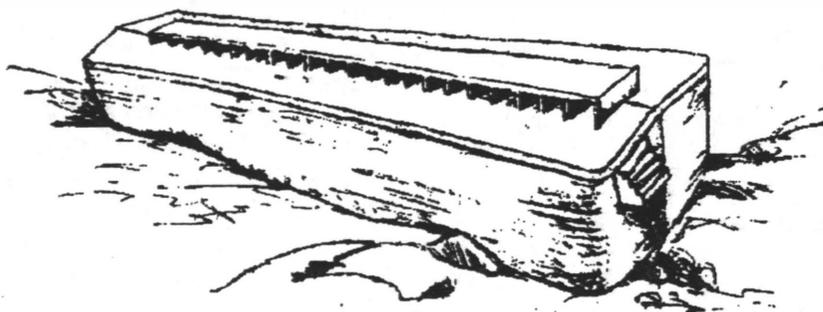


Fig. 3. Noah's Ark, as it was drawn by Elfred Lee at George Hagopian's dictation. Hagopian had claimed to have visited the site as a boy, and to have stood on the roof of the Ark.

flying a routine patrol. Circling Mount Ararat, counter-clockwise, he sighted something unusual, about 4,000 feet below the summit. Later, Schwinghammer asked an artist friend to make a drawing of what he had seen.

The sketch his friend produced proved to be identical in many respects with another similarly produced drawing, made to the specification dictated by George Hagopian. This coincidence was remarked by another long-time Ararat explorer, William Crouse, a senior priest in the Probe Ministries. Neither Hagopian nor Schwinghammer were known to each other, nor were they aware of each others drawings. Schwinghammer was surprised at the coincidences present in the two, when he was made aware of the Hagopian sketch.

Cummings was convinced of the sincerity of those peasants who claimed to have visited the Ark's site on a number of occasions. He confirmed his belief after asking Hagopian to undergo a Psychological Stress Evaluation-Test, (a Lie Detector Test). George passed the test the result of which has been published. (Secrets of the Lost Races: Rene Noorbergen). Cummings considers this to be the first authentic account of the Ark's existence.

Cummings is also convinced that the Ark can only be found on Mount Ararat itself, however, even after 15 expeditions there to find it, he has not yet discovered the site.

Another Ark Hunter, David Fasold, a one-time deep sea diver, has found what he considers to be the true site of the Ark's landfall. He places it some 17 miles south of Ararat, and, at a much lower altitude. His ideas seem to rest on somewhat more substantial evidence.

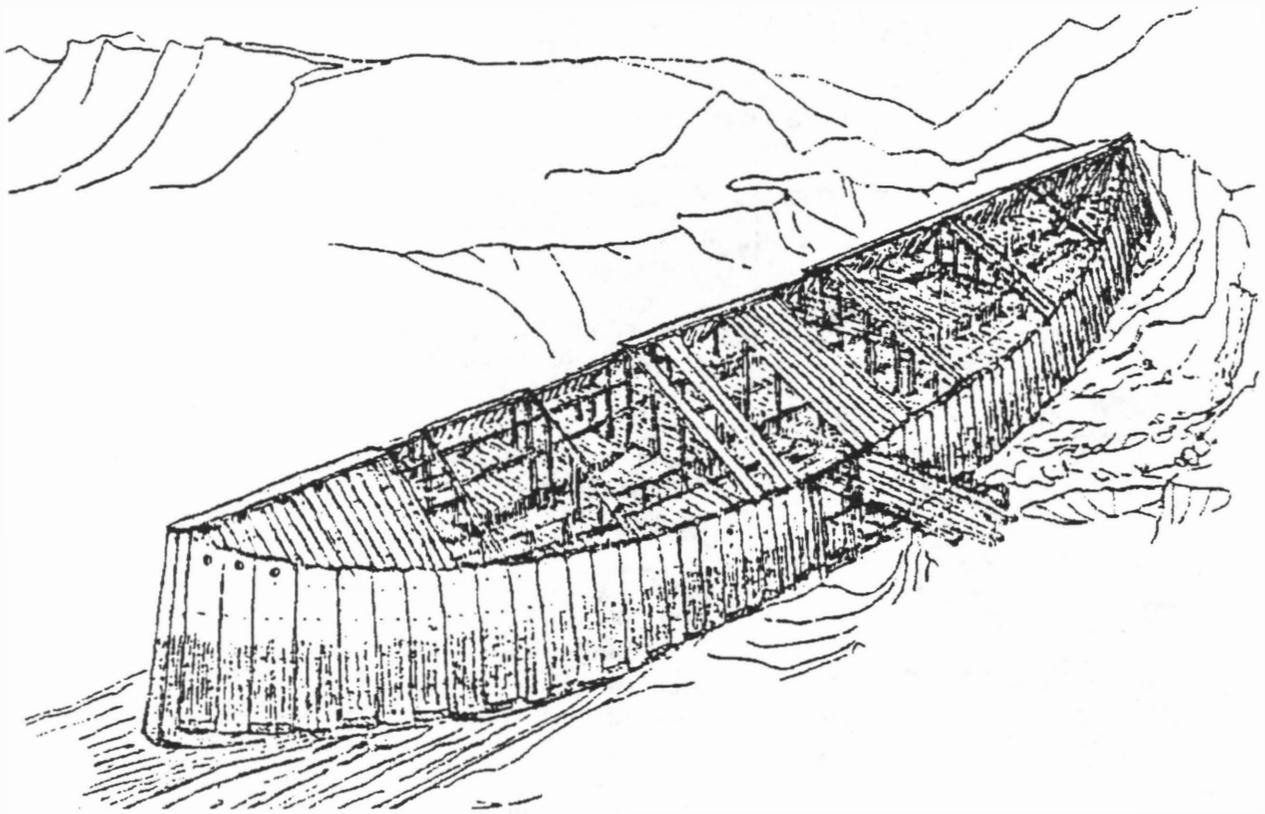
Also in 1960, the Turkish Air Force was photographing their border region with Iran. One photograph showed very clearly what appeared to be the outline of a boat on the side of Mount Mahser Dag. Significantly, this translates as Doomsday Mountain.

Fasold, along with a colleague, Ron Wyatt, has visited the new site. They worked, not only on the site itself, but also in the valley below. It was in the valley that some of the most interesting finds were made. There, a line of stones, claimed by local Christians, to be pieces of the Ark itself,

had been carved with 8 crosses, these were said to represent the 8 survivors of the Flood. These carved stones give the valley its name, the Region of Eight. Fasold has no doubt what these stones are. Basing his belief in the expertise gained in visiting ancient shipwrecks as an underwater archaeologist, he believes that they are anchor or drogue stones, from the hole which pierce them, intended to take ropes. Ancient seafarers used such stone to steady their ships in rough seas.

A mystery surrounds the stones. Why should drogue or anchor stones be found miles from the sea, and 7,000 feet above sea level? If they are drogue stones, then they are at least ten times bigger than any that have ever been dredged from the seabed. Their size is such, that they indicate a ship of quite phenomenal dimensions for its day.

Using a Molecular Frequency Generator, a piece of equipment which detects different elements in the soil, Fasold's team, called by the locals, 'The Doomsday Team', was able to confirm that the only metal present on the site was iron. It also showed, after initial difficulties and setbacks, that the iron seemed to occur in parallel



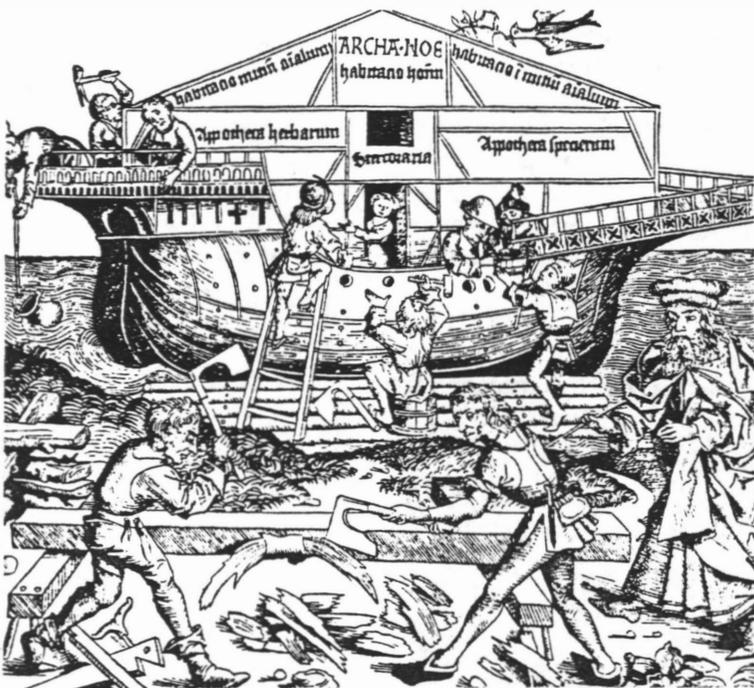
lines. His radar imagery was so clear that it seemed to indicate the presence of deck planks, between the walls.

Fasold believes that the Ark was built of reed bundles, covered with a waterproofing layer composed of a mixture of pumice and some bituminous substance such as asphalt, not, as so many seem to believe, of wood. An archaeologist, Vendyl Jones, has put forward the idea that the original organic fabric of the Ark, must by now have been replaced by other elements, in effect, that it has been fossilised.

Now the Turkish Government have come to realise the possible importance of Fasold's site. They, aware of the

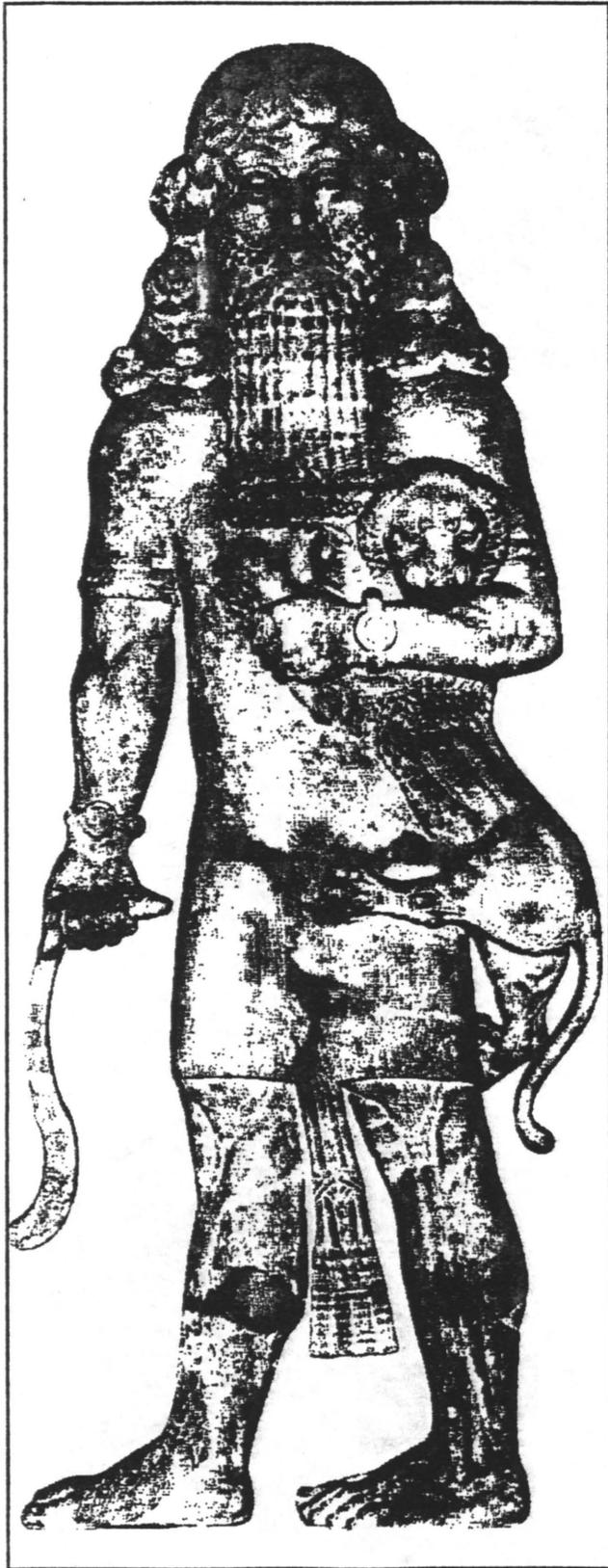
Fig. 4. Could the Ark have looked like this if it had been made out of wood? A reconstruction based upon the Sumerian Ark, Fig 2.

possible archaeological importance it have, have restricted Fasold's work on the site, to a series of minor drillings. Unfortunately, these have not been sufficient to prove, or disprove, any of the theories so far put forward. The mystery is unlikely to be resolved until a full and proper expedition finally excavates the site. Unhappily, this also may take some time to happen. Today the site lies in a very politically sensitive border area, a factor which has also played a part in curtailing the work Fasold could do, once he had managed to get his equipment on site.



GILGAMESH AND THE FLOOD

by
S. Griffiths



Gilgamesh, the hero of the Babylonian flood epic.

Amongst the many flood stories told across the world, the Babylonian story of Gilgamesh is probably the closest to the biblical account of Noah.

It was during the excavations of Nineveh on the hill of Kuyundjik, that a discovery was made of twelve clay tablets telling the exploits of Gilgamesh.

Gilgamesh, the fifth king of Erech (Uruk) and son of Lugulbanda, was a mixture of two thirds god and one third man.

Aruru, the Goddess of Heaven, created Enkidu, a creature half-man, half-bull, to distract Gilgamesh from his tyrannizing over the people of Erech. The two fought in a long hard battle and after the fighting had stopped they soon became friends.

Ishtar, the Goddess of Fertility, fell in love with Gilgamesh, but after refusing her his love sent down the Bull of Heaven to destroy him. With the help of Enkidu Gilgamesh slew the bull and in revenge Ishtar killed Enkidu.

Craving the secret of eternal life Gilgamesh sought out his ancestor Uta-Napishtim (Noah's counterpart), who, by the Gods had been granted the gift of immortality. It is told on the eleventh tablet that after the Gods had decided to destroy all mankind by a flood, a pitiful God Ea (Enki), God of Wisdom, told Uta-Napishtim of the conspiracy and instructed him to build a boat made from his reed hut, and to take his family, possessions, cattle and wild animals with him. After raining for seven days the boat came to rest on Mount Nisir and similar to the biblical account he released a dove, swallow and raven. When the raven didn't return Uta-Napishtim knew that the waters had subsided so he departed from his boat and made a grateful sacrifice to the Gods who in return granted him and his wife immortality.

Una-Napishtim told Gilgamesh of a magical plant believed to obtain ever-lasting youth, similar in description to the same flower that grows on the mountains of Ararat. The flower which is known as the Iris Root or the Root of Youth, has been used for face powders, perfumes and medicines.

Unfortunately Gilgamesh after obtaining the plant had it stolen from him by a serpent and was made to live the rest of his life as a mortal.

Strange Phenomena Of The 20th Century

THE BEST OF THE REST FROM 1901:



DATE: March.

LOCATION: Cambridge, England.

PHENOMENON: Mysterious Death.

One of the most puzzling stories I've ever come across in 25 years of reading about 'Weird Stuff', is the bizzare case of Lavinia Farrar, found dead in her kitchen...Her face beaten black and blue, her nose broken, and beside her body a few drops of the ol' red stuff along with a suitably bloodstained knife...

Nothing too strange about THAT you may say. But just you lay your cynical 'mince pies' upon the following items and see if your pupils don't dilate and your eyebrows don't arch slightly...

The pathologist discovered at the subsequent post mortem that the victim had been stabbed to the heart, but what he couldn't for the life of him explain was the fact that there appeared to be no damage to any of the FOUR garments she'd been wearing. And no, smarty pants, they couldn't possibly have been inserted through any of the fastenings, 'cos none of 'em were even in line. That was unusual. What was COMPLETELY loony toons was, apart from a little staining of the innermost garment, the wound was entirely bloodless...

Yep. That's right. BLOODLESS!!!

Just like the corpses in all those classic ol' VAMPIRE movies, Lavinia Farrar's body was as anaemic as the palest wax doll.

Now, I'm sure all those 'budding Inspector Morse's' amongst you will be asking, 'Hey, what about the smatterings of blood on the kitchen floor you mentioned?' Well spotted. But I'm afraid I'm gonna have to shoot you down, 'cos it was later discovered THAT blood never originated from the stab wound.

And so we're left with the question (assuming we're dealing with a murder here) of motive. Well, you have to ask yourself 'Who'd want to bump off a harmless old spinster?' I'm well aware there were a whole pile of sickos around in society, even back then, during what was supposedly a more 'innocent' era. But it's a pretty conscientious killer that takes the trouble to clean up all the blood and dressing the deceased, after stabbing her. And before some bright spark suggests it, nope, nothing was taken from the premises, so there goes the robbery theory outta the window...Suicide? Possibly. But highly unlikely, 'cos Lavinia was 72 years old and blind. How then could she have undressed, stabbed herself, then dressed again without the use of her sight???

Besides, Lavinia died almost instantly according to the pathologist, and not surprisingly, the jury at the resultant inquest returned an open verdict...Let's face it guys 'n' gals, you need Sherlock Holmes to solve THIS one...

DATE: 28th March.

LOCATION: Liverpool, Merseyside, England.

PHENOMENON: Ball Lightning.



During the afternoon of the aforementioned date, two people, a woman and her housekeeper, were seated on either side of the kitchen window, the top sash of which was wide open. Suddenly, a thunderstorm of violent magnitude struck and coincident with an earth-shattering peal of thunder, 'a red-hot bolt, the size of a small rocket', flew in through the open window, in its wake a trail of bright sparks. When it reached the centre of the kitchen 'the bolt exploded with a spectacular flash, and sharp crack as of a pistol'.

A few moments later, another couple of similar bolts floated on in to join the party. One entered through the back door. The other, obviously blessed with better manners, used the front door, both of which were open.

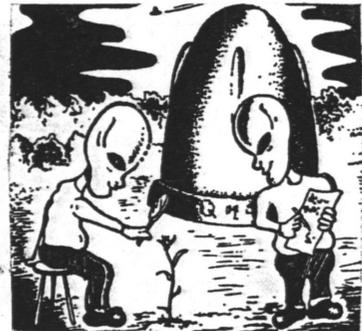
The witnesses stated that 'there was no smell or after-effect noticeable' following their subsequent combustions.

(Source: 'Modern Mysteries Of Britain.' Janet and Colin Bord. (Page 86). Guild. 1989.

DATE: Sometime in the midst of an English Summer.

LOCATION: Bournebrook, West Midlands, England.

PHENOMENON: UFO/Entities.



A ten year old boy was walking home one evening, and as he approached his back garden his attention was immediately drawn to a strange object plonked right in the middle of the lawn. It was about 4ft high and 5-6ft long, and seemed to be equipped with 'a central turret.' He was cautious at first, but you can bet it wasn't too long before his natural curiosity overcame any degree of fear, and upon inching closer he could soon make out that the object had a small door, but no windows as far as he could tell.

Suddenly, two tiny entities emerged through the door and one of the beings began straight away to walk towards the boy waving its arms about furiously...A gesture that didn't take too much interpreting...Even for a boy of 10. It meant 'Keep away...Or else!!!'

The creatures wore grey-green, close fitting uniforms (Not unlike the traditional garb of the denizens of 'FAERIE-LAND') and were wearing

'Darth Vader' type helmets that had two 'wires' (substitutes for the 'HORNS' so often recorded in the picturizations/popular conception of the creatures of World-wide folklore?), on their diminutive heads. After a little while, they climbed back into the object, and as they closed the door behind them the whole of the garden and the surrounding area was lit up with an incadescent glow...Before 'the craft' suddenly streaked away into the twilit sky.

Source: As previous report... (Page 131).

DATE: 4th December.

LOCATTON: Gerolstein, (former) West Germany.

PHENOMENON: POLTERGEIST.

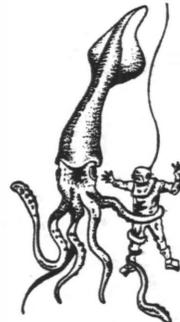


From the date listed above, until February, 1902, a POLTERGEIST outbreak haunted this village in Germany.

DATE UNKNOWN.

LOCATION: Conception Bay, St. John's, Newfoundland.

PHENOMENON: Giant Squid.



There were numerous sightings in the coastal areas of White Bay, and Trinity Bay of KRAKEN'S, the old mythical name for the entirely FACTUAL Giant Squid, during the early part of the Century?

And in fact, in later years, the locality became rather notorious for reports of a similar nature.

DATE: November.

LOCATION: South Carolina River, Near Norman, Oklahoma, USA.

PHENOMENON: Out-Of-Place Animal.



A four and a half feet long Crocodile was found and killed in the area...Needless to say, these creatures are NOT a native species of that country...So where did it come from???

1902.

THE LAST CREW OF 'THE FREYA.'

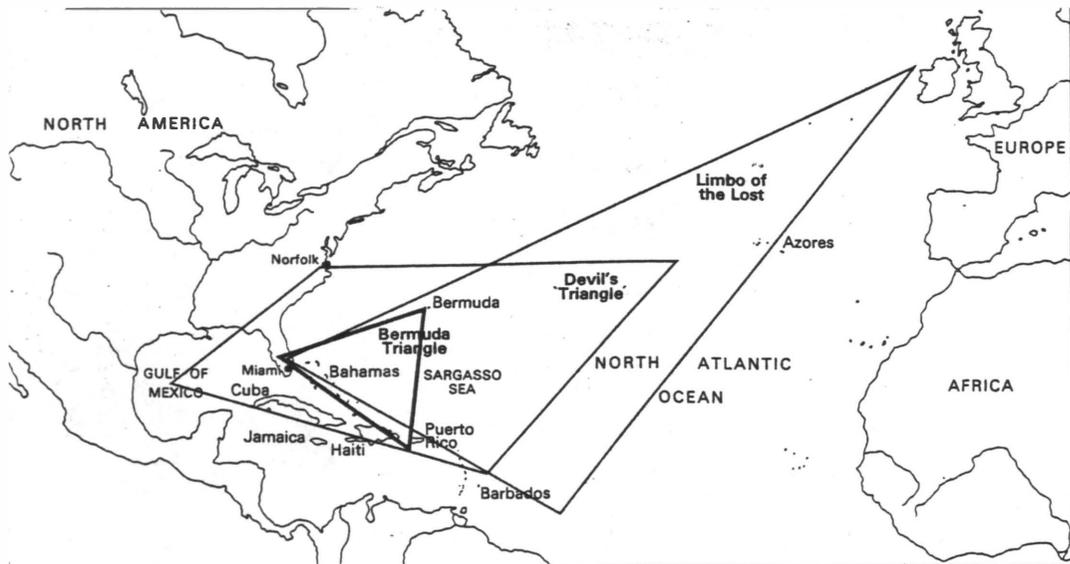
Just about everyone, the whole World over has heard of the area that lies not far off the south-east coast of the United States, in a section of the Western Atlantic known as 'The Bermuda Triangle.'

'The Triangle', in actuality more of a trapezoid, is supposed by authors like Charles Berlitz and Richard Winer, to extend from Bermuda in the north, to Southern Florida, then due east to a point through the Bahamas, past Puerto Rico to an area approximately 40 degrees west longitude, and then back again to Bermuda.

According to current, popular belief, the 'Triangle' is synonymous with the mysterious disappearances of planes, ships and other marine craft. Since the mid 1980's however, hard-nosed skeptics, such as the omnipotent Mr. Paul Begg (See his attempted assassination of 'SPRING-HEELER JACK' elsewhere in this issue for confirmation of his ardent desire to dismantle any mystery placed before him), have pored an ocean of scorn upon the whole 'phenomenon.'

This writer is completely open-minded on the subject. The only thing I will say, is that for a comparatively modern legend, there seems to be an unusually large amount of evidence shining like the proverbial beacon through the sullen mists of time, even including reports of strange occurrences dating from as early as the Sixteenth Century.

Anyway, I digress. The account we're dealing with here may or may not help you make up your OWN mind about the reality or otherwise of 'The Bermuda Triangle...' I include it in these pages on its merits as a mystery that, at the time of writing, has never been satisfactorily explained...Whatever Mr. Begg may say to the contrary...



(Above: A map showing the supposed boundaries of 'The Bermuda Triangle.'

'The Freya', was a 626 ton German barque that was said to have set sail from the port of Manzanillo in Cuba, carrying a cargo of ballast. According to most of the accounts you'll find in the many books that see fit to list this case as further proof of the existence of 'The Limbo Of The Lost', the ship was en route to Puntas Arenas in Chile. A few days into its voyage, so the story goes, 'The Freya' was reported missing. A search was undertaken, and nearly three weeks later the vessel was found, lying on her side, and giving every appearance of having been caught in one helluva storm. Of the captain and crew there was not a trace. They were initially assumed to have drowned in the terrible tempest that had doubtless caught tem in its grip...

However, investigators were quick to point out that a quick glance at the weather records revealed that only light winds prevailed at the time 'The Freya' went missing.

When the rescue crew climbed aboard the stricken vessel, they found that the captain's calendar had been turned to the date of October 4th, a fact which seemed to indicate disaster had struck not too long after the ship had left port.

An article published in the much respected scientific journal, 'Nature', in 1907, offered its own theory as to what may have befallen 'The Freya'. The piece had been entitled 'The Mexican Earthquakes', and basically what it entailed was that the crew of the barque had abandoned ship in something akin to a blind panic after submarine volcanic activity had precipitated a sea-quake... (And to be honest, it seems at first glance to be a fairly feasible supposition. After all, if I were unfortunate enough to experience a sudden shifting of the ocean floor whilst stuck on a boat hundreds of miles from dry land, I think its a fairly safe bet to say I'd need a pretty rapid change of boxie's).

The article closed by reminding its readers that earthquakes WERE indeed felt in Acapulco, and Chilpanzingo, on the west coast of Mexico, on October the fourth and fifth, 1902.

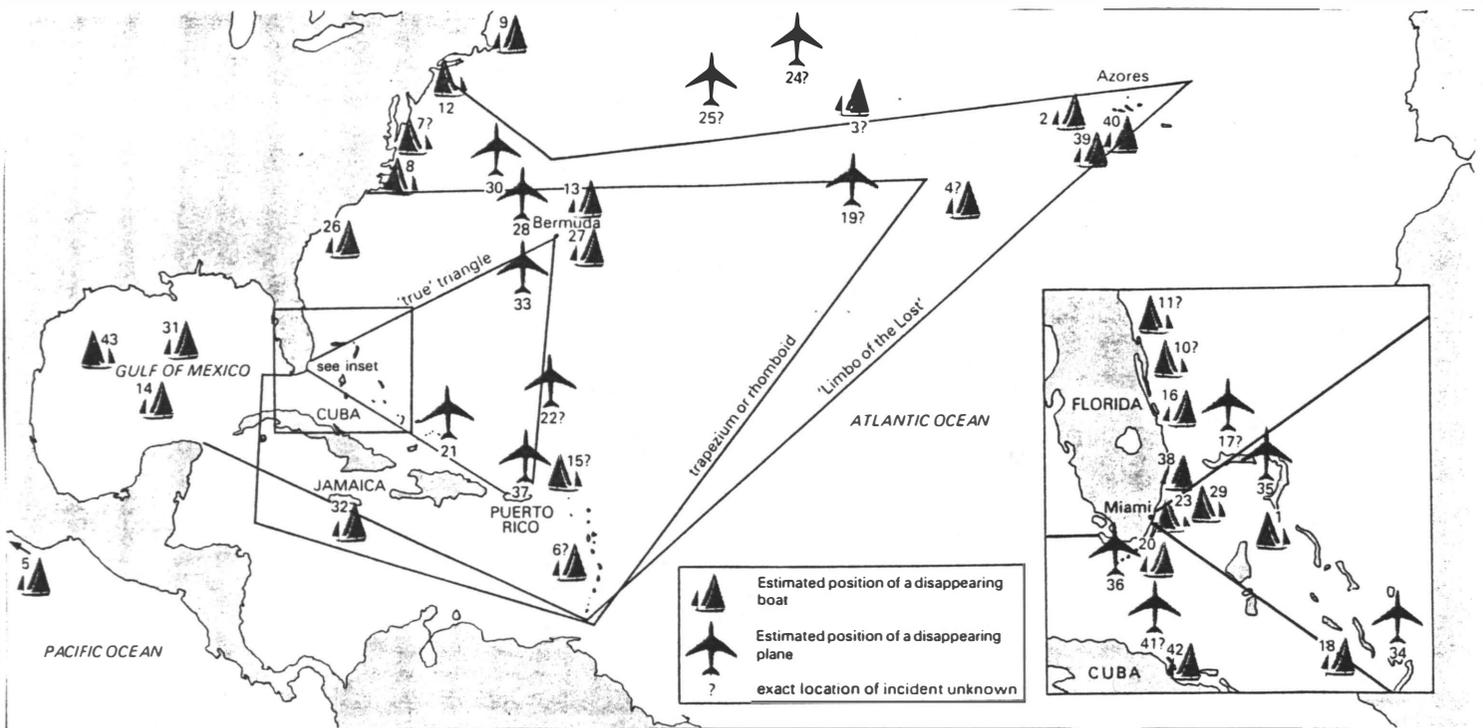
And so its all very plausible...

There's just ONE, intsy weensy problem with all this, doubtless well-meant, speculation;

'The Freya' I'm afraid, didn't set sail from Manzanillo, Cuba, but from Manzanillo, MEXICO!!!

And, even worse news for the 'Triangle' buffs, the boat WASN'T found adrift in the 'Limbo Of The Lost'...Nor even in the Atlantic Ocean...But in the Pacific...

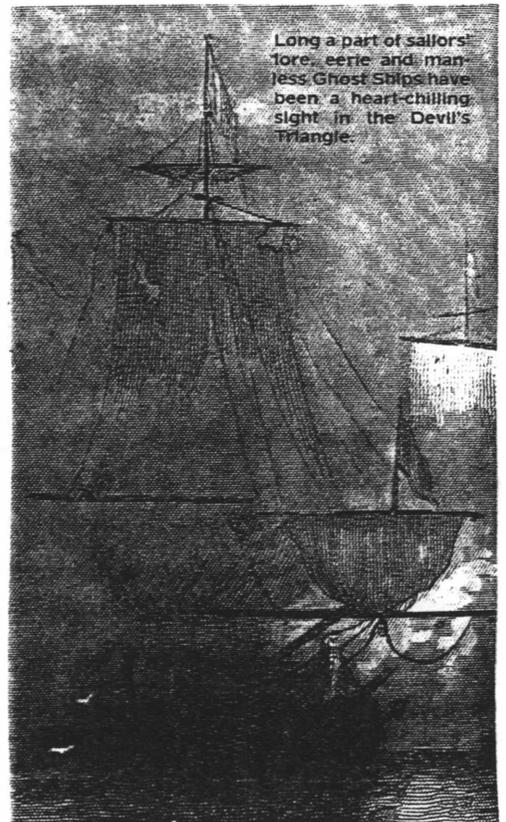
And, as Paul Begg gleefully reminds us, (Y' know, I'm sure this grumpy-faced, sourpuss, is the kind of chap who when he was a kid, got his kicks shouting out the punch-line in the middle of every good joke-telling session, telling the 4-5 year olds in primary school that there is no 'Santa Claus' and pulling the wings of rare and beautiful butterflies), there was never the merest HINT of mystery surrounding the loss of 'The Freya', until the writers crawled out of the woodwork, and saw a chance to exploit a ready-made enigma. And though I suppose we are still left with the essential unanswered question of what actually DID happen to the ship and its luckless crew, I believe dwelling on that would be at best clutching at straws, equating every SINGLE oceanic tragedy with the wild 'n' wacky world of 'Forteania.' And at worst, I'd be every bit as guilty of manufacturing a mystery, a sense of wonder, where only the mundane holds sway, as the self-elected prophets (Aka; 'Profits) of 'The Truth', typing out their revelations in the shape of a best-selling paperback...



Cases most often cited in the Triangle legend were re-examined by Lawrence Kusche, a research librarian at Arizona State University, and a natural explanation found for nearly all of them. In the summary below, an asterisk indicates cases where his explanation is disputed by later researchers (see text).

- 1 Rosalie (abandoned ship) 1800. *Ran aground, crew rescued.**
- 2 Mary Celeste (abandoned ship) 1872. *Still a mystery.*
- 3 Atalanta (vanished ship) 1880. *Severe weather.**
- 4 Ellen Austin (derelict ship) 1881. *Source of story not available.*
- 5 Freya (deserted ship) 1902. *Sank in Pacific seaquake.*
- 6 Joshua Slocum (vanished seaman) 1909. *Ill health or capsized.**
- 7 Cyclops (Navy cargo ship) 1918. *Bad weather.*
- 8 Carroll A. Deering (abandoned ship) 1921. *Still a mystery.*
- 9 Raifuku Maru (missing freighter) 1925. *Bad weather.*
- 10 Cotopaxi (freighter) 1925. *Phenomenal storm.*
- 11 Suduffco (freighter supposedly swallowed by sea monster) 1926. *Storms.*
- 12 John and Mary (abandoned schooner) 1932. *Engine explosion.*
- 13 La Dahana ('ghost ship' from the deep) 1935. *Waterlogged derelict.*
- 14 Gloria Colita (abandoned schooner) 1940. *Storms.*
- 15 Proteus, Nereus (sister ships of 9 above) 1941. *Torpedoed.*
- 16 Rubicon (abandoned cargo ship, dog on board) 1944. *Hurricanes.*
- 17 Flight 19 (five missing bombers) 1945. *Human navigational error.**
- 18 City Belle (abandoned schooner) 1946. *Bad weather.**
- 19 Star Tiger (vanished airliner) 1948. *A modern mystery of the air.*

- 20 Al Snider (vanished jockey, amateur fisherman) 1948. *Record gale.*
- 21 DC-3 (missing aeroplane) 1948. *Navigational error.*
- 22 Star Ariel (vanished airliner, sister of 19 above) 1949. *Unsolved.*
- 23 Sandra (missing freighter) 1950. *Storms.*
- 24 York Transport (troop aeroplane) 1953. *Bad weather.*
- 25 Super Constellation (US Navy) plane 1954. *Unsolved.*
- 26 Southern Districts (Navy cargo ship) 1954. *Storms.*
- 27 Connemara IV (abandoned yacht) 1955. *Hurricane.*
- 28 Naval patrol bomber, 1956. *Explosion.*
- 29 Revonoc (vanished yacht) 1958. *Storms.**
- 30 KB-50 (vanished Air Force plane) 1962. *Unsolved.*
- 31. *Marine Sulphur Queen* (cargo ship) 1963. *Multiple natural causes.**
- 32 Sno' Boy (missing fishing boat) 1963. *Bad weather, overloaded.*
- 33 Two KC-135's (Air Force strato-tankers) 1963. *Mid-air collision.**
- 34 C-119 Flying Boxcar (Air Force plane). *Engineering failure.*
- 35 Chase YC .122 (cargo plane) 1967. *Structural failure.*
- 36 Beechcraft Bonanza (light aeroplane) 1967. *Engine failure.**
- 37 Piper Apache (light aeroplane) 1967. *Bad weather or engine failure.*
- 38 Witchcraft (cabin cruiser) 1967. *Storm.**
- 39 Scorpion (nuclear submarine) 1968. *Structural failure.*
- 40 Taignmouth Electron (abandoned round-the-world yacht) 1969. *Suicide.*
- 41 Piper Comanche (light aeroplane) 1970. *Pilot error engine failure.**
- 42 El Caribe (missing freighter) 1971. *Possible hi-jacking.*
- 43 V. A. Fogg (missing tanker) 1972. *Explosion.**



Long a part of sailors' lore, eerie and manless Ghost Ships have been a heart-chilling sight in the Devil's Triangle.

THE BEST OF THE REST OF 1902.

DATE: August 10th.

LOCATION: City Island, New York, USA.

PHENOMENA: SEA MONSTER.



Captain Alexander S. Banta, saw a black, SEA MONSTER, much bigger than a Whale, on two occasions whilst sailing past City Island. It must've perceived the good captain's ship to be some kind of threat (a fairly rare occurrence. More often than not SEA SERPENTS are apt to head in the opposite direction whenever a vessel crosses their path. Very wise too, if our treatment of other large sea creatures, Whales and dolphins for example, is anything to go by) because it became very aggressive in its demeanour, and proceeded to attack the boat, and was gettin' well stuck-in before it was distracted by a passing steamer. Much to Banta's relief, the MONSTER headed on off in its direction. There are no further details on file.

Credit: 'Magonia-The Chronicles.' Lee Walker 'Forteana Files'.

DATE: October 4th.

LOCATION: Oslofjord, Norway.

PHENOMENA: SEA MONSTER.



Another 'LEVIATHAN' account, this time from Norway, concerns an unnamed bunch of people in a yacht who were lucky enough to spot a 60ft long, humped SEA MONSTER.

And...That's all we have for you, guys and geyesses...

DATE: June 5th.

LOCATION: Plundellsands, Merseyside, England.

PHENOMENA: Mysterious Fires.



A couple of anonymous witnesses reported that they'd been walking along the shore on a fairly grey, overcast evening just as the tide was beginning to come in, when to their astonishment they saw, in the distance, wispy smoke 'with frequent jets of fire bursting forth from the mud of a shallow canal.' As they moved closer, they could detect a fairly strong sulphurous smell (An odour often associated with both visitations from Demonic Entities - including 'THE DEVIL' Himself, and more recently with UFO Close Encounters) and saw little tongues of fire dancing at the very edges of the smoke haze. They could discern too a 'hissing sound, a though a large quantity of phosphorus was being ignited.'

Neither of 'em could make out what exactly was causing the fire, 'only the water where the flames appeared had particles of a bluish hue floating on the surface.' These impossible, tiny flames were popping up all over the place over an area approx 40 yards in circumference...With no obvious cause...

Another beachcomber, who just happened to be passing, was a little more curious than fearful, and poked at the mud with his walking stick. Immediately, 'large yellow flames nearly 2ft in length and breadth burst forth.'

The strange phenomenon continued for some time...Right up until the spilsport tide came in dousing the flames and completely covering the spot...

The air was filled for not some inconsiderable time with the sulphurous odour however...And far be it from ME to encourage you to descend into the cavernous depths of Lunacy, or 'Sunday Sport' headlines...But isn't it JUST possible that what these three people had actually stumbled across here was one of the secret entrances to the Underworld...Or maybe even to Hell itself!!!

DATE UNKNOWN.

LOCATION: Near Hebron, Maryland, USA.

PHENOMENA: SPOOK LIGHT.

Nothing much I can say about this, except that Janet and Colin Bord saw fit to mention the fact that in 1902, a 'SPOOK LIGHT' was often seen one mile west of Hebron...So who am I to ignore and fail to pass on that info???



DATE UNKNOWN.

LOCATION: Transvaal, South Africa.

PHENOMENA: GHOST.

W.T. Stead, a famous journalist and Ghost story collector, once told of a letter sent to him by an Englishman hunting in the South African Transvaal. The correspondence related that a man riding back to his base camp saw an eerie white horse carrying an unearthly rider that emerged from a clump of trees. For no discernible reason it began chasing him, and the man was forced to ride like the wind to make good his escape.

Back in the safety of his camp, later that night, the hunter's guides told him of an earlier safari during which an Englishman who owned a white horse, had shot seven Elephants in the copse where the hunter had encountered the 'unearthly rider.' The Englishman had returned the next morning to collect the ivory tusks...But he failed to come out of the trees, and was never seen again...The white horse returned to the camp alone, but died 24 hours later.

The guide added ominously, 'I would not go into that copse for all the ivory in the world!!!'



DATE: 1st October.

LOCATION: Newburyport, Massachusetts.

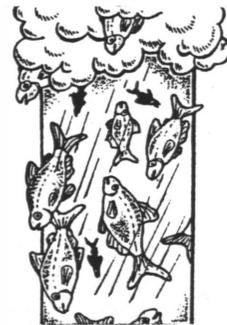
PHENOMENON: POLTERGEIST.

This year marked the first of three short-lived POLTERGEIST outbreaks, (which included such anti-social behaviour as brewing up strong winds within the confines of houses, and causing loud crashing noises), the others being in the years 1903 and 1904.

DATE: 15th May.

LOCATION: Tiller's Ferry, South Carolina, USA.

PHENOMENON: Fish Fall.



There was a fall of hundreds of little fish, including Perch, Catfish, and Trout, that splattered down upon the unsuspecting town with some ferocity during one hell of a heavy shower. They were later found swimming away merrily in the huge puddles that had sprung up all across the cotton fields.

DATE: 2nd July.

LOCATION: Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

PHENOMENON: Frog/Toad Fall,



In just one part of the city, at the height of a severe storm, 'the air suddenly turned dark and threatening'. An eyewitness described how he watched in awe as what looked to be a huge green mass descend from the eye of the storm, directly towards him. A few moments later, a 'peculiar patter, unlike that of rain or hail' began sounding.

When the deluge had abated somewhat, the townspeople ventured abroad to assess the damage and found an incredible number of Frogs and Toads, stacked at least three inches deep, and covering an area of more than four blocks. Most of the amphibians were tiny, but were huge in their variety of species. To have some idea of flotsam we're talking about

here, I think we'll leave the last word to our resident witness, 'So thick was the consignment of "Quackers" that in some places on the sidewalks and in the street, travel was impossible.

DATE: 26th October.

LOCATION: Harrisonville, Ohio, USA.

PHENOMENON: POLTERGEIST/Invisible Assailants.



A section of houses in the small, non-descript hamlet of Harrisonville, were pelted with stones by an invisible assailant, even in broad daylight.

The weirdness began one Sunday afternoon, when the front room window of Zach Dye's house was completely shattered by a large boulder being hurled through it. The house was full, but when the family raced outside to see who had done such a thing, they found there was nobody there whatsoever. The Dye home stood in the middle of the proverbial 'Nowhere', and suitable hiding places for the guilty party were noticable by their absence. As the family stood in great bemusement, they were gob-smacked still further by the surreal sight of a whole shower of smaller stones pelting the roof of the house...Originating from 'Out of thin air'.

The following day, those pesky stones began a-falling in abundance right in the centre of the village. It began with a chunk of rock smashing through the plate glass door of a local store...And once again, when the people who were inside the shop trundled outside to see who was responsible, they found no-one. Not surprisingly, this gave rise to a good deal of shouting and general hoo-hah, and before too long, out came the macho men with their guns and ammunition...Though quite what they were hoping to shoot is totally beyond me. The stones didn't seem to be unduly concerned anyway. On the contrary, they began raining down all around the townsfolk like a veritable giant-sized hail-storm, and still there was no obvious cause for their appearance. A couple of men were injured, including a James Clay, a one-legged man who was doing his best to reassure all and sundry that the stone-throwing was most likely the work of mischievous youngsters. He suddenly had his crutch knocked from under him by a large rock (an example of the capricious nature of POLTERGEIST/Cosmic Joker assaults), and not long after, the shower ended as quickly as it had began.

The show wasn't over YET however.

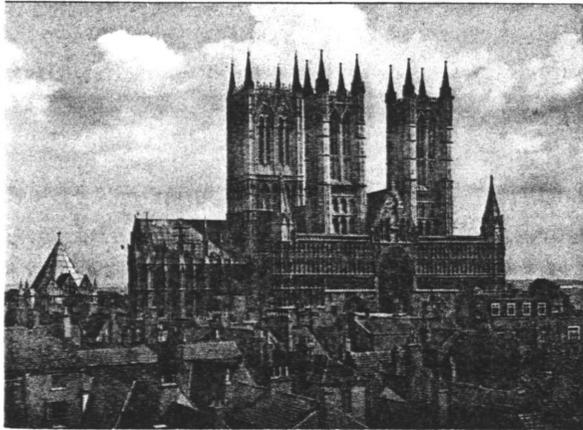
There was still one more act left to play

On the Tuesday, the stones returned, and 'the entire population thronged the streets' in an attempt to discover if the culprit was in fact a member of the community. Every man, woman and child lined up (whilst the stones continued to fall unabated) and having accounted for everyone, they could at least be certain the person responsible wasn't a resident of Harrisonville.

So just WHO, or perhaps more pertinently, WHAT was???

The Lincoln Imp

Whilst travelling back from a coach trip to Amsterdam, my wife Melanie and I spent a few hours touring around the town of Lincoln. We disembarked from our coach and headed straight up to the Cathedral.



This magnificent Early English Cathedral is the third largest in England, covering an area of 57,000 sq. ft. It was founded by William the Conqueror in 1072 when he appointed Bishop Remigius to the diocese which stretched from the Humber to the Thames. He directed him to build a cathedral to measure up to the size of the diocese. By 1092 the work was completed, but it was badly damaged by fire in 1141. In 1185 an earthquake damaged the church and the building that stands today was re-built in the Early English style.

The road that led us there was named The Strait. This was one long shopping street which reminded me of Chester, with its fifteenth century arch that spanned the main street. We continued our walk along until we came to a road aptly named Steep Hill, as we climbed I started to feel the excitement build up inside me because I knew that I would very soon be looking up

at a 12 inch high stone figure of the Lincoln Imp.

When we reached the top of the hill we were facing the tourist information centre.

The Cathedral was to our right, to the left, Lincoln Castle. I headed towards the tourist office hoping for some background information on the curse of the Lincoln Imp. This was related to the rumour that the town had suffered a lot of bad luck because of the statue and they had demanded that it should be removed. The two women to whom I spoke assured me that it was still in the Cathedral and the only place it had been removed from was the shirts of Lincoln City's football kit. This, I was told, was because of the bad performances, they believed that it was bringing them bad luck.

After buying a few postcards we made our way toward the Cathedral, made a small donation, and picked up one of the leaflets showing us around the church. I looked for the Lincoln Imp on the plan, and found that it was at the back of the church, high up, on a pillar above the shrine of St. Hugh, (Bishop of Lincoln 1186-1200). I made my way to The Imp, practically ignoring all the many splendours that the Cathedral had to offer.

As I headed to the back of the Cathedral my thoughts turned to the time I had first come across the story of the Lincoln Imp.

I remember it was one afternoon, I was on my way home from a visit to my sister's. On the way I passed a second hand shop and couldn't resist a browse. Amongst the usual antique chairs and tables there was an old dressing table decorated with jewellery. My eye was caught by a brass figure, no more than six inches high. Its appearance was half-man, half-animal with a toothy grin. At first glance it looked as if it had only one leg, due to the fact that it was sitting crossed-legged. When I got home I immediately phoned Grant (Lee Walker's brother) who was heavily into the occult at the time. I described what I had seen and the next day we returned to the shop and he bought the figure. It wasn't till some years later that Lee showed us a

picture of the Lincoln Imp in one of his books on the occult.

By now I had almost reached the back of the church. Looking back I could see Melanie, trying to take in the rest of the Cathedral, and determined not to be rushed. I headed for the spot marked The Angel Choir housing the shrine of St. Hugh. This was an extension to the Cathedral, built between 1258 and 1280. The Imp sits high up between two arches on the north side.

I looked, the Imp must have been twenty feet up, wedged between the two pillars. It seemed to glare straight down at me. There are other figures between all of the other pillars but this is by far the most grotesque. I took a few photographs of it, using two cameras, to make sure I would get a decent picture, then stood back and stared at it for a few minutes. I reflected on the legend of how it came to be placed up there.



The IMP, illustrated by Grant Walker

The oldest legend is one that tells us how the Devil sent his young demons out to play. One was said to have jumped into the sea without getting wet, another played in a furnace without getting burned, while another of them played with forked lightning. A couple were said to have ridden the breeze all the way to old Lindom, (Lincoln). When one Imp reached the Cathedral he rushed about and tried to trip the Lord Bishop. He teased the vergers and knocked down the Dean. When it started to smash all the windows an angry Angel cried out, "Stop! you shall not." The malicious Imp shouted "Such as you are better outside, you shall wait till I have finished my fun". The furious Angel replied "Wicked Imp, be turned to stone". The Imp climbed up between the arches and remains there, petrified, to this day.

Another story tells that the Imp came along when the shrine of St. Hugh was being constructed and he was hindering progress. An Angel who saw this threw a stone at him hitting his leg and then turned him to stone. Many believe that this is why he sits cross-legged nursing his wound.

The few hours that we had to look around Lincoln were drawing to a close. With half an hour to get back to the coach I took a quick look in the souvenir shop. After buying a large brass door knocker of the Imp and a couple more postcards, we made our way out of the Cathedral and down the steep hill back to our coach.

Looking back, I wondered to myself what was the attraction of a small statue in such a large Cathedral? Did it really happen that way all those centuries ago or was it just a tradition of good versus evil, to keep the good faith alive?

S. Griffiths

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

(The Editor's Tale)

I guess it's fair to say that everyone, even the most skeptical of people, experience SOMETHING in their short time on this planet that they can't dismiss as being a clever hoax, the product of a vivid imagination, or the honest misperception of the perfectly ordinary.

Comparatively few individuals will admit to that however. Perhaps because deep down they're scared. Frightened not so much by 'The Event' itself, as the undeniable fact that its very occurrence is a direct challenge to all that they've come to accept as being the 'normal' scheme of things. Their entire belief system, built up over a period of years, maybe even decades, is suddenly shattered in the time it takes to glimpse some strange unearthly 'aircraft' bathed in an incandescent glow, a serpentine, thirty foot creature "rising to the surface of some dark Scottish Loch", or some long dead, much-loved relative standing at the foot of the bed in the 'wee hours' before dawn.

Maybe it should come as no surprise then that the vast majority of people clam up when confronted by 'The Unknown'.

It's an understandable reaction, and certainly, I think the above applies to my sister, Kearry, after she came face to face with 'The Impossible,' back in the early 1980's.

As is always the case with this publication however, we merely report the bare bones of the matter...We leave it to YOU to make up your own mind regarding any supposition that may inadvertently sneak its way in...

2

Ever since I can remember, my father has kept pet rabbits in the large, home-made hutch he built at the bottom of our back garden. It's an extremely well fortified affair, with a solid timber frame and strong, wire-mesh fencing containing gaps so small, nothing bigger than a mouse could squirm its way through. The hutch is actually made up of two parts. The animals main sleeping quarters, a wooden box piled high with straw, and a six foot long 'Play Area', invariably piled high with raisin-like rabbit droppings. The only way of gaining entry to the structure is to remove the couple of housebricks that lie atop the roof, pull back a covering of musty smelling lino, and lift up the two thick planks of wood that serve as a lid.

Little wonder my mother used to joke, 'It'd be easier trying to break into Fort Knox than get yourself inside that hutch!!!'

This obsession with ultra-security may well surprise some people, but I'll wager they're the sort who've never kept pet rabbits in their back garden. The fact is, we sometimes forget, with something akin to arrogance, that whether we live in the midst of leafy green suburbia, or at the neglected end of some run-down backstreet, Nature still has its fair share of wild predators restlessly prowling the neighbourhood, or lurking in the shadows, waiting to pounce on the defenceless.

The Fox. The Stoat. The Weasel. The Rat. Even the fat ol' ginger Tomcat that seems to spend its entire existence curled up in a fluffly ball on next door's

shed roof...Each one is a potential threat to creatures not exactly renowned (aside from the fictional heroes of 'Watership Down') for their fighting prowess.

So my dad, wisely kept 'em well barricaded against their mortal foes, and never allowed the defences to slacken once...Especially when, in the early Spring of 1982, our family were amazed to discover that the pair of Dutch Dwarf rabbits we'd acquired a few months earlier, were NOT in fact a couple of frisky Bucks after all...The eight tiny, skinless bundles Kearry found whilst cleaning out the 'Sleeping Compartment' one morning, were testament to that!!!

My parents, not wishing to be over-run with bunnies, immediately decided to separate the pair, and having 'passed the buck' so to speak, onto a close friend, they arranged to find homes for the baby rabbits as soon as they were old enough to fend for themselves.

We were all advised by a local 'expert' not to make too much fuss of the offspring, when finally they emerged from their straw-lined nest, or else we'd likely incur the mother's jealousy, but in all honesty, I guess it's fair to say we, and my sister in particular, didn't pay much heed to that warning. To use her words, 'They were just too irresistably cuddly to admire from the wrong side of a wire-mesh fence.'

Over the next six weeks, we watched in wide-eyed wonderment as the miniscule balls of fluff raced around the confines of the hutch or cavorted on the wiry lawn in a carefree celebration of life...

3

And then, one cold, grey morning, as I lay in bed checking the pillows for defects, the post dawn tranquility was suddenly shattered by the blood-curdling sound of my sister's screaming. Both my two brothers and my parents had gone out for the day so there was nothing for it but to throw back the bedclothes and leap to the window. My eyes took a few precious seconds to adjust to the quality of light. At first all I could make out was the tumbledown garden fence, the dark bricks of the house opposite, the top-most branches of a tree, and a narrow ribbon of sky.

I finally spotted Kearry, standing in the centre of the path that runs down the middle of the lawn, head in hands, her screams quietening to sobs that wracked her shoulders. I didn't hang around or stand on ceremony. Half dressed, I charged down the stairs three at a time, the bitter, coppery taste of unnamed pain clogging up the back of my throat.

I hadn't a clue what to expect when I stepped bare-footed across the dew soaked garden...And I guess the furthest thing from my mind, was the sight that awaited me at the foot of the rabbit hutch...

And in a way, I'd have to admit, as bad as it undeniably was, I couldn't help but breathe a sizable sigh of relief that my darkest fears hadn't been realised. One of the baby rabbits (we hadn't bothered to give them individual names...They all looked so similar in appearance, it was impossible to tell them apart) was lying inert atop a large mound of frozen droppings. It was quite obviously dead. The fur of its tiny, lifeless body bristled in the chill morning air, and I stood staring, transfixed for what seemed like the longest time as I silently pondered the question 'How had the animal met its death?'

In retrospect, that seems to be one of the most puzzling aspects of the whole welter of absurdities that were to overtake us that Spring. How could I have ever saw fit to mentally debate the issue, even for a second???

The answer was so obvious it almost defies belief.

Because you see, although the rabbit's BODY was unmarked, with not the slightest hint of injury, and although there was very little in the way of blood, and few signs that any kind of struggle had taken place, still the animal's head had been crushed as flat as the proverbial pancake!!! It was only later, recovering from the shock with a couple of mugs of steaming hot coffee, in company with Kearry, that I realised the horrendous sight couldn't have been anything other than nakedly OBVIOUS. It was just a case of my mind refusing to accept what my eyes were telling them it saw.

And as the cold light of reason began knocking some sense into my foggy brain, I realised something else too...I'd been asking myself the wrong question gazing with indifference at that impossibly flat head...I should have been asking not HOW had the creature met its death...But WHO or WHAT had killed it and WHY???

4

I buried the pitiful remains at the edge of the barren rose garden in the misted twilight of late afternoon, whilst Kearry stared forlornly from the kitchen window.

It was in my mind to tell the rest of my family what had happened when they arrived home long after dark, but they seemed in such high spirits I had no desire to blacken their good humour. I elected instead to inform them the following morning.

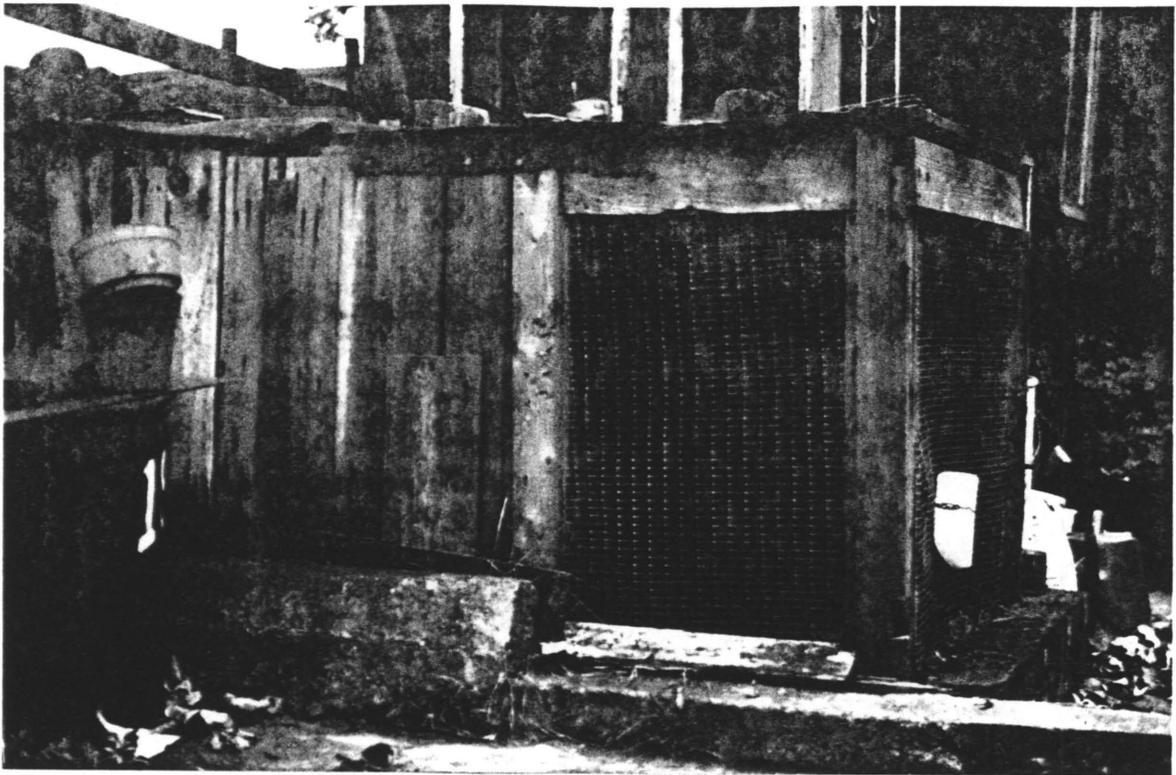
As things turned out however, I didn't need to.

Because next day, there were two more dead baby rabbits...Both of them lying in roughly the same area of the hutch as the previous corpses. Both of them huddled together as though seeking each others warmth. Both with their heads flattened in exactly the same fashion as before.

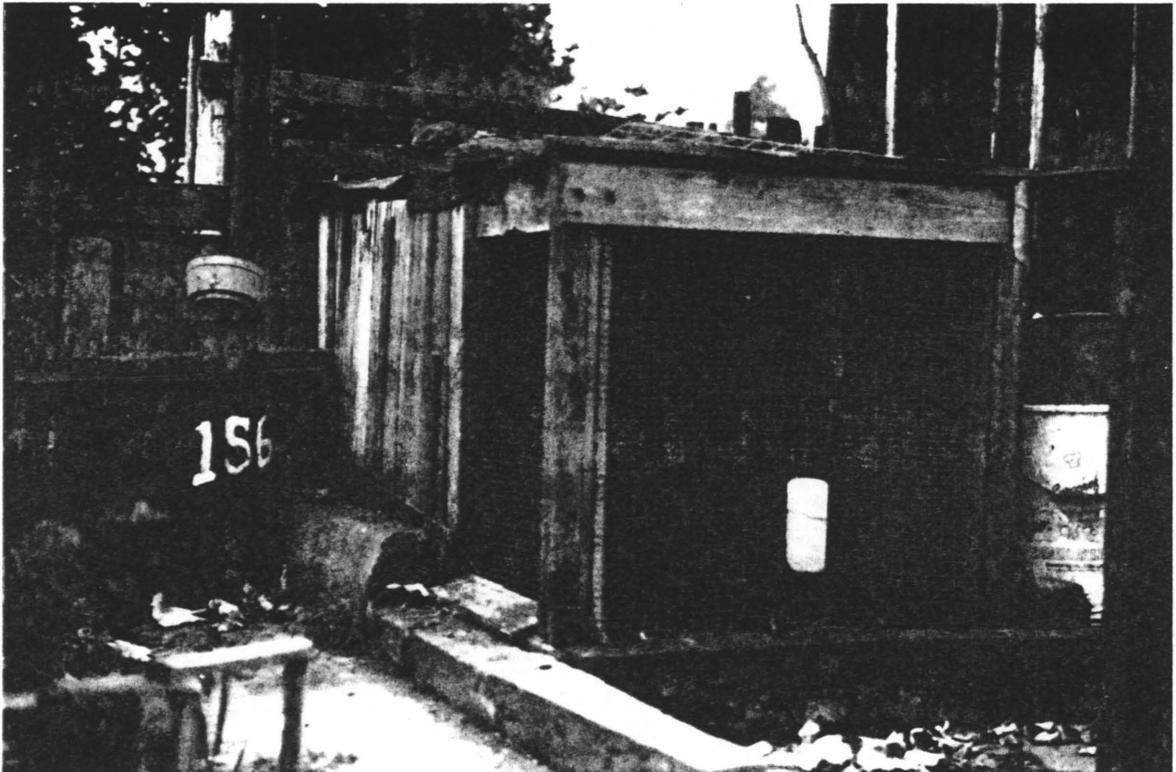
My dad took the loss especially badly. He had little doubt as to what had killed the babies. 'It's the work of a Weasel', he announced in a voice that begged no argument. 'A dirty, viscious Weasel. I should've known better. They can smell young ones a mile away.'

I guess he felt more than a fair share of guilt for having provided (no matter how much we assured him to the contrary) insufficient security for the brood. After convincing himself that there were no immediately apparent signs of how any predator could have gained entry, he spent the remainder of that day checking and re-checking the hutch for possible weak spots...And came in for supper shaking his head...He'd found not a one.

Even at this early stage, I had grave reservations about my dad's assumption that ANY animal had been the cause of these horrible attacks. For me, there were several factors that didn't tally with a mere creature of instinct being the culprit. Apart from the fact that there seemed to be no way in which, even an animal as supple as a Weasel, could have gotten in at the rabbits, there was the added mystery of WHY were only the heads mutilated? And HOW on Earth had it managed to totally crush the heads so that they were nothing short of paper-thin???



(Above and Below): Two views of the 'Predator Proof' rabbit hutch taken at the time of going to press.



Strangely, no-one else seemed too keen to ask such awkward questions. They simply accepted my dad's explanation. And who was I to argue? Besides, what we all agreed was of more immediate importance was to ensure the five surviving babies didn't suffer the same fate...

5

Regrettably, all our efforts proved to be completely in vain, and when two days later, another victim was discovered, killed in an identical manner to the others, my dad had a radical change of heart. He began to share my suspicion that only a human being (and a dangerously crazy one at that) could possibly be responsible for the killings.

Contingency plans were thus drawn up within The Walker Family, to embark upon a round-the-clock protection scheme for the rabbits. This involved the men-folk sitting at the bedroom windows right through the night, 'armed' with flashlights and a single broom handle, as we waited for what we now all fully expected to be witness to....A sick individual who liked nothing better than to mercilessly slaughter peoples pets...

We maintained this vigil for the best part of a fortnight, and aside from one occasion when I thought I spied some shadowy form lurking in the thick bushes that line the foot of the garden, (that was probably nothing more than a trick of the light), none of us saw anything remotely unusual.

The only consolation was that there were no further attacks on the three (including the mother) remaining rabbits. And by the time the green tinged promise of March had given way to the verdant fulfilment of mid-April, we began to believe whoever or whatever had been systematically wiping them out had either moved on or had decided to cease their attacks for some unknown reason...Whatever the truth of the matter, we became complacent. We lowered our guard and abandoned the 'all-night vigils'. With the misplaced confidence of the foolhardy we felt sure the danger had passed...

Any such notions were well and truly blown away less than twenty four hours later however, when we awoke to find that whatever had visited death upon the innocent earlier that year, was back with a vengeance...

Two baby rabbits were lying in the 'Play Area', their bodies untouched, their heads...FLATTENED!!!

I averted my gaze from the pathetic sight only to find myself staring unblinkingly at the concrete base of the washing line post, or more specifically, the jagged writing that was engraved there; The barely discernible signatures of my father and brother Grant. The scrawly tribute to L.F.C. The crude attempt at a five pointed star...And dominating all, the three figures my dad had etched there for a joke after finishing laying the garden path a few years earlier...

Just three figures that went to make up a SINGLE number...

666.

I continued to stare as if hypnotised, and although you may think I'm guilty of possessing an over-active imagination, I'm sure I heard the sound of far away laughter, as fleeting and ethereal as the notes of some distant melody carried on a warm, sirocco wind...

And for almost the first time, since the outbreak of these increasingly weird incidents, I began to feel SCARED...

6

I remember it was at around about this point that Kearry made, the somewhat belated suggestion that we bring the two remaining babies into the house at night. She argued, not unreasonably, there was no other safe means of protection left open to us and every other avenue had failed.

I think she gained the sympathy of the entire family...Save for my youngest brother Dale, who chose that precise moment in time to put forward the question;

'But what if it's the MOTHER that's the killer?

I didn't believe that to be the case for a second. And yet at the same time the possibility seemed almost seductively plausible. Like a politicians promise or a con-man's sales technique.

And almost before I knew what was happening, I was throwing in my lot with the babble of assenting voices that suddenly filled the air in response to the question. 'Yeah, that expert warned us not to make a fuss of the babies.' 'Of course. The mother must've gotten jealous and killed them all in a fit of spite.' 'That's right. That would explain why there were no signs of enforced entry.' 'Why didn't we take notice of the warnings?' 'Something's gonna have to be done.' 'We'll have to separate the offspring from their mother...'

On and on it went. A ceaseless litany. A latter-day Tower Of Babel. And who could honestly blame us. It felt as though we'd been offered a normal way out of a decidedly ABNORMAL situation. And we charged headlong towards that escape route at full pelt...Before the twin doses of reality and logic had much of a chance to take full effect.

We acted quickly. It was decided, rather than bring the babies inside the house each night, it would serve just as well to place a dividing wall between the mother and what was left of her brood, within the main 'Sleeping Quarters.' A thin, but sturdy strip of metal shelving from our refrigerator was utilised with this in mind and it performed the task admirably...We could keep a close watch on the rabbits by day, and there was now no way there could be ANY degree of contact between the adult and the babies during the hours of darkness...

So perhaps now, at last, for the first time in weeks, we could ALL sleep easier in our beds...

7

...And so we did.

But with the coming of daylight, there was to be an almost inevitable rude awakening...and not only from our much-needed slumber, but from our ill-conceived attempts at self-delusion.

There was only the one baby left alive now.

The other was dead.

You can doubtless guess the scenario and the method of its death. The only difference was that the corpse was still WITHIN the 'Sleeping Area.' And that's

not surprising, seeing as how there was no exit for the babies after we'd inserted the dividing section of metal the previous evening. Now there was no debate. No attempt at half-baked explanations. No suggested alternatives.

There was only one male baby left from an assorted litter of eight. We had to do all we could to protect it. And that meant placing the rabbit somewhere he couldn't easily be harmed. I think the general consensus had elected we bring him into the kitchen after nightfall, but my dad overruled this and argued that the confines of the wood shed at the top end of the garden would more than 'do the trick.'

That very evening, as the sun bled crimson to the tree-spiked horizon, Kearry gently lifted the baby out of the hutch, and put it in her old plastic Hamster cage, newly lined with fresh straw and well-stocked with food and water. She then solemnly carried its new home up to the shed and placed it atop a table that had been cleared of its usual array of tools. After weighing down the transparent lid of the cage with a couple of those ever-dependable ol' housebricks, and satisfying herself there was no way anything, human or animal, could force its way in unless it was equipped with a do-it-yourself burglary kit, she bolted and locked the only door.

It must've been sometime around 8:30, (certainly I recall it was virtually pitch black outside) that my sister began to grow increasingly anxious about the safety of the rabbit. We were all seated around the TV watching some mind-numbingly boring sit-com, and I caught sight of Kearry nervously fidgeting and wringing her hands, an expression of intense concern clouding her features. I was just about to ask if she was feeling alright when she suddenly jumped up and announced in a shaky voice, 'I'm just going to check on the rabbit. Pass us the key please, dad.'

My father rolled his eyes and heaved a weary sigh as he threw the key over to her. 'Be my guest,' he smiled, shaking his head. 'Though I think your wasting your time. No-one's gonna take the time and trouble to break in to the shed just to get at a baby rabbit...And besides...How would anyone even know we've moved it in there?'

But his words were lost on her. I'm not even sure if she heard him. She was out of the door so quick.

I went back to watching the TV with a cool indifference that I didn't truly feel. To tell the truth, I was trying my damndest to ignore the completely opposite feeling of tension...the kind you get before a storm, a sense of something holding back...And for all of three minutes I succeeded.

Then, for the second time in the space of a few short weeks, the air was rent with my sister's screaming...And although I all but jumped out of my skin at the Banshee-like screech, I found that I had somehow been half-expecting it.

We none of us had a chance to race outside to her aid. She came running through the kitchen doorway and into the living room as though the Hounds Of Hell were at her heels, and it's my belief she would have kept right on sprinting out through the front door (perhaps without pausing to open it) and legged it up and down the streets of New Ferry, wailing like an out-of-control fire engine...If my dad hadn't have grabbed her by the arms and forced her to sit down in the nearest available chair.

It took us some time to find out what had happened. Kearry is normally one of the most articulate persons I know, but she was babbling incoherently, and we had trouble understanding much of what she said. But what was immediately obvious, was that there was something awry out in the woodshed. We fished out the flashlights, and leaving my mother to look after Kearry, we stepped out into the darkened garden.

The shed door was wide open. We assumed Kearry had neglected to close it so great had been her panic. With stomachs crawling with insects too crawly to be butterflies we desperately tried to steel ourselves for whatever sight awaited us in the woodshed.

But when we shone the flashlight beams into the morass of shadows that filled the musty interior, we saw straight away, there was nothing whatsoever amiss. There was no sign of any structural damage. There was no sign of anything missing. There was no sign of any intrusion. And, best of all, the baby rabbit was still very much alive. We watched it hopping around merrily, and shook our heads at our sister's vivid imagination. With a mental shrug of the shoulders, I turned to head back into the house, but I was stopped by a cry of surprise from Grant, who suddenly exclaimed,

'Hang on a minute. There is SOMETHING missing here. Look'.

We each followed his gaze, and for a moment I hadn't a clue what he was talking about...And then I saw what he was referring to. It was nothing overly dramatic...But it was an indication that perhaps Kearry's mind HADN'T been playing tricks on her after all. It was simply this...The two housebricks that had been placed atop the plastic cage cover were no longer there...They were on the floor a good few yards from the cage...They couldn't possibly have fallen off by themselves. So unless Kearry had upset them, either by accident or for some totally unknown purpose...

After having replaced the bricks in their original position, we locked the shed door and went back inside to see if our sister had recovered her wits sufficiently to be able to tell us what had happened...

It turned out that she indeed HAD...

But when she'd finished telling us what she'd seen...I found myself wishing to God she'd remained silent...

The minute she'd stepped into the shed she'd instinctively known something was very wrong.

There was a thick, heavy atmosphere about the place that had nothing to do with the dank odours of old paint, rotting carpets, and damp wood that assailed her nostrils, nor the fact that her torch batteries were so low the light it gave off barely penetrated the pervasive gloom. It was as if she'd stepped into a dreamscape realm of waking nightmare. The most terrifying kind whose dark memory can reduce you to helpless shivers, even in the bright blessed sunlight of early morning...

For some reason, she elected to play the weak, pencil beam of watery light around the walls and shelf stacks, the myriad tins of emulsion and creosote, the tool-kits and piles of dirty oil cloths, before checking on the rabbit. What she was looking for exactly, she couldn't say, either now, nor then...But what she CAN say for certain is that it was the curious scraping sound emanating from the direction of the table

upon which the cage was perched, that drew her attention back to the whole point of her being in here in the first place...

Her initial thought was that the thing crouched between the two housebricks was some type of excessively large rat.

It was only when a sudden shaft of moonlight peering through a gap in the ragged clouds combined with the increasingly weak illumination provided by the pocket torch, that its true nature could be perceived.

She saw it was actually a two foot high figure, crooked and bent, and draped in an all-enveloping hooded cloak that obscured most of its features.

She could make out the contours of its face just fine though...It was the face of an aged crone or an impossibly old man, the skin resembled weather-worn leather, it was so heavily wrinkled. Its eyes however, set either side of a huge, bulbous nose covered with warts and lined with an intricate network of black-looking veins, were bright and filled with a malignant intelligence. It stared, favouring her with a hideous, lopsided grin revealing a set of teeth, jagged and decayed...And with chunks of rancid smelling meat dangling inbetween the all-too frequent gaps.

But what had her running from the shed in uncontrollable fear was the sight of the item the goblin-like creature held in one gnarled, bony hand...

A lump hammer. Thick handled and powerful looking. Its mallet darkly stained and dotted with stripes of monochrome fur mixed with tiny pieces of shining white bone...

9

Of course, none of us seriously believed Kearry had seen any such thing. Our guess was that she had been correct in her original estimation...That she'd come across an ordinary, everyday rat, in admittedly rather unusual circumstances. A vivid imagination and the poor quality of light had done the rest. The rather sticky problem of HOW it had gotten into the shed was 'solved' by the supposition that it may in fact have already been hidden somewhere INSIDE before the door was locked...

We were each CONVINCED beyond doubting of this...

And yet...

When we decided it might very well be wise to bring the rabbit indoors to ensure its protection from 'marauding rat's', and traipsed on back outside to collect the cage, we found the housebricks were back on the shed floor, the perspex lid had been pushed ajar, the exercise wheel (a leftover from the time my sister had kept a couple of Hamsters) was gently swaying on its side, looking for all the world like some bizarre instrument of medieval torture...

And the last surviving baby rabbit was lying dead with its head crushed, flattened, impossibly thin, as though it had been struck a single blow with a blunt, heavy object...A lump hammer, for instance...

10

We never DID find out what happened to that innocent, ultimately defenceless litter.

Theories abounded like free-falling confetti at a wedding. But each one only threw up more questions than answers. The most preposterous theory of ALL of course, was that propounded in the wake of what my sister may or may not have seen lurking in the shed, one night in late April. Such things don't exist this side of a horror writers fiction or some half-heard Faerie Tale from the distant days of childhood...

Demons. Dwarves. Elves. Goblins. They've all long since been consigned to the dustbin of discredited superstition and folk-belief.

And yet... In January, 1905, at Binbrook Farm, near Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, 'Something' killed 225 chickens in a particularly horrible way. Despite a constant watch on the henhouse, whenever examined, four or five birds would be found dead. They were all killed in the same way. The skin around the neck, from the head to the breast had been pulled off, and the windpipe drawn from its place and snapped...

The culprits or their motive were never discovered...

And yet... In 1919, in Llanelly, Wales, 'Something' entered hutches and broke the backs of rabbits.

And yet, in the late 1940's, at Alphamstone, Essex, a family living at Sycamore Farm bred chickens that were kept in a paddock surrounded by strong wire buried several feet into the earth. The doors were padlocked. But when the family were awakened by the noise of the chickens, the farmer saw a 'Greyhound' moving through the chicken huts in the centre of the paddock. He raised his gun and fired, but it simply disappeared through the netting and into the hedgerow. A meticulous search failed to provide any means of entry. The farmer was positive the entire paddock was dog and fox proof, and even man-proof...

And yet... in 1954, in Caracas, Venezuela, a man named Gustavo Gonzalez swore blind he was attacked by a 'hairy Dwarf' with glowing eyes... He stabbed it with his knife, but it had no effect...

And yet... In the Orkney Islands, off the Scottish Coast, the headless corpses of thirty seals were found on various beaches. The heads had been cut off almost surgically!!!

And yet...

And yet... The truth is, I haven't a clue as to WHAT happened to our brood of baby rabbits all those years ago. I only know that whatever WAS responsible for the killings, may well lie outside the 'normal' boundaries of human experience. Aside from the actual logistics of anything breaking into the hutch in the first place, there is the added problem of motive... Or, to be more precise, lack of one, in this case...

Only my sister, Kearry, can shed (absolutley NO pun intended) some light upon the facts behind the matter...

Except, she CAN'T.

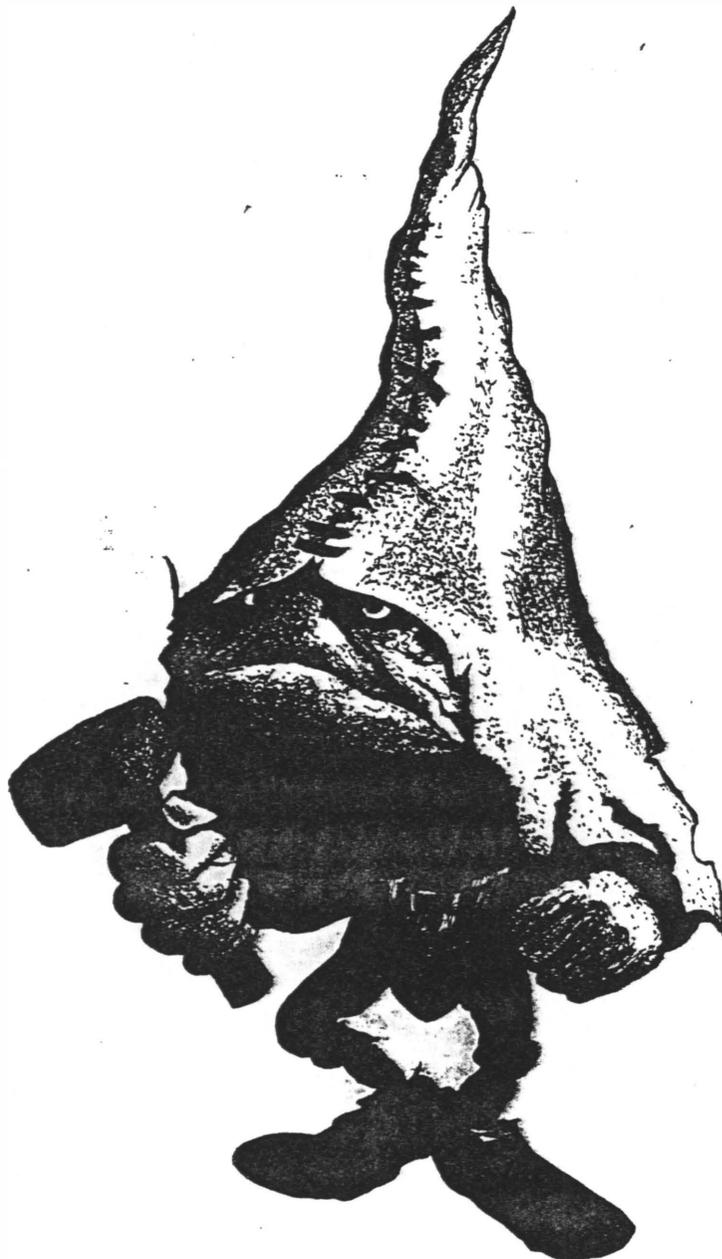
Remember what I was saying earlier about how people suddenly confronted with (for want of a better term) 'The Inexplicable,' can sometimes find it very difficult to adjust and come to terms with what they've seen, heard, and experienced... So much so that they 'clam up,' rather than admit the fact to themselves that they've just been witness to something that doesn't fit in with their belief pattern???

Well, this is an instance were the above certainly seems to be more than applicable... Kearry now refuses to relate to any suggestion that she may've seen 'a Goblin armed with a hammer,' clearly intent on wreaking havoc on the baby rabbit in our woodshed...

She denies all knowledge of ever having encountered anything stranger than a large, common or garden Rat...And what's more, she denies it CATERGORICALLY!!!

But you'll excuse me, I'm sure, if I tell you I still remember the expression of sheer horror on my sister's face that terrible night, the genuine honesty reflected in her eyes as she described what she then believed she'd seen, and that I still suffer from endless nightmares in which hideous, grinning dwarves dance upon a mound of concrete inscribed with the number 666...A blood-stained mallet in one claw-like hand...A cluster of shattered baby rabbit skulls in the other...

Lee Walker.
October 10th 1994.



THE ROAD OF DREAMS AS MIRRORS PART 2:

Yep. It's Cosmic joke time once again. Why dontcha strap on that belly-laff proof brace and that giggle quietening gag, 'cos believe me your gonna need 'em when you feast your eyes upon THIS little lot..All from 1994..

Dog shoots man

Warsaw. A man was shot in the leg by his dog near Slupsk in northern Poland. The dog knocked over the man's rifle, leaning against a wall, sending a volley of shots into his master. (AFP)

Slupsk. Northern Poland.
Daily Telegraph. July.

GIRL WAS A BOOY

THREE sailors whose boat sank owe their lives to — a blow-up sex doll. The men, who were sailing in Lima, Peru, were kept afloat for 26 hours.

Lima, Peru.
Daily Slur. September.

WAR AND POLICE: A naked man painted with zebra stripes, wielding a rifle and shouting that World War III was about to break out, was arrested in Ohio after a police dog bit his bare bottom.

Ohio, USA.
News Of The World. 1st May.

Babies at the double

TWIN sisters have had baby girls on the same day in the same hospital after going into labour at the same time.

First Josie Beatson, 29, gave birth to 7lb 5oz at Sheffield's Northern Hospital then Kath Oliver had 6lb 10oz Amy. Josie, of Sheffield, said: "We do everything together."

Sheffield, England.
Daily Slur. 11th May.

SHOT IN THE DARK

A BULLET fired accidentally by a man unloading his rifle went through his wall, across a yard and into another flat at Oregon, USA, where it killed Marni Brooks, 23, in bed.

Oregon, USA.
Daily Slur. 13th September.



Churchdown, Gloucestershire.
Daily Slur. 13th September.

FLUTE lessons are always a breeze for music-loving pupils at the Churchdown comprehensive school, Gloucester. Their enthusiastic teacher goes by the name of Suzanne BLEWITT.

WET Pcs Steven Mandley and Paul Longdon walked for hours in a storm to save a crashed pink hang-glider — but found a Mr Blobby balloon at Ventnor, Isle of Wight!

Ventnor, Isle Of Wight.
Daily Slur. 2nd September.

Joke that misfired

JOKING police officer Paulo Raverro pointed his pistol at two colleagues in Milan, shouted "Hands up!" — and then shot them both by mistake. The bullet hit both men, injuring them seriously. Now Raverro faces jail for his prank.

Milan, Italy.
Sunday People. July

A drop of bad luck

CATERINA Rusca, 60, pointed to a branch on a tree in a Genoa park and told the keeper it should be cut down because it was dangerous. It immediately fell on her, killing her instantly.

Genoa, Italy.
Sunday People. May.

I'm dying for the loo

A DISTRAUGHT mum hanged herself — because she ran out of loo paper.

Inge Knudson, 24, of Oslo, Norway, left a suicide note saying: "I'm out of toilet paper. What's the use."

The divorcee's doctor, who was treating her depression, said: "It was enough to push her over the edge."

Oslo, Norway Daily Slur. 21st April.

CORPSE DOES A RUNNER

MOURNERS gasped as Jane Eldridge, 67, leapt from her coffin and ran 50 yards from the church before passing out in Melbourne, Australia. A hospital doctor said Jane's heart defect led to a wrong diagnosis.

Melbourne, Australia.
Daily Mance. 19th April.

Lethal loss: A Japanese police officer distraught over losing handcuffs committed suicide in Sapporo.

Sapporo, Japan
Liverpool Echo. 16th April.

BIRD FANCIER: Staff at a girl's school in Hove, Sussex, investigated a sex pest who wolf-whistled at pupils alongside a playing field... and found it was a large crow.

Hove, Sussex
News Of The World. 1st May.

A TRIAL FOR ROB

A CONVICTED bank robber is to get a second trial where he'll be called Mr X, after a judge in Adelaide, Australia, said the first jury just presumed Rob Banks must be guilty.

Adelaide, Australia.
Daily Slur. 21st April.

Tears at the rain in Spain

BRITISH holiday-makers in Benidorm were fuming yesterday after villagers prayed for rain — and got buckets of it.

Locals appealed for divine intervention after a severe drought threatened to wipe out crops of peppers, oranges and grapes. But the driving rain wiped the smiles from thousands of sun-seeking tourists.

Benidorm, Spain.
Sunday People 17th April.

BOOK'S CENTENCES

MILDRED Foxwell sold one of her husband's old books at a market in Virginia, USA, not realising he had hidden £650 inside its pages. It was called: How To Make Money.

Virginia, USA.
Daily Slur. 23rd September

C. EWING COURT: Winners of a competition for people with the most appropriate names working for American law firms included Ivor Case and Sue M. Good.

USA.
News Of The World 1st May.

RUN AT A GALLOP

THE Summerhouse Equestrian Centre riding school at Moreton Valence, near Gloucester, is run by Helen GALLOP, along with her parents John and Sheila Weston.

Moreton Valence,
Gloucester. Daily Slur.
23rd March.

Swapping Tales In Dreamland

Letters Page

Dear 'Dead Of Night',

I really enjoyed the first issue of your fanzine. Long may it continue to see the light of day.

I'm not just writing to sing your praises however. (Aah, why not??? - Pleading Ed), but to tell you of an experience my Grandparents had back in the late 1960's.

At the time this incident took place she was living with her husband on the top floor of a maisonette in the Everton District of Liverpool. One Boxing Day at around about 12 noon, there was a knock at the front door, and my Grandad was confronted by two strangely dressed ladies aged between 60-70 years old, who called him by his boyhood name, 'Willy'. They also asked for my nan by her first name.

He was a little puzzled as he didn't recognise them at all, but thinking they must be friends of his wife, he let them in. He then went out to his local for a pint.

My Grandmother invited them into her living room, but was unable to put names to their faces. Not wishing to appear discourteous however, she made them feel welcome and they sat down to a meal of Turkey and Mince pies. As they ate, they talked about 'the old days' and the neighbourhood where my nan had spent the early years of her life. They also discussed past friends and acquaintances and the "two old dears" described how they recalled her being dressed in a particular outfit when she'd been little more than a child. This last fact quite surprised her because although she herself remembered the clothing, she hadn't thought about it in years.

The ladies were both dressed in what appeared to be Victorian-type garments. They had lace gloves and felt bonnets, and they wore their hair in wrinklets. My nan noticed too that they shoes were reminiscent of slippers.

After an indertimate amount of time, they suddenly announced that they had to go and visit someone else in the neighbourhood, so my grandmother wished them 'Happy New Year', and gave them half a crown each. They thanked her and prepared to leave. My nan escorted them to the door and stood at the landing rail to see them leave the only exit out of the maisonette... But they never came out at all. 'They had simply vanished' And yet, my nan later discovered that they had in fact visited the person they had said they were going to see, who lived a few roads away. Again, they 'old dears' said they knew this person, although she didn't know THEM at all. My grandparents found that her description tallied exactly with theirs.

The last word goes to my Grandad. When he returned from the pub that day, he asked my nan 'Who were those old spirits?'

Perhaps he'd never spoke a truer word???

Ian Doyle.

Eastham, Wicorall

Dear 'Dead Of Night',

Thanks for your magazine. I don't know why you refer to OUR magazine, 'The Fortean Times', as 'erstwhile' when it's still very much alive, but never mind (oops, methinks I made a bit of a boo-boo here in MY letter to 'The FT...I did of course mean 'ESTEEMED ' Magazine - Serves me right for trying to be a smart-arse ED).

'Dead Of Night' is a commendable first effort - But try and improve your printing as it's a little faint. You might reduce your type size a bit and liven things up with more graphics. ('Dover' do a series of source books of out-of-copyright graphics).

A minor point, but Phenomenon is singular - Phenomena is the plural (See your 1900 listing). Also, Millennium has TWO n's - Most paper's are getting that wrong as we lead up to the year 2,000!

Other than that, the most important thing is to build up a subscriber base and encourage feedback and newsgathering participation.

Best wishes,

Paul Sieveking,

Co-editor of 'The Fortean Times'.

Dear 'Dead Of Night'.

I'm writing to express my admiration for your new publication. I devoured the magazine in ONE sitting.

The only criticism I have, is that there seems to be a noticeable scarcity of UFO reports/updates. As I have a consuming interest in this subject, I am left wondering whether you intend to cover this fascinating enigma in future issues.

In the meantime, can I make the following contribution?

Picture the scene. A butterfly flies across red rocks. Small insects burrow in the sand. A snake slithers by.

Suddenly, the peace is obliterated as a huge, metal object descends from the sky, spewing fire from its belly. The butterfly and any other life immediately become 'brown bread' or get there little legs into first gear and scam. Suffice to say, the landing site of the flamethrowing intruder would become devoid of all life.

Now cast your minds back to 1976. On July 20th, and September 3rd, two remote controlled laboratories set down on Mars. As the official line goes, 'Viking I' and 'II' both rested on the Martian surface after their 50ft parachutes and their 3 landing rockets had been successfully activated.

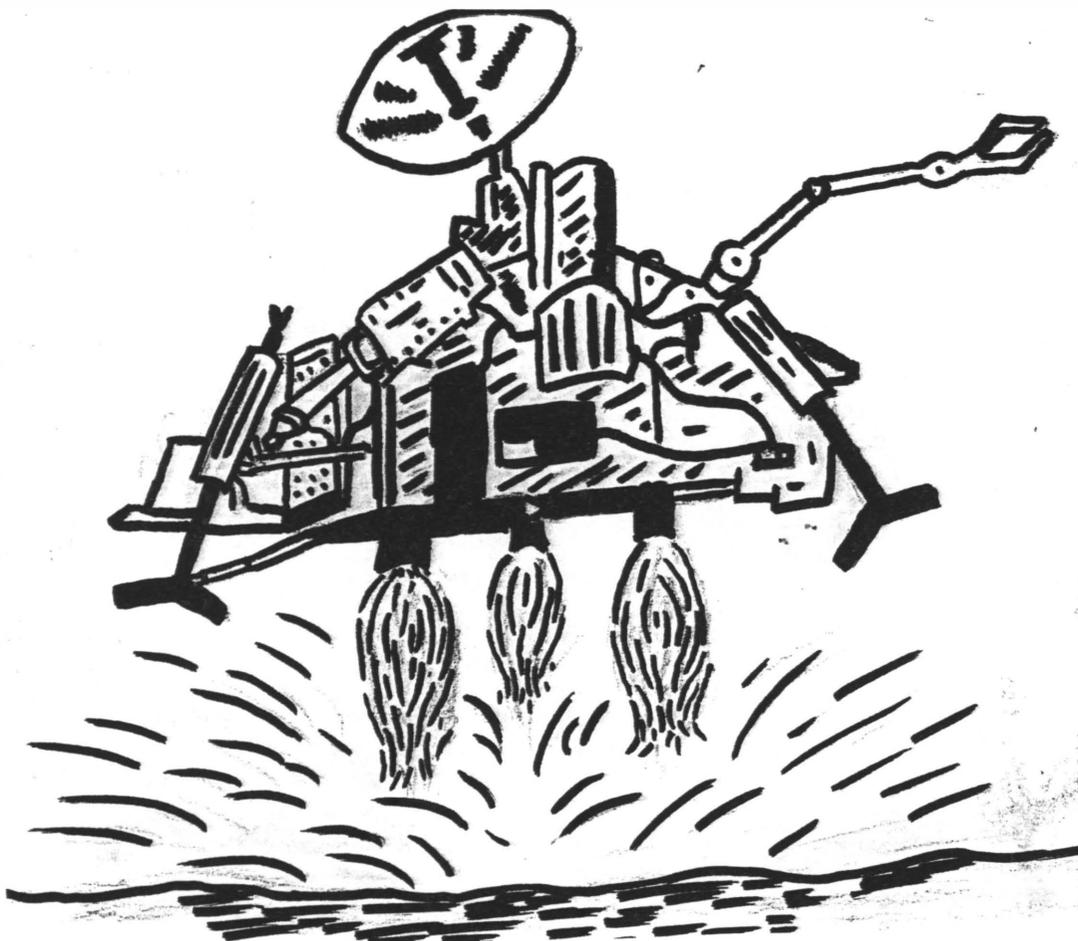
The two probes took photographs, measured temperature, and calculated atmospheric pressure, before sending its findings back to Earth. In the months that followed, all the information was analysed and the public were told that Mar's was a dead planet. But is that really the case?

Let's look at some facts.

First we were told that 'Viking I' and 'II' had their descent slowed by 50ft parachutes. The 'Viking' probe, when on Earth, weighs 1,200 pounds, a parachute of the same size used on Mars would be sufficient to slow the probe down on our own planet, but on Mars, would find the atmosphere

much less dense (less than one per cent we are told) and 'the Viking' would weigh only 480 pounds, this being the case, the parachute would hardly slow its passenger down at all. It would take a chute many times bigger than the one used. In fact, it would probably be impossible to store. I think we can safely say that the Martian atmosphere is more like the Earth's than was/is supposed, because the 50ft chute did the job.

Now, on to the touchdown. As 'Viking' approached the surface of Mars, the parachute was ditched and the 3 landing rockets exerted enough thrust for a gentle landing, and as it slowly came to rest any top soil or sand would be blown away, as would any life forms which may have been in the vicinity at the time. One of the probe's many tasks involved a small robot arm which extended outside to collect soil samples. The arm then took it inside the craft for analysis. The sample (surprise, surprise) proved to contain no sign of any life whatsoever... I will leave you to draw your own conclusions, but there is one thing we can always be certain of... The powers that be on our tiny planet don't want us to guess at the truth about the strange objects seen by totally sane men and women from all walks of life, everywhere on Earth.



(Above): Touchdown!!! One of The Viking probes gently comes to rest on the Martian surface ready to seek out any life in the soil. Ironically, its three decept rockets sterilize the ground on its landing.

Richie White. Ellsmere Port.

Dark Visions

OUT OF THIS WORLD.

BBC 1. 7th October, 1994.

The first Friday in October saw the launch of BBC 1's new show dealing with all things Paranormal and Unknown.

Hosted by Sue Cook, of 'Crimewatch' fame, the programme is set in a studio suitably decorated with the usual trappings and audience. Also present were two resident experts, Dr Lyall Watson, author of 'Supernature', and Dr. Susan Blackmore, a psychologist.

Both were briefly interviewed for the benefit of the studio audience and the viewers. Each set out their stall quickly. Lyall Watson is clearly a man who is enthusiastic about the paranormal and he is willing to look for explanations that cannot be readily supported by science. Susan Blackmore made it clear she was there to play the role of skeptic.

The programme took the form of four filmed reconstructions of paranormal events. This format has a lot in common with 'Crimewatch', so Sue Cook no doubt felt right at home.

The first investigation was into the past-life experience of Liz Howard, housewife and former ICI scientist. By far the largest segment of the programme was given over to this investigation - some 25 minutes. The film took us through her experiences of recurring dreams, regression under hypnosis, and investigation of the sites at which she had lived during her past life. A short period was then given over to expert debate. Lyall Watson suggested that Liz might have tapped into some kind of collective memory database that ALL humans might share, but which most have forgotten how to access, except subconsciously. It was an interesting theory which, unfortunately, he wasn't allowed to expand upon. As expected, Susan Blackmore dismissed this notion. Where was it? What was storing it? What kind of information does it store? Presumably Ms. Blackmore knows nothing about Telepathy and the evidence in support of racial memory, or perhaps she doesn't realise that we know very little about the majority of the functions of the human brain.

The second segment dealt with a foetal skeleton which the owner believed was cursed. A series of serious mishaps having befallen friends and family since its purchase. A decision was undertaken not to have the skeleton 'live' in the studio. Sue Cook looked suitably fearful. Susan Blackmore offered to touch it and risk being cursed. We wish.

We were then introduced to Graham Wyley, a psychic investigator who was able to touch the item because he was protected by his 'psychic gift'. Quite.

It was taken to Brixham medium Margaret Barrett, who contacted the spirit of the skeleton to ascertain its identity. She could not have been more erroneous in her prognosis if she'd deliberately set out to do so. The word farcical sprang immediately to mind.

Next up was a very short segment on premonitions which culminated in Sue Cook excitedly telling us that the BBC were setting up the first

'Premonitions Bureau' to record viewer's premonitions. I can foresee a small problem here. My mother regularly tells me about dreams she has experienced and how they relate to events which subsequently occur. I'm sure we ALL have similar relatives. Bored housewives, grandparents, hoaxers and weirdo's - I think that the BBC may have invited more trouble than they anticipate.

I'll stoutly resist the urge to write in predicting that there will not be a second series of 'Out Of This World'.

The final segment was devoted to the sightings of 'The Ghost Of Bluebell Hill' in Kent. It dealt with two sightings of the same apparition by an experienced coach driver and a relatively young driver, which bore remarkable similarities to each other.



(Above Left): Ian Sharpe and Chris Dawkins. The two witnesses of The Ghost Of Bluebell Hill who were interviewed on 'Out Of This World'. For their FULL accounts, see special feature in future issue.

(Above far right): The eerie location of Blue Bell Hill in the present day... (Credit for photo's, 'The Fortean Times' #73. Pages 28/29).

Both drivers believed they had knocked over a young girl. Both could find no body and no damage was suffered by either vehicle. A nice, computer-generated map showed the positions of nearby standing stones, burial mounds, Roman roads, television broadcasting aerials and electricity pylons. Apart from being told that they may be relevant, we were given little explanation of their influence. 'Hallucinations' cried Ms. Blackmore (as you KNEW she would).

The coach driver pointed out that if he suffered from hallucinations, he could not be a coach driver. Susan shut up quickly.

'Out Of This World' isn't a bad programme. It achieves its aims adequately. It packages its investigations in small fast food quantities which don't stretch the viewers mind - a sort of TV 'MacDonalds' for tales of the Supernatural. If however, you're looking for SERIOUS investigation of paranormal phenomena, then you won't find it here. Each of the items featured could easily have had a WHOLE programme to itself. Investigation was lacking and there was minimal opportunity for expert debate. If you're REALLY interested in the paranormal, go and buy a book on the subject. Forget this.

Paul Williams.

VIDEO REVIEW MESSENGERS OF DESTINY

Having been interested in the alluring subject of U.F.O's for some time it is always satisfying to obtain a video of such merit as 'Messengers of destiny' which deals solely with the remarkable video evidence taken during the 1991-1992 U.F.O flap over Mexico.

Being unfortunate in never having personally witnessed a U.F.O myself viewing actual film footage of the phenomena in my opinion is the next best thing.

The video contains a wealth of substantial evidence that something extraordinary did occur and was observed by thousands of eye witnesses, many of which possess actual video camera footage of the mystifying events all of which appears on the film. Various Mexican television networks also aimed their cameras to the skies and joined the hunt for the remarkably unselfconscious visitors, all this contributing to the worlds largest mass sighting of U.F.O events recorded on film.

The video centres around ancient Mayan prophecies relating to solar eclipses as precursors to natural disasters all of which apparently came to light up to and including the total solar eclipse of July 11, 1991, which was prophesised to herald two major events for mankind, (i) COSMIC AWARENESS and (ii) EARTH CHANGES, and indeed this prophecy unfolded when beneath the eclipse of the sun a silver rotating disk hovered silently above the worlds largest city and was filmed from seventeen different locations for 23 minutes, including for the first time a video enhanced U.F.O 'Hyper jump'!

This video unlike many others does not consist solely of shaky points of light in the night sky it surprisingly has remarkable highlighted video film of daylight disks, I was particularly impressed with a scene featuring a daylight disk travelling across Mexico city skyline and gliding behind a tower block, all this was filmed from an adjacent tower block window. It is scenes like these which cause even the most sceptical to admit that something weird is going on.

The video also features the work of a group of international investigators following the trail of the U.F.O's using specialised equipment and split screen techniques to reveal striking similarities between recent and non recent sightings.

Genesis 111 have produced a thoroughly stimulating film containing a huge amount of U.F.O footage lasting for approximately 75 minutes and for a price of £19.99 is well worth a purchase.

David Williams. 94.

Anybody interested in obtaining a copy of Messengers of destiny should write to, Ark Sound waves, Po box 1395, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6-9FE.

