

DEAD OF NIGHT MAGAZINE

Issue 8 MARCH/APRIL 1996



In The Shadow Of Boleskine

Merseyside's Only Publication Dealing With All
Paranormal Phenomena!!!

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Dead of Night Magazine does not subscribe to any one belief system. All contribution should be sent to the above address.

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Chasing The Unknown

The Latest Weird And Wonderful News-Clippings From Around The World.

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THE TERROR THAT COMES BY NIGHT



Following my ranting and raving about the demise of Halloween in the last issue of DON, I was more than pleased to receive the Halloween news-clipping featured here, sent to me by a good friend, Jason Dignam...Cheers Jase. You helped restore my faith in the magic of Samhain.

Steve Mullen, a former Church Of England vicar, has heard tales of many apparently supernatural experiences from his parishioners...And he has a story or two of his own to tell.

'In the middle of the night in the rambling old building, the Ghost of the hag swayed back and forth in the rocking chair. It was not the first time that I had been visited by this spectre. I was a student at the Theosophical College, training to be a vicar. It was a soft May night and I lay in bed under the open window which looked out over the moonlit garden. I wasn't looking for Ghosts. Nothing could have been further from my mind. With a shock like a sharp pain, she suddenly appeared, her eyes boiling with malice; her lips twisted into a snarl. Then the apparition began to fade until in a few minutes it had disappeared.

Next day in the village, I learned I had not been the first to see the hag. Locals spoke darkly of sordid,

harrowing deeds at the manor house years before. It was as if violence and sorrow had left its mark in the form of that malevolent phantom.

I have heard many Ghost stories from parishioners scared half out of their wits. One story was about the Ghost of a little girl who haunted a seaside cottage. Guests heard and saw a ball bouncing down the stairs - then they saw the Ghostly child herself.

It turned out that in the 19th Century, her father, a seaman, had cruelly locked her in a cupboard while he went off to sea. And she died there.

When I was Curate in Oldham, a woman who had worked all her life in the cotton industry told me that the night before the old mill was demolished, she heard and saw the Ghosts of not one or two, but dozens of the people who had worked there. It was as if they had all risen from the dead to bemoan - or celebrate - the destruction of their workplace.

A parson on the Yorkshire Dales got lost in the fog on his way home to a memorial service. When he asked a passer-by for directions, the man got in the car and rode with the parson until the church was within sight. Then he got out, whistling, and then promptly vanished!

The nickname of the parson for whom the memorial service was being held was 'Whistler'. Had the visitor been guided by his dead colleague?

Not all the experiences are frightening or oppressive. I knew a lady who said she was visited by Angels. And they appeared on the day of her death. I was at her bedside when she looked joyful beyond measure and called out; 'You see...They have come for me!'

Or there was the case of the unhappy man who turned up at the vicarage while I was gardening. He had only recently moved to the parish after the break-up of his marriage and he was in a bad way. He talked to me for a while and then asked if he could go to pray in the church. An hour later he returned, looking much happier. He said; 'I'm a lot better now, thanks. I just knelt under the statue of the Virgin Mary for a while and I feel easier in my mind'.

In fact, we didn't have a statue of the Virgin in our church. But the strange truth is that one stood there many years earlier...Right by where the parishioner said it was.

Being entirely new to the parish, there was no way he could have known this...

31st October, 1995. General. 'DAILY MAIL'.

THE ARKANSAS GHOSTLIGHT

A portion of the tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad has served as a setting for a mysterious and unexplained aerial apparition since 1931. It has reportedly been seen by hundreds of people, and the strange, pulsating light is believed to be the Ghost of a long-dead railway employee doomed to walk the tracks forever.

Gurdon, boasting a population of about 2,200, began as a railroad town. At around midnight sometime in

EDITORIAL

*Omigod. I know exactly what you're thinking, Dear Reader. And no, this isn't a case of a psychic flash wending its way across time and space like a radio wave blindly seeking out a receiver. No spurious claim of telepathic ability or Yuri Geller-type prediction (and judging from his performance on the BBC's new paranormal programme, if I were him I'd stick to bending spoons). I don't claim to have inherited the mantle of a latter-day Nostradamus, nor to have felt myself overwhelmed by the power of some great collective unconscious yearning (whatever *that* means). I don't even claim to have dreamt a precognitive dream. The sort you wake from and instantly forget, only to have the memory of it come rushing back at you at a speed that both terrifies and disorients the moment someone or something 'breaks it'. It's none of those things. It is instead the abundantly obvious.*

It is quite simply this: 'What Happy Crappy Excuse Is He Gonna Trundle Out This Time, For The Magazine Being Late???'

*And the sad and sorry fact is, dear readers, I haven't got an excuse worthy of your indulgence anywhere up my proverbial sleeve, right now. I feel a little like I did the time Mr. Harris, our school-deputy-headmaster of whom I was mortally afraid, caught me pinching several Prehistoric Monster picture cards from out of Ian Crossley's PG Tips Album, and ordered me, in a voice that promised swift and terrible punishment, to attend his office at a quarter to four. I'd been caught red-handed. My classmate had been sent home ill earlier that same morning and had foolishly left his cherished album in his desk. I'd only needed an Ankylosaurus and an Iguanodon to complete the entire set, and the temptation had proved too great...And did I feel the stirrings of guilt as I slyly peeled the cards out from their marked places, coughing into my free hand as I did so to mask the sound of tearing? No I didn't. Any feelings of shame or fear were sent scurrying like the dark shadows of the night when the sun peeps over the horizon by a powerful and alluring image...Namely of me sitting in my bedroom with a bottle of 'Trendy-Pops' in one hand, and a ham sandwich in the other, my face lit with a dopey smile as I gazed at the two picture cards now safely glued into my *own* album, with early evening sunlight falling in golden slabs across the floor, and the sound of other kids out playing Football or Kiss Chase, drifting on the breeze, far away and unimportant.*

*And besides, it wasn't as if I actually *liked* the lad. Although I was forced to sit next to him, he wasn't what you'd call a close friend. He was excessively fat and his breath smelled permanently of 'Anglo Penny Bubbly's'. He also brayed like a donkey at your slightest misfortune. He was one of those eternally sad characters who seem to take great delight in the sorry misfortunes of others. Perhaps because they're so insecure about the fact that God didn't dish them out any favours in the physique department, they feel an impulsive desire to mock everyone and everything. Looking back now, it's as clear as day that was the case with Ian Crossley, but when you're a kid you tend to be bereft of such deep, psychological insights. He laughed fit to bust everytime you fell off your chair or got dropped from the school Football team or split up with your girlfriend or your pen leaked all over your brand new shirt and tie...He'd laugh and I'd feel my hands ball into fists and only the fact that Mrs William's would be looking over to see what all the noise was about would prevent me from wiping that smug expression off his face good and proper...*

All of the above was bearable. Just.

But when the entire set of Prehistoric Monster cards were given to him by his elder brother and he brought them in one late Spring morning, his face split with a grin so wide it seemed the top of his head was just about ready to topple off, I'd all but screamed aloud in frustration. I'd been collecting those cards for the best part of a year. I'd amassed, as you are by now doubtless aware, all but two of the complete set. Two stinking, lousy cards. And could I get my hands on them? Could I hell. PG Tips had stopped producing them and replaced them with something (to my mind at least) infinitely more boring like 'The History Of The Motor Car' or 'Flags Of The World'. I'd even tried writing to PG to see if they would send me the two missing cards, but all I got back was a letter informing me that they no longer had any in stock. It seems crazy now, but the acquisition of those cards had taken on an almost lunatic significance to me. With the heartfelt determination of the very young or the maniacally obsessed, I resolved to get those cards one day.

And here came Ian Crossley, he of the 'Anglo Bubbly' breath, the donkey-laugh and the jiggling belly, and he had not one, but two of the cards and let me tell you, dear reader, he was busting his (not inconsiderable) gut to let me know all about it. Oh, wasn't he just. I was filled with the dreadful certainty that long before the home time bell echoed along the corridors, I was going to get myself expelled for stomping all over Mr Crossley's fat head, whistling 'Oh Happy Day' as I did so.

But then, wonder of wonders, before he'd had much of a chance to even get warmed up, he'd fallen ill, (the teacher told the class that he'd come down with the flu, but my money was on a stomach upset caused by the massive cold meat and potato pie smothered in brown sauce, followed by a Mars Bar., two Kit Kats and a banana he'd wolfed down as a light snack during first break). Whatever the case, he'd been too sick to remember his album. And the opportunity had arisen. The rest, you know.

*And so, at precisely 3:45, I found myself stood outside the deputy headmasters office, my brain awl with potential excuses, all of them ingenious, all of them all of them smart, all of them the product of a fiendishly clever mind, all of them *hopeless**

I could do nothing but stand there, as the other pupils went running or skipping out to freedom, eager to be away, to be home to lie in front of the TV, or call on their friends or bury themselves in a good book. Several of them, friends and strangers alike glanced at me as they passed by, their faces filled with the sympathy one affords the condemned. Some even offered words of encouragement. Some drew their fingers across their necks in a blade-like motion muttering things like 'You ees as good as dead, senor', before racing out the school gates, their hearty laughter tinged with obvious relief that it wasn't they who were stood there awaiting the dreaded Mr Harris.

Time's a funny thing, don't you think. There are occasions when it seems to stand stock still. When you are sure (usually during an interminably boring business meeting or on a long, long train journey that the clock on the wall or the watch on your wrist has stopped. That the batteries have run out. Or its mechanism has wound down. Even though you can still hear it ticking.

And then there are the occasions when time goes by so quickly you feel like you're in a TV movie and someone just pressed the fast forward button. On that early evening in May, oh, early 1975 I guess it must have been, I was praying Time would be on my side and act according to the former...The longer I was kept waiting, the more opportunity I would have to try and claw my way out of this mess. But wouldn't you just know it, it seemed that no sooner had the last of my schoolmates left the building than the office door had swung open on its well-oiled hinges, a waft of pipe tobacco assailed my nostrils and there before me stood the fearsome figure of the Deputy Head.

And it turned out I had no excuses. I could only apologise for my actions and whisper I was sorry. And you know what? It worked a treat. He only caned me twice, once for each card stolen, and although I cried all the way home and couldn't pick up a pen for day or so, I learned a valuable lesson.. When the faults are all of your own making and Time's dead set against you. the best thing you can do is to abandon the crappy excuses and crave forgiveness.

December, 1931, railroad section foreman Will McClain fired worker Lewis McBride, accusing him of negligence and blaming his careless work for the derailment of a train. After turning away and walking up the track, McClain was followed by McBride, who tearfully begged to be able to keep his job. When McClain refused to talk to him, McBride hoisted the shovel he carried and brought it down on McClain's head, knocking him to the tracks. Bleeding heavily from his wounds, McClain managed to struggle to his feet, and alternately running and staggering, fled from McBride along the railroad bed. Eventually however, McBride caught up with his quarry and killed him with a spike hammer that was conveniently lying nearby. His body was found next morning and McBride later confessed to the murder. He was duly executed at Cummins Prison in February, 1932.

Not long after the execution, Gurdon residents began reporting a mysterious white light which appeared at irregular intervals about three feet above the track at the point where McClain was killed. According to local lore, it was the Ghost of the dead section foreman.

The Gurdon light has mystified people for decades. A number of explanations have been advanced i.e., marsh gas, car headlights, quartz deposits, etc, to explain away the sightings...But as yet, there has been no completely satisfactory solution, and most locals remain unconvinced in the scientific theories put forward.

The Gurdon light has been reported as sometimes fading in and out, sometimes it changes shape and sometimes it appears to be revolving. Rarely visible for more than 10 seconds at a time, it will often disappear when one walks toward it only to reappear 10 feet behind!!!

In recent years the Gurdon light has been captured on film on a number of occasions. After careful analysis of the glowing images, experts remain confused as to what is causing them.

During the 1970's, a railroad worker, standing on the rear deck of a caboose, watched the Gurdon light as it followed the slow moving train for about 100 yards. At one point, the light veered away from the tracks and entered a graveyard only to disappear over one particular headstone.

After reporting the incident, the worker, accompanied by his supervisor and several curious townspeople, walked to the graveyard. On approaching the cemetery, the railroad worker pointed to the marker where he had last seen the light. One of the Gurdon residents walked over to it and read the name on the headstone...

It was Will McCain!!!

21st August, 1995. Gurdon, Arkansas, USA. 'LOG CABIN DEMOCRAT', via 'LO' Newsletter, USA).

ELLESMERE PORT APPARITIONS

A six-strong crew from 'WIRRAL PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS' recently staged an all-night vigil at Hooton Park near to the Vauxhall Motors Plant and they claim to have encountered some pretty strange goings on.

Resident historian Steve Parsons, who accompanied the group, says he was hit in the stomach by a ghostly presence. He also claims to have seen a mysterious apparition standing in the corridor. Over the years there have been numerous sightings of Ghosts in the middle hangar which houses an exhibition centre.

Therefore, Mr Parsons invited the group along after previously coming face-to-face with what appeared to

be the Ghost of a Second World War pilot. Staff at the hangar also claim to have seen a First World War airman who was killed by a helicopter propeller.

Armed only with tape recorders, the Ghosthunters were able to record a series of unexplainable loud bangs which occurred throughout the night.

Group chairman Mike McManus, later recalled that 'some of the members felt very uneasy in the reception area, entrance and long corridor. At one point, a series of footsteps were recorded on tape which we are going to analyse. Also on the tape was what sounded like a dog barking. This was picked up by two recorders at the same time'.

Steve Parsons claims to have seen what he thought was something standing in the corridor and at one point he said he felt as if he had been hit in the stomach by something which shook him and made him feel sick.

Mr McManus added; 'Each person kept a log of each session and they will be checked over by the group in the next few weeks. We will need a lot more evidence to prove there is something haunting the aerodrome'.

The site was originally the grounds of Hooton Hall and was used as a training camp during the Great War. It then became an airfield, and was used as Liverpool Airport for some years and was the birthplace of the 610 County of Chester Squadron, who distinguished themselves in the Battle Of Britain.

3rd December, 1995. Hooton Park, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. 'THE ELLESMERE PORT STANDARD'.



THE BLUE LADY OF MOSS BEACH

The Moss Beach Distillery in Northern California, was recently featured on the popular NBC TV series 'UNSOLVED MYSTERIES'. They recreated a version of 'The Legend Of The Blue Lady' and presented it to the world (The series is currently being screened here in Britain on 'SKY ONE', on Saturday night's...Check TV listings for details - Ed). Now, visitors come from all

over hoping to catch a glimpse of the elusive spirit, or at least to feel the presence.

According to the legend, some 70 years ago, a beautiful young woman met, by chance, a handsome, dangerous man and fell madly in love with him. This sophisticated ladies' man was, say some, a piano player in a local bar. The naive young woman, always dressed in blue, was already married to another but her unsuspecting husband and son never knew of the illicit affair. The two lovers met for romantic moonlight walks on the beach or for secret rendezvous at the Marine View Beach Hotel (now long gone) next to the Distillery. Their passionate trysts continued for months as they watched the breath-taking sunsets over the Pacific or played hide and seek in the shifting, swirling fog.

It was during a terrible November storm that tragedy struck. The Lady In Blue died in a violent car accident in the Bayshore Highway. She had planned to meet her lover later that week at their favourite spot. It is there that the locals say you will find her, dressed in blue, wandering aimlessly along the beach, lost in an eternal search for her lover. People say they have heard her as she calls softly to small children, warning them to stay away from the cliffs, perhaps hoping to atone to her own small son.

The Blue Lady, unaware that her lover was having another affair at the same time, died, never suspecting his treachery. However, the second woman discovered his betrayal and flung herself off the cliffs to the ocean, drowning in the beds of kelp and seaweed that litter those waters. Her Ghost, it is said, appears dripping wet, covered with slime and seaweed.

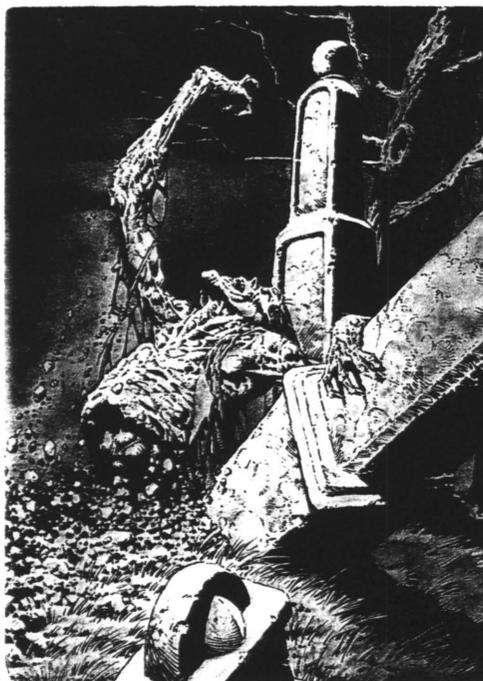
October, 1995. Northern California. *'THE DISTILLERY TIMES'*. (via 'LO' Newsletter, USA).

GILLIAN'S HEX FILES



Actress Gillian Anderson (who of course plays the ever-skeptical Agent Dana Scully in the superb TV series *'THE X-FILES'*), has, according to reports been forced to call in a real-life exorcist. After a series of unexplained disturbances in her Canadian home, Gillian decided to look into the history of her house. She found it was built on an ancient Indian burial ground.

'It was amazingly creepy', she was quoted as saying. *'I could feel the spirits from the moment I moved in'*. Gillian and her husband, *'X-FILES'* production designer Clyde Klotz called in an Indian exorcist, who seemed to do the trick. The house is now said to be clean. 15th November, 1995.



GHOSTS OF THE KILLING FIELDS

Reports from Tuzla, in the former Yugoslavia, suggest that the site of one of the worst massacres of the tragic Bosnian conflict is haunted by the spirits of the 71 victims that lie in unmarked graves there.

A recent sighting involved a young, long-haired girl seen by a policeman on foot patrol. Apparently, the girl appeared to be looking at pictures of those who were killed upon the wall. When the officer asked her what she was doing out so late after curfew the girl turned towards him. She had no face and the front of her dress was covered in blood.

Psychiatrist Kasin Brigic, dismisses the sightings as *'flashbacks typical of Vietnam Syndrome or post-traumatic shock disorder.'* He reports that he has five times more patients than before the war and is regularly turning away dozens who should be in hospital.

30th December, 1995. Tuzla, Bosnia. *'PSYCHIC NEWS'*.

SPOOK KICKS UP A STINK

'CORONATION STREET'S Betty Driver, was apparently forced out of her home by the Ghost of a dead farmer. The (ahem) ever-reliable *'DAILY MANC'* reported that Betty, (who plays Betty Turpin in the famous TV soap) said that life had become hell in the house she shared with her sister Freda.

Betty, 74, eventually called in an exorcist after the house was plagued with strange noises and *'indescribably horrible smells. We found out that the house was built on farmland and the spirit of the farmer is supposed to haunt it'*.

2nd January, 1996. Yorkshire. *'DAILY MANC'*

STORIES OF HAUNTINGS ARE PUT ON VIDEO

Wally Barnes, a 71-year-old charity worker, has produced a video featuring the ghostly tales of

Warrington...Reputedly, one of the most haunted towns in England.

Wally, who has clocked up more than 60 years of charity work, will dress in period costume reliving such tales as 'Dandy Dick Peabody' at the historic Lower Angel pub, and the Ghost of the grey abbot at the place bingo hall.

Details of price and availability will be passed on when we have them.

8th January, 1996. Warrington. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST'.

The Haunted Prison

Bullingden Prison in Oxfordshire, is reputed to be haunted by the spirit of a suspected female murder victim. Cleaning staff are refusing to work late at night in the hospital wing.

One insider at the prison said; '*It's a caused a right rumpus. Some people are really scared*'. The Ghost was first reported by a terrified inmate on remand for allegedly murdering a woman. He is now convinced that she has returned from the grave. He said the Spectre was appearing night after night in the category in the category B jail's hospital.

Prison officers refused to believe his claim, until the apparition showed up on a security camera. The insider said; '*A warder and nurse saw this weird, white figure suddenly appear on the screen. They were scared stiff!!!*'

The pair were on duty late at night, monitoring the wing from a side room. '*They had no idea what the thing was, But they said it looked like a woman in white...just like the prisoner said he saw. Now everyone's talking about it, and the auxiliary staff who help out with the cleaning say they won't go in there late at night. It's a new building and you wouldn't expect it to be haunted...So perhaps the prisoner who saw it first is right and a restless spirit is out for revenge*'.

Now the authorities are considering calling in a Ghost-hunter to investigate the strange sightings.

31st January, 1996. Bullingdon Prison, Bicester, Oxon. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Whatever Possessed Him?

A former policeman who claimed a Ghost forced him to make obscene phone calls was jailed for four months at Watford Magistrates Court. Anthony Cooper, 43, of Leighton Buzzard said his body was invaded by the spirit of the 19th Century Peter The Pervert.

The magistrates were, not surprisingly, unconvinced by Anthony's claims and in passing sentence told him; '*The offences caused considerable distress to vulnerable women*'.

4th January, 1996. Watford. 'DAILY MANC'.

Griswold Inn Ghost Sings Sad, Sad Song.

Jeanette Griswold was a descendant of the people who built the Griswold Inn, Columbus, USA, in 1811. She was reported as being a very down-to-earth lady who moved to another home in Worthington when she was still very young. Her greatest joy was going down to the Inn to spend time with her two aunts who still lived there.

One afternoon, in about 1910, while she was visiting, she heard the sound of singing. It seemed to come from upstairs, where travellers used to spend the night. Jeanette followed the sound, which led her to one of the bedrooms. The door was ajar, and she peeked in and saw a lady rocking and singing to a baby cradled in

her arms. Jeanette fled downstairs for fear of disturbing the lady and asked her aunts about the lady upstairs. The aunts exchanged knowing glances but told Jeanette she must have been imagining things.

Years later, when she was a teenager, she brought up the subject, and her aunts told her the truth about the mysterious 'Lady Upstairs'.

They said a couple had stopped at the Inn when it was a stagecoach stop. The woman was pregnant and delivered a stillborn baby during the night. So distraught was the young woman that she refused to give up the baby because she felt she could revive it.

The couple left the Inn, and later, word got out that the young mother had died. Through the years, according to the Griswold ladies, they began hearing the sound of singing, and the lady could be seen in the shadows, rocking and singing to the baby. The Griswolds apparently were not disturbed by it, nor felt any fear. They accepted it as part of the eternal mystery of life and death.

29th October, 1995. Columbus, USA. 'THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH'. (Via COUD-I)

BBC ALL SHOOK UP BY THE GHOST OF ELVIS

A BBC crew who allegedly made jokes about 'The King Of Rock'n'Roll' and his less than petite figure towards the twilight of his career, are, according to the usual unreliable sources, being made the subject of what has been dubbed, '*Elvis's Revenge*'.

The makers of the TV programme '*ARENA*', which was due to feature a documentary centring upon the revelation that his death had been attributed to acute constipation, have suffered a bizarre series of coincidences. Elvis's undertaker, who is interviewed in the programme, suddenly dropped dead.

The film crew narrowly escaped a fire at their Memphis hotel.

Pictures of Elvis mysteriously vanished from the room of author David Adler who helped research the programme.

And Elvis's cook for 26 years, Mary Jenkins, claims his Ghost now haunts her kitchen...And, wouldn't you just know it...Begging for food!!!

Adler said; '*My blood runs cold when I think about all the strange things that have happened. I am not a superstitious man, but it has given me a few nightmares. I'm just praying that nothing else happens. The most bizarre was the death of the undertaker who previously had no health worries. He just keeled over*'.

Speaking of the hotel fire at 'The Ramada', Memphis, he said; '*Smoke started cascading down the stairways and the film crew had to be evacuated from the 6th floor by firemen. Everybody was pretty shook up by the incident. Days later, pictures of Elvis disappeared. I know they haven't been stolen because I locked them away*'.

Presley's cook, Mary, is convinced that he visits her kitchen. '*He often appears at night opening all the fridges looking for food wearing a white stage-suit. Sometimes I hear him waiting. He's not a happy Ghost and it makes my flesh crawl*'.

A BBC crew member said; '*There was always a strange atmosphere when we were filming*'.

If we had known about all the weird events none of us would have wanted to do the programme'.

3rd December, 1995. Memphis, USA. 'THE SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

WHEN FATE TURNS ITS BACK

WHEN CRIME DEFINITELY DOESN'T PAY

We all know crime is currently on the increase Worldwide...

Less well-known is the fact that there would also seem to be a higher level of weirdness surrounding some of these law-breaking activities...

Just take a look at these incidents, for example...



MAKING A MEAL OF IT

Police in Massachusetts, are hunting a burglar who cooks a meal in people's houses before robbing them...

9th January, 1996. Massachusetts, USA. 'Sunday People'.

SERVES SHOE RIGHT

Juan Lopez, jailed for six years for kicking a police officer's backside in Venezuela, claimed his ex-wife put a curse on his shoes which made him commit the deed.

9th January, 1996. Caracas, Venezuela. 'DAILY SLUR'.

A BUNCH OF NITWITS

Bungling thieves broke into an art gallery full of priceless paintings grabbed...Wait for it...A bag of knitting!!!

The gang cut their way through two false ceilings to bypass the hi-tech alarm system at the building in County Durham. Baffled police officers said; *'They probably thought it was valuable surrealist art'.*

NOTE VERY CLEVER

Border police in Austria are hunting a dyslexic forger of US currency after seizing a 100 TOLLAR note from a man in Salzburg. Bemused officers investigating the case were moved to comment; *The crooks should have brushed up on their spelling'.*

15th January, 1996. Salzburg, Austria. 'DAILY SLUR'.

BEAR-FACED CHEEK

Customs officials at Quito Airport in Ecuador were not fooled when Imelda Branques tried smuggling her tiny husband Ronaldo in her suitcase disguised as a fluffy koala bear. When they prodded him he said; *'I'm Chippy The Talking Teddy'.*

IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

A prisoner who escaped from a California jail, was caught by police after he dialled the emergency number 911 by mistake, officials said. Tonga national Maliu Mafua, 27, escaped from the San Mateo Prison but was nabbed when he dialled 911 instead of 411 for Directory Inquiries from a pay-phone.

10th January, 1996. California, USA. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

*Armed raider Peter Horrod broke into a bank in Canada, to find a dozen burly policemen inside...Investigating a robbery that had taken place at the bank the night before...

5th January, 1996. Calgary, Canada. 'DAILY SLUR'.

...And when a phone pager was stolen in Utah, police sent a message asking the thief to call. Amazingly, Lee Washington, 18, *did...* And officers traced it to his motel and promptly arrested him.

6th January, 1996. Ogden, USA. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY'.

*Pickpocket Mario Palumbo thought he was onto another days rich pickings when he mingled with the 75,000 crowd at a race meeting in Italy. But Mario chose the wrong person...Pietro Fontana, the head of Milan's anti-pickpocket squad. As he was led away, the tearful crook known as 'King Of The Pickpockets', said; *'When they hear of this in Naples, I will die of shame'.*

6th January, 1996. Monza, Italy. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY'.

*Friends who drove 1,000 miles from Slovenia for a friend's 40th birthday party in Norfolk had their Lada clamped and towed away within an hour of parking in Britain. The pair were caught in Cambridge and had to pay £105 - more than the average weekly wage in their homeland - to retrieve it.

9th January, 1996. Norfolk. 'DAILY MAIL'.

*Cindy Penka called her husband at work to tell him she had been robbed, and while they were talking, two men walked into her husband's store and tried to use her stolen credit card. Thomas Penka said goodbye to his wife and called police.

Cindy Penka was the victim of a drive-by purse snatching at a shopping centre. Ten miles away, two men handed her credit card to a clerk at the electronics store that Penka manages in Hauppauge, New York. The suspicious clerk noticed the name and motioned to Penka while he was talking to his wife about cancelling her card and the account for her stolen cellular phone. Police arrived at the store and arrested two men on charges of grand larceny and forgery.

22nd August, 1995. Hauppauge, New York. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH'.

*A would-be burglar who was dressed for the weather froze to death after getting stuck in his bulky clothing while climbing through a basement window. Henry Carlton's body was found by an employee of the Betty Steinbacher Real Estate Agency. He was wedged half-way through a basement window, his legs inside and his head and arms outside. The 41-year-old man was reported missing by his family, and Carlton apparently believed he could squeeze through the 15-inch high, 18-inch wide window and drop to the basement floor, Lycoming County Coroner George Gedon said. But the window was partially obstructed by a heating duct, and Carlton's two sweatshirts and a bulky coat stopped him.

'Then he was wedged there, on his stomach, and the more he struggles, the more his clothing bunches up against him, his feet were off the ground and he couldn't get any leverage.' Gedon said.

7th February, 1996. Williamsport, Philadelphia. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH' Via COUD-I.

THE PRICE OF PASSION

Police in Romania who found a couple making love in a park fined them the equivalent of £15 for damaging the grass...

17th August, 1995. Bucharest, Romania. 'YORKSHIRE POST'.

A WEDDING AND TWO FUNERALS

A Turkish immigrant celebrating a Christmas Eve wedding with traditional gunfire into the air killed two guests and wounded nine. The unnamed 36-year-old man drew a pistol during wedding festivities and fired 12 shots, which bounced off the concrete ceiling of the hall. The man turned himself in to police and has been charged with manslaughter. Celebratory gunfire is common at Middle East festivities.

27th December, 1995. Copenhagen, Denmark. 'THE TORONTO SUN' Via COUD-I

DO-GOODER ARRESTED

When authorities in Pensacola, Florida, told Scott Plumley, 39, that they couldn't shut down neighbourhood drug dealers because they lacked evidence, he went straight down the street, bought a \$4 bag of marijuana and called Escambia County sheriff's deputies. Instead, Plumley was arrested and faces up to a year in jail. 'It is illegal to buy drugs for whatever reason', Lt Ron McNesby said.

12th December, 1995. Pensacola, Florida. 'USA TODAY' Via COUD-I

DAD DIES JUST LIKE DAUGHTER

A man whose daughter was killed by a train on a level crossing four years ago died on the same spot - hit by the same train with the same driver. Christina Veroni, 19, died as she drove over the unguarded crossing in Italy, in 1991. Dad Vittorio, 57, was killed as he drove across at the same time of the morning.

police said it was a 'tragic accident...An incredible coincidence'.

10th November, 1995. Reggio, Italy. 'DAILY MANC'.

NO MORE PENIS ENVY

Is he lucky or plain unlucky? You decide. Shop manager John Fletcher, 47, from Texas, USA, has won a £156,000 lawsuit against his doctor and a drug company after a prescription caused him to have a permanent erection!!!

10th January, 1996. Texas, USA. 'DAILY SLUR'.

DIDN'T KNOW HAMMER WAS LOADED

A man trying to hammer in some nails with his pistol shot his wife and himself instead. Richard Gardner, 23, was trying to nail some molding at his mother-in-laws house on Christmas night when the gun went off.

He was treated for a hand wound. His wife, Mary Ann, 21, was treated for a wound to the abdomen. Gardner's mother-in-law, Molly Goodman, told sheriff's deputies she asked him to repair the hallway molding. When he couldn't push it back into place with his hands, he went into the living room and got the .25 calibre handgun, she said.

He was using the butt of the gun to nail the molding when the gun went off. Gardner thought the gun was empty, it was reported.

28th December, 1995. Lancaster. 'THE TORONTO SUN' Via COUD-I

BOMBED OUT

French police blew up a woman magistrate's new Renault after a suspected parcel bomb was seen on the back seat. It turned out to be 2lb of best pate' she was saving for a lunch party.

5th January, 1996. Paris, France. 'DAILY MAIL'

'TAKE ME TO YOUR LARDER'

Scientists who claimed to have contacted extraterrestrial life stumbled upon the real source of the mysterious signals...A microwave oven in the kitchen.

The American researchers were hailed as scoring a major breakthrough last year when their high-tech radio telescope picked up a regular signal. From their scientific base in the Australian Outback, the signal came on the same frequency at the same time each evening.

The fact that it happened at dinner-time every night was not thought to be significant. The signals got through despite the telescope's advanced computer system which is supposed to detect anything which does not come from the stars. The California-based Search For Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute felt it had at last found evidence of new life and new civilisations. But they admitted their mistake at a scientists conference. Peter Backus of the Institute told the American Astronomical Society in Texas; 'The signals all came from our own technology. It was the microwave oven in the downstairs kitchen'.

Now the scientists have stuck a note to the microwave asking staff not to use it while they are trying to contact Aliens...

16th January, 1996. Australia. 'DAILY SLUR'

LOTTERY LOSER'S RIP-UP

Jobless Giovanni Contero's dreams were in tatters after a group of jeering youths convinced him to tear up a winning lottery ticket worth almost £40,000. Under lottery rules the 78p scratch ticket was not valid once damaged.

30th March, 1995. Turin, Italy. 'YORKSHIRE POST'.

WHICH BRIGHT 'ON'

Tourist bosses at Brighton were red-faced to discover that thousands of hotel guides for this Summer season have been printed with a photograph of a sunset over the pier of rival resort Eastbourne

27th November, 1995. Brighton. 'DAILY SLUR'.

The Killer Snowman

A Swiss farmer building a New Year snowman, accidentally buried and tragically killed his two-year-old daughter. Police were said to believe that the man, accidentally rolled a big ball of snow over the unfortunate girl.

4th January, 1996. Bauma, Near Zurich, Switzerland. 'DAILY TELEGRAPH'.

HOUSEWIFE'S LAST WISH

And a 58-year-old woman choked to death on the 12 grapes Spaniards eat on December, 31st, as they make their New Year wishes. Spaniards swallow one grape with each stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, mentally making a wish each time.

3rd January, 1996. Spain. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST'.

REVENGE OF THE SPIDER

Don Ramirez, 16, copied a James Bond stunt by turning a can of fly spray into a flame-thrower to kill a spider. He wound up burning his house down as a result.

What happened to the spider isn't recorded.

22nd January, 1996. Canberra, Australia. 'DAILY SLUR'.

A SURE-FIRE CURE FOR HICCUPS

Hans Halsbeck had just the cure for his friend Helmut's hiccups...He crept behind him and fired a gun. The shot cured the hiccups just fine...But landed Helmut in hospital with a gunshot wound to his thigh.

31st December, 1995. Hamburg, Germany. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY'.

*Another unfortunate German was Hans Bremer, who thought he would surprise his wife by tying the £2,400 brooch he had bought her to a helium-filled Santa.

But he let go of the string for a second and it floated away into the wild blue yonder...

24th December, 1995. Stuttgart, Germany. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'

FATAL COINCIDENCES

Herman Lorenz, 88, of Northbrook, Illinois was killed after witnesses said he walked in front of an Amtrak train, nearly 70 years after survived a fatal crash of a train and a school bus at the same crossing.

'Dad must have walked over that crossing a thousand times. He probably thought the train was stopping or that it wasn't going as fast,' said his son, Gerry Lorenz.

16th January, 1996. Northbrook, Illinois. 'USA TODAY' Via COUD-I

*And in St. Clair, Minnesota, a man crossing a highway was struck and killed by a van driven by his own son. Police chief Tom Yoder said; *'It was apparently just a freak, unfortunate accident'.*

John Roller, 68, was walking home from a convenience store when he stepped in front of a van driven by his 44-year-old son, Dieter, authorities said.

13th October, 1995. St. Clair, Minnesota. 'SAGINAW NEWS' Via COUD-I

Statue Kills Girl

A six-year-old Italian girl was killed when a marble statue of Venus, the Roman Goddess of Love, was dislodged from its pedestal and hit her on the head.

The accident happened in a hotel where the girl's family was staying near Northern Lake Garda. She had been playing with other children in the lobby near the 440lb statue.

11th August, 1995. Lake Garda, Italy. 'YORKSHIRE POST'

And...Just to prove it isn't
all bad news...

WHEN FATE SMILES DOWN

*A South Korean man named Cho Song-choi, 51, fell into a sewer in a drunken stupor and survived for nine days underground without food or freshwater.

He was pulled from the Sewer in Seoul by rescue workers. He has suffered only slight bruises after falling 20ft down a manhole on December 28th.

8th January, 1996. Seoul, South Korea. 'DAILY TELEGRAPH'

*Also in Seoul, shop assistant Park Seung-hyung, 19, was pulled alive from the ruins of the collapsed South Korean department store after 16 days without food or fresh water. She said she clung to life after a monk gave her an apple in a dream.

17th July, 1995. Seoul, South Korea. 'YORKSHIRE POST'

*A bulldozer driver in Egypt has uncovered a cache of early Islamic coins dating back to the ninth century. The driver was digging the foundations for a new building in the village of Abtuga when he found two pots buried 20 ft underground.

When villagers gathered around and saw the pots contained gold coins, they ran off with them.

27th November, 1995. Assiut, Egypt. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH' Via Coud-I

*Schoolgirl Cairo Wilmot hit it lucky when she tucked into a seafood paella pub meal and found a pearl.

Cairo, aged 7, chomped on something hard and her father John, 32, was about to complain to the 'Deacon Brodie's' pub, Dundee, when they spotted it.

Mother Georgina, 34, of Wormit, Fife, said; *'When she bit into it she said, "I've crunched something sharp", and spat it into her fingers. It turned out to be a cheap meal'.*

An expert has valued it at £30.

15th November, 1995. Dundee, Scotland. 'DAILY SLUR'.

STRANGE DAYS IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM:5

STRANGE ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR



THE COW THAT FELL TO EARTH

A half-ton heifer crashed through a factory roof and plunged 20ft to the shop floor, missing a group of aircraft workers by mere inches. The animal then promptly got to its feet and trotted calmly out the door.

The cow, it turned out, had jumped from a grass bank level with the roof of the Earby Light Engineers in Lancashire. Charge hand Tim Wolfe, 31, said; *'No one would really believe the story about the cow. I can't go anywhere now without being moored at.'*

18th November, 1995. Colne, Lancashire. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS'.

DONKEYS ARE DRUNKEN ASSES

Boozy donkeys have been treated for alcoholism at an animal sanctuary in Devon. Most have become addicted after being given beer by customers at pubs. The latest to be 'dried out' at 'The Donkey Sanctuary', was an animal called Geoffrey, whose owner gave him a gin and tonic. Three donkeys had to be given diminishing amounts of 'Guinness' and crisps as part of the process.

When boozed up, they became difficult to handle and were aggressive.

The charity now has 4,000 rescued animals on three farms in Devon, Dorset, and Derbyshire, and also helps donkeys in other parts of the world.

6th November, 1995. Devon. 'DAILY SLUR'

*And hungover pigeons were nursing their own sore heads in Maidstone, Kent, after New Year revellers left bird seed soaked in alcohol on pavements.

3rd January, 1996. Maidstone, Kent. 'DAILY SLUR'.

THE LUCKIEST CAT IN BRITAIN (AND THE CLEANEST TOO)

Christian North was grinning with relief as he hugged the cat he very nearly drowned in the family washing machine.

Three-year-old Christian popped his ginger pet Thomas, into the machine because, as he explained later, he wanted to make him 'clean and fluffy.'

Not taking any chances, he even decided to set the washer on the cycle for non-fast colours. Things looked bad for Thomas until Christian's mother Beverley arrived in the kitchen of their home in Burgate, North Yorkshire. 'I noticed the washing machine was filling up then to my horror, I saw Thomas's little face pressed up against the window,' she said. Unable to free the eight-month-old pet, she called the fire brigade. 'They retrieved him in a couple of minutes. He was absolutely soaked, but he soon recovered.'

Fireman John Brown said; 'At first we were convinced Thomas was dead because the washing machine was filling up and he was lying on his side. But we managed to force the door open with screwdrivers and pulled him out.'

22nd January, 1996. Burgate, North Yorkshire. 'DAILY MAIL'

WHO SAYS ANIMALS CAN'T FALL IN LOVE?

The picture featured below of two Pandas Ming Ming and Li Li canoodling in a Korean zoo seem at first sight to tell a remarkable story. It's hard not to believe that both animals have fallen in love.

Most spoilsport scientists however, would say nothing of the kind. It is a mistake, they say, to attribute human emotions; Love, grief, astonishment, joy, to animals. Only human beings, they claim, are high enough to feel these things...The Pandas are simply acting mechanically by instinct.

Fifty years ago, the animal behaviourist B.F. Skinner (*no relation to Scully and Mulder's F.B.I. boss in 'THE X-FILES', I assume*), experimented with caged rats and pigeons and claimed that all animal behaviour could be reduced to simple, automatic responses to stimuli; the rat is hungry; it presses the lever that gives it food. This is the so-called '*conditioned reflex*'.

But today, a very different story could be emerging. In a thought-provoking study, two American scientists, Jeffrey Masson and Susan McCarthy, examine the emotional lives of animals and produce what they believe is clear evidence, from the behaviour of animals, that they feel love, happiness, fear and bereavement just as deeply and as painfully as we do. Some of their evidence comes from documented cases in the wild. There is the mother-Elephant in Burma, who saved her three-month-old calf from drowning in a fast-flowing river. The calf was screaming with terror. She circled it with her trunk, but the waters tore the baby away and swept it downstream.

She swam after it, picked it up, and rearing on her hind legs, placed it on a narrow shelf of rock just above the flood. When she managed to escape from the river downstream, she raced back, calling all the time. When she saw her calf she stopped roaring and began rumbling, a sound not unlike the purr of a giant cat.

In a *human* mother, such actions would be called love, terror, self-sacrifice, the pleasure of relief. Because it is an Elephant, scientists deny her these emotions. Yet the evolutionary forces that shaped us are exactly the same. We are both products of what Darwin describes as '*the survival of the fittest*.'

Darwin, the greatest biologist of them all, certainly believed that animals felt emotions - and did so for sound scientific reasons. Humans and animals have common ancestors. It is logical then that they should have common emotions.

Those who have trained Elephants or dogs, or even budgies come to know that they have 'moods' just as we do, days when they are eager to learn and days when they are uncooperative. If they were the simple emotionless

mechanisms that dour ol' Skinner would have us believe, such moods could not exist.

The authors of the new study conclude that we deny sensibility in animals out of arrogance, to preserve the belief that we have 'higher' feelings, that we are God's special creatures, set apart from 'lesser' creations.



Yet Geese mate for life and can pine away when their partner dies. The world-famous animal behaviourist Konrad Lorenz, who has studied Geese closely, observed one who, when he came upon his partner's fox-ravaged corpse, hung his head. His eyes became sunken and he lost the heart to defend himself against others.

Countless animal and bird species behave similarly. Nothing in Skinner's heartless 'behaviourism' can account for such behaviour.

Take the case of the Kenyan refuge for orphaned baby Elephants, who have seen their families killed by poachers and the tusks cut off their still-warm bodies. The young ones wake up screaming in the night. Wouldn't you call that terror in its purest form?

When young animals are separated from their parents - whether it's a Porpoise released from a marine park into the open sea, thrashing about, apparently terrified, or an Elephant calf that simply fades away when it's put in a zoo enclosure by itself...Surely they suffer loss as painfully as any human being?

A fish on a hook writhes about. Fish have a nervous system, just as we do. Our nervous system serves, among other things, to convey what we feel as pain. We know that pain is a useful survival mechanism. It teaches us to avoid

them, but it didn't mean a thing to him. He really does think he is a dog. He has never met any other birds and doesn't realise he is one. I'm sure he is capable of flying. But he doesn't want to.'

10th January, 1996. *Bredenbury, Near Hereford.* 'DAILY MAIL'.

CAT IN A 999 FLAP

Shocked Philippa O' Neill woke to find the police standing next to her bed after it emerged her cat had rang 999 six times!!!

Police broke in after a series of mystery phone calls from her home in Coventry. They had hammered on the door but Philippa, 26, husband Gordon and kids remained fast asleep. Philippa said; 'My cat Chippa had been yowling to be let out. He must have kept stepping on the phone's nine button as he walked to the windowsill.'

For other similar cases see 'DEAD OF NIGHT'# 4 - Page 64 (The tale of Megan-the Bull Terrier and #7 the story of Mooca the cat).

CLEVER JEEZLY OL' CROWS

According to ecologist Gavin Hunt, some Crows are as bright as Stone Age man and make do-it-yourself tools for trapping prey. Just as our forefathers chipped flints to make primitive knives and crow (no pun intended) bars, so he saw Crows making two types of tools. They stripped a twig of leaves and bark and cut it off just below a shortened offshoot to create a hook. They also used a simple knife with a cut edge made from a tree leaf.

As far as is known, no other animal or bird has made such tools.

Mr Hunt, who observed the Crows on the Pacific island of New Caledonia, says in the science journal 'NATURE'; 'These features only first appeared in the stone and bone tool using cultures of early humans'.

Four Crows were seen making tools and 68 Crows using of carrying tools. Mr Hunt, from Massey University, New Zealand, writes; 'I observed an adult with both food and a tool in its bill next to a juvenile, then pick up the tool and fly off with it.'

Many animals have been seen to use tools in the wild, including Chimpanzees which 'fish' for termites using twigs, but their skills in fashioning tools have been positively primitive compared with the Crow's handiwork. All current theories about the evolution of mankind point to the use of tools to separate the 'Apes from the Angels'. When Chimpanzees were found using tools we had to think again.

'We have seen nothing like this in our own British Crows,' says Mike Everett of the Royal Society For The Protection Of Birds. 'The intelligence of our Crow family tends to show itself in an ability to adapt to town life and come scavenging off us there. None has developed tool-making abilities. These are very exciting findings, but it doesn't mean our Crows are unintelligent. Some of the species kept in captivity, like Jackdaws and Magpies, have shown an ability to talk and mimic. We've heard of a Rook that could take out a plug to flood its cage with water when it was thirsty, and someone brought us a Crow's nest that had been fashioned entirely from offcuts of wire, which certainly showed some sort of constructive ability.'

The Crow family are by far the most intelligent of British garden birds, although they may not be able to compete with the Hooded Crow, which in colder regions, pulls up fishing lines dropped through the ice by fishermen, taking either the bait or the catch off the hook. Carrion Crows are so crafty they know that the presence of people makes other birds leave their nests. The Crows nip in and steal any eggs or whatever the frightened bird had stored for food.

18th January, 1996. *General.* 'DAILY MAIL'.

DOG TAKES THE LEAD

Keith Armstrong was holidaying in Devon, when he parked on a sunken roadway in Dartmoor and set off with his Labrador-Collie cross named Sheba, to walk to some rocks two miles away. He left his companion Anne, in the car having a nap.

'After climbing the rocks, I became disoriented and set off in the wrong direction, walking at right angles to my original route. After two miles, I realised I was hopelessly lost and said to Sheba; 'Where's Anne?' Sheba immediately turned right and led me back to the car, completing a triangular route.

The car wasn't visible on our route, the landscape was featureless and Sheba couldn't have followed her scent as we returned from a different direction. I marvel at how she achieved this miracle of orientation.'

5th January, 1996. *Devon.* 'DAILY MAIL'

REVOLT OF THE CREATURES; 5



FLYING DEER KILLED HEAD

Headmistress Rachel Drake, 50, died when a Stag was catapulted onto the roof of her car. It had been struck by another driver in the New Forest, an inquest heard. The Southampton coroner said; 'The stag was responsible for this death.'

10th January, 1996. *New Forest.* 'DAILY SLUR'.

The Return Of 'JAWS'

Three men and a woman suffered a terrifying nine-hour ordeal after a 16ft Mako Shark overturned their fishing boat off New South Wales.

Tony Barnes, 41, and his wife Kylie, 31, and friends Anthony Green and William Catton were hurled into the sea after the Shark attacked and sank their fibreglass boat. They managed to pull on life-jackets and inflate their small dinghy, but it could only hold two people. The others had to hang on to the edge with their bodies dangling in the water, expecting the Shark to move in at any moment.

'We knew the Shark was there and that we had to stick together,' Mr Barnes said later. 'We thrashed the water like hell.'

They called out and waved to passing ships, several of which passed without seeing them. Just as darkness was falling, they were spotted by the crew of another ship and were hauled to safety.

attacks by Mako Sharks, which can grow up to 18ft and move at speeds of more than 50mph.

They are apparently desperate for food because the seas have been overfished.

15th January, 1996. *Klarna, New South Wales. 'DAILY MAIL'*.

INVASION OF THE FRENCH FROGS

French Frogs are reportedly invading parts of Southern Britain and eating their British cousins. Jim Foster, of the conservation charity Herpetofauna, described the situation as 'very worrying'. They seem to be adapting to our habitat and are spreading. 'They are an alien species and will bring their own diseases and bacteria here. We do not know the ultimate fate of our own frogs.'

The invasion is being blamed on breeders who imported French Frogs into Britain for sale at garden centres and pet shops.

8th January, 1996. *Britain. 'DAILY MANC'*.

...And meanwhile, in Australia, scientists are hoping to use a virus to save the tropical Kakadu National Park from a plague of out-of-place-South American Cane Toads...

3rd January, 1996. *Australia. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'*

FISH RISES TO THE BAIT

A Russian fisherman who caught a 28-inch Pike nearly lost his nose. The man was so excited by his catch he raised the fish to show off before companions and kissed it on the mouth. The Pike responded by clamping its jaws on his nose. Other anglers on the ice of the Ivanko Reservoir in the Central Russian region of Tver, 60 miles north-west of Moscow, could do little to help the victim.

The Pike's jaws remained tightly locked on the fisherman's nose even after his companions had cut off its head. Doctors at a local hospital finally set the man free.

12th January, 1996. *Tver, Russia. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'*.

ELEPHANT RAID

Attracted by the smell of freshly-brewed liquor, five thirsty Elephants raided a remote tribal village in north-eastern India, smashing huts and crushing one man to death.

13th December, 1995. *North-eastern India. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'*

A DEADLY BOAR

Danilo Maggoni, 38, shot a Wild Boar near his home in Varese, northern Italy. Searchers later found both the hunter and the hunted dead...The enraged Boar had hurled Danilo into a ravine before dying itself.

18th December, 1996. *Varese, Italy. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'*.

Rabbit Blow

And even when they're dead, they can still be lethal...

A 72-year-old motorist was run over and killed after he stopped on the A6 motorway, near Amsterdam, to give first aid to a rabbit.

8th January, 1996. *Amsterdam, Holland. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'*.

SHOCKING TALE OF A RINGTAIL

A wayward Ringtail, a small desert animal, managed to briefly knock out a reactor at one of America's biggest nuclear power plants when it shorted the circuits on an outdoor transformer. The Ringtail jumped a fence and slipped past guards, according to officials at the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant.

19th December, 1995. *Palo Verde, USA. 'THE LIVERPOOL ECHO.'*

SERIAL KILLER SEA-LION

Hi-tech underwater surveillance equipment has shown that a sex-crazed Sea-Lion is also a mass killer. At least 40 female partners have been suffocated while having sex with him off the coast of California.

31st December, 1995. *California, USA. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY'*

HELD UP BY HAMSTERS

British Rail had passengers in fits of laughter (just for a change) when the driver apologised for a delay...Caused by *Hamsters* on the run!!!

The animals had escaped from a cage while being transported from Southend to London on a Great Eastern train. Guards were spotted frantically trying to round them up as they scampered round a carriage.

8th January, 1996. *Southend, Essex. 'DAILY MANC'*.

ANIMAL FREAKS AND MUTATIONS



THE MONSTER LOBSTER

One of the biggest Lobsters caught in Britain for 65 years has been brought snapping to the surface. The 15lb giant christened 'Neptune', was found by divers clearing up the old Portland naval base in Dorset. The crustacean's body is 3ft long and is equipped with a set of viscous pincers. 'Claws' has now been moved to the 'Sea-Life Centre' at Weymouth. 'Sea-Life' aquarist Dave Copp said proudly; 'He's about five times the average size.'

Neptune has at least avoided the fate of a previous giant Lobster...A 20-pounder caught in Cornwall in 1931, ended up on a plate.

No-one knows how long these creatures live, but it has been estimated that Neptune could be as much as 50 years old.

7th January, 1996. *Portland, Dorset. 'DAILY MAIL'*.

ZORSIN' AROUND

Breeders have managed to cross an African Zebra with an ordinary Horse, and they've called it, predictably enough, a Zorse.

The first of these aberrations of nature is named 'White Cloud', and is said to combine the best qualities of both animals. It is apparently destined to become *the* mount of the future for serious riders. The 5-month-old foal was originally born to a registered mare via the sperm of a Zebra. It already has the speed of a racehorse and the stamina of a wild Zebra. As he grows, he will develop the long racing legs of a Horse and the powerful hindquarters of a Zebra. 'White Cloud' currently has white stockings and a coat of dark and light brown stripes which will turn to the more familiar black and white as he gets older.

Diane Richards, the breeder of this remarkable hybrid, is flushed with success but is understandably wary too. She was quoted as saying at her ranch in the San Bernardino Mountains; 'There are a whole lot of questions to be answered about the capabilities of a Zorse. Who knows for example how high it will be able to jump?'

The bad news however, is that a Zorse, like a Mule, cannot be classed as a species because it is incapable of interbreeding. For years before White Cloud was born, breeders of exotic cross-species tried experiments with Zebras without much success. The main problem is the nature of the beasts - they are often vicious and defy domestication. But Miss Richard has persevered with her £1,000-a-time artificial insemination programme and now sees the Zorse (ahem) on course for a famous future.

12th January, 1996. Big Bear Lake, California. 'DAILY MANC'

DEFORMED FROGS

Frogs have been discovered in Henderson Minnesota, USA, with deformities such as four hind legs or one eye by students from the Minnesota New County School. The find has triggered a state probe. At least 40% of the frogs from an area marsh had abnormalities, officials said.

1st September, 1995. Minnesota, USA. 'USA TODAY' Via COUD-I

GIANT OCTOPUS WASHED UP ON BEACH

A 7.5 metres-long, giant Octopus was recently found dead on the Matalascanas Beach near the Donana National Park (Huelva Province, Spain). The tentacles of this extraordinary animal were 6.3 metres long, its head 1.2 metres and its weight was estimated at several hundred kilos. People on the staff of the park pointed out that 'it is very odd to find the remains of such an animal on a beach of Southern Spain for its natural habitat is to be found in abisal waters'. It must have been dead for a month, judging from the pitiful state of its remains.

13th September, 1995. Donana, Southern Spain. 'EL PAIS' Via COUD-I

MOUSE MUTATIONS

Mice observed living near the Chernobyl nuclear disaster are in Ukraine have proved their species' notorious ability to escape extermination, not only by surviving high doses of radiation, but also by thriving in mutant forms. Scientists from the University of Georgia braved the contaminated area around the damaged nuclear plant with respirators and protective clothing to investigate why the rodents were surviving much better than other wildlife and humans.

They discovered that the Mice's DNA had evolved at astonishing rates because of the ionising radiation around Chernobyl. The variation in the genes of normal Mice and the Chernobyl Mice is the greater than the difference between Mice and Rats - two species that diverged about 15 million years ago.

20th July, 1995. Chernobyl, Ukraine. 'LOS ANGELES TIMES' Via COUD-I

HERMAPHRODITE FISH

Japanese and American researchers have discovered species of fish that change sexes like Chameleons change colour, altering their genitalia and behaviour to suit the social circumstances.

The most interesting of the species is a tiny tropical fish found of the coast of Okinawa, which normally live in groups of one dominant male and several females. If a larger male comes along, the dominant male changes into a subservient female. But if something happens to the new dominant male, the largest female becomes a male...Even if it was a male once before.

Although scientists have known that more than 2,000 years ago certain species of fish can change gender when the opposite sex is in short supply, it has generally been believed that such changes are irreversible. But biologist Matthew Grober of the University Of Idaho, told a meeting of the Society For Neuroscience that at least three species of fish have been identified that can change sex repeatedly when social circumstances require it, restructuring their genitalia and their brains in an average of four days.

14th November, 1995. Okinawa, Japan. 'ST LOUIS POST-DISPATCH' Via COUD-I.

A GREEN CAT IN DENMARK

A kitten was born at a family farm in Dybvad, Denmark, with *green* fur. It has been christened Miss Greeny and experts are unable to explain the cat's colour. Samples of its hair have been sent to a university hospital in Copenhagen for analysis.

(I wish we had a colour picture to show you. I have it on good authority that the cat really is green - Ed).

14th November, 1995. Dybvad, Denmark. 'THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH' Via COUD-I.

SIGHTINGS OF RARE AND ALIEN ANIMALS



ESSEX LION ON THE PROWL

Police believe an animal that has savaged several sheep and a goat in Essex may be a Mountain Lion. The 4ft beast has recently been seen around the village of Great Wigborough, near Colchester.

23rd January, 1996. Wigborough, near Colchester. 'DAILY MAIL'.

MARKSMEN HUNT 'THE BEAST'

Marksmen in a police helicopter with infra-red nightsights was reported to be hunting a mystery wild cat which savaged more than 50 sheep. Experts fear the hungry beast, thought to be an escaped Leopard or a Puma, could attack a human and were warning people in Powys, South Wales, not to approach it.

30th December, 1995. Powys, South Wales. 'DAILY MAIL'

ODD STRIPED BEAST SEEN IN AUSTRALIA

In Pomona, Australia, there has been a flood of reported sightings concerning a strange, striped creature resembling a Tasmanian Tiger.

Ron West, 62, saw the beast together with his wife, Mandy, near their home one evening. 'We didn't say anything to anyone because we thought people would think we were foolish,' said Mr West. 'This animal was probing some sort of dead animal on the white centre of the road. We both sort of exclaimed, 'wow, did you see that!' as it almost sauntered, loped off the road and into the scrub.'

Mr and Mrs West said the beast had definite stripes around its tail area. It was tan in colour and the stripes were darker.

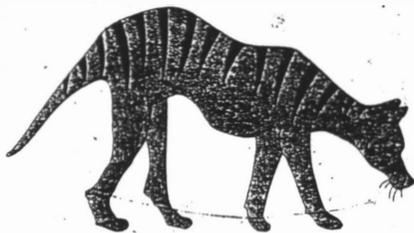
'We weren't imagining things. I can still see it in my mind's eye. It was maybe two feet tall and not at all like a dog. There wasn't much hair. It looked almost bald.'

The stripes were the arresting thing. We immediately thought; 'Tasmanian Tiger.'

Only two-and-a-half-months ago, Neil and Sherie Noble, of Buderim, both saw a beast in daylight but on separate days. Mrs Noble saw it first as she walked through a nearby bush estate.

It was 20 yards away from me and I thought, 'my God, this is a half Kangaroo-half dog'. Its tail was long and skinny, its hindquarters very high and its head almost Kangaroo-ish. Yet it was neither animal.'

She didn't tell her husband about the sighting and less than a fortnight later while he was fixing his roof he saw the beast below him on the road. 'It was definitely a wild animal, very, very nervous and looking everywhere. I didn't observe stripes but then he was mangy and hungry-looking. He looked starved. But I am now absolutely certain that we saw either a Tasmanian Tiger or a Queensland marsupial cat which used to be around here 20 years ago. Maybe the female has the male doesn't, or vice versa.'



Artist's impression of the mystery creature

The beast seems to have been extending his hunting domain. Three months earlier, Jennifer Morgan, 45, of Nanango, saw a striped beast around 7pm as she was driving from Yarraman. 'It was eating something dead in the middle of the road', she said.

The sighting brings the tally up to more than 15 in the region in the past eight years.

25th June, 1995. Pomona, Australia. 'SUNDAY MAIL (AUSTRALIA)' Via COUD-I

UNUSUAL CREATURE LIVES ON LOBSTER LIPS

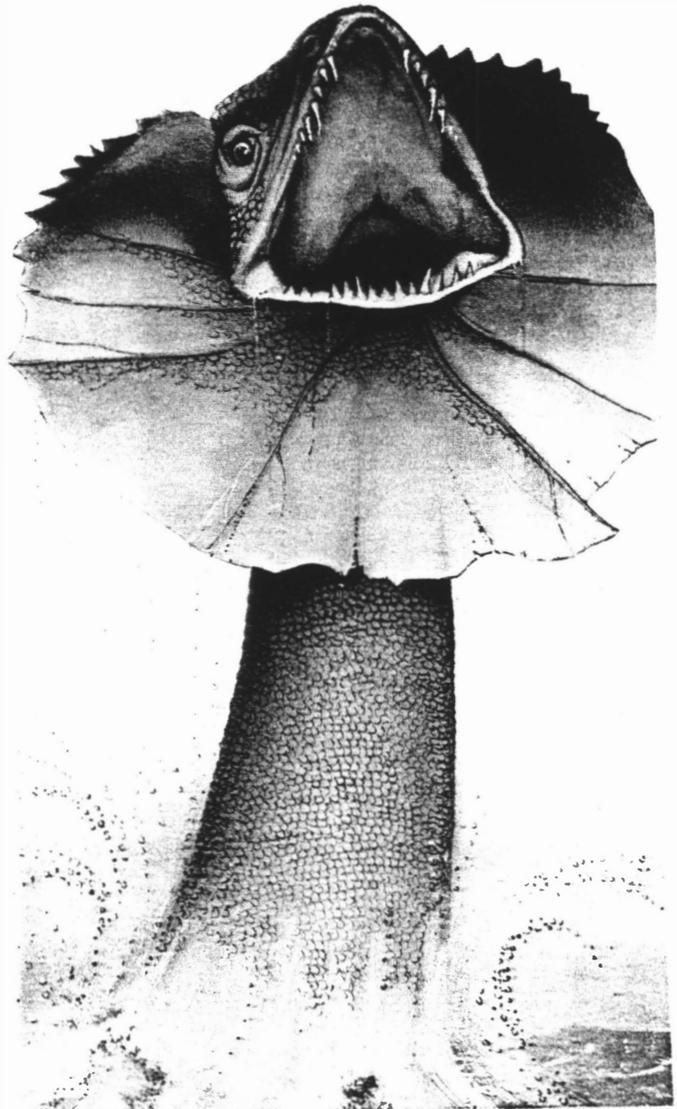
Danish biologists have discovered a tiny creature living on the lips of lobsters that is so unlike any other known animal that it doesn't fit into any of the broad classifications into which the Animal Kingdom is divided. The bottle-shaped

creature resembles nothing known to science, according to a report by the discovery 'has to be the zoological highlight of the decade'.

The organisms have been named as Symbion pandora, and are multi-celled animals with such organs as muscles, digestive tracts, reproductive organs and rudimentary brains. The Animal Kingdom has about 1.3 million known species (about three quarters of them insects), and newly discovered ones are being added to the list every day. But they all belong to about 35 recognised categories, or phyla. The newly-found creatures were discovered living on hairs of the mouthparts of the Norway Lobster, attached to them by an adhesive suction cup on the tail end. Their circular mouths are fringed with tiny hairs or chila, that wave in synchrony to draw water with microscopic fragments of food into a funnel that leads into the gut.

15th December, 1995. Copenhagen, Denmark. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH' Via COUD-I

The Leviathans MYSTERIOUS WATER MONSTER SIGHTINGS



Businessman Bob Teeney has reportedly spotted a 20-metre long creature in October, 1995, at a waterfall near Howick in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

'This is the same as the Loch Ness Monster,' Teeney said later. 'In the next two to three weeks, we will unveil evidence proving the existence of the Howick Monster that will shock people.'

Well, three months later, we're still waiting, Bob!!!
10th October, 1995. Howick, South Africa. 'DAILY MANC'.

VIDEO EVIDENCE OF 'TEGGIE'?

A film crew at Lake Bala in North Wales, (See 'DEAD OF NIGHT' #5 pp46-48; 'IS THERE A MONSTER IN LAKE BALA?' and # 7 pp23), have reportedly obtained video evidence of something lurking beneath the dark waters.

The crew mounted cameras and filmed something resembling a humped creature moving across the surface leaving a trail hundreds of yards long.

Another shows a head with a hump behind. A spokesman for the TV firm CP Bureau of Tilehurst in Berkshire, reportedly said; 'They found something out there.'

Unfortunately, before you get too excited, no further news has been forthcoming, and aside from this rather dubious newspaper account, we have no firm evidence that anything was filmed that couldn't be explained in more prosaic terms. In fact, we don't even know for sure that such a film even exists...

So we wait and we wonder...

10th November, 1995. Lake Bala, North Wales. 'DAILY SLUR'.

The Blood-Drinking Crocodile Man

It dwells in Lake Tanganyika and is called Mama Mutu, Swahili for 'Crocodile-Man'. By all accounts, it is much more dangerous than the legendary inhabitant of Loch Ness.

According to the natives, this water-dwelling creature which resembles a fish-tailed human being, drinks the blood and eats the brain of its victims.

Spanish zoologist Carlos Bonet rules out the possibility of it being a Sirenid, as it was first believed. According to him, it might be a giant otter weighing around 90 kilos and possessing a flat skull which would lend it a somewhat human appearance. It is an established fact that individuals of this species drink the blood of its prey.

14th September, 1995. Lake Tanganyika, Africa. 'ANO CERO' Via COUD-I.

DNA SCIENTISTS ON A QUEST FOR 'BIGFOOT'

The evidence for Bigfoot is as thin as the tufts of hair being tested in an Ohio State University laboratory. But that hasn't discouraged OSU scientists from employing a new DNA matching process to determine whether there's any credence at all in the Sasquatch legend.

'This is the first time that I'm aware that anybody will be able to do any DNA extraction's on Bigfoot,' said Frank Poirier, chairman of the OSU Department Of Anthropology. 'I don't expect anything to happen because I'm pretty sceptical about the this. But good science requires some wild goose chases from time to time.'

The new evidence consists of two tufts of hair - each consisting of a dozen or so individual strands - recovered in Washington State after a recent sighting.

The OSU testing is being done for the Oregon Regional Primate Research Centre.

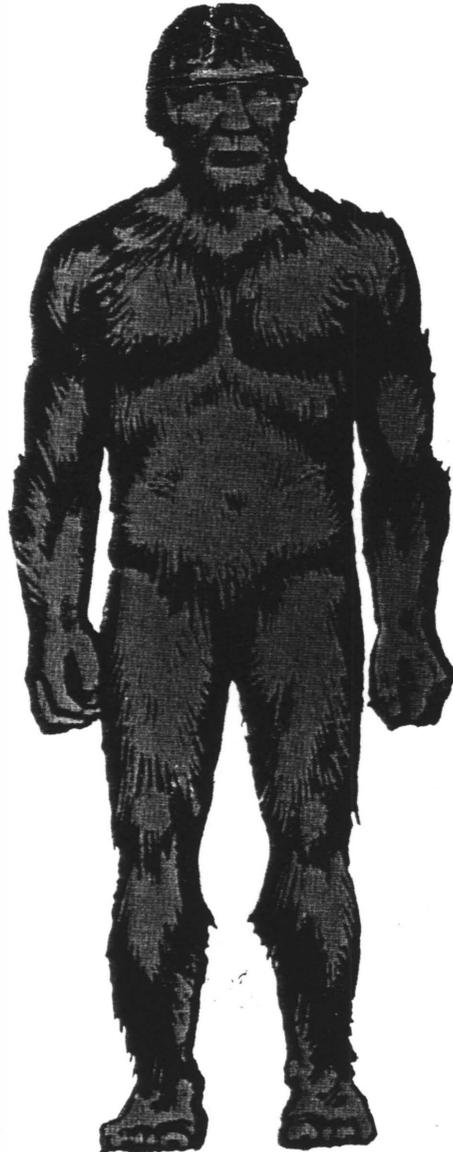
'Oregon has a large number of Bigfoot samples, all of which they treat with great scepticism,' said Paul Fuerst, OSU associate professor of molecular genetics. 'These two batches sent to us had the best possibility of being real.'

The creatures were reportedly observed at a distance of about 100ft in a dense, dark forest.

'It was a sighting by forest rangers,' Poirier said. 'After the creatures left, they picked up hair from the locale, as well as footprints and knuckle prints.'

Fuerst and graduate student, Jamie Austin, are using a DNA testing protocol being developed by the FBI for analysis of hair strands that lack the roots normally needed for identification.

Austin, a forensic scientist, is using the Bigfoot hair as well as human and Chimpanzee hair to do an independent evaluation of the protocol.



The technique, which relies on comparison of mitochondrial genes, should be able to determine whether the Bigfoot hair came from a primate and whether that primate was human or any known species of monkey or ape.

It turns out to be an unidentified species, 'We'd be able to tell quite a bit about its evolutionary history, but nothing about its outward appearance,' Fuerst said.

Tests so far, are 'suggestive that it was not a primate,' Fuerst said. Final results were expected at the end of November, 1995 (We haven't heard what conclusions, if any, they came up with, yet - Ed).

If the Washington hair samples are from an unknown primate, Poirier wants to seek a match with a single hair reputed to be from the Chinese 'Wildman', a similar man-like primate he has investigated in Asia.

The strand, given to Poirier by Chinese peasants during a 1989 expedition, doesn't match that of known primates, according to chemical analysis at Shanghai University.

'The reason the Chinese possibility intrigues me more is that you had large Apes that went extinct in Asia. But there's no evidence of Apes in North American pre-history,' he said. *'To get a creature like that in North America, it would have had to migrate across the Bering land bridge.'*

3rd November, 1996. Ohio, USA. *'THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH'* Via COUD-I.

THE BEAST OF BUZZARD

The dark waters of a pit in Leighton Buzzard are reputed to be the home of a seven-foot Fish that could weigh as much as 120lb. One man has dedicated his life to pursuing it. Compulsive angler, and father-of-four, Ian Mann's obsession is to hook this monster Catfish. He has even given in his notice at the foundry where he works so he can fish non-stop from June 16th until he lands the Beast.

Ian admits to being completely hooked on the fish, which he has seen and almost landed...*'It's a monster,'* HE SAID. *'When it jumps it scares you to death.'*

The Beast is believed to be one of the original fish stocked in the lake by Woburn Abbey staff 40 years ago. *'Some people laugh but I don't care. Once they've glimpsed the Beast for themselves, they change their minds. It moves through the water like a huge black shadow, sometimes it looks like the Loch Ness Monster. I've been dreaming about catching this fish for so long now that I can't stop thinking about it.'*

The Beast, estimated to be 7ft long would smash all British freshwater records if landed. The biggest Catfish ever to be landed in British freshwaters was also a Bedfordshire Beast. It weighed 571lb 4oz and was hooked by angler Robert Coot on August 23rd, 1995.

26th January, 1996. Leighton Buzzard. *'DAILY MAIL'*.

CANOVANAS-MONSTER OR MYTH?



A sleepy Puerto Rican town is apparently in the grip of nightmare beyond understanding. According to press reports coming out of the area, pets and livestock are being killed by a creature that punctures their throats and drinks their blood. Scores of goats, pigs, cows, rabbits and dogs have been slain in recent months. Witnesses describe the predator as a metre-tall Humanoid with prominent fangs. Scientists attribute the unsubstantiated sightings to mass

hysteria and speculate that 'The Goat-Sucker', as the culprit has been dubbed, could be a pack of wild dogs.

Mayor Jose ('Chemo') Soto, though, is taking the predator seriously. He searched the nearby foothills carrying a caged goat as bait but failed to entice the beast.

'I don't care if they call me ridiculous,' says Soto. *'It's killing animals right now, but people could be next.'*

January, 15th, 1996. Puerto Rico. *'TIME MAGAZINE'*.

Witchcraft, Curses, And Demonology In The 20th Century Belief In Hell-Still A Burning Issue

The Church Of England has officially abolished the traditional concept of Hell. The Christian idea of 'The Infernal Regions', that has held constant for 2,000 years. No longer are sinners who die unrepentant tormented for all eternity in a fiery furnace.



A report called the 'The Mystery Of Salvation' by the Church's Doctrine Commission, expressed regret that Christians had been frightened by such sadistic images of horrible suffering that make God appear a cruel, monster

rather than a kind old man. On the face of it, this is a serious attempt to make the Christian message more credible to a sophisticated and sceptical generation. The terrifying depiction's of Hell by painters such as Hieronymus Bosch come from an age like that when the Gospels were written, where bodily torment in the form of torture, death, plague and disease were a common occurrence and therefore readily sprang to mind.

In our era, despite the ubiquity of the TV camera, death and disease are hidden behind a screen of good taste. We may talk about such things but rarely, if ever, do we see pictures of those in the last stages of terrible diseases that still stalk our planet.

Now, we prefer something witty, but vague, like Sartre's '*Hell is other people*', or anodyne but theologically correct; '*Hell*, says the new report, *is total non-being*'. If that is the worst in store for the 'sinners' then it's hardly surpassing that so few people pay much attention to what awaits them beyond the grave. A large number of us are quite happy with the idea of total non-being. The thought of eternity gives us Agoraphobia; we are happy to do without Heaven as well as Hell. '*Eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.*'

It also accords with the indulgent ethos that now prevails in our society. Judgement is now out of fashion. Guilt is a dirty word. For our crimes and misdemeanours there is always an explanation and usually an excuse. Parents hesitate to punish their children; teachers to discipline their pupils. Everything is relative. There is no absolute Evil, no objective criteria of right and wrong. Even those who have not read Marx or Freud accept that irresistible unconscious impulses or uncontrollable economic forces are what determine our behaviour, and what we should pursue is not salvation but our own social and emotional fulfilment. There remains strong currents of disapproval, but Evil is always done by others not ourselves, the argument goes. Favourite targets for our righteous indignation are historical figures such as Hitler or Stalin; or political crises in far-off places like Bosnia or Rwanda. To Dr. David Jenkins, the former Bishop Of Durham, Hell is fascism. To Catholic theologians, it was the military dictatorships of Central America; they called them '*structures of sin*'. Betraying ones husband or wife, or deliberately choosing to have a child out of wedlock, are deemed too trivial to merit the attention of a God outraged at political tyranny and oppression. But either the Gospel is the Word Of God, or it isn't. It may be more pleasant to dwell upon God as a loving father who welcomes the return of his prodigal son rather than the vindictive King who condemns sinners to the outer darkness '*Where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth*'.

But even the most cursory reading of the Scripture suggests a very real danger of damnation. If Christ is trying to get anything across, it is that the unrepentant sinner is in real danger of ending up somewhere extraordinarily unpleasant. There are at least 15 references to Hell and Damnation in the Gospel Of St. Matthew alone. Hell *must* exist for the Christian hypothesis to make sense. Christ died to save us from '*the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*'. (Matthew: 25). We are saved or damned not as a society but as an individual. And equally, some idea of the suffering promised in that life to come, whether it be from the acute torment of the heat from a fiery furnace or just the total non-being, will be encountered in the here and now. For the old man with the guilty conscience, Hell is not other people. Hell is himself.

12th January, 1996. General. 'DAILY MAIL'. Writer: Piers Paul Read.

ANCIENT CURSE A LAST RESORT FOR RABBIS

In Jerusalem, at a secret time in a secret synagogue, 10 Rabbis begin to fast.

At midnight of the third day, they circle the Torah Scrolls with black candles, blow a ram's horn and place upon the Udi Ilan the Curse Of The Tongues Of Fire.

Within a year, they predict, he will be dead.

'Punishments come from Heaven. The Rabbi's have the power to call for it,' says Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, an organiser of the Haredim, the ultra-orthodox Jews calling for the curse.

Ilan is a developer building 270 apartments and a parking lot in the old city of Jaffa, Israel, just south of Tel Aviv. The Haredim say he is desecrating Jewish graves in the construction, a charge Ilan and government archaeologists deny. The Haredim have demonstrated against him, vandalised equipment, threatened to boycott his bank and its affiliated American Express cards and have already imposed upon him a lesser curse. Unless he stops his construction, the Haredim say they will be forced to use the strongest and most lethal curse available; '*The Pulsa de Nura.*'

'We have tried earthly words. They don't understand. Now we must speak to them in a heavenly language,' Meshi-Zahav says.

Ilan is not afraid. '*I will outlive the Rabbi who curses me,*' says the 44-year-old developer.

But in Israel, this invocation taps a strong root of superstition. This is a country where politicians visit Seers, men wear amulets on their wrists, and women seeking babies have been known to line up at a supermarket to sit in a chair once used by a Rabbi they felt could bestow fertility. Within the Jewish religion itself, there is a strong thread of mysticism, called Kabbalah. It uses secret rituals, blessings, curses and supernatural interpretations.

'A lot of people believe in it,' says Ithamar Gruenwald, a professor of Jewish thought at Tel Aviv University. '*They wouldn't practice it, but deep in their heart they may believe that if something bad happens to a person, it may be because he is cursed.*'

'Most people involved in this construction project are laughing about this curse,' says Efrat Orbach, a spokeswoman for the Israeli Antiques Authority. The Authority's archaeologists stopped the construction when ancient sites were found and removed what they say are the remains of a few dozen Persian and Byzantine Christian graves for reburial. There are no Jewish graves, she says.

Ilan suggests the religious opponents are still threatening him because they want concessions or money. He stopped work on the \$160 million project for negotiations, but resumed because the talks went nowhere.

Those calling for the curse are from a group called Edah Haredit - The Community Of Religious. Founded in 1918, as a small band of ultra-orthodox Jews who rejected the founding of modern Israel on religious grounds, Edah Haredit now claims a wide following among all ultra-orthodox, a powerful minority in Israel.

The group has seized on an emotional issue with the black-suited Haredim. It leads the fight against construction projects throughout Israel that the group says are destroying Jewish graves.

Aahron Kempinski, a noted archaeologist, clashed with the Haredim when he supervised excavations of gravesites for a highway intersection near Jerusalem in 1993. They put a curse on him, and he died last year of AIDS.

Ernst Japhet was given a lesser curse when his bank Leumi, financed construction of a hotel that the Haredim claimed disturbed Jewish graves. The country's leading banker, he fell scorn to a bank stock scandal in 1993, and went to prison

Gershon Agron, a major figure in modern Israeli history, started the English-language '*Palestine Post*', and became the Mayor of Jerusalem. The ultra-orthodox put the '*Pulsa de Nura*' curse on him for opening a public pool where men and women could swim together. Within a year, in 1959, he

died of pneumonia after surgery for liver ailments at age 65. 'The Pusa de Nura' is rarely imposed because of its gravity, and because of a peculiar effect; it can boomerang. Indeed, in the ultra-orthodox neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, a story circulates that the 'Pusa de Nura' was called down on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. But the procedure went awry, and the son of one of the Rabbi's died soon thereafter.

26th March, 1995. Jerusalem. 'THE SEATTLE TIMES' Via COUD-I.

KILLER CLAIMS HE WAS 'Demon-Directed'



An inmate at the Orient Correctional Institution, Ohio, USA, claimed that a Demon forced him to strangle a fellow prisoner. He had his bid for his case to be reconsidered refused in a unanimous ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court. Kavin L. Peebles, serving a life-sentence, was aged 27, when he used a laundry bag drawstring to strangle Ronald McCaman, 43, in the prison's college office.

Peebles was already serving a seven-to-25-year sentence for attempted murder.

In Peebles trial, in Pickaway County Commons Plea Court, a psychologist testified that Peebles told him he awoke the day of the murder 'and this thing tells me that this is a good day, everything's going to be just great, put on a happy face, and we're going to kill McCaman at 8 o'clock.'

7th December, 1995. Ohio, USA. 'THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH' Via COUD-I.

*And meanwhile, six convicts are suing jail-chiefs in Massachusetts, USA, because they have been refused the facilities they required to worship The Devil and other Pagan Gods....

22nd June, 1995. Massachusetts, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

VEXED BY HEXES

Sorcery in and around Miami, USA, has become so rampant that officials have created a 'Voodoo Squad' to clean up dead chickens, goats, and other Voodoo items each morning. Many of the criminal elements on trial at Dade County are Cuban and Haitian natives who turn to gods for a little help with their legal troubles. 'Sometimes we find one chicken. Sometimes we find three or four,' Raul Guasp,

a courthouse maintenance man told local reporters. 'It all depends who is on trial.'

'The Voodoo Squad' canvasses the courthouse grounds early each day to pick up dead animals, charms and other objects offered as sacrifices to the gods by relatives of the defendants, the local newspaper said.

The problem has become so big that picking up Voodoo items is on a printed checklist that janitors at the Metro Justice Building carry in their pockets.

Animal sacrifices are common in some neighbourhoods of Miami, where the new Caribbean immigrants ask the gods for help in all sorts of everyday problems and skirmishes. Hexes regularly make their way inside the courthouse, too. Relatives of defendants sometimes sneak into an empty courtroom and sprinkle 'Voodoo Powder' on the judge's or lawyer's chairs.

Courthouse officials recall how someone once released a white pigeon inside a courtroom. And in another case, two dead lizards - their mouths shut with twine - were found during a break in a cocaine trial, according to one story.

Other items commonly found on the courthouse premises include; corn kernels, which are used to speed up a trial date, eggs, which make a case collapse, cakes, which sweeten the judge's attitude towards the defendant, and black pepper, to keep someone jailed.

10th April, 1995. Miami, USA. 'ST. LOUIS POST & DISPATCH' Via COUD-I.

CHILDREN SNATCHED BY WITCHES



Relatives of 11 children killed in a bus crash refused to allow them to be buried because they believed that Witches had abducted them after bringing them back to life.

'They identified the bodies three times as their children, but now they say the bodies are not those of three children,' said Mandla Mathe, a community leader from Natal.

Drunken youths armed with axes later chopped up coffins and stabbed corpses, in a bid to prevent the funeral from taking place. Police officers fired in the air to scatter the gang, and the ceremony eventually took place.

19th November, 1995. Bhongweni, KwaZulu, Natal. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

IN THE LIGHT OF A NEW FIRE

PART ONE

by Steve Griffiths

In 1952, a stone tomb was discovered in Palenque, Central America. No one could have suspected at the time, that this step pyramid would in later years tell of the possible destruction of our civilization. The secrets of the sacred traditions, the advanced form of mathematics, Astronomical revelations and prophecies of possible catastrophes, will finally be revealed as scholars try to piece together the many gaps in Central American chronology. New ideas have been put forward to attempt to break the codes and reveal the hidden prophecies of the most mysterious of civilizations, The Maya, the Aztecs and the Incas. As more and more information floods in, archaeologists have to rethink where the people of the new world first originated. Many have now come to terms with the idea that a single landmass once held together the civilizations of central America, Africa and Egypt. A land first written about over 5,000 years ago and has been the subject of as many books since. Atlantis is slowly rising to the surface as the Earths time-bomb quickly ticks away. The four horsemen of the apocalypse saddle up and prepare their final journey into the darkness of our antiquity. Will the Mayan Codices show some missing links and provide us with reason and understanding of our importance on this planet. Perhaps all the answers will reveal themselves on the day of judgment as one final cosmic joke. Until then we have to play out the final scene of the greatest show on earth...feel privileged for you hold in your hand front seat tickets...

ATLANTIS, THE CRADLE OF THE GODS.

Of all the civilizations of the New world, the Maya were undoubtedly the most mysterious because unlike the Aztecs and the Incas, they were cut off from the rest of the world choosing to live their lives in the secluded rainforests which other civilizations found conditions too hard to live with. The Maya occupied the territory between the isthmus of Tehuantepec and Nicaragua with monuments and sacred temples stretching from the peninsula of Yucatan, the whole of Guatemala to the republic of San Salvador. It is still, and may well remain a complete mystery as to why their race suddenly collapsed in the 9th century BC. It was the Spanish Conquistadors who first landed on the coast of Mexico and discovered a civilization known as the Aztecs.

The conquest really began on the 4th of March 1519, when Hernan Cortes took the town of Tabasco, on the coast of Mexico, and formed a new Spanish Colony called Vera Cruz. The Aztecs believed their invaders to be the God Quetzalcoatl, meaning feathered serpent, whose return from the east had been foretold. Horrified by the Aztec's sacrificial rituals, Cortes decided to Christianize the land and put an end to the atrocities. The Spaniards moved inland and found the city of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, ruled by Motecuhzoma. Cortes was amazed to find large towns and cities with markets, palaces and step pyramids. Tenochtitlan was completely surrounded by water and had canals and aqueducts, even barber shops, parks and zoos.

This was one of the biggest cities ever with a population of over 300,000 people. The farmers grew crops unknown to the Spanish invaders and kept livestock, mainly turkeys and dogs. Amidst all this civilization they appeared not to have invented the wheel, or at least they had found no use for it, (archaeologists later discovered children's wheeled toys to prove this point). Although the Spanish were treated with hospitality by the ruler of the city, this did not stop the invaders from arresting Motecuhzoma and butchering the people of Tenochtitlan. Greed had triumphed over compassion and the city was stripped of all its gold as Cortes ordered the destruction of every evil influence, burning any large objects and idols, changing their language and ridding them of any written records of their past. In 1520, Cortes was driven from the city as the Aztecs bravely fought back, but unfortunately, the Spanish had brought a new evil with them in the form of smallpox which killed over half of the population. The following year Cortes returned with the easier task of completing his conquest.

There were some people who did their best to record the almost lost native traditions, one was the Franciscan friar, Bernardino de Sahagun. He managed to learn the native tongue, Nahuatl, and asked the locals to narrate the legends, folklore, and recent history before the conquest, which he recorded into 12 volumes. He discovered that prior to the Aztecs there was another race known as the Toltecs, meaning artist or builder. Ruling a Capital in the valley of Mexico around A.D. 850 known as Tollan, they were led by Quetzalcoatl, (feathered serpent).

The Mayan hieroglyphic system of writing still remains largely incomprehensible. One of the first to attempt the complicated task of deciphering it was Bishop Landa in 1575. Whilst trying to establish the Mayan alphabet, Landa was deliberately misled by the natives because of his unpopularity. It wasn't until 1876 that a French student named Leon de Rosny made a more thorough attempt at interpretation of the complex signs.

Although the Maya recorded their creation myth as 3114 BC, it is believed that the Olmecs, the Mother Culture of Central America, could have been around for at least 15,000 years. Archaeologists now believe that this race was responsible for most of the monuments, temples and pyramids scattered throughout the country. Carbon dating has proved that they had also invented the bar and dot system of counting and the calendar system. The Olmecs were responsible for the many head sculptures made from basalt, a hard volcanic stone, with the curious Negroid looking features of civilizations more likely to be found in Africa. These head sculptures can now be seen in La Venta park on the outskirts of Villahermosa, the capital of Tabasco. They were moved from their original home on the island of La Venta for protection when large oil-fields were discovered during the excavations. The Olmecs, or "Rubber people", with their round faces and thick lips, seem to suggest that at some point in history they were familiar with the people of far off continents.



Once again this migration of the people of the New World points towards the existence of a base on which all civilization diffused. Is it mere coincidence that European, African and American cultures all have myths of the great deluge. The Aztec high priests wrote of the migration which took the survivors of the fifth sun from Aztlan, through the Valley of Mexico and eventually settling in Tenochtitlan. Could Aztlan, from which the word Aztec originated, also derive from Atlantis?

This is only one example of many across the world in which survivors of a land catastrophe repopulate to escape floods or earthquakes. The original inhabitants of the Canary islands were said to be the survivors of a flood. The people there today believe the islands to be only the mountain peaks of a land known as Atalaya. Early traditions of the Basques of Northern Spain record an island in the ocean called Atlantica, while the Berbers of North Africa tell of a kingdom called Attala. References even spread as far as North America, the Indians of Lake Michigan refer to an island in the sea called Azatlan. The Hindu's recorded their island disaster in the Vishnu Purana and the Mahabharata as Atala, "The White Island". The similarity that occurs with these names can not be passed off as coincidental. At some point in history these cultures must have had contact with each other.

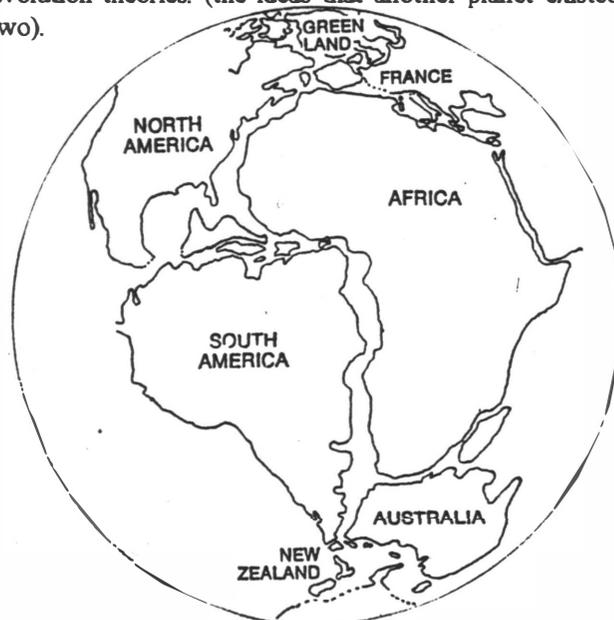
Atlantis was brought to the surface in Plato's Timaeus and Critias, where Critias tells to Socrates a tale told to him by Solon, an Athenian statesman, after he had visited Egypt. Although it has been thought of as a story made up by the Greek philosopher, the characters are real people who lived in the fourth century BC, around the time Plato wrote the two documents. Critias tells that while Solon was visiting Sais, an Egyptian city, a group of priests told him the story of Atlantis, an empire based on a continent west of the Pillars of Hercules (now known as the Strait of Gibraltar) which was larger than Libya and Asia put together. Plato went on to say, Atlantis was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean. This statement suggests that the Atlanteans were familiar with the continents on both sides of the Atlantic thousands of years before Columbus made his historic voyage. According to Solon, the Egyptians had written records of a great Athenian empire 9,000 years earlier, (that would be about 9,600 BC). The Atlanteans

ruled over other continents and conquered North Africa and Egypt and Southern Europe. When they reached the Greek borders, they were defeated by the Athenians. Platos account tells,

"At a later time there were earthquakes and floods of extraordinary violence, and in a single dreadful day and night all your fighting men were swallowed up by the earth, and the island of Atlantis was similarly swallowed up by the sea and vanished; this is why the sea in that area is to this day impassable to navigation, which is hindered by mud just below the surface, the remains of the sunken island".

It is possible (and completely hypothetical), that after the sinking of Atlantis, the people of the lands already conquered by the Atlantans, may have travelled through Europe to Siberia and crossed over to Alaska via the Bering Strait. Perhaps there was even a land bridge that connected the two countries together, a land bridge that today no longer exists. This would also account for the evidence of African and European Animal remains found in abundance throughout the Americas. Animals which are not indigenous to America have often woven their way into the architecture and mythology of the Amerinds, from lions, tigers, camels and mostly Elephant representations which can be seen in structures at Yucatan and Palenque.

Most geologists deny the existence of a large landmass because it doesn't fit in with Wegener's theory of continental drift. We remember from our school days that if you cut out the continents on a map and place them next to each other, they all fit together like a jig-saw puzzle.(the variations in the coastal areas are caused by the difference in the water levels during the melting of the Ice-age). This one super-continent was known as Pangaea.(the Permian period around 280 million years ago). The east coast of Brazil fit nicely alongside the west coast of Africa, as does the east coast of Africa and west coast of Arabia and the east coast of Greenland with the west coast of Norway. We know of continental drift because the continents are still slowly moving today. Greenland is said to be moving on a westward course of over 50 feet a year. Now we have one gigantic landmass with small gaps between the two continents. The gaps could have been caused by the sinking of parts of the land as the continents ripped themselves apart. Around about the beginning of the Mesozoic period (220 million years ago), two main continents appeared. The northern continent was known as Laurasia and consisted of North America, Europe and Asia, while the southern side known as Gondwanaland consisted of South America, Africa, India, the Antarctic and Australia. With the belief that man has only been around for 1,000,000 years (although some have suggested that Australopithecus has been around for at least 4,000,000 years) the chances are that the people of the continents had yet to evolve. Unless a super race from some far off planet could have colonised the earth millions of years before man's first appearance then the world will have to carry on with the speculations of the orthodox evolution theories. (the ideas that another planet existed within our own solar system will be dealt with in part two).



Most of the world's mythology begins with stories of the great deluge, in countries as far apart as Africa and America. The important element is that the world was destroyed and created again with a new civilisation that will carry the old traditions into the new age. If there was a central point for all the people of the world, then what better place to start than somewhere within the Atlantic ocean. This would enable the population of Atlantis to migrate from both sides taking their culture to the Americas and across to the Countries of Africa. This would

explain why the method of pyramid building was carried out in Egypt and the countries of the new world. Geologists continue to tell us how it has been proved beyond doubt that no land mass ever existed within the Atlantic, but fail to explain why large areas of the Sargasso sea are swamped in formations of seaweed, why eels choose this same place to breed after travelling in large shoals on a journey that takes over four months, or why Norwegian lemmings gather in hordes and head westwards into the sea only to drown from exhaustion. Could there be some inherent behavioural pattern that takes them to a land no longer in existence?

Diffusionists believe that all civilizations stem from one source, possibly a continent such as Atlantis, but apart from speculation, Atlantis has never been properly pin-pointed. (many Atlantologists do not agree with the theory that the lost continent lies somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean). Even the American traveller John Lloyd Stephens, the first to uncover the Mayan civilizations of the Honduran jungles, could not believe the local inhabitants could have built the many structures scattered around the areas of Central America. If there is a secret knowledge to be discovered where would could we begin to search for it. An American clairvoyant, Edgar Cayce predicted that before the end of the millennium these secrets will reveal themselves to us. The Sleeping prophet, as he was known because his visions of the future came to him through his dreams, told of a secret chamber within the great pyramid of Giza which would shed some light on the mysteries of Atlantis. Although he died in 1945, towards the end of the 1950's an old world archaeologist named Dr. J.O. Kinnamann discovered a secret room in this pyramid which contained amongst many things Manuscripts with dates relating to the building of the pyramids and the purpose for which they were built. Before his death on September 7th 1961, Dr. Kinnamann made a statement relating to this incident. He told how the great pyramid was known as The house of light and had been erected over 26,000 years ago by an Atlantian race. They were constructed not as a tomb but as a temple for esoteric initiation ceremonies and a storehouse for knowledge in mathematics, physics and astronomy. This incident might have been forgotten had a German engineer, Rudolf Gantenbrink not discovered a storage chamber within the pyramid in 1993. It was within the Queen's chamber of the pyramid of Cheops that an eight metre long shaft at an angle of 45 degrees was investigated by a small robot named Upuart II and seemed to be concealing a large limestone slab with two copper handles. Further investigation led to the belief that organic material may be hidden away behind this door. Unfortunately further investigation for some reason has been prevented. At a recent meeting Graham Hancock, who has been investigating these matters for his latest book, *Fingerprints of the Gods*, (part two) informed me that Rudolf Gantenbrink has now been thrown out of the country.

Today, a lot of the Central and south American areas still remain undiscovered. Could it be possible that the tribes who live here could hold the answers to many secrets lost to us through Spanish ignorance? It could be possible that after a great catastrophe, possibly a flood, the Atlanteans migrated, splitting up and colonizing in various countries as far apart as Africa and America, taking with them all their culture and Knowledge. One story suggests that a civilization of survivors could still be living today deep in the unexplored regions of South America.

In 1920, in true Indiana Jones style, Percy Harrison Fawcett, a British military surveyor turned Adventurer, set off to explore the hidden cities of Brazil. Into his possession came a manuscript from a Portuguese adventurer named Joao de Silva Guimaraes who had mapped one of his expeditions that took place in 1743. The map clearly showed a lost city completely surrounded by a large wall deep in the region of the Mato Grosso. In 1925 he set off with his son, Jack and friend Raleigh Rimmel, to try and locate this secluded city. Before he left, he left a message to the world:-

" Whether we succeed in penetrating the jungle and come out alive, or whether we leave our bones there, of this I am certain, the key to the mystery of ancient South America, and perhaps of the whole of prehistory can be found if we are able to locate these old cities, and perhaps open them up to science".

While the world waited with baited breath, a message was received from the party at Dead horse camp in the Xingu Basin.(this was the spot where, on a previous expedition his horse had died forcing Fawcett to turn back). He reported that they had discovered a ruined city on the banks of a large lake. That was the last ever to be heard of them. People speculated as to whether they had found the city and decided to live out the rest of their lives in this Utopia. Others believed they had been captured and imprisoned or killed by Indians. The only possible clue to their disappearance came ten years later through a medium, Geraldine Cummins, who claimed to have communicated with Fawcett on four occasions. She said that he was not dead but in a drug induced state which enabled him to travel back in time to the roots of civilization, where he witnessed the building of the great pyramids of South America and the destruction of Atlantis. He told her how they had mastered a form of

electricity which enabled them to move large stones to build their great cities. After the fourth contact, the medium did not communicate with him for over 13 years, when in 1948 he told her he had died. Rumour has it that an expedition will soon take place to try to discover this city and hopefully determine whether Fawcett and his companions ever reached their destination. Using the latest DNA technology, they can find out if any of the inhabitants of the area have strands of Fawcett's own DNA in their genetic make up.

We may never know what had become of this brave explorer until someone does decide to explore the areas and retrace his steps. Maybe the land he talked about contained the Book of Gold, which was taken to a hidden temple to escape the Spanish bonfires. This book is said to hold all the secrets of the history of the Maya. Maybe the book's custodians may reveal its location when they feel that the time has come for mankind to learn the truth about the history of our world.

Every so often, some of this esoteric information slips through the Amerinds net and provides us with important clues to solving the mysteries of the New World. Even Columbus came across many ancient maps which clearly depicted land areas within the Atlantic ocean. One of these maps, the Bencicasa map, (1482), shows, amongst other unknown Islands, a land area called Antillia. This may have encouraged him to use this Island as a possible stepping stone across the Atlantic. It is highly unlikely that Columbus ever found this landmass in the fifteenth century, but someone must have come across this information, whether it was by sailing the Atlantic or from some custodian of the secret knowledge. What is coincidental is, that once again we have stumbled upon more references to Atlantis or Aztlan, the missing link to our understanding of the civilizations of the world. Following in the footsteps of Ignatius Donnelly, the father of Atlantology, came a Scottish mythologist named Lewis Spence. He put forward the theory that Antillia may have been a separate land mass which was once part of Atlantis. He believed that after a considerable period of time the land split in two with Antillia spreading westwards. Atlantis eventually broke up or sunk and some of the inhabitants sailed to Europe, while others made their way to Antillia. After the eventual destruction of Antillia, they then moved towards America where they rebuilt their civilization.

This would account for the knowledge that the Amerinds and the Egyptians had of advanced mathematics which pre-dates ours by thousands of years. We know that Archimedes was the first person to correctly calculate pi at 3.14 back in the third century, but if you take the height of the Great pyramid at Giza, (an original height of 481.3949 feet) and multiply it by 2π it gives us an accurate reading of the perimeter which is 3023.1599 feet. The same method applies to pyramids of the New World. The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan in Mexico, is 233.5 feet, but this time we have to multiply it by 4π . This now gives us a reading of 2932.76 feet, only half of an inch difference to the perimeter reading of 2932.8 feet. We also know that the natives worked with a complex calendrical system equal to ours. The Maya somehow managed to calculate the exact length of a solar year. By their records the solar year was 365.2420, two ten-thousandths of a difference compared to our Gregorian calendar of 365.2422 days. They also determined that the Sun, Moon, and Venus appear in the same alignment only once every 104 years. They also worked out that Venus rises in exactly the same place in the sky every 584 days. How did they manage to make these calculations without the aid of a strong telescope? Their legends tell of strangers from the star world bringing to them gifts and knowledge. Could their teacher have been Viracocha, The master of science and magic, so prominent in South American Mythology? This white bearded man whose name derives from, Foam of the sea, was believed to be of large stature by most of the peoples of the Andean region. He was also known as a scientist, an architect of skills, a sculptor and an engineer. He was known to heal the sick by just touching them and restore sight to the blind. He brought order to a civilization of savages and built houses and caves for them to live in. According to South American mythology...

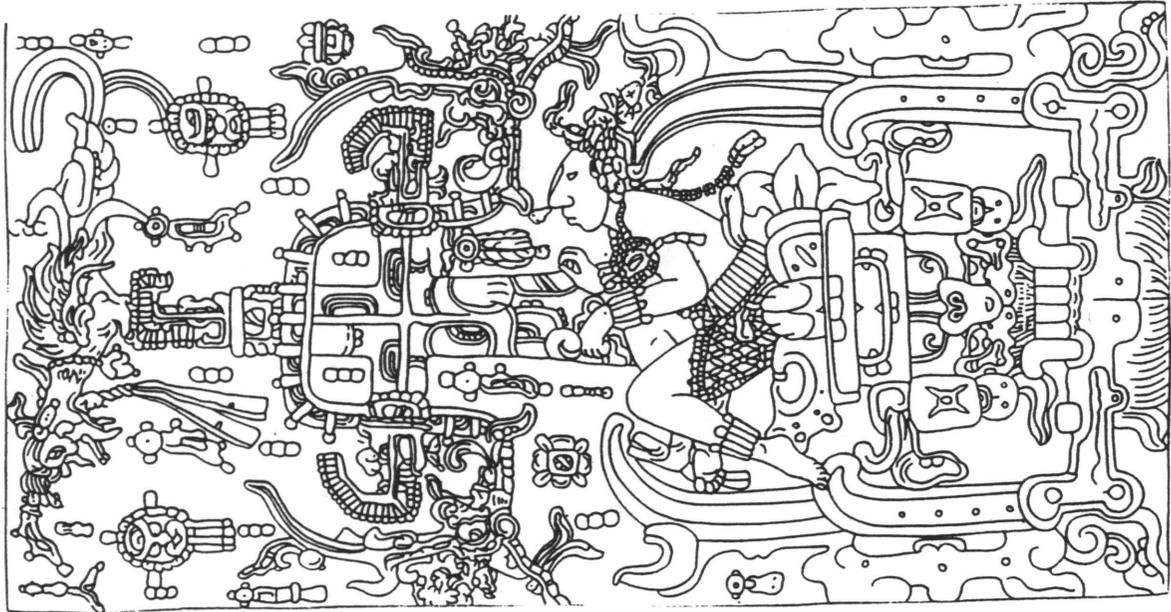
Working great miracles by his words, he came to the district of Canas and there, near a village called Cacha...the people rose up against him and threatened to stone him. They saw him sink to his knees and raise his hand to heaven as if beseeching aid in the peril which beset him. The Indians declare that thereupon they saw fire in the sky which seemed all around them. Full of fear, they approached him whom they had intended to kill and besought him to forgive them...Presently they saw that the fire was extinguished at his command, though stones were consumed by fire in such wise that large blocks could be lifted by hand as if they were cork. They narrate further that, leaving the place where this occurred, he came to the coast and there, holding his mantle, he went forth amidst the waves and was seen no more. And as he went they gave him the name, Viracocha, which means, 'foam of the Sea'.

It is believed that the natives accepted the Spanish because they thought Viracocha, a white god who had travelled across the sea had returned to them as foretold. This fair skinned god turns up in mythologies also in

central America and as far up as Mexico. The Aztecs knew him as Quetzalcoatl, and the Mayas as Kukulcan. There is no doubt that the three different names refer to the one God, despite the fact that the Mexicans relate him to the god of the sun, where as the Maya saw him as a god of thunder and rain. This was accounted for by the difference in the Hot climates of Mexico to those of the Mayan Tropical Rainforests.

Eric Von Danikan was one of the first to recognise the important messages left by the ancient Central Americans, and to question why the Spanish Conquistadors were so reluctant to share the Mayan knowledge with us. The foreign invaders completely wiped out a cultural religion by burning all written documents and codices which told of advanced achievements beyond their understanding.

It began with the discovery of the Palenque Tomb By Professor Alberto Ruz Lhullier, a Mexican archaeologist. In a step pyramid known as the Temple of the Inscriptions he discovered a red stone sarcophagus displaying a representation of the sun lord, Pacal on its lid, (some scholars have suggested the figure to be Kukulcan, and even the goddess Chalchiuhtlicue [the one with the jade skirt]). As Von Danikan pointed out in his book "Chariots of the Gods", the figure appears to be seated in a sort of space vehicles cockpit, with his body bent forward leaning across to the controls, while his foot is resting on a pedal. The vehicle is emitting fire from the rear, very similar to a rocket. The clothing on the man could be described as modern, with a roll-neck pullover, sleeves turned back at the cuffs, a broad belt and tight sock like garments over mesh patterned trousers. There is always two sides to every coin when dealing with a culture we know very little about. Von Daniken, in his book, makes no mention of the contents of the tomb and merely states that the figure was a spaceman. Perhaps if he had not been so evasive with the facts he could have been taken more seriously by experts in this field. In this case, they believe the figure to be King Pacal who died in 683 AD. The so called "rocket" is a representation of a cross shaped sacred maize tree, the symbol of rebirth, where the King is about to pluck a fruit from the tree.

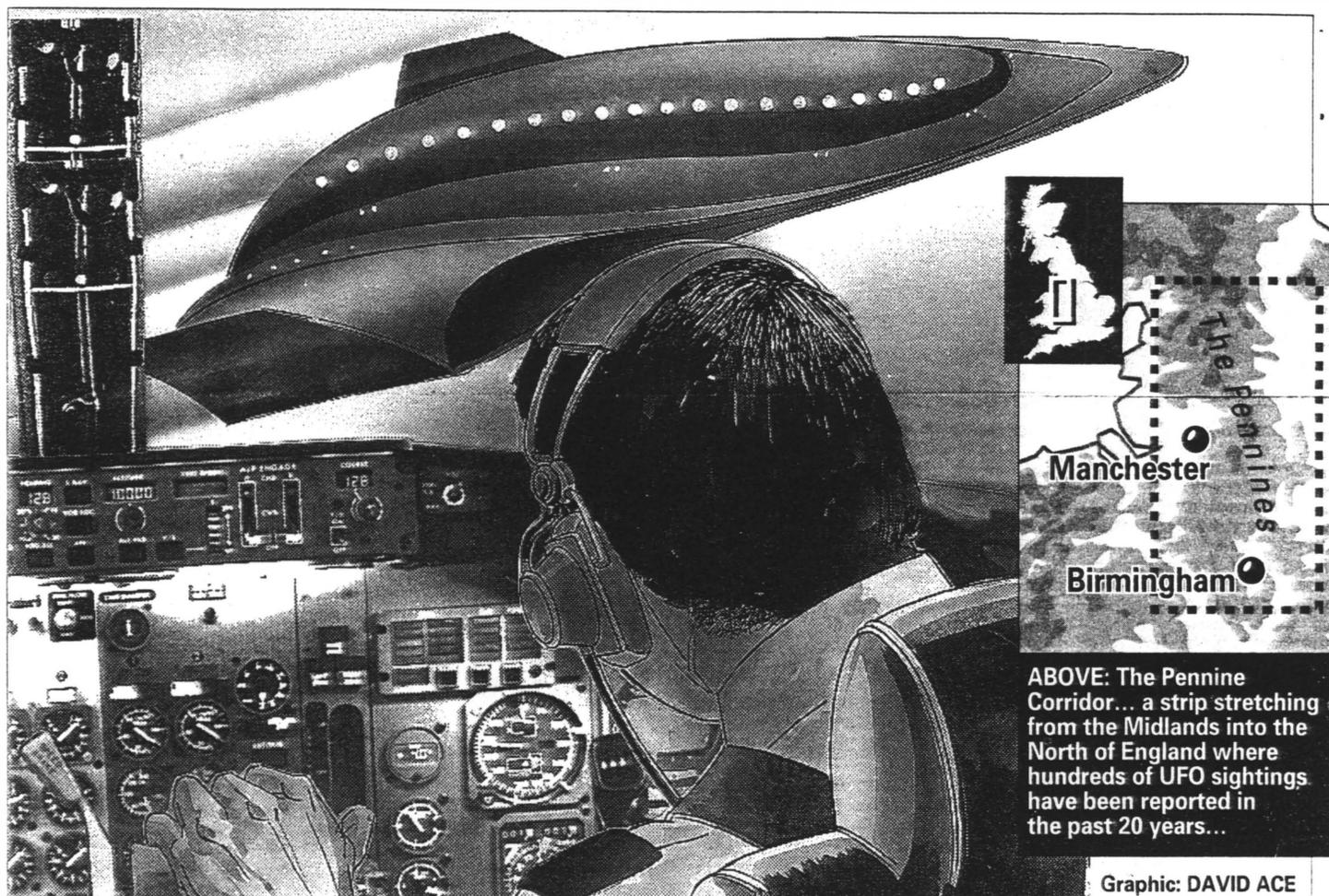


If you were not impressed with Von Daniken's ideas about the lid of Palenque depicting a cosmonaut, then the Olmec sculpture named, "The man in a serpent" might make you less sceptical. This carving was found on the site of La Venta, and appears to be of an Olmec sitting in the belly of a serpent. A closer examination reveals that he is seated in some type of vehicle, with his feet reaching out for the pedals and his left hand releasing a lever, while his right hand is pushing an object similar to the controls of a speed boat. The man appears to be wearing a head dress which resembles a control pad or monitor with an arm that hangs down to the mouth like a microphone. With the whole figure enveloped in the form of a serpent, it is believed that the representation is that of Quetzalcoatl, somehow witnessed by the Olmecs flying around in this 'Feathered Serpent'. This in turn put the worship of the god back to around 15,000 BC, when many of the Olmec sculptures had been carbon dated. Both these theories have now been challenged by Maurice Cotterall and Adrian Gilbert, in their new book, The Mayan Prophecies. Their theories on the end of the fifth sun, the end of an age as predicted by the civilizations of Central and south America, will be dealt with in part two.

KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES!!!

UFO UPDATE

IN THE PATH OF "THE SILENT VULCAN"



ABOVE: The Pennine Corridor... a strip stretching from the Midlands into the North of England where hundreds of UFO sightings have been reported in the past 20 years...

Graphic: DAVID ACE

On January 6th, 1995, a British Airways Boeing 737 (BA Flight 5061), was approaching Manchester Airport on a routine flight from Milan. As the plane was preparing to land, flying at 4,000ft, Captain Roger Wills and First Officer Mark Stuart were astounded to see a silent Unidentified Flying Object illuminated with white, Christmas Tree-type lights flashing past them. Travelling at high speed from the opposite direction, the wedge-shaped object came shudderingly close to colliding with the plane. So close in fact, that the First Officer instinctively ducked as it went by.

They immediately radioed air traffic controllers at Manchester and filed a formal air miss report after landing. Neither pilot had a clue as to the identity of the 'aircraft' they had encountered, although they say there might have been a single black stripe down one side.

Over a year down the line, the findings of the official investigation into the matter have finally been made public and they make interesting reading. The report, compiled by the Joint Air Miss Group, states the following:

'There is no doubt that the pilots both saw an object. Unfortunately, the nature and identity of this object remain unknown. Whatever it was, the object made no attempt to deviate from its course and no sound was heard or wake (wind turbulence) felt. The First Officer feels certain that what he saw was a solid object - not a bird, balloon, or a kite. The Captain was convinced that the object was lit, although he could not determine a definite pattern, he described it as having a number of small, white lights, rather like a Christmas Tree.'

In conclusion, it remained open minded as to the object's identity, but added cautiously; *'To speculate about Extra-Terrestrial activity, fascinating though it may be, is not within the Group's remit and must be left to those whose interest lies in that field.'*

Brief details were also given of a conversation between the Boeing and the air traffic controllers;

Plane: 'We just had something go down the right-hand side just above us very fast.'

Manchester: 'Well, there's nothing seen on the radar. Was it...er...an aircraft?'

Plane: 'Well, it had lights. It went down the starboard side very quick.'

Manchester: 'And above you?'

Plane: '...Er, just slightly above us, yeah.'

Manchester: 'Keep an eye out for something, er, I can't see anything at all at the moment so, er, must have, er, been very fast or gone down very quickly after it passed you I think.'

Plane: 'Ok. Well, there you go!!!'

Members of BUFORA were, according to newspaper reports (and we all know just how reliable and accurate those can be), more forthright in their views and stated that they strongly suspected that the mysterious craft was the 'Silent Vulcan' - a triangular-shaped craft that has apparently been cruising northern skies for 20 years.

Philip Mantle, the Director Of Investigations for BUFORA, was quoted saying that the Air Miss Group's remarkably open-minded report represented a milestone in official recognition of the phenomenon of UFOs.

'We have always contended that there is something out there which is beyond accepted science and now this being reflected in the corridors of officialdom.'

He also added that 'The Silent Vulcan' (so-named because it reported to be shaped like the old British Vulcan Bomber) has been seen all along 'The Pennine Corridor', from the Midlands up through Derbyshire and into Yorkshire. There was reported surge of sightings of similar-shaped objects in the 1970's and then again in the late 1980's. 'The Silent Vulcan' widened its horizons in 1989 and 1990, with a spate of reports in Belgium. (See last issue).

'The latest report, Mr Mantle said, is the first officially recognised sighting of the Silent Vulcan along the Pennines. British Airways are to be complimented for treating this incident seriously.'

But, as is so often the case when pilots (or any other responsible person for that matter) come forward with stories of encounters with the unknown, there is a hefty price to pay...Namely, your credibility and reputation.

Both Captain Wills of Normanton, West Yorkshire, and First Officer Stuart, from Congleton, Cheshire, are said to have been constantly ribbed by colleagues.

'I think they're both fed up with hearing about it, although they're glad the CAA took them seriously,' one said. 'Both are level-headed guys but they have had their legs pulled unmercifully over this business'.

With this attitude prevailing, we wonder how many other sightings of unusual phenomena go unreported?

2nd February, 1996. Manchester Airport, England. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST'/'DAILY MAIL'

Blazing Plane Riddle Of North Yorkshire

In November, 1995, various Yorkshire newspapers reported that an unidentified 'aircraft' had experienced difficulties in the skies over that county and was eventually forced to ditch somewhere on the Moors.

The combined forces of an RAF Mountain Rescue helicopter, the local police force and the local fire brigade headed out to the area of the reported crash, but were unable to find any trace of aircraft debris despite an extensive ground search of the Appleton Roebuck area of York. Subsequent enquiries have revealed that the authorities had been first alerted by a 999 call, and that a male witness to the enforced landing, had been interviewed by the police. More details of the mysterious 'crash' came to light when our investigator, Jonathan Dillon, contacted 'Quest International' 'ENCOUNTERS Magazine. BUFORA member John D. Inman and 'UFO Magazine's Mark Birdsall. It is now rumoured that two children were the original witnesses. They were out playing near 'Samuel Smith's Brewery' in Tadcaster, when they both viewed a fireball plummet from the sky and hit the ground quite close to the brewery.

A few moments later, a military convoy trundled up the road and immediately sealed off the area to the general public.

The two children were said to have been apprehended by the soldiers and were taken away and questioned. Mark Birdsall told Mr. Dillon that 'Quest International' had investigators in the area as soon as news of the incident broke, but were unable to

validate these claims. Marcus Walker of the normally extremely gullible 'ENCOUNTERS', was for once very sceptical about the usage of Mountain Rescue helicopters being used in the search, seeing as how the terrain in that area isn't particularly rugged.

However, whether the object/'fireball in question was a conventional aircraft in difficulty, a meteor (which is very likely) or a UFO, the fact remains that something strange was going on during the dark days of late November...More details as we get them.

ANOTHER STRANGE HARVEST

Jonathan Dillon also reports that an unnamed man and wife believe they have stumbled upon a case of animal mutilation, close to Edinburgh Airport.

The couple found the mangled cadaver of a dead sheep last August (1995), around about the time of the infamous Fylingdales crashed UFO/ Alien Occupants/animal mutilation wave (see DON # 4 -7).

The body of the sheep was lying on its side and seemed to have been cut with an accurate medical instrument, as opposed to an attack by a wild predator. A small quantity of blood lay in a pool next to the carcass, the right ear had been cored out of the skull, the right eye was also absent, and a small, unidentified piece of material was detected close to the animal.

The dead creature was found 500 yards from the bustling A8 dual carriageway on the approach to the airport. At the time of going to press, the sheep is undergoing expert examination. Video footage and still photographs are said to be due for release soon.

I doubt if they'll ever make the best-seller's list, though!!!

UFO CRASHES IN HEBRIDES AND SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS?

Those fiendishly clever Aliens who traverse the heavens in incredibly advanced spaceships, seem to be dropping from the skies of late, like flies in the dead heart of Winter. We've already had Roswell, Fylingdales, and a hundred other similar incidents...Now it's Scotland's turn.

The combined forces of U.S. Space Command, NASA and the Royal Navy failed to find any trace of a huge fireball said to have crashed in the Hebridean island of Jura. (This case has disturbing parallels with the aforementioned incident in North Yorkshire).

Crofter John McDonald heard what he thought was an approaching aircraft and he ran outside to see.

He told the press: *'I have never seen anything quite like it before in my life. It was about half the size of the Moon, a huge brilliant white light streaking across the sky with a shimmering tail. Then it suddenly vanished. I'm pretty sure it was a meteorite.'*

The crofter called the police, the information was relayed to coastguards and within an hour, the available data on the mystery object was filling the information superhighway to the world's most advanced tracker stations.

A search mission by one of the Royal Navy's crack teams from Prestwick, also took to the skies and spotted burning hillside, which turned out to be nothing more than locals burning heather. However, the burning light in the sky story was confirmed by other people who witnessed the 'ball of fire' along the West Coast. One police source said that they also received calls from the little Argyle village of Belloch, a few miles south of Jura on the mainland. *'But nothing has been found, said one policeman. 'It's a bit of a mystery.'*

But that wasn't the end of the story...

According to newspaper reports, a whole catalogue of sightings of an object or objects seen flashing across the skies has been collated at the end of a month in which UFOs were seen in the Highlands on several occasions.

It appeared to culminate on the Tuesday (13th February) when a mysterious ball of fire was said to have plunged from the sky near a busy motorway.

One the exact same night as the Jura Incident, dozens of motorists jammed police switchboards to report sightings of a giant fireball which left a blazing trail along the horizon, before splitting in two and landing in fields. Police who scoured the area one mile west of Edinburgh Airport (itself the location of a UFO/jet interceptor case - see feature elsewhere in this issue), could not find a single trace of the mystery object. Even the timing of the 'fireball' appeared to coincide with the Jura Incident. Strathclyde police said their reports were timed from 18:24. There were also reports of a comet-like object from Glasgow to Elgin - again around the same time. The likeliest explanation, according to the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh, was that it was a meteorite, but the CAA said nothing had been picked up on radar. Ron Halliday, of the Scottish Earth Mysteries Research Group thought otherwise; *'This could have been something from a different dimension. How else can you explain why this never showed up on radar? And how did it disappear without trace?'*

15th February, 1996. Island of Jura/Edinburgh, Scotland. "SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS"/"SCOTTISH DAILY MAIL"

THE HARPERRIGG RESERVOIR ABDUCTION

Viewers in Scotland, were treated last November 19th, to a TV programme entitled 'CRACKING STORIES; CLOSE ENCOUNTERS'.

Unfortunately, we poor sassenachs will have to make do with the following newspaper account of the prog (unless some kindly soul reading this happens to have a video recording of it, and is willing to send me a copy, hint hint). Garry Wood, 32, an ambulance mechanic from Oxgangs, Edinburgh, has suffered flashbacks, panic attacks and sleepless nights ever since his alleged abduction on August 18th, 1992.

He was with a friend Colin Wright, intent on driving from his home to deliver a TV satellite dish to a friend. The journey to the West Lothian village of Tarbrax, should have taken only 30 minutes.

They arrived two hours later, ashen-faced and shaking. Both told uncannily similar versions of an encounter with a UFO crewed by two 'skeletal Aliens' with large heads. They said they turned a corner near Harperrigg Reservoir to be confronted by a spaceship hovering 25ft above the ground. Mr Wood recalls:

'I put my foot down and accelerated. I was thinking "these sort of things are not supposed to exist". As we were going underneath it, a shimmering curtain fell and we went into total blackness. I couldn't see anything.'

Catriona Philip, the friend who had been waiting for the TV dish, said; *'Garry had phoned at 10pm to say he and Colin were coming over. When they didn't arrive, I went to bed.'*

It was well after midnight when they knocked loudly at my door. Both appeared shocked and were chattering excitedly about Aliens. They drew identical diagrams of the craft and the little men they had seen.'

Both are adamant that they didn't stop during the journey.

To discover what happened during the 'lost 90 minutes', Mr Wood, who has been the worst affected of the two, agreed to regressive hypnotherapy.

He described to Glasgow-based psychiatrist Dr Prem Misra, the Aliens he encountered on that fateful night.

While under hypnosis, he talked about 'a wee man' coming up to him as he lay on a stretcher or platform. He recalls two Aliens, *'like thin, translucent, fragile-looking skeletal beings. They seemed to look right into my life. I didn't think these things existed but whatever they are, they have a life like me and you. They are here and I know more are coming.'*

Dr Misra has no doubts that Mr Wood genuinely believes he had a close encounter.

Perennial sceptic Stuart Campbell however, is predictably unconvinced. (This is no surprise coming from the man who single-handedly sought to dismiss every account of strange phenomena, from Bob Taylor's encounter with a spherical object in Livingstone Forest, to identifying 'Nessie' as being nothing more than the misperception of the perfectly ordinary). Although he has not fully investigated the case (Now hey, when did Mr Campbell ever allow such a tiny, inconsequential factor as knowing nothing about a case, to have any bearing on his debunking ???) the redoubtable sceptic said;

'Most UFO sightings are mirages of astronomical objects or aircraft. You can generate a wave of sightings if you tell people you've seen a UFO.'

The programme also tells the story of Andy Swan, 27, a cable layer with Scottish Power who saw a 'Toblerone-shaped object', over Armadale, West Lothian. Police confirmed seeing an orange light at the same time.

Inspector John Mackinnon, who attended the July 1994 incident, said; *'We always take these sightings seriously. We have neither proved nor disproved any of these stories.'*

19th November, 1996. West Lothian, Scotland. "SCOTTISH SUNDAY EXPRESS".

The British Rail Flying Saucer

The following clipping appeared in 'THE DAILY MAIL' recently. Make of it what you will...

Back in the 1970's, British rail was staffed by scientific visionaries with dreams of the stars.

This is why the recent discovery by astronomers Marcy and Butler from San Francisco State University, hit the headlines. It is hard enough to find planets at all, let alone detect water on them.

From our viewpoint, Mars, Jupiter and Venus look like bright stars. We forget that they, and we, are almost touching the Sun by comparison to the distance to even our nearest neighbour among the true stars, Proxima Centauri.

If Proxima Centauri has astronomers, they would see our Sun together with its gnat-like swarm of planets as a single glowing entity. The only way we can tell if a star has planets, is by watching for slight wobbles in its position. Recent evidence shows that planets are probably common, and at least some of the conditions for life to start may be common too. But did we not know that already?

Is it not obvious from the mere fact that life has started here? Since life managed to get going on this ordinary little planet, orbiting an ordinary yellow dwarf star in an ordinary spiral galaxy, does that not prove that life must be a pretty ordinary phenomenon? Does not plain humility argue that we cannot be alone in the Universe, for we could hardly be that special? Actually, no.

For once we need not be humble. And the reason is intriguing. Just suppose that stars with stars really are fantastically rare. Suppose that, in a Universe with a billion billion stars, there really is only one star with a watery planet, bubbling with the right organic mix to generate DNA or some equivalent.

That ultra-unique star, that star in a billion billion, simply has to be our Sun.

Why? Because here we are talking about it. Since we exist, we have been on a planet capable of sustaining life. By itself therefore, the fact that life exists here, tells us nothing about how likely life is to exist elsewhere.

To estimate the likelihood, we have to exert ourselves and look elsewhere. Look for life itself, and listen in to all parts of the radio spectrum, of course, but so far that has yielded nothing. Meanwhile, we use indirect techniques to look for those signs and symptoms which might bear upon our estimates of the likelihood of life. Marcy and Butler's discovery is a small step in this direction.

Extra-terrestrial life has become one small step more probable, but there are many steps to go. My own belief is that there is life on other worlds but we shall probably never encounter it

This is where we need to be humble.

Einstein's Theory places an upper limit, the Speed Of Light, as the speed with which anything can travel. The number of Alien Solar Systems we could visit is very small because of this limit, and because each spaceship can go in only one direction at a time. Radio waves are more promising because they can propagate outwards in all directions at once.

Our civilisation has radio technology for about a century, and the balloon of radio waves racing outwards from our planet already embraces a number of star systems, including, in theory, the two planets reported by Marcy and Butler. But radio signals, radiating in all directions, inevitably thin out until they merge into the background hiss of the Universe. You can reduce this problem by beaming your signal in one direction. But then you are back to the problem of space travel. Your beam is so narrow, it does not hit many worlds.

There is the further, macabre suggestion that a civilisation capable of developing radio technology is soon afterwards capable of destroying its own planet.

What if islands of intelligent life are blinking into existence, around the Universe, then snuffing themselves out too quickly to establish contact?

Perhaps the real importance of Marcy and Butler's discoveries is that we shall now look up at Virgo and Ursa Major with new and wondering eyes, then look down and see ourselves more clearly and with a less petty preoccupation.

21st January, 1996. 'DAILY MAIL'

NOW EVEN 'ALIENS' ARE TAKING PITY ON THE TORIES

According to the 'ever-reliable' 'DAILY SLUR' former Tory councillor Terry Walters, 52, was abducted by 'beings from another planet' who then apparently, performed an operation on him that completely cured his bad back.

He had badly damaged his back when loading heavy materials into his car. He explained; 'The doctors were worried about it because it would not heal and I was losing feeling in my legs. Because I felt I had a strong psychic connection with Alien Beings. I asked them to heal me. I was lying in bed one night when I felt a presence of an Alien Being, standing beside my bed. He took me through the window and into a honey-combed corridor. It felt like I was dreaming but I could see everything that was happening.

Suddenly, it opened up into an operating theatre. The Alien was very tall, with fair hair and piercing blue eyes, very much like a human. The next thing I knew my wife was waking me up with a cup of tea. I got up...And my back was fine.'

Since Terry, from Crowthorne, Berkshire, had his 'Alien Operation', he claims to have had other 'Paranormal' experiences.

He's convinced that he's descended from the Ancient Pharaohs and has dedicated himself to researching the phenomena he claims to have seen. He said; 'It hasn't changed my life...It IS my life.'

Jeezly ol' crow, is it any wonder nobody bothers voting for them anymore???

8th February, 1996. Crowthorne, Berks. 'DAILY SLUR.'

THOUSANDS GATHER TO GREET ALIENS...BUT GO HOME DISAPPOINTED

Lured by three self-styled mediums, about 1,500 people gathered at an airfield in Northern Bulgaria, on 11th September, 1995, awaiting the arrival of eight spaceships piloted by extra-terrestrials, police Maj. Stoyan Marinov said.

Among other things, state TV reported, the mediums reported that the Aliens would help this poor Balkan country pay its \$12.9 billion foreign debt.

The crowd gathered in Shtraklevo, 200 miles northeast of the capital, Sofia, after three local women, Radka Trifonova, Zdravka Krumova and Ekaterina Nikiforova, declared that spaceships from other worlds would land at 11am.

The mediums, wearing identical dresses they had sewn for the occasion, waited along with the crowd. Not for the first time in history, nothing came.

Bulgaria's BTA news agency said that 30 minutes after the scheduled arriving, the three told the crowd that warplanes flying in the region were scaring off the Aliens.

After an hour had passed, they said the Aliens weren't coming because President Zhelyu Zhelev had declined to meet with them. Police had to usher the woman away from the angry crowd, although Marinov said there was no violence.

Like elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc, despair and uncertainty over the future has made Bulgaria fertile territory for would-be seers and psychics. Self-proclaimed mediums who claim to communicate with extra-terrestrials or to treat diseases are widely popular.

12th September, 1996. Shtraklevo, Bulgaria. 'CHILLICOTHE GAZETTE' Via COUD-I.

UFO Over Ibiza

A video-tape recording of a purported UFO has been obtained by an Italian tourist.

Mauro Pallauch, 43, a civil servant at the council of Trento, Northern Italy, was staying at the Spanish holiday resort of Cala Tamida when at approximately 8:30pm, a local gardener told him to look up to the sky to see an odd shining object which had been there, motionless, for a long period of time.

It was a strange, very bright object that cast a white light which could clearly be seen, despite the bright sunshine. Mauro was carrying his video camera with him at the time and he attempted to film the mysterious object. At first, he thought it was a research balloon, however, seen through the lens of his camera, he could see that the object was shaped like a lemon made up of two cones and shedding a bright, bluish light. The UFO was also sighted by up to 300 other people, most of them Italian tourists.



A still from Mauro's video that appears to show a strange, lemon-shaped UFO

The sighting lasted for about an hour, then the object, whatever it was, slowly disappeared from view. As it moved into the distance, the light around it changed from blue to pink.

22nd September, 1996. Ibiza, Spain. 'LAS PROVINCIAS' Via COUD-I

UFO OVER GLENCOE

Climber Adam Drew saw a streak of white light flash across the sky after scaling a peak with friends in Glencoe, Scottish Highlands.

Forester Adam, 24, said; 'We thought it was a flare and someone might be in trouble. It travelled at an amazing speed without arcing like a flare then shot off in silence.'

16th February, 1996. Glencoe, Scottish Highlands. 'THE SCUM'.

BOSNIAN PEACE TALKS ATTENDED BY ALIENS

Conspiracy theorist Richard Hoagland, a former NASA consultant, was once again announcing to the World that we have already been taken over by extra-terrestrials...

In true David Vincent (Roy Thinnes - from TV's 'THE INVADERS'), fashion, he tries desperately to convince a

disbelieving populace that the Invaders are here. With varying degrees of success.

Hoagland, who suspects amongst other things that human civilisation once existed on Mars and the Moon, alleges that the three Balkan warlords were taken to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base 'For a reason. How can you get these guys to see the bigger picture? With a bigger stick. You show them you have greater power than they could ever imagine.'

Since the beginning of the modern study of Ufology, Wright-Patterson has been the focus of Conspiracy theorists. The base is the HQ of Air Force research concerning new and foreign technologies. It was home to Operation Blue Book', and UFO buffs believe that the base is home to what has become popularly known as 'Hangar 18', a facility where the Alien's bodies were stored after the alleged UFO crash at Roswell.

And now, those self-same theorists are convinced that the location of the Peace talks was no coincidence...Rather it was a sign...

'Think of all the centres of world government', says Hoagland. 'The Hague, Geneva, Camp David...Dayton, Ohio is not on the list!!! I just think it stinks to high heaven.'

Hoagland, whose group has 20,000 members, according to 'OMNI MAGAZINE', thinks the leaders of Earth are trying to settle all world conflicts before preparing for war against other humanoid civilisations in outer space. The Bosnian leaders are being shown Aliens and advanced Alien technology now in the hands of the USAF.

He correctly predicted the talks would soon result in a peace agreement - after the Serbian, Bosnian and Croat leaders had seen them!!!

'We are being prepared for an interplanetary war, Hoagland said. 'Events are coming to a head.'

Reached at the Air Force Base, officials, not surprisingly considering the nature of the allegations, had no comment.

4th November, 1995. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, USA. 'THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER' Via COUD-I

YET MORE SCOTTISH UFO'S

Alex Leitch, 64, and son-in-law Tony, 23, were dumbstruck after seeing three small objects zoom out of a giant cigar-shaped UFO hovering above their holiday caravan in Lochgilphead, Argyll.

Alex from Baillieston in Glasgow, stated: I watched a massive white light coming closer and closer. There was no sound, just this amazing light cruising the sky. When it pulsated it changed colour from white to a greenish colour with a reddish top.

The side opened and out came a smaller round white object like a large star, which moved off a bit then stayed motionless in the sky. Two hours later, the big central light started pulsating again, the side opened and out came another smaller white star which did the same as the other. The same thing happened again and I noticed when the big massive centre started pulsating and flashing, the three smaller ones flashed back.

The incident occurred last August (1995), and was witnessed by his wife, Stella, 61, Tony, daughter Alexis, 29, and eight-month-old grandson Connor.

On the first evening Alex claims he saw a blue UFO streak across the sky, then a golden, boomerang-shaped object hovered 100ft above them on the last night.

Alex said; 'It just hovered silently then vanished. It was the most wonderful experience of my life.'

17th February, 1996. Lochgilphead, Argyll. 'THE SCUM'.

...And in Lanarkshire, Mark Marshall, 12, of Larkhall, said he spotted a 'huge fireball. It was really bright, faded, then got bright again.'

...And painter David Moffat, 31, saw an 'orangey ball of light trailing an orange and red flame', over Falkirk on 13th February.

James Mcneish, 59, saw a strange light in the sky over Grangemouth, Scotland, and quickly grabbed his video camera in order to try and film it.

'I was looking for my wife Evelyn who was walking the dog when I suddenly saw this huge ball of light and realised it wasn't a star. It was shaped like a half-circle and it wasn't half moving. I grabbed my camcorder and started filming. It was amazing. The thing expanded to about seven times its size and then shrunk back again.

It did this several times. I filmed it for about eight minutes until it disappeared behind clouds. When the clouds lifted it had gone.'

...Vera Sharpe also saw a throbbing white light as she brought in her washing. Vera, of Rhu near Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire, spotted the illumination over Gare Loch.

She said: *'I thought it might be a lifeboat signal or something. Then I wasn't so sure. I went to get my binoculars and watched it. I realised I was probably looking at a UFO. It was a bit disappointing to be honest. It didn't appear to have any shape. I watched it for about 20 minutes. When I came in and looked out it was gone.'*

17th February, 1996. Grangemouth/Helensburgh, Scotland. 'THE SCUM'.

MARTIAN MONUMENTS ON THE EARTH?

Mathematician David Percy has come up with the not entirely new theory that the prehistoric stone circle at Avebury in Wiltshire, was built by (ahem) homesick Martians.



Why does he believe this???

Well, he says it has exactly the same geometry as a giant crater in Cydonia, a region of Mars. And he should know.

He used to work for the American Mars Mission, a research body independent of NASA.

He is convinced that visitors from the Red Planet arrived at Wiltshire sometime in the distant past and decided to build a replica of a monument they previously constructed on their home planet.

The mathematical fit between the two sides is so perfect, he claims, that the chances of it being merely a coincidence are about one in 100 trillion. He has, predictably, written a book about his findings called 'TWO THIRDS', published by Salisbury-based, Mary Bennett. According to Percy, the connection between Mars and the Earth do not stop with Avebury.

Enhanced images of the surface of Mars taken by NASA's Viking Spacecraft in 1976, apparently show (Percy would have us believe) evidence of a mile-and-a-half long pyramid, with a half-mile-three-dimensional representation of a face. Local archaeologist Peter Oakley says with undisguised enthusiasm; *'NASA says the face is just a strange quirk of erosion. But you can see teeth in the mouth and a pupil in the eye socket.'* He also says that the similarities between Avebury Circle and its twin structure are too striking to be ignored.

'There is a pyramid structure on the edge of the crater that fits exactly the with an earthen mound in Avebury. I was very sceptical when I started researching it, but now I'm convinced'.

Of course, the theory cuts no ice whatsoever with English Heritage Chief Archaeologist Geoff Wainwright.

'Avebury was a temple built by the first race of farmers to come to England. The chieftains were carving out territories and Avebury was the centre of one.'

Ms Bennet though, is not deterred. *'It shows that the same mathematical coding and equation were being used on Earth as on Mars,'* she says. *'The codes can only be cracked with the aid of hyperdimensional maths.'*

But when they were, they would help us to visit other planets in the same way that Martians had apparently visited ours.

5th March, 1996. Avebury Circle, Wiltshire. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

FLYING SAUCER SCARE AT BALMORAL.

A 'NEWS OF THE WORLD' exclusive (and therefore an account that is sooooo truthful, it should be engraved in tablets of stone) revealed that RAF jets had to be scrambled to *'chase a UFO from the Queen's Balmoral home.'*

According to the account, two Harrier GR7 jump-jets took to the skies after locals reported seeing a mystery light over the Scottish castle.

One witness claimed the RAF planes appeared to be locked in a dogfight with the UFO. The light appeared just after 10pm and was seen clearly 8 miles away in Ballater. One local said: *'It seemed to appear from nowhere right over Balmoral. Within minutes, two jets had zoomed in and appeared to be chasing it. They seemed to climb very quickly, almost standing on end. It was almost as if they were in some sort of dogfight with the light.'*

Another witness revealed; *'It was like something out of a science-fiction film. The sky was clear, and suddenly a circular light was over Balmoral. It didn't seem to come from any particular direction, it was just there all of a sudden. Next thing, all hell broke loose as the jets roared in. They were shooting around in circles. Suddenly, the light vanished and after circling the castle the planes flew off in the direction from where they came.'*

Security around the Royal's family home has been tightened since the IRA's ceasefire ended. And a strict exclusion zone bans all aircraft from the skies above the 55,000 acre estate on Deeside. None of the Royal Family was there when the incident happened.

An RAF spokesman was reported as saying; *'There were two aircraft in the area. They could have been on some kind of exercise. Pilots are not going to report such things as UFO's to anyone and I've been unable to get anything out of them.'*
3rd October, 1995. Balmoral, Royal Deeside. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

AREA 51... THE FINAL FRONTIER???

The Nevada State Government has high hopes that passing Extra-terrestrials will notice the signs that have been erected to advertise the perfect landing place for any intergalactic mission. In one of the most bizarre pieces of legislation in America's history, a 100-mile stretch of desert highway has been re-named. In March this year, giant signs went up on the roadside, some facing traffic, others directed into the sky. Locals have insisted that they have seen spacecraft and visitors say they have either met Aliens or been abducted by them.



At the centre of the hysteria is of course, the in-famous AREA 51, an ultra-top secret military base. A former worker (the ubiquitous Mr Lazier, dentate know) claims to have seen flying saucers being dismantled and Urologists believe that Alien beings are actually residing there already, teaching scientists how their technology operates. Whatever the reality of the claims, there are definitely some strange things to be found belling up to the bar of the 'Little A'le'inn Hotel. *'We have some real weird ones'* says owner Pat Travis, 52. *'Merlyn Merlin says he's the ambassador from the planet Draconus.'* Hundreds flock to sit for night after night on mountains overlooking AREA 51 as a wave of renewed UFO interest sweeps America. The U.S. Government is predictably, tight-lipped about AREA 51 and the Air Force won't even recognise its existence, even though fences have recently been pushed back to 12 miles away. A sign threatens *'Use Of Deadly Force Authorised'*. But seekers after 'the truth' arrive in their thousands anyway. They have provided a boom to the trailer park community of Rachel (pop 120) where a cottage industry has sprung up around UFO sightings. On offer is everything from T-shirts to Alien credit cards, UFO guides to etiquette books on greeting the UFO occupants. No wonder Pat and Joe Travis say as they survey shelves loaded with souvenirs and a menu offering burgers with or without 'Alien Secretions' (relish), *'I think Aliens have come to help us. They've certainly helped our business.'*
5th March, 1996. Nevada, USA. 'DAILY MAIL'.

FINAL SNIPPETS

...Following an appeal for information on the subject of UFO's in one of Merseyside's local newspapers; *'THE WIRRAL NEWS'*, the subsequent reports were carried in a recent issue...

Sometime in 1960, at roughly 6:30pm, a Mr C. Edwards was coming home from work with a friend, and had just reached the end of Quarry Road in Bebington. We stopped because up above there was a large, long object which was lit up. There was no sound. It was not at a great height, it was quite visible but the amazing thing about it was all the lights on it. It was travelling in a northerly direction towards Liverpool. *'It was definitely not an airplane, as at that time, there were not the planes flying around than there are now. The two main things that amazed me were the height and all the lights.'*

.... In 1965, G. Holes was a railway signalman outside Birkenhead North Station. The signal box was then set in wild countryside. He takes up the story; *'It was just past midnight. I was looking out of the window when the cloud started to darken and a saucer-like object moved slowly down out of the cloud and became stationary. I quickly knocked my mate in on the telephone and told him to look to the sky. It gave off no sound and was a metallic grey with a band of pale blue light around the edge. We watched it for a couple of minutes. There was no indication of any windows, nor where there any other objects or lights in the sky.'*

As we watched, it slowly moved up into the cloud and slowly accelerated straight up into the sky. It went so fast that within 10 seconds it reached the stars.'

...Mr C. Boyd of Woodchurch, Birkenhead, says that on May 16th, 1988, he saw a UFO only about 100ft from where he was standing. It had three port holes and was completely silver, with no markings at all. *'I was not the only person to see it. It was also seen by someone in Moreton near the shore sometime in May or June, 1988. When I saw the object it was at Hooton, South Wirral, so obviously it had travelled different places in a short time.'*

... And finally, 15-year-old Louise Marie Aspinall, of Leasowe Road, Woodchurch, reports that at approximately 9pm on July 25th, 1994, her grandad saw two big beams light up the sky like spotlights. *'He told my nan and I to come and see it. My nan didn't think it was anything over than the North Star. My grandad informed that it couldn't be the North Star because it was in the south. He took his binoculars outside and let me look.'*

It was a big circle with a green light in the middle and 12 coloured lights around it. I don't know what it could have been.'
14th February, 1996. Wirral, Merseyside. 'THE WIRRAL NEWS'.

TALES FROM THE LOCH-SIDE:2

In The Shadow Of Boleskine

Part One



'If there's one thing I know, you can't control Evil. You can lock it up and burn it and bury it and pray that it dies, but it never will. It just rests awhile. You can lock your doors and say your prayers, but the Evil is out there waiting. And maybe, just maybe, it's closer than you think.'

TOMMY DOYLE: Halloween: The Curse Of Michael Myers.

1

Is it possible for an entire *area* to be haunted by what, for want of a better word, we term Evil? Haunted, not by a solitary headless horseman or a phantom monk doomed to walk an identical route on the anniversary of some dark and terrible deed.

Haunted.

Blighted the way other areas are *blessed* with breath-taking natural beauty, a sense of inner-peace, or a deeply religious aura?

Can mere rock and shoreline. Stream and greensward. Meadow and valley somehow retain a vivid impression of ancient horrors past and of horrors yet to be?

Can a place simply be *born* bad?

Can it?

Of course, students of strange phenomena wouldn't hesitate in telling you that it can indeed. And if you'd care to politely inquire further, they'd doubtless delight in informing you (in that smug, patronising tone exclusive to certain schoolteachers, college course lecturers and that maddeningly annoying smart-arse who knows the answers to all the 'Trivial Pursuit' questions) they've known about the existence of such places for years beyond counting. They even have a name for them...

'Window Areas'.

Now that's as good a name as any, I guess. Hell, who am I to argue with what's long since become a universally accepted entry in the Paranormal Researchers' Bible right alongside *'Close Encounters, Near Death Experiences'* and *'Spontaneous Human Combustion'*? You'll pardon me however, if I choose to refer to them by another name...A name that from personal experience I consider to be far more appropriate:

'SHADOWLANDS'.

The type of place that seems permanently bathed in a scummy wash of light. A queer flat yellow that throws the landscape into sharp relief and where the air seems forever pregnant with rain and thunder. Where the moon rises like a spirit with a pale, humourless face amidst a sea of diamond-chip stars. Where the rakish silhouette in the middle of a farmer's field looks like a figure torn from the mist by a madman's hand.

Where buildings stand at weird, unnatural angles.

Where birdsong is muted.

Where shadows gather and lie eternal.

SHADOWLANDS.

2

If such places exist outside of the students wishful thinking and this writer's somewhat fevered imagination, then the area around Boleskine House, overlooking the dark, brooding waters of Loch Ness, must stand as a shining example.

Oh, I'm sure it's a pretty fair bet a large proportion of the people reading this won't ever even have heard of the place. That's hardly surprising. You'll find little mention of it in paranormal circles, despite the fact that the infamous magician/occultist/charlatan/pervert/(delete where your personal opinion of the man decrees to be applicable) Aleister Crowley once resided there. Even books, videos and magazine articles dealing specifically with the Loch and its legendary Monster contain only the most cursory of references.

Illustrations of the locale are rarer still. The sole example I've yet come across was featured in Simon Marsden's *'PHANTOMS OF THE ISLES'* (Guild Publishing: 1990). A two-page black and white spread of Boleskine Burial Ground looking suitably moody and ominous. (Interestingly, Marsden's attendant notes contain the following disturbing, and maybe starkly relevant lines: *'The whole enclosure had a particularly strange atmosphere, as if it were the centre of some powerful force.'* And later; *'...Crowley may have unleashed Evil Spirits that ran amok in the area.'*

The validity of the latter we will dwell upon in a short while. Marsden's initial comment is bang on the mark. A personal visit to the area will be enough to convince you of that.

But therein lies a problem.

It seems hard to believe, but even regular visitors to the Loch may remain blissfully ignorant of the existence of this place roughly midway between the tiny, picturesque villages of Dores and Foyers. General Wade's Military Road, the endlessly winding B852, is comparatively shunned by tourists in favour of the main A82 that runs right along the opposite shore (and is therefore considered to be far more 'Nessie-Spotting Friendly').

My friends and I journey up to the Highlands at least twice every year. It's become less of a holiday in the traditional sense of the word, more a sort of annual pilgrimage stretching back to the Summer of 1992, and we only came across Boleskine quite by accident, in the midst of a search for the Foyers Hotel, (from the grounds of which the first full-time 'Monster-Hunter': Tim Dinsdale filmed his now legendary footage of *something* traversing the Loch).

The memory of that discovery is still vivid in my mind, though I do my level best to try and forget. On the whole I like to think I do a good job of keeping the recollections suppressed.

But sometimes, in the dead of night, or the wee hours before the dawn touches the sky, the memory surfaces in my dreams and on such occasions, I scream myself awake into the rough, uncaring darkness...

3

Picture if you will, a miserable, rain-sodden afternoon deep in the Scottish Highlands. The calendar asserts it is mid-August, but you could be forgiven for thinking winter still holds sway. The sky is the colour of slate and a vicious wind sweeps up dead leaves and spins them into mini-tornadoes.

A Rover drives along a narrow, winding road surrounded on one side by steep, heavily-wooded slopes and on the other by undergrowth so dense the vast expanse of water you know to be there is only visible in brief, tantalising glimpses of grey.

Suddenly, the road veers away from the Loch and the car is all but engulfed beneath a thick canopy of trees. It's clear that even on the brightest day, the enveloping foliage would admit no rich tapestry of sun and shade. Only a vaguely depressing half-light...Perfectly suited to the desolate burial ground that hoves into view over the next rise.

The car brakes to a halt. Five young men, myself amongst them, climb out and make their way across the road to the walled enclosure smack in the middle of the proverbial nowhere. There is no-one else around. The road is empty of traffic. There are no farms or houses in the lush, green fields either side of the graveyard. The only signs of modern civilisation are the telegraph wires snaking their way through the trees. It's an achingly lonely place, the atmosphere stiflingly oppressive but the intrepid five are too consumed with curiosity to pay much heed. The unexpected discovery fills them with excitement. They're eager to explore. And the rusted gate is standing open as if silently beckoning them to enter.

And enter they do...

A battered noticeboard is attached to the wall nearest the entrance. Contained behind a transparent plastic cover are a collection of children's notes and drawings. A placard informs the reader that the work is the product of the pupils of Foyers Primary School, and provides a brief history of the burial ground. Reference is made to the deliberate destruction of the attendant church, now little more than an empty, roofless shell, its crumbling walls all but hidden by blackberry bushes and clumps of high, stinging nettles.

There are details to of how the cemetery has long been redundant, for the very good reason that by the middle of this century, there had simply ceased to be any room left within the consecrated earth in which to bury the newly-dead.

Intrigued, we walk *in-between* the headstones careful not to tread on any of the actual graves lest we disturb and insult the fallen (in my mind the nightmare image of long, thin bony fingers suddenly erupting from beneath the stony soil - bloodless and worm-like - blindly seeking out warm, living flesh, is impossibly hard to shake) towards the buildings only entrance: a rotted oak door that, contrary to our expectations, is standing slightly ajar.

A brief argument ensues as to who would be the first to enter. We stand motionless for a few long moments as unmoving as any of the those grand sepulchres. No one volunteers. And then, with a collective mental shrug, we *all* push the door fully open and cross the threshold together.

The cottage, for that is what it must have been once, is two-storied.

The sole source of illumination is a tiny, upstairs window but even allowing for the good few seconds it takes for our eyes to adjust to the pervasive gloom, it is quickly apparent that the ground floor is little more than an empty shell. A dank, fetid smell permeates the room discouraging further investigation regardless.

A set of rickety wooden stairs leads to the floor above. The original flight had it seemed long since been removed wholesale. In total silence, (a silence that would appear almost reverential in *any* place save *here*) we ascend.

At first glance, this room too seems to be disappointingly empty.

The afternoon light falls in grey slabs across a bare, wooden floor. Dust motes dance crazily like a swarm of maddened insects. There is no furniture. No outward sign of decoration. The place is as drab and colourless as the surface of the Moon. And the only sign that anybody had set foot within these walls in years, *decades* even, is some fresh kindling lining the grate of the old-fashioned fireplace.

Filled with a perverse sense of anti-climax, (and what had I *expected* to find, exactly? The angry Ghost of some member of the Clan Fraser, berating me for having dared disturb his centuries old sleep? A bunch of black-cowled Satanists performing a secret and obscene rite? An eremite recluse complete with kilt, Claymore, and a love of the Highlands matched only by an inbred *hatred* for the English?), I glance out of the single, grimy window. I notice the wind has dropped dramatically leaving in its wake a stillness that seems unreal, almost dreamlike. Very little is moving out there. The only evidence that I'm not gazing at a photograph or a matte painting, the kind they use in all those low grade TV and B-movies when the budget doesn't stretch to cover the cost of on-location shooting, is the thin, wispy woodsmoke spiralling lazily over the treetops and a flock of southward-bound Canadian Geese flying in perfect v-formation, their hauntingly lonely cries muffled by the thick pane of glass.

I almost turn to suggest we leave, and doubtless would have done so if my brother hadn't have chosen that moment to call out suddenly: 'Hold on a minute. Take a look at this.'

I spin around and see he's pointing at the floor, and at first I can't make out what it is I'm supposed to be looking at. The accumulated dirt and dust lies across the wooden surface like a misted veil.

Slowly however, I begin to discern the crude, chalk inscriptions and diagrams etched faintly in the centre of the floor. A circle, roughly-drawn, it's circumference lined with words, the majority of which have faded almost to the point of total obscurity. The few I *can* manage to read appear to be written in some strange foreign language...

As one who has slightly more than a passing interest in Occult matters, I think perhaps I recognise some of the words as being Latin or Hebraic, and like a birdwatcher who strongly suspects he has caught a glimpse of a particularly rare species, I make a mental note to check up and confirm their identity when I get home.

There are more scribbles on the wall and all along the oak beams that criss-cross the ceiling. A heady mixture of the exotic and the entirely unintelligible.

And here...looking as out of place as a string of Christmas tinsel blowing across some sun-drenched tropical beach, is a sentence in plain, simple English:

'DO WHAT THOU WILT SHALL BE THE
WHOLE OF THE LAW'

Painted in spiky block capitals, a rusty shade of red...The colour of dried blood. There is something chilling about that seemingly innocuous phrase. Chilling and at the same time achingly familiar...

At the time though, I can't quite recall where I've heard it before. It lies on the brink of recall like a half-remembered dream upon waking.

And then, one of my companions, Simon I think it was, discovers the charred remains of broken animal bones hidden within the kindling in the fire grate. There is another pile of fresh-looking bones stacked in the far corner of the room. And resting upon a shelf cluttered with discarded beer cans and several yellow-stained rags, is the clean-picked skull of a horned creature - A goat most likely. A used condom nestles beneath the bridge of its teeth and its depthless hollow eyes seem to mark me with the type of black empty madness that must exist beyond the rim of the Universe.

The sight of this, more than anything, sends a sensation of prickling horror travelling up and down my spine.

A sense of pure Evil, intangible, yet nonetheless *real*, grows and becomes so overpowering that we each turn and leave by the same unspoken consent with which we'd entered. Though a whole lot quicker!!!

The afternoon was wearing on. It had been our intention to travel into Fort Augustus and stock up with some provisions for the remainder of the holiday. I tell myself that this alone is the reason for my impatience to be away from the place. I tell myself that and I successfully close my ears to the voice that pops up in my head to remind me: 'We lie best when we lie to ourselves'.

Fear of the unknown, the Bogey-Man, the thing that gibbers and capers in the dark corner of your bedroom after lights out, is not something you care to admit to in the company of good friends, but it's there written plain on our faces anyway. We are scared shitless, not to put too fine a point in it, though we can't *precisely* say why.

'Things had gotten so bad, the childish scrawl, written entirely in block capitals confided, that the bones of the deceased were being buried in graves so shallow, packs of wild dogs had begun roaming the plot, digging up the remains almost as soon as they were laid to rest.'

Bodysnatching had apparently been rife here too, with doctors from nearby Inverness willing to pay a handsome price for fresh cadavers upon which they could perform their medical experiments.

There is also mention of a particular headstone standing in the most neglected corner of the graveyard riddled with what appeared to be bullet-holes. The story goes that during the 17th Century Jacobite Rebellion, a British patrol were passing the burial of a rebel who had been killed in action. On seeing present amongst the mourners those whom they suspected of being Jacobite sympathisers, they immediately opened fire, hence the bullet-holes in the headstone. It is not recorded whether anyone was killed or wounded in the attack.

We look around the enclosure and see it contains row after row of crumbling, moss-covered tombstones that prove upon closer inspection to be almost exclusively inscribed with the surname Fraser. The wind howls through the fissures in the aged stone, like a lament for the passing of all that's dead or dying, and an even closer look at those crooked graves reveals that may not be so very far from the truth. The majority of the names engraved here are the final glorious epitaphs of those who have fallen on foreign battlefields in the service of their country, (Waterloo, South Africa, The Somme), or else were the tragic victims of inter-clan warfare.

I am struck by the sudden memory of my grandmother's funeral on a similar rain-swept afternoon when I was fifteen years old.

Then as now I was standing by a graveside, head bowed, my shoulders hunched against the bitter cold. My red-rimmed eyes fixed upon the wreaths and brightly coloured bouquets. The simple/moving messages of condolence attached to the flowers are quickly obscured by the heavy rain. The words slide from the soggy card in thin rivers of ink like a woman's mascara moved by tears. The air hangs heavy with solemnity and grief. The only sounds are the muffled sobbing of the assembled mourners and the vicar's sonorous tones as he utters words of cold comfort. From somewhere far off, I hear the chimes of an ice-cream van, the distance turns the nursery rhyme tune into a discordant melody of false cheer. As though a demented circus clown, its face sweating greasepaint, had been let loose on one of those old-fashioned hurdy-gurdy's. I had an image of it grinning insanely as it pummelled the keyboards with white-gloved hands. A murderers hands. A chill that had nothing to do with the godawful weather causes me to shudder uncontrollably and as much as I loved my nan, I remember thinking selfishly I wish they'd hurry up and get it over with. All this standing around and sobbing in the rain isn't gonna bring her back. Can't they see that?'

And then I promptly burst into tears of my own. The precious recollections of all the good times we spent together come flooding back in a deluge so powerful I'm almost swept away by their sheer force. My mother puts her arm around me and I bury my face on her shoulder silently cursing the God who could deign to take away a loved one, closing my ears to the murmured consolations that are now doing the rounds.

An eternity seems to pass. No-one moves. We're soaked to the skin and all cried-out. Time it seems has stood still.

Eventually though, as if on some unspoken cue the congregation prepares to depart. And now, wouldn't you just know it, I don't want to leave. Walking away now feels too much like desertion. Abandoning a friend just when they need you most. I'm all but dragged to the waiting hearse and its po-faced chauffeur. I clamber aboard, slide into the back seat between my two brothers and glance back over my shoulder one more time.

I see there's a wood pigeon perched atop my nan's headstone. I can hear its plaintive song even through the thick, tinted glass and it sounds crazy, but its gentle, repetitive cooing lightens my mood. I can't say why, but for the first time on that terrible day, I feel a sense of inner-calm. And then my heart almost leaps into my throat and I have to cover my mouth with hand to stifle an astonished cry. A single shaft of sunlight emerges from between a ragged gap in the cloud cover. It spears out like a laser beam across the long row of headstones, their uniform whiteness for a moment turned blindingly bright. The pigeon, doubtless startled, suddenly takes to the air and I watch it ascending to re-join its flock, before flying toward the distant horizon looking for all the world like a soul that had joyfully been set free...

4

If that cherished memory was meant to fortify me against my natural fear of death and the grave however, it proved unsuccessful.

In the Boleakine Burial Ground, the spirits of the dead seem to be permanently chained to their physical remains. Their place of internment.

And their resentment. Their understandable anger at being cut down in the prime of their lives had been harnessed by some powerful, inherently evil force that had perhaps existed here since the dawn of time. And over the passage of centuries, somehow all that resentment had been transformed into something far worse. A bitter, twisted hatred that had turned the very earth sour.

Or at least, that was the overriding impression the place sought to project upon me.

5

One thing the noticeboard fails to make mention of is the derelict-looking building that stands roughly half-way along the opposite wall. This strikes me as being a little odd, because although there is nothing outwardly remarkable about it, the fact is that aside from the ruined church, it easily dominates the enclosure.

nor unsmiling. He was ordinary-looking, and yet at the same time, possessed of a striking charisma. He was of indeterminate age, although the lines on his face seemed to indicate that too much emotional voltage had been running behind that benign countenance for too long a time. Still, he appeared to be an easy man to like. To take into one's confidence. Perhaps even to trust. There was certainly nothing sinister about him.

Outwardly at least.

The caption beneath the photograph had said simply: *Aleister Crowley: The self-styled Great Beast 666. Raised by devoutly religious parents, he rebelled to become one of the most notorious Black Magicians in recent times. A former member of the Golden Dawn, he was loathed by the popular press you labelled him: The most wickedest man in the world'. His most famous edict was: 'Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law'.*

My interest aroused, I'd read the whole piece and spent the remainder of that day gleaning all I could about this mysterious figure, Crowley although in truth, this didn't amount to a great deal. Just a tantalisingly brief synopsis of his life and times and some of the more sensational newsworthy events that had contributed to his later notoriety.

And something else...

Something that had all but leapt off the page, screaming 'Howdy Doody' at the top of its voice. And just as well that it had, or I may never have noticed it, tucked away as it was amongst the references to the Abbey at Thelema, the famous '*IO To Pan*' and his many run-ins with McGregor Mathers (a fellow member of 'The Golden Dawn').

Something that was in reality, little more than an anecdote. An aside.

It was simply this: Aleister Crowley once lived in a remote hideaway deep in the Highlands of Scotland. He resided for quite some time in a secluded mansion screened from the roadside by a thick canopy of trees.

It's a house that has stood for a hundred years and may stand for a hundred more.

A house that overlooks an ancient clan Burial Ground.

Boleskine Burial Ground on the banks of Loch Ness...

7

Isn't it strange that of all emotions, curiosity is the one that most brings out the child buried within each and everyone of us?

Almost from the second that I 'remembered' the origin of that jagged scribbling, and informed everybody else in the car pulling away from Boleskine, I just *knew* that there was no way we would be able to just scoot off without affording ourselves a brief glimpse of Crowley's residence.

The journey back home to Merseyside would be even less bearable if we failed to avail ourselves of the opportunity presented to us. If nothing else, we'd be able to snap a few pictures of the house and scare ourselves silly during the dark nights leading up to Hallowe'en, passing the photo's around and swapping true-life horror stories at a beer-laden table in 'The King's Arms' while a bonfire blazed away outside and the rich smell of baked potatoes and roasted chestnuts filled the chill October air.

Our curiosity chased away our fears, and by the time Simon began reversing the car back to the lay-by, being afraid was quite the furthest thing from my mind. The flame of questing instinct burns too brightly and the dark shadows of Boleskine are forced to retreat like the tide compelled by the pull of the Moon. They are rendered impotent. They have no power .

At least for a little while.

Once more we emerge from the car and begin looking about us with re-newed excitement.

Almost from the beginning however, it is clear that the house is not going to be easy to find. Even the most cursory of glances is enough to convince all of us of that unpalatable fact. There is only one building (aside from the graveyard-keeper's hut, of course) visible on the road and though we all but race towards it expectantly, we see almost immediately that it's nothing more than a small cottage, inhabited, judging from the 'Range Rover' parked in the driveway, by a well-to-do family. There's a child's tricycle lying on its side beneath the front window and a 'Barbie Doll', naked and minus an arm is propped up drunkenly against an Apple Tree. It's abundantly clear that this is most certainly not the place we are looking for.

Grant, ever the practical one, suggests we knock and ask to see if they know the location of Boleskine House. If the inhabitants have lived there for any amount of time, it's a fair bet they'll know right enough. We unlatch the gate, swing it open and are stopped in our tracks by the sound of a woman's voice calling to us from just down the road.

A middle-aged lady is making her way towards us, dressed in wellies, jeans and an all-weather anorak with the hood up.

'Excuse me,' she says in clipped tones and without a trace of a Scottish accent. 'Excuse me, but who does that car belong to, parked in that lay-by over there?'

Before any of us can answer, she speaks again, with her hands on her hips, the gesture of someone who's used to getting what she wants, and who doesn't suffer fools gladly. I can only just about make out her face, obscured as it is by the hood, and for one crazy moment, I'm sure that standing before here before me is ol' 'Mona' herself. The Head Librarian come to decree Three *New* Commandments:

1: PLEASE DO NOT PARK ON THE B ROADS AROUND LOCH NESS.

2: ANY TRESPASSERS ON THE GROUNDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS WILL BE SACRIFICED TO THE DEVIL.

3: AROUND THE FORMER RESIDENCE OF MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY ESQ, SILENCE IS MORE THAN A VIRTUE, IT'S A NECESSITY. IF YOU SPEAK TOO LOUD, YOU'LL WAKE THE DEAD!!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

HAVE A NICE DAY!!!

'Will one of you kindly move the vehicle. It's causing an obstruction and there's a Sunday school bus due this way any moment now!'

We gratefully clamber back into the car, Simon guns the engine and prepares to steer the car out of the lay-by in which he'd parked and back onto the road. We breath a collective sigh of relief. Like the song say's: *'We're On The Move.'*

And then, I suddenly remember where I'd seen those words written in (dried blood) red paint on the walls of that Godforsaken cottage...

'DO WHAT THOU WILT SHALL BE THE WHOLE OF THE LAW'

I remember.

And in truth, had I ever really forgotten?

6

The Civic Centre Library on the outskirts of Bebington Village, was once a favourite haunt of mine. It often seems I spent half of my childhood and nearly *all* my early teenage years with my head buried in a rollicking good novel, (I had a particular fondness for the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, the wonderfully scary Ghost stories of M.R. James and the crime thrillers penned by Raymond Chandler, but I'd read just about *anything*, if the story grabbed me) leafing through old magazines or browsing amongst the reams of dusty volumes that lined the walls of the reference section located on the library's second floor.

I loved the Reference Room best.

It was like a tiny world of its own peopled by a race who knew exactly what was expected of them and precisely what their place was in the grand scheme of things. On any given day, (except on Wednesday's and public holidays when the building was closed) you could clamber up the stairs, take a seat at one of the large, plastic-topped desks and pretend to read whilst really glancing about you at the timeworn habits and rituals of the inhabitants.

There'd be a group of college students or sixth-formers, their foreheads creased in concentration as they pored over massive tomes on *'The Origins Of The Franco-Prussian War'* or *'Advanced Mathematics Made Easy'*. The desk just opposite would be occupied by several schoolkids, more often than not tittering fit to bust over the pictures of human genitalia in the biology encyclopaedias or else trying to cough loudly to cover their ripping out of a portrait of Michael Jackson or Take That . The old men rustling their newspapers pointedly in gestures of mild annoyance. The courting couple who gaze lovingly into each others eyes over the tops of a stack of *'NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'* magazines. The young female librarian who wears a tight blouse and a mini-skirt to show off every inch of her hour-glass figure, driving both the adolescents and the old men to distraction...And loving every minute of it.

And presiding over all, the fear-inspiring, dread-inducing persona of the Head Librarian...A large, grim-visage woman with a spiteful, kid-hating attitude that would put the Witch in *'HANSEL AND GRETEL'* to shame. She sits at the head of the room, peering out at her domain with an expression on her face that simply *demand*s that those assembled behave themselves...On her desk there is a laminated placard inscribed with the words: *'THIS IS THE PUBLIC REFERENCE FLOOR. PEOPLE COME HERE TO STUDY AND TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION. ALL ARE WELCOME. BUT PLEASE REMEMBER THESE THREE SIMPLE RULES:*

- 1: NO BOOKS MAY BE TAKEN FROM THIS FLOOR FOR ANY REASON!!!*
 - 2: PEOPLE CAUGHT DEFACING OR DAMAGING BOOKS WILL BE PROSECUTED!!!*
 - 3: IN A LIBRARY, SILENCE IS MORE THAN A VIRTUE...IT'S AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY!!!*
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.
HAVE A NICE DAY!!!*

Her name may or may not be Mona. The kids all called her that, (though never to her face), and the way she was always complaining, a name was never more appropriate...But woe betide anyone who was caught breaking any of the Three Commandments According To Mona. I've seen grown men cower in the face of her wrath. She hands out her reprimands with all the aplomb of a person who has spent a lifetime joyfully inflicting misery and watching others bend before their will. And it was useless attempting to be furtive. She was equipped with a thousand-yard stare that, like Medusa, could turn a persistent offender to stone.

But still, in spite of Mona, or maybe in some strange way *because* of her, I loved the place. And I regret deeply the fact that I haven't been back there in years. Maybe I'll make a point of paying a visit there this weekend.

Maybe I will, if the weather's not too great. Or if Liverpool F.C. aren't playing on Saturday afternoon. Or if I haven't got a disco to organise. Or an article for the magazine to write. Or a garden fence to paint...or...or...

Maybe.

Anyway, it was on a damp and misty afternoon in late November, 1980, when I first came across the words that would return to haunt me 12 years or so down the path of my life. I remember the world beyond the round windows (most of them decorated with multi-coloured cardboard leaves drawn and pasted on by children) looked grey and distant. The library was lit by soft, diffused lighting and I was struck with the feeling that those passing by outside would likely be glancing up at the building with the same expression on their face as that of a weary traveller lost on the moors who, after countless hours of wandering, suddenly spies the welcoming glow pouring from the windows of a farmhouse And perhaps, thinking these thoughts, the passers-by might add a spring to their step in their hurry to get home a little faster.

I was idly leafing through a book by Dennis Wheatley called *'THE DEVIL AND ALL HIS WORKS'*, when I came across a section dealing with Satanists and Black Magicians. Amongst the lurid pictures of Witches' Sabbats and strange, arcane rituals was a black and white portrait of a curious, bald-headed man with intense, almost hypnotic eyes and an enigmatic expression. He seemed to be neither smiling

'Okay missus, keep yer hair on,' my brother Grant replied quickly. 'We were gonna be movin on in a minute, anyway.' Then, seeing that she seemed placated, if not exactly satisfied by the response, he seized the opportunity by adding: 'Erm...Y'know, we heard that a fella named Aleister Crowley used to live round here. I don't suppose *you'd* know if his ol' house is still standing, and if it is, *where* can we find it, would you?'

The second the words left his mouth the woman's expression of haughty intolerance changed to one of outright suspicion and hostility. And as people will do when they're caught momentarily off-guard, she answered the query with a couple of questions of her own.

'Why do want to know? We have more than enough weirdo's hanging around here, as it is. Why on earth should I encourage others, hmmm?'

'What do you mean, "weirdo's"?', I enquired, that burning curiosity re-lit with a vengeance. 'You mean Satanists? Black Magicians? Devil Worshiper's?'

I mean *weirdo's!!!*, she repeated like a teacher explaining a simple math problem to a backward 5-year-old. 'I'm referring to people, and I use the term loosely, who come up here to plague us with their endless questions, their ceaseless trampling on private property, their constant vandalism of yonder Burial Ground and their pathetic little acts of what they doubtless deem to be homage, like dancing round naked in the fields at midnight, or sacrificing an animal or two...Or maybe even dressing up in a monk's cowl and sleeping on the very front doorstep of Boleskine House...' She caught herself, but too late. The confirmation that we sought, that Boleskine House did indeed still stand, had been unwittingly provided. (Except with the benefit of hindsight, I'm not at all sure if there was anything unwitting about that 'slip of the tongue', whatsoever. Around Boleskine, things don't happen unless they serve a purpose...And it's usually a corrupt and evil one.)

She made a show of shrugging her shoulders resignedly. 'Okay. So now you know. Crowley's House is around here, somewhere. But I'll be damned if I'll tell you it's precise location.' She regarded us with such a look of obvious contempt, I was once more struck by the image of ol' 'Mona', chastising some luckless twelve-year-old who had been caught red-handed drawing a goatee beard on a picture of The Queen Mother.

'Now get out of here and move your car like I told you. The school bus will be coming by any moment now. And your vehicle's causing an obstruction.'

And with that, she stormed off, leaving the five of us standing in the middle of the road, completely at a loss as to what to do next.

'I suppose we'd better move the car as she says', Steve suggested half-heartedly. 'We know the house is somewhere on this stretch of road, probably overlooking the Burial Ground, if the books you read, Lee, were right and not just adding a bit scenery for dramatic effect. But we could spend the rest of today traipsing up and down between here and Dores and either break our neck in the woods or get ourselves run over by the Sunday School bus...'

He paused momentarily, his brow furrowed in obvious puzzlement. And I think we all realised what he was going to say a mill-second or so before he actually said it.

'Hang on a sec. Today isn't *Sunday*. It's Monday. Bank Holiday Monday to be exact. What the hell's that woman on about?'

He was right, of course. It was indeed a Monday. We'd been so concerned with our questions about the house that we'd clean forgotten what day it was. It's a common enough thing. When you're on vacation, the passage of the days, so important the rest of the year round, becomes meaningless. Who gives a flying one *what* day it is as long as the fun and games can go on unabated, am I right?

But for a local to forget. Now that wasn't quite so likely, was it? Not if she was in full possession of all her marbles, anyway. No. It was my guess that she was smart enough to calculate that as dumb tourists, we'd have almost certainly lost track of time. She'd just wanted rid of us as quickly and as painlessly as possible...And you had to admit, it had almost worked.

We turned around, each of us intending to let her know in no uncertain terms, that she hadn't succeeded in fooling us...(Well, not for very long, anyway. Okay, maybe just for a little while. Oh alright, she *had* kidded us good and proper, and we'd fallen for it hook, line and sinker...But we hadn't actually gotten in the car and driven off, now had we? So the joke's on *you!!!* Ha-ha on *you!!!* Ha-Ha all *over* you!!!)...but when he turned the road was empty for as far as the eye could see. There were only the trees, their overhanging branches forming a natural green canopy that stretched away into the middle distance like the arched cloisters of some mighty cathedral.

'Where the hell did she go?' I asked. My voice sounded tiny in the caught-breath silence.

'Maybe there's a farmhouse just out of sight beyond those woods', Simon offered. 'We wouldn't be able to see it from here.'

The offer was taken up with unanimous approval and a unified chorus of assent.

'Could be a whole bunch of crofts and cottages just down the lane there.'

'Oh aye. I'm certain of it. The owl' Biddy's probably watching us through her bedroom window, right now'.

'Yeah, of course she is.'

'What a conniving, ol' boot.'

'Probably laughin her socks off.'

And the fact is, looking at things from a cold, logical perspective, that was very likely the truth of it. She had almost certainly put on a bit more speed the second our backs were turned, and scurried into her home. She then charged upstairs, and pressed her nose against the window, anxious to keep an eye on us lest we begin beheading the local sheep with machetes so we could gorge ourselves on their blood...

That's the *logical* explanation of where she *went*...

But, we were so concerned with finding an answer to that question, we completely ignored the one that was even more relevant: Bearing in mind that we'd just travelled up from the village of Dores, a good

five miles distant (and the direction from which she'd first approached us) without seeing so much as a single habitation; Where the hell had she come *from*???

That's one of the things that keeps me lying awake some nights, afraid to sleep, afraid to *dream*. Another is something Steve said, with typical black humour as we stood on the road mentally debating our next move:

'Hey, I know where she lives. I know where she'd be right at home. In the graveyard. In the graveyard with all the other dead things!!!'

8

I sincerely doubt very much if we'd ever have found the place, that day at least, if we hadn't have heard the faint strains of pop music floating on the air, just then.

We had been more than ready to give the search up as a bad idea and continue with our journey to Fort Augustus. Hunting down the homes of the famous and the infamous could only hold your interest for so long when you were tired and hungry.

It was Richie, I think who heard the music first. He was certainly the first to recognise the tune.

'Hang on. There's a radio playing somewhere: *'I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE''*.

And so it was. Marvin's voice drifted toward us sounding disembodied and somehow lost, like the helpless cry of a child that can't find its mother.

'Oh. I know a man ain't supposed to cry, but these tears I can't hold inside...'

With the unspoken consent that has been a regular feature of this never-ending day, we walk toward the source of the music spread across the road looking for all the world like a bunch of cowboys heading for the showdown gunfight at High Noon.

It would be nice and poetic to be able to say it was Marvin's singing that beckoned us on down the road back to Dores. That we were hypnotised by the heart-wringing melody...

'Cos losing you would mean my life, you see. 'Cos you mean that much to me'.

It would be neat and pleasant. But it would also be a lie.

The thing that held us in thrall had very little to do with anything so noble.

We still had our hearts set on seeing that house, and it was possible that maybe, just maybe, the owner of that radio might well be able to help us in our quest.

It turned out we didn't have to walk very far...There was a small lodge a third of a mile or so from where we were parked, that we'd passed a few hours earlier. It had appeared to be both deserted and dilapidated, and so we'd scarcely slowed to take a closer look, but now, as we approached the entrance, we could that there was a man, aged somewhere between 30-35, painting and decorating the front room. He was atop a set of ladders paint brush in hand, whistling along to Marvin, oblivious to all.

Once again, it was Grant who spoke up in order to get the man's attention.

'Excuse mate, have yer got any idea where Boleskine house is, please?'

The man looked up startled and very nearly fell off his ladder. He took a good few seconds to recover his composure. When he eventually found his voice, his accent was immediately recognisable as purest Glaswegian.

'Well, it could be that I do have a very good idea of where the house you're looking for lies. But before I decide whether I should tell you or not, let me ask you a question; Why do you want to know?'

Having met with this understandable reluctance to reveal the whereabouts of a place the locals would just as soon prefer to remain hidden (out of sight out of mind) before, we thought carefully before answering.

We decided to play the dumb tourist, out to take a few snaps of places of local interest. No more than that. We must have come across as being fairly convincing, because his face was lit with a smile at that point and he said: 'Och, why not? It canna d'nae harm that I can see'. Then he slapped his thigh as though he was about to recite the world's greatest gag. 'The thing is fella's, yer gonna kick yerselves all the back tae Liverpool when I tell ye...This here building is Boleskine Lodge. I'm the head groundkeeper, the summer help and the caretaker all rolled into one. The path y'see winding its merry way up the hill behind those gates over there...That driveway leads right up to the place ye looking for...Boleskine House. But ye canna go up that way...The man who owns it is a wee bit paranoid about the nutcases who hang around his front door. He keeps guard dogs. Big, mean black things that'd tear a man's arm off as soon as look at ye...And it's all alarmed wi the latest hi-tech surveillance equipment, too. So I'm afraid ye've had a wasted journey. Tough luck, lads.'

Having imparted this information, he laughed so hard he had to hold onto his belly, and he was still braying like a donkey as we walked back dejectedly the way we had come, and for all I know, he's still there at this moment, hee-hawing his way into a conniption fit at the hopeless endeavours of a bunch of pig-ignorant Scousers.

9

Lucky for us, that cackling Scot's low opinion of us, actually worked in our favour, and once we were well out of his sight, it was *our* turn to laugh loud and long.

He obviously didn't know who he was dealing with. Three members of our group, Stevie Gee, Grant and I, were from the age of 13, original members of 'The New Ferry Ghost Club', and as such, we were adept at breaking into reputedly haunted houses, no matter how securely boarded up, (the thought that we were committing burglary, as I believe I've stated in an earlier article, never even crossed our minds - and I don't suppose it would have deterred us any, even if it had. We didn't see ourselves as criminals - We were honest-to-God *Ghostbuster's*) and prior to that, we had been the founder members of 'The Lad's Of The Seventh Apple Scrumpling Core' and there hadn't been an orchard or allotment within Merseyside's borders that was safe from our pillaging.

In the Summer of 1992, I was sure as hell no longer a kid, secure in the naive belief that latter-day Van Helsing's are not sent to prison for long periods of time if they're caught breaking into other people's

property. I was old enough to know better (or at least *think* I did). But if we couldn't actually get inside the place and take a look around, nothing was going to stop us grabbing ourselves a quick eyeful and a couple of photographs of the *outside*...

We knew the location. Now all we had to do was find an alternative route to the driveway, and the answer was just as plain as day. The house must be hidden from the road, just like the books had said, by a screen of rolling hills and thick clumps of fir trees. All we had to do was climb over the fence that ringed the adjoining field, clamber up the hill, and look down on the front of the house. And with excitement and anticipation once more at a peak, we set out to do precisely that.

10

I suppose, after all we'd been through, the actual sighting of Boleskine House, was always going to be something of an anti-climax.

As when we'd entered the top floor of the graveyard-keeper's cottage, in a time that now seemed an age ago, I'm not quite sure what I expect to see, but can't help feeling that perverse sense of disappointment wash over me like when you're burning up at the seaside and the large white-capped wave heading your way that you hope will help cool you down turns out to be horribly lukewarm.

It's every bit as enormous as I'd expected it to be. And I guess, seen from a different angle, late at night, with its many windows filled with a garish, sickly light, it may indeed appear suitably terrifying. But as you can see for yourselves, Dear Reader, the briefest study of the picture reproduced below could not hold a candle to either the entirely fictional abodes of evil (Shirley Jackson's '*HILL HOUSE*' where whatever walked, walked alone, or William Castle's '*HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*', to name but two), nor the allegedly genuine (Borley Rectory or 112, Ocean Avenue, Anityville - although, to be fair, both these examples are spurious to say the least...Harry Price and Jay Anson respectively may have a lot to answer for).

It looks so *ordinary*...



We stand there for what seems like the longest time...And I let my thoughts wander along with my gaze

I looked back towards the Burial Ground, now several hundred feet below us, and then out across the Loch... And in that 'permanent semi-twilight', with the dark clouds hanging so low they seemed about set to swoop down and kiss the diseased earth, I find it is impossible not to want to imagine how it might have been here in some dim and distant time before...Imagine and wonder if there had *ever* been a time when this place was spiritually clean. Elemental-free. Held sacred. And where the only shadows cast were the natural consequence of cheery sunlight...

11

Boleskine... Before The Fall

The height of Springtime.

A crisp, fresh Sunday morning.

The skies are clear and eye-wateringly bright and sun-rays dart off the surface of the Loch, sparkling like a promise. Paddle steamers cruise the shimmering waters and groups of well-to-do tourists sit on the banks sipping their iced tea or tucking into picnic lunches. Everything is right with the World. God is over all.

And within the lovingly-tended plot that marks the final resting place of members of the Clan Fraser, families file happily into the church. The tiny, rough-hewn building is non-descript, though that stark simplicity makes it no less welcoming. A minister with a kind, grandfatherly face stands at the Lych gate, shaking hands with each and everyone of his parishioners. Giggling young girls in pig-tails and summer-white dresses. Sullen boys in stiffly starched suits. The adults, conservative and God-fearing, who take their seats staring frankly at the church's only decoration: The two rows of stained glass windows. Even the smallest child looks upon these colourful works of art with something approaching religious awe. And perhaps, although they are very probably not aware of it, something else, too. Those intricate depiction's of the Eternal Struggle Between The Forces Of Good And Evil ('The Temptation Of St. Anthony', 'The Revolt Of The Angels', St Michael Defeating The Dragon')...may have touched upon something far older even than Christianity.

Something essentially primal.

Something timeless and ageless that lurked hidden out of sight, deep within the subconscious mind.

Something which was given form and voice in the dreams of even the most pious during the dark watches of the night.

It was simply this:

Knowledge.

Knowledge that there exists the finest of lines between a land that is blessed and a land that is cursed, and that while it was likely certain places were born bad, perhaps with the passing of time they could be made clean, reclaimed, Exorcised if you will, by the thoughts and actions of mortal men.

Perhaps Boleskine, once damned, was such a place.

THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE...

And if that were so, the faithful would do well to remain vigilant. One lowering of their guard. One failure to recognise potential Evil in their midst. One careless acceptance of a seemingly well-intentioned stranger...Then the delicate balance could be tipped in the favour of the Serpent Of Lies. God, weeping, would turn his back. And the Dragon would emerge from the Pit triumphant, and the shadows it cast would cover the land like a death shroud...

And fall, they undoubtedly had.

Those who had been appointed 'Brotherhood Of The Watch' had been found negligent in the task entrusted to them. And when the inevitable Time Of Reckoning came around, and a smiling, bald-headed man had suddenly appeared amongst them, twirling a silver-tipped cane like a harmless children's magician, they had forgotten the wisdom the village Elders, and if they hadn't exactly welcomed him with open arms, they had at least been far too willing to accept him at face value.

And the stranger, whose benign features were constantly lit by a smile that never touched his eyes, had been left to his own devices...Which was precisely what he'd wanted all along, of course.

Evil, the Elders had always taught (and had probably intended to engrave upon the walls of Boleskine Church in 15ft high letters. And oh, wouldn't things have turned out for the better if they had) comes in many guises. More often than not, bland and innocuous-seeming. It seeks a safeplace out of sight and out of mind where it can rest and gather its strength. And once it obtains a foothold, it breeds like the most virulent strain of a killer disease. Cancer say. Or Bubonic Plague. It has a voracious appetite and it eats its way through everything...Starting with all you've ever cherished and held dear to your heart together with all the things you'd long since taken for granted. And ends with the tragic, irreversible loss of innocence.

And the most terrible thing of all is that you don't even noticing it happening...Until it's far too late. The changes are as imperceptible as the movement of a clock hand, but every bit as inexorable as the passage of time.

Perhaps a few of the older generation, the Elders, or maybe the very young would have perceived the differences.

Fewer visitors to the area. A drop in the number of souvenir-hunting tourists with bulging purse-strings. Fewer guests at 'The Foyers Hotel'.

And then, a gradual darkening of atmosphere. People finding excuses not to go to church. Doors once open to neighbours firmly bolted shut. Mistrust and disharmony tearing friendships asunder. An increase in family feuds. Sudden and unexplained deaths of prominent people.

And stories of the man who owned the house on the hill overlooking their church. Strange tales involving weird rituals, disappearing children, multicoloured lights flashing in the Highland sky...And of things seen on the road between Dores and Foyers as day closed down. Terrible things. A coffin lying in the road, something grey and shapeless sitting hunched atop it. The Spirits Of The Deceased, shuffling along, their faces rotted and decayed, their gelid eyes as cold and unfeeling as a dead fish on a slab. A crawling eye that pulsates like a grotesque paper bag. A nameless batrachian horror seen in the woods by schoolchildren bunking off Sunday School.

The church fell into disrepair and The Burial Ground became disused.

The place became shunned.

The place became cursed.

The place became SHADOWLAND.

12

I shivered and decided there and then that my curiosity had been well sated. It really was time to get moving. A shopping expedition had suddenly never seemed so enticing.

We clambered back down the hill, careful not to slip on the still-wet grass and vaulted over the wire fence. The car was parked a little farther up the road and we tiredly began making our way towards it.

We were perhaps a little less than a hundred yards shy of Simon's Rover, when another car came towards us. It gave us all a start, because it had been the first vehicle we'd encountered since arriving in Boleskine. We moved to the side of the road, almost having to lean on the wall of the Burial Ground, in order to let the car pass, and as it did so, I felt a vague sense of unease. I could see that there were two people in the car. One was an ordinary-looking man staring straight ahead, as though concentrating intently on the road in front of him. The other appeared to be a nun. She was certainly wearing a wimple and I caught sight of her face as she turned towards us and smiled. The window on her side was lowered a notch, and her outfit was blowing in the breeze that had suddenly sprang up. She smiled, and I almost smiled back, but then the smile became a sickly grin that I didn't care for one little bit...

I looked away quickly, glancing at the others to see if they had seen, and judging by their expressions, they had indeed. There was something not quite right about that couple, but I was damned if I was going to dwell on it in this of all places.

We jogged, the last few feet, and not one of us said a word.

Simon once more gunned the ignition, and this time there would be no turning back.

I did glance back one more time, however. I couldn't resist. Despite my fear.

And almost immediately, I wished I hadn't.

'The Prince is a vulnerable and worried man. But he is also very spiritual and wants us to bring more serenity into all the rooms and especially the gardens at Highgrove.'

Charles, who is known for his penchant for talking to plants, takes a keen interest in alternative therapies and is currently having his dreams analysed. Among the Ghosts he will doubtless want exorcised are his screaming matches with Diana and the memories of her bulimia which he has never come to terms with. Randa's sister Patte, who met Charles in L.A. two years ago, said; *'Feng-Shui will help to bring in the positive energy he needs.'* 10th March, 1996. Highgrove. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTER

Alan Power, a resident of your humble editor's home town of Birkenhead, shows a penchant for pitting his wits in the sphere of the paranormal.

He has spent the last 12 years of his life as the North West's answer to Dan Ackroyd, checking out Ghostly goings on as well as seeking to calm people who believe they have encountered other-worldly phenomena. He began his life as a tailor, but has since turned his talents to investigating the supernatural...

'Ghosts never frightened me, they excited me more than anything else,' says Alan. *'But I know that many people can feel intimidated by spirits and are afraid to talk about their experiences. If someone thinks their home is haunted they can escape by moving away, but some spirits remain in contact with particular people rather than places, and these situations are much more difficult to deal with.'*

Alan offers counselling to anyone alarmed by unaccountable apparitions by phone as well as face to face. He firmly believes that a disembodied entity can exert a very strong influence on a living person. And he describes how he is able to perform an exorcism on someone who has been possessed.

'I look into the possessed person's eyes. At first it seems very strange - as though there is a mist between us. This will sound very odd, but I speak to the spirit within. The entity will normally speak to me via the person. I try not to get into a conversation, as they have a tendency to try and side-track you from your task. I say; "Hold your peace and get out".'

Sometimes the possessed person will move around or shake - but this only lasts for a few seconds. Then I place my hands on their head in a healing way and calm them down.'

While Alan has very few qualms about confronting spirit forces on their own territory, he is very concerned about amateur Ghost-hunters tracking down spirits themselves - especially at Halloween.

'Masks, pumpkins, and broomsticks are one thing - but encountering real spirits can be an experience that has long-lasting effects, both emotionally and psychologically. I am particularly worried about youngsters trying to emulate the kind of feats they might have seen on the 'GHOSTBUSTER' movies.'

Although he advises lay people to leave Ghost-hunting to the experts, Alan's so perturbed at the thought of irresponsible spirit-hunters visiting haunted houses that he has issued a set of guidelines for anyone who insists on carrying out their own investigations. He says;

- i: *'Investigations should always be carried out in groups - and at no time should anyone stray from the main group.'*
- ii: *Children and those of a nervous disposition should not be permitted to attend the scene of a haunting. No one who has recently suffered a bereavement should participate.'*

iii: *There should be no attempt at contacting or communicating with the Ghost via Ouija Boards, Tarot Cards, pendulums or other instruments.*

iiii: *Remarks directed at the entity such as "Is there anyone there?" should be discouraged.*

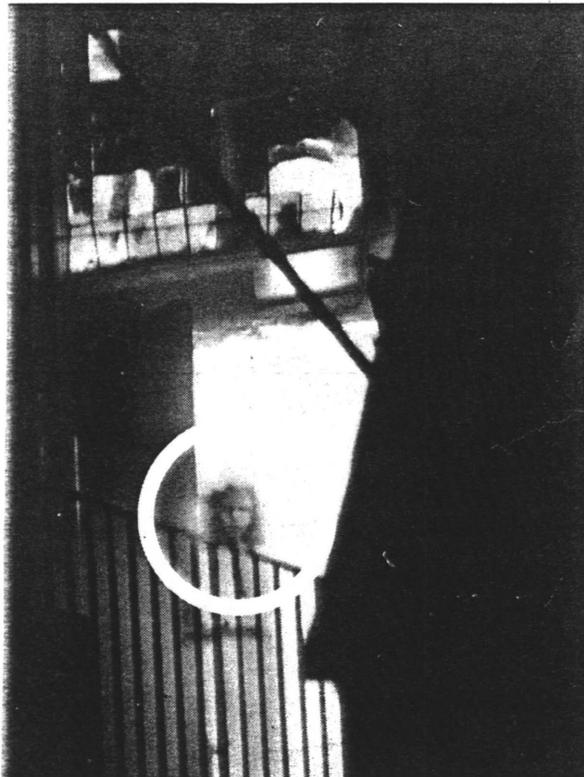
v: *If any member of the group suddenly becomes agitated, emotionally disturbed or distressed, they should be*

removed from the location as soon as possible. vi: If anyone experiences dramatic changes in either the atmospheric or body temperature, hears high-pitched whistling or voices in their head, they should contact Alan's Paranormal Helpline 0151-651-0725.

31st October, 1995. Birkenhead, Merseyside. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

The Ghostly lady

The Ghost of a 17th Century peasant girl seems to appear in the photograph reproduced below. It was taken by amateur cameraman Tony O' Rahilly after flames ripped through a doomed building. The figure appears to be standing where no human could be standing. Tony says he had no idea at the time that she was there.



The town of Wem in Shropshire is steeped in the legend of Jayne Churm, who started a catastrophic blaze in 1677. O' Rahilly claims he took the shot during a fire which wrecked the town hall in November, 1995, but only developed the film in late February this year (1996).

He swears he knew nothing of the figure until it emerged on developing paper as he printed the picture at home. *'I was a bit taken aback I can tell you,'* he said. *'But I have no idea what it is doing there. The fire was really going at that point and police were keeping everybody back. No one could have been that close to the flames without getting injured.'*

Workmen rebuilding the town hall have reported seeing a ghostly figure rise up from beneath the floor. Paranormal investigators were due to pay a visit to Wem at the time of going to press to conduct experiments.

The 'DAILY EXPRESS's photographic experts say the shot is just bad enough to be plausible.

'With modern technology you can do anything you like with pictures. The saving grace of this shot is that if you wanted to fake it you could do a far better job than this.' said one.

7th March, 1996. Wem, Shropshire. 'DAILY MAIL'.

Back From The Dead

A student pronounced dead after being run down by a car inside a zinc coffin used to carry the dead from traffic accidents.

Anja Rueschel, 19, of Stenda, Germany, said: 'I remember waking up in total darkness and started banging on the lid.'

She fainted as medics unscrewed the lid, but has since recovered from her head injuries.

8th March, 1996. Stenda, Germany. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Witchcraft In The World Today



Black Magic Theory In Severed Head Horror

The severed head of a man discovered by a roadside was used in a gruesome Black Magic ritual, police believe.

The horrific find was made by a woman walking her dog at Oxspring, near Barnsley, Yorkshire.

The man, who died of natural causes in his 80's, was buried in December, 1995.

'The grave must have been desecrated and the head removed some weeks ago,' police said.

4th February, 1996. Oxspring, near Barnsley. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

Mitterand Hit For 666

Former French president Francois Mitterand could have been a secret Devil worshipper, says celebrity fortune-teller Jaques Bois.

He noted that the hearse at Mitterand's recent funeral had the Devil's number 666 on its registration. And he says there are 666 windows in the glass pyramid at the Louvre, which Mitterand helped to design.

21st January, 1996. France. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Satanism And Black Magic At The Rollright Stones

A sensationalist tabloid magazine reported that Maria Pardoe had undergone an horrific experience at the notorious Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire.

Personally, I'd take the following with a healthy-sized dollop of salt, but our job is merely to report, so draw your own conclusions...

As a teenage Devil-worshipper in the clutches of a Satanic sect, Maria Pardoe was witness to a scarcely believable catalogue of horror. At an isolated beauty spot, Maria, mother-of-three, was involved in crazed sex orgies and even saw murder committed in front of her.

She believes the Satanists raped and abused scores of victims and killed more than a dozen during the few years she spent in their power. Only now has she plucked up the courage to talk about it. The group met to worship the Devil at the Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire - an ancient monument which dates back to 1,500 BC.

Frightened Maria, 37, sobbed as she revisited the sinister stones where even now from black candles - often used in Satanic rites - can be found pooled in rocky hollows. An official warning at the entrance to the ritual site orders: 'No entry from sunset to sunrise.'

Maria told how she was made to take part in sick rituals by her adoptive father, a senior member of the sect.

She said: 'I was first brought here as a 13-year-old girl and I was terrified. There were about six children and 30 adults who used to meet at a pub about a mile away. When everybody was there and it was properly dark we would all come up to the stones.'

The children were led into the middle of the ring and told to summon the Devil by counting all the stones in the ring twice.

It was difficult because it was dark and the stones are complicated, but if you counted the same number twice the Devil would come to you and be with you during the ceremony. Then we were kept in a corner outside the ring while the adults began the ritual. There were some pretty women in the group and they always got it the worst. They were made to lie in the middle of the ring while the men had sex with them in turn. Everybody would watch and the women were always made to have oral sex. Sometimes, the pretty ones were tied to the biggest stone in the ring called the Main Stone or the King's Stone.

When that happened whoever was tied to the stone was the property of all of us, you could do what you could do anything that you liked to that person. There were some very plain and dumpy people in the group and if you were ugly you were only good for humiliating and degrading acts.

No-one wanted to just have sex with them, so they were saved for the really cruel stuff. One terrifying thing they really did was symbolic and turns my stomach just to think about it. They had a 12 inch wooden cross. It was meant to represent Christ, the Church and all good things, and they used it to perform sex acts on the women. By using it in such a disgusting way they were saying: 'Our evil has the power, nothing can save you unless you are loyal to the Devil.'



Maria, who was christened Bethany by the sect, only knows the adults by special names. At each meeting one male would assume the role of High Priest, taking the name Nathaniel and leading the group chanting Latin phrases.

Maria went on: 'More than 20 years on I can still remember the chants but I don't know what any of them mean. While we were there we used to get us high on drink and made us smoke cannabis so we didn't know what we were doing. The children huddled together behind one of the biggest stones because it was often very cold with hardly any clothes on. We would spend the whole night in fear. We knew any one of us could be picked at any time and we'd have to do all the things we had seen

grown-ups do. I was tied to the stone many times and raped. I have seen them murder a baby and runaway children who nobody would miss. These people were either tied or dragged into the middle of the ring and had their throats cut or were stabbed through the heart. Sometimes they chose old tramps or winos who they lured up to the Stones with free drink. After killing the "high-ups" would carry the body back into the field. When they came back, the body would be buried and I just tried to forget what I'd seen. When you get that involved in something like that you are constantly terrified and you start to believe that the Devil really has got control. These people kept you in their power through fear. I can only explain it like this, remember when you were little and your mum was so angry she told you to do something - and you flew to do it? That is the state they had us in all the time. When they told you what to do, you did it as fast as you could and just hoped they would let you go when they were finished. They were always telling you what you were doing was "for the Devil" and that you would die if you betrayed him. Now I can see that it was a gang of evil perverts. Some used their own children in these rituals, and they were using all this Devil mumbo-jumbo to hold us in fear. I know it all sounds crazy, but all I'm asking for is someone to investigate what I say and give me a chance to tell the truth.

Maria escaped the sect at 18 - after more than 100 visits to the Stones...When she ran away from her home in Northfield, Birmingham and travelled to London to train as a nurse.

Now she has written to 'House Of Horrors' Detective Superintendent John Bennett, who spent months investigating Fred and Rose West's murderous lives, has written back to Maria to tell her that the alleged crimes did not take place in his area so he cannot investigate.

So she is planning to write to Thames Valley and Warwickshire police forces asking them to search for bodies near the Stones.

She says: 'I've seen my friends tortured and raped here and it's taken me all these years to pluck up the courage to tell the truth about what happened. I'm not doing this for fun, it puts me in pain to come back here and remember all the things that happened to us.'

A spokesman for Warwickshire Police said they were unaware of the allegations and had no plans as yet to investigate the site.

31st October, 1995. Rollright Stones. Oxfordshire.

And in a somewhat similar vein....

DEVIL CULTS PREY ON GIRLS IN GOD'S TOWN

according to the ever-reliable 'NEWS OF THE WORD' (and I don't think), sinister Black Magic cults are preying on young girls to lure them into bizarre rituals.

One alleged victim who was ensnared by a married Satanist was the 18-year-old daughter of a leading Salvation Army couple. At least four Black Magic cults have targeted 'God's Own Town' - Peterhead on Scotland's north-east coast, where religious groups outnumber hotels and pubs by two to one.

In pubs used by young people members try to tempt young girls to take part in semi-naked Witchcraft rituals. Now Church leaders, including the Sally Army couple, are fighting back against the Witches covens and practitioners of Black Magic.

Joy Ross, was a regular attendee at the Salvation Army Headquarters in Chapel Street until she fell under the spell of a Satanist, who she said would cast spells while sticking pins into Voodoo Dolls. Her parents, Major Victor Ross and wife Elizabeth were devastated. 'I could see the Devil in Joy's eyes,' said Major Ross. 'She was a good Christian and this man changed all that.'

But now Joy has turned her back on the Satanist and his Devil worship. 'Joy told me she once stared into the eyes of a friend of his for several minutes and the face of the

Devil appeared,' explained Mrs Ross. 'She got really frightened and this put her faith back in God.'

Joy also found new happiness with another man and they had a baby, Hope, now 5 months old. 'We were over the Moon because it represented her own new hope for the future,' said her mother.



Peterhead's church leaders have been holding secret meetings on how to combat the cults. One said: 'Everyone knows there people are going to churchyards for Satanic rituals. We're alarmed at the number of young people being sucked in.'

Major Ross told how a friend came across people conducting a Black Magic ceremony - they quickly scattered.

Retired businessman Tom Milne, 66, said; 'Religion is stuck down the throats of everyone here and young people in particular are rebelling and turning to Satanism. Satanism and Black Magic are becoming fashionable in Peterhead.'

10th March, 1996. Peterhead, North-East Scotland.

'News Of The World'.

The South African Witch Doctor's Quest

With a short red skirt, leopard-skin, beaded hair and sandals, his appearance was startling in a winter's day in Britain.

Equally alarming were the blood-curdling screams he let out on arrival at Heathrow on 15th February, not just for their decibel level, but for their purpose.

South Africa's most prominent Witchdoctor was summoning the spirits to help his quest to find the shrunken head of his great-great uncle King Hinsta, chief of the Xhosa nation from which Nelson Mandela is descended.

The King was killed by a British military expedition to the Eastern Cape more than 160 years ago. Chief Gcaleka believes his ancestor's head was brought to Britain, possibly to Scotland as the soldiers responsible for the King's death were Highlanders.

Museums and military officials say they can find no trace of the remains in Britain, but that has not deterred him.

'It is here...I have no doubt about it,' yelled the staring-eyed sangoma, or spiritual healer. Asked how he hoped to find the skull, he said: 'I am going to search with the spirits.'

He believes that many of South Africa's problems are being caused by Hinta's headless spirit wandering the country. If he can reunite the head with the body, those troubles will be over.



16th February, 1996. Scottish Highlands. 'DAILY EXPRESS'.

Witchcraft Murders

Four teenage of a Doomsday cult in Manila, Philippines, were persuaded by their mother to end a vigil waiting for the end of the world. They strangled the 40-year-old woman claiming she was possessed.

29th January, 1996. Manila, Philippines. 'DAILY MAIL'.

**And five men in Harare, Zimbabwe, have been arrested for murdering a neighbour to sell his body parts for Black Magic rituals.

29th January, 1996. Zimbabwe, Africa. 'DAILY MAIL'.

When Fate Turns It's Back

Stolen Stones Gather No Luck

To millions who gaze on it each year, the sight is unforgettable. But for some visitors, the memory of the magnificent, red splendour of Ayers Rock is not enough. Unable to resist, they pocket a small piece of it to take home as a souvenir. And that, according to the scores now posting chunks back to the landmark in Central Australia, is when all their troubles began.

Worried tourists, convinced they have been cursed, are returning their illicit mementoes to the rangers station at the Rock, complete with tales of sudden bad luck. One Londoner claimed he could hardly walk after an attack of gout. An American wrote that her mother was near death. Many told how they have been made bankrupt.

'There are obviously a lot of worried people out there - convinced all their bad luck has come about because they broke the rules and took pieces of rock', said Senior Ranger Julian Barry.

'They believe they will continue to be cursed until they send the pieces back, which is why bits of rock, of all shapes and sizes, have been pouring back in through my door. We've filled a large wheelbarrow with them. When you consider that some pieces are no bigger than a marble, that's a lot of returned rock.'

Ayers Rock, now known by its Aboriginal name of Allure, is an important religious and cultural symbol to Australia's native people. More than one million tourists have visited it in the past three years, climbing 1,100ft to the top or walking five miles around the base. They are warned against taking anything from the Rock or its surrounds, part of a vast National Park.

Mr Barry said there was no indication of any curse in Aboriginal folklore, but added that the Rock 'certainly has a curious aura - maybe there's something in it.'

13th February, 1996. Ayers Rock, Australia. 'DAILY MAIL'.

JINXED DJ IN A SPIN

Disaster struck BBC radio DJ Alan Clifford after made the grave mistake of walking under a ladder and duly broke an ankle. His wife Emma, 26, then developed pneumonia, a burst water tank flooded their home...And to cap it all, burglars nicked their furniture!!!

4th February, 1996. Carlton, Notts. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

DEATH AT THE OPERA

An opera singer fell off a ladder and died...Just after singing the aria 'YOU CAN ONLY LIVE SO LONG'.

Tenor Richard Versaille, 63, is believed to have had a heart attack during the opening performance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

21st January, 1996. New York, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

THE KILLER DOOR

A drunk bled to death after trying to kick open his jammed front door.

Richard Peach, 24, missed the frame and smashed through a glass pane, slashing his right foot, heel, and Achilles tendon. He was found slumped in a pool of blood outside his flat.

30th January, 1996. Wilenhall, West Midlands. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Hammer Horror

Dopey handyman Richard Gardner, 23, tried to hammer in a nail with his *gun*...and shot himself and his wife. As they recovered in hospital Sheriff Williford Faile said: 'It wasn't a very smart thing to do.'
31st January, 1996. Lancaster, South Carolina. 'DAILY SLUR'.

SALESMAN IN PARK ORDEAL

A salesman selling personal attack alarms was robbed at knifepoint as he walked through Birkenhead Park. The 17-year-old was threatened by two men who stole his coat containing £80, five personal attacks alarms, 29 radios and 48 watches.
9th February, 1996. Birkenhead, Merseyside. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

WOMAN KILLED BY WALNUT BUTTER

A woman executive died after eating Walnut Butter at an office party, an inquest heard. Louise Westlake, 27, suffered from a rare allergy to nuts but didn't realise they were in the Christmas meal. The engineering company operations manager felt unwell during the party on December 9th and returned to her room at the Hilton Hotel, Manchester Airport. She later collapsed and paramedics failed to revive her. Her mother, Annette, from Bristol, said Miss Westlake of Hounslow, West London, had suffered from asthma since childhood. 'If she ate nuts she would suffer stomach ache,' she added. Police discovered that the Walnut Butter had been served at the party with bread rolls.
28th February, 1996. Manchester Airport. 'DAILY EXPRESS'.

Turned Into A Tomato

A hypnotist left Christian Chavert red-faced...Literally!!! He convinced him he was a juicy, ripe tomato. Wife Nellie, from Narvonne, France, now has to watch over her husband because he keeps getting into the fridge!!!
3rd March, 1996. Narvonne, France. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

LOVE HURTS

Jacob Beisvitz was horrified when the vice girl he ordered when he stayed in a Tel Aviv hotel was his wife Rachel!
Not surprisingly, the couple are now getting divorced.
3rd January, 1996. Tel Aviv, Israel. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.
***And a wedding ended in farce when groom Christophe Hautefort told bride Madeline Sellard that her fingers were fat when he put on the ring in Lille, France.
The couple then exchanged blows and a brawl broke out. Christophe has since joined a dating agency.
4th February, 1996. Lille, France. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.
***Even worse, horrified Daisy Gladden was trapped in a car for four days after her 14-stone boyfriend James Young collapsed and died when making love to her in Ohio.
3rd March, 1996. Ohio, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

OH NO!!! NOT MY CAR!!!

A motorist who left a wrecked car for scrap men to collect was stunned when they took his much-loved family saloon instead. Paul Rance asked the men to remove a blue Vauxhall Chevette from outside his home. But they took his yellow Chevette which they later broke up.
4th February, 1996. Aylesbury, Bucks. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

SPOTTER KILLED BY TRAIN

A trainspotter was mown down by an 80-ton engine as he jotted down numbers. Robert Young, 50, was killed on his favourite stretch of railway line. The bachelor was struck from behind by a sprinter train as it pulled out of a station in Peterborough.

Mr Young was a regular visitor to the station, spending his Saturday afternoons taking down numbers as he watched trains pull in and out of the platforms. His sister, Elizabeth Turnell, said: 'He really enjoyed it. It was a lifelong hobby.'
27th February, 1996. Peterborough, Cambs. 'DAILY SLUR'.

MORE WEIRD CRIME



Gay farmer Ian Hill mistook an undercover cop's facial twitch for a wink. He went over to a park bench at a meeting place for homosexuals and fondled the top of the surveillance cop's thigh and squeezed his penis. Hill, 48, of Buckbottom Farm (Cosmic Joke Name Game at it yet again) in Cumbria, admitted indecent assault.
1st February, 1996. Cumbria. 'DAILY SLUR'.

** James Donner, 23, robbed a car salesman of £400 but was arrested within the hour at his home in Denver, Colorado. Donner had his name tattooed on his right cheek.
1st February, 1996. Denver, Colorado. 'THE SCUM'.

**Virginia police are holding a 4ft Python, hoping to recover the \$1,000 in banknotes - fed to the snake by a robber trying to hide his haul.
12th February, 1996. Virginia, USA. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS'.

**A singing robber who raided a bank near Copenhagen, belted out the ABBA hit 'Money, Money', before fleeing with £3,000. The man, an ex-employee, was later arrested.
30th January, 1996. Copenhagen, Denmark. 'THE SCUM'.

**Also in Denmark, in the port city of Esbjerg, a thief slipped up when he attempted to rob a butcher's shop and fell into a vat of indelible sausage dye. Police believe he will be easy to find as he was likely to have a bright-red face for the foreseeable future...
3rd February, 1996. Esbjerg, Denmark. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST'.

THE BEAST OF EXMOOR

The sheep-slaying 'Beast Of Exmoor' first made its appearance at Drewstone Farm in the Yeo Valley in 1983.

The Royal Marines were called in, but failed to shoot the creature. (And maybe we should not be too surprised by this. In countless incidents involving 'Alien Animals' the entities display a disconcerting imperviousness to man's technology. One is constantly reminded of the words of a gamekeeper upon hearing that his master intended to take a pot shot at 'Nessie', at the tail end of the 19th Century... 'Perhaps your Lordship's gun would misfire - Ed).

Nowadays, the singular 'Beast' is believed to have been an entire family of Pumas. Between them they have accounted for over seventy sheep at Drewstone. At the nearby village of Bishop's Nympton, I met one of Britain's foremost Big Cat investigators, Nigel Brierly. An elderly scholarly man, a naturalist of the old school, Nigel lives in a lonely grey hilltop building called, appropriately enough, The Old School.

'It used to be a school for the children of agricultural workers from the farms around here, about a hundred years ago', Nigel remarked. 'Of course, now with machinery those workers and their children have vanished.'

One hundred years ago, I reflected, Big Cats would have found it very difficult to survive in a working countryside. When people toiled in every field, a stray dog would start a hue and cry, let alone a Leopard. Progress and Pumas have worked hand in hand (or hand in paw), for new forestry plantations provide excellent cover for Big Cats.

Illustrations of these elusive creatures in English fields hung framed in the walls of the Brierly's strange, Neo-Gothic home. These were the originals of pictures used in Nigel's guide to British Big Cats, the definitive work on the subject; *THEY STALK BY NIGHT* (Yeo Valley Productions). I had not known before that Nigel had drawn these pictures himself. He also has made large collection of plaster casts of footprints (or 'Pugmarks', as Big Cat footprints were once known to big game hunters of the Empire). Rare books on Pumas graced his shelves.

Mr Brierly found that both Pumas and Lynxes are attracted to catmint. He planted the mint, then learned how to make an oil extract that attracts cats. As yet, none of his cat traps has succeeded in capturing a Puma, but he lives in hope.

Before he retired to Bishop's Nympton, Nigel Brierly had worked for the London Education Authorities, preparing boxes of newly-killed creatures for schoolchildren to dissect in Biology lessons. So he could himself be termed a predator, albeit of a genteel kind, feared by fish and frog. The locally-made plaster casts of Puma footprints were very well constructed and I could almost feel the paws reach up to pat me. His vast collection of reports of Big Cat sightings looked interesting.

Most accounts of 'Lionesses' at large in England must surely refer to Pumas. Coloured drawings of mystery cats, sent to Nigel, had great charm, and recalled the 'naive art' of Grandma Moses.

'I'm sure the Big Black Cats here are Pumas, not Black Leopards or Panthers. They run with brown-coloured animals, who obviously are Pumas,' Mr Brierly said. However, on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, I had been told by farmers who had lost sheep to Big Cats that Black Cats and Brown Cats were *never* seen together. There is no reason why Black Pumas and Black Panthers should not both run wild in Britain. At first, I wondered if Pumas and Leopards were cross-breeding and producing black cubs unlike each parent. However, only one such cross has been recorded in captivity, at Carl Hagenbeck's Zoo in 19th Century Hamburg, and it was spotted. It can still be seen, in stuffed form, in the Rothschild museum at Tring.

'I heard that someone in Exmoor stumbled on a stables in a lonely spot, opened a stall door and saw nine or ten captive Big Black Cats leaping around inside,' Nigel Brierly told me.

'Ha! I bet that there's a secret puma fancy!' I exclaimed. 'Owners are breeding them in different colours, as they do tame mice, rabbits and canaries! No wonder there's a lot of strange animals about. A small Lynx, or Bobcat can breed with a domestic cat, and a large Lynx, as you say, can probably breed with a Puma, as well as with a Bobcat. So there could now be a chain of relationship that links a fireside cat to a wild Puma on the hills, with every stop in between.'

Nigel looked amused, but did not contradict me. He is convinced that Lynxes, as well as Pumas, live wild in the Yeo Valley.

In Nigel's book, there is a picture of Mr Jim Gibbs, farm manager, holding the skeletal remains of a lamb killed in broad daylight. Nigel drove me to see Jim, who has now retired, and lives in a quiet suburban street in nearby South Molton. Jim has seen Panthers and Pumas on various occasions. In fact, I would guess that more people in the West Country have seen wild Pumas that have seen wild badgers, since badgers are so secretive. Dropping me off at Jim's house, Nigel shook my hand and drove into the sunset.

A friendly, talkative soul, with expressive black eyebrows, Jim launched into Big Cat reminiscences without more ado. Most of the incidents he described happened ten years ago. Since then, Bodmin Moor seems to have replaced Exmoor as the main Big Cat Country.

'Yes, I've seen the bloomin' cat, sat in the bloomin' field an' at, and never took no notice of it,' he said. 'I just saw it two or three times out o' the corner of my eye, an' thought it was my neighbours black Labrador. Then I remembered, she'd got a golden Labrador! I took a proper look next time, an' it was a Big Cat! I was the manager o' Limeslake Farm then, all on the same batch of land as Drewstone where the Marines came. We began losing lambs day by day. They took the hounds out to find the culprits, and all at once I see it, a big Black Cat! It came out from some rough ground, and just took and ran. Where did it come from? I presume somebody once had it for a pet. I know for a fact that they must have been breeding. The farm that I was on was ideal for that. I've seen them with young ones at a distance. Some people I know had relatives come across from America. They said; "I didn't know you had Cougars here!" There was the Cat sat in front of them! Oh, I suppose I've seen Big Cats anything up to twenty or thirty times over the years. Hundreds of people have seen them. I've seen horses with scratches on them, an' big cows with scratches on them. Here, take a look at these.'

He showed me some photographs of dead sheep with torn necks and stripped ribs.

'I've seen a Big Cat with two youngsters terrifying the cows. That was very early, it wasn't what I'd call daylight, it was a misty morning. Still, you could see it 'twas Big Cats. Foxes don't terrify cows and calves, it isn't of a fox's nature, and the Cats don't have a fox's way of walking. I've seen rusty-coloured cats an' black ones running together. They attach foxes, they do - I've seen a fox ripped abroad by them, an' seen trees that were scratched and marked. But I've never seen a Big Cat up a tree. They're always on the ground, ainem?'

'Do you think Big Cats will ever be wiped out?' I asked.

'No, it's too late now, that's my opinion of it. There's too many of 'em'.

Just then, Jim's son Ian let himself into the house, a cheerful, robust young man with short hair. He joined in the conversation with enthusiasm. Apparently, some years ago, Ian's nephews from Manchester were down on a visit, when someone noticed a Big Cat chasing the bullocks round and round the field.

'We all saw the Cat. It was big, black and nasty!' Ian said. 'These bullocks were six to eight months old, but when we all ran out, ten of us, we broke the step and fell down in a heap, cups spilling everywhere! The cat walked off into the gorse, then turned, sat down and looked at us. That was August, 1984. An evening, it 'twas.'

'We were just having our tay,' Jim put in. 'When the Cat came, and there was ten on 'em watching it on the doorstep, and the bloomin' slate step broke! It if wasn't for that, we would o' had a photo!'

'You know that big ram of Eric's?' Ian went on. 'An army officer saw the Cat pick the whole body up in its mouth and make off. When the Marines were here, and there was a reward for the Cat, guns were going off all over the place. People feared for their dogs. If you went out in the woods you'd get shot at, that's how bad it 'twas.'

'A farmer shot his own cow - I heard that tale!' Ian said. 'Five hundred people were out shooting. I heard a tale, a policeman came up to a farm gate, there were so many guns firing, he took one look and went away. Ridgeback Hounds that hunt Lions in Africa were brought in, but got no scent. The day the Marines came to Drewstone Farm, the Cats moved on to other farms. They know when it's safe and when it isn't. Those Cats could run through sheep and they'd take no notice. A Cat could take one sheep, and none o' the other sheep would get spooked at all. It's the biggest problem round here! The Cat's got so common, everybody swore we were feeding them! Someone said; "I nearly shot your big Black Cat."

'Perhaps if one is found dead one day, you can send it to the Ministry Of Agriculture, and they'll be bound to take notice and do something,' I remarked.

'Found dead! There's hundreds and hundreds of red deer on Exmoor, and no-one's ever found one dead of old age. To my mind, and I said so all along, we'll never get rid of them!' Jim concluded.

The British Big Cat, it seems, is here to stay.

ROY KERRIDGE.

(For enquiries about Nigel Brierly's book: 'THEY STALK BY NIGHT', telephone 01769-550-589.)

THE ROMANCE OF THE WOLF

When a Japanese friend lamented the loss of the Japanese Wolf, now extinct, I remarked that Wolves have long been extinct in England.

She was shocked.

'What, no Wolves in England, the home of the Wolf? No Wolves now, in the country of Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs! That's terrible!'

Artistic people, such as my friend, tend to romanticise the Wolf as a noble Spirit Of The Wilderness.

Practical people, farmers and countrymen, have an equally exaggerated feeling about the Wolf. To them, the Spirit Of The Wilderness is an Evil spirit, since the British countryside has been dearly won from the prehistoric wilderness, and could easily fall back into its former state. So to many country people the Wolf is a devil, its extinction a matter for rejoicing.

An old Welsh lady once greeted me at her cottage door, and told me of the dreadful day when Wolves escaped from the Cardiganshire Wild Life Park.

'The whole village stayed indoors until they were caught;', she said.

In the USA, were Wolves are now protected, farmers near Wolf territory live in quite unnecessary fear of being attacked, since the North American Timber-Wolf has never been known to eat a human being.

So I was intrigued to read, in the small ads section of a canary-fanciers newspaper, an advertisement for Wolf-Dog puppies, cross-breeds between Alsations or Huskies and North American Wolves.



I spoke on the phone to Mrs Edwina Harrison of Fieldhouse Farm, near Retford, Notts. She invited me along to see her Wolf-Dogs so I caught a train and met her at Retford Station.

As we bowled along in a car that whiffed slightly of Wolf-Dog, she answered my anxious questions. My fears were these: would Wolf-Dogs be bred for ferocity and be bought by

thugs in place of Put-Bulls and Rottweillers? Might not such Wolf-Dogs escape, revert to type and prove a worse menace to sheep than stray dogs and escaped Pumas have ever been? Mrs Harrison sought to reassure me on both counts.

'I take great care to whom I sell my Wolf-Dog cubs,' she told me. 'I make sure they go to good homes. They are perfectly good in the house, and my own favourite, Timber, sleeps beside my bed. No. I have no pure-bred Wolves at my kennels. Wolf-owners have to apply for licences under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act of 1976. One of my customers told the neighbours that he cross-bred dog was a Wolf, and the R.S.P.C.A. seized it. She is now trying to fight the case. As long as Wolf-Dogs have some domestic blood in them, they are exempt from the Act.'

'All the same, I notice you refer to the young ones as "cubs", not "puppies", I observed.

'Well, they are cubs to me, such delightful creatures! We have two litters of six-week-old cubs at the farm now. I'm sure you'll like them. Yes, of course the mothers will let you handle them.'

'Another thing, suppose a Wolf-Dog gets lost', I said 'Won't it make for the nearest wood and dig a lair, emerging at night to prey on farm animals?'

'Nonsense! I keep German Shepherds and other dogs, and once when I brought home a Wolf-Dog, the dog's barking scared it, and it ran away up the road. Although missing for a few days, it remained near houses, and had nothing to eat, although there was a flock of sheep nearby. You see, it had been brought up with a bottle-fed lamb, and wouldn't dream of hurting a sheep. When I went up there, the flock of sheep had scented the Wolf-Dog, and formed into a big protective circle. We keep Jacob's sheep ourselves, and the Wolf-Dogs never touch them.' (I was not surprised when I saw the Harrison flock, for it was dominated by a huge dangerous, curly-horned ram and led by a llama! Even the biggest and baddest of Wolves would think twice before descending on such a fold). Immediately on arrival at the small, cluttered farm, I met my first Wolf-Dog. This was Cochise, the pet of one of the farm helpers, Sue. Like most of the staff at the understaffed farm, Sue and her family live in a trailer, or mobile home, and Cochise had made himself a lair beneath it. A grey and white animal, he resembled a nervous Husky, and dived into his cavern on my approach. Later, when he grew used to me, he frolicked around me inside the trailer, without upsetting furniture or spraying urine, as a wild Wolf would certainly have done. He did tear the curtains, mind you, just as my dogs do. Apparently, the local postman holds Cochise in some awe.

I ducked beneath a washing line, and soon found myself in a small, dark, front room hung with Wolfiana. Books on Wolves vied with pictures and models of Shire Horses for my attention. Mr Bill Harrison keeps Shire Horses and heavy hunters, sometimes entering them in ploughing contests. Mr and Mrs Harrison are an elderly couple. Trying to run their retirement dream-farm, complete with animals, seemed to stretch them to the uttermost. Fortunately, Sue, with a large family, and ex-army husband, had come to buy a Wolf-Dog (Cochise) and stayed on to work at the kennels and farm. The only other employee was Molly, a tough, bright-eyed local girl who seemed to spend her time pounding marrow bones into mush, with a pot n a stick like an African villager.

When the tea-things had been safely cleared away, two enormous Wolf-Dogs bounded into the room, jumped up on me and sniffed me all over. Evidently deciding I was inedible, they ran jumping and licking everyone in the room in boisterous high spirits, before rushing off. Except for a slight upward curve of the tail, a trait found in no wild dog, they resembled Wolves in every particular. Alsations (or German Shepherds, as the Harrison's called them) have black muzzles, a most un-Wolf-like trait. Siberian Huskies, on the other hand, have white jowls, white paws, and a pale spot over each eye, markings that are characteristic of Wolves. They ate

obvious first cousins to the Wolf, a fact some Husky-breeders dispute. These two breeds, Alsatian and Husky, represented the dog-part of the Harrison's Wolves, a part of which, Mrs Harrison, Wolf-romanticist-supreme, was not particularly proud.

Buck, the founding father of seven years ago, looked like a Husky. His more Wolf-like pups were prized for breeding.

'We are not trying to breed the Wolf nature out of dogs,' she told me. 'We want our Wolf-Dogs to have all the good qualities of Wolves and to remain superior to dogs. Now come on out and meet the Wolf-Dogs and their cubs.'

Eagerly, I followed Mrs Harrison and Sue into a small concrete yard where Alsations leaped and barked. The yard was lined with wire-netting pens, in which Wolf-Dogs and Siberian Huskies were kept. Only the superior strength and posture of the Wolf-Dogs distinguished them from the Huskies. In the far North, Husky bitches are often left out to mate with Wolves to strengthen the breed. Mrs Harrison told me that she had seen Wolf-hounds attempt to chase the Huskies. There seemed to be some Cruft-ish rivalry between Husky-breeders and breeders of unrecognised Wolf-Dogs. Mrs Harrison hoped to start a Wolf-howling concert for my benefit, but only one Husky complied.

It was disconcerting to see the Wolf-Dogs confined in rows of pens, but after all, fox and stag hounds, hunting animals too boisterous for chintzy parlours, are often kept in the same way. Like hounds, the Harrison Wolf-Dogs had frequent exercise. I would recommend Wolf-Dog ownership to country people used to hounds and their ways. A Wolf Dog though, is not a lap-dog. Admitted by a friendly mother Wolf-bitch to her lair, I fondled her entrancing fat fluffy cubs, some grey with white eye spots and some pure white, for a white Arctic Wolf-Dog lived nearby. This made my day worthwhile.

ROY KERRIDGE.

For Further Enquiries About Wolf-Dog Puppies,
Phone: 01777-228-376.

NEW BOOK ILLUSTRATED BY ROY
KERRIDGE



An illustration from 'A HORN IN THE GROUND', a children's book by Selina Scott (no relation). Illustrated by Roy Kerridge. Available from Petal's Books, price: £3. Tel: 0181-536-1349.



WHITBY GOTHIC WEEKEND III

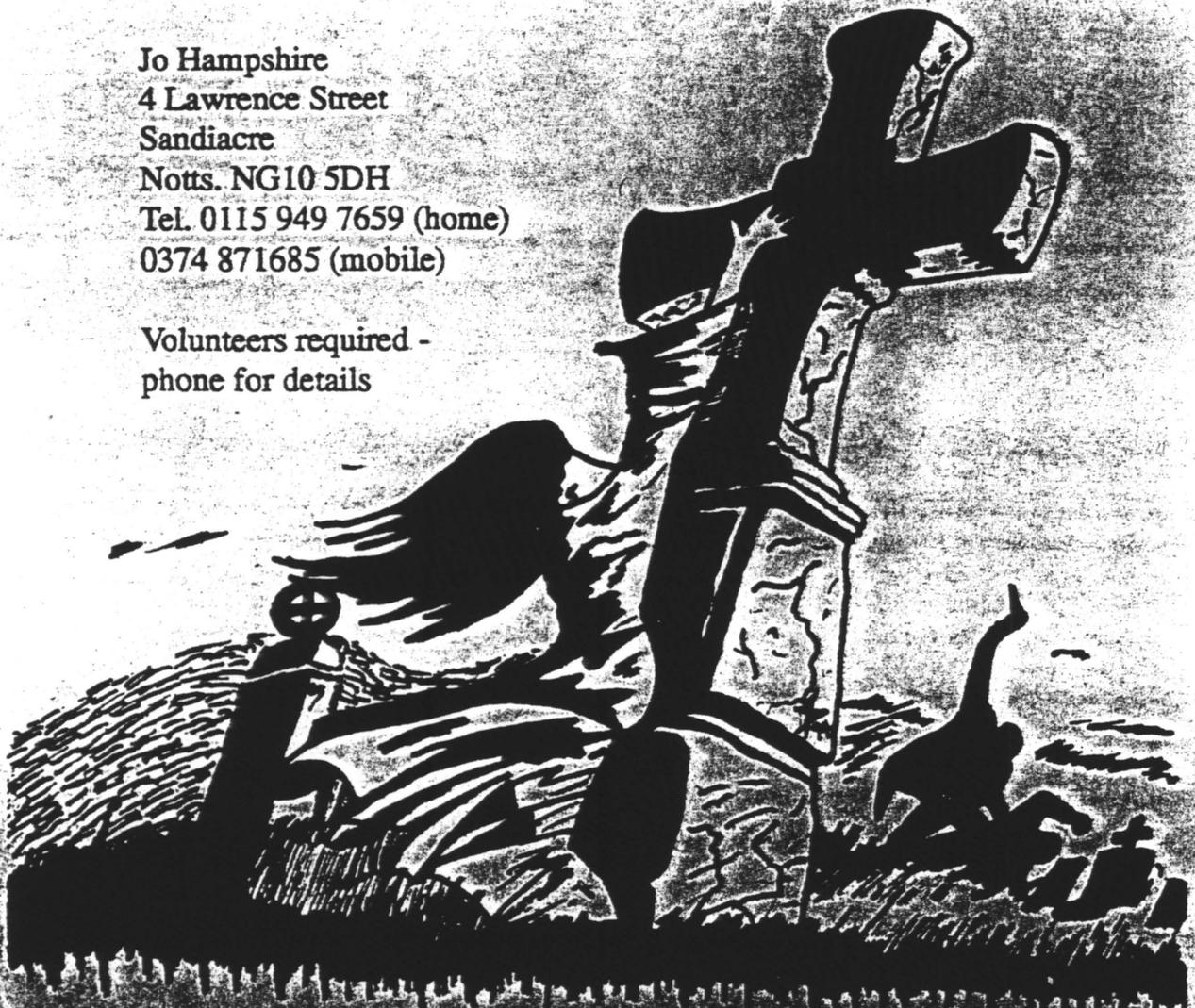
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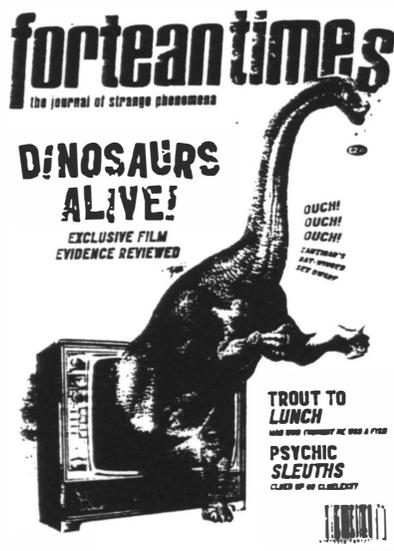


EXCHANGE MAGAZINE REVIEWS

THE FORTEAN TIMES #86

Still the magazine whose standards of production and writing provide the yardstick for that which we all need to aspire to. Even more so now they've gone monthly!!!

And this latest issue has to be the best for some time. The articles are as varied as they are entrancing: Dinosaurs Surviving In The Congo, Psychic Sleuths, Kevin McClure's Forum piece on End Time Mythology, a new Nessie picture, and the absolutely outstanding Strange Days (now printed in full, glorious technicolor), as well as part two of the Fortean aspects of 'The X-Files'...



Pheeeewww!!! How can we ever hope to compete with that little lot??? Sheer magic.

£2:20 from all good newsagents. Subscription details: 12 issues inc P&P £26:40 Box 2409, London NW54NP, UK.

ANNALS 2 #26

Another superb edition of one of the most informative Fortean mags around. This one maintains the previous high standards by including fascinating articles on The Roswell Autopsy Film, Lunar Enigmas, The Face On Mars, Crop Circles, Archaeological Cover-ups, Mystery Clouds, and lots, lots more.

Sample copy £1:75. Subs £7 for 4 issues. 4G Preston Manor, Wick Hollow, Glastonbury, Somerset. BA6 8JQ.

TRANS UFO #2

A quite superb idea made real. A publication that translates into English, UFO articles from Scandinavian countries and Argentina. We really can't praise this effort highly enough. This profusely illustrated edition carries pieces on Danish UFO sightings 1992-3, Flying Discs in Sweden, and Crop Circles in Argentina. Plus loads more besides.

Tremendous stuff. The only disappointing thing is that the mag only comes out twice a year!!!

£3:38 Sample issue. Eileen Fletcher, Derwent Cottage, Derwent Dam, Banford via Sheffield, S30 2AQ.

HAUNTED SCOTLAND

NEWSLETTER #6

Mark Fraser is to be congratulated for producing an excellent publication, free of charge. His latest release features Ghosts encountered in the Gateway To The Highlands, UFO reports and cracking selection of Scottish press clippings. Anyone with any sense whatsoever, will take advantage of this free, well-written newsletter.

Mark Fraser, 35, South Dean Rd, Kilmarnock, KA3 7RD, Ayrshire, Scotland.

DEMETER IV

The Vampire fanzine of the wife of John D. Inman, Vanda L. is a must for anyone even remotely interested in Vampire lore in fact and fiction.

The current edition features Vampire Therapy, Dr. Blood's Film Reviews, the Real-Life Vlad Dracul, and a selection of suitably spooky ghost stories.

32, Valley Rd, Scarborough, Yorkshire, Sample: £2:50.

THE GOBLIN UNIVERSE #1

From the geniuses who brought you the superb 'ANIMALS AND MEN', comes this surrealist production dealing primarily with...Well, er, weird shit, not to out too fine a point on it.

There's an interview with Jon Downes And The Amphibians From Outer Space (who've recently released their latest CD: 'THE CASE' - a reviews of which will appear in the next issue of D.O.N.), News From Nowhere, several slices of strange fiction and erm, a couple of obscene poems about postmen!!!

'THE GOBLIN UNIVERSE', 15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter. £1 Sample Issue.

GHOSTWATCH #10 Vol 2

Another marvellous edition from the pen of Mike Mckeown. This one features highly entertaining articles on Electronic Voice Phenomena, Poltergeists, hooking up to the Supernatural Internet, a look at haunted pubs, and a Christmas poem from Mark Fraser.

Brill stuff!!!

PO Box 54, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L43 7FD. Sample issue £2:50.

SPECTRAL!

THE MAGAZINE OF GHOSTS, POLTERGEISTS & HAUNTINGS

ISSUE No 5

October - December 1995

£1.75



SPECTRAL! #5

Almost a sister magazine to GHOSTWATCH, an admirable collection of articles and newsclippings concerning supernatural entities...

Inside this issue you'll find The Cock Lane Ghost, Leicester's Most Haunted Building: Braunstone Hall, A Ghost Walk In London, and a round-up of cases from the files of Malcolm Robinson's S.P.I.

Highly readable and well worth a look.

PO Box 18, Aberdare, Mid-Glamorgan, CF44 8HG. Sample issue £1:75 +25p postage. £6 for 4 issues.

AWARENESS #3 Vol 20

Although this is a very established and long-running publication, this is the first time we've come across this outstanding mag.

Parkinson on all things astronomical. A hugely entertaining read.

Omar Fowler, 94, The Circle, Sinfin, Derby, DE24 9HR.
£1 Sample copy (Members free).

3RD STONE #22

Undoubtedly the best-produced magazine on our exchange list (aside from the FT, of course), this glossy publication calls itself 'The Magazine For The New Antiquarian', and is written roughly along the same lines as 'AT THE EDGE', in that it deals with mysteries related to Britain's ancient past. Written with a welcome dollop of humour, the Autumn/Winter edition features an interview with Julian Cope (formerly with Liverpool band The Teardrop Explodes), Chambered Mounds in South West Wales, A Supernatural Highway traversing the West Country, and a look at Druid Circles.

Profusely illustrated throughout, (the photo reproductions are first class), this magazine is rapidly becoming one of our fave exchanges.

£2:50 sample issue. £7 for 3 issues. PO Box 258, Cheltenham, GL53 OHR.



ENCOUNTERS #6

Any publication that calls itself 'The World's Most Paranormal Magazine' is cursed with a major case of over-inflated self-importance!

And ENCOUNTERS, as well-produced and lavishly illustrated as it undoubtedly is, has got an ego of Prince Naseem proportions.

The latest edition is crammed with articles (surely aimed at the younger end of the market - nothing wrong with that, of course, indeed, some would say, with a fair degree of honesty that it's about time a paranormal publication was seen to cater for a younger audience), headed with tabloid-type headlines eg: 'Shape-Shifter: Exclusive Hypnotic Regression Reveals Greys Can Shape Shift (Jeezly ol' Crow, Kevin McClure will be having kittens!)', 'UFO Top Secrets Exposed', 'Ouija Medium Explains The Dangers Of Using The Board...It's all very lurid and about as genuine as a politician's smile.

The quality of the writing is juvenile, but despite that, (or maybe because of it), not un-entertaining).

It's never gonna win any awards for in-depth, well-balanced journalism, but then that never necessarily sells magazines, does it????

£2:99 Sample Issue. Available from all good newsagents.

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The Journal Of Contact International UK features a moving tribute to the late Lord Clancarty (a great contributor to Ufology and founder member of Contact International), a critical look at the Earthlights Hypothesis, a Dossier Of Greek Mythology, and a look at whether or not electromagnetic influences on the brain can cause UFO sightings.

Essential reading for the serious-minded Ufologist!!!

11, Ousely Close, New Marston, Oxford, OX3 OJS. Subs £9 for 4 £14 for 8.

AT THE EDGE #1

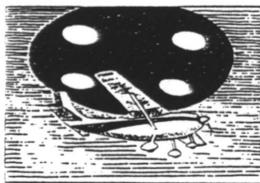
The first issue of the magazine formerly known as MERCIAN MYSTERIES, is an extremely well-produced affair, one of the best on the market.

And, it is well-written too. This edition includes the usual intriguing articles on various facets of archaeology and folklore including Otherworld Cattle, Time And Place - The TV Of Our Minds, Under The Greenwood Tree and The Wise Man Of Gotham.

A great read.

2, Cross Hill Close, Wymesswold, Loughborough, LE12 6UJ. £7 for 4 issues.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS 173
March 1996



EDITOR: JENNY RANDELS COVER DESIGN: ROY SANDBACK

NORTHERN UFO NEWS #173

Jenny Randles long-running magazine is as excellent as ever with all the latest UFO news and features including pieces on The M.O.D. and UFO's, Jenny's latest BBC 2 documentary, Mike Wooten of BUFORA on the commercial side of Ufology, and yet more aerial wonders from the wilds of Wales....Highly recommended!!!

11, Pike Court, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8QF. Subs £7 for 6 issues. Payable to 'NORTHERN UFO NEWS'.

UFO NETWORK NEWS

INTERNATIONAL #1

A new one on us, but a publication that is more than deserving of your support.

The inaugural issue includes a large collection of the latest UFO newsclippings, Skywatch reports from around the Leeds area, the Maurice Masse UFO/Occupants encounter and more besides.

88, Whincover Drive, Old Farmley, Leeds, LS12 5JT. £1 Sample Issue.

ANIMALS AND MEN # 8

As regular readers will know, this is your humble editors fave magazine, not least because it deals exclusively with my favourite facet of the paranormal...namely, Cryptozoology. The latest issue features Green Cats and Dogs, The Puerto Rican Goatsucker, The Malayan Mystery Man-Beast, Cryptocetology (mystery Whales), and the discovery of a new species in Derbyshire. Simply brilliant stuff!!!

15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, EX4 2NA. £1:75 Sample.

ENIGMAS # 43

Malcolm Robinson's truly excellent mouthpiece for his very own Strange Phenomena Investigations (S.P.I.), is the usual high quality/quantity mix of Fortean. The current issue contains pieces on The Falkirk UFO Event, Ghostly Happenings in a Scottish Restaurant, S.P.I. research work,

lectures, and all the very latest unusual stories from the weird and wonderful world of the paranormal. Superb!!!

41, The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 2TT, Scotland. £2:30 single issue, £11:50 for 5 issues.

NETWORK NEWS

The Beastly Solar Conspiracy Issue of this prolific and well-written publication features a welter of newsclippings concerning all things weird and wonderful, with a special focus on Alien Animals and strange animal behaviour, the Occult Power Of Money, and Signs And Portents. Essential reading for those who want to stay informed of the very latest paranormal news.

Earthly Delights, PO Box 2, Lothwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0YY. Subs £5 for 4 issues.

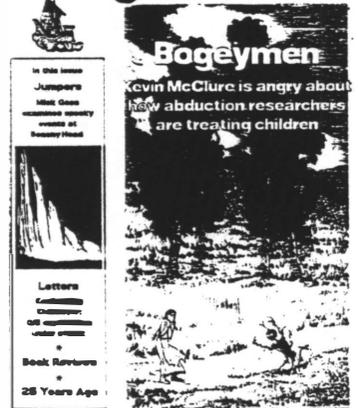
PSYCHIC NEWS # 3321

'Over 60 years' weekly reporting on Spiritualism and the Paranormal', and still going strong!!!

This weekly paper provides you, the reader, with an indispensable overview of all the current events in the fascinating world of the Supernatural. The latest edition at the time of going to press features an exorcism in Widness, Body Invaders, Encounters With Angels, Hypnotic Regression, and a possibly anomalous photo from Portugal. And all for only 35p!!!

Subs details; £28 for 1 year from Clock Cottage, Stanstead Hall, Stanstead Mountfichet, Essex, CM24 8UD.

Magonia 55
CLB March 1996
Investigating Occultatory Visions and Beliefs



MAGONIA #55

A consistently well-written publication, always crammed with thought-provoking articles by some of the best authors in the field.

Issue 55 includes pieces by Kevin McClure on 'Bogeymen': a scathing review of the methods employed by Alien Abduction proponents in acquiring 'evidence', Mick Goss on the Killer Black Monk Of Beachy Head, the famous UFO/Occupants encounter by Father Gill in Papua, New Guinea, and lots more...

Always challenging. Always laced with a goodly dose of healthy scepticism. One of our favourite reads.

John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

OVNI# March Issue

The Newsletter of The Phenomena Research Association, a monthly journal featuring all the very latest news from the annals of Ufology.

The March edition includes the not-very-surprising revelation that the Santilli Film has been torn to shreds at the Leeds UFO conference. There's an excellent review of the entire Santilli affair, reproduced from an original article by Kent Jeffrey, and an excellent piece by Barry

The Journal Of Contact International UK features a moving tribute to the late Lord Clancarty (a great contributor to Ufology and founder member of Contact International), a critical look at the Earthlights Hypothesis, a Dossier Of Greek Mythology, and a look at whether or not electromagnetic influences on the brain can cause UFO sightings.

Essential reading for the serious-minded Ufologist!!!

11, Ousely Close, New Marston, Oxford, OX3 OJS. Subs £9 for 4 £14 for 8.

AT THE EDGE #1

The first issue of the magazine formerly known as MERCIAN MYSTERIES, is an extremely well-produced affair, one of the best on the market.

And, it is well-written too. This edition includes the usual intriguing articles on various facets of archaeology and folklore including Otherworld Cattle, Time And Place - The TV Of Our Minds, Under The Greenwood Tree and The Wise Man Of Gotham.

A great read.

2, Cross Hill Close, Wymesswold, Loughborough, LE12 6UJ. £7 for 4 issues.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS 173
March 1996



EDITOR: JENNY RANDBLES COVER DESIGN: ROY SANDBACK

NORTHERN UFO NEWS #173

Jenny Randles long-running magazine is as excellent as ever with all the latest UFO news and features including pieces on The M.O.D. and UFO's, Jenny's latest BBC 2 documentary, Mike Wooten of BUFORA on the commercial side of Ufology, and yet more aerial wonders from the wilds of Wales....Highly recommended!!!

11, Pike Court, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8QF. Subs £7 for 6 issues. Payable to 'NORTHERN UFO NEWS'.

UFO NETWORK NEWS

INTERNATIONAL #1

A new one on us, but a publication that is more than deserving of your support.

The inaugural issue includes a large collection of the latest UFO newscippings, Skywatch reports from around the Leeds area, the Maurice Masse UFO/Occupants encounter and more besides.

88, Whincover Drive, Old Farmley, Leeds, LS12 5JT. £1 Sample Issue.

ANIMALS AND MEN # 8

As regular readers will know, this is your humble editors fave magazine, not least because it deals exclusively with my favourite facet of the paranormal...namely, Cryptozoology.

The latest issue features Green Cats and Dogs, The Puerto Rican Goatsucker, The Malayan Mystery Man-Beast, Cryptocetology (mystery Whales), and the discovery of a new species in Derbyshire. Simply brilliant stuff!!!

15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, EX4 2NA. £1:75 Sample.

ENIGMAS # 43

Malcolm Robinson's truly excellent mouthpiece for his very own Strange Phenomena Investigations (S.P.I.), is the usual high quality/quantity mix of Fortean. The current issue contains pieces on The Falkirk UFO Event, Ghostly Happenings in a Scottish Restaurant, S.P.I. research work,

lectures, and all the very latest unusual stories from the weird and wonderful world of the paranormal. Superb!!!

41, The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 2TT, Scotland. £2:30 single issue, £11:50 for 5 issues.

NETWORK NEWS

The Beastly Solar Conspiracy Issue of this prolific and well-written publication features a welter of newscippings concerning all things weird and wonderful, with a special focus on Alien Animals and strange animal behaviour, the Occult Power Of Money, and Signs And Portents.

Essential reading for those who want to stay informed of the very latest paranormal news.

Earthly Delights, PO Box 2, Lothwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0YY. Subs £5 for 4 issues.

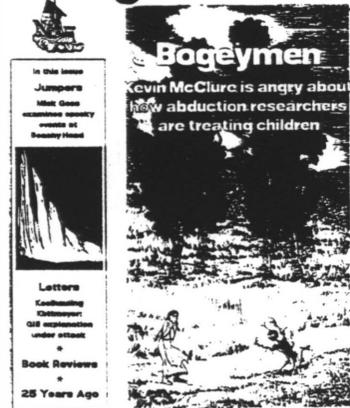
PSYCHIC NEWS # 3321

'Over 60 years' weekly reporting on Spiritualism and the Paranormal', and still going strong!!!

This weekly paper provides you, the reader, with an indispensable overview of all the current events in the fascinating world of the Supernatural. The latest edition at the time of going to press features an exorcism in Widness, Body Invaders, Encounters With Angels, Hypnotic Regression, and a possibly anomalous photo from Portugal. And all for only 35p!!!

Subs details; £28 for 1 year from Clock Cottage, Stanstead Hall, Stanstead Mountfichet, Essex, CM24 8UD.

Magonia 55
CLB March 1996 Assessing Contemporary Values and Beliefs



MAGONIA #55

A consistently well-written publication, always crammed with thought-provoking articles by some of the best authors in the field.

Issue 55 includes pieces by Kevin McClure on 'Bogeymen': a scathing review of the methods employed by Alien Abduction proponents in acquiring 'evidence', Mick Goss on the Killer Black Monk Of Beachy Head, the famous UFO/Occupants encounter by Father Gill in Papua, New Guinea, and lots more...

Always challenging. Always laced with a goodly dose of healthy scepticism. One of our favourite reads.

John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

OVNI# March Issue

The Newsletter of The Phenomena Research Association, a monthly journal featuring all the very latest news from the annals of Ufology.

The March edition includes the not-very-surprising revelation that the Santilli Film has been torn to shreds at the Leeds UFO conference. There's an excellent review of the entire Santilli affair, reproduced from an original article by Kent Jeffrey, and an excellent piece by Barry

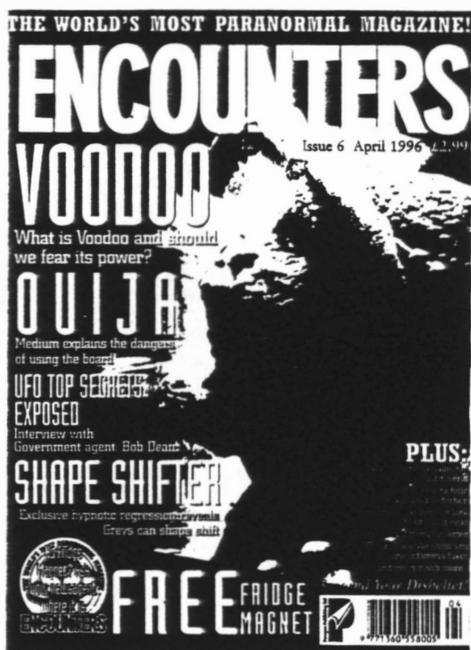
Parkinson on all things astronomical. A hugely entertaining read.
Omar Fowler, 94, The Circle, Sinfin, Derby, DE24 9HR.
£1 Sample copy (Members free).

3RD STONE #22

Undoubtedly the best-produced magazine on our exchange list (aside from the FT, of course), this glossy publication calls itself 'The Magazine For The New Antiquarian', and is written roughly along the same lines as 'AT THE EDGE', in that it deals with mysteries related to Britain's ancient past. Written with a welcome dollop of humour, the Autumn/Winter edition features an interview with Julian Cope (formerly with Liverpool band The Teardrop Explodes), Chambered Mounds in South West Wales, A Supernatural Highway traversing the West Country, and a look at Druid Circles.

Profusely illustrated throughout, (the photo reproductions are first class), this magazine is rapidly becoming one of our fave exchanges.

£2:50 sample issue. £7 for 3 issues. PO Box 258, Cheltenham, GL53 OHR.



ENCOUNTERS #6

Any publication that calls itself 'The World's Most Paranormal Magazine' is cursed with a major case of over-inflated self-importance!

And ENCOUNTERS, as well-produced and lavishly illustrated as it undoubtedly is, has got an ego of Prince Naseem proportions.

The latest edition is crammed with articles (surely aimed at the younger end of the market - nothing wrong with that, of course, indeed, some would say, with a fair degree of honesty that it's about time a paranormal publication was seen to cater for a younger audience), headed with tabloid-type headlines eg; 'Shape-Shifter: Exclusive Hypnotic Regression Reveals Greys Can Shape Shift (Jeezly ol' Crow, Kevin McClure will be having kittens!)', 'UFO Top Secrets Exposed, Ouija Medium Explains The Dangers Of Using The Board...It's all very lurid and about as genuine as a politician's smile.

The quality of the writing is juvenile, but despite that, (or maybe because of it), not un-entertaining).

It's never gonna win any awards for in-depth, well-balanced journalism, but then that never necessarily sells magazines, does it????

£2:99 Sample Issue. Available from all good newsagents.

COUD-I

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Don't Just Throw Away Those Strange Phenomena Clippings You Come Across Now And Again In The Pages Of The Daily Press...Send Them To Raymond Nelke, COUD-I, 2312, Shields Ave, St. Louis, Missouri, MO 63136, USA, And In Return He'll Send You A Package Full Of Weird And Wonderful News Cuttings From All Over The World!!!

Write To The Above Address For Full Details.