



DEAD OF NIGHT MAGAZINE



Issue 11 March/April 1997 Price £2

BEWARE OF THE BEAST!
Dark Forces Haunt Boleskine House



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

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EDITORIAL

As you'll likely be reading this a few weeks or so after Valentine's Day, I've decided to take the unusual step of featuring a full-blown story as part of this issue's Editorial.

To be more precise, it's actually an example of that great Fortean tradition, the Friend Of A Friend Tale (hence the initials; FOAF).

I hope you enjoy it. I guess it beats the normal bunch of waffle that has passed for previous Editorials. More often than not, these have contained nothing more than the same old unfulfilled promises that I'll get the next issue out on time. I'm pretty sure you're sick to the back teeth of reading that type of drivel. But of those of you who are more concerned with the traditional contents of an Editorial ie; What have I got planned for forthcoming issues...Well, check out the *back* page.

The rest of you, whether you're reading this during this during your dinner break, on the bus on the way to work, or curling up on the sofa with a steaming mug of tea, I hope this story, supposedly true, does it for you.

If not, don't blame me. Blame the friend of a friend of a friend of a fri...(you get the general idea) who related it to me.

A Blind Date With Destiny (A Valentine's FOAF Tale)

'Some days will last a thousand years, Some pass in the flash of a spark,

Who knows where all our days go?'

'EAST OF EDEN'. BIG COUNTRY

It was a Friday afternoon in mid-February, and the factory where I'd worked for the best part of seven years was shutting down for the weekend.

Ordinarily, (and to the constant bemusement of my colleagues) the ringing of the five o' clock bell wouldn't have inspired in me any mad dash rush for the exits. The laying down of tools, and the teeth-jarring sound of the metal shutters slamming onto concrete, would herald nothing more than the prelude to yet another empty weekend at the close of yet another empty week.

But today things were very different.

Today was Valentine's Day and I was filled with a kind of wild exultation that try as I might, I could not quite conceal. I'd taken a fair degree of ribbing from some of the lads in the canteen at dinner time. Someone had whispered, just loud enough for me to hear, that they figured I was in love, and I'd felt myself blushing furiously as I stared into the murky depths of my tea cup. There had been muffled laughter and for a fleeting, bleak moment I'd been certain that the details of my 'Great and Secret plan' were written all over my face. I'd looked up and caught the eye of old Joe Bradley, the shop floor cleaner, leaning on his yard brush, and suddenly he'd tipped me a knowing wink, as though he'd read my mind and offered me his silent support.

The remainder of the day had dragged interminably and when finally the time had come around to clock off, I'd been unsure as to whether or not I had the necessary courage to carry out 'The Plan.' I stood at the factory gates with a million thoughts buzzing round my head like a horde of insects that once inside my skull, had no way of ever getting out. The evening tasted of dust and tiredness. A cold wind blew and rippled soundlessly around me - piling litter in the gutters. The street was bathed in the flat orange glare of countless streetlamps.

Directly opposite from where I stood was 'Debbies Flower Shop', softly lit but obviously open for business. I crossed over and gazed in at the Valentine's Display, the gaily wrapped bouquets. The heart-shaped boxes. The greetings tags inscribed with gold-lettered poetry.

For what seemed like the thousandth time that week, I was struck with a vision of a potential future: An impossibly long road stretching ahead into a land of dreams: I pictured Kim, the girl whom I'd helplessly fallen for, but who quite probably never even knew I existed. She was stood behind the bar of 'The Cherry Tree', smiling at the customers, her hair the colour of raven's wings. Her skin so soft, you felt you could lose your fingers if you tried to touch it. And I saw myself, entering the pub, walking up to the bar as bold as you like and handing her a card and a bunch of flowers and seeing her face light up and her eyes widen and.....

Suddenly, my stomach felt squeezed by a powerful hand, and casting aside any remaining shreds of doubt I entered the store....

Five hours or so later, I was seated in the back of a taxi cab clutching a bunch of red roses and a small white envelope close to my chest. I guess it must have looked like I was scared of dropping them on the floor, but the truth was my heart was hammering so loudly against my ribcage I felt sure both the cab driver and my best friend, Mikey, who'd agreed to come along on this 'do or die mission' to provide moral support), would hear it pounding like a manic beat on a kettle drum.

I couldn't have that.

If Mike who'd been in on 'The Plan' from the start, began to suspect I was getting cold feet, he'd very likely suggest that we call the whole thing off. And in my present state of mind, the temptation to do just that would be too great to resist. Besides, we'd almost reached our destination. Through the front window I could already make out the string of fairy lights that marked the entrance to 'The Cherry Tree.' There was no turning back now. I knew it and I suppose Mikey must have done too, because right then he turned to me and said; 'Best of luck, mate' and although I knew he meant it, his sympathetic expression spoke louder than words. That look said; 'God, I *do* wish you all the luck in the world, but can't you see what a prize ass you're about to make of yourself?'

And the truth was, I could see very well. But I could also see that if I didn't do this, I might well regret it for the rest of my life. Maybe it was madness. The stuff of dream-like romance that you only ever read about in a 'Mills And Boon' novel. But lunacy or not, I was determined to go through with this come what may.

The cab pulled up slowly outside the pub and I climbed out, with only the merest hint of reluctance.

'We'll wait here for five minutes. Just in case you have to make a quick getaway,' Mikey assured me, and I turned and gave him the thumbs up hoping I looked a lot braver than I felt. And then I was pushing open the door that led through to the lounge, and began making my way across to the bar...

I was maybe halfway there, when I realised I was holding the roses in full view of the entire pub.

I had been hoping that the place would be half-empty at such a late hour - Usually by ten thirty, all but the most hardy of regulars would have forsaken The Cherry Tree, to sample the dubious delights of the local night-clubs. But, wouldn't you just know it, the lounge was packed to the rafters and several people, beer glasses in hand, were already regarding me with some amusement. Perspiration gathered coldly under my arms and I wished desperately I were invisible. My resolve began to crumble. The success or otherwise of 'The Plan' depended very much on speed. I'd known that from the outset. But I also knew that I'd never have the nerve to sidle up to the bar carrying the flowers before me like a flaming torch. This had to be done with at least *some* degree of subtly. I needed time to think. Scarcely aware I was even doing it, I made a quick detour to the Gent's toilets and locked myself into a rancid-smelling stall.

No sooner had I slid back the bolt when I heard a couple of young lads walk in, their voices raised doubtless for my benefit. 'Eh, Eddie, did you see that prat with the roses?'

'Oh aye, yeah. I think he's been watching that old 'Impulse' advert, one time too many.'

They both brayed with laughter as if this was the funniest thing either of them had seen in years. Hell. Maybe it was.

Plainly, the only option open to me now was to try and conceal the traitorous flowers somehow, and I was thankful that I'd worn my coat. If I zipped the jacket right up maybe...But no. The bouquet was too big and the heads of the roses almost came up to my chin. Walk around like this and it was quite likely people would think I had a Gro-Bag hidden under my jacket

Finally, left with no other choice, I elected to turn the flowers upside down so that only their stalks were showing. Don't ask me why, but in the circumstances, that actually made me feel a little less conspicuous.

'Okay. I told myself. *So far the Great and Secret Plan has been an unmitigated disaster. Am I going to just give up?* I thought of Mikey sitting out in the taxi, looking at his watch and thinking well, maybe he cracked it after all, and telling the driver to take him on to another pub. If I was still going to see this thing through, I would have to do it now and hang the consequences. I took a deep breath, checked my appearance in the mirror - (I thought I looked quite cool if you ignored the pet Triffid peering out from under my collar), and quickly made my way back into the crowded lounge.

This time I didn't mess about. I went straight over to where Kim was serving a great hulking biker and waited for my opportunity. It was only then that I realised that despite the fact that I'd rehearsed this moment a million times in my head, I'd never been sure quite what I intended to say when I handed over the card and flowers. Something incredibly romantic perhaps. Something witty and charming. Or Maybe it would be better to say as little as possible. Just smile shyly and say *'these are for you..'*

Yeah, I decided. *The least said, the less chance there is of messing the whole thing up.'* And then suddenly, she was done with the biker, and she looked towards me, and oh Lord, she was smiling and she asked me what I wanted and I reached into my jacket and opened my mouth to say *'these are for you,'* but the words died on my lips as three things happened in quick succession.

Firstly, the long-haired, muscle-bound biker turned toward his group of friends intent on passing over a tray laden with numerous pints of lager. Secondly, I chose that exact same moment to reach for the upside down roses from beneath my coat. I pulled down the zipper, half-raised the bouquet, and promptly knocked the drinks tray out of the biker's hands, instantly drenching him and the rest of his party. And thirdly, I just had time to begin to mumble an apology before I was sent crashing to the floor by a round house punch that I never even saw coming. One minute I was about to offer to pay for the spilled drinks, the next I was flat on my back staring up at a ceiling that seemed to be spinning like an out of control Roulette Wheel. I was dimly aware that were people looking down at me, asking if I was alright, but their voices seemed far-off and unimportant, and things had gotten a little hazy there for a while. I was helped to my feet and someone wanted to know if I needed an ambulance. I could taste blood in my mouth and

my nose felt like it had been spread right across my face, but all I can remember thinking is; *'I can't let Kim see me like this. If I can make it to the door, Mikey might still be waiting. We can get out of here. Try again next year.'*

But of course, when I finally stepped outside, the taxi was nowhere to be seen. The street was as deserted as the mountains of the Moon. And just to add to the fun and frolics, it had started raining. Not the heavy stuff. The kind that hangs in the air like a fine mist and soaks you right through to the bone.

I would have likely remained slumped in the doorway until closing time if my instinct for self-preservation hadn't been so acute. I did not relish the prospect of another encounter with Neanderthal Biker Man and his loveable cronies..

Even worse, 'The Great And Secret Plan' had been a total failure. I'd go back to work on Monday without even the consolation of fantasising I had a chance with Kim. Like the roses that were still miraculously stuffed down the front of my coat, I could consign it to some dark corner of my mind marked: 'Shattered Dreams.'

Some wonderful Saint Valentine's Day, eh?

It was time to go home.

I began walking, head down against the rain, wanting nothing more than to dive into bed and crawl beneath the sheets. The only thing to do with an evening as bad as this one had turned out was to put it to sleep. Even a fool knows when he's beaten, right?

Right?

Wrong.

Weary and punch-drunk, I'd stumbled in what I thought to be the general direction of home, but when I next looked up, I caught myself heading in the *opposite* direction. Even stranger, I was preparing to climb the five foot wall that marked the farthest edge of the pub car park. It seemed some inner part of me, a part I never even knew existed, was not prepared to throw in the towel even now.

It was getting colder. Through slanted eyes I could see my breath gusting greyly from my lips, but that hidden resolve, that stubborn refusal to just give up had now found a voice - It spoke in the softly persuasive tones of a favourite grandmother imparting the wisdom of a lifetime's experience. And what it said was this; *'Tell you what, son. Why don't you climb that wall and perch yourself atop it. Do it right now and you'll achieve two things very quickly. Firstly, you'll be out of sight of that nasty man with the fists like sledgehammers. And secondly, and more importantly, those overhanging trees will afford you some measure of shelter while you wait. You should wait y'see, because look at that car parked over there. Below the sign marked 'Reserved For Staff Only'. Third bay from the left. That's an Astra, isn't it? It's hard to tell in this light, but I'm pretty sure it's coloured dark blue. A dark blue Astra. You know who drives one of those, don't you?'*

I did indeed.

And any degrees of doubt I may have had were soon dispelled when I took a closer look through the car's front window. There was a 'Garfield' figurine dangling above the dashboard. The fat orange cat was sporting a t-shirt that announced to the world; *'I RUN ON HUGS'*.

This was Kim's car alright. I'd seen her driving it on several occasions around town. I glanced at my watch and saw that it was just after eleven. She'd be knocking off in less than three quarters of an hour. I reached inside my jacket and pulled out the bunch of roses to check on their condition. They were slightly crumpled but otherwise unharmed and I didn't figure Kim would notice, especially in the weak lighting of the car park. *'Okay, I thought. I'll give it one more try. What have I got left to lose?'* To ensure I didn't damage the flowers any further, I reached out and placed them on top of the wall before scrambling up after them.

It was as uncomfortable as Hell sitting atop that pile of bricks. The leafless branches provided far less shelter than they promised, but that was academic anyway because I was already soaked through to the skin. I tried not to think about the time stretching out before me because when I did, the nightmare image of Jack Nicholson at the end of 'The Shining', frozen to death, his pale blue face split with a rictus grin, sprang too readily to mind. I shuddered and hunched my shoulders together in an effort to keep warm before reaching out for the roses, intent upon putting them back inside my coat.

And that's when things began to go horribly wrong again.

How it happened, I'm not at all sure. Maybe it was because I wasn't really looking what I was doing. Maybe it was down to the fact that my fingers were numb with the cold. But in stretching for the flowers, I only succeeded in knocking them over the edge of the wall. They defied my last gasp desperate attempt to try and grab them and went sailing, not into the car park where they would have been easily retrievable, but into the private garden on the other side.

Now why didn't that surprise me?

I peered into the darkness below and could just make out the 'Debbie's Flower Shop' logo (a crudely-drawn Cupid, all set to let his 'little arrows' fly) caught in the middle of a holly bush. Without hesitation, I jumped down to recover them, a musty rich, rotten smell filling the air as my feet struck the wet earth. I saw I was in the midst of a veritable jungle of plant life. Dead brambles and gorse bushes pricked at me from all angles, and as I stepped forward, a branch whipped across my face and I let out a yell of surprised hurt. If I hadn't known better, I'd have thought the garden,

along with the elements, were in league to conspire against me. I certainly didn't want to be down here any longer than was necessary. I snatched up the errant roses and made to leave.

And that's when I heard a low, menacing growling coming from the bushes away to my left. For a crazy, heart-stopping second, I felt sure the plants themselves were snarling their anger at me for having trespassed into their domain. A sense of dreamy terror, the likes of which I hadn't experienced since I was five years old and had been convinced some gibbering, nameless horror was seated on the end of my bed, washed over me.

And then I saw that there was a darker shadow in front of the bushes. Except it wasn't just a shadow. It was a dog. A Doberman, to be precise. And it looked like it would enjoy nothing better than tearing my throat out and gorging itself on my blood.

I realised immediately that I'd never be able to climb back over the wall to make good my escape. The dog would be upon me before I could even begin to haul myself up to safety. There was only one option open to me and I took it almost without thinking. I bolted through the tangled undergrowth, my mind and body impervious to the pain inflicted by snagging boughs and thorny bushes.

I knew very well I could not outrun a dog over a great distance, but I could see there was a path just up ahead with a pair of wrought-iron gates at the end of it. If I could reach them in one piece, and if they weren't locked, I could close them after me and it was likely the guard dog would not attempt to follow. That was a couple of ifs too many, but I wasn't left with an awful lot of choice in the matter.

You've heard of the saying 'Fear gave him wings?' Well, it wasn't really until I was charging headlong down a garden path in the middle of well-ordered suburbia, expecting at any moment to be sent spinning to the ground as the doberman leapt, its jaws wide open, its hot breath on the back of my neck, that I *fully* came to understand the true accuracy of that phrase.

I ran faster than I ever had in my life (this had been quite a night for finding I had hidden depths, alright) but I only just made it.

Thankfully, the gates weren't padlocked, and I'd just managed to wrench one of them open when the hound sank its teeth into the soft flesh of my calf at the back of my right leg. I screamed and kicked out instinctively with my left. It was a lucky shot. My heel connected with the side of the dog's head and it yelped in pain and let go its grip. It backed off, regarding me with eyes as murky as old quarry water. Its tongue lolled out and it appeared for all the world to be grinning at me. *Damned* if it didn't. We stood there facing each other for what seemed the longest time. Then I could see there were flecks of blood staining its teeth. *My* blood, I thought deliriously. And the realisation was enough to get me moving again.

I limped through the open gate and slammed it shut behind me.

And suddenly the air was filled with dazzling bright lights and the wailing of sirens, and the next thing I knew, I was being grabbed roughly from behind and my hands were clasped together in a vice-like grip. There was a cackle of static and a tinny voice blaring out garbled instructions. The dog began barking furiously once more and I was left feeling terribly confused. A series of images, like a video tape on Fast Forward, whirled through my head: The shock and pain of being punched in the nose by a drunken slob. The ill-concealed mockery of strangers. The nerve-racking chase through the garden. Being savagely bitten by an evil-looking guard dog. And overriding all, the knowledge that everything that had happened tonight had counted for nothing....The vain prayer of an agonised heart...

I didn't fully comprehend what was happening. Not even when a uniformed police officer began shouting questions into my face; 'What's your name? Where do you live? What were you doing in the McCallister's back garden?'

I couldn't answer. My body felt shot through with Novocain and my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. The officer who was questioning me no doubt interpreted my silence as proof of guilt.

'Off yer head on drugs, are yer son? Well, don't you worry. A night or two in our delightful custody suite will soon have you feeling right as rain.'

It was as he was halfway through cautioning me that I was under arrest for suspicion of attempted burglary, that I felt my sense of awareness begin to slip away - the sights and sounds; the tinny transistors, the snarling dog, the cynical tones of the officer, the flashing lights, they all merged into one meaningless jumble. Like the mystic nonsense caught between the radio bands late at night.

I was standing on the edge of some mental and emotional overload, and I knew that if I allowed myself to cross that border I'd be lost. I had to remain vigilant. Keep my wits about me. Stay on the ball. That was the ticket.

And then I fainted dead away.

A bad dream sent me screaming up from sleep into the unmistakable brightness of early morning.

Except of course, it wasn't a dream. It had really happened.

One glance at the cold floors and the four, graffiti-strewn walls were more than enough to convince me of that. There was no fog of confusion now. Only the acceptance of the patently undeniable; Coming around in the back seat of a police car and being ushered into the bleak, forbidding Bridewell. Having my property (including those cursed, Godforsaken roses) confiscated by an unsmiling custody sergeant before I'd been bundled unceremoniously into a holding cell. There I'd been left alone, until some unknown time later I'd been examined by a police surgeon. He'd

treated my various cuts and bruises and had given me a injection to save the dog-bite from becoming infected. Dimly, I'd heard the doctor say I would be unfit for interview until the morning.

Not long after, and for a record breaking *third* time that long, long night, I'd lost consciousness.

And now, here I was, awaiting interview on a serious charge: Attempted Burglary. I wasn't an expert on the law or anything, but it was common knowledge that they sent people to prison for offences of that nature. For a long time.

The dawn spilled through the barred window in slabs of dead grey winterlight. Yellow water stains were spreading in rings across the ceiling. And from over in the far corner, I watched as a slow black beetle crawled laboriously towards its own strange destiny. I felt the hot, slithery burn of tears under my lids but I was determined not to cry. I want you to understand, there was nothing macho about that. I was simply afraid that if I started I wouldn't be able to stop.

And then I heard footsteps echoing along a corridor. The jingle of keys. The turning of a lock. I staggered shakily to my feet, reawakening the sickening pain in my right leg. The door opened slowly and I was face to face with the sneering police officer who had taken such great pleasure in arresting me the night before. Only now, he wasn't wearing that familiar expression of contempt. Now he looked like a schoolboy who'd been caught stealing from his friends and had been made to apologise before the whole class.

'Right lad. You can consider yourself very lucky. The McCallister's have decided not to press charges, and seeing as how you're of previous good character, the sergeant's said you can go free.'

I hardly dared to believe it.

Even when I was being asked to sign for the return of my possessions, (following a standard lecture from the custody sergeant about how I should act a little more responsibly in the future - 'I'd lay off the ale, if you want my advice') I'd half-suspected the officers were only playing a perverse sort of game with me. Raising my hopes only to dash them cruelly the moment I set foot outside the station.

They hadn't though.

I stepped out the front door into a morning that was cold and eye-wateringly bright. My leg throbbed abominably and my eyes were still half-closed, but the fresh air invigorated me and I can't recall a time before or since, that I've ever felt so alive.

It was a feeling that lasted for all of sixty seconds. As I hobbled out of the police station car park, I happened to glance back over my shoulder and I saw someone staring out of a third floor window at me. It was the arresting officer. He waved and smiled the dead mechanical smile of a clockwork figure. Even from where I was stood I could see the way his eyes glittered with a kind of stupid, evil petulance as he mouthed the words; 'I'll be watching you.'

There was a bus stop several hundred yards down the road. I had a little money in my pockets. Enough anyway to ensure I didn't have to *limp* all the way home.

I was still carrying the roses, of course. The bitter irony of that absurd fact was not lost upon me. The cause of all my problems been handed back to me along with the rest of my property. It seemed I was doomed to carry them with me for all eternity, like some spirit of the damned forced to atone for a lifetime of sin.

Angry, I made as if to throw them away. But when I saw there were no wastebins, I hesitated. The memory of that police officer's face peering out at me, his humourless grin, his sullen eyes, and that mimed threat...'*I'll be watching you,*' was too vivid in my mind. Littering the street was a crime and I looked around guiltily, as if at any moment the boys in blue might come rushing out of the nearby bushes and drag me back to that filthy, stinking cell.

And then I spotted a bin just over the road from me. It was placed at the entrance to a garage forecourt. Struck with a sudden resolve, I headed across, anxious to be rid of the bloody things. 'Good riddance', I muttered. 'You've caused me more grief in one night, than anyone has a right to in a whole *lifetime!*'

I prepared to chuck them into the slot marked '*Place Your Litter Here*', when suddenly from behind me, a heart-achingly familiar voice said; 'Y'know, they do say that talking to yourself is the first sign of madness.'

I spun around and heard an involuntary click in my throat as I saw it was Kim. I could hardly believe that I'd failed to notice the familiar blue Astra parked at the nearest petrol pump.

She walked towards me and I lowered my head so she wouldn't see what a mess my face was in. Pain I could take. Shame I could not. But she gently raised my chin and the look of concern in her eyes made me forget all that had gone before.

I gazed directly into her eyes - the same deep blue eyes that had caused me no end of restless nights and suddenly I realised that I was being given a final chance. Things hadn't gone the way I'd intended, but what did that matter? Here was an opportunity too good to miss.

'*These are for you.*' I whispered hoarsely (although with my nose a shapeless lump of gristle, it came out sounding more like '*Dese are for du*'). With something akin to a sense of triumph, I finally handed her the bunch of roses.

And that was when she squealed and backed away from me as though I'd offered her a gift of writhing, venomous snakes. Something shrank within me as I saw the expression of pure disgust on her face. 'I'm sorry.' I mumbled struggling to keep the hurt out of my voice. 'I only wanted to wish you Happy Valentine's Day'. I know it's a whole day late...I suppose it was a bit of a stupid idea. I guess I'll see you around.'

I let the roses fall the ground. They landed in a puddle streaked with oil-induced rainbows.

And then incredibly, Kim was laughing. 'No, No. You don't understand,' she said glancing at the soaking pavement. 'I think it's very sweet of you to buy me flowers. I've been secretly hoping you'd ask me out. The truth is, I thought you'd never get round to it. But you see... I'm allergic to roses. I have been ever since I was a child. They bring me out in an awful rash and so I avoid them like the plague.'

The sun drifted behind a cloud. Somewhere a dog barked. A dark and mournful sound; the voice of loneliness incurable. A stupid sort of wonder flooded through me, and I honestly didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Lee Walker.

New Ferry, Merseyside.

14th February, 1997

Spirit-Filled Churches In Chelsea

'In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'

For many children, brought up in the Church of England, the Father and Son are realities, but the Holy Ghost is a nebulous, shadowy presence.

But to members of Spirit-Filled churches, the Holy Ghost is only too real - it is the Spirit who makes you jump, shout and talk in tongues. There are at least two Spirit-Filled churches on the outskirts of Chelsea, and one of them is itself Anglican - Holy Trinity, Brompton, or 'H.T.B.'

The most talked about church in London, Holy Trinity is famous for its huge and ultra-fashionable congregations, its Old Etonian vicar, Sandy Millar, and most of all for the Toronto Blessing, a contagious Holy Spirit manifestation that began in the Vineyard Church, near Toronto airport. (For further details on the origins of this phenomena, see 'DEAD OF NIGHT' # 4 -Ed). I met Bill Burlington, the society photographer, in Brompton Road, and off we went to church on a Sunday morning.

The dignified grey walls of Holy Trinity seemed to be rocking to the rhythm of the band within. However, when we joined the crowds in the church doorway, we were in for a double disappointment. First of all, Sandy Millar was ill with a bad throat. And secondly, a no photography rule prevailed since over-eager reporters had been disrupting the services. So Bill went home, but I remained. Although the church had welcomed its first vicar, Joseph Pott, as long ago as 1829, the whole building gleamed with polished pinewood and opulent modernity. A recording-studio-type control desk had been built across the centre aisle and a busy engineer controlled the sound of the electric guitars and focused the pictures on the many closed-circuit colour TV screens around the building. Mark Elsdon-Dew, the Communications Officer, found me a chair near the back - probably the last empty seat in the church. Not only was the huge church packed from end to end, but the balconies near the ceiling seemed about to crack beneath the weight of eager, arm-waving worshippers. A sense of expectancy seized the formerly genteel crowd, most of whom were in their late 20's or early 30's. Several children had accompanied their parents, and a man near me was swinging a baby in a carrycot. Older people looked happy and very much at home, as did the few African and Indian worshippers. On the whole, here was prosperous young Kensington and Chelsea at prayer. It was a shock to look up at the altar and see a wild-haired rockabilly guitarist flailing away as if this were Country Music Night at a pub in Kilburn. The words of the songs appeared on a giant screen near the empty pulpit, above the heads of the other musicians. Although set to a steady, drum-thumping rhythm, the songs and music seemed bland and innocuous, once I grew used to them.

Looking up, over the heads and arms held aloft, I admired the gilt-haloed figures of Angels above the altar, and the graceful arches and arabesques of walls and ceiling. The latter had been brightly painted in pink and white.

When Andy Piercy, the grey-maned and bearded singer, switched off his electric guitar, the rostrum was taken by Jeremy Jennings, the Pastoral Director. A middle-aged man, with glasses and receding hair, (Pastoral Directing takes its toll, you know) he spoke clearly and eloquently, taking his text from the Book Of Kings, Chapter Four. We heard, from a modern English Bible, the tale of Elisha and the poor widow. Calling at the widow's house like an Angel unawares, Elisha had blessed her only drop of oil, so that one near-empty pot could fill jar after jar until the woman found herself able to herself able to sell oil with all the ease of a modern Middle Eastern potentate.

Jeremy J then proceeded to reinterpret the story '*allegorically and parabolically*' as he put it. The oil was the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, and the hastily gathered jars the empty hearts and the empty churches of the world waiting to be filled. Just then, a loud, derisive laugh rang out. Excitement mounted. A lady with long blonde frizzy hair grabbed hold of her boyfriend and began to sob on his shoulder. Jeremy Jennings, all the while had been speaking in a normal voice, not declaiming wildly or passionately, as so many preachers do when they feel the Holy Ghost is near.

'There is a new movement which is sweeping the churches of the world,' Jeremy J continued. *'It is a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit. Some say it began in the Vineyard Airport Church in Toronto. Others trace it back still further, to the Day of Pentecost. Massed conversions to Spirit-Filled Christianity are taking place at Naga-Land, in India. Thousands are giving their lives to Jesus, and miracles are occurring daily! Fireballs have been seen flying in the air over the meetings. Other things are happening, so strange, that the only Bible parallel I can draw is that of Balaam! Animals are speaking, I am told, in farms near the meeting houses. Cows and donkeys are speaking in human languages, testifying the coming of the Lord! When I hear this, all I can say is that it's something totally outside my own experience!'*

(It used to be believed in England that farm animals spoke at midnight on Christmas Eve, when no person was around to hear them. The Nagas, by the way, are a forest people persecuted and oppressed by the Indian government).

Jeremy Jennings concluded his talk and welcomed the next speaker, Glenda Waddell.

Glenda, cheerful, middle-aged and sensibly dressed, rose to tell us of her experiences at the fountainheads of the New Movement-Canada.

'When I first encountered the Holy Spirit, I began to laugh. I laughed almost non-stop for two months, and I got really sick of it. I said: "Lord, can't I stop laughing and go deeper?" Then I felt impelled to go to Toronto and worship there. Once in the congregation there, I heard people roaring. I remember thinking; "Oh God, please don't let me start roaring". But I roared! I fell down and roared for days, and I just knew I was doing funny things with my hands, like all the others. I said: "Lord, is this really me?". Later, when I stopped roaring, I asked the Lord why He was doing this to people. I seemed to hear His voice; "It is so that my church might be cleansed of all vanity and dignity." And after that, I met once-proper churchmen who would once have frowned if a child had cried out in a service, grew looser and more tolerant since they themselves had been touched by the Spirit and laughed and roared. With all that noise, it was indescribable, like a jungle. We have just heard about animals who speak like people - Well, us people roared and made every kind of noise, just like animals. It was a jungle! And now I feel really blessed.' Smiling, she stepped down.



Shortly after this, Jeremy Jennings announced that the main service was over, but those who wished to do so could stay for the Ministry. Within a few minutes, all the wooden chairs had been cleared up and the whole centre of the carpeted church became an open space more packed than ever with happy, excited worshippers. Only a few parents with children stepped to the back where orange juice was being served. In the main part of the church, the Holy Spirit reigned triumphant. Young men and women wearing 'Ministry Team' stickers hurried through to the crowds to pray with anyone in need, beckoned by upraised hands.

A loud snarling roar broke out somewhere, echoed here and there, like a hunting party of big cats on the veldt. Two people danced frenziedly on the spot. Far away, the band tinkled softly, but no one on the microphone sang or spoke. Used as I am to the stentorian demagogic tones of Deep Southern orators at Revival occasions, I found it all very soothing.

'Come, Holy Spirit!' Jeremy Jennings then invited, and worshippers fell slowly and easily to the ground. First to fall was a Ministry Teamworker herself, unable now to minister to others. Second was the blonde frizzy-haired girl who had been crying earlier. Not many worshippers spoke in tongues, but within 10 minutes of Ministry Time, a hundred people were on

their backs like Sleeping Beauties. The two young women near me lay there in utter calmness, eyes closed, faces relaxed, with slight smiles and regular breathing. All over the building, it was the same. I had been told beforehand that Old Etonians went to Holy Trinity and 'got possessed.'

All I can say is that if so, Eton has changed since my day (the day I had a guided tour), since most of the Blissfully Unconscious, were young ladies.

Some were guarded by anxious boyfriends, and almost all were being prayed-over by Ministry Team workers. These spiritual nurses kneeled by their recumbent faintness and held their right hand over them for Divine protection. Some young men, of City Banker appearance, also lay sprawled out. Everyone looked very comfortable, for nobody had fallen in an awkward position.

A stocky young man in a grey suit and a brown beard, lay on his back, his expensive shoes almost touching those of his girlfriend, who had also been touched by the Holy Ghost. After a while, both opened their eyes, and smiled ruefully at one another, as if in sheepish pride. Before long, nearly everyone was sitting up on the carpet, talking earnestly to Ministry Teamsters. I licked my pencil and prepared for interviews.

'When I've experienced the Holy Spirit, I feel a sense of God's love,' a fainted-and-revived young lady named Rosemary told me.

I wondered if Holy Trinity appealed to the 'Me Generation', the Toronto Blessing a mere self-fulfilment, or 'Personal Experience', accompanied by no great sacrifice for others, the message of Jesus.

'No, the fainting and the roaring are mere outward manifestations. They are not important - what is important is focusing on God. As a result of the Blessing, I have been given a greater Love for the Lord, greater desire to read the Bible, and to share. God has shown me deep things. He has brought things from my past up to the surface and allowed me to be healed. I live in South London, and I'm in marketing.'

Meta de Fluiter, a Dutch young lady who worked as an interpreter, was new to Holy Trinity, and found it all very interesting.

'There is such a feeling of involvement, of anticipation here, and so many young people!' she enthused. 'I think it's amazing how many people come here to fill their lives with things other than material.'

'It fills me with delight! In Switzerland, where I live now, the church is mostly for old people.'

Downstairs, in the basement, I find a flourishing bookshop. A noticeboard proclaimed 'One More Snatched From Satan's grip' and the cash register pinged away merrily. Mark Elsdon-Drew was in charge here, busily wrapping Christian paperbacks from Hodder and Stoughton.

I spoke to one of the customers, a serious-looking retired colonel-type, with a white military moustache.

'Apart from the noise, I enjoyed it,' he told me. 'I need to be refilled by the Holy Spirit once in a while, you know. So saying, he paid for a book and was on his way. Another elderly man, said that he attended 'a similar Evangelical church in Manchester.'

'You mean "Evangelical-within-the-Church-OF-England?" I asked him.

'Of course!' came the shocked reply.

'Could you tell me how many members of this church are Old Etonians?' I asked Elsdon-Drew.

'Well, there are about two thousand people here this morning. So about ten of them might be Old Etonians. And there's probably ninety Old Harrovians.'

Upstairs, beside a wall plaque from another age, I considered these changes in the Church of England. The plaque was a memorial to Captain Oliver Walter Sichel, who 'voluntarily fought for his King and Country and died near Cambrai on Friday, Oct 25th, 1918, of wounds received on the previous day while leading a gallant advance. Took his fill of music, joy, of thought and seeing. Came, stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.'

Should Captain Sichel ever return to read his memorial, he would find plenty of music, joy and smiling in Modern Holy Trinity, but not much thought. Perhaps the traditional Prayer Book churches could be termed Thought-Filled Churches. But the Spirit-Filled Churches within the Church of England are carrying all before them, the greatest burst of church-expansion since the Anglo-Catholic and High Church movement of the 19th century.

Beginning with the high-minded ideals of duty to the poor, of encouraging both charity and a love of beauty, the Anglo-Catholic churches have in our day, shrunk to mere temples of Self-Fulfillment where homosexuals dress up in gorgeous robes. Holy Trinity does not merely exist for the sake of the third member of that Trinity. The Father and Son are served also, and thousands of pounds have been sent to Rwanda. In my opinion, Holy Trinity points the way the Church of England must go if it is to be a popular church. We English, nurtured on folk music and rock music, our books and King James' Bibles forgotten, have become a people who feel but no longer think in words. Folk Religion, the old religion of the old time Revival Camp Meeting has its merits and we may as well make the most of them. We brings me neatly to the Chelsea region's other Spirit-Filled Church, one where the Spirit has long been welcome: The Church Of God Of Prophecy at Effie Road, Fulham Broadway. In this delightful, village-style building, the Victorian portals still inscribed 'Mission Schoolhouse', Pastor Stewart welcomes all-comers, 'members and visiting friends, every Sunday for Morning and Evening Worship. Nearly all these members and visitors are West Indians. Pastor Stewart, the church leader, is a dynamic woman in a crimson beret, a forceful and indefatigable fund raiser. When I turned up on the Sunday, after attending Holy Trinity, I was greeted as an old friend. Years ago, I used to help out at the Barclay Hall Youth Club attached to the church and I was still remembered. So Bill Burlington, who came with me, was allowed to take pictures inside a church, after all.

It was my first service at Effie Road, and I found myself in a small, red-plush church, with chair covers, curtains and carpets as crimson as Pastor Stewart's beret. The feeling of being in an old-fashioned cinema was heightened by the lit-up screen upon which the words of the songs appeared, just as at Holy Trinity. But as the members here have had more practice, the clapping songs and tambourines have more coherent words and melodies than the rock-gospel choruses heard at Holy Trinity.

*'Wonderful words of Jesus,
Sing them o'er and o'er.
Neither do I condemn thee,
Go and sin no more.'*

Taking the microphone, which didn't work (as she spoke so loudly, she didn't notice) Pastor Stewart congratulated the church for their efforts at the Fulham Carnival.

A young man, Brother George, was called to the front and prayed over by the Pastor and by Evangelist Keiza. Women in the church outnumbered men.

'Brother George is going to college, a place of great temptation, where there is even Witchcraft!' we were told.

Brother George looked apprehensive. *'May he take his faith there with him and bring it back intact!'*

'Amen, Amen!!!'

Shortly after this, a Spirit winged its way around the church, bringing spontaneous prayers and utterances in its wake. Among the words spoken 'in tongues', I could pick out only 'Sheba', perhaps a reference to the African queen who visited King Solomon.

'It is the sweet, sweet, Holy Spirit!' enthused Evangelist Keiza. *'Greetings, Holy Spirit!'* Pastor Stewart cried. *'Thank you Holy Spirit. You know, the Holy Spirit take over so we don't use head-language, we use our hearts and feelings. Sometimes the Holy Spirit uses animals. He made Balaam's donkey speak and He caused the cock to crow three times for Peter! Let us all say Amen!'*

Roy Kerridge. London. Winter 1996.

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CHASING THE UNKNOWN

The Latest Weird And Wonderful News Clippings From Around The World

Beware Of 'The Beast'!

Have you ever been haunted by the spirit of coincidence?

I'm sure you have. Though it takes many forms.

It might be a friend you haven't seen in ages, perhaps since leaving school (although it's a safe bet you both swore a solemn oath that you'd never lose touch), and you catch yourself wondering what he or she is doing now...And just at that moment, you stare across a crowded room and there they are in the flesh. Almost as though they'd answered some mental summons.

Or it may be a certain song you haven't heard since childhood, and suddenly, and for no reason at all, you find yourself humming the tune and recalling the lyrics that had once meant so much. You smile a sad, wistful smile, and then blaring from the radio of a passing car, you hear that exact same song

Or it may be the memory of an old movie, one that had you crying into a soggy hankie, or hiding behind the sofa with your eyes squeezed tightly shut. And on the way home from work, you pick up the paper and glance at the TV listings, and there it is. That very night they're screening 'CASABLANCA' or 'THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON.'

I'm not sure if there's anything remotely supernatural about such moments. Most people would doubtless put it down to pure coincidence. And maybe they'd be right to do so. One thing's for sure, this level of synchronicity is so trivial it scarcely seems worth bothering your head about.

However, it does bring to mind something that happened to your humble Editor a couple of years ago.

I'd suffered a terrible nightmare in which some black-cowled, faceless enemy had entered my bedroom and had stood at the end of my bed. It had reached into a sack and pulled out something that writhed and coiled in its hands. With a low, chuckle it had then placed the object onto the pillow near my head and I'd seen it was a hooded cobra, its eyes glittering in the darkness, venom dripping from its fangs. I'd lain there, paralysed with fear, one breath away from panic's edge. And then suddenly, and with lightning speed, it had struck out, its mouth impossibly wide, ready to sink its teeth into the pulsing vein in my neck....

And I'd awoken. A scream frozen upon my lips as I'd sat bolt upright in bed.

I guess, I must have still been half-asleep. That curious state that marks the border between dreamland and what passes for reality, because although some inner part of me knew that what I'd experienced was only a nightmare, still I was filled with an irrational fear that the snake still lay coiled upon the pillow. The room was pitch dark. The curtains were fully drawn allowing no sliver of moonlight to peek between the gaps. I could hardly see my hand in front of my face. And yet, when I dared to glance down at the pillow, I saw that there was the cobra, as I'd known it would be: poised ready to strike, its hood flapping like the black sails of some cut-throat pirate ship. Its forked tongue flickering in and out. Its too-bright eyes boring into the innermost core of my being, almost as though they sought to view my soul.

And for the longest time, I was totally unable to move, terrified that if I did so, the snake would inflict its deadly bite upon me.

I have no idea how long I remained locked in that position. The discomfort of pins and needles had long passed away and I think in the end, it was simply the fact that both my arms had begun to feel numb and were no longer able to support my weight that inspired me to make a mad dash grab for the light switch

At first, my hand had felt like it belonged to someone else. It was a heavy slab of meat. A puppet's limb devoid of strings. I fumbled for the switch, expecting at any moment to feel the sting of two hot needles burning into my other arm...Indeed I was sure at one point, I could feel its cold, alien breath raising goosebumps on my skin...

And then, suddenly, the room was flooded with impossibly bright light.

I'd found the switch.

There was nothing, coiled or otherwise, lying on my pillow.

There was no cowled figure replete with its sackful of nasty surprises. There was only my bedroom. Sane. Normal. Safe.

Breathing in the comfort of the reassuringly familiar, I'd eventually allowed myself to lie down once. I lay awake for a while longer, listening as my heart gradually ceased its frantic beating, the terror-induced sweat cooling on my brow. It's funny, but I was certain I wouldn't be able to get back to sleep that night, but the second I closed my eyes, I'd drifted into a deep, dreamless slumber..

And you can be sure that for the first time since I was a child, I slept with the light on.

The memory of that bad dream stayed with me all through the following day. It's normally true to say that dreams of this type tend to be all but forgotten by the time you're tucking into your 'Cornflakes' with the kettle boiling away merrily and Tony Snell blasting out 'AAAAAALLLLL The Hits!' on 'CITY F.M.' Even the most vivid nightmares gradually fade to the point where you're scarcely aware you even woke in the night at all. And all you're left with is some vague feeling of unease coupled with a bone-weary tiredness (manifested in what my mum has always referred to as 'a dose of the yawning ab dabs),

This one had proved different, however.

It stayed with me all day long, and though I didn't talk to anyone about it, I found the memory of it creeping up on me at the most unlikely of times. As I was talking on the phone to a client at work, reading the sports pages in the canteen at dinnertime, discussing our team's chances in that evening's football match against Merseyside Police...It's no exaggeration to say its recollection haunted me.

And I was damned if I knew why.

I got home that evening feeling so tired I could barely keep my eyes open. I had no desire other than to catch up on my sleep, and after passing on my tea, I'd wearily climbed the stairs, my shoulders stooped as though I were burdened with all the troubles of the World. I opened my bedroom door, kicked off my shoes, and prepared to pull back the covers....

And that's when I saw it.

The cobra was back, coiled on the pillow-case. Its jaws stretched wide. Its fangs dripping poison. As though it had been merely awaiting my return, intent upon seeing through unfinished business.

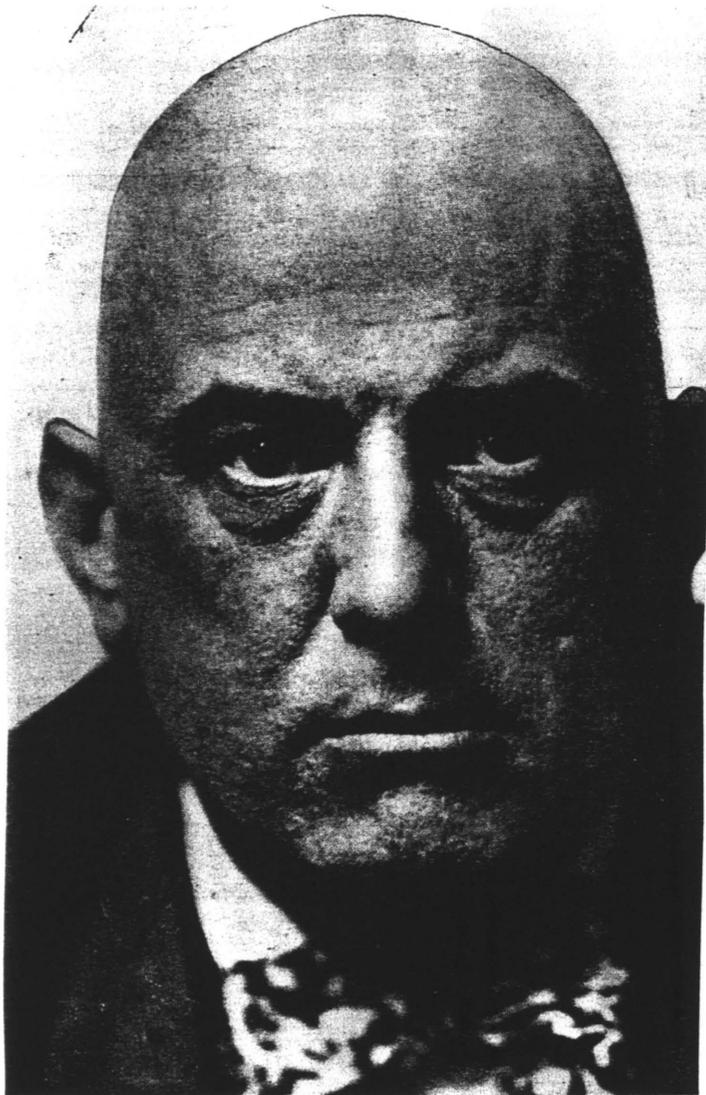
I stood dumbstruck for a single, endless moment, unable to accept that which my eyes were telling me. I backed away, and wiped a hand over my face. I was shaking like a man with a bad case of the DT's and reality seemed to totter on the brink of some yawning chasm of craziness.

And then suddenly, my vision cleared and I saw it was only a colour picture of a snake. A 'Brooke Bond' collectors card, to be precise. The type my dad always saved for me when the last of the teabags had been used.

Cursing myself for a fool, I picked up the card and struggled to keep from laughing out loud. It was only later, that I marvelled at the coincidence of finding a picture card of a cobra placed in exactly the same position as in my nightmare. The odds against my father coming across a that particular card on that particular day, and then putting it on my pillow for me to find when I came home from work, must be astronomical. Had my dream of the night before been some sort of premonition? And if it was, did it matter? As with most 'coincidences', it was ultimately insignificant and devoid of any meaningful revelation.

Save perhaps to illustrate that we are all of us, at some time, haunted by the Spirit Of Coincidence...Though it takes many forms. And sometimes it takes the shape of stories we've been told.

Stories that we haven't heard in a while...



In the wake of our feature on the occult aspects of Boleskine House and its attendant Burial Ground on the banks of Loch Ness, (See 'In The Shadow Of Boleskine' - 'DEAD OF NIGHT # 8), I was startled to come across an intriguing piece in Stuart Gordon's excellent 'BOOK OF CURSES' (Headline 1994). (I was a trifle amazed, because I hadn't until that point come encountered any worthwhile reference to a site that we believe to be worthy of serious investigation).

Amidst the references to the Rev Donald Omand, and his belief that the Loch Ness Monster is not a real physical entity, but a 'malignant phantom from a prehistoric past, evil and hateful, leaving witnesses paralysed with fear or speaking of an abomination, is the following tale.

Omand had attempted to carry out an exorcism of the loch, and together with his companion, the well-known paranormal investigator Ted Holiday, had hired a boat to serve this purpose.

Three days later, at Strone, the lochside house where they were staying, there was 'an inexplicable manifestation.' At the time, Omand was warning Holiday not to approach an alleged UFO landing site near the village of Foyers, not far from Boleskine House itself. (Incidentally, Gordon alleges at this point that sometime in 1969, Boleskine Burial Ground had been visited by American tourists who had found, hidden under a grave-slab, a tapestry embroidered with humped, worm-like creatures, wrapped around a conch shell that made a braying sound when blown).

It was as Omand's hostess, a Mrs Cary, was also warning Holiday against making his way across the loch to the UFO site that there was a sudden 'tremendous rushing sound like a tornado outside the window.' The garden was filled with 'indefinable, frantic movement.' There were thuds, as if heavy objects were striking the wall, and through the window was what looked like a 'pyramid-shaped column of blackish smoke revolving in a frenzy.'

Scared out of her wits, Mrs Cary screamed, but apparently her husband failed to see or hear anything untoward. Eventually, the disturbance, whatever it was, ceased, and Mrs Cary then described seeing a 'white circle of light on Ted Holiday's forehead...I thought the house had been struck by lightning with this light shooting across the room.'

Holiday was moved to comment that the beam of light, of which he'd remained blissfully unaware, had struck exactly the spot on his head which Omand had earlier crossed with Holy Water. The very next morning, over the road atop the slope leading down to Loch Ness, Holiday reportedly spotted a strange man dressed entirely in black. His back was to the Loch, and he was glaring malevolently at Ted. He seemed to be wearing black leather or plastic, gloves, a helmet and mask and goggles. Holiday warily approached the man, and as he passed close to him he was disturbed to see that there appeared to be no eyes behind the lenses and he could discern no sound of any breathing. Walking past the man, Holiday pretended to be eyeing the Loch, then began to turn. As he did so, he heard an odd whistling sound - and swung around to find that the mysterious figure had completely vanished without trace.

Understandably, Holiday told nobody about this experience for months. Not even Omand was aware of what had happened. Omand, not long after the exorcism, seemed more preoccupied with the fact that he believed that there would be no more manifestations around the house, but that the monster would continue to be seen. Long-standing astral forms are apparently very difficult to dissolve. The original exorcism would doubtless need to be reinforced by further rites.

A year later, Holiday returned to Loch Ness, only to be struck down by a heart attack on the very spot where he had met the enigmatic Man-In-Black.

Five years later, a second heart attack killed him, aged 58.

Only a few weeks after reading this, I was even further surprised to receive the following press release, very kindly sent to me by paranormal researcher, Rita Gould.

In the middle of February, this year, plans were well underway to begin restoration work on Boleskine House itself...

The clipping came in the form of a 'chilling warning given by Malcolm Dent, former buddy of millionaire pop star Jimmy Page, and custodian of the house for Page for 20 years.'

On the 50th anniversary of Aleister Crowley's death, Malcolm was publicly urging Dingwall architect Sandy Gracie, who was set to restore the North Wing of the 18th century mansion to get the job done as quickly as possible or face the consequences.

Dent, was according to the report, a 6ft 3inch streetwise Londoner when he arrived in the sleepy Loch Ness-side hamlet

of Foyers. Locals shunned Boleskine after dark, and although at first Dent was sceptical of the stories he caught around the corner of whispered conversations, he gradually came to believe there may be something to the tales after all.

'I have witnessed what can happen,' he said. 'My former wife and I got our eyes - and ears - opened over the time we spent at Boleskine. Most of the oddities occurred during upheavals in the house. I am not talking about wallpapering, but structural alterations. Any time there was anything major in hand, it was almost as though the house didn't like it. If we didn't get on with the job and get it finished, something would let us know about it.'

'We would be wakened up during the night with heavy doors banging all over the place and carpets and rugs being rolled up. It was as though it was a reminder to get on quickly and get the job over with. Once the work was finished, the house would settle down.'

A further disturbance occurred when Malcolm, who now makes hand-crafted furniture in Embo, was getting ready to Boleskine about six years ago, and again, 'something' made itself known.

'There had been an upheaval getting the house ready for viewing, and I started moving some of my possessions. I was outside at the time when, without warning, and in what I can only describe as a great booming voice came "What are you doing?"'

'When I got back inside the house, I was as white as a sheet. That little experience really scared me!'

Another more visual experience was when Malcolm and his friends were discussing the Occult, a few wee drams having been imbibed.

'We were discussing the house, Crowley, and what had happened in it and had all started off with contrary views.

As the evening wore on, we eventually found ourselves in agreement and there was a moment's eerie silence.

At that point, something happened that, looking back, was a very emphatic exclamation mark! A small porcelain figure of the Devil rose off the mantelpiece to the ceiling, then smashed into smithereens in the fireplace.

The most horrific experience of all was something Malcolm heard but was too terrified to open the door to.

'I was awakened in the wee small hours...and just knew something was wrong.

I was petrified.

Something was snorting, snuffling and banging. It sounded like some sort of huge beast.'

I had this clear picture in my mind of what it looked like, but there was no way I was going to open that door. I had a knife on the bedside table and I opened the blade and just sat there. The blade was so small it wouldn't have done any good, but I was very frightened and I had to have something to hang on to.

The noise went on for some time, but even when it stopped, I still could not move. I sat on the bed for hours and, even when daylight came, it took lots of courage to open that door. Whatever was there, I have no doubt, was pure evil.'

Malcolm said he was glad that the old house had been taken on and was now being treated as a home.

'I had quite a few drawings of what Boleskine House looked like back in the twenties.

If Sandy, the architect, wants any help, I will be only too happy to give it.'

But Sandy, who has been working on the house for 20 years on and off, says he is not worried.

'The North wing was destroyed by fire and we are rebuilding what was there so that the house will be as it was,' he said.

'We are building up one room and doing re-roofing work. The latest work will go ahead as soon as we get listed

building planning consent. I have been working on the house on and off since Jimmy Page had it 20 years ago. I'm afraid I can't say I have personally seen or heard anything strange over the years I have been involved with the house.

The latest owners, the MacGillivray's are basically taking on the work Jimmy Page started.

Of course, the 50th anniversary of Crowley's death is coming up, you never know. Anyway, I'm not bothered. I'm not afraid.'

We wonder if Sandy would still be saying that if he heard something on the other side of a closed door, smorting, smuffling and banging...Sounding like a huge beast trying to get in???

8th February, 1997. Boleskine, Foyers, Loch Ness. THE HIGHLAND NEWS' Via Rita Gould.

Ghostly Tales



A Truly Haunted Man- An Interview With Peter Underwood.

The following article appeared in a recent edition of *THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE*, (the exact date that it was published is unknown because the person who sent it to us, neglected to include details of the date)

Just in case you didn't come across it, we have decided to re-print the highlights of the interview with one of Britain's most renowned ghost investigators.

I remember reading Peter's superb 'Gazetteer Of British Ghosts', during one summer's holiday in Wales, when I was little more than 12 years old. I had to baby-sit at nights whilst my parents went to the local pub, and I remember scaring myself silly as I pored over the often terrifying tales contained

within that book. And yet, I couldn't put it down. The fascination it held was too great.

Peter Underwood, now aged 72, and the President of the Ghost Club Society, has devoted more than 50 years of his eventful life investigating phantoms and apparitions.

He is not some loony-toons fanatic, all-too willing to suspend his disbelief at the sight of a door closing by itself or a shadow playing on a plain white wall.

He readily accepts that a very high percentage of apparently paranormal happenings have a rather more mundane, logical explanation. But that knowledge hasn't dampened his belief in the reality of Ghosts. He remains convinced that too many sane, well-balanced people have reportedly seen something that falls beyond the border of accepted science.

Lots of people, he allows, have had a single, one-off psychic experience, maybe at a time of intense grief or stress. 'It isn't objective, well and good. But when I research and come across others who have seen the same Ghost, maybe a hundred years ago, then belief doesn't really come into it.'

Peter and his group of investigators have spent many a sleepless night at reputedly haunted houses, and they have found that complaints of mysterious noises are far more prevalent than actual sightings of spectres. But initially, of course, the team have to assess the integrity of the house owner. 'Evidence is only as good as the person giving it,' insists their President.

Mr. Underwood is a privately educated man, now retired after working as a production manager for a publishing house. His interest in Ghosts started as a child, when he spent holidays at his grandparents' home in Hertfordshire...The house was reputedly haunted by a headless ghoul.

When curious thrill-seekers knocked on the door and asked to hear the tale, Peter would be deputised to show them the bedroom and rattle off the blood-curdling story. At first, he was amazed that people could be so gullible, 'But very often, visitors would say; "Well, we're not surprised. We have a Ghost, too". As I grew up, I thought that there was maybe something in this.'

A more formative experience, though, was the sudden death of his father when Peter was just nine years old. That night, consumed with grief, he slept in the same bed as his equally distraught mother. 'In the middle of the night I woke up and thought I saw my father standing at the bottom of the bed. I woke my mother, crying: "Mum, Mum, he's come back!"

He is the first to admit that the apparition, however real it seemed, was the wish-fulfilment of a grief-stricken child. At least, it probably was.

'In the morning, I said; "Mum, you saw him, too? She said; "Yes, dear, but we won't talk about it." My mother lived to be 99 and many times I said to her: "Do you remember that night?" But she would never talk about it. It awakened my mind to the possibility that what I had seen could be objectively true.'

He does not, though, maintain that Ghosts are earthbound spirits, unable to move onto another world. 'I think that's highly unlikely. I have no belief in an afterlife and I've never come across any evidence to make me change my mind. I've nothing against religion. It gives comfort to a lot of people. But it's not for me.'

Instead, Peter holds that Ghosts materialise when past events are somehow imprinted on the atmosphere, often where there has been intense emotion or violence: hence the many stories of haunted battlefields and the disproportionate number of headless figures in the Ghostly population. When atmospheric conditions are right, this spectral video allegedly plays.

Yet these impressions from the past fade over the passage of time, so the spectres they produce have a limited timespan. Peter claims to have rarely come across a Ghost more than

400 years old, though there are, of course, numerous reports of Roman soldiers in York, and other areas. It seems that new Ghosts appear looking as round and solid as the rest of us. And there is a notable lack of unearthly activity, such as disappearing through walls.

As the years pass, they fade into wraiths...Until all that is left is mysterious knocking and banging.

Wood and stone, Peter contends, may act as storage batteries absorbing all those strong emotions from the past.

The original Ghost Club, founded at Cambridge in 1851, has numbered amongst its members Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, W.B. Yeats and Aldous Huxley. Two years ago, it underwent an all to earthly schism. Retired Naval Commander Bill Bellars, one of the Club's ruling council, claimed that the President was too dictatorial and secretive.

In something of a huff, Underwood promptly resigned, and took with him half the members to form the splinter Ghost Club Society.

Peter is somewhat disenchanted with the scientific basis of Ghost hunts; *'The scientists take their apparatus, hi-tech stuff for vibrations. That's not my field. I'm not a scientist.'*

Teams of Ghost Club parties work in groups of eight or more, at least one in every room of a reportedly haunted house. The residents are always sealed into one room to prevent them from getting faking any of the phenomena. Chalk marks are made around the furniture, in case telekinetic energy should move it. There are thermometers, to register unexplained drops in the temperature. There are sensitive tape recorders, to register mysterious noises, and there are infra-red cameras. Unfortunately, so far, there has never been an authenticated photograph of a Ghost. The excuse proffered is that *'they may inhibit paranormal activity.'*

In simple English...Ghosts are distinctly camera-shy.

Mr Underwood advises those who share their homes with spirits to learn to live with their spooks. *'I've attended exorcisms and they are very impressive. They give comfort to the occupants but they don't make the slightest difference to the phenomenon. The trouble with exorcisms is that they presuppose that a power of good will be paramount over a power of evil. There's nothing evil about Ghosts to my mind; they can't harm you. So how can exorcism possibly work?'*

Not everybody wants to get rid of their Ghosts, anyway.

Once Peter investigated a haunted house where the owner hoped he might be in for a rate reduction. Two years ago, on the other hand, a Canadian professor won £71,000 compensation from the vendors of 13th century Chingle Hall, in Lancashire, when the property failed to live up to its ghostly reputation.

Ghost hunting provides an entree to the highest circles. When Underwood called on Paul Getty at his haunted Surrey mansion, Sutton Place, there were loud bangings in the gallery and great hall. The richest man in the world had two Ghosts, including a Lady In White, and admitted that he was frightened, but intrigued at the same time.

The noises, Underwood dismissed as psychically unimportant. *'But in the garden, two of my party said that they had almost glimpsed a fleeting form that sped behind a bush and disappeared.'*

On other occasions householders have been reluctant to co-operate in psychic investigations. The occupants of a Dorset house had a screaming skull. Its tortured yells resounded throughout the house if it was removed from the house. They refused to let Underwood experiment. Had the skull left its rightful place, the legend threatened them with death within the year.

Peter, however, never gets scared; *'I'm too interested in what I'm doing.'*

Nor does Peter believe he is in the slightest bit psychic. And he refuses to accept that you can train yourself to be more sensitive to ghostly presences.

And has Peter ever seen a Ghost for himself? On several occasions, he believes that he almost one.

At a church in West London, a vicar reported that a dozen phantom monks could be seen on most evenings. Peter headed over there, but saw and felt nothing. At 16th century Gawsworth Hall in Cheshire, the owners looked perturbed, claiming that a ghostly girl had just walked the length of their library, disappearing where a skeleton had been found; Underwood believed them, but the action passed him by.

At Spinney Abbey in Cambridgeshire, the temperature dropped by seven degrees at precisely 2.10am - just as horses and pigs kicked up a terrific row. *'First-hand evidence of animals' apparent awareness of Ghosts,'* says Underwood confidently, though all he noticed, on the spot where yet another ghostly monk was supposed to walk, was the sudden draught.

He sat up at ancient Rushbrooke Hall, hoping to see the murdered lady whose body was thrown into the moat. At 2am, the window flew open; three Ghost investigators felt an icy blast and the sensation of something brushing past them; there was a dull plop in the moat. Murdered lady or rudely-awakened duck?

But Underwood's closest encounter with the supernatural was on his way home from work with, predictably enough, no infra-red camera to hand. As a commuter, he used to tramp to the station across wet fields. His wellies would be left in the porter's cupboard. One evening the porter wasn't there, the cupboard was locked, so Underwood took the drier way home by road. *'I walked through the village, and saw someone I knew on the top of a ladder, working on the chimney of one of the houses. It must have been 6:30pm. I gave him a wave.'*

'Next day, I heard that he had died of a heart attack at 3pm that same day. I went back to look at the house...And there was no house there. It was a rather pointless experience. I didn't even know the man's name. But I know what I saw, and I certainly saw him after he was dead...Looking absolutely normal and solid.'

Over the years, he has encountered more than his fair share of hoaxers and pranksters.

'I went to see this man on the South Coast who heard music all over his house. We sat and talked, and suddenly I heard it too, in the next room. But when he went out to make a cup of tea, I sat in his chair and felt buttons through the padding. I pressed and the music played again. He came back in and said; "I love making gadgets. I've had a lot of fun with this." People say: "I don't believe. Convince me." I wouldn't dream of trying to convince anyone. I'm not convinced. I'm still trying to establish objectively, what is happening. We have not yet discovered what circumstances must prevail before Ghosts can appear. There must be a common denominator. If we can define that, I think it's possible that, eventually, we'll be able to produce a Ghost at will.'

January, 1997. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE'

HOUSES WITH A SPOOKY PAST CREATE LEGAL WOE

In 1989, a New York City man paid \$65,000 for a house in suburban Nyack, New York, but learned after the closing that the big old riverfront Victorian had a reputation for being haunted.

The aftermath of this story is such that it might help herald a change in the states' housing laws.

When the buyer found out that his new home had been written up in both the local press and the 'READER'S DIGEST', and also was included on local walking tours of ghostly properties, he sought to get out of the contract.

He claimed that the real estate agent had failed to tell him about the Ghosts, as required by stigmatised* property disclosure laws, and said that he didn't know local lore about the house since he came from out of town. Failing to get the contract overturned at the local level, the buyer took the case all the way to the New York Supreme Court.

In a 1991 ruling, *Stambovsky vs. Ackley*, the State Supreme Court ruled for the buyer, saying his contract was violated because the house was 'possessed by poltergeists' and therefore was not delivered vacant at the time of closing.

The buyer got his \$32,000 down payment back and shed his haunted house.

New York is in the minority, however. According to the National Association of Realtors, 29 States and the District of Columbia currently require that a buyer be told of any problems that might affect a property's value - presumably including any poltergeist activity.

Interestingly enough, if the Victorian with a ghostly past were for sale today, it might find many potential buyers. It seems that haunted houses have become trendy.

'We're in the 90's, and this is a New Age status symbol,' says Richard Crowe of Chicago Supernatural Tours. *This is considered to be one up on the Joneses'*

In fact, Crowe himself has a thriving business showing places that have a spooky past.

One of his favourites is a city-run retirement home built in 1967, on the site of the 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre of mobster Bugs Moran and his gang. The garage where seven gangsters were mown down is now a grassy park, and 'people have claimed to hear sobbing and moaning on a regular basis,' says Crowe. 'Dogs act up when they are in the area.' And how can you tell if your house is haunted?

Crowe says that few Ghosts are actually seen. They make themselves known with phantom footsteps, muffled voices and floral perfumes.

'If you want to get rid of a Ghost, he adds, 'stop talking to it.' 27th October, 1996. Nyack, New York, 'THE SUNDAY ENTERPRISE.'

....AND GHOSTS SCARE UP GOOD BUSINESS IN BRITAIN, TOO

Ghost hunter Andrew Green has been investigating supernatural phenomena for over 25 years.

He can recount the time when in 1944, a young girl's image showed up in a photograph of an empty house. That tale proved to be the catalyst for his obsession with the subject, and although he is now aged 69, he shows no signs of retiring from the field.

A former chemist and journalist he's now a respected author, teacher and lecturer and holder of two university degrees. He's also a regular TV and radio commentator on the supernatural...And he's not alone.

These so-called ghostbusters form a small, yet thriving industry in the realms of the paranormal.

Ghosts and poltergeists have long been considered a fact of life in England.

The British tend to be very fond of Ghosts and the Scots have a long tradition of second sight,' says Archie Roy, a professor emeritus of astronomy at the University of Glasgow. Julie Setton of 'PSYCHIC NEWS', adds, *There are so many*

historic buildings here and anything ancient usually has a Ghost or two.'

Sober institutions like the Royal Albert Hall and the Automobile Association accept the existence of Ghosts. In the AA's 1996 hotel guide, there's an unquestioning feature about haunted hotels and inns, based on an AA survey across the UK.

In April, 1996, Green investigated the Albert Hall, where workers recently spotted apparitions.

Green reported convinced the town hall's management that 'there probably is something there, but it's nothing malicious.'

The Spiritualists National Union, which trains and certifies mediums and faith healers, is a government-recognised church with 400 members around the country.

Green and many of his colleagues are members of the SPR, a London-based group devoted to the scientific study of the paranormal.



The organisation was formed in 1882 by Cambridge University scientists. Its membership rolls are heavy with doctorate-holders.

Then there's The Ghost Club, a London institution since 1862, whose members have included Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, and Charles Dickens, who of course, penned 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL', one of the most enduring of all ghostly tales.

The voices of the sceptics are never too far from earshot, however. Donald Lemming, chairman of the department of experimental psychiatry at Cambridge University, scoffs at the notion of incorporeal beings: 'It seems to me so implausible, there is so little evidence, that it's not even worth debunking.' he says.

Though they may disagree on specific theories, ghost-hunters tend to share one belief: that there is a phantasmagoric element to this world that cannot easily be dismissed. 'I've seen too many things I can't explain,' says Tony Cornell, a board member of the SPR.

Although Green's Albert Hall investigation was well publicised (he was followed by camera crews for 17 of the 18 hours he spent there) most Ghost hunters strictly uphold clients' confidentiality. But many of their clients are only too happy to advertise.

John Maggs Bros, an antiquarian bookstore, is often promoted as being London's most haunted building. John Maggs himself says that in the 55 years he's been in the 256-year-old shop, he's never seen anything remotely peculiar, let alone supernatural. But he's only too glad for the myth to continue, as it has brought in thousands of pounds worth of business. On Halloween night, 1994, Maggs, his wife, and a local TV film crew, together with a Warlock, spent midnight in the shop. The Warlock declared that a 'genial Ghost' was present.

Although Maggs saw nothing, he could perhaps be forgiven if he thought he'd heard the mysterious sound of his cash register ringing in the ether....

22nd August, 1996. Britain. 'USA TODAY.'

What's Going On In Sao Paulo?

Disembodied voices. Vanishing People. Self-dialling telephones. Reports of supernatural occurrences at the Sao Paulo City Council building reached epidemic proportions last Summer.

Even hardened sceptics like Councilman Paulo Roberto Faria Lima, were forced to change their firmly entrenched views regarding the paranormal. One night in May, 1996, he decided to stay up late with his wife to update his computer files.

Paulo takes up the story; *At 12:30 am, we wanted to leave the building but couldn't open the door. It was weird because it can only be locked from the inside. Then we both started hearing voices speaking in an unidentifiable tongue and heard furniture moving around. I phoned security, and a guard came up and opened the door with no problem. He told me that we were the only people in the 12-story building.'*

And Faria Lima wasn't the only one with a tale to tell.

Elevator operator Aristides de Paula described the day when *'three people walked into the elevator and only two got out. One simply disappeared.'*

And Antonia Oliveira Alves, a cleaning woman, said she heard a phone dialling all by itself.'

Eventually, in response to this apparent supernatural phenomena, the city councilman tried to investigate the manifestations for himself. He consulted a medium, who promptly told him the 27-year-old building was haunted by mischievous entities. Just when he was beginning to feel less than threatened, however, along came a religious group who told him with equal conviction that the cause of the hauntings was the Devil Himself.

Faria Lima, unsure who to trust, called in a team of ghost-busters....The Private Institute For Interdisciplinary Research Into Parapsychological Phenomena.

After touring the building in late June of last year, investigators gave five possible explanations; Pranksters, physical changes in the building that could cause wooden floors and furniture to creak; disturbed employees, electromagnetic energy that could help make employees become disturbed, or psychokinesis - the movement of objects using mental energy.

But, astonishingly, no Ghosts.

'It is definitely not the work of Ghosts or any other supernatural being,' parapsychological investigator Fatima Regina Machado said.

One final twist to this story, however....The City Council Building is in a district called Vale do Anhangabau - An Indian name meaning 'Valley Of The Spirits.'

7th July, 1996. Sao Paulo, Brazil. THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH.'

A HOST OF HAUNTED PUBS AND INNS

An Exorcist was banned from his local pub....Because he had the temerity to steal the pub's resident Ghost.

Landlord Pat McCann was stumped to learn that the 300-year-old spirit had been whisked off by the mystic. Apparently, and in all seriousness, he was quoted as saying; *The spirit is part of the pub and he had no right to interfere. He asked me if I wanted an exorcism and I said no, so he did*

it behind my back. The Ghost attracted a lot of visitors - we've even had a TV crew from America.

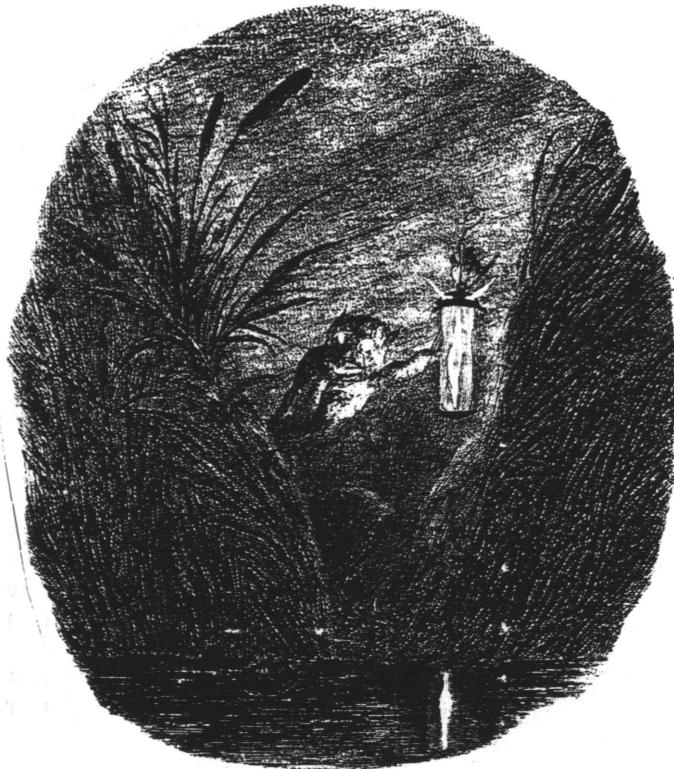
The quite literally holy bust-up occurred after Kevin Carlyon popped into the Red Lion in Avebury, Wiltshire.

He heard the local legend of a girl called Flori, murdered when her husband caught her in a lover's arms. Mr McCann explained; *'She switched lights on and off, but that was no problem. I liked having her around.'*

Mr Carlyon however, begged to differ. *'We are talking about a soul in pain, not a visitor's attraction. I'm sorry he feels that way, but she's free.'*

Mr McCann retaliated by saying; *'He's barred.'*

15th October, 1996. Avebury, Wiltshire. 'SUNDAYMANC.'



*** Another exorcism of a pub, was more welcome however. Britain's oldest pub; 'Ye Olde Trip To Jerusalem', had been the victim of a sailor's curse inflicted 150 years ago.

Three people who had the misfortune to touch a model galleon all died suddenly. The jinxed, dust-covered relic was left by a visiting seaman and workmen refused to start the £4 million overhaul the place required until the galleon was removed.

Finally spiritualist Valerie Stendall was summoned to move the model and carry out an exorcism.

Valerie declared; *'I have lifted the curse for good. I am not afraid it will cast a spell on me.'*

We hope, for her sake, that her confidence proves to be justified.

27th October, 1996. Nottingham. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

*** A psychic has claimed he has detected a ghost in a pub in Somerset. It is widely believed to be the spirit of former regular Dennis Thorne, who has returned from the grave to visit his favourite haunt - six years after his death.

The medium described a man with poor eyesight who had links with the vicar, and locals realised it was a (ahem) dead ringer for 65-year-old Dennis. The former building contractor drank at the 17th century inn at Burtle, for more than 40 years and his widow said her husband was known as the vicar for the impromptu 'sermons' he used to preach from his place at the bar.

Helen Thorne, 68, of nearby Woolavington, added: 'He was always at the pub making jokes and in the thick of things. It's nice to think his spirit lives on in the place where he was so happy.'

8th September, 1996. 'Burtle, Somerset. NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

Possessed By Evil

According to a chilling news report in the less-than-reliable Sunday press, a four-bedroomed, semi-detached house in Chadwell Heath, Essex, was haunted by the essence of pure Evil.

A family of five snapped up the house after it became available at a bargain price. It seemed like the dream home, and after the chaos of moving in was over, Hussein Hassan, his wife and three sons, were settling in happily.

Hussein reportedly doted upon his children, all of whom were said to be bright and intelligent. The cafe he ran was successful, the boys were doing well at school, his wife was getting to know the new neighbours.

An ordinary family in an ordinary house...

Until suddenly, strange, inexplicable things began to happen. Furniture seemed to move around of its own volition. One of the boys deliberately battered his head against the wall for no reason. The au pair complained of a weird and nasty atmosphere, packed her bags and left. Things got so bad, that Ferdiye, Hussein's wife, suggested they should move, because she was scared.

And it seems she had every right to be.



(Above): The ordinary-looking council house in Essex. Does some Evil force lurk in the dark corners of the upstairs bedroom? And was the terrible tragedy that occurred there caused by the influence of Demonic spirits, or the lunatic actions of a madman?

Early in November (the article doesn't give the exact date) Hussein came home from work and systematically slaughtered and butchered his wife and their sons Timen, 6, Adem, 13, and Eren, 15, before stabbing and hanging himself.

They were in their night clothes, and Hussein, 43, strangled and hacked them to death as they fought for their lives. His body was found hanging from the banisters by one of Eren's school friends who came to visit.

To the police, the killings differ from other murders only in their brutality, and the family relationship of the victims. Detective Sgt Mark Allmitt was quoted as saying; 'We are not looking for anyone else and we are satisfied Mr Hassan

killed his wife and children and then took his own life. It is a tragedy that cut short the lives of a young family. We still haven't uncovered a motive for the attack, although we found weapons and evidence of a struggle.'

But in the wake of the appalling carnage, friends and neighbours have come forward to tell a very different and disturbing story about the house in Chadwell Heath...

According to their accounts, Ferdiye told them that one day she had found pieces of her jewellery on the floor soon after she had carefully placed them in a box. There was no one else in the house at the time. She complained that the shower in the bathroom would go on and off for no apparent reason, and she would find drawers pulled out in the wardrobes.



Then one day her son Eren suddenly jumped up and smashed his head against a door frame. After having stitches on the cut in hospital he told his mother he didn't have a clue why he did it.

Alice Kaya, Ferdiye's best friend says; 'They were a wonderful family. Hussein just loved his wife and kids. He was the last man on earth you would expect to do something like this.'

There was something odd about the house, especially the upstairs. Ferdiye was genuinely scared to go up there by herself and I must admit I felt the atmosphere was bad. There was something not very nice there. Strange when you consider what a warm family they were.

'I know they lost their Austrian au pair because she did not like the house either. Ferdiye told me this. She was quite depressed by it all.'

'Ferdiye said to Hussein they should move. But he always laughed it off.'

Another friend, Firdes Bekir, said; 'I grew up with Ferdiye. We went to the same school and saw each other every day. We got married round about the same time, and had our children at the same time. I feel utterly devastated. Ferdiye talked about the strange happening with the jewellery when we went round to the house for Christmas just after they'd moved in. I didn't think anything of it at the time. But I never liked the house. There is something eerie about the

atmosphere. The upstairs was constantly gloomy and depressing.'

A third friend added her voice to the uncanny impression the house made on people. 'Ferdiye was very nervous about their home. So was the boy after he cracked his head open. I remember saying to her if the house was really getting to her she ought to move.'

Now, in the aftermath of the tragedy, the couple's relatives are squabbling bitterly over whether Hussein should be buried with his wife and children.

A last little victory for the Evil force that lurks in the house in Chadwell Heath?

24th November, 1996. Chadwell Heath, Essex, 'SUNDAY MANC.'

Ouija Boards - A Word Of Warning!!!

Psychic Sam, the resident 'expert' for that bastion of the paranormal, 'THE DAILY EXPRESS', recently added her voice to the growing clamour for people to leave the supernatural well alone.



People who dabble with Ouija boards for fun are playing with their lives. Ouija Boards are lethal. They conjure up spirits and it is all too easy to contact a negative one who doesn't want to be disturbed.

It's very much like calling someone at five o'clock in the morning when they are fast asleep. And if you contact a bad spirit that is angry that its life was taken, it can latch onto the Medium.

The attraction is the excitement and the fear. Ouija Boards are incredibly powerful. You would be amazed. The glass can swing from one point to another and it spells out conditions, names, everything.

I don't have anything good to say about them. My advice to anyone thinking about using one, is don't.'

Predictably however, there are those who remain adamant that seances and the use of Ouija Boards do have some value.

The writer Ezra Pound relied upon them for poetic inspiration, his work being described as 'deeply occult', part seance and part, secret history.'

Pound, though, was persecuted for his beliefs and was even incarcerated for 12 years in St Elizabeth's Hospital for the criminally insane in Washington D.C.

And it's not just the literati who have found solace in connecting with figures from the past.

Even Hillary 'laff-a-minute' Clinton has been known to dabble with the dead.

Jean Houston, her spiritual guru, has helped her 'contact' both Eleanor Roosevelt and Mahatma Ghandi for advice on how to best cope with the double pressures of high office and of having a daughter as bone-shakingly ugly as Chelsea...

The Russians are even said to be more keen on seances than the less-than-stable Americans. Rasputin, the Mad Monk, adviser to the Tsar, was particularly fond of them. And former Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev even installed a mystic leader in the Kremlin and consulted him every morning

But the overriding message seemed to be, even if you think you know what you're doing, is to well enough alone.

5th October, 1996. General. 'THE DAILY EXPRESS.'

*** Ouija Boards were also in the news when it was suggested that one could be employed to help establish a breakthrough in the hunt for the killer of Lin and Megan Russell.

Village neighbours engaged in a seance, were said to have pinpointed a where a hammer - the possible murder weapon - was found in late September.

Police subsequently failed to carry out a thorough search of the spot in Nonington, Kent, until seven weeks after the mother and daughter were battered to death, despite a witness sighting a suspect in the area.

One of the eight people at the seance told police that the session had led them to believe the weapon had been dumped close to where the suspect was seen.

At the time of going to press, tests were being carried out to whether or not it was used in the attack on Lin, 45, Megan, six, and her other daughter Josie, nine, who survived.

15th September, 1996. Nonington, Kent. 'SUNDAY MANC.'

*** And another board game, this one called 'RUMMAGE', seemed to act as the catalyst for mysterious goings on at a factory in Ipswich.

Staff at the plant claimed the 17-year-old building is haunted. Pallets were seen to move around at night of their own volition, workers turned up in the morning to find the contents of games scattered around the floor, and several workers have complained of feeling a 'presence.'

Bosses at TV Board Games in Ipswich eventually called in psychic investigator Pauline Lancaster. - who told them that the spirits dating back to Tudor times, were more than a tad upset.

The game is apparently a modern version of one invented by Henry VIII to teach servants the layout of his palaces by sending them to different rooms to collect objects. Miss Lancaster, 49, claimed a man had been killed in a drunken row over a game in an inn which used to stand on the factory site.

'I made contact with a number of spirits, who were confused and upset about the game.' said Miss Lancaster. 'Some had played in Tudor times and had bad memories of it.'

She performed a ceremony to restore what she called the natural balance of elements in the factory. 'The spirits seemed to accept that it was only a game and apologised for the inconvenience they had caused. I don't think they will be causing any more trouble.'

28th October, 1996, Ipswich, East Anglia. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

Digger Unearths Pictish Bones

A seventh-century cemetery has been uncovered next to a historical mansion already reputed to be one of Orkney's most haunted houses.

Seven skeletons were exposed as workmen dug a drainage ditch alongside the appropriately named Skull House, which will open to the public this year.

Archaeologists said that the find could well provide vital new evidence about the arrival of Christianity in the islands.

It is believed the human remains were part of a long-forgotten Pictish graveyard, which may well extend beneath the house, where a ghost is regularly seen and heard by guests.

6th October, 1996. Orkneys, Scotland. *THE HERALD.*'

The Haunted Honeymoon Castle

A haunted castle has, according to *THE DAILY SLUR*, clinched its place among Britain's ten most popular honeymoon hotels. Langley Castle in Northumberland, boasts a ghost called Maud, who reportedly wanders the deserted corridors in the wee hours before dawn, moaning.

Newlyweds say she adds to the cosy atmosphere by making couples cling together in fright.

27th October, 1996. Langley Castle, Northumberland. *'DAILY SLUR.'*

The Wall Rake Ghost



I came across this interesting, if somewhat obscure, item in an old edition of a local magazine called *THE WIRRAL CHAMPION.*'

A journalist recalling the 1930's, remembers a time he was having his hair cut and 'was giving half an ear to the barber as he chatted away, under the mistaken belief so many of them have, that this is what the customer wants.

When he said he had seen a ghost the previous night however, I began to take an amused interest. He was very willing to tell me more.

'It appeared that he had been to Heswall Station, to see a girlfriend off to Neston, and was walking back up to Wall Rake. The alsation dog at his side suddenly stopped and he felt the hairs in its back stiffen. It was staring into the darkness ahead and on looking up he could make out a wraith-like figure floating gently towards him. He was rooted to the spot but before he could cry out or run, the apparition turned and glided through a sandstone wall. When he reached the spot he saw there was an old iron gate, secured by a rusty padlock.

The story caused quite a stir in the local papers. When I later took some friends down to the scene on the following Sunday we found a crowd of sightseers. A couple of policeman were trying to move them on so we climbed over a wall into the grounds of the empty house behind the locked gate.'

Unfortunately, that's where the account ends, and there are no further details.

November, 1995. Heswall, Wirral. *THE WIRRAL CHAMPION.'*

When Fate Turns Its Back... Shurely Shum Mishtake

A 21-year-old woman, out driving whilst peed to the proverbial eyeballs, was heading down a road in Whangarei, New Zealand, late at night.

She made the grave error of mistaking a police van at a drunken-driving checkpoint for a diner truck selling meat pies, a popular snack after a heavy session on the ale. The woman stopped, and her two male passengers got out to get the food in when they suddenly realised they were labouring under one hell of a misconception.

Senior Sgt. Alastair Ward said that one of the men noticed the foot-high 'Police' signs on the van, and said; *'That's not a bloody pie cart!!!'* They attempted to drive off, but were later apprehended.

12th May, 1996. Whangarei, New Zealand. *'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'*

*** A Florida boss, trying to save time by shaving and brushing his teeth at the same time, very nearly died when he slipped and stabbed himself and stabbed himself with his toothbrush.

13th September, 1996. Florida, USA. *THE SUNDAY MANC.'*

*** Window cleaner Alain Goel got stuck between panes of double-glazed glass for 12 hours at a house in France.

The much-vaunted sound-proofing prevented anyone hearing his cries for help!

20th October, 1996. Valence, France. *THE SUNDAY MANC.'*

*** A luckless couple queued for over two hours to have their china valued on *'THE ANTIQUES ROADSHOW.'* whilst it was visiting Ludlow.

Unfortunately, when they finally managed to get in they discovered they accidentally brought the box containing their hibernating tortoise.

18th October, 1996. Ludlow. *'DAILY EXPRESS.'*

*** A desperate bachelor received just one reply when he placed an advert in the Lonely Hearts column of his paper. His own recently-widowed mother.
22nd DECEMBER, 1996. New York, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

*** Pianist Andre Brozowski's recital ended as soon as he stepped onto the stage in Dourados, Brazil. The management had forgotten to provide Andre with the most basic ingredient of all...A piano.
2nd November, 1996. Dourados, Brazil. 'DAILY MANC.'

*** 21-year-old Thomas VanHoose was in the market for illegal drugs in Oregon, USA, when he dialled a wrong number and accidentally paged a narcotics detective instead of his dealer. A more than surprised Detective Jim Porter played along with the caller and asked Thomas to supply a quarter-pound of pot. Police expressed amazement that, 'out of 3,500 pagers in central Oregon, he would get a narc's pager.'
4th August, 1996. Oregon, USA. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

*** Veterinary experts were called in to check on a herd of cows, after the animals were found to be grazing on a hidden £35,000 cache of cannabis resin. The drug had been stored on land near Macroom, County Cork, by unknown dealers.
12th January, 1997. Macroom County, Ireland. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

The Ideal Man?

Villagers in Russia were rather distraught when they discovered that the winner of their annual Ideal Man competition was in fact a 17-stone woman named Olga. Olga disguised herself as male and it was especially galling for the judges, because just a week earlier she had won the Ideal Woman competition.
25th August, 1996. Russia. 'THE SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Life's A Real Lottery, Sometimes...

Heartsick Vincent Woolchover has been booted out of his home in Texas for having the temerity to change his wife's state lottery numbers. Yeah, you guessed it, the week he changed them, was the very week they came up....With a £7 million jackpot!
8th December, 1996. Texas, USA. 'THE MAIL ON SUNDAY.'

*** Kinky bondage lovers Eike Farentz and Gerta Simming were unable to break free after they'd succeeded in tying themselves up in knots. They were stuck for three whole days before they were found (embarrassingly enough) by Gerta's parents.
3rd October, 1996. Germany. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

*** After a fire hose soaked £10,000 worth of bank notes in Caracas, Venezuela, staff hit upon the less than brainy notion of trying to dry the notes in a microwave....And promptly turned them to ash!!!
1st December, 1996. Caracas, Venezuela. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Wheel Bad Luck

Shaun Hennessey, 30, who cycled 4,000 miles for charity on a four-month tour of Europe, had his bike pinched just two days after returning to his home in Preston, Lancashire.

17th October, 1996. Preston, Lancashire. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

Definitely Not Firing Blanks

*** A man who had the idiocy to fall asleep with a loaded pistol in his pocket (fnn, and if you will, mmurrrr) in Michigan, USA, had to have 16 stitches in his private parts after the gun went off by accident.
13th September, 1996. Michigan, USA. 'DAILY SLUR.'

*** And in Moscow, Russia, a half marathon ended in total farce when the starter accidentally shot a runner by the name of Valentina Slobina with his starting pistol.
15th September, 1996. Moscow, Russia. 'SCOTTISH SUNDAY POST.'

*** Horst Meder, 54, went deaf after being constantly nagged by his scolding wife, Elsa. Doctors in Innsbruck, Austria, decided to measure Elsa's voice and found that it hit 80 decibels....The same as a petrol-driven lawnmower.
19th November, 1996. Innsbruck, Austria. 'DAILY MAIL.'

MAN SNEEZES HIS EYE OUT

Wayne Roberts, 35, had been in a bar brawl in Eagle, Colorado, and had walked into a punch which, unbeknownst to him, broke two bones around his eye socket. After the fight was over, he happened to sneeze causing his left eye to fall out. Doctors managed to re-attach the eye, and have promised his sight would not be affected.
28th January, 1997. Eagle, Colorado, USA. 'DAILY SLUR.'

*** A short-sighted man of 67, was out hunting wild boar in Cahors, France, along with a close friend. Whilst engaged in the midst of the hunt, he mistook his friend for a boar and shot him dead. He did however, manage to walk free from the courts, after they ruled accidental death.
21st January, 1997. Cahors, France. 'DAILY SLUR.'

WEIRD DEATHS

A girl, aged nine, was playing with her cousin in a churchyard, and was killed by a bunch of toppling gravestones. The cousin, a young boy, jumped on a stone in high spirits and it pushed the rest over until, in true domino-effect-style, they hit the girl at the end of the row, crushing her.
6th September, 1996. Prospect, Ohio, USA. 'DAILY SLUR.'

*** Bricklayer Francesco Sallieri went to the toilet on the 18th floor of a new office block in Naples. Sadly for him, a freak gust of wind (okay, stop that sniggering at the back - ED) blew the portable loo off the building, killing him instantly.
20th October, 1996. Naples, Italy. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY'

KILLED BY A LOAD OF BULLS BALLS

Extremely unlucky Rene Vaclause was crushed to death in his car after a lorry in front of him shed its four-ton load of frozen bulls' testicles in Lyons, France.
8th December, 1996. Lyons, France. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'

Poetic Justice

A thief by the name of Andy Winter was crushed to death by a 600lb safe which he was manoeuvring down the stairs in a New York office.

And the real kicker was, the police later revealed that the safe was totally empty!
13th October, 1996. New York, USA. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS.'

*** Murderer Laurence Baker, 47, was electrocuted by accident in prison when he foolishly sat on an aluminium toilet wearing home-made headphones connected to a TV.
4th January, 1997. Pittsburgh, USA. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

*** A man wearing a placard with **THE END IS NIGH** died when he was knocked down by a car on the streets of Barcelona, Spain.
12th January, 1997. Barcelona, Spain. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'
*** Sixteen people died when a bus driver swerved to avoid a pig and wound up ploughing into a truck in northern Colombia.
25th November, 1996. Northern Colombia. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

WHEN FATE SMILES DOWN

The Return Of The Ring

Lucky Christine Pinder got her wedding ring back after losing it 21,000 miles away at the bottom of the sea.

The gold band slipped off as she was swimming on the Australian coast. Heartbroken Christine, 44, thought she would never see it again as it sank into the coral of the Great Barrier Reef.

But before she returned home, Christine left her name and address with a local diving firm. Amazingly, one month later, one of their eagle-eyed divers saw it glinting on the seabed and it was sent back to Britain.

Christine later said; 'I can't believe my luck. It must be a trillion-to-one shot that somebody would find the ring at the bottom of the sea.'

'I was sure I had lost it forever.'

Christine and her husband were on a dream trip in Queensland to celebrate their Silver Wedding Anniversary. 'I was enjoying myself snorkelling and looking at the exotic fish when the ring slipped off my finger. I was distraught - I just cried and cried. Nothing could replace the ring.'

The final word was left to her husband Bill....'The company was called Quicksilver. It must have been a lucky omen.'

20th September, 1996. Queensland, Australia. 'DAILY SLUR.'

Fortune In A Prayer

Spanish visitor Eduardo Sierra prayed beside a stranger's coffin for the dead man's soul...And soon after inherited millions.

Swedish businessman Jens Svenson, 73, who had no family, left a will leaving all his wealth to the first person to enter the church in Stockholm, and pray for his soul.

3rd October, 1996. Stockholm, Sweden. "DAILYMANC."

LANDING ON THEIR FEET

*** A glider pilot heard a thud at 10,000ft and looked out of the window to see a man clinging onto the wing.

The unexpected passenger was parachutist Martal Troyan, who had leaped out of a plane at 15,000ft. He clung on for several minutes before continuing his jump - landing safely at Belval, north-east France.

'We were both very lucky,' said pilot Jean-Marc Slana.

8th October, 1996. Belval, north-east France. 'DAILY MAIL.'

*** And meanwhile, housewife Jane Stern had a miraculous escape after falling from her fifth-floor flat in Washington DC. She landed on a washing line below - and swung unscathed through a second-floor window.

12th January, 1997. Washington DC, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Religious Phenomena

The Antichrist Does Not Cometh

In Bogota, Colombia on June 19th, the head of Colombia's Roman Catholic Church has ordered priests to forward any money they received for performing mass baptisms during a scare about the coming of the Antichrist.

'Serious harm has been done to the church because of the actions of some priests,' the cleric archbishop Pedro Rubiano said in a letter in the newspaper 'El tiempo'.

'They have distorted the true image of the church,' he added referring to priests who sought to profit from hysteria that broke out just before June 6th, 1996 - the day many Colombians feared that the Antichrist would appear. Money collected for baptisms is to be deposited in a fund for the poor. June 6th was the sixth day of the sixth month of a year that also ends in six - a coincidence that of course produces the number 666, the sign of The Beast. A wave of baptisms took place because of rumours that the Antichrist would put the mark of the Beast on any child who had not been baptised.

There is no record how much money was collected.

20th June, 1996. Bogota, Colombia. 'THE NEW YORK TIMES.'

Official Medjugorje Pilgrimages Opposed

Since early 1981, sightings of the Blessed Virgin Mary have been reported in and around Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Now the the Vatican has apparently stated that 'official' pilgrimages to the site should not be made any longer.

The Vatican position, which also reflects the opinion of local bishops in the former Yugoslavian republic, was outlined in a recent letter by Archbishop Tarisco Bertone, secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Archbishop Bertone cited a 1991 report by Yugoslavian bishops which said that after much study, it could not be confirmed that supernatural apparitions were appearing at the site.

'From what was said, it follows that official pilgrimages to Medjugorje, understood as a place of authentic Marian visions, should not be organised,' said Archbishop Bertone.

Another bishop by the name of Peric has said that the apparitions have stirred confusion and division in the local church.

The reports of Blessed Virgin Mary sightings to six children have drawn millions of people to the tiny village, many in groups organised by parishes and priests from around the world.

The pilgrimages have continued in recent years, despite the heavy fighting in the region and despite discouragement from the local Bosnian hierarchy.

28th June, 1996. Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. 'ST. LOUIS REVIEW'

Virgin On The Ridiculous....

The tabloid press were quick to seize upon the following story of a scheme to insure virgins for £1 million against being impregnated by 'an act of God.'

The policy, not surprisingly, has been slammed by Church leaders of all denominations, but undaunted, a group called GRIP Insurance is offering the policy for £100 a year to those worried about immaculate conception ('Well, aren't we all - ED) A typically irate spokesman for the General Synod of the Church of England claimed the whole thing was outrageous, but to claim their payout, women would somehow have to prove that their child was the Son of God.

6th September, 1996. General. 'DAILY MANC.'

...AND THE HOPELESSLY CULLIBLE???

As featured on the inaugural programme in the 'FORTEAN TV series on CHANNEL FOUR, a car park in Florida, USA, has become the setting for a holy shrine as thousands of devout Catholics flock to see an image of the Virgin Mary on the windows of a finance company.

The 35ft high shimmering rainbow-coloured vision covers two floors of the building and has been dubbed the Mammon Miracle in the Gulf resort town of Clearwater, near St Petersburg.

'God is telling us to change our ways, says Sister Christian, a visiting nun from India. 'It looks exactly like all the paintings of the Blessed Mother.' Pilgrims have turned the wall below the image into a shrine covered with candles, flowers, written prayers, photographs of sick children and even memorial notices for the dead.

And handicapped people have travelled hundreds of miles in the hope that they may secure a divine cure for their ills. Sister Christian and her fellow nuns are joined in prayer by other believers. Many of them are reduced to tears. Some faint on the spot. 'God is giving us a sign,' says another nun, Sister Martin.

But, predictably, the sceptics are less than convinced that they are witnessing a miraculous apparition. They are more open to the belief that it is nothing other than a bizarre freak of nature. 'It's certainly unusual, but I'm more inclined to think it's caused by the sun reflecting off water left by the sprinklers,' said one.

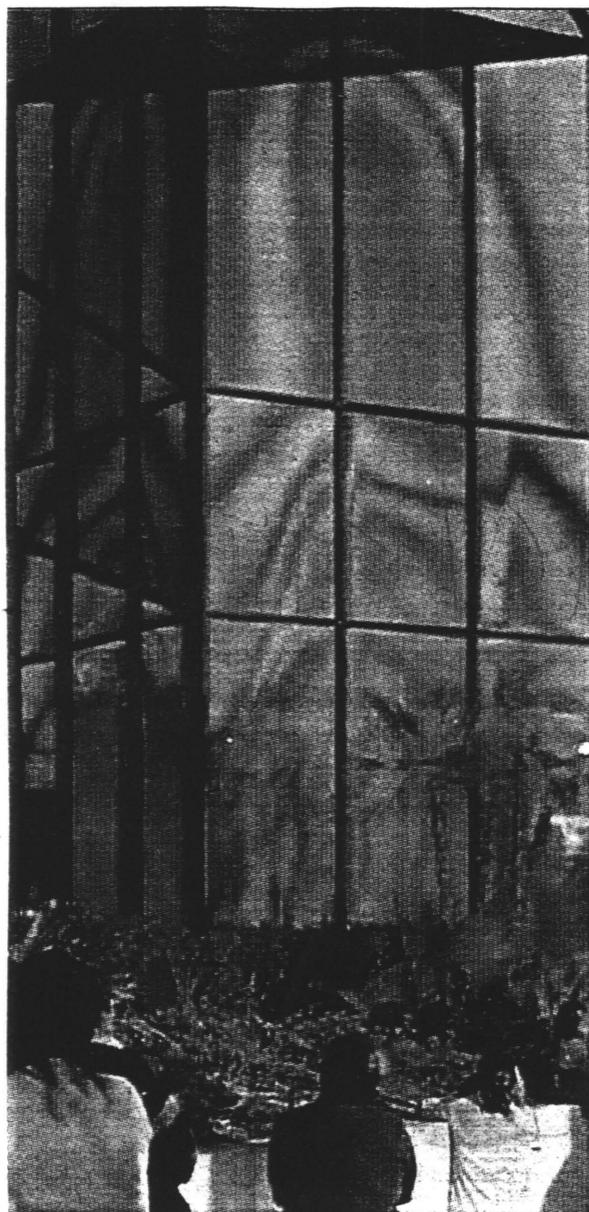
Others have suggested that the phenomenon is a result of minerals in the glass.

The image, which first appeared on December 3rd, 1996, (according to the press reports I've come across) glows and changes colour from green to blue to red. It features what looks like a slightly tilted woman's head with the sort of draped hood Mary is usually depicted wearing. The outline also shows much of an apparently robed torso. But the shadowy face has no features.

Whether or not the phenomenon is a miracle, thousands of people flocked to the site, some of them have even set up a semi-permanent camp in the car park.

'It's amazing,' says Patty Sharn, a receptionist with the company, Seminole Finance. 'It's very spiritual, very peaceful. There are a lot of godly people here.'

And a Clearwater spokesman said; 'People are coming on pilgrimage out of faith and out of curiosity. They come to pray and take pictures. It is not a carnival atmosphere. There is a sense of awe and wonder.'



Church officials have wisely chosen to sit on the fence about the reality or otherwise of the mystery. They have urged healthy scepticism about the apparent apparition amongst their flock.

10th December, 1996. Clearwater, Florida, USA. 'DAILY EXPRESS'

THE DAY JESUS WEPT?

And just a few days later, Greek Cypriot pilgrims in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity fell humbly to their knees before a 12th century picture of Jesus, saying that Christ had winked at them.

The painting, near the grotto where Jesus is said to have been born had allegedly begun to weep red tears.

'This is a miracle and a sign that Jesus has sent us to strengthen our belief,' claimed Father Anastasios.

He dismissed the sceptics' theories that the weeping Jesus was merely a ploy to bring pilgrims and Christmas cheer to Bethlehem as Yuletide approached.

'I don't know what this means for tourism, this is a religious matter, Father Anastasios said. 'I saw Him opening and closing His eyes.'



Sceptical tour guide Eli Udwin was quoted as saying, *'Reports of tears generally occur in the Winter when there is condensation.'*

Sadika Hamida was the first to see the 'weeping' Jesus. *'It was beautiful. He opened and closed His eye and later tears fell, red tears,'* she said.

Unbelievers were more convinced that one of Christ's eyes was simply brighter, creating an illusion of winking.

15th December, 1996. Bethlehem. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

The Girl Who Sheds Tears Of Glass

Hasna Musimani, aged 12, is apparently shedding tears of glass, according to eye specialists. Hundreds of tears are said to have rolled down her rosy cheeks during the past six months without appearing to cause her any harm.

The glass, say the 'experts', seems to be covered in a viscous liquid that protects the eyeball and her tear ducts.

The story Hasna tells, according to the French magazine 'ICI', is that she believes she has been singled out for a miracle by the prophet Mohammed.

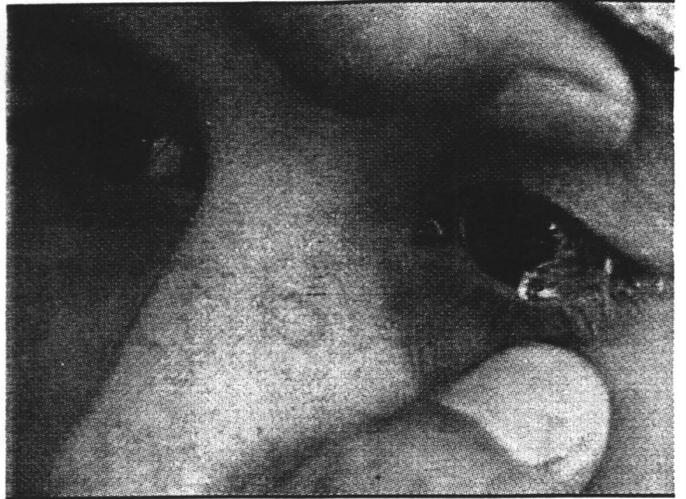
It all began in March, 1996, after her father dropped a glass at their home in the village of Fakiha, on the eastern plains of the Bekaa Valley in the Lebanon.

She dutifully scooted off for a broom to help sweep up the mess but when she returned, she found that the shattered glass had all gone.

Next morning, her left eye hurt abominably, and her mother took her to see a doctor. He was amazed to have to extract the

first of what seemed to be glass tears, which have since varied in size - the largest has been the size of a small bean.

Ophthalmologist Fadi Maalouf described the phenomenon as extraordinary. *'I do not believe that glass can form inside of the eye, and it is impossible that a foreign body artificially introduced could emerge in such a way,'* he said. *'If pressed, I would probably opt for a glandular deformity.'*



Above: What appears to be tiny slivers of glass are extracted from the eye of a 12-year-old girl. A miracle, or some sort of weird medical phenomenon?

Dr Joseph Qassouf, chief medical officer at the Health Ministry, said that during a visit he saw six pieces of glass emerge from Hasna's eyes, one shaped like the letter S.

'The glass was transparent and able to scratch a piece of wood. It's truly remarkable.'

10th October, 1996. Lebanon. 'DAILY EXPRESS'

More Virgin News...

The faithful along with sightseers are out in force as they flock to a small country church in South Australia...Apparently, its priest claims to have seen an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and The Child on the altar wall.

The unfortunately-named Rev Andrew Nutter, told reporters that *'When it first appeared, I shared it with people in the congregation and they said, "Well, yes, if you squint your eyes, think good thoughts, maybe...Maybe.'*

Crowds have turned up in their thousands at the church after a local newspaper broke news of the sightings.

10th July, 1996. South Australia. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

'The Face Of Christ' Appears On Wigan Pier

A paranormal seminar was reportedly brought to a halt by the appearance of a simulacrum of Christ on a canal bridge in the Lancashire town.

What appears to be a bearded face, two feet by three feet, took shape as paint flaked off the side of the bridge.

Paranormal investigator Ian Hawthorne, 29, was holding a class on UFO's in the Orwell public house when someone gazing idly out of the window suddenly shouted *'Look, look, it's Jesus.'*

All 80 students rushed to the window and Ian was astounded to see the image that had taken shape on the bridge.

'We all saw it, like The Shroud of Turin. It is quite amazing. Only a few minutes earlier I had been discussing the phenomenon where holy or paranormal images can be seen in everyday things.



Above; An interesting simulacrum, if it proves to be genuine...But, well, does this look anything like the popular conception of what Jesus Christ is supposed to look like, to you?

The peeling paint also revealed a sticker saying; "Choose now, your saviour. Judge? Heaven or Hell?"

Cosmic Joke, or plain old twaddle dreamed up by the less than reputable 'DAILY SLUR?'

Judge for yourself.

23rd August, 1996. Wigan, Lancashire. 'DAILY SLUR.'

The Ark Theory May Well Hold Water

One of the most graphic and well-loved Bible tales that we all remember from school, concerns the Great Flood and how Noah built the Ark on instructions from God.

Now, two American geologists have claimed that the flood did actually happen but that it did not cover the whole of the Earth...But rather an area that is now the Black Sea, which, for people living there at the time, was the whole world.

Walter Pitman and William Ryan of Columbia University, New York have put forward the theory that the story of Noah was inspired by a flood which submerged the civilisation there around 5600 BC, when sea levels rose after the last Ice Age.

Appearing on the BBC's 'HORIZON' programme (16th December, 1996), they claimed that surveys of the Black Sea bed reveal an earlier coastline, much lower than today's. Drilling has also found dead plants from the side of what was once a freshwater lake. The civilisation around the lake was wiped out when the waters rose. The only survivor was Noah

who guessed what was about to happen. The theory gained some qualified support from archaeologists.

But others said it left questions unanswered. For one thing, Genesis says that 40 days and 40 nights of rain caused the flood.

Moreover, it says the waters began to abate after 150 days. Ryan and Pitman claim the floods did not abate at all, but formed the Black Sea.

But Walter Pitman was also quoted as saying; *'We know when it occurred. We know where it occurred, and we know it was of a colossal magnitude. And that's a problem the archaeologists are going to have to live with.'*

16th December, 1996. Black Sea, Turkey, 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

And Have They Unearthed The Tomb Of Christ?

The belief that Jesus did not ascend to Heaven after the Crucifixion has been dealt a blow by Richard Andrews and Paul Schellenberger, two amateur archaeologists who claim to have found the last resting place of Christ.

They have, they say, discovered a tomb beneath thousands of tons of rock in a mountain in Languedoc, South-West France.

High above the verdant countryside near the infamous Rennes-le-Chateau, 1,300 ft beyond a steep medieval path lined with oak trees, the two men are convinced they have found the tomb. It lies across the valley to Mount Cardou - its lush green slopes scarred with jagged rock.

For Schellenberger, a civil engineer, and Andrews, a former diving specialising in mine clearance, this revelation came not with the blaring of a trumpet and some Archangel coming on the clouds in glory. It was revealed with the appliance of the cold logic of mathematics and science.

Extraordinary as their claims are, they have put their heads firmly on the proverbial chopping blocks by allowing a leading British publisher the rights to make public their findings in a new book called *THE TOMBS OF GOD.*

30,000 advance copies had, at the time of going to press, already been ordered by interested bookshops

Obviously their findings will send immense waves of controversy crashing through the edifice of accepted Christianity.

But standing by Mount Cardou, their conviction is as obdurate as the rock under which they believe the remains of Christ lie.

'It doesn't mean we don't believe in Christ or his message.' Andrews is quick to point out, perhaps struck with the memory of what used to happen to supposed heretics in the Middle Ages. *'It simply means we do not believe the dogma that the Christian church has put out for 2,000 years. We do not say that Christ did not exist or that he was not an enlightened or spiritual man. We do not even dispute that he was the Son Of God.'*

'But we believe the bodily Resurrection of Jesus was used by the Church for its own political and powerful gains. It was a simplistic view propagated for the masses so that the Church would continue to have influence and wealth.'

Christian doctrine demands belief in the Resurrections. The Church, of whatever denomination, is unshakable upon this: Christ was crucified in 33 AD outside Jerusalem, after which he returned to life and ascended to Heaven to sit at the right hand of God. It insists that there is no grave to be picked over, nor any bones, because the Resurrection and the Ascension were entirely physical.

But after more than three years of painstaking research, Andrews, 43, and Schellenberger, 52, believe Jesus was a

'Because to say that Christ's body is still here on the Earth fundamentally undermines what has become the most major influence in Western culture for 2,000 years.

'We weren't terribly happy about this and were sceptical of everything we found.'

Andrews, raised and educated a Roman Catholic at the Oratory School at Woodcote, near Reading, one of the country's leading religious public schools, found his deep-rooted faith shaken by the discovery.

But, he said, the findings were impossible to ignore. *'All the evidence pointed to the conclusion that it was the body of Christ; a body which, according to the Church, should not be here or anywhere else on the Earth.'*

'The followers of St. Paul who established what was to become the Church of Rome, believed Jesus had been bodily Resurrected. By making the Resurrection a central tenet of Christian faith, the early Church introduced guilt and gained an influence over people's lives.'

'The followers of Christ's half-brother James, the Christian Gnostics, believe the Church has distorted the true message of Christ, which was that individuals could by their behaviour achieve salvation in their lifetime. The requirement for His body to have undergone physical resurrection is not a prerequisite for belief in His teachings.'

The real question of course, is have these two men really made one of history's most extraordinary discoveries? They would like the site professionally excavated, but the area is virtually inaccessible and they expect there will be a fair degree of opposition from the Church and French authorities.

So, it seems, the rocks of Mount Cardou will not yield any secrets to the world, just yet.

And, after 2,000 years, one of the most enduring enigmas of all time is likely to remain undisturbed. It may be just as well for mankind, if it does.

18th August, 1996. Mount Cardou, France. 'DAILY MAIL.'

NEW WACO FEAR AS CULTS MULTIPLY

More than 500 religious cults, some using mind-control techniques with a potential for extreme violence, are currently operating in Britain, according to newspaper reports.

Worryingly, cult activity is as intense in Britain as it is in the US, with up to half a million current or past members.

And the phenomenon is expected to become even more widespread in the run up to the end of the Millennium in the year 2000.

A study by the Institute for European Defence & Strategic Studies warned that a tragedy similar to the infamous Waco siege in Texas could easily happen in this country.

At least 70 Branch Davidian Cult members died in 1993 after a gun battle with police and a raging fire ended a 51-day siege of their compound.

David Koresh, the leader of the Waco community who preached a messianic gospel of sex, freedom and revolution, died of gunshot wounds to the head.

The report warned that action was needed by the security services to prevent cult violence erupting Waco-style.

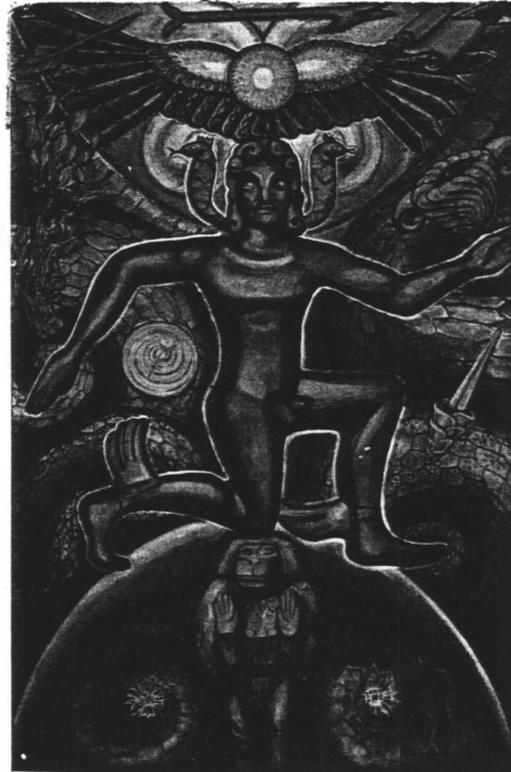
It pointed out that one third of the Branch Davidians who died at Waco were British.

Author Martin Hubback, a security expert, said cults tended to fall into two categories; religious orders that attract younger people in their twenties and those offering therapy for physical or mental problems that appeal more to the middle-aged.

There is also a rising number of cults masquerading as management training, or self-improvement groups.

Mr Hubback warned that the violence and unpredictability of the worst of the cults makes them even more potentially dangerous than more conventional terrorist groups.

He cited incidents such as Waco, the nerve gas attack on Tokyo's underground and the death of 48 members of the Canadian-based cult *'The Order Of The Solar Temple.'* in fires in Switzerland.



'It is this combination of individuals belonging to a group without rational ends; who are not in a bargaining relationship with the authorities; who are not reckless as to their own survival; and who possess the ability and the inclination to use hitherto taboo methods of destruction which makes cults such a serious threat to society,' he said.

'If anything, we are moving away from a world where conflict is between relatively players and towards one threatened by irrational cults who want to make the apocalypse a self-fulfilling prophecy.'

Only a small minority of unorthodox religious groups represent any danger to society, but those that do are capable of wreaking havoc out of all proportion to their size or importance.'

Thousands of unorthodox cults exist around the world and vary from single-congregation white-supremacist churches to major international organisations.

Waco raised alarm over cults to the highest level since 1978 when 900 followers of Jim Jones committed suicide in the Jonestown compound in Guyana.

US politicians have called for a report on cults, many of which are considered a threat because of recruiting campaigns which encourage kidnapping and indoctrinating newcomers.

A Cult Awareness Network has been created to counter these practices and help parents retrieve and 'detoxify' their alienated children.

Amongst the most powerful is the Unification Church, or the Moonies. It recruits from universities around the world using a front organisation and has vast holdings including a fishing fleet, a university in Connecticut and its own newspaper, *THE WASHINGTON TIMES.'*

20th August, 1996. General. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

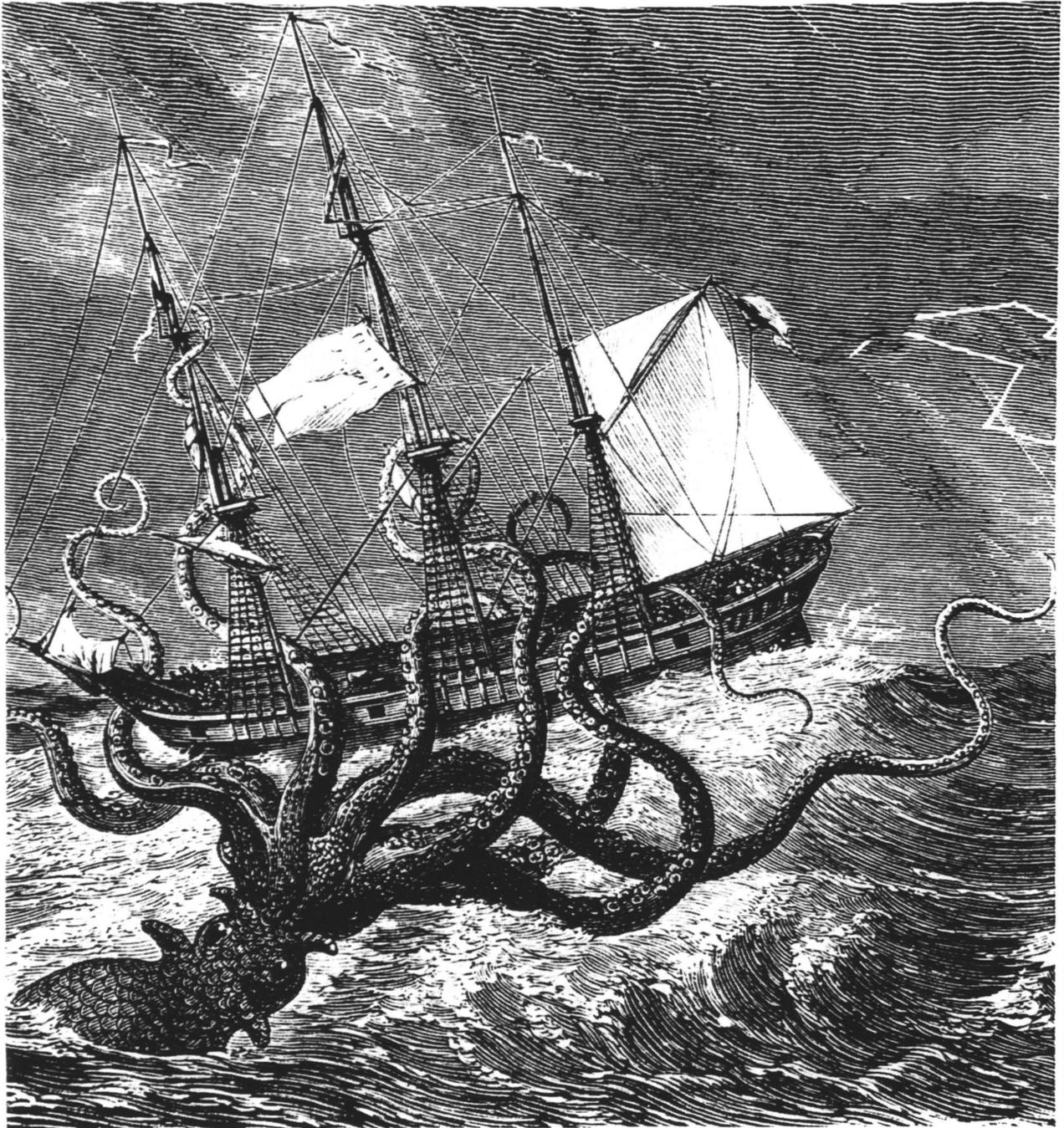
ALIEN ANIMALS

The Kraken Wakes!

The semi-mythical Giant Squid, often referred to as '*last great unknown animal on Earth*,' is reportedly the subject of a hunt by Dr Clyde Roper, a man who's sense of adventure would Indiana Jones to shame.

For thousands of years, the legend of the Kraken has endured. Edward Cohen, says in his '*ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MONSTERS*,' that it is even possible the Giant Squid was the inspiration for the many-armed Greek Scylla.

In the 16th century, the natural historian Olaus Magnus described the Kraken as being a '*monstrous fish - very black, with huge eyes*,' and there have been many eyewitness accounts throughout the ages, and from all over the world (although predominantly the seas off South America, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands) of an animal so huge it can destroy ships and drag them to the ocean floor with its writhing tentacles.



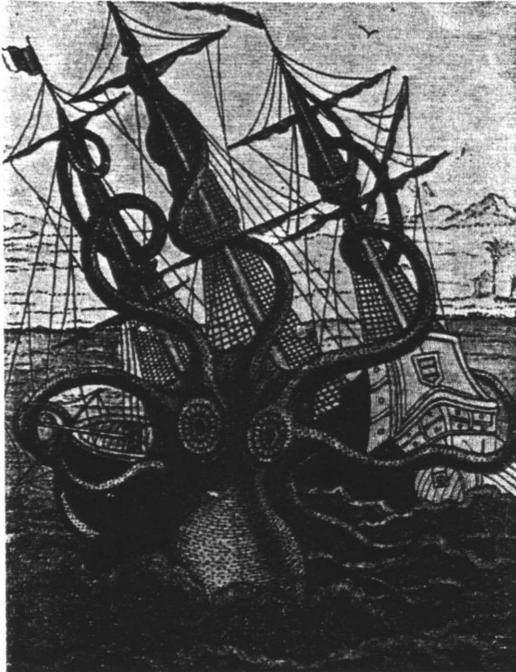
In more recent times though, the creature has been relegated to the realm of fanciful sailors stories. Tales to be recounted around a beer laden table in the snug corner of some dockside pub, while the wind howls outside and the sleet patters at the window and the whole world seems asleep in the dead heart of winter...

In January this year, however, Dr Roper led a 12-week expedition to the deep waters of the Pacific, off New Zealand's South Island, where he genuinely believes the 'Kraken' lives.

Once there, he intends to lower a camera 3,000ft into the depths of the ocean in the hope of capturing the creature on film. If he is successful in his ventures it will, says fellow 'expert' Richard Ellis, be one of the greatest achievements of 20th century marine biology.

Dr Roper, 58, a teuthologist (that's a Squid expert, to me and you) at the Smithsonian Institute Of Natural History in Washington D.C, was in an optimistic mood about his chances of obtaining the definitive proof of the creature's existence.

Three young Giant Squid were netted in the area a year ago,' he said as he made his final preparations for the long voyage. Strictly speaking they were just babies but the smallest was 13ft long.



Above; The Kraken of legend and sailors' myths was said to be a fearsome creature indeed, capable of dragging ships and their terrified crews to their doom

'Pieces of tentacle have been found on beaches throughout the world, some as thick as 1ft across, which suggests they have come from an adult measuring about 60ft from the tips of its tentacles to the back of its head.

That's some creature.

We know they're there. But, apart from the horror stories fishermen around the globe have been telling their children ever since men got into boats, we know next to nothing about how they live.

It's amazing that this huge animal is part of our world and we still haven't seen one living, feeding and reproducing. We know more about Dinosaurs which became extinct 100 million years ago.'

The good doctor agreed that that this is possibly because no one has ever lived to tell the tale, but added; *'It can eat the camera if it wants, just as long as I get a minute's worth of footage of it doing so.'*

His original plans involved him seeing the Squid at first hand through the porthole of a specially-designed acrylic submarine but couldn't raise sufficient cash to hire one.

Therefore there is no chance of an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with the two-ton monster as experienced by Captain Nemo in the 1954 film version of Jules Verne's classic story *TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.* (A film I remember vividly from my childhood - I was scared of entering the water on the beach at Prestatyn every time my family went on holiday, in case just such a fate should befall

me Little wonder that the special effects, courtesy of the guys at Walt Disney, won themselves an Oscar for those convincing effects - Ed).

Many naturalists, including formerly avowed sceptics, now seem to accept the reality of the Giant Squid.

There have been several reliable accounts of encounters with these veritable behemoths of the sea. Probably the two most readily acceptable accounts occurred over a 100 years ago...

In 1861, off the coast of Newfoundland, sailors on the French gunboat *Alecton*, reportedly fired upon what appeared to be a gigantic Squid lying stationary on the surface of the water. They then succeeded in hooking it up with an anchor and attempted to haul it aboard. Unfortunately, the line broke and the creature was allowed to slink off back into the murky depths from whence it came.

And then, on November 2nd, 1878, on roughly the same stretch of coastline, near the town bearing the delightful name of Thimble Tickle, a couple of fishermen spotted what they first presumed to be the remains of a shipwreck. They rowed steadily towards it and then suddenly, *'to their horror, found themselves close to a huge fish, having large glassy eyes, which was making desperate efforts to escape, and churning the water into foam by the motion of its intense arms and tail.'*

The exceedingly courageous fishermen somehow managed to slip a rope around its body and contrived to tow it to the shore. They tied it to a tree so preventing it from reaching the deep waters from which it had emerged. Following its death, measurements were taken of its dimensions and it was found that its body was 20ft long. The largest of the tentacles was 35ft, thus making a total length of 55ft. There is no record, so far as we can tell, as to what became of the carcass. We wouldn't be at all surprised, however, to discover someone had the less than bright idea of disposing of it in some way, due to the overpowering stench.

Sadly, that's normally the case when such irrevocable evidence presents itself for scientific examination.

A recent *'DAILY MAIL'* article states that a few years ago, (they're not sure of the exact date), an American marine biologist was dragged 150ft below the surface by a whole gang of three 10ft Humboldt Squid.

As there are no further details, we'll have to take their word for it...Perhaps other readers would care to enlighten us?

Although the bodies of squids are largely muscle, they have a sharp beak with which they can quite easily deal with their prey. 'Experts' believe that lethal beak would have little trouble cutting through a stone and that a really big creature could cut a man clean in half with no trouble whatsoever.

All Squids have complex eyes, very similar to humans, as well as having a sophisticated brain. They are believed to be so intelligent that, along with the octopus and cuttlefish, they are the only spineless creatures for which a licence is required if scientists want to use them in experiments.

If the expedition manages to record even the slightest glimpse of one of these denizens of the deep, Dr. Roper's financial backers may well grant the funding for a second trip complete with a submarine sometime in 1998. The area they'll be searching is a huge underwater plateau off New Zealand.

It is a favourite haunt of sperm whales, which are known to feed on small squid. Dr Roper intends to track the whales in the hope that they will lead his camera to the giant's hideouts. He said; *'It has always been my dream to see one alive and kicking. All squid are gorgeous, beautiful animals - although I admit I'm somewhat biased.'*

We'll keep you posted as to whether or not his search for proof is successful.

27th December, 1996. Kaikoura, New Zealand. *'DAILY MAIL.'*

Newly Discovered Animals Have Eluded Scientists



A band of conservationists have headed on out to the vast primeval forests of Vietnam in search of undiscovered species of animals, as yet unknown to science.

According to an article printed in *The Circleville Herald*, these intrepid explorers have had to hack their way through the jungles of Vu Quang as they relentlessly sought traces of strange animals in the incredibly lush terrain. The reporter who accompanied the party now takes up the story...

Suddenly the leader halted and bent to examine faint marks in the soil. Two-and-a-half-inch hoof marks. The tracks of the elusive Sao La.

Up ahead under a rock ledge were more tracks and a large patch of soil rubbed clear of undergrowth.

"Sao la slept here," said Vo Quy, a biologist and Vietnam's leading environmentalist, as he raised his camera and snapped.

Four years after scientists discovered the Sao La in remote mountain forests on Vietnam's border with Laos, the dainty, long-horned ox remains an enigma. Just as mysterious are two other large mammals discovered in Vietnam in 1994, the Giant Muntjac or Barking Deer and a Spiral-horned Bovine. Do they travel in herds or alone? How widely do they roam? What do they eat? And perhaps most importantly of all, how many are there and what are their chances of survival?

A shortage of manpower and funds has limited scientific survey work at Vu Quang forest in central Vietnam's Ha Tinh province and Pu Mat in neighbouring Nghe An province, believed to be the main homes of the Sao La and Giant Muntjac. Together the two forests cover 373,000 acres.

The government halted commercial logging that had already devoured nearly one fifth of Vu Quang. It is still struggling to establish effective nature reserves, retain former loggers as conservationists and persuade local residents to stop poaching.

Despite the difficulties, excitement over the rare sweep of discoveries remains high, along with anticipation about other species that may remain hidden in unexplored recesses of the dense tropical woodland.

"This is the largest protected area in the country. The flora and fauna are very rich," said Quy, founder of the Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at Hanoi National University.

"I think there are thousands of insects and invertebrates. Many new species will be described. This is a big heritage not only for our country but for the world," he said on a recent trip to the forests.

The World Wildlife Fund sponsored brief surveys of the Sao La in 1992, 1993, and 1994 that led to the discovery of the Sao La and Giant Muntjac based on horns and descriptions from local hunters. Denmark has offered to sponsor further research, including a study of plants and insects.

For now, the work of observing forest life is performed by three young Vietnamese who spend weeks at a time in a small camp deep inside Vu Quang. They record temperatures,

humidity and the location of animal tracks, not just from the new species, but from tigers, elephants, wild boar, and other familiar forest denizens.

Once word got round that they were special, local hunters set out to catch Sao La for sale. They snared at least four and authorities brought two to Hanoi for study in 1994, but they died in captivity within months. One was captured in Laos in January, 1996, but it, too, died quickly.

One of the Hanoi captives lived long enough to be photographed for an environmental poster. The camera caught it looking back over one brown shoulder, alarm in its large black eyes, nostrils slightly flared.

Most striking are the straight slender horns that gave the animal its name; Sao La means spindle in the language of the local Thai minority.

No Giant Muntjac has ever been captured, although hunters last year gave a local university the carcass of a one-year-old male, a bullet hole in its left flank. The school stuffed it.

As for the Spiral-Horned Bovine, nothing has been found since a single pair of horns and a scrap of skin that scientists tested and determined was a new species.

A visiting German team found the horns for sale in Southern Vietnam's highlands.

15th August, 1996. Vu Quang, South Vietnam. THE CIRCLEVILLE HERALD.'

Alien Big Cats On The Prowl Again



The late (something of a washout) Summer of 1996, seemed to generate a plethora of Alien Big Cat reports starting with an account of a huge, wild cats body being found in South Yorkshire.

According to press reports, two women out walking their dogs on the wild and misty moors, encountered the decomposing carcass near Penistone.

Interestingly, there had been an increase in sightings of panther-like creatures in the area over an 18-month period prior to this discovery. The rotting remains of the animal, said strangely enough, to resemble a lynx, was sent to Doncaster Museum for examination, and hopefully, identification. Typically, and frustratingly, we have not yet heard whether anything definite has come out of this 'finding' (we are reminded uneasily of the 'Beast Of Bodmin's Skull' found by

two schoolboys that turned out to be nothing more than a hunting trophy placed on the moors for a laugh - See DEAD OF NIGHT #7).

Wildlife 'expert' Colin Howes was feeling kind of optimistic about the whole thing however, at the time of going to press...He was quoted as saying; *It's a lot bigger than a domestic cat, but we will find out what it is.'*

Call us members of the Sourpuss Cynical Brigade, but we won't be holding our breath any on this one.

The find has also reportedly revived the local ancient legend of Barnburgh Parish Church, near Doncaster, where a man was said to have been killed by a huge wild cat...

18th August, 1996. Penistone, Yorkshire. 'SUNDAY MANC.'

*** And then there was this less than convincing report from *THE NEWS OF THE WORLD*, that a shocked cousin of the Queen had been subjected to a terrifying encounter with the so-called 'Beast Of Balmoral.'

This mysterious creature has in the past been held responsible for terrorising the sheep on the Royal estate, and was allegedly sighted by none other than the Princess Olga Romanoff, the great niece of murdered Russian Tsar Nicholas II. She was later interviewed and stated; *I was amazed. I am convinced there is a panther on the loose.'*

She went on to say that the Big Cat was pacing about near her home at Banchory, 25 miles from Balmoral. *'It was sleek, black and had pointed ears. I've no doubt I saw the one that has been prowling the Balmoral estate. I know these animals can travel great distances in one day.'*

Stories of the 'Beast' go back to the Summer of 1994, when a panther-like creature was seen soon after Prince Charles's pet Jack Russell 'Pooh' vanished on a walk. Teams of gamekeepers have been making late-night patrols in a bid to snare the animal after a rash of reported sightings all around the 55,000 acre spread.

One eyewitness spotted the creature yards from the Queen Mother's Birkhall retreat next door to Balmoral.

We don't know if he had his tongue firmly located in his cheek or not, but he was quoted as saying; *'I don't like the idea of the young Royals playing in the woods with this thing on the loose.'*

8th September, 1996. 'Balmoral, Scotland. NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

The Giant Cats Of Kilmarnock

In late August and early September, last year, there were various reports of Alien Big Cats from in and around Kilmarnock in Scotland.

Mark Fraser, paranormal researcher and Editor of the consistently excellent *'HAUNTED SCOTLAND'*, has been on the case and has succeeded in collating an interesting selection of sightings.

'I can't be sure what they are ,he was quoted as saying in the local press. They are too big to be sightings of domestic cats. They are about the size of Labrador Dogs. I'm getting reports of sightings at the Dean Country Park and the Bellfield roundabout.

'As far as I can tell there are two distinct colours of large cat in this area; one is black, the other is a sort of fawn colour.'

Accounts have been coming in from sightings in broad daylight as well as during the hazy twilight of dusk and in the full darkness of the dead of night.

Last August two men in their mid-twenties were driving on the Irvine to Kilmarnock road. Near the Moorfield roundabout

they both saw a cat-like animal which they described as being *'bigger than any dog.'*

It jumped out in the middle of the road, barely touching the ground and then on to the verge before racing away across the surrounding fields.

It appeared to be golden-light-brown in colour, and although they only saw it in profile bathed in the glow of the car headlights, they remain totally convinced that what they saw was an enormous cat.

Prior to this encounter, in mid-July, a large cat was seen by a passing motorist close to the Beecham plant not far from Irvine. It too ran onto the road, then into the fields and was lost to sight.

Coincidentally or not, the mutilated carcasses of several sheep were found in the same area. A mauled lamb was discovered in a field on the Ardrossan to Dalry road, near a local dam.

It had what appeared to be claw marks down one side.

Also that Summer, another passing motorist reported sighting a large puma-like creature near Dundonald camp and a young female assistant at a Kilmarnock petrol station was advised by a lorry driver to lock herself in.

He said he had seen the creature on the eternally busy A71. Unfortunately, it's not at all certain exactly where he saw the animal.

A couple who were walking their dog along the River Irvine between Huriford and Crookedholm, saw a large cat-like creature on the evening of 8th September.

They described it as being like a large jungle cat, as big as a fully grown Labrador. It was fawn-coloured with brown markings around the top of its head and ears.

Two days prior to this sighting a factory worker in Darvel saw a large black cat-like creature walking along the disused railway line.

Also in July, a big cat was struck by a car on London Road, between Kilmarnock and Crookedholm. The animal emerged from a clump of bushes at the side of the road, and although the startled driver was able to brake, he still struck the mystery creature. It managed to run off, but there was a dent in the car's registration plate.

And in the same area during August, the same or a similar animal was seen by a family driving between Dundonald and Kilmarnock. The big cat leaped into fields near Fraser's Garden Centre, at Dundonald. Its movements were described as graceful and powerful.

During October, Stephen Steiner and his brother-in-law Andrew Malcolmson, came forward to claim they have seen the 'Phantom Puma' on more than one occasion.

The pair often go hunting for rabbits and hares in the Dundonald area. *'We've seen this creature three or four times in the last month,'* says Stephen. *'The first time we saw it was on the road from Dundonald to Friveways and it attacked the car.'*

He claims that on the other occasions the Big Cat was sighted prowling the fields in the area. *'One time it was watching us for a little while but then it bounded off. There is no doubt in my mind that what we saw was no dog. It was too agile and it moved like a cat. I'm concerned that with winter coming on it may come into the village. We don't know enough about it to say that it will not attack a child or domestic pets.'*

Finally, for this issue at least, Darvel butcher Ian McCaw called *THE KILMARNOCK STANDARD* to tell them that he had sighted a large brownish cat near to the Loudoun Golf Club one morning last winter.

'It was heavily built, like a Doberman, but I could see it had pointed ears like a cat and a face like a cat. There was some snow on the ground, but I didn't go looking for any prints'.

Some people made Ian the butt of their jokes about the incident, but as he says; *The club steward didn't laugh at me. He said that he'd seen large cat-like footprints in the snow. I don't know what it was that I saw, but it was just like the animal that other people have been reporting.'*

Anyone who sees an Alien Big Cat in the area is asked to pass on the details to Mark Fraser at 25, South Dean Road, Kilmarnock, or you can ring him on 539509.

13th September - 25th October, 1996. Kilmarnock, Scotland. *'KILMARNOCK STANDARD.'*

OTHER BIG CAT SIGHTINGS

In Selby, Yorkshire, on the 28th September, a total of five people claimed that had witnessed a large, panther-like cat, nearly three feet tall. It was calmly sitting on the grass verge by the roadside.

29th September, 1996. Selby, Yorkshire. *'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'*

*** And at St John's College, Cambridge, pupils were ordered to stay indoors. after a Big Cat the size of a tiger was seen roaming the playing fields.

The RSPCA were called in to investigate the sightings. Head groundsman Jim Williams, who spotted the animal said; *'It was five or six times bigger than a normal cat and very unusual..'*

A creature known locally as 'The Fen Tiger' has been reportedly seen several times in the county.

20th November, 1996. St John's College, Cambridge *"DAILY MANC."*

The Mystery Of The Block Ness Monster

In New Shoreham, Rhode Island, one of those frustratingly unidentifiable carcasses has been discovered, causing the usual well of controversy as to its origins.

Found in a fisherman's net, the mysterious 14ft serpentine skeleton has taken something of a life of its own on Block Island, 14 miles off the Rhode Island coast.

The sea creature's bones have apparently vanished before any attempt could be made to identify them, and no one seems to know who has taken them or why. There has been a message from the 'kidnappers' that they were worried the creature, whatever it is, would be shipped off the island and never returned. This 'message' has itself been labelled as pure fiction by sceptics who argue that the bones have been spirited away for the precise reason that they would easily be identifiable if viewed by experts. Perhaps the whole thing is a hoax aimed at attracting tourists to the island?

It is certainly true that whilst the mystery remains, people are only too willing to suspend their disbelief and fork out on \$18 for the official 'Block Ness Monster' T-shirt. Such fashion items adorn the shelves and hangers of island shops. The back of the shirt shows a snake-like creature wrapped around the island's coastline.



What has become known as Block Ness Fever, broke out last June, when two fishermen aboard the suitably titled *'Mad Monk'* cast their nets for Monkfish and wound up catching something very peculiar instead. Upon returning to shore, they hurriedly displayed the carcass on the stone breakwater near the local docks for the Point Judith Ferry.

The spine stretched longer than two men and was attached to a narrow head with vacant eye-sockets and weird whiskers. Lying in the sun, the sight of it was enough to draw a constant stream of the downright curious to the Old Harbour for two days.

'Probably more people walked down there in two days than in whole century, just about,' said Chris Littlefield, one of the island's 800 permanent residents. Disembarking from the ferry one of those days was New York State park biologist Lee Scott of Nyack. *'What the heck is this?'* Scott recalled saying as he clapped eyes on the strange body. *'I went back to my car and got the camera.'* He then took the skeleton to his island summer home and put it in his freezer to preserve it. He planned to ship it to the mainland for examination at the National Marine Fisheries Service in Narragansett.

Gary Hall, the fisherman who helped land the creature, was to stop by Hall's home and pick up the bones and put it on the ferry, Scott said.

'Like others on the island, Scott does not feel the need to lock his doors when he's not at home. One day he went fishing, and when he returned home, the skeleton was gone.

A short time later, Scott got a phone call from the 'kidnappers.' They said they live on the island and were concerned that if the skeleton was allowed to leave, it would never be returned.

'They talked to me in a roundabout way,' Scott said. *'They talked to me about their position on keeping it on the island. I agree.'*

Meanwhile, back on board the *'Mad Monk,'* Hall was declining to talk about the mystery, while the other fisherman, J.T Pinney, spoke only of how the creature's appearance, and subsequent *disappearance* has affected the islanders.

'Some people take it far too seriously, with contempt, even.'

It should be duly noted that Pinney is the brains behind the T-shirt merchandising. On the other hand, he has also tacked up posters seeking information as to the skeleton's whereabouts.

Other islanders have been quick to describe Pinney as being somewhat colourful. *'Jay is capable of anything,'* says Vic McAloon, manager of the Oar Bar and restaurant, and a former town police chief. *'He's a very witty character. I know he's sold a lot of T-shirts. I think that's very clever. I certainly bought one.'*

The debate about the skeleton itself continues unabated, though the likelihood is it's probably the remains of a Basking Shark.

Harold Pratt, a fisheries biologist, certainly agrees with that thesis, but said he understands why some people believe it's more mysterious. *'It does look otherworldly. It looks like something from the deep past.'*

Scott however, remains convinced that the bones could well be the remains of a shark not yet known to science. He claims he measured the creature's 'snout' and found that it came to 12 inches. The average snout of a Basking Shark is a mere 6 inches.

Whatever the truth of the matter, one thing remains certain. This is a mystery that has all the classic elements of an enigma that is set to run and run.

We'll keep you posted.

22nd September, 1996. Block Island, USA. *THE SEATTLE TIMES.*

South African Lake Monster

In Howick, South Africa, real credence is being given to an ancient legend that tells of some mysterious denizen lurking in the depths the pool below Howick Falls.

In common with countless other purported lake monsters, local superstition dictates that an evil spirit has long exerted its malign influence over the unwary, and it especially delights in sucking its victims into its underwater lair.

The small town of Howick, west of Pietermaritzburg in Kwa-Zulu Province, has been subjected to the usual tourist invasion, each one keen to grab themselves a fortune should they be lucky enough to grab the definitive proof.

Absolom Dlamini, 69, however, is at least a tad more respectful of the enduring power of the creature.



'There's usually a fearsome spirit here which makes you feel like you are being dragged by some power into the waterfall.'

Bob Teeney, who has a fast-food shop at the falls, has more in common with the aforementioned Pinney (see previous article). He's far too concerned with exploiting the mystery for his own greedy ends. He claims to have seen a 25-foot long monster in the pool, and has actually succeeded in obtaining some typically fuzzy photographs of what appears to be a head rearing up from the murky depths.

These same inconclusive photo's grace the walls of his shop. One of the pictures, taken by a tourist, reportedly shows a pipe-like neck rising from a half-submerged swollen 'body'. Three smaller 'monsters', which look a suspiciously like common or garden ducks, are swimming next to it.

Teeney of course, claims the duck-like objects are in fact baby monsters that prove that a whole family of creatures unknown to science exist in the expanse of water.

He favours the classic ol' Surviving Plesiosaur Theory - beloved of Sir Peter Scott, Tim Dinsdale, et al. Anthropologist Sian Hall, who also lives in Howick, is more sceptical. She believes that 'sensation seekers' have embroidered the myth passed on by generations of Zulu's in the area that a giant water snake lives in the pool.

'There are no physical monsters in the Howick Falls, she says confidently. 'Giant eels, perhaps, and even huge otters, if that is your idea of a monster. We do not need to misinform the public, nor to use their gullibility to attract tourists to Howick.'

What a rotten ol' spoilsport!!!

7th July, 1996. Howick Falls, South Africa. 'SEATTLE TIMES.'

Tales From The Loch Side

A young man skin-diving in the loch close by Temple Pier, at Drummadrochit, one afternoon in July, 1996, encountered something mysterious in those primeval depths.

Robert Badger, 23, a man who has had two years' diving experience as a skin-diver, was helping the Loch Ness Investigation at its Achmahannet headquarters. In an interview with *THE INVERNESS COURIER* he said that he had been fixing an anchor for one of the Investigation's small boats, and whilst diving towards the spot where the anchor was being placed, almost half-way down, and at a depth of 10 feet, he had seen a very large body swim past, fairly slowly, and he estimated its girth at six feet.

Although the visibility had been more than a little dim, he was in no doubt whatsoever that the object was a live animal of some kind. At the depth of 10 feet moreover, he could still see, somewhat darkly, naturally, the actual bottom of the loch, so had it not been for the fact that his goggles had restricted his view on either side, he would have been able to form a pretty accurate opinion as to its true size.

He added that he had felt a bit scared after the object, whatever it was, passed out of sight.

13th August, 1996. Loch Ness. *'INVERNESS COURIER'*

*** Meanwhile, a month earlier, two brothers claim to have spotted Nessie while on a fishing trip to the infamous Loch. Joseph McLean, 19, and his brother Alistair, who hail from Bournemouth, stated they had been angling on the shores when they saw a 20ft long creature swimming in the still, mirror-like water. They claimed that the creature was a massive reptilian animal and they watched it for about a minute as it sped by. Then it dived and disappeared into the peat-stained waters.

Joseph, 19, was quoted as saying; *'I heard a whooshing sound and looked to see where it was coming from. The water was splashing and I saw a huge black mass move through the loch. It seemed to be moving at some speed and I watched it for about a minute before it disappeared under the water. I couldn't believe my eyes.'*

Alistair said; *'It was going so fast there seemed to be a huge wake coming from it. Just before it disappeared we saw a flipper come out of the water with a big splash.'*

20th September, 1996. Loch Ness. *'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'*

The Loch Lochy Monster

The monster in Loch Lochy, affectionately known as 'Lizzie', finally surfaced for the briefest time after a 21-year wait.

The loch, like so many in the mist-shrouded Highlands of Scotland, (and like just about every loch that one encounters along the Great Glen - Linnhe, Oich, and even tiny Dochfour have their own reported sightings) has something of a monster tradition.

According to the author Alan Landsburg, when he was researching material for his book *'IN SEARCH OF MYTHS AND MONSTERS'*, he was told of a man living at Lochside sometime in 1930. One day he'd suddenly warned his wife never to wash their linen in the waters anymore. When she, quite understandably, enquired as to why this should be so, he told her in no uncertain terms that he'd seen *'something ghastly, and to his mind unnatural in the loch.'*

Much later, on 13th July, 1960, Mr and Mrs Eric Robinson together with a friend, were looking out across the loch when they were startled to see a two massive waves cross the calm, still waters. Then what appeared to be a 15 foot rounded back suddenly broke the surface, and began rolling over. Unable to believe what they were seeing, they excitedly grabbed a pair of binoculars and watched in awe-struck wonder as *'a fin or a paddle on its body turned.'*

It caused further waves, which were so powerful they broke on the beach at their feet.

By that time a veritable crowd of nine other people had gathered round to watch. All claimed to see the same thing.

After an unspecified time, the monster, if such it was, dived and disappeared from view and was not seen again.

There were no further reports until on September 30th, 1975, a Mr and Mrs Sargant forwarded an account of a similar looking monster with a 15 to 20 foot black-coloured back, visible above the water.

Unfortunately, we do not have any further details of this sighting.



But in September of last year, a group of eyewitnesses were completely stunned to see an apparent 12 foot-long, three humped creature rearing up out of the water.

Guests at the nearby Corriegour Lodge Hotel rushed to the shoreline to try and afford themselves a better view. The Hotel boss was later moved to comment; *'I have never seen anything like this creature before.'*

Add to this the recent discovery of what may be huge caves beneath the surface of nearby Loch Ness, (see next issue for full story) and it may provide some basis to the long-held belief that there may be a tunnel connecting the lakes all along the Great Glen and out to sea...Thereby explaining how a whole family of large, aquatic animals could reside in any one loch???

15th September, 1996. Loch Lochy, Great Glen, Scotland. *'SCOTTISH SUNDAY POST.'*

Keep Watching The Skies!!!

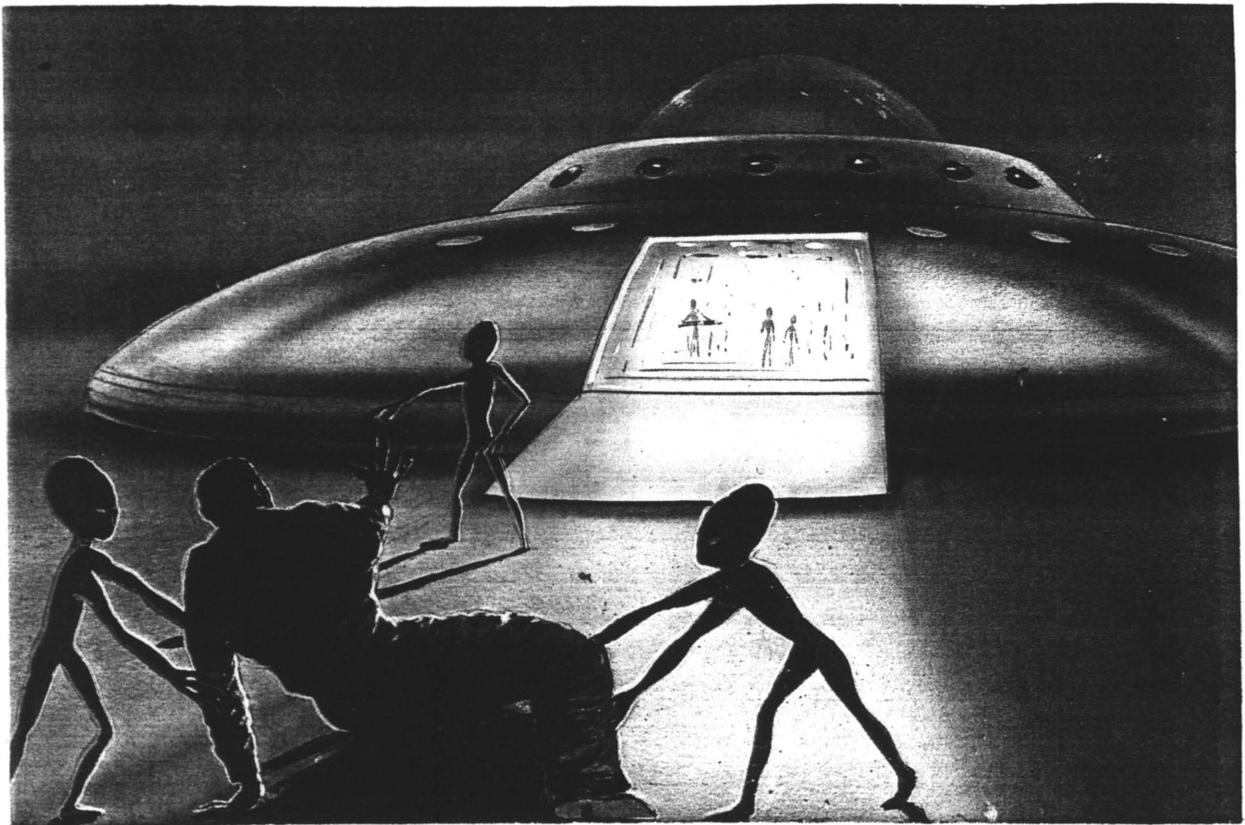
UFO UPDATE

By way of something of a departure from the normal round-up of UFO-related news, for this issue we've decided to feature a couple of articles we've recently received instead. This is mostly due to a lack of space, but don't worry, we'll round-up all the latest UFO news in our next issue.

Out Of This World???

We live in a world where violence, tragedy, disease, famine, wars, and every other kind of atrocity are continually on the increase. Even allowing for the thawing in East-West relations, the world seems forever tottering on the brink of World War Three. At the same time it is a world fast expanding through the media, science and technology and many other fields of profession. Things that were once considered to exist solely in the realms of science-fiction are now becoming ever more possible. With ever more outstanding technological advances in the future. Just one single episode of such T.V. programmes as *TOMORROW'S WORLD* and *FUTURE FANTASTIC* are enough to convince one of this, and of the aims scientists have reached and are continuing to reach for.

Yet in spite of mankind's abilities to develop and increase in such fields as the media, science and technology; there still remain things about the universe that continue to fascinate and capture the imagination.



For hundreds (if not thousands) of years now, people have reported sightings of strange lights or unidentifiable objects traversing the skies. These mysterious objects are believed by many people to be spaceships manned by alien entities. The number of UFO reports seemed to rise sharply during the Second World War. Accounts were forwarded by responsible witnesses including military and civilian pilots. Their sightings were so frequent that the flyers even had a name for them; 'Foo Fighters.'

Despite the plethora of reports and the subsequent photographic evidence, scientists refused to give the subject any degree of credence. They admitted that they could not explain away all of the sightings, but claim to have proved that many of the accounts were merely misconceptions of the perfectly ordinary; meteors, the planet Venus, a rocket, an artificial satellite or that classic, all-time number one favourite and scourge of the skies above Roswell; the weather balloon.

Furthermore, atmospheric disturbances may well create optical illusions that resemble UFO's. An unidentifiable object observed in the sky does not necessarily mean that it is a spacecraft from another planet with a penchant for developing mechanical difficulties when they're flying above remote desert locations (usually, though not always, in the deserts of New Mexico). It has been firmly established that many quite identifiable objects have been mistakenly reported as a UFO.

For many years now various T.V. programmes and countless movies have helped promote the belief in all things extraterrestrial. With films that are aimed at both adults and children (*SUPERMAN, DR. WHO, STAR WARS, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE,*

MORK AND MINDY, STAR TREK ALIEN, THE OUTER LIMITS, THE X-FILES, and more recently *'INDEPENDENCE DAY,'* it is more than apparent that mankind's interest in UFO's, aliens and the paranormal in general has been well and truly fostered. The much-maligned Condon Report of 1966-68, sponsored as it was by the U.S. Air Force, stated that whilst not all the reports could be explained in conventional terms, there was absolutely no evidence to suggest that they were craft from another planet. Over 12,000 other UFO reports of events that took place from 1947 to 1969, were investigated independently by the Airforce. This investigation ended after they concluded that UFO's presented no threat to the national security of the United States.

Many people have since claimed that they have been in contact with alien life forms, (the so-called Contactee's) and more recently to have been abducted by bug-eyed, 'Grey's' and subjected to intense medical examinations. Like any true Fortean, I would never presume to dismiss such people as being either out and out hoaxes or completely insane. Something out of the ordinary is going on here, but what?

It is interesting to note that although the accounts of abductees have many things in common, no two reports are exactly alike. Is it reasonably sound to believe that these experiences of UFO and alien encounters are intelligent beings from some far-flung solar system? And if so, how? With the many thousands of accounts of UFO sightings all over the globe, why is it that none of their occupants have made themselves known? Why all the indirect approaches? Why all the Hide and Seek behaviour? Why don't they openly reveal themselves? To quote an old cliché; there are more questions than answers.

From 1920 to 1947, the period before the modern wave of UFO sightings, there were fewer than twenty movies dealing with extraterrestrial life forms. But from 1950 to 1980, there was a massive increase to over a hundred. It is nothing short of amazing how people are so easily prepared to accept the reality of UFO's as interplanetary spacecraft. Many of the same people refuse to accept the existence of God. What is equally amazing is how, after so many years of so many movies we are somehow supposed to believe in ET. I think it is an insult to our human intelligence.

The British journal 'Flying Saucer Review' is widely regarded as the leading and most respected publication dealing with UFO's. It has over 50 experts and specialists from around the world who study and carry out investigations into alleged UFO encounters. It was established in 1955 and has since carried out an exhaustive and objective study of the subject. The editor, Gordon Creighton, once stated; *'There seems to be no evidence yet that any of these craft or beings originate from outer space.'*

A noteworthy statement when you consider the source Dr Jacques Vallee, the French astrophysicist and author of the classic 'Passport To Magonia,' was quoted as saying; *'Over the past twenty years the extraterrestrial alien has assumed a powerful persona, so much so that expectations are now high that he actually exists among us.'* He also stated; *'The experience of a close encounter with a UFO is a shattering physical and mental ordeal.'*

Points of consideration.

There are many reasons why people believe in UFO's and alien life forms. One is the belief that many human beings, maybe even mankind as we know it, refuse to accept that we cannot exist alone in the universe. Why not? say I.

Another reason people are so willing to suspend their disbelief is (and I personally believe this is the main and most important reason) is that everyone wants a solution to the problems currently facing the world, and on a more selfish level, their individual worries. Therefore many people seek solace in the

knowledge that saucer occupants who have the ability to build such sophisticated spacecraft would be quite easily able to solve our problems, be they individual or global. The fact that there appears to be no real, concrete evidence for the existence of these beings doesn't seem to phase them any.

Furthermore, it doesn't seem to have struck them that alien beings capable of playing games, and dangerous games at that, on the hearts and minds of the human race, would be able, or indeed willing to help create harmony on Earth.

Even supposing that aliens have been gracing us with their presence, what would likely happen if they were to make contact with us? I sometimes wonder how Joe Public would react (especially those that desperately want them to exist). What form would these entities take? We have all seen the movies. The film-makers imagination has created all manner of alien being. But maybe they would be so *alien* as to be impossible to conceive in our wildest dreams. Maybe someone could succeed in capturing one of them alive and turn them into a sort of carnival side-show. I can just see the government joining forces with 'Sky T.V.' and setting up a Pay-Per-View scheme, and make some quick cash!

Or maybe the human race would be duly subjected to a similar fate by them.

In the movies we have seen, they have come to us with wildly different characters and personalities. Some are benign, openly friendly beings come to aid mankind (*'SUPERMAN,' ET-THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL,' MORK & MINDY'* etc.) And some are pure evil (*'ALIEN,' 'INDEPENDENCE DAY,' MARS ATTACKS'*, etc.).

In many T.V. programmes there is a curious combination of both good and evil alien beings (sound familiar?). It is interesting to see the movies that have portrayed such a combination (*'ALIEN NATION, 'V''* etc.), where aliens took part in everyday human life activities. In the American series *'ALIEN NATION.'* we see such a case. Evil men joined forces with evil alien beings, while good men teamed up with the good aliens. Can you imagine just such a scenario on Earth? That would be a front page story for the media!

I can just see the press headlines now;

'Alien Visitors Land In Central London'

'I Had An Alien Love Child.'

'Alien Visitors Meet Royal Family.'

'Teenage Aliens Raid Drugstore.'

'I Will Run For Prime Minister, Next

Election" Says Alien Visitor.'

'Alien Being Steps Up Peace Process.'

'Alien Celebrity Funds Children's Hospital.'

'Alien Being Marries Supermodel.'

Oh dear, these events sound all too familiar to life here on Earth.

The list goes on... Or maybe the aliens would come and take us all away in their flying saucers (for better or worse) to another planet. If alien beings really existed it would be possible to have any one of those scenarios occur. Or maybe it would be none of these.

Maybe, just maybe it could be (in the immortal words of the TV announcer in *'MONTY PYTHON''*) *'Something Completely Different.'*

Hudson Bartley.
London 1997.

Bonnybridge - The Story So Far

Late in 1994, a fascinating new television show was about to be aired for the first time. The programme was entitled 'STRANGE BUT TRUE?', and was hosted by well-known TV personality Michael Aspel. The programmes remit was to report on events of a paranormal nature and the first show was to feature a famous UFO encounter that took place in November, 1979. Forester Bob Taylor, stumbled onto a 'landed craft', apparently from another world, in a clearing in Dechmont Law Forest. The second part of the show also intended to discuss that now world-renowned UFO hotspot....Bonnybridge.



My wife and I had no particular interest in the subject of Ufology, but our added interest in this particular show was two fold. Firstly it was a truly remarkable local event and secondly was the fact that along with half the population of Bathgate, Kathleen had a daylight sighting of the craft prior to it becoming public knowledge. Eventually, I too had a later sighting of this, or a similar craft which was in the area for a period of weeks.

Kathleen takes up the story:

"Whilst walking with my mother-in-law towards my sister-in-laws house, she suddenly exclaimed; "What a funny looking aeroplane." I looked up at the area she was pointing at and saw an unusual craft. It was shaped like an upside down spinning top, with a metallic appearance close to that of Teflon. The craft was hovering in broad daylight and in total silence over the vicinity of Dechmont Law. After a few minutes I quickly ushered my mother-in-law into the house. I did not mention this incident again until it became public, when I told my husband what we had witnessed."

I had returned home from work and had settled down to watch the Six O' Clock News. I was astounded when the story of the landing and attempted abduction was featured. Whilst going through the usual howls of disbelief Kathleen informed me of her sighting. Being sceptical of such matters did not help my appreciation of the events. As Kathleen related her story to me I could not help but feel she was being honest. Knowing Kathleen helped to give me *partial* credence to her story. It wasn't long after that when I had my own sighting of the craft.

I was at work and one afternoon there was a total power failure. Because of this we were allowed to leave work early. I arrived home and found that Kathleen was not at home. I knew she would be in my mother's house and started to walk the half mile or so to her home. As I approached the house my attention was drawn to an exceedingly low and very loud rumble in the sky. I looked up and saw a very bright light heading slowly in my direction. I thought to myself this is the famous UFO and sat on the wall to observe. After a few seconds the sceptic in me came to the fore once again and with a grunt of disdain I left the wall and entered the house. That would have been that as far as I was concerned. My sister arrived home about ten minutes later in a high state of alarm and excitement. She had been travelling on a bus coming from Edinburgh and claimed that a UFO had swooped low in a field adjacent to the road. I realised then that if I had kept my position by the wall I would have had a first class view of the craft as it flew overhead.

Neither Kathleen or I reported these daylight sightings, due to the fact that we did not realise UFO researchers even existed. As 'STRANGE BUT TRUE' was about to feature the Dechmont Law encounter I decided to contact a forester friend, who had actually been involved in putting the fences around the original 1979 site for the police. He gave us a guided tour of the site pointing out where the tracks had been, where the strange angle marks, made by the spiky orbs where, and where the 'ship' had been sitting. He pointed out the direction Bob had entered the clearing before encountering the thing and where his van had skidded off the track becoming stuck in mud. This gave us background information on the event prior to the show being aired. We then decided that, as we had gained valuable insight into Bob Taylor's encounter, we should follow that up with a trip to Bonnybridge to view the 'UFO's' firsthand.

This trip was organised in a spirit of whimsy, as we did not believe these crafts were truly visiting Bonnybridge. Despite actually seeing the 1979 craft, I remained a sceptic of the highest order.

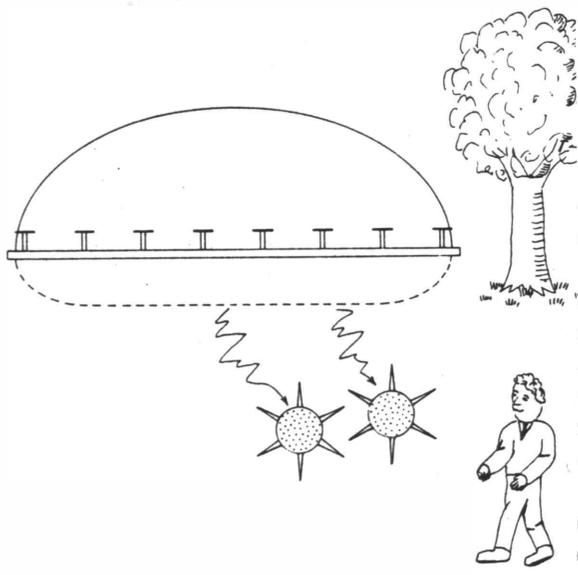
We arrived in Bonnybridge on the night of April 1st, 1994. Never having been in the area previously made it slightly more difficult to find a good spot for a night of skywatching. Nevertheless, we settled down at 7:10pm. The weather conditions were excellent, the sky covered in a spectacular carpet of sparkling stars. Almost as soon as we arrived I jokingly said; "Look, there's one" as a single white light appeared over the horizon and headed west. Suddenly, and without any fuss, it changed direction...And went straight up! We looked at each other and smiled. "Must have been a plane" I said nervously. Ten minutes had elapsed, and yet another of those small white lights appeared heading east..I had decided to log everything that moved that night hence the accuracy of the timings. After a short period, another two lights appeared and rose in the west and east situating themselves at ten and two o' clock respectively. These lights appeared to join the star constellations. If we had failed to observe these lights among the stars we would have been totally unaware that anything was amiss. For the rest of the night we had to reassure one another that we did see those lights travelling there. This seemed unbelievable to us at the time. But even more was to follow.

Another two lights appeared over the horizon flying slowly one above the other. After a short time the lights appeared to join together and separate again. At this point we realised that something was quite defiantly up! Various lights came and went usually at ten minute intervals. It was at this point that Kathleen became decidedly agitated, repeating "Oh my God, what is that?" I could see nothing at this time as whatever Kathleen was observing was obscured to my vision by the

silhouette tree line. A large white light was heading straight toward our position at a height of no more than a hundred feet. I quickly got out of the car and using my binoculars managed to have a good look at the underside of the craft. It appeared to be of a triangular shape without the sharp edges. It was rounded at the front and the rear points of the triangle were also rounded, the back edge was concave giving a general elongated heart effect. The craft had three slowly flashing lights at the rear, the two at the extremities were red and a white flashing light was situated in the middle of the concave. I can only describe the underside of the craft as being covered in patch-type boxes and pipes similar to those seen in the 'STAR WARS' movies! I deliberately looked for a tail plane and wings on the craft. There were none!

As the ship slowly banked to our right I had absolutely no fear. Our feeling was one of marvel superseded by a tremendous feeling of awe.

In a state of exhilaration we decided to travel toward the horizon, as that was where the things were coming from. We travelled blindly through Drum Forest, a spooky place during the day, never mind the pitch dark. We emerged from the forest and arrived into open country. I soon spotted lights that appeared to be hovering pretty close to the ground. Another light appeared in the sky and headed in our general direction. I quickly scanned this light with my binoculars and can only describe what I saw as three serrated red arrows. I could not ascertain whether they were joined to a structure or were individual objects.



The American researcher Bob Dean, said that "Once you have witnessed a UFO, your body changes at a molecular level." I totally concur with Bob, as these sightings heralded a radical change in my life. Without fully realising it at the time, my future had been altered forever, and my belief systems were to undergo a thorough re-evaluation.

My main concern that night was the fact that these things were happening without any intervention by the R.A.F. Strangely, I felt no fear or apprehension during any of these sightings.

Eventually, I paid a visit to the local library and began reading any UFO books that were available. In the glossary of 'UFO'S AND HOW TO SPOT THEM' by Jenny Randles, were contact addresses and telephone numbers of UFO groups. I decided to contact BUFORA to report our sightings. I was visited by a researcher who listened carefully to my often rambling statements and went off to research his findings, I received a comprehensive report, including details of the earth's Geo-Magnetic Field. Although the results didn't prove our

sightings were genuine (nor could they) they certainly were not totally sceptical in the final analysis. I would add that geo-magnetic hallucinations do not appear in an almost triangular shape with flashing lights, or take the form of red arrows.

The following is a copy of the relevant sections of the BUFORA investigators report:

Summary: On 1st November, 1994, between 6pm and 12 midnight, UK measures of geomagnetic activity showed that the earth's geomagnetic field was comparatively 'quiet' or 'unstormy'. Measures of geomagnetic intensity for the precise period from 7-10pm show that the earth's magnetic field strength was just under 49175 nano Tesla, a figure which does not markedly differ from comparison measures taken three days before and after the sighting date.'

At this point I expect you wonder what all this might mean!

Here are some possibilities:

1: Geomagnetically Influenced Ball Lightning

In some way the earth's low level of geomagnetic activity might have promoted the development of 'Earthlights' or ball lightning in the area. You may have been a witness to a particularly long display of natural geomagnetic anomalies. This does not explain your closer observation of an object with red and white lights, however. (At least as described).

2: Geomagnetically Influenced Collective Hallucination

The earth's geomagnetic field may have interacted with your brain functions, placing you both in similarly altered states, and promoting the hallucinations of UFO-like objects. This would account for most of the features of your experience, but it seems unlikely that such a state would be maintained for a three hour period without your having been aware of it (inducing altered states, even mildly, is difficult without major change in the quality of conscious experience). Also, this hypothesis fails to explain the fact that you both agree on what you saw, which is not a characteristic of pure hallucinations!

3: Extra-Terrestrial Craft Seen - Geomagnetic Data Irrelevant.

It is of course, quite possible that what you saw were alien spacecraft engaged in some activity whose purpose we can only guess. This hypothesis fits the facts as experienced quite well, but beyond our own testimony we have no means of further checking out its truth. In short, unless the aliens agree to an interview themselves, you are left with your own gut feelings! Also, on this account, the geomagnetic data I have gathered would have been pure fluke, playing no role whatsoever in your experience.

Combination Of Hypothesis 1 And 2

It might be that the state of the earth's geomagnetic field influenced both the development of physical and mental anomalies. So, you may well have begun the experience seeing the ball lightning, but as the exposure to the magnetic anomaly progressed, you entered a mildly altered state, prone to vivid, but realistic hallucination, and this led to your experience of the closer, more UFO-like experiences of lights (due to magnetic anomaly) at distance primed you to think in terms of UFO's. Once in an altered state, your suspicion that you have seen a UFO may well be expressed in an involuntary vivid image of a UFO. Once again, this hypothesis fails to account for the fact that you both appear to have seen the same close up object, unless you are prepared to accept the existence of ESP between you both in your altered states! (personally I think this going too far).

These are five of the main hypothesis that I have come up with to explain your encounter. You may well be able to think of more. Ultimately, how you explain your experience is something only you can decide. Whatever the case may be, I

am quite sure that you witnessed events demanding something more than a mundane explanation, and for what it's worth, I'm split equally between hypothesis five and three.

One could be forgiven for believing that these encounters would be enough for one lifetime, but more encounters were soon to follow. Eventually, as I became deeply embroiled in the often murky world of Scottish Ufology, I drifted into the world of UFO research. I quickly understood that professional and more committed ideals were urgently required in Scotland. Many important sightings and a potentially important abduction had, in my opinion, been mishandled by Scottish Ufologists.

I noticed that witnesses were not being handled in a particularly sympathetic manner, some were being openly ridiculed in certain publications! Another misconception was that skywatches were regular occurrences. Most of the so-called 'experts' sat waiting around the phone for reports to come in before making the effort.

I resolved to get into the field and look for evidence myself. Accompanied by Kathleen, sometimes with others, we would be in places as far afield as Tarbrax, close to the area where the encounter with Garry Wood and Colin Wright took place, Cairnapple, close to the site of our 'Ruming Man' encounter (*See next issue of DEAD OF NIGHT for more on this quite frightening encounter - Ed*), and the Bonnybridge/Shieldhill area. We were rewarded by three important sightings in one fantastic week in Shieldhill, managing to take two videos of UFO's in action.

On 26th November, 1995, I was contacted by a man from Shieldhill telling me that there was UFO activity around the Westerglen Masts. On arrival at the site, minus a video camera, no activity was evident. After a while waiting in the dark we witnessed a large disc with illuminated windows as it hovered for a few minutes, after which it simply moved slowly away.

A few nights later on the 28th of November, we were back at the same point and managed to video two stationary lights. After a short period, one of the lights dropped a small light towards the ground. On further examination of the video, it appeared that at the same time another small light left the original light at 45 degrees. On the 5th December, 1995, we were back and so were the anomalous lights.

This time there appeared to be little action from them, although I did manage to video two small planes with their search lights on and the sound of a jet could be heard flying over the area.

From November through to February 1996, in below freezing temperatures, we were constantly in the Shieldhill area. Although some weird occurrences were taking place no further solid evidence presented itself. These were strange times indeed.

It would appear that an even more important video has been taken in High Bonnybridge, the area of our initial sightings. This video is apparently a close up of a Flying Triangle, displaying many lights and features on the craft.

This video was subsequently spirited away to the USA by SCETL, and was out of the country within two hours. Time will tell if the video becomes 'free' and public domain, or if it will go to auction amongst the media. Despite the fact that Scottish Ufology has once again shot itself in the foot, this latest debacle will once again raise the profile of the Bonnybridge area in particular and Central Scotland in general. The Bonnybridge armchair debunkers, and there are many, will have to eat their fair share of humble pie and hopefully slink back into the blind, deaf and noisy negativist corner that is rightfully theirs.

The Bonnybridge enigma is *real*, it is happening and should be studied at every opportunity by seriously minded individuals without seeking fame or fortune. Only then will we, Scottish UFO researchers, take a step closer to unveiling this phenomenon. Scottish Unexplained Phenomenon Research is committed to a constant review of its standards. SUPR will attempt to find the truth that surely exists within the heart of Ufology.

We will, by being out in the field, take every opportunity to search the skies above Bonnybridge and elsewhere, and when positive results are achieved, supported by proper analyses, we will disclose the information, involving the media only when a case is proved genuine. Surely the correct way forward.

Scottish Unexplained Phenomena Research

(Formerly Lothian Unexplained Phenomena Research).

David Coleman, UFO and unexplained phenomena researcher and investigator.

For a sample copy of SUPR's newsletter, 'COVER UP,' please send £1 to 49, Limefield Crescent, Bathgate, West Lothian, EH48 1EF, Scotland.

If you are looking for a genuine UFO investigator in Scotland, then look no further!

Fire From Heaven: Update On The Mystery Explosion Over The Isle Of Lewis

As reported in the last issue of our magazine, a huge air-sea search was initiated after anomalous objects were seen falling from the skies above the Isle of Lewis last October..

It was initially feared that there had been a mid-air collision between conventional aircraft. Eyewitnesses were quoted as saying; 'I saw a large aircraft and a small one collide. I heard a couple of big bangs and saw lights falling from the sky.'

'It lit up the sky and then fell into the sea. It was like a scene from THE X-FILES! When I heard it first, I thought it was a firework because it's not long to Guy Fawkes Night. Then I saw the trail of smoke. I saw three flashes in total and heard a further two bangs.'

The RAF were alerted and immediately dispatched shady-looking investigators after Air Traffic Control based at Prestwick said they had absolutely no reports of any planes missing.

The probe got underway after it was strongly suspected that a meteorite or a chunk of space debris, such as an out-of-control satellite, had burned up on re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

At around 5pm on 26th October, 1996, various eyewitnesses told of having seen an explosion in the sky above the Butt of Lewis. A pall of thick smoke was also reported out to sea. According to press accounts, the area pinpointed by the locals is the exact location where transatlantic flights enter and leave UK airspace.

The RAF, therefore, were perfectly correct to presume that there had been some sort of collision offshore.

RAF Kinloss co-ordinated the air-search after receiving reports from the Coastguard at Stornoway that explosions and flashes had been seen off the coast. A Coastguard spokesman said; 'We have had reports that two aircraft were seen in the Butt of Lewis area between 5pm and 6pm. We cannot rule out a collision between them.'

Stornoway Coastguard initially mounted an extensive air-sea search with their helicopter but within an hour, as the number of reported sightings increased, an RAF Sea King helicopter was scrambled to help in the search. So too was a giant RAF Nimrod. The Lochmiver Lifeboat was also launched and all shipping in the area was alerted.

At the time, an RAF spokesman at Kinloss was quoted as saying; 'We have a special unit investigating the matter. One of the things we are actively looking at is the possibility that it may be satellite debris.'

By the following day however, the same spokesman had switched theories to the possibility of falling meteorites..

There have been no reports of any aircraft missing and we are sure there is nothing there.

Meteorites can cause all the aspects of this sighting, and they are common at this time of year. Coincidentally or not, a major NATO military exercise was due to be held the following week, although the armed forces predictably denied that any of their aircraft were in the area at the time of the alleged incident.

Even more interestingly, the top-secret RAF tracking station at Fylingdales (the site of an alleged UFO crash/retrieval a few years ago - See back issues of 'DEAD OF NIGHT, for the full story) in Yorkshire, were also contacted to see if they knew anything about the incident. They of course, responded by claiming that their highly sensitive tracking devices had picked up nothing.

By early November, the ubiquitous Nick Pope was being dragged in to express his (ahem) 'expert' views on the incident. Less-than-reliable sources went so far as to suggest that Pope had requested the files on the case to be forwarded to him, but we suspect that assertion may well be wishful thinking on behalf of the sensationalist press, eager for an 'X-FILES' -type exclusive.

He was supposed to have said; *This sighting off Lewis could be a UFO - I would not rule it out until I look at the reports I have asked for.*

By the middle of the month, American military scientists were adding their voices to the growing well of controversy. A British scientist contacted by the Americans stated that he believed the explosion was indirectly caused by the military. His comments come at a time when former White House adviser Pierre Salinger was busy telling anyone willing to listen that the TWA Jumbo Jet disaster over New York, which killed all 230 people on board (the cause for which still remains unexplained - See 'DEAD OF NIGHT #10 and our next issue for update) was struck by a rogue American missile. Reports began to emerge of US military scientists from Sandia National Laboratories - which operates spy satellites - in Albuquerque, New Mexico, were hoping to pinpoint the mysterious object which caused the £200,000 air-sea search operation to be launched. There were also suggestions that as well as Fylingdales tracking the object, its American counterpart was engaged in a similar exercise.

The Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo was quoted as saying his Ministry was 'unaware' of any military activity in the area of the blast, but Western Isles MP Calum Macdonald not surprisingly described that reply as being 'not a definitive answer,' and promised to continue to push to find out if non-British military could have been responsible.

The Scottish National Party then came forward to claim that it had information that a naval frigate was seen off the west

coast of Lewis uplifting wreckage from the area, as if she was involved in some covert recovery operation. There was also an unconfirmed report of a Lynx helicopter being secretly involved in the initial two-day investigation. The MOD said it had no record of the aircraft being involved.

Well, if this was some kind of secret 'Black Op' (to coin the American term for covert military operations, it would hardly be likely to say anything else, would it?)

The US military contacted the Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland, the country's leading astronomical research centre for fire balls and similar objects, for information on the explosion. They wanted to pinpoint the exact time of the explosion so they could check pictures of spy satellites trained on the Earth to look for nuclear and other missile explosions. The technology involves differentiating between natural phenomena such as meteorites and man-made explosions like missiles. Professor Mark Bailey, the Observatory director, was more than willing to confess he was totally baffled by the incident.

I was torn between this being caused by the military, such as target practice (hardly a comforting thought, seeing as how it was so close to the mainland), and a natural phenomenon such as a fireball. I am hoping to be told the results of the American investigation. But it all hinges on getting an exact time of the explosion to see if a satellite was trained on that particular area at that particular time. This is a very strange incident indeed.'

Finally, for this issue at least, SNP parliamentary leader Margaret Ewing was asked to raise in the Commons the possibility of military involvement being the catalyst for the explosion. The party's Western Isles parliamentary candidate, Dr Anne Lorne Gillies, forwarded a full report to SNP defence spokesman Colin Campbell.

At the time of going to press, we are no nearer an answer to this most perplexing mystery...

28th October - 4th November, 1996. Isle of Lewis, Scotland. 'THE SUNDAY MAIL,' 'SCOTTISH DAILY RECORD,' 'THE SCUM.'

FALKIRK UFO SIGHTING/VIDEO

The Scottish press had reported that 63-year-old Margaret Ross has managed to capture 'sensational evidence' of a UFO sighting from her home in Falkirk.

The tape shot from her bedroom window, apparently shows a pulsating bright object in the middle of a cloudless blue sky. It then appears to turn in to a half-moon shape with four dazzling diagonal bars. Margaret stated that she wasn't a bit frightened by the sighting. She said; *'I wasn't scared - I was simply speechless. I just watched in awe.'*

'Experts' were said to be poring over the video tape and there are as yet, no further details as to the film's authenticity or value to Ufology.

14th October, 1996. Falkirk, Scotland. 'DAILY RECORD.'

SPOOKS IN THE SKIES OVER ITALY

Not far from the airfields of Rome Airport came reports of a strange green light flashing across the early evening sky.

Three pilots as well as air traffic controllers went on record as saying that they all saw a luminous green sphere speeding across the heavens from east to west for a few seconds duration.

Interestingly, it failed to show up on radar screens.

15th January, 1997. Rome Airport. Italy. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

CHASING THE UNKNOWN

The Latest Weird And Wonderful Press Clippings: Part Two

The Curse Of The Mummy's Tomb



According to the normally reliable 'LIVERPOOL ECHO', that maddeningly persistent legend associated with the tombs of the ancient dead, has manifested itself, not as you might expect, in Egypt, but in deepest, darkest Peru.

A frozen Inca Mummy, known as Juanita - the Ice Princess, has been blamed for a veritable plague of disasters since her grave was disturbed on Mount Ambato, in the southern Andes. Peruvian medicine men were forced to hold a healing ceremony in the nearby city of Arequipa, southeast of Lima.

Among the incidents said to have occurred since the discovery of the tomb in October, 1996, are the February 29th crash of a Peruvian commercial jet that resulted in the tragic deaths of 123 people aboard as well as the deaths of 35 unfortunates who were electrocuted in August when a high tension cable fell on a crowd celebrating the 456th anniversary of the city's founding. The rumours of a curse have spread among the populace at the speed of proverbial wildfire. Though not *all* are convinced that the incidents are in any way related to such 'superstitious nonsense.'

Foremost amongst the resident band of sceptics is the American archaeologist who found Juanita. Johan Reinhard was quoted as saying that Juanita was a 'gift of the apus', a Quechua term for the Spirits Of The Mountains that form an integral part of traditional Andean beliefs.

'I didn't dig to find her. She was in plain sight and was not discovered thanks to any human effort, but thanks to another "apu", the volcano Sabancaya, which heated the area,' Reinhard said: 'The Mummy was happy to have been found, because she was sad at being exposed to the sun.'

The 12 to 14-year-old Mummy, thought to be the best preserved body from the pre-Columbian era, was apparently killed by a powerful blow to the head 500 years ago and sacrificed to the Gods atop the 20,000ft-high Mount Ampato.

Juanita was displayed by the National Geographical Society, and even received international attention when ol' guy smiley himself, President Clinton, joked during a political fund-raiser that the Mummy was 'good looking' and if he were single he might ask her for a date. Some Peruvian scientists complained that Clinton had shown a decidedly heretical 'lack of respect' for the Mummy. Another group of archaeologists also attempted to prevent its departure fearing that it would be damaged. They argued that it should be displayed in Peru first. Others seemed more concerned that Peru's president was using the artefact to bolster his own image...

27th September, 1996. Southern Andes, Peru. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

AMSTER-DAMNED

A total of four mummified babies were found encased in Voodoo Dolls within two Amsterdam houses in a Black magic scandal that has caused uproar across Holland.

A 45-year-old Surinamese man was placed in custody after being arrested on charges of rape and a possible murder charge. The finds followed the mysterious death of a 44-year-old Amsterdam woman who apparently had an affair with a man said to be a Voodoo Witchdoctor. Police were expecting to make more arrests although there were no further developments at the time of going to press.

17th September, 1996. Amsterdam, Holland. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

The Witches Report

In the wake of the release of the American fantasy movie; 'The Craft', a goodly portion of 'real' Witches were so angered by the film's portrayal of their rites and beliefs that they made their feelings known in the national press...

'The Daily Express' carried a full page article reinforcing their bitterness and began by pointing out that there are an estimated 10,000 practising Witches in Britain alone. Apparently, over in the States, the film's influence has been such that there has been a significant increase in the number of adherents of the ancient Wicca religion. Especially amongst impressionable youth's.

The movie (the plot of which concerns four teenage girls who decide to form a coven and invoke supernatural powers by drinking blood and summoning Demons) has particularly incurred the wrath of the wonderfully named 'Witches Public Awareness League' in the USA, and the 'Pagan Federation' here in Britain. Kelly Dugery of 'The Witches' Education Bureau' in Salem, Massachusetts, was moved to speak out against the film;

'It promotes the image that Witches drink blood which is completely and totally untrue. Witches don't perform curses against other people - only strictly in the area of self-defence. It didn't promote a very positive image.'

Kate West, 39, a practising British Witch who runs a 'training coven' in Cheshire, was quick to add her voice to the growing clamour;

'This is not what the real 'Craft' is about. Witches have traditionally been healers. The main tenets of Wiccraft include respecting nature and looking after the planet. "The Wiccan Rede" says "As' it harm none, do what you will", and that "whatever you do, good or ill, will be returned to you threefold."

'We don't allow people under 18 to be in our circles. I have had kids as young as 12 or 13 come to me, and I've said,

"There are a lot of books out there - read, and come back and ask questions."

London Witch Ruth Knight, 28, believes: *The movie was pure Hollywood. It showed some ridiculous things, like a male God Manon whom the filmmakers made up. The Wiccan religion is about the power of the Goddess.'*

And the reason why the film has struck such a resonant chord within the collective psyche of today's youth?

Anne Nash of the 60-year-old Croydon based occult journal 'Premonition' believes that it has its roots in *'the godless symbolism. It's about being in touch with the elements - actual reality in an age of virtual reality.'*

Michael Jordan, a religious anthropologist, agrees. *'What appeals about Witchcraft, not only to young people, is that it fills the vacuum created by loss of interest in Christianity.'*

But the last word on the subject goes to Bill Pritchard who whiles away the hours in the occult shop 'Mysteries' in Covent Garden.

Sometimes young people come in for love potions, but I always turn them away from revenge. There's an ethic against using magic to manipulate people. Magic is neither intrinsically evil nor good, as the wise occult book shop owner in the movie emphasises. "It's like electricity or knives; it's how you handle it that matters.'

1st November, 1996. General. THE DAILY EXPRESS'

The Magistrate Witch

We have all of us heard that classic, less than favourable reference to Criminal Court Magistrates, as being nothing more than jumped up shopkeepers...Well now, we have to contend with the even more (for those amongst us who fall foul of the law) hideous prospect of having our cases heard by a self-confessed Witch!!!

Aileen Grist, 42, has recently been chosen for training as an Oldham magistrate. Or at least she *had*, until it her religious beliefs were made apparent to the powers that be.

Aileen was, perhaps understandably, furious. *'I'm the first to admit that I'm a Witch. And a good one, too. But that is no reason to doubt my ability to be a good magistrate. They have Catholics, Jews and all sorts of denominations sitting on the bench and they were quite happy with my qualifications until they discovered I was a Witch. It's a pity because I think I have much to give. You don't have to be a Christian to administer decent justice or display an understanding of the problems that afflict our society.'*

Aileen lives with her former vicar husband Tony in Oldham, and is a devout follower of the Wiccan faith. The epicentre of her faith is her 'chapel' on the second floor of her home. It is dominated by a big altar on which sits the ancient, revered figure of Pan. Together with her husband, she sits in a state of high contentment around the pagan altar, explaining that they both regularly pray by it, waving their hands over a basket of stones that represents the Earth. There are also special prayers to Pachimama, a South American Goddess from the Andes, as well as regular incantations to the British God of nature, Herne.

The couple met via a lonely hearts advertisement in their local paper. Mr Grist gave up his godly duties in turn for the lure of the ways of the pagan.

At the time of going to press, we had no details as to whether or not Mrs Grist was successful in her endeavours to become the first (to our knowledge) British Witch to become a magistrate...Although we know some active criminals who are more than a little convinced that they have been sentenced by the 'minions of Satan', already!!!

19th December, 1996. Oldham. 'DAILY EXPRESS'

Satanist 'Sacrifices Schoolboy'.

As per usual, the tabloid press were quick to seek attention-grabbing headlines to relate the tragic story of how (ahem) 'Devil Worshipper' David McCallum, aged 20, lured Michael Earridge, 15, and a friend, Stephen Curran, also 15, to his home in Walworth, South East London. Once there, together with an accomplice who cannot be named for legal reasons, McCallum stabbed Michael 11 times in the chest and the neck with a 12 inch combat knife.

Curran later told police that he felt uneasy in McCallum's bedroom. The words 'Devil Man killer. 666 Slayer. Iron Maiden' were scrawled on the TV. *(Right. Damn right! And next we'll be hearing that timeless ol' classic; All Heavy Metal music comes direct from the outer reaches of the Ninth Circle of Hell, and that those who listen to it are in dire peril of becoming possessed by Evil Spirits Can you give me Hallelujah? - Ed).*

The definitive 'proof' that McCallum was in league with the Devil, and not some psychotic individual who belongs exactly where he now is, ie; Broadmoor, comes courtesy of the fact that he had a couple of books on the notorious mass murderer Charles Manson.

10th December, 1996. Watworth, South East London. 'DAILY EXPRESS'

VAMPIRES ON THE PROWL AGAIN



The man known in America as 'the Vampire Rapist' was finally released from prison on 8th August last year.

One time engineer John Brennan Crutchley was given his less than flattering nickname because he abducted a 19-year-old hitchhiker in 1985, repeatedly raped her, and used an intravenous device to drain nearly half her blood so he could drink it.

He was freed, but not surprisingly, the authorities were at a loss as to how and where they could place him back into society. Well, would you want to live anywhere near someone who actually enjoys the taste of human blood? Crutchely, now 49, was married with a 4-year-old son when he captured his victim. A neighbour found her nude, bleeding and handcuffed, after she'd managed to escape. He is currently on fifty years probation after serving 10 years of a 25-year sentence, and now, the people of Orlando, Florida, are maybe bolting their doors after the sun goes down and darkness falls like a winding shroud...

8th August, 1996. Orlando, Florida. 'USA TODAY.'

**Meanwhile, in September, Jon Bush, 27, also a self-confessed Vampire, was heading in the opposite direction...He was convicted in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, of biting and sexually molesting eight girls, ages 13 to 16. Thankfully, he could be sentenced to more than 100 years in prison.

11th September, 1996. Virginia, USA. 'USA TODAY.'

***And in Ammanford, South Wales, a pervert equipped with Vampire fangs was being hunted after he groped a 10-year-old girl in a local park. The assailant, predictably dubbed 'Dracula' by the press, also accosted another girl of 10 and attempted to lure away a third, aged nine.

Strangely enough, local police believe that his huge pointed incisors may well be real. Investigating officer Inspector Mike Benbow was quoted as saying; 'He must present an awesome sight to his victims.'

9th January, 1997. Ammanford, South Wales. 'DAILY MANC.'

***Police officer Gordon Martines was left shaking his head in amazement after he stopped a driver for speeding just before dawn in Las Vegas. The driver told him in all sincerity that he had to get home double quick because he was a Vampire and he had to be in his coffin before the sun came up.

29th September, 1996. Las Vegas, USA. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

***Vice girl Maria Gonzalez apparently waives her fee if customers agree to pay her in their own blood.

Maris, 28, who is nicknamed 'The Vamp', got hooked on the substance after sucking a cousin's bleeding finger when she was just a child in Mexico City. 'It tasted real good,' she claimed. 'Now I've got a thirst for fresh blood and I need at least a pint a day.'

24th September, 1996. Mexico City. 'MAIL ON SUNDAY.'

***And finally, for this issue, a professional boxer was hospitalised after a complete stranger punched him in the face and bit his neck outside a cinema showing the film; 'Dracula: Dead And Loving It.' Michael Jones, 22, who coincidentally(?) just been to see another movie; 'Fear', said after the entirely unprovoked attack; 'I couldn't believe it. I've got stitches in my lip and teeth marks on the side of my neck.'

26th November, 1996. Shaw Ridge, Swindon. 'DAILY MAIL.'

That Voodoo That You Do...So Well!!!

A voodoo do-it-yourself kit, complete with a doll, pins to stick in it and a 47-page instruction manual for wreaking revenge in potential enemies has been slammed by a church leader,

The manual advises how to inflict large spots on the nose, severe wind, baldness or excess body hair upon those who fall foul of you. It also suggests naming Jelly Babies after enemies before feeding them through a mixer.

The Bishop of Readin, the Right Reverend John Bone, was quick to warn that; 'Voodoo is a dangerous mixture of religion and magic, and it is much safer not to get mixed up in it.'

Gordon Wise, the senior editor for Boxtree MacMillan, which markets the kit, was even quicker off the blocks to counter; 'This is has nothing to do with real Voodoo. It's hilarious - just what we need in these frustrating times.'

'The Little Voodoo Kit' is available for £8.99 in bookshops around the country.

3rd November, 1996. General. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

Miss South Africa, Peggy-Sue Khumalo, a 23-year-old Zulu, was also attracting a great deal of controversy after she claimed she would sacrifice a cow and ten oxen if she won the Miss World title in India.

Peggy-Sue was adamant that to do so was part of a tribal custom. She was also planning to kill a goat for winning her national title. Cows, are of course, sacred in India, where the godawful contest(?) was staged.

24th September, 1996. South Africa. 'DAILY MAIL.'



*** A Malaysian accused of beheading a Bangladeshi in a ritual sacrifice he believed would help him win the lottery was sentenced to death. The High Court rejected the defence argument that A. Francis, 25, was drunk when he killed Bangladeshi manual worker Ali Mohammed Ullah, 30, in 1994.

2nd November, 1996. Malaysia. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

*** And in Accra, the capital of Ghana, mobs of frightened people have battered to death a dozen Witchdoctors - blamed for shrinking penises!!!

Victims claim they put a spell on them, then demand cash for a cure. Police in Accra however, have dismissed the scare as being nothing more than a thieves' ploy to rob the crowds.

22nd January, 1997. Accra, Ghana. 'DAILY SLUR.'

GENERAL WEIRDNESS GARDEN ASTRONOMER FINDS NEW WORLDS

An amateur star-gazer has stumped the so-called experts by discovering three new planets in a year. From a shed at the bottom of his garden, George Sallit spotted mini-worlds missed by professional astronomers equipped with state-of-the-art telescopes. 'I was ecstatic when I found them,' he was quoted as saying. The new planets could well end up being called Sallit 1, 2 and 3.

This has made all those nights of standing outside in the freezing cold worth it. After finding Sallit 1, I knew I had to carry on. I couldn't stop because astronomy is my hobby and I love it.'

Mr Sallit became only the third man this century to discover a new planet when he found one in September 1995. He was told that the other two planets he spotted in the same asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars were also new.

STRANGE HUMAN BEHAVIOUR THE MANIAC TOE-SUCKER

George Richards, 18, appeared at North Shields Magistrates charged with indecent assault and harassment after he allegedly pounced on a terrified woman and started sucking her toes. The court was told that he informed his 36-year-old victim; 'I love you. You have the sexiest feet I have ever seen.' He then pinned her to a patch of wasteground at Killingworth, North Tyneside, in June last year, and after removing one of her shoes he promptly began licking and sucking her foot. Richards at first approached a 57-year-old woman out walking her dog, and said he wanted to lick her feet before asking if he could buy her shoes and stockings for the princely sum of £40. Later on, that same day, he attacked the 36-year-old mother as she collected her daughter from dancing class. He stalked the understandably frightened woman, who couldn't fail to notice him staring intently at her, and sauntered up on the pretext of asking the time. Suddenly, he dragged her screaming to the ground and carried out his bizarre assault. She managed to beat him off and ran to a nearby social club to raise the alarm. Richards, from Killingworth, fully admitted the offences. We are not aware of the sentence he eventually received. 24th September, 1996. Killingworth, North Tyneside. 'DAILY MANC.'

...And The Panty Fetishist

A peeping Tom was so determined to secure a look up women's skirts, that he hid a camera in his shoe to grab an eyeful of over 50 females. Eight hours' videotape found at the home of teacher George Campbell, 62, featured low-level shots of victim's panties. 'He inserted a fibre-optic lens in the top of his shoe,' said Toronto detective Mike Beauparlant. 'Wires ran up his trouser leg to a camcorder on his waist..' Campbell slunk up to women at crowded events and slid his size 12 shoes between their feet. He was caught behind a mini-skirted girl firing an air rifle at a game stall. Some women taped are reluctant to identify themselves because they weren't wearing underwear, the detective said. Campbell was facing trial on sexual assault charges. 9th October, 1996. Toronto, Canada. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Weird Crime MAD ABOUT GUNS

Upset that an automated bank teller in Portland, Maine, wouldn't give up any cash, Domenico Germano pulled out his gun and opened fire on the recalcitrant machine. Police said he had been drinking and taking painkillers at the time. A judge ordered Germano to pay for the repairs, and forbade him from using alcohol or firearms. 8th June, 1996. Portland, Maine, USA. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

*** A man in Jiaohe, China, was so over-joyed with the birth of his son that he drove through the town firing an anti-aircraft gun into the air. He was eventually arrested, and the police

were endeavouring to discover just how he managed to borrow the gun. 8th June, 1996. Jiaohe, China. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

Tomorrow's Just An Excuse Away

The best excuse of 1996, had to be that proffered by priest Horst Meder, after he was caught having sex with two prostitutes...He told police he was only trying to convert them both to Christianity and that he only took off his trousers because it was so hot in his car...As you do. The courts were not convinced by his explanation, and they duly fined him £250. 20th October, 1996. Berlin, Germany. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Angry Ebony Frew claims that she failed her driving test in Ohio because the examiner kept breaking wind. But Don Grant, of course, isn't having any of it. He blames the car smell on fumes from the exhaust system. Well he would, wouldn't he? 8th December, 1996. Ohio, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

*** Also on 8th December, over in Pennsylvania, USA, Aleksander Popivker was found reading a Bible in the church pulpit. Nothing strange about that, you might say. Except that he was stark naked at the time. He told police he was celebrating his birthday in exactly the same condition that he came into the world. 'Pennsylvania, USA. SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Encounters With The 'Dark One'.

Two teenage girls who had arranged to meet a man calling himself 'The Dark One' on the Internet, have been reported missing, and investigators have said they were last seen a week ago getting into his car.



Police in Spartansburg, South Carolina, USA, said Cash Morriss, 18, of Sparks, Nevada, had found Summer Nix, 13, and Casey Thompson, 15, during the Spring of 1996, through messages on a computer bulletin board. Investigators believe

Morriss met the girls on August 13th this year. The girls have not been heard of since.

21st August, 1996. *Spartanburg, South Carolina, USA. 'BOSTON GLOBE.'*

The Bodysnatcher

Police have been horrified by the capture of a psychopath who sleeps in a coffin and digs up newly-buried kids' bodies to take pictures of them.

Belgian detectives investigating the Marc Dutroux paedophile case found up to 30,000 photos of children - including 1,630 of dead girls - in an Antwerp cellar. A 59-year-old man was being held by police.

9th October, 1996. *Antwerp, Belgium. 'DAILY SLUR.'*

THE MOTIVELESS AND THE DOWNRIGHT CRAZY

RUDE RAGE

Lorry drivers have been startled by a naked man who runs along the hard shoulder and central reservation of the M11 in Cambridgeshire and waves at them...

15th September, 1996. *Cambridgeshire. 'DAILY SLUR.'*

Of Cucumbers And Zips, Snakes, Horses And Pigs

*** Police in Spotsylvania, Virginia, believe three men charged with robbing a liquor store hid the evidence in a 4-foot pet Burmese python. The snake was placed in custody while it digested what X-rays show could be the missing \$1,000. Police say suspect Richard Briggs bundled the cash tightly and coated it with food for the reptile to swallow.

16th February, 1996. *Spotsylvania, Virginia, USA. 'USA TODAY.'*

*** Colombia's notorious 'Chicken Bandit' recently broke into his twelfth bank vault in two years. The kicker is he never takes any money but leaves a rubber chicken behind.

23rd January, Colombia. *'DAILY SLUR.'*

And police are searching for a robber who holds up banks with a pig. The thief, who has struck four times in Naples, threatens to kill the pig unless the cashiers hand over the money.

3rd October, 1996. *Naples, Italy. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'*

*** Thieves staged a well-planned warehouse raid...To steal a million zips.

They broke in through the roof, climbed down ropes, and foiled an alarm before loading up a lorry and driving off from the wholesaler near Paris.

'It's baffling,' said a police spokesman. *'We can't understand what they want them for.'*

15th October, 1996. *Paris, France. 'SUNDAY MANC.'*

*** A man who kept a horse in his sixth-floor flat has been charged with illegal parking. The Russian told police he was afraid the horse would likely be stolen if he left it outside the building in Moscow.

20th November, 1996. *Moscow, Russia. 'DAILY MANC.'*

***Police in Azul, Argentina, are baffled by a spate of muggings by three men dressed as, of all things, giant cucumbers!!!

1st December, 1996. *Azul, Argentina. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'*

***Kindly Sylvia Stayton, 62, was arrested after putting coins in parking meters which had run out in a bid to stop Cincinnati motorists from being arrested.

27th October. *Cincinnati, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'*

***Dwight Stout, 32, planned to woo back his girlfriend by brainwashing her through a combination of sleep and food deprivation, and locking her in a home-made coffin disguised as a coffee table in his Ohio home.

Fortunately for his intended victim, a friend of Dwight's blew him up to the police and his masterplan was thwarted.

4th August, 1996. *Mansfield, Ohio, USA. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'*

BUNGLING BURGLARS AND ROBBERS

Wayne K. Brewer went into the Apollo Liquor Store in Evansville, Indiana, USA, and asked for a bottle of wine. He presented his driver's licence as required by state law. He then knocked the clerk down and robbed the place of \$100 before fleeing on a bicycle. Unfortunately for him, he left his licence behind. Police had no trouble tracking him down.

21st July, 1996. *Evansville, Indiana.*

Burglar Armand Ferrier made the fatal error of swiping a deadly tree viper from a pet shop in Rouen, France...And was later killed when his stolen booty turned around and bit him.

24th November, 1996. *Rouen, France. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'*

*** A bank robber was told by a cashier: *'You're in the wrong queue for withdrawals - wait over there.'*

He was still waiting when the police arrived in Garry, Kansas.

1st December, 1996. *Garry, Kansas. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'*

*** An Amsterdam couple's home was burgled by two robbers aged 83 and 85. Their lookout, who had a walking stick, was too slow to get away.

15th December, 1996. *Amsterdam, Holland.*

***A husband and wife who had long been working as burglars in Peru, were arrested by police after being caught making love in a house they were quite literally 'screwing.'

22nd December, 1996. *Peru. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'*

AND YET MORE OF THE TOTALLY IRRATIONAL: The Cat-Eaters

In Wisconsin, USA, three people hit a calico cat named Muffin on the head with a wrench, then promptly marinated the feline with wine, barbecued it and tried to eat it, according to local police.

Richard Beliveau, 33, David Miller, 30, and Susan Enderle, 34, were all charged with mistreatment and killing of an animal. Witnesses to this barbaric act claimed that they saw two men on their hands and knees under a car, going after the cat. The owners discovered Muffin was missing the next morning.

4th August, 1996. *Elk Mound, Wisconsin, USA. 'SUNDAY ENTERPRISE.'*

*** The 2,000 men, women and children of Stigtomta in Sweden, including the village priest, urinated outdoors for an entire day to protest the pollution of Hallbo Lake, which is dying because sewage is being pumped into it. At the time of going to press there was no report on how the 'Pee Outdoors Day' affected the ecosystem of the village. 2nd June, 1996. Stigtomta, Sweden. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

LONG TIME NO SEE

A woman who thought she was far too ugly to venture outside remained indoors for an incredible 15 years.

Spinster Maria Rossi, 46, hasn't left her home in Como, near Milan, since 1981.

Neighbours alerted police, who found that Maria was alive and well.

'Friends brought shopping in and she watched TV all day,' said police. 'And she's not even that bad looking.'

15th September, 1996. Como, Italy. 'Mail On Sunday.'

*** Eccentric Harriet Lasky has been chewing the same stick of gum for 33 years in Colorado, USA.

She stores it in a glass of water when she sleeps to keep it pliable.

3rd October, 1996. Colorado, USA. 'SUNDAY MANC.'

Blind Alexander Robinson got his eyesight back after an operation... But then lost his wife.

His missus filed for divorce after Robinson, of Mobile, Alabama, opened his eyes and told her: 'You sure have gotten fat in four years.'

4th October, 1996. Mobile, Alabama, USA. 'DAILY MANC.'

NOT GAME FOR A LAUGH

Comedy club owner Francis Mortello was fined a whopping big £3,000 by police in Foggia, Italy, for having the temerity to pump laughing gas into the audience to get them to chuckle at his (presumably unfunny) jokes.

There is no truth in the rumour that ace comedian(?) Bernard Manning, has used the same tactics to secure laughs for himself.

13th October, 1996. Foggia, Italy. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

*** Gullible Geraldo Nader was moved to sue his church in La Paz, Bolivia, after the clergy there predicted that the World was about to end on November 1, 1996. Geraldo was so convinced in the accuracy of their prophecy that he promptly went out and gave away all his money.

27th October, 1996. La Paz, Bolivia. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Jobless Arsan Kay was told he wouldn't get a job interview at a bank in Kobe, Japan, even if he absailed there naked.

You've guessed it. He thought it was an initiative test and absailed nude down 12 storeys. And he still didn't get the job.

20th October, 1996. Kobe, Japan. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

JAIL-HOUSE SHOCKS

Moscow murderer Boris Czernik learned to read and write whilst he was serving his sentence in prison. A noble thing to do you may feel.

Unfortunately, he used his literary talents to pen a death threat to the judge who jailed him. He has since had five years added to his sentence.

24th November, 1996. Moscow, Russia. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

And a mere three weeks after escaping from jail in Metz, France, robber Jean Baudin begged to be let back in... because he was bored out of his skull.

1st December, Metz, France. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Georgy Buscheff dressed his wife in a brown carpet and a pair of cardboard tusks and tricked hopelessly gullible villagers into Khashport, Russia, into believing that he'd discovered a woolly Mammoth.

15th December, 1996. Khashport, Russia. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

A RASH OF OVER-REACTIONS



CHEF CARVES UP HIS GIRL

A chef murdered his girlfriend and chopped up her body with a carving knife because she criticised his mother.

Renaud Tonolo, 23, strangled Sandrine Bourniche then cut her up and threw the remains into a river in Manche, France. He was jailed for 20 years.

13th December, 1996. Manche, France. 'DAILY SLUR.'

A 29-year-old man in Bangkok became enraged when he saw his wife kissing another guy in a video of a family wedding. When she refused to answer his questions as to the identity of the man, he stabbed her to death. He later confessed to police.

12th May, 1996. Bangkok. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

Lazarus Nzarayebani, a member of parliament in Zimbabwe, got so involved in a spirited discussion of the issues with fellow law-maker Levy Gwarada, he ended up biting the other man's lip off.

8th June, 1996. Zimbabwe, Africa. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

*** A man involved in divorce proceedings in a court room in Eskilstuna, Sweden, suddenly pulled out a stick of dynamite and blew himself to smithereens. His wife was not injured but

suffered shock. The division of property was being discussed when the explosion occurred.

16th June, 1996. Eskilstuna, Sweden. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

*** Rick Worthley woke up his 17-year-old son, Michael, at six in the morning, and asked him to cut the lawn of their home in Belton, Missouri.

The boy refused and told his father in no uncertain terms, to go away. Dad, fuming at this lack of parental respect returned with a power mower, fired it up in his son's bedroom and mowed the carpet in an effort to get his son moving.

The kid called the cops, who arrested his father for assault.

21st July, 1996. Belton, Missouri, USA. 'THE BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

**Gail Murphy, 46, was confined to her bed and was forced to lie on her stomach while she was recovering from haemorrhoid surgery, and so she was particularly irate when her husband, Edward, went off on a fishing expedition with his mates, leaving her alone for over six hours.

When he finally got home, she picked up a shotgun and blew him away.

4th August, 1996. Boston, USA. 'BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD.'

*** A farmer in Eastern China was so gutted that his wife gave birth to a daughter rather than a son, that he attempted to commit suicide.

When his wife conceived a second baby girl, it proved too much, and he took his own life by drinking pesticide.

17th September, 1996. Eastern China. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

THE BOAR WAR

A bloody five-day war erupted in Papua New Guinea after rival tribesmen could not decide how a wild boar should be served at, ironically enough, a peace rally.

15th September, 1996. Papua New Guinea. 'Sunday Mail.'

*** Three years after a row at their wedding reception in America, Carol Hodgson is finally speaking to her husband Roger again - after the birth of their second child.

Carol had apparently stuck to a vow of silence after moaning about Roger's stag night.

22nd September, 1996. USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

Modern Urban FOAF tales.

*** A cruel housewife was so fed up with her poodle's constant yapping that she put the dog in the oven to make it stop. The 57-year-old Dane was reported for cruelty by her horrified husband after he came home from work and smelled burning flesh. The unfortunate dog died of burns and shock.

***After being sacked from his job for persistent laziness, Melbourne fishmonger Shane Bray decided to post fish through his ex-boss's letter box, and then smeared fish eggs on his windows and broke into his house to hide clams in the loo!

24th November, 1996. Melbourne, Australia 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

***A Mexican man disgruntled over a Tarot card reading in Monterrey pulled out a gun and shot a woman soothsayer in the head. She was admitted to hospital with serious head injuries.

25th November, 1996. Monterrey. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

THE COBRA WOMAN'S REVENGE

A jilted woman aiming to punish her boyfriend released six deadly Cobras in a crowded karaoke bar where she works in central Jakarta, Indonesia.

Nobody was bitten but security guards clubbed one of the snakes to death. The others - and the nutty 29-year-old woman - were taken into police custody.

20th January, 1997. Jakarta, Indonesia. 'DAILY MANC.'

Strange Days In The Animal Kingdom: VIII The Animals Strike Back: WOLVES ON THE RAMPAGE



In India's northern Uttar Pradesh state, a pack of Wolves have been blamed for killing as many as 20 children in just four months according to local reports.

Groups of hunters were formed to hunt down the animals. The body of a 2-year-old was found half-eaten during July, 1996, about half a mile from his home. Villagers near the city of Lucknow, about 350 miles west of New Delhi, the capital, have claimed the Wolves have been seen sneaking into neighbourhoods and snatching children from their beds in open air huts.

6th July, 1996. Uttar Pradesh, India. 'THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH.'

Invasion Of The Reptiles

The Iranian capital of Tehran was apparently been inundated by thousands of lizards, salamanders and snakes during the summer of 1996.

One of the more dangerous encounters with the city's residents was when vipers terrorised merchants and customers in the central bazaar. An 'expert' at the Environmental Protection Agency proffered the theory that the reptiles were driven into the metropolitan area by military exercises around their habitat to the south of Tehran. Another possible reason for the unusual migration is that rising groundwater levels from heavy rainfall made the animals' nests too wet, forcing them to leave.

14th July, 1996. Tehran, Iran. 'COLUMBUS DISPATCH.'

Elephant's With An Attitude

Two adult Elephants smashed their way into a key Indian Air Force Base at Kalaikunda, close to the Nepalese and Chinese borders. Once inside, they sought to overturn parked jet fighters.

Maybe they were protesting against the militarisation of their country?

12th September, 1996. Kalaikunda, Nepal. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

*** Also, a pregnant woman was gored by an apparently frightened Elephant's tusks as she elected to crawl underneath it for, ironically enough, good luck.

Wien Sudpleum was wounded in the thigh as she made her third excursion under its belly in a Thai ritual. The ceremony is meant to ensure an easier childbirth. Fortunately for Wien, the barking of several dogs managed to scare the beast into submission.

28th January, 1997. Phatum Thani, near Bangkok. 'DAILY MANC.'

Revenge Of ThePot-Bellied Pig

Luis Carrera made the grave error of stealing a pot-bellied pig in Cordoba, Spain. He soon returned it the next day after the animal bit him, urinated in his car, and tried to mate with his grandmother's wheelchair.

24th November, 1996. Cordoba, Spain. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

BABOONS SET UP AMBUSH

Motorists on one of South Africa's busiest highways between Cape Town and Johannesburg, have been facing a new and dangerous wildlife hazard. For some unknown reason, packs of Baboons have taken to ambushing the drivers with showers of rocks.

Traffic officials said three attacks had been reported throughout late December and early January.

17th January, 1997. Cape Town, South Africa. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

HOUNDS THAT EAT YOU OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME

Harriet Jerdin returned from a weekend away to find her pet terrier, Pepper, had managed to eat his way through £20,000 worth of furnishings and clothes.

And it wasn't as though the dog had been left to go hungry. A sitter had fed the dog two meals a day. But the hungry hound obviously wasn't satisfied with that. He somehow munched his way through a tasty, lip-smacking combination of rug, sofa, toaster, food processor and a pair of curtains.

And that was just on the ground floor!

Up the apples and pears, Pepper managed to chew bedding, 10 pairs of shoes, 12 sweaters, underwear and a cocktail dress.

Despite all this destruction, Harriet refuses to part company with the dog. 'I'm not get ridding of him. He's family.'

23rd January, 1997. Boston, USA. 'DAILY SLUR'

*** And, Sid Andrews was left quite literally gobsmacked after a dog ran off with his set of false teeth.

Sid went to his local pub, The Anchor, in Totton, Southampton, for a celebration pint after managing to bag a whole netfull of fish.

But, just as he was about to proudly show off his catch, Toby, the pub Alsation, suddenly made a dash for the biggest Bass. In the resultant confusion, Sid's set of false teeth somehow fell onto the floor...And were promptly wolfed down by the hungry mutt.

Sid, 51, was moved to say; *The landlord is following Toby waiting for the teeth to come out....But I certainly don't want them back!*

Can't say I blame him.

19th November, 1996. Totton, Southampton. 'DAILY SLUR'

Killer Bees On The Attack

Swarms of what are believed to be the infamous Killer Bees attacked bus passengers on a remote highway near the Pacific coast city of Mazatlan, in Mexico. They also killed two donkeys and several cows in nearby fields.

17th October, 1996. Mazatlan, Mexico. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

THE RETURN OF THE BIRDS



Late last Summer, the normally peaceful seaside resort of Exmouth was being subjected to a terrifying series of attacks by the local population of seagulls.

As reported in the last issue of 'DEAD OF NIGHT', the birds seemed to have lost their instinctive fear of humans thanks to a ready supply of food from the tourists who flock to the region. All along the East Devon coast, the marauding gulls have divebombed victims to steal their supplies of fast food. They grab fish and chips, sandwiches and ice creams (they don't appear to be too particular about their diet) straight from people's hands. Children and dogs have also been attacked. Last Summer, hospitals across the region recorded a record number of 'seagull victims.' One unfortunate woman had a chunk of flesh bitten from her hand and a mother and child were left bleeding from head wounds.

However, tourists refused to be deterred from feeding the birds and in an attempt to persuade them doing so local councils elected to launch a propaganda war with screenings of the Alfred Hitchcock classic horror movie; *The Birds*.

Members of East Devon District Council decided to open up cinemas in towns such as Exmouth and Sidmouth to show the film as matinee warnings.

'Some gulls are as big as small dogs and they are now a major problem, certainly the worst I have ever known,' said Councillor May Hardy

They are divebombing people on the seafronts, turning out litter bins and bursting plastic bags.' They are so fat but the public keep feeding them. We have tried a poster campaign urging them not to feed the birds but that has been ignored. I fully support the film 'The Birds' being shown in all our cinemas to warn people of the problem.

Exmouth Mayor Geoff Chamberlain said; 'Showing tourists the film may be the only course open to us. But we should be careful - we don't want our visitors leaving the cinemas as gibbering wrecks with bird phobia after watching what is a very disturbing film.'

20th August, 1996. Exmouth, East Devon. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

*** Over in the USA, Jenny McCarthy was attacked by over 40 seagulls as she ate Kentucky Fried Chicken on California's Malibu Beach.

Jenny, who's a Playboy model-turned TV presenter, was forced to flee into the arms of her boyfriend, Ray Manzella.

We wonder whether the motive for the attack had anything to do with the fact that Jenny was merrily tucking away into several of the gull's once feathered, now barbecued, friends?

19th November, 1996. Malibu Beach, California. 'DAILY SLUR'

WAR DECLARED ON RATS, BULLFROGS AND TERRAPINS

The government of Colombia has been forced to unveil plans to confront a new enemy from within. No, it's not the ubiquitous drug-barons. This time it's the turn of the common Bullfrog. Apparently, its population has spread widely across the country causing massive problems in the coffee growing areas.

29th October, 1996. Colombia, South America. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'

*** And China's capital, Beijing, has had to arrange what it calls a 'an official rat killing day,' after being invaded by countless millions of rats. Last November 12th, thousands of 'Rodent Warriors,' fanned out across the city, setting traps and laying poison.

29th October, 1996. Beijing, China. 'Liverpool DAILY POST.'

*** Meanwhile, closer to home, in Falmouth, Cornwall, conservationists launched a scheme to catch out-of-place Terrapins who were suspected of savaging water birds in a nature reserve.

Imported Terrapins grow to the size of a dinner plate and can be extremely vicious when they want to be.

19th September, 1996. Falmouth, Cornwall. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

INSECTS BACK ON THE MARCH AGAIN

Ron Smith, a 77-year-old man who wouldn't hurt a fly, was tragically killed by a spider.

The ex-miner refused to swat the house spider as it crawled up his stairs. Instead, he tried to capture it with a tissue without harming it. Unfortunately, he lost his balance and wound up

plunging down the stairs at his home in Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

He died two days later in hospital from head injuries.

A local inquest was told by his widow, Sally, 'My husband would never kill a spider. This action was typical of his kind nature. After I said the spider was big he tried to pick it up with a tissue. I believe he must have been dizzy or blacked out.'

18th October, 1996. Barnsley, South Yorkshire. 'DAILY SLUR'

*** A swarm of angry wasps turned an outing into a terrifying ordeal for 53 children aged three to six in a forest near Paris. Some of the kids were stung several times although none were seriously hurt.

7th September, 1996. Paris, France. 'DAILY MANC.'

*** And a woman was indirectly killed by ants when she was so disgusted that she'd accidentally drunk water infested with them, she swallowed insecticide to kill them.

But, not surprisingly, the unnamed 22-year-old farm worker later died in hospital.

30th September, 1996. Cairo, Egypt. 'DAILY MANC.'

SNAIL SWARMS STOP TRAIN

In Rabat, Morocco, a horde of snails swarmed onto the rails of the Casablanca - Fez line, causing an express train to halt after losing its grip on the secreted slime.

The bizarre incident (and wouldn't our very own British Rail just love the chance to proffer *that* excuse over their tannoy's next time the train's are running late...It sure beats leaves - Ed), occurred near Meknes, 87 miles north of the capital, Rabat.

16th May, 1996. Rabat, Morocco. 'BOSTON GLOBE.'

Pets Sending Owners To The Cemetery

A pet python turned on its owner and crushed him to death. Grant Williams, 19, was found by the door of his New York flat with the 13ft snake, called, ominously enough (*you're fired-Ed*), Damien, still wrapped around him.

9th September, 1996. New York, USA. 'DAILY MAIL.'

*** And a parrot pecked a baby to death in the Central African state of Congo while its mother took a shower.

The tragedy happened in capital Brazzaville, when the bird somehow got out of its cage and pecked off the baby's nose. The family then beat the parrot to death, but it was too late to save the child.

12th September, 1996. Brazzaville, Africa. 'DAILY MANC.'

More Monkey And Elephant Madness

A herd of thirsty Indian Elephants in search of water went on a drunken rampage after finding a drop of the hard stuff instead. Charging out of the hills south west of Calcutta, they trampled through six illegal breweries, wrecking them as they guzzled the contents.

'They are famous for their fondness towards liquor,' a forestry official was quoted as saying.

8th October, 1996. Calcutta, India. 'DAILY MAIL.'

*** And a rampaging Elephant was killed by police after it managed to break free from the Buddhist temple where it had been chained for more than 20 years.

No wonder it wasn't in the best of moods after that period of forced incarceration!

11th January, 1997. Thailand. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

*** Meanwhile, over in Spain, women were forced to flee in terror when three escaped monkeys burst into a ladies' toilet and ran amok.

They were later recaptured trying to mate with a giant teddy at a nearby store in Gijon.

25th September, 1996. Gijon, Spain. 'DAILY SLUR.'

THE CREATURE FROM UNDER THE SKIN

One of the most horrible stories we've come across in some time centred upon a soldier by the name of Lee Miller.

Last November, he was aged 18, and was bitten by a Bott Fly during an Operation Raleigh expedition in Belize. A larvae, christened 'Jungle Jim', was laid beneath the hapless teenagers scalp and lived beneath his skin for six long weeks. Doctors at Sheffield's Royal Hallamshire Hospital were forced to bandage his Lee's head with bacon in an attempt to try and flush the creature out. But when that didn't work, (after waiting 30 hours), the surgeons elected to operate.



(Above); Bearing an uncanny likeness to the parasites in David Cronenberg's 'SHIVERS', the tiny insect larvae that had made its home beneath Lee Miller's scalp.

It was finally removed and was handed over to Lee in a less than touching reunion. He dropped the insect larvae on the floor after picking it up with a pair of tweezers. He was relieved enough to be rid of it to joke; 'Part of me wanted to stamp on it, but it was dead anyway and doctors wanted it for research. I'm glad to see the back of him.'

A consultant at the hospital's department of infection and tropical medicine were somewhat bemused by the media attention surrounding Lee's case.

Dr Robert Reed said; 'If you go to Central or South America there's people walking round the streets with worms sticking out of their heads all the time.'

Now there's a cheery thought.

15th November, 1996. Sheffield, South Yorkshire. 'DAILY SLUR.'

EVEN WHEN THEY'RE DEAD, THEY'RE DEADLY

A dead duck got its posthumous revenge upon hunter Max Verner.

He'd blasted the bird out of the skies above Bonn, Germany, and when the duck fell earthwards, it smashed the bottom of Max's new boat and sank it!

18th October, 1996. Bonn, Germany. 'DAILY MANC.'

DAY OF THE FOX

Elena Sheppard had left her son Phillip in the conservatory of their South London home for a mere three minutes when she heard the cry all mothers dread...Her baby was screaming and she soon saw why. A scrawny Fox was perched on the pram, its bloodied nose pressing into Phillip's face.

'This old-looking Fox was standing over the baby,' she said. 'It was horrible.'

Mrs Sheppard joined in the bout of screaming and the Fox, doubtless frightened by the combined cacophony, raced out through the door into the garden.

The baby's mouth was filled with blood where the Fox, apparently driven by hunger, had bitten him on the underside of his lip. There were scratches around his mouth and nose. His 36-year-old mother snatched him up and dialled 999 for an ambulance as thoughts of rabies and disease swirled around her head.

'None of the ambulancemen nor the doctors could believe it was a Fox, but it definitely was.'

Fortunately, the baby did not need stitches and the wounds were superficial.

'It is terrifying to think what might have happened if I had been away for more than three minutes,' his mother mused.

A vixen and seven cubs had been living at the bottom of the garden of the families three-bedroom house in a quiet suburban street in Norbury. But none of the family ever imagined that Foxes would dare to go near the house, let alone inside.

Matthew Frith, a conservation officer for the London Wildlife Trust, was equally amazed: 'This is unprecedented and probably our first recorded incident of a Fox attacking a human.' He believed it was likely the Fox had been driven to enter the house by hunger after younger male Foxes had taken over its territory. Urban Foxes were becoming more accustomed to humans, he said, especially because people were feeding them and encouraging them to approach their homes.

A spokesman for Croydon Council was quoted as saying; 'Normally Foxes are very nervous and we have never known a Fox to attack anyone.'

12th November, 1996. South London. 'DAILY MAIL'

ANIMAL'S TO THE RESCUE

Battered Alasdair Morrison's pet dog, Brutus, kept him alive for two days following an horrific accident - by licking his face.

Alasdiar, 33, lay semi-conscious on a remote moor after his tractor rolled over, smashing his pelvis.

But every time the electrician blacked out, the faithful Collie brought him round with his tongue. Alasdair, recovering in hospital, said; 'He wouldn't let me give up. If it wasn't for Brutus, I would not be alive.'

Alasdair was on his way to visit friends when he was thrown from the driving seat of his tractor into a swollen river near Ness, Isle Of Lewis.

He'd told his parents he would be away over the weekend - so they didn't expect him back for another 36 hours. It took Alasdair six hours of agony to crawl from the wreckage to an empty cottage 500 yards away.

He said; *'When I came to I managed to set fire to the wooden lean-to toilet. But the signal went unnoticed. I even scrawled a message on a piece of paper and put it in a plastic bag. I tied it round Brutus's neck and tried to get him to raise the alarm. But he refused to leave my side.'*

His father, Alex John, eventually tracked down his son 48 hours after the crash, before a helicopter flew him to hospital in Stornoway.

8th September, 1996. Ness, Isle Of Lewis, Scotland. *'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'*

CREATURES WITH A THIRST FOR POWER

Flags were at half mast in Rio de Janeiro, after the death of Tiao the monkey.

He was labelled as a protest figure, and actually managed to come third in the mayoral election with a staggering 407,000 votes.

Makes you wonder at the quality of the other candidates, don't you think.

26th December, 1996. Rio de Janeiro. *'DAILY EXPRESS.'*

*** And staying in South America, political rivals were blamed for the poisoning of a goat which had looked set to become the Mayor of a Brazilian town.

The animal called Frederico, had been leading the opinion polls in Pilar, Brazil, since his owner put him up as a protest candidate in council elections. Police were said to be investigating.

25th November, 1996. Pilar, Brazil. *'DAILY MAIL.'*

The Cat That Came Back From The Brink Of Death

A vet declared that Judy Doolan's cat only had weeks to live, and if the truth were told, she couldn't claim that she was at all surprised.

Pandora, her seven-year-old Burmese cross, was pitifully thin, with dull, lifeless eyes and a coat almost devoid of colour. Tests had shown the feline's liver was riddled with disease. The usual drugs were prescribed to try and make Pandora's remaining time as comfortable as possible. Fortunately for the cat, Judy wasn't quite as convinced that there was no saving Pandora.

She took the cat to a local faith healer, who simply cuddled the animal and then declared her cured. Two months on, and Pandora is reported to be sleek, plump and contented...And even more amazingly, she has been passed with a clean bill of health. A neighbour, Bill Harrison, had given Judy the idea to visit the healer, and after having put aside her understandable degrees of scepticism, she paid two visits to the healer.

And the cat was cured.

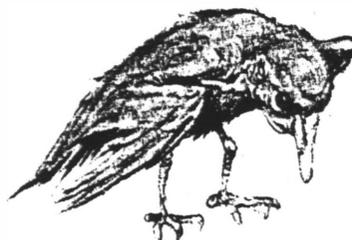
'When the healer told me Pandora was cured, I thought; "Oh yeah". I wasn't convinced because my vet had done loads of blood tests which proved Pandora was dying.'

But he didn't ask for any money. He didn't ask me to believe in anything of have faith in him. He just handed her back saying she had been ill but she was better.'

Feline specialist Dr Andrew Sparkes, found the results hard to believe. *'Certainly this cat was very ill. The blood tests carried out by Mrs Doolan's vet confirmed there was a severe liver problem. We will never know precisely what the problem was or what cured it.'*

6th November, 1996. Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset. *'DAILY MAIL'*

Mutant Animals



Amphibian Deformities

In the midst of rural Missouri, USA, the appearance of a deformed, five-legged frog was causing widespread concern.

Brian Dampier was out hunting frogs near his school in Columbia when he made a sensational catch.

'I grabbed really fast and got a handful of mud and a frog. When I cleaned the mud off, I saw the frog had five legs. I thought, "Whoa, what's wrong here?"'

He immediately took the amphibian to his science teacher, Mike Bielski at Gentry Middle School. Mike had apparently heard that a similar strain of mutant frogs had been found elsewhere and that pesticides or other sources of environmental pollution were suspected as being the potential cause.

The state herpetologist Tom Johnson, came around to inspect what Dampier had found, and Missouri promptly joined the growing list of states, most of them in America's Midwest, where ponds have been producing frogs with deformities.

Researchers, trying desperately to find the reason for this sudden upsurge in reported aberrations, have gone on record as saying that their level of concern is great.

Amphibian, because their skin is permeable and permits toxins to invade, can be the first detectors of problems in a biological system.

'Amphibians are very good indicators of the health of the environment,' Johnson said. *This is not a quirk. It's something we need to look at seriously.*

Meanwhile, over in Minnesota, a group of middle school children on a biology field trip spotted some unusual looking frogs. One was missing a leg, some had withered arms, others had shrunken eyes. Of the grand total of 22 frogs caught by the class that day, an intensely worrying 11 were found to be deformed.

Not long after, reports of other strange frogs began to pile up. A frog with nine legs was discovered, a club-footed frog, a frog with three eyes, one in its throat!

The 'experts' first thought that the problem had been confined only to the agricultural part of that state.

Not for the first time in matters Fortean, the 'experts' were hopelessly wrong.

Deformed frogs have since been reported in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Vermont, and even up into Canada.

David Hoppe (*Oh, that just has to be the Cosmic Joker playing at his Name Game, don't you think?*) a University of Minnesota herpetologist, was also quick to voice his concern about the situation:

'Abnormalities like this get me worried. We don't know how far this is going to go.'

Amongst the theories propounded for the so far, unexplained phenomena, include exposure to pesticides or toxic metals, acid rain, global warming, and increased ultraviolet light. Different deformities seem to be concentrated in frogs from different regions. Hoppe believes this may be because there is more than one cause at work.

20th-28th October, 1996. Missouri, Minnesota, USA. 'ST-LOUIS POST AND DISPATCH'/'TIME MAGAZINE'

Cat's Hot Tin Goof

A black cat almost ran out of luck after getting his head stuck in an empty pet food can.

The unfortunate cat was trapped in the can for several days before he was finally discovered at Weymouth, Dorset. Vet Martin Cumber said; *The distressed cat had been searching for food. It would have been a horrible death - he could have starved or wandered into the path of a car.*

2nd February, 1997. Weymouth, Dorset. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

DOG TO THE RESCUE ONCE MORE

Lexi, a 2-year-old golden retriever, saved three people from a burning house when the dog roused one of the occupants by licking his face.

'If it weren't for him, they'd be in a lot different condition,' said Fire Chief Captain, Richard Farrenkopf. *'There was a smoke detector downstairs, but no battery in it.'*

Lexi managed to wake Bob Colberg, a friend of the owner of the house, Alan Gordon. He woke to heavy smoke but in time to get everyone out safely.

Alan Gordon was so grateful, he was promising Lexi a steak dinner.

7th October, 1996. West Dennis, Massachusetts, USA. 'COLUMBUS DISPATCH.'

Small Mice Live Longer

Good news for those of us who are a little on the short side (*your humble Editor, amongst them*). Proof that smaller people live longer has been provided by a research team in America. The scientists have been studying the longer lifespans of rare dwarf mice, and in an as-yet unpublished study, the tiny breed of mouse was found to live up to twice as long as their larger cousins.

7th November, 1996. Grand Forks, North Dakota, USA. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH.'

OUT OF PLACE

KANGAROO'S AND WHALES

A Kangaroo that was on walkabout in woods near Antwerp in Belgium for at least the last two years, had a lucky escape when police and firemen finally tracked down the half-frozen animal and took it to the local zoo. It is believed, (typical of these sort of cases) to have been a domestic pet which escaped.

18th January, 1997. Antwerp, Belgium. LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

And a Humpback whale has been reportedly spotted off the coast of Cornwall for only the second time this century. Cornwall Wildlife Trust was relying on the local populace to report any further sightings of the mammal, which is normally found much further north.

19th September, 1996. Cornwall, England. 'DAILY MAIL.'

No More Mr. Bird-Brain 2

And here's one for all those think our feathered friends are no more intelligent than the average pea-brain...

Apparently, Pippin the Budgie can speak four languages, quote Shakespeare and even ad lib the Bard's work.

It can chat in Japanese, French and Africans and loves to show off his skills by swearing at the neighbour's cat in Clifton, Yorks.

24th September, 1996. Clifton, Yorks. 'DAILY MAIL.'

Fish Fall With A Difference



Bob Ringewold certainly had his explanation ready when he came to turn in his rental car with a large dent in the roof. He told the rental company that a bird bombed him with a 5lb fish! No, don't laugh. Just yet. Let's hear the full story first.

Ringewold and a friend, Verna Dawn, were driving near Lake Michigan when they spotted a young eagle flying overhead with a wriggling fish in its talons.

'Dawn was leaning forward, looking at it out the windshield and then it flew out of view,' claimed Ringewold. *'And then, Ka-Bam! The dropped fish slammed into the car's roof.'*

Ringewold stopped to pick up the fish, a sucker, to serve as evidence. *'I knew there was going to be damage to the roof of the car and no one was going to believe me about what happened. So, he even stopped at a state police office to fill out a report to take to the rental agent.'*

Unlike the police, Rick Ireland, the Avis Rent-A-Car manager, never doubted the incredible story.

'A person couldn't make up a story like that,' he said. *'I've been in the business for 15 years and that's the oddest story I've ever heard.'*

24th June, 1996. Detroit, USA. 'CASPER STAR-TRIBUNE.'

GENERAL WEIRDNESS

THE COLONISATION OF THE RED PLANET

According to the national press, the recent upsurge in interest surrounding the planet Mars, (related, of course, to the discovery of Meteorite ALH 84001 and its potential traces of ancient Extraterrestrial life forms) has resulted in talk of man turning the Red Planet into a colony of Earth within 10 years.

American space 'expert' Robert Zubrin, (Chairman of America's National Space Society) has gone on record as saying that Mars could be conquered by travelling light and living off the land. He can see a day when thousands of ordinary humans could quite easily travel on space shuttles to create shake and bake colonies and help pave the way for more permanent communities.

The theory sounds fine on paper. However, in reality, the prospect is a great deal more daunting. At the farthest point in its orbit, Mars is 250 million miles from the Earth - a distance 1,000 times greater than the journey made by astronauts to the Moon. It's maximum daytime temperature is minus 29C which plunges to a distinctly chilly minus 100C after nightfall, and even worse, its atmosphere is 95 per cent carbon dioxide.

Man on the Red Planet

34m

▶ **COLONISATION:** A nuclear-powered rocket carries colonists one-way to Mars after the pioneers have paved the way.

▶ **THE FIRST MISSION:** Four astronauts explore Mars on a 30 month return mission. They live in the habitation module.

▶ **THE SPACE BASE:** The colonists live in giant plastic domes which act as greenhouses. Oxygen, water and fuel are made from Martian gas and material - and hydrogen brought from Earth.

▶ **RETURN:** The pioneers go home in the Earth Return Vehicle whose fuel is made from Martian gases.

Graphic by Clare Harrison and Sharon Leach

Undaunted, Mr Zubrin says the colonists could easily survive by building huge, golf ball-shaped greenhouses. Over a period of just a few hundred years they could even conceivably turn the planet into something resembling the Earth. He has even considered what is inevitably the greatest barrier of all to this wildly exciting venture...Namely; the cost.

Zubrin believes the astronauts could convert the resources already on Mars into water, oxygen and fuel.

'We have in hand all the technologies required for undertaking within a decade an aggressive programme of human Mars exploration. We can reach the Red Planet with relatively small spacecraft embodying existing technology. We don't need futuristic "Battlestar Gallactica" spaceships. We simply need to use some common sense. Intelligent use of local resources is not just the way the West was won. It's the way the Earth was won and it's also the way Mars can be won. On Mars, the resources exist that could all w travellers to grow food, make plastics and metals and generate large quantities of power.

Zubrin has even drawn up a detailed three-phase plan to achieve this goal. First around August 2005, a rocket would blast off for Mars carrying a 45-ton Earth-return vehicle. Its chemical processor will use six tons of liquid hydrogen to combine with the Martian atmosphere to produce fuel for the return journey. Then 14 months later, a second spaceship, *The Beagle*. (named after

Charles Darwin's 19th century ship of exploration) will be launched on a 30-month round trip to Mars with a four-man crew. Further missions would carry habitation modules which could be linked together to create giant plastic domes containing homes and market gardens.

'Children will be born and families raised on Mars,' claims the irrepressible Zubrin. They will turn it into a living, breathing world supporting multitudes of diverse and novel ecologies. This will be one of the greatest enterprises of the human spirit.'

To all this upbeat optimism, we would add one tiny note of caution however. In the words of Nigel Kneale's Professor Quatermass, *'We are on the edge of a new dimension of discovery. It's the great chance...to leave our vices behind. War first of all. Not to go out there dragging our hatreds and our frontiers with us.'*
24th December, 1996. General. 'DAILY MAIL'

IS THERE ICE ON THE MOON?

In late December last year, scientists were hotly disputing whether the Moon has ice at its shadowy South Pole, as radar findings from a Department of Defence suggest.

The question could well be settled for good when another probe named Lunar Prospector launches and circles the Moon's poles.

'If there's water there, we'll see it,' says Alan Binder, principal investigator for the Lunar Prospector spacecraft. 'We have extremely sensitive experiments aboard that are specifically designed to answer this question.'

Of course, the Pentagon spacecraft, called Clementine, was never designed to just to find ice on the Moon. The \$75 million probe was built to test 23 new technologies developed by the Ballistic Missile Defence Organisation, successor to the (supposedly) defunct SDI or 'Star Wars.'

It is currently in orbit around the Sun, nearing Earth every 11 years.

But mission officials say ice - and probably water-ice at that - is just what it found when it took radar soundings in 1994 over parts of the South Pole.

'I am reasonably certain that this could be ice,' says Paul Spudis of the Lunar and Planetary Institute at Rice University. 'It's not like an ice rink on the Moon but more like ice mixed in with the dirt.'

The ice probably as long ago as 4 billion years as comets smashed into the Moon. If it is water, scientists say, the ice mixed with soil and rock to become a sort of permafrost.

The £63 million Lunar Prospector, built by Lockheed-Martin in Sunnyvale, California, is scheduled to launch on September 24th, 1997, so we should know the truth about the possibility of ice on the Moon, this Autumn.

4th December, 1996. General. USA TODAY.'

Europa - An Astronomical Enigma

Startling images from the Galileo spacecraft seem to show that Jupiter's strange moon Europa may be millions of years younger than scientists had previously thought. Scientists, among them, Kelly Bender, at Arizona State University, got their first look at the images, taken from 25,000 miles away, when Galileo transmitted them on December 11th, 1996.

The photo's show few impact craters on Europa; scientists use craters to date planets and moons. This suggests that Europa may be much younger than Jupiter's other moons, which are quite literally, pockmarked. Until now, scientists had figured Jupiter and its 16 satellites were all formed about 4.5 billion years ago. But if Europa is only 30 million years old, as some

scientists now suspect, they would have to revise their theory that planets and their moons are formed around about the same time.

With its relatively smooth, almost translucent surface, Bender says, Europa *'Looks like a person with his skin peeled off, where you get muscle areas or parallel lines and veins or ridges that stick up above the surface.'*

The ridges and some dark bands indicate that its crust was split and filled with darker material. But scientists have no idea what.

Galileo also recorded a strange 'symphony' of sounds coming from the magnetic field of another Jovian moon, Ganymede. On two passes by the satellite, the probe's plasma wave detector picked up a low, rumbling chorus sandwiched between two big bursts of noise.

No explanation has as yet been proffered by the scientists and astronomers.

13th December, 1996. General. 'USA TODAY.'

Apocalypse Now!

ARMAGEDDON BY ASTEROID

In the midst of claims that the British Government is failing to even acknowledge there exists the potential for mass destruction courtesy of an asteroid hitting the Earth, a meeting was called by scientists to discuss the threat.

And not before time.



It's less than comforting to know that an asteroid a mere half a mile across smashing into our planet at 20 miles per second would cause an explosion equivalent to more than 1,000 of the most powerful hydrogen bombs yet detonated.

The egg-heads have apparently set up groups of teams to scan the skies for Near Earth Asteroids (NEAs). But, just before you begin to lay your head on the pillow and sleep comfortably in your bed, consider the news that the early warning post set up in Australia back in 1990, to cover the Southern hemisphere is currently under threat because, wouldn't you know it, the funding was due to run out at the end of 1996.

Dr. Duncan Steel, who runs the observatory at Siding Spring in Australia, said no new funding had been offered by the British side of the partnership. The good doctor was moved to say, *'Whitehall is working from a position of profound ignorance. People like to imagine there are battalions of astronomers scouring the skies; There aren't. If a half-a-mile asteroid is due to hit us, you can expect a six seconds warning. When it enters the atmosphere it will light up like a*

thousand suns. By the time you've turned to look at it, it will have struck the ground, releasing energy equivalent to 10 million times the Hiroshima bomb. Then it's goodbye.'

*** In the wake of this disclosure came news that a large meteorite had smacked into a fortunately remote area of Honduras, leaving a 165ft-wide crater.

The rock, which had appeared as a huge fireball, set several acres of coffee plants ablaze, and terrified villagers in San Luis.

Reports of the incident, which occurred on the evening of November 22nd, 1996, only emerged on 17th December of the same year.

*** Further depressing tidings, came earlier this year (January, 1997), that more than 200 asteroids of that dreaded half-a-mile diameter have broken free of their orbits around the Sun and are roaming the Solar System like so many loose cannons.

More than a few are likely to have orbits that cross the Earth's path, but the odds of them crashing into our planet, you'll be somewhat relieved (though not, I suspect, totally) to hear are only one in every billion years.

At least that's according to Harold Levison, of the Southwest Research Institute, Boulder, Colorado.

The findings were published in 'NATURE' and were the first to examine the orbits of a cluster of asteroids around the Sun called The Trojan Swarm. The asteroids are in the same orbit as Jupiter and probably number as many as in the better-known main asteroid belt.

Scientists had assumed their orbits were stable, but they were 'surprised to learn the asteroids are leaking out of their orbits at the outer edge and then go rattling around the Solar System,' Levison says.

The study was conducted with Eugene and Carolyn Shoemaker of the Lowell Observatory and Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

The Shoemakers, of course, were the ones who discovered the comet that crashed into Jupiter in 1995. They now say that the Trojan Swarm findings add to the notion that objects in the Solar System are much less stable than previously believed.

The whole field has undergone a revolution in the last five to ten years,' Levison says.

The old picture of the Solar System is that everything moves like clockwork. But the entire system is chaotic, and it is impossible to predict where things are going to be.'

Hey, no shit.

11th November, 1996. LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'/17th December, 1996, 'LIVERPOOL ECHO.'/ 2nd, January, 1997, 'USA TODAY.'

Sleeping Patterns To Blame For Otherworldly Phenomena

Fresh from the Department Of Incredible Theories To Explain The Unexplainable, comes this less than convincing possibility, Accounts of strange, Fortean phenomena may well be caused by a common disturbance in your sleeping patterns

The so-called 'experts of parapsychology have it seems, chosen to blame many reports of supernatural encounters on sleep paralysis and a similar condition dubbed false awakening.

Sleep paralysis is supposedly caused by the mind remaining active after the body has gone to sleep. The brain is still sending signals, but the muscles cannot react. It is often accompanied by hallucinations and the feeling of a presence.

Sufferers can imagine flashing lights, engine-like humming and sensations of floating, including Out Of The Body Experiences.

The ubiquitous Dr Susan Blackmore (the girl who has a sane, rational answer for just about everything!), has stated that a

U.S. survey found that nearly four million people claim to have been abducted by Aliens. Many, she said, had experienced symptoms associated with sleeping paralysis. Some people were terrified by this condition, but others, it seemed, quite enjoyed it. 'Some try to induce it on purpose,' she claims.

11th September, 1996. General. THE LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'

Earthquake In Cornwall

On 10th November, 1996, West Cornwall was rocked to its foundations by the biggest earthquake to hit the area for 15 years.

The British Geological Survey said the tremor was felt in towns and villages from Padstow on the north Cornwall coast to Land's End, and measured 3.8 on the Richter Scale.

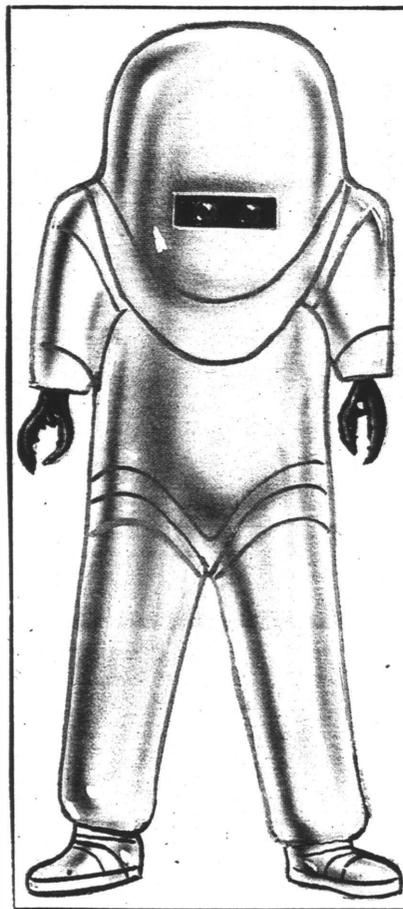
Police stations were, as per usual, inundated with calls, but there were no reports of injuries or major damage.

Today's quake is one of the biggest we have had in the region,' said the Survey spokesman, adding it was strong enough to crack plaster.

11th November, 1996. Cornwall. 'DAILY MAIL'

REAL-LIFE ROBBIE THE ROBOT

According to a press release from Japan, a robot that recognises and reacts to human feelings has recently been invented.



The machine, which can apparently smile and frown, just like human beings, was designed by Fumio Hara in Tokyo. It is to be used as in shops and theme parks, although for what purpose exactly, is not immediately clear.

17th October, 1996. Tokyo, Japan. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

MAMMOTHS TO WALK THE EARTH ONCE MORE

In Japan, (the home of the 'real-life Robbie The Robot, you'll remember), there are plans afoot to resurrect the Great Woolly Mammoth.

A full ten thousand years after it became extinct, biologist Professor Kazufumi Goto has hit upon the idea of using frozen sperm to fertilise an Indian Elephant and produce a new race.

You've guessed it. Goto is a big sci-fi movie fan, and yes, he's seen 'Jurassic Park,' and has been inspired by that film. 'I've seen the movie and thought it very interesting. 'Jurassic Park is impossible, but I believe we can create a Woolly Mammoth.'



After several generations, a genetically pure Mammoth could be recreated, according to Goto when he appeared on BBC TV's 'Tomorrow's World.' (11th November, 1996). He hopes to find a suitable sperm donor from among the hundreds of Mammoths which were deep frozen in Siberia during the last Ice Age. He intends to travel to the Siberian city of Yakutsk, where he will meet up with Russian specialists at a Mammoth institute and observe an excavation.

He theorises that having found preserved DNA in good condition, he would then use a combination of that and sperm from live Elephants to produce what will, in all actuality be a half-Mammoth, half-Elephant offspring.

Goto, a genetics specialist and his colleague Shoji Okutsu, have already used 'dead' sperm to produce a calf, mice and rabbits. If this latest project proves to be successful, Goto is optimistic that 'We may be able to revive other extinct species using the same process.'

We wish him and his team well. If any further information comes to light on this fascinating story, rest assured it will appear in future editions of 'DEAD OF NIGHT'.

20th August, Yakutsk, Siberia, Russia, 'YORKSHIRE POST.'/12th November, 1996. 'DAILY MAIL'

AMERICAN CORN CIRCLES HIT THE HEADLINES

The farming village of Paulding, Ohio, USA, has been attracting more than its fair share of media and public attention after a local pilot flying over a wheat field spotted a mashed circle measuring 93ft in diameter. He discovered it on (Cosmic Joke time again - or evidence of a hoax?) on July 4th...Independence Day, and it has brought out and the hoaxers, the investigators, and the plain ol' curious in their thousands. Researchers took grain and soil samples and interviewed residents about whether they saw anything unusual in the days before the circle was found. Amongst the people who went to look at the circle firsthand, was Joe Nickell, an investigator with 'The Skeptical Inquirer.'

His group investigated circles for two years in the early 1990's and came to one conclusion; *'They're all hoaxes. 100 per cent of them.'*

He is amazed that some people believe otherwise.

One of those who are at least open-minded enough to allow that there is some room for doubt, is Nancy Talbot, 57, who was formerly a Country music producer. She is now a spokeswoman for BLT research, which, you may not be too surprised to learn, investigates Corn (and one presumes, *Wheat*) Circles. Nancy travelled to Paulding to take a look at the latest example for herself.

'This, she declared is no hoax.'

Her organisation has several teams of volunteers that investigate circles in the United States, Canada, England and several European nations. BLT Researcher's main investigator is William Levengood, a former University of Michigan physicist who owns his own seeds consulting company.

Levengood says he has conducted extensive studies on plants and seeds found in and near the circles. He claims some plants show gross abnormalities possibly caused by microwave radiation.

These abnormalities, he contends, either cause the plants to stop growing or grow five times faster than normal. He does not know the origin of the radiation.

Talbot was extremely annoyed that anyone could simply dismiss the whole phenomenon as being nothing more than a human hoax. *'The press lumps Crop Circles in with other anomalies - UFO's, hauntings, every other damn thing. It's stupid. The press presents the idea that Crop Circles have to be either fakes or UFO-related. Why the hell aren't they asking what the real cause is?'*

20th August, 1997. Paulding, Ohio, USA. 'COLOMBUS DISPATCH.'

The Scent Of A Woman

Scientific tests in Austria, may have proved that when a man says he is on the scent of a woman, he may unwittingly be telling the literal truth.

The tests appear to show that the old beliefs that men were unaware of the physical changes in females when they ovulated and were most ready for (ahem) mating, were totally wrong.

Researchers at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute in Vienna, tested 106 men divided into four groups. Three of the groups inhaled the scent of women at three different times in their menstrual cycle.

The fourth group inhaled only water vapour. The saliva of the different groups was examined for testosterone, the male hormone, and those men in the ovulation group were found to have increased the level of the hormone by half. Levels in the other groups were markedly less affected.

10th October, 1996. General. 'DAILY MAIL.'

SEX IN THE REALM OF DISNEYLAND

Reports that certain Walt Disney films contain subliminal images of sex, have been doing the rounds it seems like forever. The most recent allegation was made late last year when a lawsuit was brought against the company in Texas.

It is being claimed that a minister in *'THE LITTLE MERMAID'* is sporting an obvious erection. And the video's packaging allegedly contains a male sex organ slyly concealed on a castle. It further claims that a voice in *'ALADDIN'*

whispers *'Take off your clothes'* and *THE LION KING'* has the word sex half-hidden in a cloud.

6th September, 1996. Texas, USA. 'DAILY SLUR.'

Discovered: Insects From Another Age

Insects have been found trapped in the oldest amber yet discovered. Scientists may now be able to study their DNA and boost research into evolution and genetic engineering.

The resin, which oozed from trees in the battle-scarred mountains of Lebanon, has been dated back 125 million years.

Insects in it are said to be in exceptionally fresh condition, and researchers in Paris, who studied the find now hope to establish that social insect species such as ants, lived much earlier in prehistory than is currently thought.

8th October, 1996. Lebanon, Middle East. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

The Destruction Of Jericho: Historical Fact

New radiocarbon dates of cereal grains from debris left by the destruction of Jericho are said to support several aspects of the Book Of Exodus. Just like the Bible says, Joshua fought the battle of Jericho during the early part of the 16th century B.C. after leading an Israelite army that had just spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

The Second Book of The Old Testament that describes the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and their journey to the promised land. Other, more sceptical scholars said the argument was interesting, but seriously lacking in supporting evidence.

For years, geologists have suggested many aspects of Exodus, from the parting of the Red Sea to a plague consisting of a *'darkness that can be felt'*, can be attributed to the eruption of the Thera volcano on the Greek island of Santorini in 1628 B.C.

That predates the new Jericho destruction dates by 45 years, note Hendrik J. Bruins and Johannes van der Plicht in a recent issue of *'NATURE'*

They argue that the eruption of Thera caused plagues in Egypt, allowing the Israelites to escape. Then The Chosen People spent about 40 years in the desert, whereupon Joshua led them to victory over Jericho.

18th July, 1996. Jericho. THE BOSTON HERALD.'

THE MECCA OF MYSTERY HONoured

For decades, the town of Warminster in Wiltshire, has been associated with various facets of paranormal phenomena.

During its heyday in the mid-sixties, thousands of people have travelled from all over the world to keep vigil on the surrounding hills for mysterious lights in the sky.

What became known as 'The Warminster Thing', made the headlines and was the subject of several TV documentaries. There was even a public meeting called by anxious townfolk who demanded answers as to the origin of 'The Thing.'

The national press had a field day, and even now, the town is being dubbed the *'UFO Capital of Britain.'* (*We're pretty sure the residents of Bonnybridge in Scotland, would have something to say about that!*).

A plaque, confirming the honour was unveiled in the town hall on 20th October, 1996. The town's high quotient of strange phenomena has been put down to the fact that Warminster lies

on the confluence of two ley-lines, whilst others have put them down to the close proximity of Salisbury Plain, home of secret military work.

The award has been inspired by Twentieth Century Fox, which has combined with the West Country Tourist Board to arrange the ceremony presided over by Lord Bath. At the unveiling, the film giant announced the release date for the video of the mega-bucks movie; 'INDEPENDENCE DAY.'

Ron Morrisson Smith of the West Country Tourist Board said; *'The area has a rich and fascinating history of mystic links. We want to attract as many visitors as we can, and for Warminster it seems as if that could mean from this world and beyond.'*

29th October, 1996. Warminster, Wiltshire. 'DAILY MAIL.'

MEDICAL ANOMALIES

A 25-year-old Mexican woman has given birth to what appears to be a two-headed baby, but doctors say the girl has little chance of surviving.

The rare birth took place in late-July, 1996, at Tijuana's General Hospital, about 20 miles south of San Diego.

The father, 32-year-old Otilo Angolo said the child was born with two spinal columns and two heads. His wife, whom he did not identify by name, was doing fine after the birth, he said.

28th July, 1996. Tijuana, Mexico. 'ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER.'

*** And in Bogota, Columbia, Ricardo Roncallo, 28, was recovering after doctors removed a gall stone weighing an amazing 4.4lb or two kilos. *'I imagined something smaller.'* Ricardo understated from his hospital bed.

The size of the gall stone is not a record, though. The world's biggest was 13lb 14 oz or 6.29 kilos.

29th September, 1996. Bogota, Columbia. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

The 12 Days Of Christmas Mystery-Giver

In Toronto, Canada, Twelve drummers drumming arrived on the doorstep of an elderly couple, capping a 12-year saga in which they received the gifts of 'The Twelve Days Of Christmas' from distant locales.

The tale began in 1985 when Mary and Stanley Grandish of Edmonton, Alberta, discovered a stuffed partridge in their backyard pear tree.

The anonymous gifts, which came in the order outlined in the traditional verse and song, included six white geese mailed from Germany, and seven silver napkin holders shaped like swans from Australia.

Each gift arrived from a different city, with no return address and few clues about the sender.

14th December, 1996. Toronto, Canada. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH.'

ATTACK OF THE CABBAGE PATCH DOLL

Bad news for kids who love Cabbage Patch Dolls...A chewing Doll elected to munch seven-year-old Sarah Steven's hair up to her scalp in the town of Griffith, Indiana. It took her aunt over 30 minutes to free her.

28th December, 1996. Griffith, Indiana USA. 'DAILY EXPRESS.'

The Cosmic Joker Strikes Again



MEDICAL EXAMINER DECLARES DOLL DEAD

In Stamford, Connecticut, USA, a doll apparently used to help train medical students was a tad too realistic for assistant medical examiner. He mistook it for an aborted foetus and sent it to the state for an autopsy.

The doll was discovered on a catch basin grate along the side of the road. A passer-by called police, who found it covered with sand and gravel, and with a severed arm.

Assistant Medical Examiner Henry Minot was called to the scene, where he pronounced the doll dead and sent it to the state office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Farmington for an autopsy to be performed.

'This was obviously something that had been at the side of the road through a snowstorm....And it looked enough like a foetus so we thought it was - both the police and I did' Minot said.

Deputy Police Chief John Perrotta said the doll was about 10 or 11 inches long and in a foetal position.

'It wasn't like it had yellow hair...and a belly button that squeaks when he saw it. It looked like a foetus confirmed' Perrotta.

15th February, 1996. Stamford, Connecticut, USA. THE BOSTON HERALD.'

KILLED BY A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Proof that you shouldn't tempt fate is provided in spades by the following story.

Angler Paul Collins was struck dead by lightning...Mere seconds after he'd been joking with his fiancée about being struck by lightning.

Paul, 27, and his girlfriend Suzanne Collins, also 27, were fishing as a thunderstorm approached. When lightning flickered in the distance, she asked him what he'd do if he was

hit and the self-employed decorator jokingly replied; *'Just lie down.'*

A few moments later, they were struck beside the River Lode at Burwell in Cambridgeshire. Suzzane picked herself up and at first thought Paul was simply playing dead. But then she saw his head was badly burned and dialled 999 on her mobile phone while trying to revive him.

Suzzane was treated for minor burns.

13th July, 1996. Burwell, Cambridgeshire. *'DAILY MANC.'*

*** Also fooled by dummies, were armed police officers who besieged a man's home at dawn after photographs of mutilated bodies were found in his old car.

He was later to tell the cops that *'they're the dummies of English murder victims. My son took the snaps at Madame Tussaud's.'*

24th October, 1996. Lyons, France. *'DAILY SLUR'*

Tomado Skips Theatre Showing **TWISTER'**

In Osage Beach, Missouri, USA, a tornado with a sense of humour, struck a popular factory outlet shopping centre on June 6th, 1996, but had the decency to skip over the centre's movie theatre, which just happened to be screening the film *TWISTER*.

No one was hurt and the centre's damaged roofs were quickly covered with tarps.

Factory Outlet Village 5 Cine, a five-screen movie house at the mall in Osage Beach, was showing *TWISTER* for the third consecutive week.

7th June, 1996. Osage Beach, Missouri, USA. *'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH.'*

End Is Nigh For The Grim Reaper

A party-goer plunged to his doom from a high-rise flat...dressed as none other than The Grim Reaper.

Truck driver Kurt Jarlsson, from Stockholm, Sweden, wore the deathly outfit for his 50th birthday party because he was convinced he was going to die soon.

He got that right.

2nd October, 1996. Stockholm, Sweden. *'DAILY MANC.'*

*** Cemetery worker William Daborn died from a heart attack and fell into the grave he was digging for another funeral.

Staff at Windlesham Cemetery, in Surrey, had to quickly remove his body before mourners arrived to bury the rightful occupant of the grave.

4th September, 1996. Windlesham, Surrey. *'DAILY MANC.'*

Name Games

Firefighters were called to a suspicious blaze near Alton, Hants, after scores of fire extinguishers exploded...At the premises of the Capital Fire Protection Company!

10th July, 1996. Alton, Hants. *'DAILY MAIL.'*

*** If you should fall foul of the long arm of the law in Wantage, Oxfordshire, and you can expect a visit from (ahem, yet again) the *Coppers*.

The local police ranks include Sgt Alan PENNY, PC Darren PRICE and Sgt Ian MONEY.

16th August, 1996. Wantage, Oxfordshire. *'SUNDAY MANC.'*

*** A contest to find the biggest man in Germany was won by a guy called, yes you've guessed it; *SMALL*.

Gerhard Small, 29, who is 7ft 2 inches tall and weighs more than 20 stone, walked off with the title...In his size 54 shoes.

4th September, 1996. Germany. *'SUNDAY MANC.'*

*** The residents of a Spanish village called 'Luck' have won £91 million in Lottery cash in just over two years. That fact has inspired hundreds of people from all over Spain to Sort - Luck in English - to buy tickets.

6th September, 1996. Sort, Spain. *'DAILY SLUR'*

*** The two shop workers in charge of selling Christmas goodies like cards and decorations at W.H. Smiths in Swindon, Wiltshire, are Gary WINTER and Kevin SNOWBALL.

10th October, 1996. Swindon, Wiltshire. *'DAILY SLUR'*

A HOST OF MISJUDGEMENTS Holy Killer Within The Shrines Of The Sacred

Holy Water from religious shrines, long regarded as having healing properties, could kill susceptible patients, a nurse from St. Helen's has discovered.

She has given the warning that the water, if drunk, by the sick or used to anoint wounds, is a breeding ground for infection.

Germs are transmitted from hands or in bottles holding the water a study of Holy Water cultures from shrines like Walsingham and Lourdes, has shown.

Linda Parsons, an infection control nurse at Whiston Hospital on the Editor's home county of Merseyside, has stated that the contaminated water could have caused premature deaths.

Mrs Parsons, who worked with microbiologist Karen Allen, said she was *'quite concerned'* by their findings.

'We cultured Holy Water and found it was heavily contaminated with a lot of quite serious pathogens, organisms capable of causing disease and infection People put Holy Water into eyes, their mouths and under bandages. It isn't the water itself that is the problem but the way people collect it, contaminating it with very dangerous germs with their hands and the bottles they use.'

Some hospitals have banned the use of Holy Water on their wards, while Whiston and the Royal Preston Hospital, in Lancashire, now sterilise Holy Water.

12th December, 1996. Whiston, St. Helens, Merseyside. *'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.'*

*** Ships were alerted and bomb disposal experts scrambled to defuse a 'bomb' bobbing in Hong Kong harbour. The strange truth is though, it turned out to be nothing more than an enormous sausage.

Wrapped in white plastic, it looked exactly like commercial blasting explosive.

4th June, 1996. Hong Kong Harbour. *'DAILY EXPRESS.'*

*** Fortune teller Gloria Villaneva failed to see it coming when a customer upset by her predictions decided to take his revenge by shooting her in the head in Monterrey, Mexico. He went on the run whilst she is spending some time in hospital.

11th December, 1996. Monterrey, Mexico. *'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'*

*** Stunned Jane Parker was watching a parachute display in Cradock, South Africa, when her estranged son quite literally dropped in.

Jane had not seen Barry for seven years when he landed within yards of her.

13th December, 1996. Cradock, South Africa. 'DAILY SLUR'

*** Anti-Crime campaigners in Hillsborough, Sheffield, were totally bemused to find that thieves had climbed lamp-posts and stolen all their Neighbourhood Watch Signs.

27th September, 1996. Sheffield. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD.'

*** After trying and failing for four years to quit smoking, US Air Force Sgt Ray McKinley finally gave up when he was struck by lightning during a cigarette break at his New Mexico base.

I guess he took it as a message from God to pack it in.

27th September, 1996. New Mexico, USA. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE.'

THE TIMELORD EXTERMINATED

A Dalek, one of the Timelord's most feared and persistent of enemies has been blamed for 'exterminating' an exhibition of Doctor Who memorabilia during a blaze.

The exhibition was being held on 16th September, 1996, and visitors to the display at Longleat House, Wiltshire, which has attracted fans of the BBC science fiction serial for 23 years, were hurriedly evacuated.

No one was hurt in the blaze, which did not affect the historic manor house itself.

But the complete collection, including valuable props from the TV show, was destroyed.

A spokesman for Wiltshire Fire Brigade said flames were first spotted coming from a Dalek and a full investigation into the cause of the fire was quickly underway.

Longleat spokeswoman Clare Kiener said; 'We have lost the entire display. The flames were six feet or higher, and there was a lot of smoke.'

The exhibition was set in a separate building in a courtyard of the 16th century, 140-room house, home of the Marquis of Bath.

The exhibition included a model of the Doctor's Time Travelling Tardis, monsters including Daleks and Cybermen, and some of the Timelord's clothes and equipment.

Ms Kiener said; 'Some of the exhibits were original props from the show and are therefore irreplaceable.'

17th September, 1996. Longleat House, Wiltshire. LIVERPOOL DAILY POST

The Sky-Diving Elf

A mischievous sky-diving Christmas Elf was blown off course and knocked a 1-year-old girl out of her mother's arms as he landed outside a shopping mall in Norwalk, California.

Hundreds of people saw the accident during holiday festivities outside the Norwalk Square Mall.

The girl was in a serious condition at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, spokesman Steve Rutledge said. She suffered several skull fractures and some bleeding around the brain.

The baby's name was not released.

The costumed sky-diver, who was unhurt, was part of a team taking part in the city's sixth annual Jingle Bell Jump to start the Christmas shopping season. Strong wind blew all but one of the sky-divers off course.

1st December, 1996. Norwalk, California. 'ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH.'

CREDIT FOR CUTTINGS AND CLIPPINGS

You know the speech by now, but I'll repeat it anyway. Without the selfless help of the following, this section of the magazine would be well-nigh impossible to put together.

Cheers, chaps (and chapesses)! Keep 'em coming, and we'll keep on Chasing The Unknown.



Remember, each of these clippings are examples of the magic that surrounds everyday life. If you should spot one...Please send it!!!

Thanks to Ray Nelke (COUD-1), Jase 'I believe in Miracles' Dignam, Matt 'Gibbons', Lorraine 'Into The Red', Tommy 'I just Lurrve Patsy Cline' Brown, Janet 'Professional Sounds And Lights' Lawrence...

Exchange Magazine Reviews

FORTEAN TIMES # 85

The usual high standard of writing and reporting on all aspects of the paranormal, and the still the shining example to which all others must aspire, the latest issue (at the time of writing) includes articles on Angels And Miracles in Tennessee, Secret Technology Of Thought Control, Welsh Dragons and all the consistently excellent Strange Days section featuring all the weird news fit to print. Indispensable!!

John Brown Publishing, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London, SW6 6LU. Subs: £26:40 for 12 issues.

3RD STONE #25

Beautifully produced, this excellent antiquarian magazine is written in an entertaining, colloquial style, informative, but with a rich vein of humour running throughout. The Spring, 1997 issue features The Supernatural Highway Revisited, The Legacy of Gregory Rasputin, Stone Circles of the Avebury Region, and lots more.

An engaging read.

PO Box 961, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2TS. £7 for three.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS # 175.

Jenny Randle's superb publication features the very latest from the often turbulent world of Ufology.

The Autumn issue includes fascinating articles on UFO crash retrievals in Britain, tragic UFO losses, Lancashire's Flying Triangle, and a Man In Black hoax. Oh, and of course, a round-up of the latest UFO sightings, reviews of related publications and TV programmes.

Note: Change of address!!! Now available from 1, Hallsteads Close, Dove Holes, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8BS. Subs: £7 for 6 issues.

ANNALS # 28

Gerry Lovell's consistently excellent publication continues to maintain its high standards with its UFO-dominated contents. With articles on Martian Bases, UFO's Over Russia, the Discovery Of A New Face On Mars, and Real Journeys To The Centre Of The Earth...A must-read for anyone remotely interested in the paranormal in general and in the current state of Ufology in particular.

C/O 'Willow', 91a, High Street, Bangor, County Down, BT 20 5BD Northern Ireland. £7:50 for 4 issues.

ANIMALS AND MEN # 12

As regular readers will know, Cryptozoology is my favourite aspect of paranormal phenomena, and therefore, it may not be too surprising to learn that this magazine is ranks at the top of my must-read journals.

Always well-written, and thoroughly entertaining, the latest issue includes pieces on Feathered Dinosaurs, The Mystery Animals Of Germany, New Zealand Extinctions. From a personal point of view, the controversial reappraisal of Tim Dinsdale's 1960 'Loch Ness Monster Film' by Richard Carter, provided the greatest food for thought. Whatever your opinions on the reality of Nessie. The great days of zoology are certainly *not* done!!!

The Centre For Fortean Zoology. 15 Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, Devon. EX4 2NA. £8 for 4 issues.

GHOSTWATCH NEWSLETTER: February 1997

Mike McKeown's hugely enjoyable GHOSTWATCH magazine has now transformed itself into an equally excellent Newsletter...And whilst, of necessity, it's a great deal briefer in its coverage of otherworldly happenings, its none the less entertaining.

The February issue covers strange goings on in a pub cellar in Northampton, Ghouls On Film, Ghostly Winter Tales, and a round-up of the supernatural in the media.

Well worth a look, and long may it continue.

12, Washbrook Avenue, Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside. £5 for 6 issues.

AT THE EDGE #5

Another nicely produced antiquarian magazine that is also essential reading for anyone remotely interested in this sphere of folklore and mythology.

The March issue includes riveting articles on such diverse subjects as Druids, Hollow Hills, Cosmic Homes, Late Orcadian houses and lots more besides. A publication that brings to mind the sense of wonder that lies all around us.

2, Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough LE 12 6UJ. Subs; £9 for 4 issues.

HAUNTED SCOTLAND: November-December, 1996

Very similar to our own magazine in content, Mark Fraser's magazine goes from strength to strength. Consistently well-written and filled with fascinating articles, it's rapidly becoming one of my favourite reads.

The latest issue features reincarnation, chicken mutilation in Ayrshire, Ghost stories from Hull, Angelic Visitation To Children, Richard Carter at Loch Ness, and lots more.

Essential reading. Highly recommended.

35, South Dean Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7RD Ayrshire, Scotland. Subs: £12 for 6 issues.

MAGONIA # 58

Often controversial, usually contentious, always compelling, MAGONIA is never less than bewitching in its standard of writing. The latest issue features a demolition of the UFO Crash-Retrieval Myth, a critical look at the phenomena that is Nick Pope, and asks that eternally burning question; 'Who's Plugged Into Your Brain?'

There's no better publication for those who seek a rational view of 'contemporary vision and belief.'

John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB. Subs: £5 for 4 issues.

LOCH NESS NEWS CLIPPING SERVICE Vol 2 No. 3

An absolutely invaluable publication, featuring as it does, all the latest news from the banks of the most famous stretch of water in the world.

We only came across this magazine recently, and it's to my eternal regret that we didn't encounter it sooner.

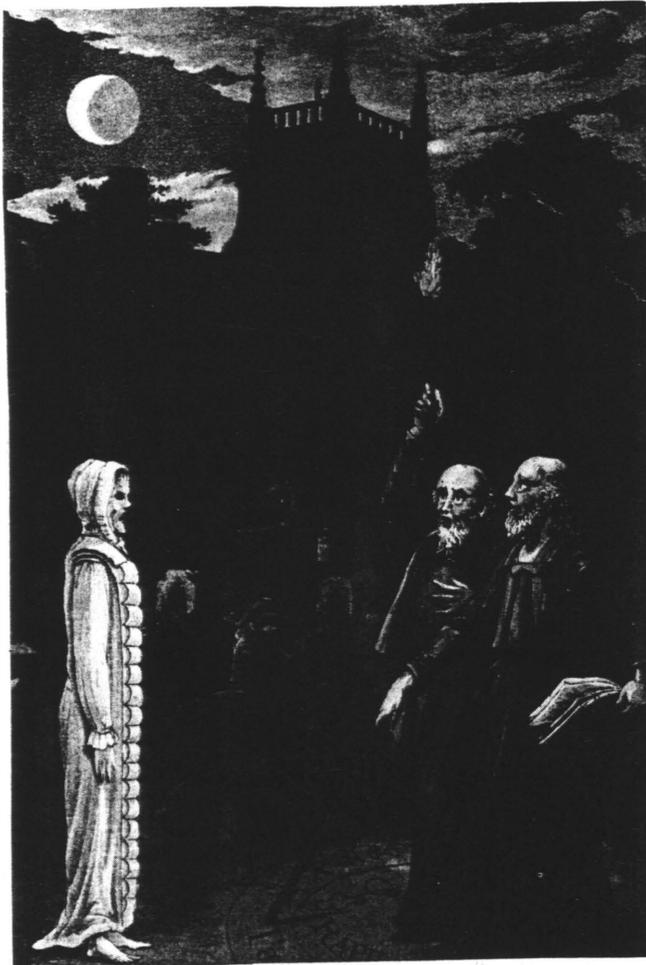
Compiled by Andreas Trottmann, a subscriber to 'DEAD OF NIGHT', it includes all the latest sighting reports from the loch, as well as interesting news items centred upon a place that, corny as it may sound, I sometimes consider to be my spiritual home. (alongside The Kop at Anfield, of course- Ed). You simply must subscribe to this!!!

Les Pretresses, 1586 Vallamand VD, Switzerland. Write for Sub prices..

Next Issue:

CAN WE NOW RAISE THE DEAD?

In the aftermath of the controversy of genetic cloning, are we just a step away from Resurrection?



Tales From The Loch-Side VII: The Death Of A Salesman: The Mysterious Disappearance Of Monster-Hunter, Frank Searle

Ghosts And Devils Over Merseyside: 'The Soft Whisper Of The Dead': The first in a series of local supernatural folk tales that have helped shape the Editor's interest in the paranormal.

Plus All The Regular features including news on Princely Ghost-Hunters, Voodoo On The Rise, More Weird Crime, Real-Life Miracles, Animal Mass Suicides, Alien Abduction Insurance Claims and lots more besides.

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ROBIN HEATH - Author, lecturer and megalithic tour guide. He is editor of the international 'ASTROLOGICAL JOURNAL.'

There will also be specialist bookstalls, stands from magazines related to the field, light refreshments available and working astronomical models of Stonehenge and Avebury circles.

There will also be free transport between Devizes and Avebury for those that require it and Free admission to the Keiller Museum at Avebury.

DAY 2 Tours of the Avebury Stone Circle and surrounding monuments including the enigmatic puzzle that is Silbury Hill by two of our illustrious speakers.

For an information pack and ticket application form send an SAE to TLH M00T97, PO Box 258, Cheltenham GL53 or call the Moot Hotline on 01386 421058.