

EARTHQUEST NEWS

A Newsletter from Andrew Collins, Vol 6 No 1, Spring 2003

QUESTCON2003: Welcome to another year and another Questing Conference, to be held once again at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, Camden, London NW1 – the date Saturday, 15 November. This time we have updated the name for marketing reasons to QuestCon03, although it will still be known as the Questing Conference in every other respect. On the bill we are delighted to have **Colin Wilson**, who in advance of the publication of his new biography will reminisce on a life studying everything from the occult to the paranormal and ancient mysteries, such as Atlantis and the age of the Sphinx. **Lynn Picknett**, co-author of **THE TEMPLAR REVELATION** and author of the recently published **MARY MAGDALENE: CHRISTIANITY'S HIDDEN GODDESS**, will speak about the extraordinary significance of Mary Magdalene, whom she sees as the most important woman ever. **Robert Bauval** reveals the findings of his ten-year quest to uncover the transmission of Ancient Egyptian texts and later Hermetic teachings to Gnostic sects, the Grail writers, the Knights Templar, Rosicrucians and Freemasonry - the subject of a new book co-written with **Graham Hancock** entitled **TALISMAN** out this autumn. **Crichton Miller**, author of **THE GOLDEN THREAD OF TIME** (2001), in his lecture entitled 'The Cross and the Serpent' tells the story of his remarkable search to understand the nature of the Celtic Cross and its use as an instrument of ancient navigation, especially for transatlantic journeys.

Montague Keen, a leading light in the well-respected and long-established Society of Psychical Research (SPR) will provide a background to the extraordinary events which in the 1990s surrounded a physical mediumship group based at Scole, Norfolk. **THE SCOPE EXPERIMENT** by Grant and Jane Solomon (1999) is a brilliant introduction to the whole subject, and very much recommended to all questers. What is of extreme importance is that the strange activity allegedly witnessed on countless occasions by the Scole group has revolutionised the way in which spiritualists and psychics perceive séance-room phenomena. Similar groups are now springing up all over the world. We are even trying a bit of it here in Leigh-on-Sea, with some limited success. It is thus important to take stock of the situation before the matter gets out of hand, and there is no better person to do it than **Montague Keen**, who sat in on many of the sittings as an impartial observer and is therefore in a perfect position to deliver a personal assessment of the events based on the findings of a major research programme the SPR undertook into the activities of the Scole Group.

Dr GREGORY LITTLE AND mtDNA: Finally, we can reveal that American writer and researcher **Greg Little** has been asked to deliver a key lecture at the conference. Now you might say who's Greg Little, even though he is the author of several bestselling books on everything from ancient civilisations to the relationship between UFOs and human consciousness and even prisoner rehabilitation. Greg is a major force behind the organisation and some of the funded projects undertaken by the Association of Research and Enlightenment (ARE), the membership wing of the Edgar Cayce Foundation (31,000 members to date), and I have just provided a lengthy introduction to a new book written by him on the latest discoveries on Atlantis. To be entitled, **ATLANTIS REDISCOVERED: EVIDENCE FOR PLATO'S AND EDGAR CAYCE'S ATLANTIS IN THE BAHAMAS AND CUBA**, it is released by Eagle Wing Books in October 2003. Most important of all is that Greg is one of the world's leading experts on the nature, evolution and transmigration of something called mtDNA. Okay, so what's mtDNA? Well, we all know that behind the manufacture of our physical and mental structure is DNA, a life-code, or signature, which determines who we are and what we look like. However, what most people don't realise is that we also contain foreign bodies, natural forms of bacteria, which also have their own DNA, and this is known as mitochondrial DNA, or simply mtDNA (BTW, all animals also have mtDNA). The significance of mtDNA is that it is passed on from generation to generation through the female line, while different strains produce their own unique signatures and mutate in an easily recognisable fashion, meaning that you can determine their point of origin and divide up the human race into individual strains designated by simple letters such as A, B, C, D, E, and X. Understanding the type of mtDNA present in indigenous peoples around the world provides us with important clues concerning their ethnic origins and the various migrations of their ancestors. More startling is that mtDNA

can be preserved in human remains for tens of thousands of years, meaning that individual strains can be traced to their point of origin through a succession of mutations.

Now, for the orthodox scientist, or palaeobiologist, the evidence of mtDNA has determined that the human race derives from one original mother, inspiringly nicknamed 'Eve', and that there are 42 known major branches of mtDNA and a handful of extinct versions. Frustratingly, mtDNA test results are used to confirm accepted racial and political paradigms, such as the first mother originated in Africa and the native American peoples travelled across the land bridge that once linked Siberia with Alaska some 13,000 years ago to begin colonising what was then just an empty continent. No aberrations to the norm are accepted by the scientific community, which was why Greg took it upon himself to read and absorb every available paper, book and periodical relating to current mtDNA research in order to determine what it could tell us about the history of mankind. Away from the shackles of restraint put on the world by convention, Greg can ably show that the ethnological movement of prehistoric man was quite a different fish to what we have been told. No way will I steal Greg's thunder, for I truly believe that what he has to say will provide for one of the most remarkable lectures that you are likely to hear this year. It was after listening to his comprehensive talk on the subject of mtDNA at last year's Ancient Civilisations Conference held at the ARE headquarters in Virginia Beach, Virginia, that I realised Questing Conference attendees should be given a chance to hear this stuff first hand. Above that, Greg, who hales from Memphis, Tennessee, where he lives with his wife Lora, is also a very charismatic, confident and knowledgeable man whom it will be a delight to introduce to the British questing audience. So be there!

CONFERENCE FRINGE LECTURES: In addition to the speakers mentioned so far, there will be a fringe room where three interesting talks are being lined up before we have to vacate the room at lunchtime. London-based writer and psychic quester **Jack Gale**, author of inspired books such as *THE CIRCLE AND THE SQUARE* (1997), will outline his quest to discover the occult significance of Flamstead's Well, a deep shaft on Greenwich's Castle Hill connected with the mystical intrigues of the royal court of England at the time of the War of the Roses. It is a personal quest which has involved the expertise of good psychics as well as sound historical archive research and on-site investigations. In my only lecture for the conference this year, I will use the fringe room to review recent psychic questing activities I have undertaken over the past year, comparing them with accounts recorded in Tibetan Buddhism associated with the so-called *terma* tradition of the *nyingma-pa* 'red hat' monasteries. Also on hand will be my friend and colleague **Richard Ward**, who will add to the narration.

Another key talk scheduled for the fringe room concerns the so-called 'Starchild Skull', found in Mexico, which some people believe to be of extra-terrestrial origin. **Grant Stapleton** will outline its alleged history and give a balanced account of its possible origins, making reference to recent attempts to test its mtDNA.

Just one further point I need to clear up with respect to these fringe lectures. People have complained that they have been unable to see all the speakers they came to see at the conference because one clashed with another appearing on stage at the same time in another room. Let me put it like this: the fringe lectures are simply a bonus to the day of events, and are to be attended if an individual desires to be there in preference to what is going on in the main hall. However, in the future we shall endeavour to co-ordinate the billing in both rooms in order that key speakers do not clash.

SUNDAY WALKABOUT: In addition to the day of lectures, **Adrian Gilbert** - co-author of *THE ORION MYSTERY*, *THE MAYAN PROPHECIES* and *THE HOLY KINGDOM* and author of books such as *MAGI* and *THE NEW JERUSALEM* - will lead a tour of various sites of historical interest in Central London on Sunday, 16 November, the day after the conference. The Monument, St Paul's Cathedral, The Temple Church and Trafalgar Square are just some of the places on the list to visit, and at these he will outline their mystical significance with particular reference to the activities of the Royal Society and Freemasonry. Although the tour is included in the admission price to the conference, details of where and when to meet will be issued only to conference goers. This should provide an ideal opportunity for people to stay overnight in London. A selection of alternatives regarding hotel bookings and reservations can be found on Eden - the Andrew Collins/Questing Conference website. However, I would advise making reservation bookings as early as possible in order to ensure the choices you want. Tickets for the QuestCon03 are GBP/£28 in advance and GBP/£30 on the day, with a 10 percent discount on group bookings of four tickets or over. Postal tickets are available by sending your remittance along with an SAE, to Questing Conference, PO Box 189, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1NF (cheques made out to 'Questing Conference'). There is a secure on-line credit card ticket service on my website, while credit card bookings can as usual be made

through Atlantis Bookshop by ringing 0207.405.2120 (+44.207.405.2120). Remember, that in addition to the price of the tickets there is a GBP/£1 booking fee per ticket when using this credit card hotline number.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR AND SARS: Since last I wrote for EARTHQUEST NEWS 5:3, which was available electronically only (due to the immense cost of postage and packing these days), the world has been plunged into new conflict with the war in Iraq. The world economy inevitably slowed down, resulting in a severe drop in holiday bookings both in the foreign and domestic markets. For these reasons I was prevented from attending Robert Bauval's Stars and Signs Tour this May, due to limited advance bookings. If anyone from my camp booked on the basis that I would be there, all I can say is that the decision was totally beyond my control. Both my wife Sue and I were looking forward to seeing Egypt again, and would have been there come what may.

Another result of the Iraq War, and continued unrest in the Middle East, has been the decision of Ancient World Tours (AWT) to postpone plans to organise on my behalf a ten-day tour of Jordan, including five days at the ancient rock city of Petra. This is the preferred site of the biblical Mount Sinai in both TUTANKHAMUN: THE EXODUS CONSPIRACY, by myself and Chris Ogilvie-Herald, and THE EXODUS CONSPIRACY by Graham Phillips. However, do not fret, for as soon as a more stable climate prevails in the Middle East it is our intention to get the whole package on the road again. Already both the itinerary and costing are finalised; it is just down to dates now. So be patient.

Likewise, the planned Green Stone Tour is also on hold due to the fall in the domestic holiday market during the same period, due mainly to people's genuine fear either of terrorist attacks at airports and major cities, or of catching the SARS virus which is killing hundreds across Far East. Graham Phillips, Sue and I have already surveyed the sites and locations in question and have also found a beautiful Tudor hotel where the weekend event is to be based. However, we are waiting and hoping for the economic climate to change before giving any further details of the tour.

GRAIL QUEST: Certainly, it has been a trying time for us all, and one which has perhaps led us to review our priorities in life. I have been spending much of my time psychic questing; indeed, far more so than at any point in the past ten years. This has resulted in some mind-blowing events and revelations, much of which I intend bringing together in a new book on the nature and evolution of the Grail legend. I am finding out things about this holy vessel which seem to have been overlooked by all the obvious writers in this field, plus at the same time I am beginning to dismiss standard views on its origin. I can't give too much away for the moment, but what I *can* say is that the old idea that the Grail derives from earlier Celtic role models such as a cauldron or horn of plenty are simply untrue. There is a profound Christian, even Christian Gnostic, mystery behind the development of the Grail and its mysteries connected with the Holy Blood which is said to have flowed from one or more of Jesus's wounds as he hung on the Cross of Calvary. Everybody knows that, you might say. Moreover, you will know too that it was supposedly Joseph of Arimathea, a rich follower of Jesus, who after the Crucifixion received into his care not only the Redeemer's body for burial in a private sepulchre, but also drops of the Holy Blood which he caught in a sacred vessel, the Grail, usually identified as the cup or dish of the Last Supper. Yet there are flaws in this story – flaws which are only revealed with very delicate reading of the earliest romances.

What I have become interested in over the past year or so is exactly what did go on at the Crucifixion, or at least what did people come to believe had gone on that day? Why did the idea of collecting the Holy Blood of Christ become so important not only to medieval Christians, but also to the writers of the Grail romances? I have found myself examining scenes of the Crucifixion in medieval art, looking for examples that show the Holy Blood being collected in a cup or chalice by someone positioned beneath the Cross. For instance, you will find that as early as 1100, it was standard Christian iconography in Germany to depict a chalice or cup at the base of the Cross, presumably as a sign of the sacred blood which dripped from Jesus's wounds. Moreover, there are certainly images of Joseph of Arimathea collecting the Holy Blood which predate the first Grail romances of the late twelfth century. Before, and even after, this time, however, representations of the Crucifixion in which the collecting of the Holy Blood is shown vary considerably. For instance, a Spanish psalter (a book of the Psalms) dating to the end of the tenth century, shows the Holy Blood being caught in a cup by an adrogyne dwarf, crowned and seated at the base of the Cross. Clearly he or she is not Joseph of Arimathea. At the same time, Mary Magdalene reaches out with a hand towards the flow of blood, which stems from a wound made on the right side of Jesus's heart by the lance held by the blind Roman soldier Longinus. It is as if she is directing its fall into the cup. Other forms I am aware of, or have seen, show a similar crowned figure, this time on a beast of apocalypse (and thought to represent the Church of Rome), catching the Holy Blood, while still others show the Magdalene taking this role.

MARY MAGDALENE – CAN YOU HELP? Like my colleague Lynn Picknett, I am on a Magdalene kick, and need some help with my research. I want everybody who possibly can to check in their local churches, cathedrals, chapels, etc., or in books showing local or national Christian art, and see if you can find representations of the Crucifixion in which a person collects the Holy Blood in a vessel. Alternatively, look out for pictures which might show a person collecting the Holy Blood as Jesus's body is being laid out and embalmed in the Holy Sepulchre. Those thought to have been present at this moment vary according to the different Gospels, but the list certainly includes Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene (usually shown in red and/or blue, or brown), the Virgin Mary (usually being comforted in her deep anguish and sorrow by a third Mary, maybe 'Mary' Salome) and John the Divine (usually shown young, clean shaven and dressed in red and blue). It could be a stained glass window, a mural, a painting, a sculpture or a page from an illuminated manuscript, it doesn't matter. What's more, it can come from any country of the world. All I need is details of its age, a brief description and its known provenance or history; the older the better really. On the other hand, I suspect that there will be either nineteenth century or modern interpretations of the Crucifixion which might be of great value to my research. Even if you don't find anything of interest, it is a great exercise in itself. If you do find something either drop me a line, hopefully containing a print (doesn't matter what quality, initially), by writing to PO Box 189, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1NF, UK, or, better, email me at edenelder@btinternet.com. Try displaying any JPEG attachments in the body of the email as I might get a little over cautious otherwise. If I receive literally hundreds of replies, then I apologise in advance if you don't get a response back immediately. However, everything I receive will be studied in great detail. I am particularly interested in scenes where the Magdalene is seen catching the Holy Blood, or of any written accounts where she is doing just this. If you find one, I need to hear about it.

ALIEN ENERGY: For the first time, one of my books which has previously only been available in a privately-printed, limited edition is now being published by the American company Eagle Wing Books. Written in 1994, ALIEN ENERGY serves as my ultimate statement on the nature of the UFO phenomenon, and its relationship both to human consciousness and ceremonial landscapes, such as that around Avebury in Wiltshire. I concluded that earth lights were often conscious, multi-dimensional manifestations which when encountered at close quarters induce altered states of consciousness, hallucinations as well as slips in the space-time continuum. More importantly, they could literally remove you temporarily from this dimension in a manner which would produce what we know today as abduction experiences. According to Jim Martin of USA's FLATLANDS magazine, even the late Carl Sagan, the great free thinker of the space age and author of CONTACT, possessed or at least read a copy of ALIEN ENERGY. The book can be ordered now by ringing (+1) 1-800-431-1579, or it can be ordered through www.amazon.com or Arcturus Books. It should also be available from specialist bookshops in the UK via Counter Culture of Sutton Mallet, Somerset, the UK distributors for Eagle Wing Books.

THE NEPHILIM: In EARTHQUEST NEWS 5:3 I reported on the fact that I was working with Carl McCoy, the frontman and vocalist with premier gothic rock band Fields of the Nephilim, now just The Nephilim. Together we have put together the band's official website, which includes a large content of magical material, including an exclusive new article by me on the Watchers and Nephilim, an article by Richard Ward on the reality of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos and news of the foundation of a magical organisation to guard, protect and disseminate the knowledge and wisdom of the Watchers and Nephilim. It is now finished, although severe e-commerce problems have caused unexpected delays. We want it to go on-line as soon as possible, and we'll tell you when this happens. In addition to formulating the site, Carl and I are working on other projects which can only be revealed as and when they materialise.

GRISSECOM: Other than the QuestCon 2003, the only other major lecture I am giving this year is at GrisseCon, which is to be held at Tillington Hall, Eccleshall Road, Stafford, between 10-12 October. Organised by my good friend Storm Constantine and her posse, it is billed as a three-day celebration of fantasy, horror, mystery and magic. I shall be speaking on the Watchers and Nephilim. Other speakers include Storm, CANNED CHAOS author Phil Hine, fantasy writer Freda Warrington, artist Anne Sudworth, Ricardo Pinto as well as more to be announced. Tickets for the weekend begin at GBP/£40 (£35 for concessions). For more information write to Grissecom1, 8 Rowley Grove, Stafford, ST17 9BJ, UK.

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