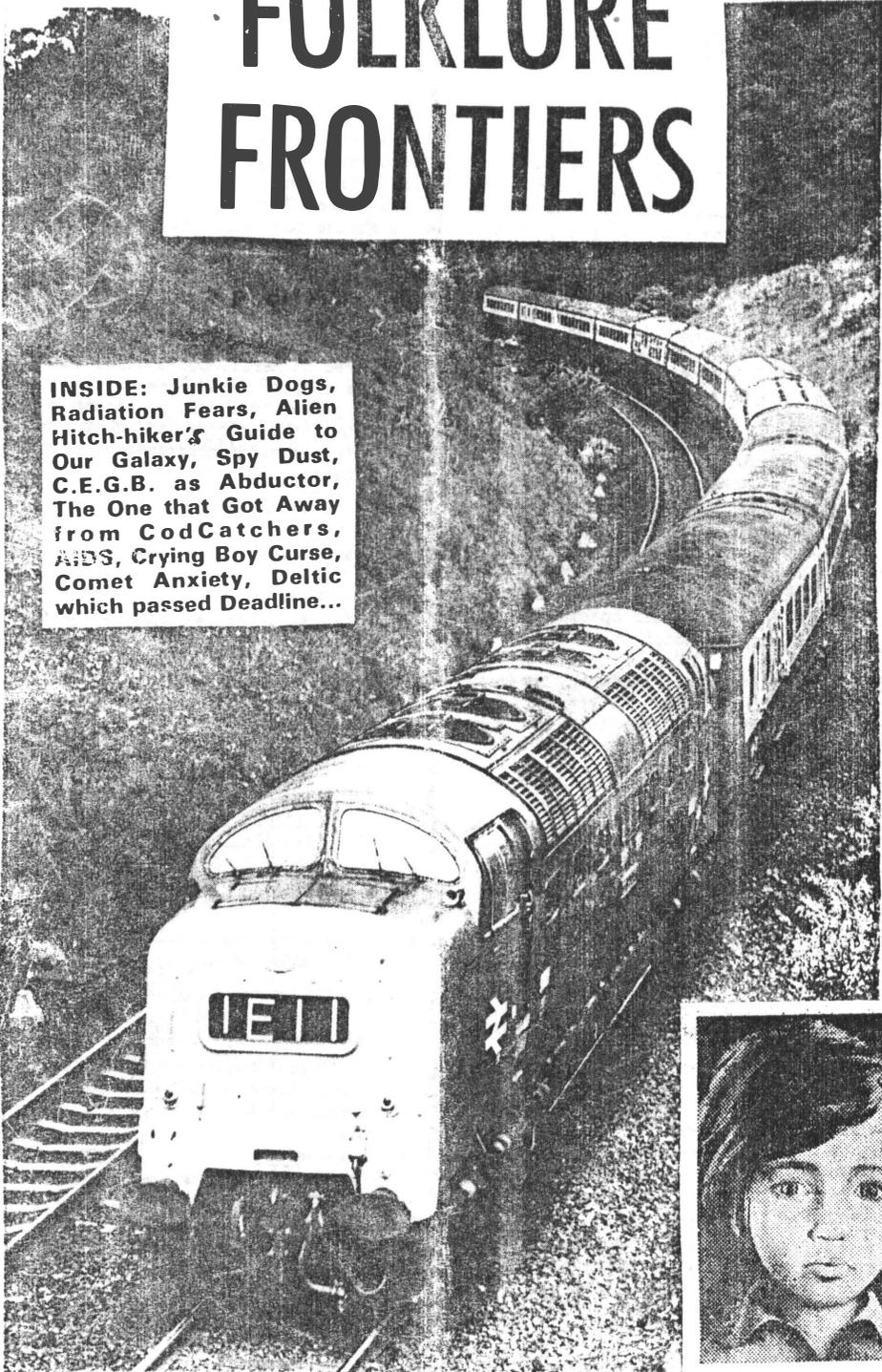


FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

INSIDE: Junkie Dogs, Radiation Fears, Alien Hitch-hiker's Guide to Our Galaxy, Spy Dust, C.E.G.B. as Abductor, The One that Got Away from CodCatchers, AIDS, Crying Boy Curse, Comet Anxiety, Deltic which passed Deadline...



Lead-in

Well, here we are in a new format. The change has not been without its fair degree of trauma. However, typing this on an old-fashioned typewriter, I wonder how the mix of archaic typing, photocopying and word-processing is going to look. You -- and I -- now know. New technology is a tool we must grasp and use. I only hope the end product you are now reading reaches my expectations as we strive for both a better presentation and more reading matter.

I would urge would-be contributors to present material for ready reproduction on A4 size paper, not more than single-spaced for ease of reproduction. This is not essential, but would simplify matters. In fact, if anyone wants to contribute handwritten, don't worry, it's content which comes first, we'll cope. Also, there's no specialist clique here. Everyone's contribution will be considered on merit. Don't think that if you've never written for a magazine before your ideas or information are not important. Actually, if ever there was a forum for the ordinary person to contribute to it is this. We want to know what urban legend Mrs Bloggs told you in the launderette, what Jim at work said about his sister's wife's babysitter's coming to harm/embarrassment tale, or that story you heard in the pub about the microwave oven.

That said, here are our contributors this issue -- remember, don't be overawed! You too could have your 15 column inches of fame!

Michael Goss is the author of "The Evidence For Phantom Hitch-Hikers" (Aquarian, 1984). He is a freelance writer specializing in the paranormal and is compiler of bibliography of filter-pests. A former member of the Society for Psychical Research, he is now an active member of A&AAP and lives in Essex. We look here at what appear to be two new modern legends in the making.

Andy Roberts is editor of UFO Brigantia, a West Yorkshire UFO mag. Stimulated by "Harrogate panther" reports of last autumn, he is working on a book of northern out-of-place alien animals. Here he suggests a report from 1972 may be a variant of the PHH and one which links it with the UFO phenomenon.

Frank Allau is a former Member of Parliament and energetic Press freedom campaigner. He recounts a recent experience which confirms his view of certain newspapers and the Press Council. It is reprinted from The Journalist of April, 1983.

Peter French is deputy chief reporter of The Mail, Hartlepool. This extraordinary court story revolves around two modern anxieties: a woman's abduction and nuclear power. It was printed in The Mail on July 4, 1986.

Sheila Elgev is chief reporter of The Mail's Horden Branch office. All I can say is the story was checked out and appears all above board. The colcatchers' leader added they will always pick up other hitch-hikers in future. Maybe they'll change their minds after seeing the film "The Hitcher." Yet it still sounds just like foaflore.

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By Michael Goss

Towards the end of "The Vanishing Hitchhiker", Professor Brunvand talks about something he calls "protollegends": short stories and rumours which may evolve into fully-fledged urban belief tales. (1) A protolegend, then, is a nucleus from which a "proper" urban legend may develop or (in Professor Brunvand's words) the "raw material" of one, lacking the widespread currency, structural complexity and range of variations which would qualify it as a genuine contemporary legend, but recognizably akin to accepted examples of the genre.

Spotting and classifying newly-emergent contemporary legends has almost become as international a pastime as chess or lager-drinking: a modern trend not without its dangers. Equal only to the amount of effort which folklorists put into finding fresh specimens is the effort that some expend in defining exactly what is or isn't an authentic urban legend: how the "real thing" differs from, say, a rumour (brief statement of unsubstantiated fact) or a canard or even a joke - not always easy, since all three can provide the basis for a future urban legend and may already have done so. Perhaps this is not the place to wax over-critical and to insist that the Alligators in Sewers (for instance) isn't a genuine urban legend because it's too short and has no narrative development. However, recognizing that the hunt for "new" legends is too far advanced to check, the following stories seem to me worth watching as likely urban belief tales in the making. Whether they achieve that hallowed status will depend chiefly on their appeal or popularity among a wider public and thence their expansion into more sophisticated narratives with requisite variations per each telling. As they stand, though, they reveal characteristics which help to define the essential qualities of an urban belief story. The first one I name the ...

CANINE JUNKIES

Princess Diana, as is well known, has interested herself in the problems of drug abuse. This social commitment explains why, on a certain occasion when television cameras were happily around, she paid a visit to a Customs point where dogs are used to sniff out the illicit merchandise. A TV news clip (artfully positioned in the end-spot reserved for items which leave the viewer smiling -- at least, until the weather report comes on) captured H.R.H. being shown a particularly endearing small dog in the course of its duties. Having duly sniffed out the case loaded with death-dealing hoo-hah, the little terrieresque pooch started to play to the gallery. It showed maximum reluctance to release the stash and as the Customs man intervened to remove the case it launched itself in frenzied zeal at the object, eventually being carried off bodily, all four feet dangling in the air, rather than let go. This remarkable canine collar amply demonstrated the effectiveness of the dog-watch on drugs and was moreover good television. Princess Diana laughed unrestrainedly and so, I9d guess, did we all.

"It's not so funny at all!" an outraged-cisaged person warned my wife when she retold the story a week or so later. "Those dogs are addicts! Yes, to get them to find the drugs they keep giving them some till they're hooked! I know because a friend of Mrs P.'s works for the Customs, and ..."

The fact that I've heard more absolutely-true urban legends from Mrs P. in an hour than I've had in a month of acute eavesdropping elsewhere -- the fact that Mrs P. seems to have an amazing number of friends who tell her these astonishing-but-oh-yes-really-true tales -- is one reason for my having great hopes for the Canine Junkies motif. Besides that, it has the fundamental foaf authorisation which immediately reassures the audience and simultaneously defies them to disprove the tale, since the foaf is an insider (here, a C&E employee) who has access to secrets which we don't. Another good trademark is the story's specious credibility. With hindsight, the frenzy of the dog in the TV clip could easily be in-

terpreted as typical of the most mush-brained user-abuser in desperate need of a fix. Again, the motif capitalizes on our ignorance as to how the dogs are trained and perhaps on vague suspicions that the process involves them being given samples of drugs in order to teach them what the stuff tastes or smells like; there isn't much incredible about the idea of training a dog to identify the scent of heroin, cocaine or whatever by shooting some of it into them or maybe wafting some beneath their fine nasal tracts. At least, not in general, casual-thinking terms; it's only when you get critically-psyched-up that the doubts arise.

Finally, the tale plays with a theme highly successful in many contemporary legends: the Distrust of Big Organizations. Here we are being led to believe the worst of a Government agency - always fair game - and an authoritarian one at that. Nobody is required to express kindly thoughts towards H.M. Customs & Excise, so the message is simple: these horrible uniformed spoilsports who ruthlessly penalize you for bringing in an ounce of baccy or little old bottle of brandy over the limit deserve all the contempt you feel like showing them. You thought they were merely spoilsport fascists, but look! the soulless bullies actually maltreat animals! A lot of people would like to believe something like that, anyway.

Needless to say, the villains at C&E would not dare to admit any of this. Here we have the Conspiracy of Silence theme, a typical foaflore failsafe: you cannot prove the story to be fiction because the only people who could confirm whether it is true or false are blatantly committed to denying it as a matter of course and of self-preservation. But checking out stories is exactly what folklorists are meant to do, so I rang Customs and Excise's Press office in London -- only to learn that the people whom I needed to speak with are at R.A.F. Newton. They are the ones who actually train and supply the dogs used by C&E.

The key to training sniffer dogs, as the Press Officer told me, is not to give them daily shots in the fetlock, but to use their instinct of playfulness. Regardless of what you want to train a dog to find - explosives or drugs - the thing is "made a game of": in other words, the animals are encouraged to work by turning the search into a game: "You've got to keep the dog interested or it gets bored." Thus having a hound sniff out heroin is (from a canine point of view) no more arduous than having to retrieve a ball which some human nutcase keeps throwing away. The behaviour traits of the species matter more than the human intention and also explains why the TV substances sleuth wouldn't let go of the case once it had located it. Any dog will hold on to what it finds, especially the younger ones. The Press Officer told me he'd witnessed a display where a sniffer dog found a hidden pistol (good boy!) but then, to the embarrassment of its handler, refused to drop it on cue (bad, boy, but quite funny).

Like the frenetic tail-wagging that accompanies the search-procedure this seize-and-keep tendency is "an indication that they find it great good fun." In retrospect, the tenacity of the TV dog squares a lot better with this explanation than with the suggestion it was the wild resistance of a demented junkie; have you ever tried to wrest a ball from a dog when it brings it back to you? To conclude, the method of training sniffer dogs to recognise distinctive drug scents was rather different than getting them to snort the stuff up their ultra-sensitive nostrils. "An addicted dog," closed my source of information, "would be useless. Take it from me, it's a load of old rubbish." (Or load of junk?). I took it from him, of course, but I wonder if Mrs P.'s friend at the C&E would have done.

Speaking of Press officers -- feeling in my case, since I spent two years trying to be one -- urban legends-cum-rumours can be very bad for the blood pressure. I have occasionally felt qualms of sympathy for harrassed McDonalds PR folk confronted by accusations of covering up Wormburger scandals or for their opposite numbers who have to listen to Kentucky Fried Rat allegations. Professor Brunvand's new book has considerable material on Proctor & Gamble's incisive efforts to refute the belief that its trademark (man-in-moon face with 13 stars) is a Satanist symbol; as the Professor sees it, R&G would have done better to sit back and let the story die a natural death. (2) It may not be true that tales of this kind are deliberately planted by business rivals in order to discredit the

opposition, but there are occasional hints that some have an oblique propaganda value. Which brings us to the strange and alarming reports of:

SATELLITE EARTH STATIONS AND RADIATION SICKNESS

Forgive the intrusion of some trivial autobiography, but the PR post I just mentioned having held was with British Telecom International, owners and operators of the satellite earth stations at Goonhilly Downs, Madley and (more recently) North Woolwich's London Teleport. This big-dish aerials working to telecoms satellites which handle our overseas telephone calls, data, TV broadcasts and much besides have a distinct hi-tech, sci-fi aura about them - no, it's not true that they're used for tracking UFOs - and it would be peculiar if their looming presence did not inspire a few spurious beliefs. So indeed they do.

Having a conglomeration of dish aerials foisted on your doorstep is apt to be something of a culture shock. One of the questions a BTI spokesperson learns to anticipate when a new satellite earth station project is being mooted before the public concerns the supposed dangers of microwave radiation: to wit, will the local populace suddenly go down with giddiness, diarrhoea or plagues of boils and the like as a result of the dish "leaking" electrical energy?

The answer (truthfully) is a positive negative. The radiated power is too precisely aligned between satellite and aerial in the first place and too weak in the second. The strength of a signal received from a telecoms satellite in geostationary orbit over the Equator has been compared with the amount of heat which would reach Earth from a single-bar electric fire somewhere on the Moon. (Some fact, eh? I bet you'd like to know where I got it. Well, it has been stolidly repeated in just about every BTI Press release or publicity brochure on satcoms ever since the opening of Goonhilly in 1962. As folklorists, you'll know that any story which survives as long as that has to be true). It would be rather silly to climb up a dish aerial and sprawl over the central feed - at least, I presume it would, though I've never heard of anyone doing it - and there is also something which is called "sidelobe radiation" that laypersons might interpret as overspill from the dish, but it is too weak to hurt anyone. It's more sensible to go in fear of your TV set.

No danger, then - but a growth of satellit earth station/radiation sickness rumours has seeded a likelihood for a long time. The reasons aren't far to seek.

First and most obvious, there is already an established canon of microwave urban legends, principally those where a wet dog/cat/human head is placed in one to dry it off all the quicker and ends up by being cooked or by exploding. These tales have been interpreted as expressions of distrust in modern technology, especially the kind which invades our homes as gadgetry at the expense of the old, tried ways of life. (3) You can roast a dog in an ordinary gas-oven -- and there are tales to prove it -- but it makes no sense to do so on grounds of saving time. The pet comes to grief because the microwave is so amazingly fast and because its owner doesn't really understand the perils of the appliance.

Second, people do not understand (and consequently fear) radiation. This is necessarily the source and the dedoubler of eerie tales of its awesome powers (real or imagined). Then there are the reports of mystery illnesses connected in popular belief with electric power in general - all rejected out of hand by those responsible for the power supply in question, of course. The celebrated Fishpond Bottom enigma is one notorious case in point, (4) but far better known are the scare-stories of defective ovens and televisions or again the rumpurs about military/espionage use of radiation. Without knowing too much about the subject, it all makes horrible sense to us - doubly so when a writer like Walter Bowart is delineating the microwave bombardment of the American Embassy in Moscow one moment and General Electric's recall of 90,000 X-ray-leaking colour TV sets in May 1968 the next. (5) Microwaves are bad news and the big organizations responsible for the hardware that emits them never own up when something goes wrong - the Conspiracy of Silence motif again.

The specific charge is that micro wave radiation can cause anything from nausea, headaches and fainting to disorientation, hallucination and cancer, not to mention

sterility. That much is true - radiation can do that. Certain types of appliances using radiation have been withdrawn from the market for fear of radiation health risk - that again isn't disputed. What we need to do now is to ask whether there is any concrete proof that this pollutive leakage of radiation has ever been reported from satellite earth stations.

It's an important query, too, because the age of direct broadcasting satellite TV and cable TV is dawning - or so we are told by those with commercial interests in direct broadcasting satellite - and cable TV. The dish aerials are amongst us and I believe that only a miracle can avert a flood of ... well, maybe not of radiation itself, but of scary new urban legends connected with it. Given the understandable disquiet over many "invisible energy" sources at present, such a development would be logical enough. Who will be first to see a crow/pigeon/ any other bird you care to name instant-roasted in a dish antennae? Which friend of a friend will tell Mrs P. how her neighbour grew horns after somebody installed a rooftop satcoms station?

The answer, my friend, is pulsing in the sky ... the answer is pulsing in the sky. Or even pulsing in The Guardian for March 10 1986. In case you missed it.... (see report Page 7). This, as they say, is a sensitive area. I am reluctant to declare the story just quoted a veritable urban legend or even a protolend, especially as a statement of that kind might appear an attack upon the credibility of the Peace Movement (and indeed upon The Guardian). No doubt the information was given to Gareth Parry in good faith and was used by him in the same manner: that is, both information and journalist believed what he/she was saying was nothing less than the absolute truth. Even so, the article has a certain speciousness which might mark it down as a contemporary legend. Taken with the other microwave shock-stories just mentioned, we have to choose between thinking that a secret radiation-horror is about to burst upon us or that a new canon of urban belief tales is going the rounds. My foregoing remarks on the intimate relationship between satellite earth stations, microwave fears and foaflore as a whole inclines me towards the second option.

On article of folklorist faith goes that whenever you look for hard evidence in an urban legend, you find only foafs. Here we seem to have not one foaf, but "at least 40" whose accounts are made to seem credible by the fact they are presented to us by (a) a senior lecturer on epidemiology from a university medical body and (b) by a national newspaper. Dr Farrow is an authority figure whose role is to set the seal of corroboration on the story; if anyone should be able to decide whether the peace women have a case, it must be him - an expert in epidemiology - surely? And then, of course, there is the implied Press corroboration: The Guardian would not print the thing if there wasn't some kind of evidence to support it, would they? (Why, I can hear a few of you sniggering out there!).

But what are the bones of the story? A number of women are said to be suffering from headaches, dizziness, lapses of concentration and memory: "symptoms which are consistent with the known neurophysical effects of electromagnetic waves." How do we know that those symptoms are consistent with the neurophysical effects of EM? Mainly because the writer just told us so, but most people will have heard something along those lines - that radiation causes certain effects including, perhaps, just those listed; and a few will retain vague memories of the defective ovens scare or maybe the U.S. Embassy Microwave Blitz. It thus seems more or less a credible story so far

Just when the tale seems to flag a little, in come another credibility-enforcer. Apparently "academic research into similar claims" to those of the Greenham Common women is "being conducted in Canada." This may tell readers that Mr Parry's report is all the more reliable since (by inference) the EM effects it deals with are not unique, nor are the claims concerning them. If the Canadian academics (more authority figures!) are taking these allegations seriously, that we may depend upon it that the allegations are worth taking seriously. After all, academics don't do things for fun and they wouldn't conduct research if there wasn't anything to conduct research into. Unfortunately of not, this reference to "similar claims"

Peace women fear electronic zapping at base

By Gareth Parry

Doctors are compiling a report on the condition of a number of Greenham Common peace women who have had symptoms which are consistent with the known neurophysiological effects of electromagnetic waves, or low level radiation.

These symptoms range from headache and dizziness to difficulties of concentration or memory. Fears of electronic "zapping" have led peace women at the camp to keep a record of ill-effects reported by their groups over the past year.

Claims that this has revealed a pattern of illness will be presented by the peacewomen at a media briefing in London today. They will report that at least 40 women present at different points around the nine-mile perimeter of the American cruise missile base have experienced similar symptoms, at the same times.

Dr Stephen Farrow, chairman of the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons said yesterday: "We are now compiling evidence about the claims made by the women. There is obviously a great deal of interest in what they say; it seems feasible, although a lot of it is anecdotal, and we're very thin on evidence."

Dr Farrow, who is senior lecturer in epidemiology at the University College of Wales Medical College said that academic research into similar claims was being conducted in Canada.

The symptoms could be related to the powerful and

secret electronic microwave satellite communications apparatus used at the missile base. If this is so, it would indicate unhealthy emissions are being radiated into the Berkshire countryside.

On the other hand the American military have an intruder detection system called BISS, Base Installation Security System which operates on a sufficiently high frequency to bounce radar waves off a human body moving in the vicinity of a perimeter fence.

A similar British system has been developed and has been acquired by the Ministry of Defence since April, 1984. Security at Greenham is a British responsibility but it is not known whether equipment of this type has been installed. Some Greenham women believe that the symptoms are the result of an attempt to drive them away from their protest siege of the missile base.

Other peace women claim they are being assaulted by what the military calls electronic warfare, as part of a "field trial."

The Greenham women claim that meter tests outside the camp, taken at times when women have experienced the symptoms, have shown a marked increase in background microwave signal levels. They also say the symptoms are more pronounced when cruise missile convoys leave the camp.

The Ministry of Defence denies that any form of electronic signals are being used on the women.

and Canada means something totally different to a folklorist - for example, that the same set of rumoured urban legends has been recorded on the opposite side of the Atlantic, too.

People are supposed to place respectful trust in academics who are doing research - well, some of the time. They are also encouraged to respond in the same way to technology - well, some of the time - because both are prone to infallibility. The alleged radiation poisoning receives a second injection of credibility when we read that it has been measured instrumentally by "meter tests." Just as well, too, because otherwise some meanie might pretend that all those symptoms were purely subjective, or at the very least that the purported cause of them was. The introduction of handy hardware, though, puts this out of the running. The Women can back their claims by pointing to a machine which "proves" they were not imagining it at all.

I would like to know what kind of meters they used - like those employed to take readings during the Dragon Project's research at megalithic sites, perhaps? I would also like to know how reliable these meters are held to be by electronics experts, the base or background microwave signals from which the "marked increase" referred to in the text was gauged and also what that increase amounted to. Notwithstanding, I can live without all that data; yet it appears to me virtually impossible for anyone to show a direct causal relationship between the alleged symptoms and the reported meter readings. Come to that, the co-ordination of the symptoms with the measurement process sounds a little too facile. ("Hey, guys, I feel a headache coming on. Who's got that EM meter?").

And I shouldn't be too surprised if some sceptical soul dealt heavily with those symptoms "consistent with the known neurophysical effects of electromagnetic waves." "Consistent with" isn't the same as "caused by"; again, it would be very hard to prove the symptoms were the result of EM and nothing else, especially as the ones described in Mr Parry's article might be attributed to anyone from a whole medical dictionary of ailments. A really vicious sceptic might go further and blame them on nutritional deficiency, hysteria or the kind of paranoia which lead schizophrenics to suspect their next-door neighbours of blasting them through the adjoining house wall with a secret death-ray. There is no evidence that I know of to prove the Peace Women are nutritionally deficient, hysterical or schizophrenic, but that won't stop some people. However, here is the story's first urban legend failsafe. Radiation is harmful and since its effects mimic the symptoms reported by the women are not caused by other illnesses, physical and/or mental. But it is just as impossible to prove that they are not caused by radiation. Or indeed by telepathically-transmitted black magic...or the influence of Halley's Comet. Since you can't disprove it, the thing may just be true.

Overall, the story observes the best contemporary legend convention of utilising popular belief on some topic to support a more imaginative extension. The graduation from accepted fact (and it matters nothing that in scientific terms that "fact" is a fallacy or half-truth) to hypothetical implications compares with H.G. Wells' definition of how he came to write novels like "The War of the Worlds." Start with a generally unchallenged belief; develop it imaginatively by application of the "What would happen if..." formula. It worked excellently for him in his early days and it still works for urban legends. Someone says there are canals on Mars...canals mean that Mars is inhabited...what would happen if the Martians landed in Dorking? Microwave ovens cook meat in spectacularly swift and thorough fashion...what would happen if a live dog was trapped in one? Radiation is potentially harmful...it could be used by the military...it was used for something like that by the Russians (the U.S. Embassy caper)...what would happen if at Greenham Common...?

In practice, though, the article's framework isn't quite so simple because it does not depend on exploitation of one motif, but gets the most out of two. The women's symptoms could relate to "the powerful and secret electronic microwave satellite communications used at the missile base. If this is so it would indicate unhealthy emissions are being radiated into the Berkshire countryside." Notice the emotive words ("powerful and secret"... "unhealthy emissions"). This is patently the kind of microwave/satellite earth station/pollution motif which I mentioned at the start of the

section -- accidental but reprehensible. However, the second motif takes a different line of attack. The source of the trouble may be deliberate, more frighteningly militaristic venture; the ominously-acronymic BISS might be bouncing radar off human targets in a nefarious field test of the latest mind/body-control technology! If so this bodes no good for the Greenham Commoners, but none for us either, since the fiends who are giving it a dry run may soon train the thing on us. This is fantastic enough, so corroboration must be introduced at this point. Readers are told that such horror-machines truly exist in a sentence announcing that the Ministry of Defence has purchased such a system. It may not be at Greenham Common, but can we accept the MoD's assurance that no form of electronic signal is being used on the women? Of course not. They are bound to deny it, just as C&E is bound to deny its dogs are junkies - the Conspiracy of Silence failsafe again.

So what guarantee is there that the story is genuine fact and not foaflore? Assuming that the women are affected as stated, there is (according to Dr Farrow, who clearly gives substance to the account - which is what an authority figure is meant to do) there is "a great deal of interest in what they say; it seems feasible." But on the other hand he admits that a lot of it is anecdotal and we're very thin on evidence." A cynic would take that as meaning there isn't any evidence at all - as indeed might an urban legend collector. Meanwhile we await the promised report from the doctors (first sentence para. 1) with interest. Maybe by the time this issue of "Folklore Frontiers" comes out you'll know better than I do.

For the moment it is too early to say that the Zapped Women of Greenham Common are definitely the stars of a new urban legend. I have given reasons for suspecting that they might be - I hope without giving offence to the supporters of the Peace Movement and not in any dogmatic spirit because my reasons may be wholly wrong. In some ways, the idea of this news item being folklore is infinitely preferable to the alternatives: either that satellite earth stations are poisoning the atmosphere or that the military has dreamed up another weapon to end all weapons. Should it prove to be an urban legend, the story would surely reveal once again how contemporary fears, suspicions and even the beliefs of certain select groups (here the Greenham Common Women) can find a expression by adapting a piece of folklore to its own needs.

But let's stick to the rules. An incredulity-stretching or otherwise dubious tale can only be classed as an urban legend if it is found in quantity and with variant form across a significant number of locations, preferably including some from other countries. I have already said that the radiation-pollution/satellite earth station motif appears to fulfill that criterion, but far more examples are needed to upgrade it to a "genuine" urban belief take. This applies just as strongly to the Canine Junkies.

As the editor of a defunct boys' paper was wont to say: Ove To You, Readers!

- Notes: 1, Jan Harold Brunvand: The Vanishing Hitchhiker..., Pan ed., 1983, p132.
See also definition under "Glossary."
2, Jan Harold Brunvand: The Choking Doberman. J W Norton, 1984, pp 169-186.
3, Brunvand, The Vanishing Hitchhiker..., pp56-58.
4, Guy Lyon Playfair: "Power Struggle at Fishpond," The Unexplained (No. 110), pp2194-2197.
5, Walter Bowart: Operation Mind Control. Fontana, 1978, pp266-268.

A DUSTY ANSWER

By **FRANK ALLAN**

MOST national dailies give enormous prominence to sensational Cold War stories; they fail to print official refutation; and the Press Council then disallows complaints.

Here is a case in point, on which the Council's decision reached me a few days ago.

"RUSSIANS USE SPY DUST ON ENVOYS . . . American diplomats in Moscow have been exposed to a cancer-causing spy dust which the KGB used to check their movements, the US revealed last night."

That was the splash in the *Daily Mail* on August 22 last: The *Daily Telegraph* not only led with the story; it covered most of two pages.

The *Daily Express* (page 1) read "Reagan raps Russia over spy spray cancer scare."

The *Sun*, too ran this doubtful piece of propaganda on page 1 with the head "KGB 'Spy Spray' Row." (They did, however, report the next day that the Russians dismissed the claim).

The *Daily Mirror* used the story more briefly (on page 2) headed "Peril of Spy Tracer."

The *Daily Mail* continued: "The invisible dust was sprayed on seats, steering wheels, door frames and any object the diplomats were likely to touch.

"The most commonly used of these chemical tracking agents," it reported, "is Nitro Phenyl Pentadien, or NPPD. It is described as a mutagen, which causes changes in cell structure but can also cause cancer."

Six weeks later the *Telegraph*, to its credit, did print (in three inches s/c on page 2) a report headed "British Cars Free of KGB 'Spydust'."

Foreign Office officials in Moscow reported after an enquiry that there was no sign of the chemical tracking agent. The Americans, too, said the *Telegraph*, declared they had no evidence.

The other dailies no doubt had seen the *Telegraph* refutation (which came from a Foreign Office briefing). Not one of them printed it.

U.S. row over Moscow embassy

KGB 'SPRAY'
PROTEST

Diplomats' cars treated
with spy chemical

Just at a time when the Geneva peace talks were taking place the Great British Public were themselves covered with a further layer of poisonous propaganda dust aimed at reinforcing anti-Soviet prejudice. It helped to condition the minds of millions to accept military preparations.

Yet the letter received from the Press Council gives as its only "reason" for disallowing my charge that "complaints of sufficient substance to warrant adjudication had not

**RUSSIANS
USE SPY
DUST ON ENVOYS**

been established." What further substance did they want!

I fully support the NUJ decision to withdraw from the Press Council. It is overloaded with the proprietors' men; it has no power to require publication of its decision in the offending papers; and it is too slow, so that by the time the Council reports the damage has been done. (It took them seven months in my case before they sent a decision).

I first heard the story on the BBC news. But as the Press Council doesn't handle complaints about broadcasts I didn't take it up with the Council. Instead I wrote direct to the BBC. The reply I received says:

"The reason for the delay is that we have done some exhaustive checking. I feel sure that somewhere in our output we carried something of a denial, but I have to confess that I can find no trace of it in our news summaries and bulletins of the 16 and 17 October." (That was the date of the *Telegraph* refutation).

"We have also looked at the index of our News Information Bureau and drawn a blank."

We might have expected higher standards from the Beeb.

'Ere, Mate, You Goin' To Venus?
By ANDY ROBERTS

The Phantom Hitch-Hiker (PHH) tale is well known to all students of folklore, whether it be traditional or contemporary. Ever since that fateful day in the sixteenth century (or before!), when the first PHH thumbed a lift on a passing mail coach, the PHH has followed man as he has progressed through various forms of transport. PHH stories are a common enough tale in relation to cars and motor cycles, and have even according to a recent article⁽¹⁾, been identified on public transport. In addition to this, the tale is found in a somewhat differing form in connection with other modes of travel, such as 'planes and ocean liners, where it crops up as "the disappearing passenger". Recently I came across an article in an old copy of *FSK*⁽²⁾ which may be a new variant of the PHH and one which takes the motif into the UFO era. The story is as follows.

In the early hours of August 27, 1972, an Argentinian mechanic named Eduardo Dedeu was returning to his home by car when he noticed a man hitching a lift (in some versions Dedeu is approached whilst fixing the car radio aerial). He was dressed in a coat with the collar turned up, and a cap covering his head, making it extremely difficult for Dedeu to see his face. Dedeu stopped and the man got in but when Dedeu asked his destination, the man, whose face Dedeu later described as "elongated", answered unintelligibly (other versions state that the noise of the radio prevented Dedeu understanding what the hitch-hiker was saying). Further conversation met with the same response and they travelled in silence until the 710km mark, when suddenly the car lights went out and Dedeu had to stop. As he stopped Dedeu noticed what he thought at first was a bus overturned on the road, with a large blue light in the centre and two small white lights at the side.

Dedeu got out of the car and was immediately blinded by an intense flash of white light and at the same moment felt intense heat which made him shelter behind the car door. All this took place in a few seconds, and when he was able to look up, he could see the object was now moving away to the left, and had a green light on the underside and white lights in the windows. Getting back into the car he found the mysterious hitch hiker had vanished, leaving the door open and the door handle on the floor as the only indication that he had ever been there. The car lights came back on at the same moment, allowing Dedeu, who was somewhat shaken, to drive to the next town where he reported his experience to the Police, who interviewed him for four hours in the presence of a Doctor. His account was taken to be serious and coherent by the Police, and the Doctor could find nothing wrong with him.

This story would appear to be a beautiful, if bizarre, synthesis of PHH and UFO tale, creating both a new PHH and UFO variant. To begin with we have a driver, alone on a road in the early hours offering a lift to a hitch-hiker, which is, with accepted variations, the basis of all PHH tales. The journey continues, until the car lights go out, a classic UFO vehicle interference symptom, followed by the driver actually encountering a "UFO" in the road, together with physiological effects, a CEI in fact. From there the story returns to the classic PHH mould with the passenger having vanished, the only mark of his passing being the door handle on the floor of the car. Of course the Police, and in this case, the medical profession, are involved, adding validity to what would otherwise be a totally unbelievable story.

The implication is, of course, that the hitch-hiker was an alien returning, via the UFO to who knows where, but whatever the implication, this story joins the ranks of the PHH tale and adds to it a variant which, to my knowledge, has not (yet) been repeated.

The differences between the PHH part of Dedeu's tale and the more traditional PHH story are fairly obvious; the hitch hiker was a man as opposed to a young girl (male PHH's do occur though), the hitch hiker vanished from the vehicle (presumably) after it had stopped (the hitch hiker usually vanishes whilst the car is in motion), and there is no "identification", either through a verifiable address or item of clothing found at a grave although the identification may not be necessary as it is "obvious" that the UFO took the hitch hiker and therefore that he was an alien as opposed to the more usual PHH who is a ghost.

The majority of PHH's are portrayed as being dead, coming from, and presumably returning to, the grave. Death is another world and the idea of a PHH going into space as opposed to the grave is intriguing, as how more "otherworldly" can you get

than the idea of aliens, UFOs and space? This to my mind adds fuel to the idea that all entity experiences, whether they be ufonauts, fairies or the PHH, do come from an otherworld—that of the human mind—clothed in the appropriate temporal and cultural garb.

Dedeu's PHH/UFO variant could have been the result of some kind of hallucinatory state brought about by travelling alone, late at night. This has been suggested many times in relation to nocturnal UFO encounters and so it would seem reasonable to apply it in this case. The hallucinatory nature of the event is stressed perhaps by the strangeness of the man's clothes, features and speech and even more so by the UFO interlude. But the facet of the story which suggests some form of hallucination more than any other is the way in which the vanishing of the hitch hiker coincides with the disappearance of the UFO and the car lights coming back on, indicative of a sudden return or 'snap back' to normality.

Dedeu later claimed that he had seen UFOs on previous occasions, thus putting him in the category of a "repeater" witness, who are allegedly susceptible to many forms of paranormal experience, and again this adds weight to the whole encounter, PHH, UFO and all coming from his own mind.

Most of the above is speculation, as would be any theorising as to the reasons why Dedeu saw and experienced what he did over, say an image more suited to the Argentinian psyche. There will be those who read the story and see it as a complete fabrication, although a hoax comprising of the best parts of PHH and UFO lore emanating from Argentina in 1972 is hard to believe, and those who take it at face value, Dedeu actually giving a lift to a real extraterrestrial who is later taken on board a UFO, and we cannot easily discard either theory. I see it as a good example of an entity case comprising both PHH and UFO imagery both of which are common throughout the world, and stemming originally from the mind following some form of stimulus, whether natural or paranormal, thus being participative folklore. Perhaps many more folktales originate from some form of paranormal human experience than the old guard of folklorists give credit for.

Exactly why this PHH variation isn't more widely circulated and re-located in slightly different form isn't clear. Perhaps it is too bizarre to capture people's imagination, UFOs not exactly being a part of everyday life, or perhaps the UFO age is still too young for the tale to have been re-located. Only time will tell.

The line between folklore and paranormal event can be very thin at times but it is on that line where the most interesting and imaginative tales are to be found.

Notes: 1: Magonia, 1986, Article by M.Goss.

2: FSR Vol. 18, No.6, 1972, "The Hitch Hiker From Space", by Jane Thomas. General reference: M.Goss "Evidence for Phantom Hitch Hikers", Aquarian Press, 1982. "Visions, Apparitions, Alien Visitors", Hilary Evans, Aquarian Press, 1984.



WHAT A STATE! Skye artist Tony MacKenzie pictured during his pre-nuptial blacking by so-called friends in Portree. Stripped to his socks and underpants, the victim at one point appealed to the large crowd to lay on more feathers to provide extra insulation against the cold! The woman who was to be his bride, Susan Milne, from Uig, kept a safe distance. (West Highland Free Press, 21/3/86).

THE PSYCHIC QUESTING CONFERENCE. This will be presented by the Centre for Earth Mysteries Studies in London on November 1. Main speakers are Andrew Collins, Graham Phillips, Marion Sunderland and Jenny Randles. Tickets £5. Full details from 75b St Gabriel's Road, London NW2.

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KEY MEN . . . Dave Robinson with his Codcatcher mates Tony Hann, George Birks and Richard Plant. — (M. 4007)

MAIL, HARTLEPOOL, 10/6/86.

Vandals sink anglers' plans for car catch

ANGLER David Robinson and his mates landed a catch with a difference on a bait-digging trip.

by **Sheila Elgey**

Berwick, but by the time they arrived two wheels and the battery had been stolen.

For they hooked an unwanted R registration Chevette estate car from an exasperated O.A.P.

damn thing. I'm sick of it breaking down!"

"We thought about trying to tow it home, but gave up on the idea and just left it for police to sort out," said David.

The group from Horden Cod Catchers Club were heading for Berwick when they spotted an elderly couple trudging along the roadside carrying suitcases.

"We were speechless and thought he must be joking, but they just wandered off and left us with the keys," said David (33), of Ninth Street, Horden.

Today police in Berwick said they are still trying to trace the owners, who are thought to live in Dundee, and the abandoned car could be towed away as a wreck by the local council.

Taking pity on the pair they stopped to give them a lift.

"We weren't sure what to do because this sort of thing doesn't happen every day. We hadn't seen the car, and thought it might be stolen."

"It's a pity we didn't get to it before the vandals because the body was quite sound, and we could have done it up and sold it for a few hundred pounds," said David.

The pensioners said their car had broken down and they were heading for the nearest bus station.

The group of good Samaritans decided to report their "catch" to Berwick police and ask advice.

And he added: "From now on we'll pick up anyone who has had a car breakdown in case the same thing happens again."

And when the cod catchers' van dropped them off at Berwick, the man tossed his car keys across to David and said: "Here, you can have the

"I think the police thought we were crackers at first," said David.

The anglers found the car on their way home from

Man believed woman was 'imprisoned' in power station

A MAN tried to get into Hartlepool's nuclear power station because he thought a woman was being held captive in the reactor room, magistrates heard today.

Michael Brennan, (42), of Warren Road, admitted causing a breach of the peace outside the power plant last night.

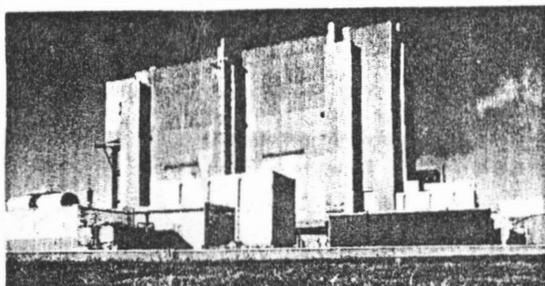
Prosecutor Veronica Wilson told the court the defendant entered the site illegally as a security guard was checking a tanker.

She said when challenged by the guard Brennan told him he was a plumber.

She said the security guard asked the defendant if he had a pass but Brennan continued to walk towards a restricted area of the site.

Miss Wilson told magistrates Brennan then turned round abruptly and left the site where he continued to shout at security guards from the road.

The prosecutor said the se-



HARTLEPOOL POWER STATION

curity guards called the police when the defendant continued shouting and waving his arms.

"One of the guards thought the man was going to have a fit.

"But when a police officer arrived Brennan ran off across Tees Road causing cars to brake and swerve," she said.

Miss Wilson said Brennan had told the officers to keep away because he had "bacteriological blood on his hands".

Brennan, who was not represented, told magistrates he had gone onto the site because he thought a woman

— with whom he had been corresponding for over 22 years — was being held in the station's reactor room against her will.

"I went to the power station with a view to meet a woman I thought was being held in the power station reactor room against her will," Brennan told the court.

The court was told that when Brennan was arrested he had refused to give his name or address to the police.

He agreed to be bound over in the sum of £100 for 12 months.

MAIL, HARTLEPOOL
4/7/86

♥ TELEGRAPH SEX 'HOOLIGAN'

A Chinese pop star, Zhang Xing, 23, who made two fans pregnant nine times has lost an appeal against a three-year jail sentence for "hooliganism." All the pregnancies were aborted.

27/6/86

CLOD-HOPPERS! SOIL SHOWER HITS VILLAGE

Villagers ran for cover yesterday when their homes were "bombed" from 2,000 feet by clods of earth and clouds of straw.

Anglers had to stop fishing at Marpool, near Derby, because the lake was covered in hay—picked up from farm fields by a freak wind.

▲ SUN 16/7/86

Self taught

A 16-year-old student collapsed and gave birth to a baby boy during a sex education lesson at a Nairobi school in Kenya.

▲ MIRROR 12/7/86

Motifations

Comet commentary

Halley's Comet (H.C.) has been and gone. A real damp squib of a cosmic event. As an unidentified American woman was reported to have said after travelling to a Peruvian Inca mountaintop for a grandstand view and putting the telescope to her eye: "That's it? That's all there is? I came 4,000 miles to see this crummy fuzzball?"

It certainly failed to live up to media-fuelled expectations, but being 39 million miles away at its closest, what were we to expect? Nevertheless, the newspapers got some dubious stories out of the wandering supersnowball.

Among many legends associated with H.C. is one that an egg with the tell-tale symbol is produced each time the visitor passes our way. Eggs bearing such a mark were reported all over the country — not surprisingly as Thames Valley Eggs had offered a £10,000 prize for the best. Various newspapers of 18/11/85 had claims and also reported the shell-shocked Holoway (Star) or Holdaway (Mirror, Sun) family found a nine-carat earring in a fried egg. This Jack and the Beanstalk scenario is amusing and a senior lecturer in zoology at University College, Cardiff, Dr Peter Ferns acknowledged the possible reality, concluding the hen could have swallowed the ring while pecking around, or more probably sat on it during a dust-bath and absorbed it into its system! It would be mistaken for an ovum, given a coat of white and laid in the normal way. Talk about the birds and the bees...

I don't know who won the Thames Valley Eggs' prize, but The Star (31/1/86) promoted a similar contest and gave £5,000 to Linda Franklin for finding a comet egg. They managed to stretch the story to two paragraphs. What price fame! More to the point, had not the police anything better to do than escort this treasured egg back to the farm in Withall, Worcs., where it was going on display?

Another superstition is that good wine is produced during cometary years. Grapes are supposedly of a better flavour. But the commonest example of comet belief is their association with the deaths of kings. Virgil accounts for the assassination of Julius Caesar this way and Shakespeare took up theme. Other cases are chronicled elsewhere (Forrest, Bob, "Velikovsky's Sources", private; also Stonehenge Viewpoint, No. 68, 1985). Do we therefore ponder the downfalls of Marcos and Baby Doc as being ordained by H.C.? Certainly Fortean author and researcher Loren Coleman pointed the accusing finger at H.C. and blamed it for sparking a wave of airline crashes — 1985 being the worst-ever such year with 2,000 deaths (Sun, 8/4/86). That's a new one.

If that's hard to swallow, try the idea that H.C. has a consciousness. Information is available of H.C.'s thoughts channeled late last year to one John Pawlick. H.C. boasts of bringing "transformational energies to Planet Earth" and as it is to be expected from such literature, an environmental warning is given and nuclear assurance relayed (The Merrie Magi's Crystal Planetworks, No. 17, 1986).

Patrick Moore seems to give H.C. anthropomorphic powers. "Obviously Halley is knocking out people who have been watching him," he said after slipping on wet grass and breaking his left shoulder blade while stargazing.

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Patrick Moore seems to give H.C. anthropomorphic powers. "Obviously Halley is knocking out people who have been watching him," he said after slipping on wet grass and breaking his left shoulder blade while stargazing. Another H.C. watcher's teeth were so cold he smashed two of them (Mirror, 12/12/85). Moore lives in Selsey, Sussex, where the local public house, The Stargazer, was named to honour its most distinguished patron. Landlady Christine Probert said Moore was very upset when a bolt of lightning smashed through a wall and wrecked a \$5,000 lighting system in the planetarium restaurant (Sun, 22/5/86). H.C. curse again?

Though from Pliny onwards comets have been associated with war and civil unrest, Ptolemy attributed foreign invasion to them and also "diseases and sudden deaths." In modern times the literal case for this has been championed by Profs Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe ("Diseases From Space", 1979, and with Dr John Watkins, "Viruses From Space", 1986). The argument is that checkout staff dealing at close quarters with the public are no more likely to become infected than your average hermit. That viruses are incurred by vertical transmission. That indeeds comets can get up your nose and can bring pestilence and death (also that organic debris from comets could have started life on Earth).

Hence serious, long-lived viruses like smallpox and more recently the AIDS virus HTLV III originated from space and then spread from person to person. If Hoyle is right, AIDS began in a shower of organic material on central Africa ten years ago (Guardian, 30/4/86). Which leads us to...

AIDS deficiencies

For a start off I think the much-publicized notion that AIDS has been passed on to man by the African green monkey is a non-starter. The cometary hypothesis sounds saner and stands up well in company with theories that it has been created by man as a weapon or God as homophoberetribution.

Blaming man first, Harley Street venereologist Dr John Seale suggested the virus could have been released, either deliberately or by accident, causing the current world epidemic.

He stated that Moscow radio broadcasts, heard in countries with U.S. bases, said AIDS was being spread by Americans based abroad. The charge being coupled with allegations that the virus originated in secret experiments carried out by the C.I.A. and the Pentagon, in which humans were injected with animal viruses. He later said it was just as likely, if not more so, that the virus could have been released from a Russian laboratory (Aberdeen Press & Journal, 20/12/85). While elsewhere he said it could be American, Russian, English, Australian or Canadian. Oh, and it was created by a mad boffin experimenting with VISNA, a lethal virus which attacks sheep (Sun, 13/12/85). Suddenly, the green monkey idea does not seem so nuts. And early in December, Warren J. Hammerman, of the American magazine Executive Intelligence Review, tried to convince readers AIDS was a Russian secret weapon (Star, 6/12/85). At that time a Russian source told our New Scientist: "We have no cases of AIDS in the U.S.S.R." They've since owned up a little to having cases.

Conspiracy theory aside, let's bring in religion. Various Jamaican reggae artists have interpreted AIDS as a gay plague warning to mankind. There's King Kong's "AIDS", Colonel Josey Wales' "Want No AIDS" and Peter Metro's "AIDS A Go Round." Wales even blames the problem on womankind (New Musical Express, 25/1/86).

Meanwhile U.K. rocker John Lydon, aka Johnny Rotten, says he won't play dates in London because he is scared he might catch AIDS from fans who spit at him (Mirror, 5/6/86). Jonathan King, failed rock star, reported in his column that among stories going the rounds in the U.S. included the result that sex attackers are no longer beaten up by fellow prisoners as all they do is threaten to spit on their attackers, and Roman Catholics are refusing to drink from Communion chalices (Sun, 13/12/85).

Stories where a simple statement is misheard and leads to curious consequences are well-known to folklorists. Writer Leslie Thomas was supposedly being checked by Queen's Park Rangers' Dr Crane as he was worried about three moles on his chest. "Just age," said Dr Crane. At which a woman squealed alarm and dashed from the room. She had thought the doctor had said: "Just AIDS" (Star, 15/4/86). There has also been much confusion over Terence Higgins, M.P., and the Terrence (two r's) Higgins who was this country's first AIDS victim (Star, 29/4/86).

Similarly, hoax letters are a peripheral folklore interest and five jokers sent out official-looking letters to 50 people saying they were AIDS suspects. Seven of the victims were so alarmed they went to hospital. As for the hoaxers, they were bound over for two years for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace (Mirror, 8/11/85). Another cruel hoaxer was being hunted by private detectives after letters typed on health authority notepaper were sent to homes in Oldham, Greater Manchester, saying blood tests proved "AIDS positive" (Sun, 24/2/86).

The "blood brothers" ritual some children copy from Red Indian films was discouraged (Mirror, 15/1/86); nudists invited to a special "in the raw" theatre show got washable seat covers because of an AIDS scare (Sun, 18/1/86); and the Salvation Army was angered by Kissogram girls mimicking its uniformed women while revealing skimpy bras and pants, and avoiding lip-to-lip contact to avoid AIDS (Sun, 21/2/86). Finally, to end back with showbiz, notoriously gay comic Kenny Everett could joke about being continually being asked if he had AIDS. "It seems there is a permanent rumour to this effect in the gay community in the country" (Star, 2/6/86).



Tears for Fears

CURSE 'EM ALL!

MANY of you reading this article may have bought Crying Boy prints and by now be wondering if it was such a good idea.

Far be it for me to give an art critic's opinion on these prints of various weeping urchins, but I certainly do not like them. Nor do I like the ubiquitous sultry Oriental woman print or David Shepherd's elephants.

Yet it seems Italian artist Graham Bragolin's depictions of pitiful youngsters have become the key factor in a scenario of a house blaze where the fire is blamed on the Crying Boy picture. The print is unharmed and we now have a huge number of media-reported cases where this seemingly happened.

(cont. Page 23)



ON THE ROAD AGAIN. The prodigious Andy Roberts tells me the following tale has been heard many times by a friend of his wife's who owns a pub: "A motor-cycle rider picks up a young girl hitch-hiker at the toll area of the Mersey Tunnel. She gives him her home address and they set off. When he gets to the other end of the tunnel he stops to ask her the directions and she has gone. Worried, he goes to the given address (a few days later in some versions, the same day in others) to be told by a tearful mother that it was her daughter and she died on that day." The tunnel usage reinforces the disappearance as you cannot stop or turn around there, and the girl's death that day, rather than anniversary, is an unusual variation.

Andy also supplies two M62 tales he says he's heard many times: (a) The weather on the Windy Hill stretch of the M62 is so bad that the authorities are going to build a massive canopy over the whole area (ten miles plus); (b) A part of the M62 over the High Pennines is earmarked for use as a nuclear missile launching strip.

He also draws attention to a "Rotherham Triangle" case of a spectre of a young girl blamed for accidents on the A61 at Woolley, between Barnsley and Wakefield. Police and road safety experts were probing the figure which darts out late at night or in the early hours (Express, 17/7/85).

ROTHERHAM TRIANGLE. Sounds like a story fictionally concocted to fit the headline "Magnets attract nut" (Mirror, 12/12/85), when magnet-makers Swift Levick, of Sheffield, checked that its biggest order, signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, came from a mental hospital patient...Third Division Rotherham's goalkeeper was being reported by police to the Football League for alleged obscenities shouted at a woman fan, and so what you may say, but the match was at Brentford, scene of novelist Robert Rankin's spoof Brentford Triangle mysteries (Sun, 27/11/85)...Likeliest place to find modern folklore in the media is Peter Tory's diary and surprise, surprise, he confessed to readers that his home town is Sheffield (Star, 21/2/86)...And when B.B.C.-2's "Dorcy Minutes" looked at how to become a huge 5 girl, guess where the candidate to get abreast of Samantha Fox came from: Rotherham? Yes (Mirror, 27/11/85)...Oh, and in the wake of Chernobyl and all the contaminated grass, sheep, reindeer, nightingales and so on, health experts slapped a ban on anyone eating George Ousley's produce. He and others had "scorched" leaves and soil at Clough Road allotments, Masborough, Rotherham, and blamed it on that recent bogey, acid rain, as plots were downwind of an industrial estate (Mirror, 2/7/83).

UFOs. The notion of UFO retrievals won't go away. Readers of Northern UFO News, No. 127, are regaled by one Doug Labat that "circumstantial evidence, though somewhat anecdotal" is accumulating in the U.S. in support of a group called MJ12, or Majestic 12, supposedly constituted and set up in 1947 by President Truman. It was to investigate a "crashed vehicle of foreign origin" and Labat presumes it to be the Roswell crash debris. A group called GAUS is to publish details, along with an exposé of a secret military testing facility in Nevada for exotic technology called Area 51 or "Dreamland". Andy Roberts has promised an article on the subject for F.R.

A brief paragraph (Star, 25/5/86) states: "Brazilian fighter planes chased UFOs the size of ping-pong balls over three of the country's cities, it was reported yesterday." The ludicrousness does not need further comment.

CHICKEN! The diarist of the Cambridge Town Crier (25/1/86) reported that a Fulbourn lady while preparing the Sunday lunch in advance wrung the chicken's neck and plucked it. "On turning her back for a minute she was horrified to see it mobile once more, traversing the kitchen floor on her return. Filled with remorse she couldn't bring herself to wring its neck again, and having made it comfortable she sat up all night knitting it a romper suit which it wore until more feathers grew and the bird was presentable again." Monitor Nigel Pennick comments that the "localization" no doubt obliquely refers to the fact that Fulbourn has a large mental hospital. And the following can be quoted fully without comment: "When 14 free-range eggs hatched for chicken farmer Jane Gianì at Petaluma, California, she found two of the chicks arrived ready plucked! Deciding to rear them to breed as oven-ready birds, Jane has made the chicks tiny suits of clothes to survive the chilly winter (Sunday Express, 26/1/86).

ROYALTY. When Prince Charles was reading anthropology at Cambridge, so Peter Tory claims, he supposedly interrogated a more worldly companion -- a lady now married to a Hampshire landowner -- on sex, asking: "What exactly is it like?" Realising this was a pass, she told him: "For heaven's sake, go out and find out." Several weeks later the heir to the throne telephoned to comment: "Is that all there is?" She advised him to "keep practising" and by all accounts he did and found the effort worthwhile (Star, 29/1/86)...It seems there's more on his bachelor love life, tutored by Lord Mountbatten (Mirror 29/1/86), in a book, "The Ultimate Family" by John Pearson (Michael Joseph)...and did he and Diana have a tryst in that train up a junction which was so hotly denied by the Royal Press spokesman? Sleeping berth control?... Then there was the scores in the "Daian V Fergie" ratings where Diana got 10 for purity and Fergie got 5. "As the future mother of the heir to the throne, Diana was subjected to rigorous gynaecological tests. No one doubted Earl Spencer when he proudly told the world that his daughter was a virgin" (Star, 31/6/86). Oh, no? Only Private Eye, who named a certain Army officer as having supposedly deflowered the maiden...Then there was the tale related in the Commons of how a member of Royalty was disturbed by "grunts and groans" from a naked couple in the next compartment on a London to King's Lynn train. Speculation failed to confirm it was the Duchess of Kent (Telegraph, 26/2/86). At the same time, on the same route, the Queen's ears were supposedly assaulted by a "ghetto-blower" and her breakfast was taken from kitchen to table along an icy platform at Ely as someone had locked the intervening door and lost the key. Publisher Ian Allan, commenting on whether or not this Alice in Wonderland tale "is true or not is conjectural but probably there was some basis in fact, though it really defies belief that there can have been no fewer than a dozen 'malfunctions' which caused the train to be 40 min. late" (Railway World, April, 1985).



ANIMAL CROSSING. This topic of Porteusian was witnessed by your editor earlier this year. Our albino rabbit, Albie, was kept in a hutch as a baby with a black guinea pig, Squeaker, until we acquired two more cavies and put all three guinea pigs together. When Squeaker died I buried him. When allowed out, the rabbit went directly to where I had buried Squeaker, left his scent all around the spot, stood on his hind legs and wiped his face with both front paws, as if wiping away tears. It was an oddly moving sight. (Pictured are Albie and my daughter Kathryn).

PORTLANA. Fishfall time, with a dead mackerel falling to stop play between Old Cliftonians and Stowe Templars, but was it really as explained dropped by quabbling seagulls after stealing it from sea lions at nearby Bristol Zoo? (Star, 3/6/86)...while when "The Exorcist" was shown at The Regal, Abingdon, Oxon., the screen went blank during Satan's big scene, the soundtrack grew louder and owner Stuart Jarvis bewailed that: "It was so deafening it broke the popcorn machine," gaining him valuable publicity one could cynically pronounce (News of the World, 9/3/86)...



SENILE MURDER. The creator of rodent puppet Roland Rat claimed on radio that the ears were made of contraceptive ends, and they do look so on close examination, but who could use so large a Durex product?...Page 3 icon Samantha Fox says she was joking when she said she wished her boobs were smaller and "I was joking about how they bruised my chin when I went jogging - and somebody took me seriously" (Star, 25/6/86). Well, you're not taken seriously here, pet...Nor the lead story in Peter Tory's diary about Colonel Gaddafi rumouredly being a cocaine-snorting, frock-wearing female impersonator. As Tory concedes himself, such stories circulate to discredit unpopular figures (Star, 25/6/86).

ROCK 'N' RUMOUR.

I'm not naive enough to accept the supposedly musical explanation they give for their name We've Got a Fuzzbox and We're Gonna Use It. Not after other all-girl groups named Fanny, Clout and The Slits. But why is it people like me enjoy this band: "I think it's to do with the (Chernobyl) radiation cloud," Maggie says seriously. "It's affected the whole world's mentality." Two topics I'm researching -- nuclear myths and rock rumour -- from the mouth of a babe (Record Mirror, 17/5/86).

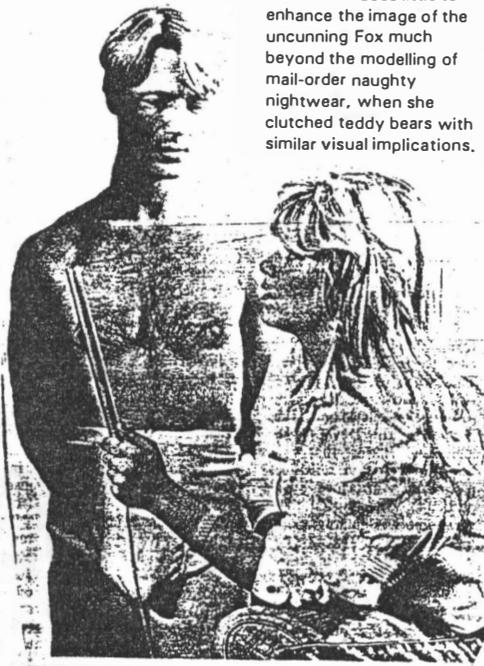


● FUZZBOX (top to bottom): Maggie, Jo, Tina and Vicky.

The Foxy piece below joins the two categories. "SAM OF SUN" seemingly relates to the murderer who called himself "SON OF SAM". He apparently took his name from a whispered few words at the end of a Jimi Hendrix song, ● **SAM OF SUN** "Purple Haze."

I wish short-but-deep Samantha Fox well in her declared new efforts to become a television journalist - 'I would really like a chat show of my own and to interview Joan Collins' - but I fear that the Press Office of LWT, which sent us the adjoining photo of Sam the Sleuth pursuing 'the visible pantyline problem' story for The 6 O'Clock Show, has not helped her on her way. I dare say that the photographer and press officer Simon Duffy will claim that the angle of the shot and microphone, and

subsequent less than subtle symbolism, is purely coincidental, but for the rest of us it does little to enhance the image of the uncunning Fox much beyond the modelling of mail-order naughty nightwear, when she clutched teddy bears with similar visual implications.



Readers' letters

Rail spoof corrigenda

From Mark Valentine

I must lay the ghost of 55020 Nimbus, before it passes altogether from fiction to folklore. The source for the story of this spectral Deltic diesel locomotive, supposedly "spotted" at Hadley Wood stations months after it was scrapped by B.R., is an article "A Trick of the Light?" published in Deltic Deadline, journal of the Deltic Preservation Society. W.B. Herbert, in "Railway Ghosts", repeats the story and acknowledges this source, and you mention the sighting briefly in your review of his book.

As editor of the Deadline at the time the story appeared, I can categorically state that it was a spoof, contributed by a member under a pseudonym in order to jog memories of the departed loco., and underline the foto in store for the other locos in the same class. W.B. Herbert wrote to me seeking permission to use the piece while he was compiling material for his book. While I had no objection on behalf of the society, the copyright obviously belonged to the member who wrote the story, and the matter was referred to him.

Herbert wrote again, very close to the book's publication date, telling me that he would be using the story with the usual acknowledgements. It was only at this stage that I realised that his work concerned supposedly authentic railway ghosts. I replied to Herbert telling him that the piece was a hoax. In response, he said he was surprised to hear this as several other people had reported curious incidents in the general area of Hadley Wood station.

I have never received a copy of Herbert's book, but I know now that he appears to have presented this story as a possibly authentic case despite being clearly told that it was a work of fiction - a "Winter's Tale", if I remember, for our Christmas issue. And although it is no great matter, I am also aware that he did not receive permission to use the story from the original writer, the copyright-holder.

If Herbert has indeed been told by other witnesses about strange happenings at Hadley Wood, I have no doubt they must also stem from the Deltic Deadline story. The magazine had an average circulation of about 1,000 and rail enthusiasts are apt to exchange gossip and tales of this kind at the slightest prompting, so that the piece could quickly have become a FOAF phenomenon.

Timeless wisdom error

From Marion Russell, Arkana.

Thank you for sending a copy of Folklore Frontiers with the Arkana review.

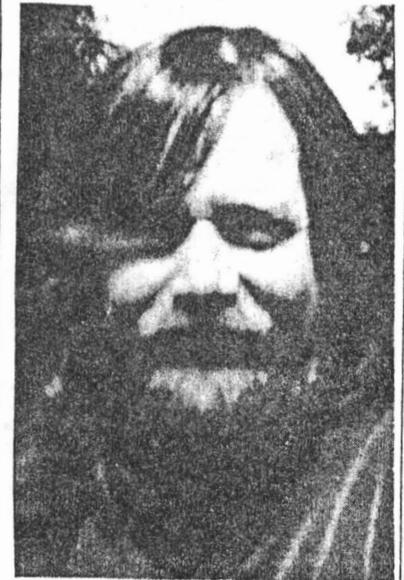
Can I just draw your attention to a fairly major blunder, which is that you seem to be reading the author's birth-date in the Library of Congress data as the date of publication of the book. So 1959 is Arthur Verluise's date of birth, as 1944 is Gregory Szanto's.

This is, of course, more than a little misleading for your readers, many of whom might feel very different about new books on these subjects as opposed to reprints. In fact, "The Marriage of Heaven and Earth" is a 1985 publication, and "The Philosophy of Magic" is 1986.

(cont. p22)

ARCHAEOLOGY IS A DISEASE

MEET THE CURE



DEVEREUX THE LEY HUNTER

But seriously, congratulations Paul on getting THE LEY HUNTER to 100 issues. Folklore Frontiers salutes you! -- Reviews of T.L.H. and other magazines in next issue.

Lookalikes



OLIVE SMELT



ANNE SCARGILL

From Fred King, Bristol

In Folklore Frontiers Nos. 1 and 2 you mention Scargill and the Yorkshire Ripper. Have you noticed the resemblance between Scargill's wife Anne and Ripper victim Olive Smelt, as she now chooses to appear as a photographed in a picture in the Sunday Mirror of May 11 this year? Are they, perhaps, related?

Giant belief

From Michael Behrend

Something I remembered recently. When I was at primary school near Grimsby 30 years ago, the village war memorial was one of those fat grey obelisks. The little kids used to tell each other there was a giant in it. I'm not sure how many actually believed this (I didn't). Is this a modern version of tales about standing stones, and does anyone know of similar items of children's lore?

**The Editor
welcomes
your letters**

BACK ISSUES: Nos. 1 and 2 available 75p, including postage from editorial address. Also back numbers of THE SHAMAN, TERRESTRIAL ZODIACS NEWSLETTER and ANCIENT SKILLS & WISDOM REVIEW.



A new wave of reports appeared late last year — though I recall an earlier concentration — and have continued since. It seems the earliest version of the most recent wave came from Swallownest, South Yorkshire.

May and Ron Hall had laughed off warnings that there was a jinx on their picture of a tot with tears running down his face. Ron's fireman brother Peter told them he and his colleagues had seen the print often in houses where there had been blazes.

He claimed that these popular pictures — an estimated 50,000 have been sold in Britain — always seemed to survive the flames.

The blaze, which started in a chip pan, gutted the kitchen and destroyed front-room furniture. Their home of 27 years was wrecked, but the 2ft. by 1ft. picture didn't even suffer smoke damage. May said: "Peter told us he wouldn't have the picture in his house, and neither would his friends at the fire station."



The next day's Sun newspaper had a flood of calls of similar woe and so it has been going on since.

Trust The Sun also to ally Page 3 and the Crying Boy when beauty Sandra Jane Moore reported that having painted such a friend's Crying Boy with spiky hair for a giggle, the home was flooded out . . . and the picture was undamaged.

The busty blonde in shorts and fireman's helmet was pictured lighting the fire on wasteland in Berkshire for the burning of "thousands" of copies of the pictures sent by concerned readers.

The piece was by freelance Paul Hopper, jokingly promoted "The Sun's Fine Arts Correspondent." As for the paper's editor, Kelvin McKenzie supposedly freaked out when someone put a Crying Boy on his office wall.

Of course, everything has a reverse side. There's a story of Sun reader Bob Cherry, of Milton, Glasgow, finding a Crying Boy propped against a dustbin. He kept it and won £20 on bingo, £4 on the pools and £11 on a fruit machine. Hardly a fortune — or worth a page lead in a national newspaper — but he also said: "When I put the picture inside my car started first time and I haven't had any bother since. I've never been so lucky in my life. And I'm sure it's all down to the boy. It might not sound a lot of money, but three wins in a row is more than coincidence — specially when I've never been lucky before. I liked the picture as soon as I saw it. All the bad luck stories don't bother me."

Strangely enough many of these stories come from the Rotherham/Sheffield area. In that vicinity is East Herringthorpe, where the Godbers' home was destroyed — but not Bragolin's print. It was still hanging in the charred ruins of the council house, while other pictures in the vicinity were shrivelled and burnt beyond recognition.

Then troublesome tot, Craig Hardwick, set fire to his Walkley Road, Sheffield, home and while the upstairs was destroyed a jinx print escaped. The four-year-old had given the Curse of the Crying Boy a helping hand when he stuffed an electric heater with paper and began the blaze which gutted the top floor of his family's home. But the Hardwicks' Crying Boy picture remained untouched as the blaze raged around it. His long-suffering dad, Ron, joked: "I'm throwing out the painting and I think Craig can go with it!"

The curse is alive and well in Yorkshire still and baby Daniel Eccless's rattle brought his father Jed running to a blazing kitchen at West Melton, Rotherham. The home's Crying Boy was unscathed until Jed destroyed it.

Then a few days later in Markfield Drive, Wickersley, Rotherham, Len Myers became a cripple. Four days after hanging a Crying Boy print he fell from the balcony and became condemned to a wheelchair, saying: "It can't be just a coincidence."



Also this year fire chief Alan Wilkinson had tears of laughter when joking colleagues presented him with a Crying Boy print as a retirement gift. A smouldering cigarette had even been glued to the boy's mouth as a finishing touch. Wilkinson was retiring from — yes, you've guessed it, Rotherham fire station — and he claims he was the first to discover the curse of the dreaded pictures.

I have cuttings from all over the country. For instance a superstitious Falmouth, Cornwall, couple were taking no chances with two examples of Crying Children they had planned to hang on their lounge wall. The West Briton newspaper showed them ready to dump them on the huge Guy Fawkes' Night bonfire at the nearby beacon.

Yet a Telford, Shropshire, family survived a blaze, as did the urchin Crying Boy picture which was a gift from their children. Ironically husband Fred was an electrician and former fireman. Mr Trower said he was open-minded on the subject but liked the picture and did not want to get rid of it.

So far as I know there has not been a real investigation into the riddle. Perhaps this journalistically fortunate, so the curse/jinx stories can continue to fill column inches.

The much-maligned Sun at least has asked a couple of "experts" their opinions on the mystery.

On lack of ignition, London City University chemist Dr Peter Baldry confessed bafflement, adding: "I don't know why they have survived these house fires."

Well, shouldn't some professional find out? And on the curse, British Folk-Lore Society secretary Roy Vickery suggested the original artist might have mistreated the child model in some way, adding: "All these fires could be the child's curse, his way of getting revenge."

Yet aren't the portraits of different "urchins"? Anyway, I don't particularly like any of them. It is nothing to do with taste. They just don't appeal to me.

CIRCLES OF SILENCE by DON ROBINS. Souvenir Press, 1985; 144 pp; diagrams and photos (inc colour); £14-95.

The mysterious stone circles dotted about Britain's moors remain as enigmatic as ever. Despite the most modern hi-tech equipment used to monitor curious emissions, they defy scientific analysis.

Many years ago my wife received an electric shock from a stone at Hart, Co. Durham, while it presented a tingling feeling in the hands of a friend and myself. From ancient folklore traditions of perambulating, drinking, prophesying and whatever megaliths, a new enigma of stones as energy centres was becoming more powerful.

With this background a group of researchers formed the Dragon Project, with the aim of testing the stone energy thesis. Paul Devereux, John Steele and Don Robins founded the project, with Robins having oversight of the physical, scientific monitoring aspects to begin with.

Many anomalous readings were found using a "bat detector" (wide-range ultrasonic receiver) at the Rollright Stones. Robins describes this early ultrasound fieldwork and geiger research. Those specially interested in the earth mysteries will have seen this research written up in many magazines, not least "New Scientist."

Where the value in this book lies therefore is the context into which this raw material is placed, explaining as a professional materials chemist why we need not rely on mysticism and the occult to formulate theories about stone energy. It has a reliable, justifiable and real scientific base. Also why leys and so on are not fevered fraudulence.

This is a scientist's story, told in clear layman's language. He puts over the excitement of discovery in a manner uncommon among his breed. It is controversial material, but then if it were not, then there would be no excitement. Anyway, for science to have relevance, it must by definition break new ground and shift paradigm around like building bricks.

It will be interesting to see what, if anything, other scientists E.M. critics or mystics, find to argue with Robins' thesis.

THE COLDRUM LEY: CHANCE OR DESIGN? By Bob Forrest and Michael Behrend. Booklet; 43pp; £1-50 (inc p&p); from 53 Bannerman Avenue, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 2DR.

Are leys myths of things seen on the ground? B.B.C.-2's "The Strange Affair of . . ." programme on leys was an abysmal "set-up." Those of the E.M. fraternity will have seen Paul Devereux's condemnation of the programme in "The Ley Hunter" and may have received a circular sent out by editor Devereux regarding the programme producer's seeming duplicity.

Book reviews

So this the book of the TV programme. No lavish affair as would grace an Attenborough series, but a hard, cold, statistical reference point regarding one very lacklustre half-hour. The introduction points out that as long ago as 1979 Forrest had worked out that despite its shortness, the Coldrum Ley was statistically probably not significant. It had not been Devereux's first choice, but had been chosen because it was close to London and ably illustrated a number of ley concepts. Consequently the drubbing it got for lack of statistical significance was unfair. If later the fact the pre-Reformation churches on the line being Saxon is seen as significant, it could be a whole new ball game.

As it is, ley hunters now have an upgraded — though not new — statistical technique from F&B. This the booklet explains and the statistical evaluation of leys, though boring to many enthusiasts, is a prerequisite to the subject, moving from archaeological apocrypha and mythology into the realm of acceptance and scientific paradigm. The booklet may surprise many ley hunters as to how they could encounter the intrusion of chance regarding an alignment they thought was a stone-bonker certain ley. Keeps your feet on the ground indeed. Also they give an appendix of how they sorted out pre and post-Reformation churches; the status of which can probably for the remainder of the country be checked through the Pevsner archaeological guides.

Forget that deplorable programme. As soon as I saw Bob Symes on the horse — a la Alfred Watkins vision myth — I knew we were in for a case of putting the Bootle in. (Bootle being producer.) Statisticians aren't much fun either, but at least they state their position clearly and fairly in this booklet. Most people now have at least a vague idea of what leys are. This booklet will help put them on the map of authenticity if used correctly.

ANCIENT MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN by JANET BORD and COLIN BORD. 288pp; 22 colour & 150 b&w photos; 1986; Grafton Books; £14-95.

Those who will benefit most from this book are newcomers to earth mysteries study. In the early Seventies the couple's "Mysterious Britain" was a useful introduction to the subject and undoubtedly helped popularize the many topics under the umbrella of modern research. Now with greater awareness and a better general understanding of what leys, terrestrial zodiacs and legends repre-

The subject matter is wide-ranging and covers such prehistoric monuments as stone circles, standing stones, dolmens, hillforts, fogous and rock art; later landscape engineering and crosses; subterranean and the Romans; hill figures; King Arthur; dragonlore; mazes and holy wells; legends of living stones, the Devil and giants; customs and traditions; leys and earth energy; and modern mysteries such as UFOs, lake monsters and mystery big cats. Each subject is covered concisely before a series of each as places worth visiting are given with site description and exact location.

This is all well and good and informative as far as it goes. Though the book fulfils its obvious purpose, the reader who has passed the novice stage will not learn a great deal that is new.

Much of the information is, in fact, contained in their other books on history and Forteanism. In fact, it adds up to a sort of condensing of their past 15 years' output.

However, it is attractively presented and hopefully will add to the growing number of people drawn to the ancient mysteries.

A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO CELTIC BRITAIN by Dr ANNE ROSS. 128pp; 100+ b&w photos; 1986; Routledge & Kegan Paul; £9-95.

The Celts were a rum lot. They were warriors with a penchant for beheading their victims and retaining the heads as trophies yet revered and feared the gods. They bred horses, were skilled potters and developed a beautiful art style. They traded widely, even as far as China. Wives held high status and children were reared, rather than exposed as in the classical world, yet they performed infant sacrifice. And by all accounts their feasting makes Oliver Reed seem reclusive and monkish.

Theirs were turbulent times, yet their organized tribal society allowed for complex laws, languages, religious concepts and practices with an extraordinary artistic achievement. Even when the Romans arrived in Britain, the Celtic presence remained unnervingly threatening and unreliable.

Dr Ross, regarded as the foremost Celtic scholar in Britain, has produced a gazetteer along the lines of the Bords' books, interspersing essays on aspects of the Celtic civilization among 124 sites listed alphabetically.

It is an excellent and detailed work and Michael Cyprien's photographs are evocative.

On a personal level, I was interested to see if she would include Hexham, Northumberland. Here in Rede Avenue were found stone heads which Dr Ross pronounced to be 1,800 years old votive objects. Then Desmond Craigie claimed he had made them 18 years previously. The Scots boffin versus bluff Geordie confrontation made good media interest and I have written a book on the subject, "Tales of the Hexham Heads" (copies still available at 75p — small denomination stamps acceptable — inc p&p).

Nevertheless, a valuable asset for those interested in a troubled period of our history.

SKULLS, CATS AND WITCH BOTTLES by NIGEL PENNICK. 28pp; illos; from author c/o 25 Partridge Drive, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EN; £1-10 inc p&p.

Last year the carved head of a ram bearing the face of the Devil was discovered by workmen behind an old fireplace in the Three Nuns Inn, Mirfield, West Yorkshire. Brewery bosses decided it would be more appropriate for it to be at another of their pubs, The Ram, and took it away. During the next three months spooky happenings went on. Bar pumps turned themselves on, wasting gallons of beer, and kitchen equipment would cut out and switch back on. Then landlord Richard Copeland felt an icy hand on his shoulder ... but no one was there. He was told of the pub's black magic links and "I was informed of a tradition that anything found within the walls should be returned there to keep the spirits happy." Consequently the ram's head was returned and the atmosphere improved (News of the World, 27/10/85; Mirror, 28/10/85).

Then appeared a story about John Lennon's former wife Cynthia finding a mummified jackdaw behind an old fireplace at her home in Penrith, Cumbria, perfectly preserved in 1956 newspapers. The tale then goes off at a tangent, suggesting the assassinated rocker was communicating it as an afterlife sign (News of the World, 1/6/86).

Such foundation sacrifice stories appear occasionally to remind us of the ancient practice of placing objects, be they animate or inanimate, as magical protection for buildings. Such acts of putting dead animals or witch bottles and acoustic jars under or in the fabric of buildings is here analysed, along with an impressive collection of photographs. It is a little-researched area and this book forms a valuable sourcebook for folklorists and practising geomants.

DADDY WITCH AND OLD MOTHER REDCAP by NIGEL PENNICK. 50p, inc p&p, cheques and P.O.s to be made out to "Practical Geomancy", 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD.

Defender of the Old Faith Pennick here puts survivals of the old craft under Victorian Christendom into a perspective of a flourishing pagan culture in rural England up to its demise after World War I. He notes how this culture was practical and had an "underground" nature as it was neither written about or its practitioners were particularly literate themselves. These "cunning" men and women, witches and wizards, were working-class countryside people who only perhaps met one another at fairs. I wonder, however, whether Pennick simplifies this, and that rather than being isolated native shamanic figures they formed more organized covens, perhaps based on geomantic configurations such as terrestrial zodiacs, and that there was a nationwide network. Also that such exists today and was not expunged by either world war or the urbanization by mobility of rural England.

As for the 1980s, the tale of magic involved with breadmaking has a modern equivalent in North Sea gas being blamed for a reduction in quality of Yorkshire puddings. Similarly tales of cunning persons miraculously getting recalcitrant horses on the move again has a modern equivalent in vehicle stoppage incidents ascribed to flying saucers.

A historical thesis but one which should encourage more thought for a wider religious basis for the future. These are the indigenous practises of our island.

THE NIGHTMARES OF DREAM TOPPING by MERRILY HARPUR. Arrow, 1986; pbk; £2-50.

This is the book which has made me laugh most this year. This cartoon series from Punch relates the ups and downs of a family with a week-end country cottage. Apart from David and Druscilla Nightmare, there's their children Hal, Isolde and the prococious Grinling, along with dog Kierkegaard and cat Sea View, plus another homo urbanicus couple and an "Emmerdale Farm" style set of locals. The drawings are a delight and the scripts witty.

There are some hilarious mixes of old and new supposed folklore, from waxing moon horticulture to autoculture ("never change your oil at the new moon" and "never buy a new Range Rover before April 5th"); a solar heating salesman hiding in the loft (commonly Pakistanis in truly urban tales); custom of apprentice boys rolling an old car battery down a hill to chuck it in a pond; romany caravan as "UFO"; beating the bounds and attempt to sing the vicar to death and also his attempt to Christianize local paganism; plus dowsing for metal detector users, Excalibur-like machete wielded from ye old wishyng welle, mystery alien animal and Devil's landscape engineering. David not only goes along with telling the bees of births, marriages and deaths, but gives them a Stock Exchange bulletin. Yet he deplores ley lines (sic) as "the slime of superstition", only to get his come-uppance.

An inexpensive cornucopia of gentle fun at folklore's expense.

MOTHERS BEWARE MOTHERS by JANET ROBERTS. Husband Tony introduces this Anti-Feminist Papers No. 2 booklet subtitled "Being a Brief Account of False Feminism and the Monstrous Betrayal by their Earliest and Most Traitorous Companions." 28pp; illos; Zodiac House; Gondolin, Westhay, near Glastonbury, Somerset; price ?

By turns this booklet both annoyed me in many of its generalizations and at other times I found myself nodding my head in sage agreement. Mother-in-law jokes are not funny when you experience them in real life, which is why they are so powerful. Favouritism is both disagreeable and common, but surely fathers are equally guilty. As a hag versus maiden treatise, it makes many telling points, though I doubt if anyone will agree entirely with Mrs Roberts.

SOME HAIRY MONSTER by PAUL LESTER. 24pp; 1985; 50p from author at Flat 4, 34 Summerfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B160ER.

This slim pamphlet looks at some hairy, ape-like creatures which challenge scientific categorization and acceptability. The yeti and Bigfoot are well enough known, but Lester also tackles Loys Ape and the unashamedly fictional King Kong and Swift's yahoos. Lester gives brief accounts of the evidence for his monsters and cites possible explanations for the sightings. He tackles the mythic realm head on, and in the case of the Abominable Snowman remarks on its emergence in the Fifties, when publicity was given to the conquest of Everest and the Cold War. It was like a peaceable kind of cold war warrior and he notes the lack of genitalia mentioned in reports, tongue-in-cheek suggesting "it is almost as if the high-pitched whistling call that has been attributed to the Snowman might be its lonesome cry of castration." Discussing Bigfoot, Lester draws attention to the fact it has been suggested as a descendant of extraterrestrial colonists who, unable to return, have languished as fugitives undergoing species deterioration. King Kong is treated symbolically: racist undercurrent and ideas of bestiality, miscegenation and excessive sexuality actually absent in gorilla behaviour. As for Loys Ape, one is vaguely amused to learn that the only two encountered resorted to defecating and flinging the resulting excrement at the humans who confronted them, and in opposition to other hairies, they proved aggressive and the female had an exceptionally large clitoris.

LOST LANDS by NIGEL PENNICK. 40pp; illos.; from the author at 25 Partridge Drive, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EN; £1-60 inc p&p.

LOST LYONESSE by BECKLES WILSON. 32pp; illos.; from AdCo Associates, 2 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 1NN; £1-50 inc. p&p.

One of Hartlepool's oddities is the fact that it has a submerged forest on the beach where prehistoric artifacts have been found, yet has an old light-house a mile inland, now high and dry in Vulcan's scrap metal yard. Pennick has found other strange facts like these and revealed them in his drastically shortened version of a larger manuscript. He argues that major changes in the coastal geography of the British Isles have occurred and their significance to history and archaeology have yet to be recognised. He details the various ways in which inundation occurs; relates bell-drowning ritual lore and other legends and traditions; storm surges; depredations to Wales, the Wirral, Merseyside, Lancashire, Scotland, Holderness, East Anglia, Kent and the South Coast. There's a paragraph on the Hartlepool seaside resort of Seaton Carew where I live.

Pennick relates in some detail what is perhaps the most famous and extensive of the lost lands of Britain — Lyonesse. When the oil tanker Torrey Canyon ran aground on the Seven Stones reef off Land's End in 1967, it was said that it hit the remains of this drowned Cornish province.

A delightful little Pocket Pals book on blue card is "Lost Lyonesse: Evidence, Records and Traditions of England's Atlantis," Originally published in 1902, this edition is introduced by Cornishman antiquarian John Michell, who notes that "it appears that the district and the isles of Scilly are but tiny relics of a once much greater kingdom, Lyonesse, the land of an ancient civilisation whose destruction by the elements may well have contributed to the legend of Atlantis."

Fascinating archive material for those interested in drowned lands.

STONEHENGE, ITS HISTORY, MEANING, FESTIVAL, UNLAWFUL MANAGEMENT, POLICE RIOT '85 & FUTURE by JOHN MICHELL. Radical Traditionalist Papers, No. 3, 1986; 32pp; £2 from 2 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 1NN.

New updated second edition of book reviewed in F.F., No. 1. I will not go over old ground but note here that again this year the authorities acted imperiously against the Peace Convoy and despite some idle-sods-on-the-dole commentary they won a fair degree of sympathy. If the public had not been aware of a creeping totalitarianism, this one issue made it sufficiently plain. As Michell reinforces here: "The violent suppression of the Stonehenge festival is an ominous symptom of fascist tendencies in the present political order." However, he is sufficiently optimistic to predict: One day Stonehenge will be appreciated once more for what it really stands for, and that understanding will cause a renaissance in western culture and the institution of harmony among all nations."
