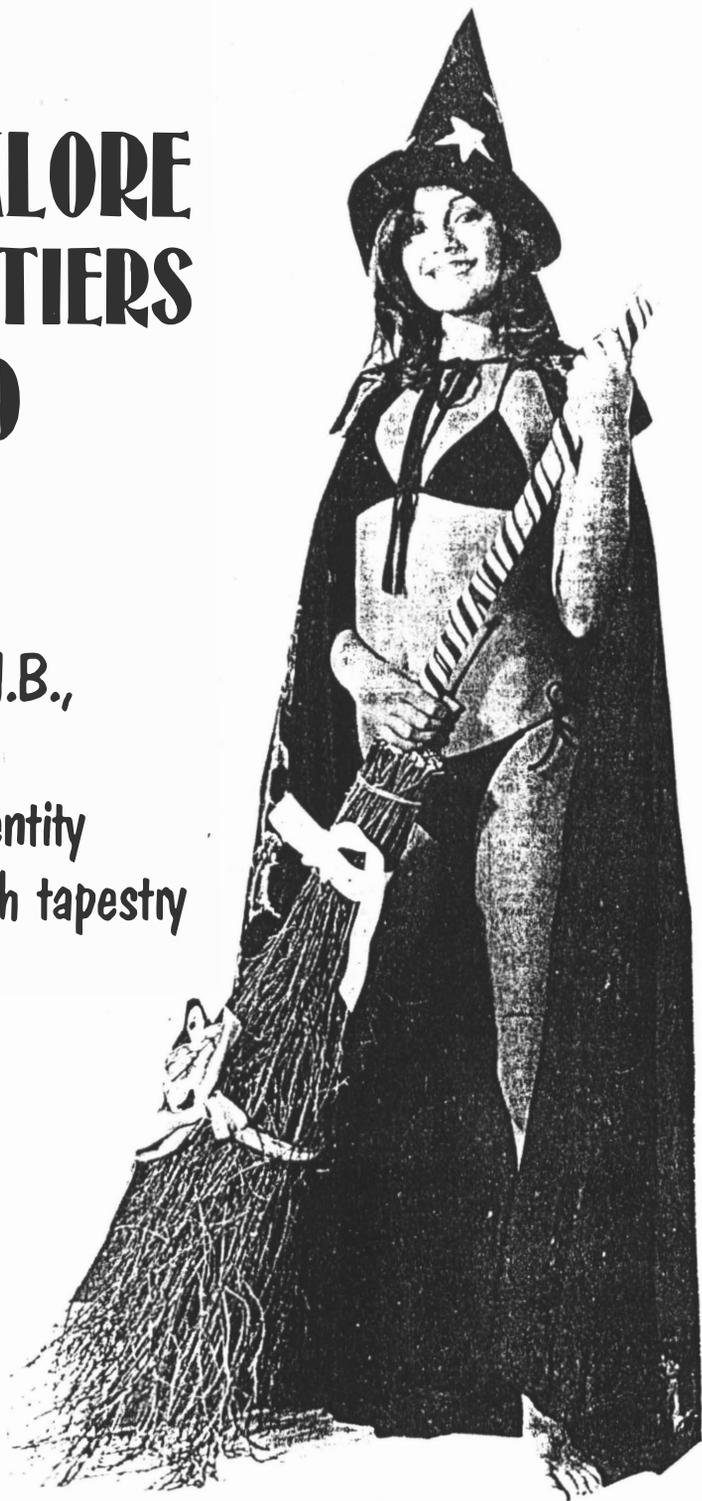


FOLKLORE FRONTIERS No. 9

Hi-tech, M.I.B.,
contactees,
mistaken identity
and life's rich tapestry



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FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent non-profit making magazine devoted to folklore, particularly what is generally known as urban belief tales or modern legends.

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DOUBLE MYSTERIES

(Two remarkable stories of mistaken identity)

By Bob Skinner

Some years ago, whilst browsing in a book, I came across the following account of a bizarre case of mistaken identity, originally from a 1907 newspaper(1).

THE DROWNED DOUBLE

Two Months after Burial Albert Steer Returns

In the matter of the mystery of Albert Steer, the police confess themselves helpless and at fault.

Two months ago Steer left his family in Bickley with vague word of a journey into Surrey, and the next day a drowned man's body was taken up from the Thames near Chelsea Bridge.

By the description of it the body seemed to be that of Albert Steer. When his son and daughter viewed it at Horseferry mortuary all their doubts were removed.

It was certainly their father. Not only were the features and build similar to them, but all accidental marks were there.

Albert Steer had lost an eye, this drowned man was one-eyed. One of his toes had been crushed, and the body had a crushed toe. Albert Steer's face was marked with a dent over the eyebrow where a piece of bone had been taken away, and here was the same dent in the same place.

So Somerset House registered the death of Albert Steer, a coroner's inquest declared that he had been found drowned, and a memorial stone has been put up in the cemetery on Bromley Common.

And now Albert Steer, with an uneventful story of two months' work for a gardener at Little Malden, reappears to his sons in the bar of a London public-house.

The Registrar-General must therefore cancel an entry in his books, and the Steer family, in the interest of accurate genealogy, must erase the inscription in Bromley Cemetery.

All that remains for the police to do, as an "Evening News" representative learned today, is to recover from the Commissioner of Police the only photograph of one who is once more an unknown man found drowned near Chelsea, and to advertise again for friends of a one-eyed man with a broken toe and a dent above the eyebrow.

I was reminded of it again in 1984, when my local paper printed the following strangely similar story(2), stating that the item had first been printed in an issue of the paper in 1904.

A Greenwich family has just had an extraordinary experience. After John Gobbett, a lighterman, had left Greenwich his barge was delayed by stress of weather at Southend, and a body was found in the Thames which was identified as that of Gobbett by his wife, his father, and several other people.

The resemblance of this man to Gobbett was extraordinary. Gobbett has a long scar on the side of the leg, which had been broken some years ago, and had slightly crooked in the setting; a scar on the bridge of the nose; and a peculiar birthmark. These malformations were duplicated in the case of the man identified as him, and whom the family buried at Nunhead.

A day or two after, Mrs Gobbett received a letter, which, though purporting to come from her husband, was not in his handwriting, saying he would be home on the following day. The woman spent a night of anxiety; but her husband arrived in the morning, to be thoroughly astonished by the story of the burial which was related to him.

The stories were so similar that it was difficult to believe that both could be true. The proximity of the location and date for these alleged incidents, and the duplicated theme seemed to indicate some link between them.

Was it the Steer story just a variation of the earlier Gobbett report, or were both examples of an urban legend?(3). My interest and curiosity was aroused, and I decided to research further.

There is insufficient space to give a full account of both the stories here, but as the whole mystery hinges on the alleged coincidence of identifying marks, I will concentrate on what I discovered about this aspect of the cases.

1904: The John Gobbett case

At the British Newspaper Library at Colindale, I searched the local papers covering the Greenwich area for June 1904, and traced several references to the case.

John Henry Gobbett, a 32 year old bargeman, had left home on Friday 3rd. June, purportedly to sail on a barge to Colchester. He was expected to be away for a week.

The first newspaper reports detailed the circumstances of the discovery of a body in the Thames opposite the Royal Naval College on the 6th June, its "identification" by Mrs

Gobbett, and the inquest on 10th June. No mention is made of any distinguishing marks (4,5)

A week later, the papers reported the surprising reappearance of Gobbett on 18th June, and his reunion with his shocked wife (6,7,8).

In these references additional details are given of the initial circumstances.

Apparently the body found in the Thames had been identified as Gobbett's not only by his wife, but by his father and a number of other people who knew him well.

Even Gobbett's eight year old son had been involved, and had declared, on seeing the body " It's my dad".(6)

The body of the man had only been in the water a few hours, and its resemblance to Gobbett is said to have been quite extraordinary.

It was not only in features and general confirmation. Gobbett has a crescent shaped scar nine inches long on his right leg, the mark of an accident which resulted in a broken bone and a leg made permanently crooked. The dead man had a malformation exactly similar, as well as a scar on the bridge of the nose and a birthmark identical with those which Gobbett is able to show.(7)

In one report, Mrs Gobbett was asked about how it was she had misidentified the corpse as that of her husband. She mentioned the identifying marks of the scar on the nose, and on the leg, adding the new detail that her husband also had a scar behind the left ear.

All these marks were exactly reproduced on the dead man, who she was positive at the time was her husband.(6)

At the inquest credible witnesses had appeared who had testified to having seen Gobbett in Greenwich two days after Gobbett was supposed to have left on a barge, bound for Colchester. It was therefore concluded that Gobbett had not left at all, but had met his death as the result of some river misadventure.

Despite the evidence of the remarkable resemblance, at least two people were not so sure.

A police constable who had known John Gobbett had expressed doubt about the identification (8), and Gobbett's brother, George, was unsure having noted the fact that the corpse measured 5ft 10ins, while his brother had only been 5ft 6ins tall. He had not, however, attended the inquest.(6)

Although certain items found in the corpse's pockets had been produced by the police at the inquest, they had not been shown to the jury. These items included papers which later confirmed the identification of the body as being that of Arthur Jackson, an inmate of the local workhouse. (6)

1907- The Arthur Albert Steer case

A search of newspapers of 1907 unearthed several references to the Steer affair.

Arthur Albert Steer (sometimes referred to as Albert Steer), was a 56 year old gardener, who lived a wandering life, generally away from his family at Bickley, near Bromley, Kent.

He had been last seen by his sons on 24th April at Bromley, when he had spoken of going to Surrey. On the following day, a body had been found in the Thames, near to Chelsea Bridge.

In a May issue of a West London paper there appeared a report of the inquest on this body.

John Steer, Bromley, Kent deposed that the body was that of his father, who was a general labourer. He had lost the sight of one eye, and had also had a piece of bone taken out from the eye-brow some time ago.

The Coroner: You have no doubt at all as to the identification?

Witness: Not a bit... (9)

Later reports, following the reappearance of Steer in July, described more fully the circumstances of the misidentification.

Charles Steer, a son of the wanderer, read a paragraph under the heading "The Mystery of a One-Eyed Man." Every detail published tallied with those of his missing father. Albert Steer, senior, had lost an eye and had a smashed toe, so had the dead man; he had a broken nose, so had the dead man. The only point upon which the family were undecided was the description of the clothing worn by the man taken from the river. This was a uniform of some kind, bearing the mark "X 100 F".

This fact was not considered important, however, as the father had always lead a roving life. The next day, therefore, Charles, the son, and his sister journeyed to London and identified the man at the Horseferry-road Mortuary, Westminster, as their father. The dead man was alike in appearance and build to their parent.

"The marks were the most extraordinary thing about it," the son Charles told a reporter. "There was the same indent above the eyebrow where a piece of bone had been taken out. I had not the slightest doubt it was my father. The inquest was held, and we buried him in St Lukes' Cemetery, Bromley Common on May 3rd." (10)

A Times report from September recorded a second coroner's court hearing, held 2 months after the original events. The proceedings were to officially establish that Steer was alive, and to investigate the misidentification. In this report it is revealed that, although it was true both Steer and the corpse had been one-eyed,

John Steer, the son, said that the mistake they all had made was that his father had lost his right eye, the drowned man's left one was missing. (11)

The newspaper accounts mention one further interesting coincidence in the Steer story.

While Steer had been away from home, he had been working for a gardener in Wallingham Park at Little Malden in Surrey. Only a few days before he had returned home to Bickley, the Steer family had received a report that another Steer had been found living at Whyteleafe, not far from Little Malden. This Steer, curiously enough, was also a gardener with one eye. (10)

Conclusion

However unlikely it may seem, there can be no doubt that both the Gobbett and the Steer coincidences had a factual foundation. In addition to the various newspaper reports, I have copies of the death certificates that were issued in the names of Gobbett and Steer, and which are still indexed under those names at St Catherine's House; both have been officially amended to note the original misidentification of the bodies.

The entries in the registers of the Cemetery at Nunhead have never been amended, and still record that the burial on 13th June 1904 of John. H. Gobbett in grave number 27330, a plot situated in what is now a forgotten and overgrown area of the unused cemetery.

It is amazing that two incidents, so similar in many ways, happened on the same river within 3 years of each other (12). Not only that, but there are a number of similar cases documented elsewhere [see panel].

Professor Glaister attempts to explain such cases of mistaken identity, by stating that

such mistakes usually arise only when the the facial features are changed, past recognition, most usually in the case of bodies that have lain in the water for some time; and also from the desire of mourning relatives to satisfy their grief by interring a body. (13)

However, it is interesting to note that in neither the Gobbett or Steer case had the body been in the river for any length of time, invalidating this explanation.

What became of Gobbett and Steer? So far, I have been unable to find out about their lives after these events. To me, the stories of these two individuals are fascinating, and as time allows, I hope to continue my researches.

In future I will be more cautious before classifying strange tales as urban legends.

SOME SIMILAR ACCOUNTS OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The body of an old man, having the forefinger of the left hand and the left ear missing, was found on the banks of the river Dee.

It was identified by two young women as that of the body of their father, who had same deformities, and a proclivity to wander from home. After the funeral, they found that their father had returned home. (13,14)

In Dublin in December 1897 the dead body of a woman was taken out of the canal and was identified by a man and some neighbours of that of the mans wife, there being accidental marks over the eye and on the nose, and the number of missing teeth being the same.

The three sons, however, doubted identification, because of the colour of the hair. Following the funeral, the mother returned home. (14)

In Glasgow in 1904, the body of a man was discovered from the Forth and Clyde Canal. Two days later it was identified by no fewer than ten persons as the body of a particular person. Those who identified it included a daughter in law and some police officers.

The death was duly registered under that name, and the remains interred. Some days later, an inspector of police who knew the supposed deceased man well, saw the man himself in the street. When the man was told of his supposed death he was both astonished and amused. (14)

In Milwaukee in 1855, the head and trunk of a murdered man was found floating in the river.

Despite the damage to the head, there were a number of people were absolutely sure that the victim had been a John Dwire. They recognised the face and features, the colour of the hair and eyes (although Dwire had one eye, and the corpse had two - one, however was nearly detached due to a head wound).

Identifying marks included a "five-pointed starry scar" on the left cheek; the loss of two front teeth, one in the upper and one in the lower jaw; a bald head with curly sandy hair round the base of the skull only; scars on the chin and finger and thumb of the right hand; a crooked nose; and "leg of mutton" whiskers.

At the inquest, however, some witnesses declared that they believed that Dwire was in fact alive and well, and living not far from Milwaukee. A message was sent, and to the utter amazement of those who had sworn so positively to the identity of the body, John Dwire arrived and walked into the court room. (15)

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2. Farnham Herald, 6th July 1984, quoting the Farnham, Haslemere & Hindhead Herald & Alton Mail, 25th June 1904.
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4. Found Drowned in the Thames, Kentish Mercury 17 June 1904.
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6. "The Dead Alive"- Strange Affair at Greenwich. The Mystery Solved, Kentish Mercury, 24th June 1904.
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11. A Coroner's Mistaken Verdict, The Times, 14th Sept. 1907.
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Grief turns to joy as 'dead' son goes home

By SUN REPORTER
A GRIEVING couple who identified their son as a body in a mortuary were astonished when he calmly arrived home four hours later.

Fred and Pat Sole wept with joy as 18-year-old Simon strolled through the door - and his shocked grandmother nearly fainted. The family believed Simon had been killed in a car crash, but it turned out the victim was another teenager who looked amazingly like him.

Mr Sole, 40, said yesterday: "It seemed like a miracle when Simon turned up. He came back from the dead."

Mr Sole, a plumber, an inquest heard that the mix-up happened

when police called at Mr Sole's house with bank card and keys.

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Verdict: Accident.
Sun, 9/11/88

REGISTRATION DISTRICT				Name and surname	
1907 DEATH in the Sub				When and where died	
Columns:— 1		2		3	
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	No.	When and where died	Name and surname
497	Apr. 25 th 1907 River Thames near Chelsea Bridge Pimlico	Arthur Albert Steer	180	Dead body found Sink June 1904 Foreshore of River Thames at Royal Naval College Greenwich	John Henry Gosack

Form A.30M (24/12/47) L.M. 3/77 (4/12/52)

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the

MEN IN BLACK

By David Taylor

"They will be at your door too, unless we all get wise and find out who the three men really are". -- Gray Barker (They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers)

Eric Maple, researcher into the supernatural has written concerning the history of Men in Black (MIB). "A few of these grim spectres in black first made their appearance during the Elizabethan post-Reformation period and they increased their activities as Protestantism advanced. They were popularly supposed to represent either Satan or his attendant demons ..." (1). The history of English witchcraft is full of tales of their activities. Jane Vallis, a 17th century Huntingdon woman, was persuaded to sell her soul to a mysterious MIB who left her under the watchful eye of two familiar spirits. A similar tale was told by Susannah Edwards, a 17th century witch of Exeter, who was approached by a dark-robed stranger, who offered to buy her soul. During the great plague of London in 1630, a witch scare was started by a man who claimed to have been picked up by a stranger in a black carriage driven by black horses. The stranger took him to a house full of ghosts and demons who were preparing poisons to spread the plague (2). The mysterious figures in black, however, did not always have a diabolical mission. During December, 1666, Johann Fridrich Schweitzer, physician to prince Orange, was visited by a figure in black carrying the mystical philosopher's stone. Unfortunately for Johann, the mysterious figure in black did not return as promised to show him how to turn metal into gold.

The MIB needs no introduction to the ufologist, who is well aware of the mysterious figures' association with UFO reports from the 1950s and 1970s. I have myself investigated two UFO reports from the 1970s where MIB were involved. The MIB, however, is not exclusive to the annals of

either ufology or demonology. In 1967 Luis Castillo, an American petty criminal, was arrested in the Philippines under suspicion of conspiring to assassinate President Marcos. Under interrogation he revealed that over a period of years, he claimed his mind was controlled by some mysterious agency. He says he remembered being taken to a "factory" outside Chicago where he met a woman he did not know. She assigned him tasks that he carried out in a trance-like state. In 1963 whilst performing one of these tasks, he was driven to Dallas in a black car, accompanied by a man with "oriental eyes", who ordered him to shoot President Kennedy from a high building (3).

Ghostlore also has its fair share of mysterious figures in black. I have myself investigated a "haunted house" where the owner claims to have seen a figure in black hat and cape standing in the back garden.

But it is to ufology that most researchers turn to when faced with MIB reports. I believe that the next case is a good illustration of how there is a powerful mythology pervading MIB cases. During the late 1970s Mrs Joyce Bowles and her friend Ted Pratt were abducted by a UFO in Winchester. Following their experience Mrs Bowles received a phonecall from a man in London who advised her to keep quiet about their encounter. Although no actual figure was seen, UFO researchers associated the call with a MIB (4).

That these figures in black, whatever they may be, exist would be foolish to deny. But the effect that they have on us, as researchers, is just as real. Thirty-six years after the Albert Bender claimed his infamous experience, UFO investigators are still asking witnesses if they have noticed any "mysterious figures" since their sighting. The MIB has, in its own right, become a separate area of study. The MIB has come to represent a figure of authority, a dark and menacing authority. Seduction by demons and vivisection by aliens are better left alone, most people believe. The MIB seems to reinforce this attitude -- it appears to us as an authoritarian figure, in the style of the 1940s "B" movie F.B.I. figure, warning us not to upset society.

The rest, as John Keel points out, we have constructed in our own lonely, painful search for meaning (5).

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- (1) Eric Maple, "The Domain of Devils" Pan Books 1966
- (2) H. Mackay, "Extraordinary Popular Delusions" 1842
- (3) V. Boward, "Operation Mind Control" Fontana 1978
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GREEN MONSTERS

By Nigel Watson

Whatever the "real" origin of UFOs, alien beings, lake monsters, yetis or ghosts, they all indicate to the percipients of them that there is something wrong with human existence. In the 1950s when the subject of flying saucers was still new, several people claimed they met the pilots of these vehicles. Invariably the messages from these space people was that humankind was destroying planet Earth. These messages usually expressed a fear of atomic bomb testing, the threat of an atomic war and general worries about the Cold War. Since then the space people have warned us about pollution, drugs, sex, and other dangers that are likely to bring about the demise of planet Earth and its (usually unworthy -- save a chosen few) inhabitants. A good example of their type of viewpoint is given by this American researcher:

"The positive aliens are the forces of light here to help the planet. We are facing a possible pole shift, earthquakes, the greenhouse effect - we're in various precarious positions. The highly spiritually advanced planets want to help us, want us to see peace." (Pioneer Press Despatch, St Paul, 11/12/88).

In a similar manner lake monsters and terrestrial monsters are usually observed in the zones between wilderness and urban civilisation. They disappear as civilisation, industry and pollution intrude upon the natural environment.

Monsters are often regarded as the guardians of secret natural areas that humanity should not invade (but often does).

Sightings and theories about such legendary, mythical or supernatural beings have preceded the current interest in such subjects. Michel Meurger and Claude Gagnon note in "Lake Monster Traditions" (Fortean Times, 1989, p107) with regard to Canadian monster sightings that the:

"synchronicity between the coming of a new way of life and the alleged increase in monster sightings is worth thinking about. The lake-monster image seems to help express deep conservatism and it may be that when our informants are speaking about the monster's distaste for noisy mass tourism, they are conveying their own distaste with modern society indirectly."

The views and attitudes of the 1950s flying saucer contactees can be compared and contrasted with modern-day British contactees. In turn their views can be compared and contrasted with other "fringe" beliefs about the care and respect of planet Earth. In particular, paganist, wicca, earth mystery, and hippy-type views could be included. In many cases people have been committed to such ideologies or lifestyles due to their own experiences with the unknown or unexplained.

A good example of the type of experience that can be used to justify a variety of ideologies took place in December, 1931. Although it is expressed in overtly Christian religious terms, the form of the experience can be easily reinterpreted as a contactee encounter. By the 1950s the tables were turned and overtly UFO experiences were used as a vehicle for various religious philosophies (e.g. Adamski and his meeting with Jesus). Charlie Woodward had a dream or vision after a day of praying. He climbed one mountain, then he climbed a cottonwood tree on the summit of an even higher mountain. A voice called him down and as he approached the earth he spotted two men.

"One was an extra large man, and the other not quite as large. It was God and Jesus. (God the larger one.) They were in what they called a Pilot. It was a round room about ten feet high, eight feet across, with a screen all around and a post in the centre of the room. The room had seats with our backs to the centre post. They invited me to get in the Pilot."

As he got into the craft he saw his body lying on the ground near the cottonwood tree. They flew to Heaven, which he was told was 700 miles above the earth. This took three minutes to reach. Heaven contained lakes and meadows, and streets paved with gold.

"Everyone was dressed in white, standing, smiling, their hands reached out as if to shake hands with me. I went up the street with both hands stretched out. I went up to where God and Jesus were sitting on the Throne.

"God had me sit by Him and Jesus on the Throne. I asked them why did they want me to sit on the Throne with them when everybody else was standing up."

(Arkansas Gazette, Little Rock, 8/5/88).

Like the contactee stories of today nothing exceptional is communicated to the percipient. Rather the vision, dream, out-of-the-body experience, call it or explain it as you wish, the encounter confirms the faith/views of the person and provides "proof" for themselves and other that they have a direct line with Heaven and/or the ETs.

More sceptical viewpoints could also be used to show that these types of belief are the product of popular culture, modern-day folklore in the making, future shock, disillusionment with rational, materialistic

science, etc., rather than the intervention of supernatural/extraterrestrial forces.

Rather than debate whether UFOs/ghosts, etc., are objective or subjective we should actually try to look at WHY these subjects have such dedicated followers and proponents, and such dogged opponents. Also, the good and the bad effects of such belief systems can and ought to be considered.

CREDITS: UFO Newscipping Service and Fortean Times.

GAGS ABOUT GADGETS

By Jan Harold Brunvand

Judging by the legends I've heard lately, there may soon be an urban tale about every gadget in the Sharper Image catalog.

Here are a few examples of stories I've collected about ultramodern gimmicks, along with my guesses about ones that are sure to be legend topics soon.

Karen Urbanowski, of Rossford, Ohio, sent this one about a deep-fryer: "There was a guy who did a lot of drugs. One night he came home from work, got stoned, and then decided to fix some dinner. He turned on a deep-fryer to make French fries. When he thought the oil was hot enough for cooking, he checked it by sticking his hand in the fryer, immediately deep-frying his hand."

That story reminds me of one from the 1960s about hippies who, after getting high on LSD, stared into the sun until they went blind.

And it makes me wonder if there are legends about such trendy appliances as crepe cookers, pasta makers, food processors, hibachis, talking bathroom scales, nail polish driers or exercise machines.

A credit-card legend came to me from Kennan White, of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He heard about a yuppie, just out of college, now working in a high-paid job.

"This yuppie wanted to buy a house, but the banks all turned him down for a loan because of a minor blemish on his credit record. His roommate had failed to pay his share of the utility bills, or something like that. So the guy applied and received 40 or 50 credit cards, some with credit limits as high as \$5,000. He used the cards to purchase the house. Then he went back to the bank and, using his new house as collateral, he took out a loan to pay off all the credit-card companies."

An automatic-teller machine cash card is the subject of a legend that I found in a newsletter called Folklore Frontiers, published in England.

Supposedly a woman finds a cash card lying in the street one night, and thinks of a way to turn it in via an ATM. She inserts the card into the slot and punches in some numbers at random. She knows that without the proper Personal Identification Number, or PIN, the machine will keep the card, and a bank official will find it in the morning. Against all the odds, she hits the right PIN number and the screen obligingly flashes the message, "How much do you wish to withdraw?" Unfortunately, this version of the story doesn't tell what the woman does. But I suspect that there are varying versions of how it ends.

There must be other ATM stories too. What about legends that deal with answering machines, VCRs, cable TV, satellite dishes, laptop computers or cellular phones?

William Moser, program director of the Museum of Scientific Discovery, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, sent me a legend about a pocket calculator:

"I majored in astronomy, and a math instructor of mine had an early Hewlett-Packard calculator. Supposedly, a student who owned one of these

calculators when they first came out typed in an unlikely series of keystrokes, such as the square root of negative zero. The calculator immediately broke. The student returned to the store and told the salesman what had happened. The salesman didn't believe him, so he picked up a new calculator from the shelf and typed the same keystrokes. This calculator broke as well."

Moser has never seen calculator that would be damaged by mere keystrokes. I agree that the story sounds legendary.

Are there legends about other pieces of office equipment -- shredders, staplers, pencil sharpeners, dictating machines, FAX machines and the like?

My questions about such stories are written on Post-it notes stuck to letters I've received. Which makes me wonder: what are the legends about Post-it notes?

Ghost trains

WILLIAM BARRY HERBERT has published a second volume of paranormal encounters, "Phantoms of the Railways".

Much the same as his "Railway Ghosts", this edition of the occult along the rails has apparitions haunting stations, tunnels, signalboxes and gangers' huts.

My favourite tale is a particularly curious case of something which could not occur in normal spatial time experience. What is recounted is that a Fifties trainpotter watched two identical trains pass almost simultaneously, both hauled by Black Five 44813. Had the young rail enthusiast experienced a time warp?

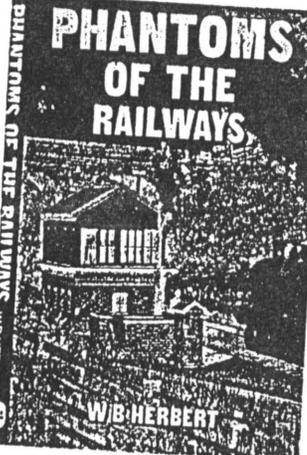
More traditional tales tell of human and animal spirits, such as a platelayer who became a tramp and haunted an old hut; a nanny and child run over by their train; Snowy the grieving station cat; colour-vision medically unfit! ex-driver haunting a closed depot; and an old woman in wrong period clothes vanishing away into thin air on Durham City station.

There's an oppressive atmosphere at a spot in Liverpool and a suicide's scene; phantom communication cord puller and trespassers; a celebrated skull known as Dicky o' Tunnel, which led to realignment of a Derbyshire route, to keep the railway away from his resting place; trains on non-existent tracks on the Isle of Man; anniversary replay of Tay Bridge disaster; and even tragedies in a recording studio, involving the likes of Fleetwood Mac.

Being mysterious and emotive places, tunnels feature prominently; spectral smoke from Ingrow's blowing against the breeze; World War I dead soldiers reappearing during the sec onworld war by Balcombe Tunnel; and the phantom train of Box Tunnel.

Herbert mislaid out the best legend of Box Tunnel, that architect Isambard Kingdom Brunel wanted the sun to shine down it on his April 9 birthday. Twenty years ago the columns of Railway Magazine concluded that Freemason Brunel and his surveyors attempted to achieve this symbolic exploit, but were inadequately proficient at determining atmospheric refraction. As a result the sun supposedly shines through on dates ranging from April 8 to 8 - but not on the ninth. Yet according to Philip Atkins, librarian at the National Railway Museum, York, gangers on the Bath to Chippenham line have reported the

GHOSTS and other railway mysteries are the subject of a slim new volume. One of the book's contributors, the Mail's PAUL SCREETON, has been made aware of a strange aspect about the main author. Here a tale of mystery about the compiler is unravelled along with a straightforward review of the book.



occurrence as late as April 17. To attempt to align rail track in such a non-functional way must be the epitome of personal narcissism.

Back to Herbert, many of the stories are shallow in interest and slender in fact. Regarding another tunnel, that at Blea Moor, Herbert admits "there has been much speculation but very little facts of detail". In other words a flimsy manuscript has been well padded into a slim book. Railway World's reviewer called it "scraping the bottom of the barrel".

Yet there are familiar themes to interest the serious folklorist - anniversary recurrence, sacred ground sacrifice, vehicle interference, prophecy, negativity effect, recording interference, sleeping heroes - and a wide selection of supernatural claims for the paranormal.

In another category is the fabled strategic steam reserve, an urban belief tale or modern legend, beloved of rail buffs. It is quite extensive coverage, being the longest at four pages of the 48 chapters. It was, incidentally, written by me.

The forgotten train entombed below Crystal Palace also falls into modern myth territory - and I've heard of other unsubstantiated examples.

Another of Herbert's correspondents, who lived in West Dereham, recalls a mystery passenger train seen by he and his wife on a line used only occasionally for goods traffic. Here there may be a rational - as opposed to supernatural - answer. Such lines are often used to park the Royal train, most recently in our own area the Prince of Wales up the Wensleydale branch and in the late Fifties the Queen at Picton.

Also to suggest a non-paranormal explanation, the man referred to on the King's Cross to Edinburgh express who was menaced by a sinister spectre, almost certainly had a hypnompnic vision due to fatigue.

Some tales also have the feel of pure fiction, rather than any basis in paranormal happening. This is particularly true of a soldier on an express leaving Newcastle who relates how he was murdered in a train compartment and then disappears; the soldier's uniform-wearing cuckolded wrath which opened the regulator to derail a train; and soldier whose mother waited for his eventual return.

There are even stories with an element of the hilarious, such as the poltergeist which disturbed a Tupperware party!

All in all, an interesting collection, though hardly a classic.
● David & Charles, £8.95.

A hoax repeated

Author published fiction as fact

GOOD though many of Herbert's tales are, I can supply an equally interesting one. I can reveal how in his earlier book he spoofed his readers.

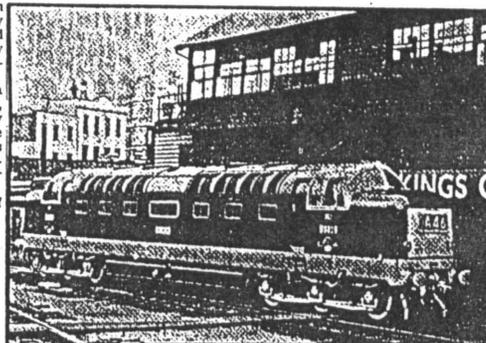
I came by this insight into an aspect of the author's methods by chance, when a review I published in a folklore magazine was read by a former railway preservation society publication editor.

Herbert had a chapter wherein a diesel locomotive, 55020 *Nimbus*, seemingly reappeared in ghostly fashion charging through a Home Counties station seven months after it had been well authenticated as cut up in a Doncaster scrapyard.

Mark Valentine, of Bourne-mouth, told me:

"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 station months after it was scrapped by B.R., is an article 'A Trick of 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 fate in store for other locos in the same class. W.B. Herbert



As D9020 before renumbering to 55020, *Nimbus* poses in its heyday glory.

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 'friend-of-a-friend phenomenon'.

So Herbert ignored copyright and published as fact what was fiction.

Discovering my interest in the supposed strategic steam reserve, he sought permission to reproduce an article on the subject I published in the magazine *Common Ground*. This I granted and he promised me a copy of the book in which it would be re-published 'as a token of my appreciation'. Herbert has reproduced a shortened version - though the longest piece in the book - without crediting me directly (though my name appears in the general acknowledgements) and failed to send a courtesy copy of the book (a review copy being supplied by the publishers).

So this "ghost writer" suggests you decide for yourself the value of Mr Herbert's railway anecdotes of the supernatural.



Tale of a haunting murder mystery

BIZARRE coincidences between two unsolved murder cases have been uncovered by Crown Prosecution Service researchers.

An anonymous note sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions late last year urged investigators to probe similarities between the two crimes.

This week the CPS records officer reported to the DPP:

'On Whit Sunday, May 26, 1817, a young woman who lived in the West Midlands travelled to Birmingham.

'She changed her dress at a friend's house and went on to a dance.

'In the early hours of Whit Monday' she was sexually assaulted and murdered near the Chester Road in the Pipe Hayes area.

'A man named [redacted] was arrested and charged. At his trial he was acquitted.

'157 years later, in 1974, Whit Sunday again fell on May 26.

'A young woman travelled from her home north of Birmingham. She changed her dress at a friend's house, and went to a dance.

'In the early hours she got on a bus in Chester Road near Pipe Hayes.

'Her body was later found near the road. She had also been sexually assaulted.

'A man was later acquitted of murdering her. His name - Thornon.

NEWS LINES

ROKEQ'S SOUVENIR. This was the summer classic. I was told it by an elderly lady sitting beside me on a train to Devon, who claimed it happened to a nurse from Northallerton. My teenage son was listening in, and claimed to have heard it occurring to a girl in Hartlepool. Here's how the News of the World the very next day (6/8/89) reported this new legend:

A BRITISH girl was delighted when her holiday lover handed her a mystery package as they parted. But her pleasure turned to screams of horror when she opened it on the plane home.

For the gift was a little wooden coffin inscribed with the words: "Welcome to the death club. Now you've got AIDS."

The 25-year-old girl is the latest victim of a sick new cult sweeping top Spanish resorts.

Local lads who suspect they have the killer disease are wooing lusty lasses into their beds and deliberately trying to infect them.

The girl had spent a fortnight of steamy sex with her sunshine roméo. He told her not to open his surprise package until she got home to Swindon, Wiltshire.

But she was egged on by curious pals and unwrapped the parcel during the flight.

An AIDS counsellor told the News of the World: "This is the second incident of this kind we have heard about."

"A few weeks ago a girl phoned us in a very distressed state after discovering what was in-

side her identical parcel. "We're particularly worried that this has probably happened to more girls. They may be too frightened to report it, in case their boy-friends find out."

The spokesman stormed: "It's the cruellest thing possible to do to another human being and will put these young

girls through weeks and weeks of torment.

"It will take three months before they know for sure whether they have caught AIDS and they must be going through sheer hell."

A News of the World doctor said: "The men doing this must be sick in the head. The chances that they've caught AIDS are slim but cannot be ruled out."

The experts know the girls' identities but are keeping them confidential.

A Wiltshire police spokesman said: "If these girls can lead police to these appalling men then they should contact us straight away."

DUST THE JOB. In our "Gags and Gadgets" article, Prof Brunvand wondered if there are satellite dish legends. Perhaps, but electronics wizard Stan Bacon claims to watch SKY TV using a dustbin lid to pick up the signals. He tried out the idea after reading an April Fool joke about bin covers converted for such use. (Sun, 12/4/89).

FLASH IN THE PAN. We've all heard the one about the guy who ignites an inflammable substance and blows him off the loo, followed by ambulancemen laughing, dropping him and adding to his injuries. Well, workmates sprayed an aerosol as Tim Henley abloated himself, they lit a cigarette and in the resultant explosion Tim and two pranksters were treated for minor burns. It happened at the Gateway store in Dawlish, Devon, which I visited on holiday this year (Sun, D. Mirror, 2/2/89).



DODD MAN. Waiting reporters at Ken Dodd's fraud trial were baffled when a distant voice told them: "Why don't you fuck off?" Dodd, who started out as a ventriloquist, just smiled and his lips never moved.

BURIED ALIVE. A man who was buried in error was released and when he walked into his house his mother and sister went mad and dropped dead. Or so Saudi newspaper al-Riyadh claimed; The Sun (18/8/89) added the report could not be officially corroborated.

COT DEATHS. I failed to note media attention to more logical -- but no less controversial -- notions that parents smother babies or cot materials cause heart failure. Two items from the files suggest other reasons for this infant phenomenon. Deaths in farming communities are blamed on sheep dip waste inadvertently washed into domestic supplies (Northern Echo, 21/3/89) and airbase radar causes sleeping babies' brains to "overload and fuse". In the latter case, Dr O' Leary, a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, said that five deaths within four hours within a 7-mile radius of the R.A.F. station at Farnborough could be linked, and other radiation sources to kill babies were underground streams, electricity pylons, sewers, airports, railway stations and electric stations (Today, 30/1/89). Are there any historical theories. Or this a purely modern phenomenon.

SQUEEZED NAUGHTY BITS. The old ones are the best ones and Janet Bord sent us a new version which will be so familiar I will forego the full details. In this case the woman finds her "husband" with clinging wet shirt over his face and gives a tweak to the family jewels, saying "tinkle, tinkle, time for tea", but ceases her silvery laughter when she encounters her real spouse fully-clad and leaning against the mantlepiece. However, cautionary tale scribe R. V. F. Poole claims to vouch for its veracity (Weekend Telegraph, 28/1/89).

CONGRATULATIONS. Then there was the West German student who tried to dodge National Service by getting his diabetic girlfriend to provide his urine sample. Doctors congratulated him -- the test showed he was pregnant (D. Star, 3/5/89). Don't mention the war, but Winston Churchill's passion for cigars allegedly stems from "the sight of the Cuban women, their skirts pulled up high, rolling tobacco leaf on the inside of their thighs to make cigars" which caused him to stub out the cigarette habit (D. Star, D. Mirror, 21/4/89).



ION LADY. Briefly, in May the media suggested Margaret Thatcher took baths which zapped her with low-level electricity. Socket-to-'em Sun (10/5/89) readers had an asterisk to explain that the headline THE ION LADY referred to the ion as an electrically-charged atomic particle. The next day Today left readers wondering as to the veracity and cartoonists had a field day. She should be warned as (Sun, 18/8/89) an "accident" verdict was recorded on a London man who had a habit of giving himself electric shocks and whose body was covered in tiny scars made by the clips.

WOGGLES. Another oldie but goldie -- "boy scouts, girl guides" -- well, the monthly mag Guiding warned heavy drinking can shrink boobs and increase the risk of breast cancer. The folklore of sex organs is mammoth sized and the Daily Star also warned Boy Scouts that sustained boozing could shrink their woggles in commenting in Guiding (also Sun, 31/5/89).. But for brewer's droop resuscitation... Aphrodisiacs are always good for the Sun and a Belgian beer with the ingredient of a Japanese mushroom - Shi Take - grown in the brewer's garden had lusty British squaddies popping over from Germany to stand proudly to attention. Brewed in Beverdonk, Tommies called the place Everbonk (17/6/89). Same Sun (9/8/89) publicized La Biere Amoreuse, beer which reverses brewer's droop and costs 80p a pint in France.



PROCTOR'S PINELYPTUS PASTILLES
(BRONCHIO-LARYNGEAL.)

A born for Cough, Asthma, Catarrh, Hoarseness, &c. A remedy and a stimulant valuable by itself, S. Hornhardt and many eminent speakers and singers. They make the voice full and rich, and prevent falsetto. Sold only in packets by Chemists and Stores. 1/- and 2/6. Inset on having 'PINELYPTUS.'

BOOK REVIEWS

Lake Monster Traditions: A Cross-Cultural Analysis
By Michel Meurger with Claude Gagnon.
Fortean Times (London, 1989) (£12.95).

Lake Monster Traditions is certainly one of the most handsomely presented works on a cryptozoological subject to appear in recent times. For quite a while before I actually began reading the book, I was more than content simply to peruse the immense variety of illustrations; to indulge in the luxury of finding notes on the same pages as the text to which they are appended (instead of having to flip constantly back and forth from the text to the long lists of notes at the back of the book, as would be the case in most other volumes of this type); to browse through the extensive and well laid out bibliography; and to utilise what must surely be the very last word in indexes.

Moving from the visual to the verbal: this book is equally impressive as a definitive work on comparative, cross-cultural folkloristics. The vast scope and depth of its coverage reveal a mastery of sources and a masterly understanding of the many-layered, multi-faceted form that comprises any myth or folktale, regardless of its source or subject. As a result, this is not a book to be read casually, or dipped into randomly, but rather a work to be absorbed steadily and methodically, working patiently from its beginning, gradually amassing facts and concepts that are built upon and expanded as the book progresses.

As for the material: there is a great deal of original work present, arising from the authors' field studies carried out in relation to monster reports from various lakes in Quebec. Equally valuable is the considerable output derived from detailed bibliographical forays into Continental Europe's centuries of documented data on lake monsters - material that for the most part has rarely (if ever, in some cases) been made available before to the English-speaking public. The same applies to many of the North American and (especially) the South American legends and lore included within. I was delighted to become acquainted with information concerning a number of aquatic anomalies whose names were new to me, and I congratulate the authors for bringing these and others like them to the attention of mystery beast investigators.

At the same time, thanks to the authors' painstaking researches, one of the most valuable aspects of their book is its message to such investigators that folkloristic data should not be invariably looked upon as a sure and certain guide to the past and possibly continuing existence of strange beasts not officially recognised by science. Even when a healthy allowance for exaggeration, distortion, and misinterpretation is taken into account when investigating legends of such creatures, there is still no guarantee with folklore-derived information alone that the beasts which it describes are anything other than symbols - culturally-patterned motifs with no basis in corporeal reality. In short, Lake Monster Traditions reminds cryptozoologists of the perennial danger of attempting to "discover" a mystery creature that is nothing more than a symbolic representation; and of the undeniable fact that they should never underestimate the remarkable creativity of human imagination, inordinately capable of manufacturing monsters out of thin air.

Nevertheless, there is unequivocal evidence - in the shape of this century's haul of major zoological discoveries, for instance - that some legends of "impossible" animals are indeed based upon genuine creatures. The trick, therefore, is deciding which mystery beasts are symbolic and which are real; or, put another way, distinguishing between folklorised fact and factual fact! And this is where impartial scientific evidence comes in - for although it may be possible for a knowledgeable folklore researcher to explain any given mystery beast away as a motif rather than a reality, objective scientific evidence cannot be dismissed in this manner. A sonar machine's findings, for example,

are not influenced by the cultural background of the person operating it; a distinctive pelt worn by a native and which does not match that of any species known to science is a reality, not a non-physical symbol from that tribe's sociological history; a worldwide zoogeographical correspondence between the locality of "monster-inhabiting" temperate lakes and the types of monsters reported from them is independent of cultural considerations from any one given area.

Of course, we must certainly take the point that just because, for instance, an over-sized pike has been discovered in a certain lake featured in generations of local monster lore, this does not necessarily mean that the pike is the monster (or even a descendant of it). In cases like these, there is a great danger of unwittingly "identifying" a non-existent, wholly folkloristic symbol with a modern specimen or species whose existence in the same locality is totally unrelated to the folklore aspect. Even if the modern-day animal form is itself an extraordinary, unexpected one, it may still be completely unconnected with the mythical one.

However, in cases involving comparable sightings of lake monsters by eyewitnesses of totally separate cultural backgrounds (e.g. visiting Western tourists, and local persons), it is more reasonable to suppose not only that some noticeable, inconnu animal species does indeed exist here, but also that this same species did indeed comprise a major component (if not the entire basis) of the longstanding local "monster" myths relating to the lake concerned.

Summing up: Lake Monster Traditions is a first class discourse on the subject of lake monster folklore and its interpretation. Cryptozoology owes a debt of gratitude to its authors for emphasising, via an excellent treatise, the timely, vital message to all would-be seekers of mystery beasts not to accept folklore evidence for their existence at face value, but instead to research its background and origins carefully and thoroughly, in order to ascertain the likelihood that the beasts in question are truly something more than symbolic. Equally, however, the obverse side of the cryptozoological coin must also be recalled: Never become so immersed in the folkloristics of a given mystery beast that due consideration of available, culturally-independent scientific evidence is neglected or forgotten. If these two, complementary concepts are combined and adhered to, there is every chance (not just in relation to lake monsters but also with regard to the whole spectrum of reported mystery animals) that by this century's close, some further, significant zoological discoveries will have been added to the list already bearing the names of creatures such as the okapi, mountain gorilla, Komodo dragon, Chinese river dolphin, and onza - to mention but a few of the animals once thought to be nothing more than the non-existent denizens of native myth and folklore, and now known to be real entities in their own right.

The last word in this review must definitely be offered to Robert Rickard - editor of Lake Monster Traditions, and founder of Fortean Times (the book-publishing descendant of Fortean Times) - a word of grateful thanks from all researchers of mysterious phenomena. If all future works published by Fortean Times can match the superlative standards of presentation and layout achieved in Lake Monster Traditions, then it is evident that those Fortean subjects too specialised to attract mainstream publishing attention, yet nonetheless eminently deserving of booklength treatment by competent researchers, have finally found a worthy home.

— By Dr. Karl P.N. Shuker —

EUPHONICS: A POET'S DICTIONARY OF SOUNDS
by JOHN MICHELL (Frontier Publishing, £5.95)

Two decades ago I went to interview artist Anthony Earnshaw. We supped pints in Wrens pub in Leeds and somehow the piece never got written. He did, however, teach me how to tell when brown sugar is "alive" for which I've been eternally grateful. His claim to fame was a cult book of his own designs for letters -- "A" being a ladder against a wall, and so on.

Now John Michell introduces us to another form of romantic alphabet, a poetical one. Euphonics is a poet's dictionary of sounds. There is a powerful alchemy about correctly used sound and not only the poet can benefit; the influence in the formation of words and languages stretches to orators and dramatists, magicians and priests, advertisers and sporting spectators, newspaper sellers and rag 'n' bone men.

Alphabets have a mystical significance and over the years I have been instructed of the particular importance of the Druids' tree alphabet, Scandinavian runes and letters used by gypsies. Initiation even starts with primordial alphabet soup.

Names too have significance, most entertainers choosing ones other than those they were christened. A certain Mr Zimmerman selected Bob Dylan and went on to write the nurse-y-rhyme like "God Gave Names To All the Animals".

The author, as anyone who has read his books knows, has great prose style. Of this care in selecting words, he once told me he would sit for 3/4 of an hour waiting to find the correct word (if it doesn't come to me immediately, I leave a space with a squiggly line below and return to it later). As a student of the Classics, Michell follows the Ancients in proclaiming his Dictionary non-definitive, and neither exclusive, authoritative or didactic. He has left space with each letter for the reader to make additions, amendments or notes. As I read through I did this and no doubt will be returning often again to consult Michell's views and make more associations.

At random, I would like to share a few illustrative comments. I would add to the lightness of "L" such as "laissez-faire" and "lesson". The "KH" sound in "cack" and where "FA" come together causing a fizzling out, how about "fart"? In addition to his binary body bits for "B" let's add "Bristols", "Brendas" and "bazookas", while "bimbos" have them and "bras" hold them, and the sex act is now quite respectfully referred to as "bonking". As for "X" as box of tricks, we've only recently learned the "axolotl" is not a strange but mature amphibian but a salamander tadpole, which from all evidence it looked and shows the stupidity of most scientists.

This booklet is a brief insight into the subtle relationships between sound and meaning. Written with humour and illustrated with light-hearted poems and sketches by Merrily "Nightmares of Dream Topping" Harpur, it is sheer superduper-califragilistic-expealadocious delight.

GOthic IMAGE BOOKS BY MAIL TWO

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All-new second edition of this exciting catalogue.

In the late Seventies Cris Popenoe, of Yes! Bookshop, had the idea of compiling a guide to the burgeoning variety of books relating to inner development. Like Popenoe's guide, Gothic Image divides books into sections, with new ones in the second edition, with each major section introduced by a short overview of the subject, followed by mini book reviews. The organization is sensible and useful and contributors are those who have written widely in their chosen fields, such as John Michell, Geoffrey Ashe and John May.

Such a guide fulfills a useful function for those who either want to start on their own search for interesting literature or may have missed a book on their pet subject because it has not been reviewed in papers/magazines they read or has been published by a small or obscure publisher.

This is a limited edition and updates price changes, out of print titles and titles featured in the first catalogue now available in paperback. Hours of enjoyment guaranteed.

TRADITIONAL BOARD GAMES OF NORTHERN EUROPE by NIGEL PENNICK
(Walknut Productions, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge,
CB3 8SD, £1.50, inc p&p)

When a field was divided into squares, the plots were sold for charity and the object being for one lucky winner to have his winning bet where a cow decided to leave a pat of its excrement, we know that despite all the electronic arcade games, human ingenuity and originality is alive and well. Maybe it was not a traditional board game, but divination using animals, like Durham's Dun Cow, is timeless.

But this booklet sticks strictly to smaller board games, and so also my personal favourite -- tip-it -- is ruled out. Before I developed better sense, I played fruit machines and until I read this book did not understand -- as most are no doubt equally ignorant -- that the bonanza combination TIC TAC TOE is a nomenclature variant of noughts and crosses.

Pennick's scholarly investigation shows how the simple noughts and crosses has its origins in the Bronze Age. An Irish board dating from this period shows how prehistoric people amused themselves with mereles, perhaps better known as nine men's morris.

All of which leads us to Pennick's larger

GAMEs OF THE GODS by NIGEL PENNICK (Century Hutchinson, £7.95)

Our enjoyment of with board games must come from the stirrings of ancient and eternal fascinations; a response to ways of life once more familiar. What passions a simple game of dominoes can arise; the psychological warfare of chess; the tears as another draught is crowned.

The simplicity of a lone child playing hopscotch compared with the grid as a powerful symbol of the structure of the world, and of divine or human dominion over it. From monarch in his/her palace, the capital city, the holy temple as omphalos and layout of the countryside, this was how nations were ordered and it was expressed in the grid.

Designs of traditional gameboards preserve their sacred origins and are linked inextricably with divination. As Pennick states: "From early times, it has been believed that a familiarity with these patterns has a much wider application in the world off the board". Basically, mental training is involved and no doubt we benefit by becoming more insightful.

Pennick explains divination's place with regard to established religions (too uncertain and random to be anything but subsidiary) and science (so exclusive it can see it as noting more than a belief system to be studied by social anthropology).

None of this has stopped mankind's spirit discovering as many weird and wonderful systems as humanly possible. There's divination by bread dough shape and the potentially lethal plumbomancy, the pouring of molten lead into water! I noted two new ones to me anyway in our popular tabloids recently: omphalomancy, the study of belly-buttons (D. Star, 30/3/89) and the study of ears and their link with heart condition (Today, 2/5/89).

Back with Pennick, he disuses the role of augurs and haruspices, whose role it was to interpret divination and events. We certainly had our fair share of modern amateur ones when the south transept of York Minster was engulfed in flames; interpretations running from rare lightning to UFOs or God's wrath at David Jenkins.

Earth mysteries scholars will be familiar with the notion of oracles, specific places associated with prophetic revelations. Reading this book after having just visited Knaresborough, I must remark that I felt I was going to pass out in the cave where soothsayer Old Mother Shipton was born -- a true place of extraordinary power, as is the whole of the township. Continuing on the subject of land, I did not know that the words "allotment" and "lot" of land came from the old meaning of a piece of land whose ownership or leasehold was selected by drawing lots.

Dice so used in such transactions and games were of pagan origin and Christianization dubbed them the Devil's invention and were criticized by the new priesthood (I had a Roman Catholic aunt who wouldn't play cards with others of the family on a Sunday).

Pennick continues with divination by arrows, staves, rods, wands,

yarrowstalk and the I Ching, feng shui, knots in cords, houses or astrology, talismans; from architectural ornament to snakes and ladders to Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven". Sacred alphabets such as the Beth Luis Nion one and runes to Cosmic Axis.

With much background information covered, Pennick then moves to the games themselves, via courts and fairs. Some may still pooh-poo as superstition such beliefs; they should consider in particular the section where instances of human responses to anomalous geological phenomena are given which closely parallel the oracles of old. It is also good to see a too rare discussion of "humadrud" energy, discounted by science but able to almost literally drive people mad.

Chess, too, raises tempers -- Marx and Lenin, for example -- and Pennick's discussion of the game's psychology is enlightening.

In that great casino in the sky, James Marshall Hendrix will be looking down while playing with Laughing Sam's dice.

C.G. JUNG: LORD OF THE UNIVERSE by COLIN WILSON
(Aquarian, £5.99)

Wilson on Jung is as one would expect a rattling good read. Jung's seminal ideas are woven into a fascinating biographical narrative. Too frequently Jung's highly-original concepts are used out of context, simplified or used as downright attempts to strenghen spurious personal nonsense. Wilson presents the facts fluently in a cohesive summation of Jung and his beliefs.

There are oddities where Wilson's wide reading is used to enter such absurdities such as how if Jung could have read a certain obscure book known to Wilson, Jung would have reached conclusions quicker; or in discussing rivalry with Freud "the real difference ... is that his own mother was fat and ugly, so there was no temptation to dream of seducing her, and that his father was pathetic and unsuccessful, so there was no temptation to fantasise about killing him". At least it's different to claiming deliberate psychic attacks by Jung on Freud.

We have Jung to thank in particular for the theory of archetypes (a word so often misused, even in Jungian contexts), collective unconsciousness, synchronicity, individuation, and so on.

Jung's psychology is not easy to comprehend -- not least because he was not always good at expressing himself clearly -- but Wilson gets to the nitty-gritty. Popularizers often get short shrift, but I can think of no better introduction to a man who was scientist, romanticist and mystic.

May you stay forever Jung!

RUSHDIE'S INSULT by JOHN MICHELL

(Radical Traditionalist Papers #7, Blasphemy #2, privately published by the author, of 11 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JG. Price unknown).

On the surface, this slim work looks like reflex contentiousness, engaging the liberal coterie who have defended Salman Rushdie's calculated offence to Muslims in his "The Satanic Verses". You know the style of argument, tut, tut, Muslim girls' arranged marriages! Of course Prince Charles could have wed a binman's daughter. You get the picture? Michell puts his own view, but I would favour uniculturalism. As for Rushdie, let's face it, as an advertising copywrite cum novelist, he has no excuses for not knowing what he was letting himself in for (see also F.F. 8, p.23). Pity Jim Allen wasn't around to do this review.

MYSTERY CATS OF THE WORLD by KARL P.W. SHUKER (Robert Hale, £12.95)

As Dr Shuker states in his concludory section, "mystery cats are starting to receive serious attention from scientists throughout the world". And well they should.

As a witness to a black panther in Northumberland, I am disturbed that

this subject receives so little official attention. That is, either by the scientific community or law enforcement officers. Will it require an innocent person's mauling to make it a major issue?

However, for most people the closest they come to mystery felids is through accounts in newspapers; genuine enough, but often containing contradictions, errors, annoying paucity, or like the pub landlady identifying her sighting as definitely a lynx (as if she was a rampant felidologist), our interest is whetted but we're left confused as how to respond.

To our rescue comes cryptozoologist Dr Karl Shuker. Here he has produced what amounts to an "Observer's Guide to Fabulous Felids" in enlarged form, with only coloured illustrations missing. It is not presented as an academic tome, but seeks to be popular without losing scholarly integrity, i.e. informal and concise but not superficial. Within a single volume can be found all the principal mystery cat forms. We learn the phenomenon is worldwide, there is great diversity of types, there are resumes of each's basic history (based on serious rather than anecdotal evidence), analysis of probably zoological identity involved, and by compiling a comprehensive list of all sources used, readers can pursue themselves any aspect further.

He introduces the evidence with a thorough discussion of cat genetics; this being of considerable importance relative to mystery cat identification. He follows with British sightings, including a pre-Sixties resume, though selectivity may disappoint regional chauvinists like myself, where the emphasis is very much on the celebrity areas (Exmoor, Surrey, Notts.).

There's also the problems, such as how an Inverness farmer captured what he thought was a predator but turned out to be almost tame (though its faeces suggested ferality) puma. Also by and large one must agree with the author that alien cats choose to avoid mankind at all costs, but what of the Thinford, Co. Durham, case where one terrified a stationary lorry drive by jumping on to his vehicle bonnet snarling?

The author is not afraid to make bold speculations, such as to ponder the morphological feature of pronounced gracility in the two new cat forms -- onza and Kellas cat -- represented by specimens formally discovered since 1983. He poses the possibility that a fundamental genetic mechanism could be at work. Is this capable of producing gracile mutants in felids, regardless of species?

However, the book has one facet -- or rather lack of it -- which will lead to hostility in some quarters. Shuker, in his foreword, largely dismisses the claims for various elements of paranormal activity associated with mystery cat sightings. Naturally he is aware of these, and one suspects that with cryptozoology still not regarded as wholly scientific by certain factions of the Establishment, it is best to draw a discrete curtain over shadowy possibilities. I would have liked to have seen a reasoned chapter attempting to place the occult theories against the cryptozoological ones. My own black panther sighting is one I would not like to say for definite was of a corporeal animal but maybe a guardian beast of some territorial twilight zone. Also there is no consideration of Rupert Sheldrake's "morphological resonance" mechanism speculation. Certainly Shuker puts his cats in a down to earth reality where they are as solid as tin of Whiskas. He'll not be too worried by any cat-calls from the occult lobby. He can always reply "miaow" in scientific tones.

The language of dreams, if appreciated, can lead to a fuller comprehension of conscious existence. Nerys Dee provides a complete and practical guide in The Dreamer's Workbook, which can be used to explore, understand and influence the dreaming experience. It includes information on the top ten most common dreams; precognition and death; signs, symbols and archetypes; the language and source of dreams; lucid dreams and nightmares; advice on keeping a dream diary. There is also an A-Z of dream meanings. (Aquarian Press, £7.99). Another book which shows how to remember and record dreams is Working With Dreams, by

Montague Ullman and Nan Zimmerman, and also use them to solve problems, how to recognise creative, telepathic and warning dreams, and how we need them to help us cope with the complexities of living in an ever-changing world. (Crucible, £6.99). Another approach is that of Robin Shohet, in Dream Sharing, where he claims sharing dreams promotes personal growth -- though most would agree that other people's dreams are the most boring act of communication imaginable (Crucible, £4.99). Sky Dancer is an evocation of Tibetan Tantric teachings translated into English by Keith Dowman. It is an account of the life of The Lady Yeshe Tsogyel, recognised as an enlightened being, a female Buddha, and this is her spiritual biography. The wisdom of the years from her birth in 757AD is still relevant today. (Arkana, £8.99). As for now, Wiccan high priestess Vivianne Crowley (right) presents a quest for self in Wicca, whose secondary title, The Old Religion in the New Age shows the relevance in today's world of ancient wisdom. Among the issues she explores are: witchcraft as a non-dogmatic New Age religion; the misunderstood concept of black and white magic; why witches have initiations; meaning of magic; the God and Goddess within us; sex and nudity; making sense of the life-cycle; future of witchcraft. (Aquarian Press £6.99). On the Death of a Son, by Jasper is a touching and inspiring book recording the author's reactions to the death of his eldest son in a car accident. After first making contact with his son through a medium, he gradually establishes an extraordinary relationship transcending death and a mine of information about the spiritual worlds is communicated to him. It should bring comfort to the bereaved and provoke thought among those seeking an understanding of the human spirit (Aquarian Press, £4.99). The seminal work of Emanuel Swedenborg is made accessible to the modern reader in the Essential Readings selection by Michael Stanley. It is a book of visionary insights and theology, along with more worldly matters anticipating modern discoveries (Crucible, £7.99). While more of ancient and modern together is provided by Terry Clifford in The Diamond Healing, an account of Tibetan Buddhist medicine and psychology (Crucible, £6.99). Some pages were blank in my copy, so check. Symbols for Women, by Sheila Farrant, shows that astrology can lead women out of a patriarchal bias as she challenges and redefines established interpretations of our most popular symbols. One for the feminists (Unwin Hyman, £6.99). A combination of astrology the fundamentals of depth-psychology are detailed in Dynamics of The Unconscious, by Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, to reveal one's true potential; including horoscope alchemical symbolism (Arkana, £7.99).



There are a multitude of means of divination and if one should wish to pursue this path the The Fortune Teller's Workbook discusses 18 methods. Some take years to perfect while others can allow proficiency with less arduous training. This book covers many of the best known methods of prophecy such as palmistry, dominoes, cards, tea leaf reading, crystal ball, tarot, Chinese astrology, I Ching, numerology and dreams (Aquarian, £7.99). Which brings us to The Variety of Dream Experience in which 14 experts in group dream work show how our dreams can provide a natural pathway towards emotional healing and self-fulfilment. Extending the use of dream work to the whole community -- home, church, school and political arena, it is edited by Dream Laboratory founder Montague Ullman and Claire Limer (Crucible, £6.99). Hidden powers in minerals is the subject of The Magic of Precious Stones, by Mellie Uydert, which have been used to meditate upon, to increase psychic perception, to inspire love and act as healing agents. The book reveals the secret properties of gems, traces the use of precious stones in religion, magic, healing and astrology (Aquarian, £4.99).

As for astrology there is a constant flow of books on the subject. No authority on the subject, I can only list several new volumes the reader might find of interest. The Art of Astrology, by Sheila Geddes, is a

textbook of practical techniques (Aquarian, £6.99); in The Book of World Horoscopes, Nicholas Campion presents an annotated collection of mundane astrological charts for predicting the likely future of not an individual but a group entity such as a nation or any other collective impersonal body; Dark Stars, by Bernard Fitzwalter and Raymond Henry, looks at more obscure planetary entities and their effects on mankind's fortunes (Aquarian, £7.99); Eclipses, by Derek Appleby and Maurice McCann, explains the astronomical background of the phenomenon, importance in recent history and natural disasters and, of course, the effect they have on individual horoscopes (Aquarian, £8.99).

Many regard the I Ching a more subtle, mature and more accurate method of divination and reprinted is the Richard Wilhelm translation with foreword by C.G. Jung (Arkana, £7.99), while Wilhelm's edition of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching is also available again (Arkana, £4.99). Similarly T.C. Lethbridge's The Power of the Pendulum deals with man's higher powers and abilities in a highly-original way (Arkana, £4.99).

E.A. Wallis Budge reprints continue to fuel the interest in Egyptology and ancient societies with the chunky The Book of the Dead (Arkana, £8.99) and Egyptian Magic (Arkana, £4.95).

Staying with the past, The Reincarnation Workbook is a guide by J.H. Brennan on how past lives can affect the present and provides step-by-step lessons to enable readers probe their own past lives (Aquarian, £6.99). Tibet, like Egypt, holds great fascination so there will be willing buyers for The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling, a tale of an ideal warrior's adventures, by Alexandra David-Neel and Lama Yongden (Shambhala/Element Books, £11.95); and Peter Kelder's Tibetan Secrets of Youth and Vitality, where secret rites of power to restore, or maintain, the glow of youth are offered to the general public in a popular format (Aquarian, £3.99). Also on the subject of health there's Take Charge of Your Life by Louis Proto on relaxation, diet and exercise (Thorsons, £3.99); How to be Healthy, Wealthy and Wise, by M.H. Tester, providing a design for living which promises a vibrant and healthy life and Maurice Barbanell's Where There's a Will, where positive thinking conquers every problem (both Aquarian, £3.50).

Who are Michael, the Space Brothers, Seth (sorry it's not him out of Emmerdale Farm) and so on and who cares -- Channeling by barmy Jon Klimo will tell you (Aquarian, £7.99).

On a higher level is Dion Fortune, whose works are worthy of reprinting and a new audience. Five are now available from Aquarian -- Sane Occultism, Through The Gates of Death, The Cosmic Doctrine, The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage (all £5.99) and Glastonbury (£4.99). Israel Regardie, too, is an author to be reckoned with and Foundations of Practical Magic is another classic on Quabalistic, magical and meditative techniques (Aquarian, £4.99) which comes recommended by Colin Wilson, who provides an introduction to After Death - What?, by Cesare Lombroso, which traces a sceptic's gradual conversion to spiritualism. Another major figure is the study by Richard Seddon, Rudolf Steiner, which plots his philosophy of man's struggle to attain full spiritual stature (Crucible, £7.99). Geoffrey Ashe is a major writer and he impresses with The Virgin, a study of Marianism, first published in 1976 (Arkana, £5.95).

Challenging is the collection assembled in Photography in the Spirit World, whose author Cyril Permutt regards his work as genuine evidence of images of the after life and after presenting a fascinating series of pictures leaves the reader to decide its validity.

So slim as to be useless, The Aquarian Guide to British and Irish Mythology is by the factually untrustworthy (on earlier evidence) John and Caitlin Matthews (Aquarian, £5.99).



MAGAZINES

NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES. Journal of the Northern Earth Mysteries Group. Single copies £1.15; 3 issues £2.95. From 103 Derbyshire Lane, Norton Lees, Sheffield, S8 9EN. No. 37. Comprehensive report on Northern Moot plus write-up on following day's field trip. Articles on Lothian sites, witchcraft and famous hermit; standing Yorkshire maypoles and celebrations; West Witton Burning of Bartle 1988 ceremony. No. 39. Articles on ancient stones; earthworks and churches or halls; astronomical alignments at a site near Sheffield; book reviews and meeting reports.

TOUCHSTONE. Newsletter of Surrey Earthy Mysteries Group. Q. £2 for 4 issues. Payable from J. Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT4 2BY. No. 21. More allotechnology from Philip Heselton. No. 22. Nostalgic journey to Chiddingstone and Surrey tree clumps, plus Hurt Wood Track reprint. Each issue also has notes, book reviews and letters.

TERRESTRIAL ZODIACS JOURNAL. £3 for 3 issues, cheques payable top P. Heselton, 170 Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5 3DY. Welcome new A5 mag devoted to landscape figures. No. 1. Editor Heselton on a morphological approach to zodiacs; facsimile reprint of a two-day itinerary around Glastonbury's Temple of the Stars by discoverer Katherine Maltwood; late Tony Wedd on Glastonbury Zodiac; provisional list plus map of 39 U.K. zodiacs.

PENDRAGON. Journal of the Pendragon Society. 4 issues inc society membership £4.50; \$10. Eddie Tooke, Chinook, Paxhill Lane, Twynning, Glos., GL20 6DU. Vol XIX, No. 1. Faces of Morgan le Fay edition. A favourite possession of mine is a Peter Blake poster from the Sixties of Marianne Faithfull in the guise of Morgan le Faythfull. But who was Morgan -- many interesting pieces with Tooke really spaced out. Plus Turin Shroud and other miraculous portraits. With Vol. XIX, No. 2, it looked Sleeping Hero time. This was a photocopied effort with apologies. Articles on Joseph of Arimathea, Brent Knoll, Scillies and Paul Screeton on people who beat destiny's rap in "Resurrection Shuffle ... (From King Arthur to Rock 'n' Roll olympus)". R.I.P. was premature and zany Tooke has taken over the reins with Vol. XIX, No. 3, with Stonehenge theme. Articles on solstice battles, Armenian circles and bleeding yews; link with N. Africa; functions of the monument; plus Helston Furry Dance; and noticeboard.



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STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT. Mag on newsprint covering archaeology, astronomy and related arts and sciences. Q. U.K. agent L.C. Smith, 16 Solstice Rise, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wilts., SP4 7NQ. Eight-issue sub \$12 U.S.; \$16 elsewhere. No. 78. Ivor Snook relates the folk history which Geoffrey of Monmouth based his Stonehenge comments on; ancient metrology; editor Donald Cyr and sceptic Bob Forrest begin a debate on ideas related to Isaac N. Vail's canopy theory (cont 79,80); tree ogam; ogam in Colorado; pre-Columbian Welsh transatlantic voyages; readers' letters; large book catalogue. No. 79. Challenging stone structure in Quebec suggestive of pre-Columbian Euro settlers; dragons and serpents motifs; metrology; and P.K. Johnstone on berserkers and other Dark Ages heathen warriors -- splendidly readable piece. No. 80. Santa Fe halo display; megalithic weather; epigraphy; mysterious Australia; pre-Columbian seafarers; Palaeo-Indians; pre-Druid Stonehenge.

CHALLENGE. Research into paranormal, E.M. and related studies. Q. Single copy £1; 4 issues £3.75. Payable to A.T. Feeney, 53 Brook Tce., Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 6PJ. No. 1. Editorial declares mag's skeptical stance, particularly over "faith" and "belief systems". Some of this is very personal. A poorly-crafted satire pillories Ian Taylor as "The Git of Bic Hill" (Penhill - geddit!). Psychic questing and Anomaly, No5, get rubbished. There's an arid incomplete introduction to the psychology of belief systems which is as bigoted as the material it seeks to debunk. A seeming non-quote from Tacitus brings another attack on the E.M. camp. Ten minutes of harmless, rather childish, negative thinking. They may however have an important point to make -- it being a fool and his money are soon parted. No. 2. More holier than thou vitriol ranges through "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" (Holy shit?) venom; particularly personal attack on "The Giant of Penhill" by S. Doog, who does not even mention the book author's name; whereas Tony Feeney does, and reflects my own doubts in succinct arguments. The skeptiks also attack Velikovsky and Creationists. Plus letters.

FORTLEAN TIMES. The Journal of Strange Phenomena. Phantasmagorical potpourri of Fortleana. Single issue, £1.75; 4-issue sub £7; U.S. \$16. Payable to Fortlean Times, 96 Mansfield Road, London, NW3 2HX. No. 50. Features inc devil encounters to M.I.B., Loch Ness update, unburied dead, Rowley Regis UFO encounter, S.H.C. plus round-ups of such happenings as penis-severing, alien big cats, killer bees, fishy yarns, ghosts etc. No. 51. Sea serpents separately from Norse mythology and Black Sea; Michael Goes on crocodile cryptozoological hoax; mystery subs of Sweden and Irish Sea; Fort and Theodore Dreiser; do swallows hibernate?; U.S. lizard man ... all essential reading.

THE LEY HUNTER. Senior E.M. mag. £6 for 4 issues; \$15 U.S. surface. From P.O. Box 5, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7AA. No. 106. German E.M. work and attitudes; radiation at Cumbrian megalithic sites; Stonehenge solstice debacle and John Michell praise for Burl's book on the monument; second part of Ian Taylor's inquiry into stones as ley indicators; Paul Screeton's potpourri of E.M. miscellanea; Moot 88; letters and reviews. No. 107. Paul Devereux looks at the state of the art ley research; radical reassessment of Venus figurines by Betha Hagens; leys consolidated; American moot report; Paul Screeton on a modern site with Celtic influences; Nigel Pennick on Alfred Watkins; John Glover on "nuclear winter" of 1150BC; Chinese geomancy. No. 108. Evocative landscape articles by Helen Woodley and Chris Hale; primitive soft porn cover by Monica Sjoog; excellent review section.

VALRUS. Official organ of the non-material world. c/o 25 Partridge Drive, Cambridge, CB3 8EW. 75p inc p&p, in blank postal orders. No. 26. Anti-fundamentalist essay by the prolific Nigel Pennick in the wake of the problems of a lapsed Muslim novelist. He posits, "Dark ages fall when fundamentalism gets the upper hand". Plus piece on turn-of-the-century Belgian concentration camps.

MAGONIA. Q. 4 issues £3; U.S. 10 dollars surface (must pay in bills). U.K. orders payable to "JOHN RIMMER. From John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HE. No. 30. Excellent Peter Rogerson as always on current ufoklore themes which is essential reading for all who are interested in flying saucer happenings; disappointing documents of British Government UFO files in the Public Record Office; rites of passage speculation; TV documentaries mangling of ufology; Hilary Evans on the importance of keeping abreast of

ufological developments. No. 31. Michael Goss tackles the tales of Elvis Presley sightings, but before the Sun offered £1m. for his body or personage delivered to Wapping (1/2m. for Buddy Holly); strangers in the bedroom; Paul Fuller on the dubious vortex theory for mystery circles.

No. 32. Martin Kottmeyer looks at those prone to nightmares, considers abductees and comes up with the boundary-deficit theory; Patrick Harpur puts the case for reading UFOs as primary imaginative phenomena and makes this one of the most essential articles on ufology of all time, offering a mercurial dualism which allows for coexistent extraterrestrial hypothesis and earthlights theory; Ralph Noyes defines superstition as "persistence in a belief in the face of contrary evidence; plus an appraisal which sees U.S. ufology concerned with abductees, crashed saucers and cover-ups with UFOs and human sciences. Plus reviews and letters. Intellectually stimulating.



NORTHERN UFO NEWS. £5 for 5 from 37 Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP. No. 135. Editor Jenny Randles explains the purpose of her and Peter Hough's "Death by Supernatural Causes?" and hangs critics and debunkers on their own petards. The news and round-up reports on BUFORA, Sunday Sport and The Press Council, which proves the former to be the biggest idiot organization of the three. No. 136. Anti-Flying Saucer Review editorial regarding its acceptance and commentary on 1970s APEW group affair. Issues also cover UFOs in the media; case reports; articles elsewhere and general info. Intelligent yet chatty. Always enjoyable.

NFNIDNID. Original and quite a departure this. It's actually "part" of Nos. 2 & 3 on one long tape cassette. Surrealism unleashed featuring the incomparable Tony "Doc" Shiels, with his son Gareth and Hens Teeth. Opens with short story which is like a cross between your neighbourhood paper boy, Santa Claus and Springheel Jack rolled into one. There's Doc's Ivor Cutler sort of "Give Me a Sugar Lump" pleading over doom-laden percussion and son Gareth sending up country songs by singing of a "Holy ghost town". There are monologues, rantings, music from the neutifully tuneful to great rhythms and discordant mayhem. One track has caterwaluling reminiscent of felids mating. Doc didn't enclose a price with the tape, but a fiver at least to Nnidnid, 3 Vale View, Ponsanooth, Truro, Cornwall.

AMASKAYA. Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship. Q. Annual sub £2. Cheques payable to J. Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. No. 13. Two pieces on the extraordinary Philip Rodgers, an early UFO "contactee", along with two letters written by him during the Sixties. Plus Philip Heselton on alternative technology. No. 14. Rather perplexing choice of article by Tony Wedd on cancer, seeing as he failed to conquer it; another reprint from Philip Heselton on Wedd setting up STAR Fellowship.