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FOLKLORE FRONTIERS



FOLKLORE FRONTIERS No. 11

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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Subscription for four issues is £4; overseas \$10. Single issues £1. Please make all payments to "P Screeton" -- NOT the magazine's title. Dollar notes only from USA due to bank charges. Sheet of information on back issues available -- please send SAE.

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

In an effort to generate cash to keep the magazine going and keep its price stable, I am planning on selling spare and review books at very reasonable prices. In addition to the review books received by FF itself, I review a far greater and wider range of books for my employers. In fact, I can offer books -- fiction and non-fiction -- on just about any subject under the sun. I plan to make these available at just above one-third of published price, including postage. If you wish to ensure FF's solvency and keep its costs down, send an SAE listing the types of books you would be interested in and lists to suit your requirements will be despatched. If you can then reply promptly it means there will be no disappointment as someone else had got in first. This really is too good to miss.

THE DIARY

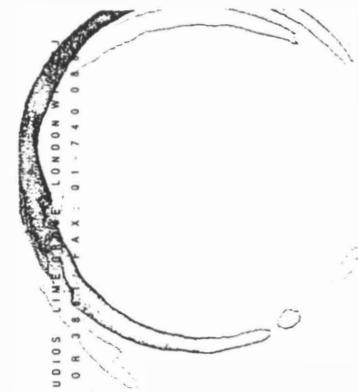
We have exposed WILLIAM BARRY HERBERT before in The Mail, Hartlepool, and FF (FF9, p15), and he perpetrates the same fiction as fact regarding the appearance of diesel locomotive 55020 Nimbus seven months after it had been reduced to scrap metal at Doncaster, again in "Railway Ghosts and Phantoms" (David and Charles, 1989), an omnibus edition of his earlier compilations. He's now writing a book on pub ghosts -- don't expect a free pint for assisting him.

GARY BUSHELL may not be everybody's cup of tea, but The Sun TV critic hit the nail on the head (26/6/90) when he wrote: "The BBC is running a 91-part drama about Indian myths called Mahabharat. It would be nice if they devoted even half as much time to British folklore. A touch of King Arthur would go down a treat".

I don't think much of MARIETTA HIGGS (see previous FFs) and note two of her sons, Robin and Nicholas, have been accused of burglary. It was main splash (page one that is) headline in Today and U Express (19/10/90). The local morning paper, the Northern Echo, Darlington, afforded it single column status, though on Page 1 -- and all three had different ages for the sons. The Northern Echo has always supported the deadly duo, who some might feel if it were not for their medical qualifications were close to being paedophiles. FF will be returning to this subject next issue. JOHN MICHELL was to have written up a piece on the bogus social workers scam but it hadn't materialised by deadline time.

Congratulations all round to those who appeared on the Late Show presentation of UBIs. I thought the programme on September 20 this year was better than I had expected (look how awful EVERY programme on UKUS has been). Obviously within the

short time there was not the scope for any deep and meaningful discussion -- not that the subject really warrants it anyway. The dramatisation of the tales was handled well and all the people who took part can take a bow. researcher JANE RUNDLE telephoned me several times trying to persuade me to appear. For a variety of reasons I was not terribly keen. Nevertheless it was a pleasure to have been able to help her. She received some copies of FF which I hope were of some use. She said she enjoyed reading them and that they would be useful. I illustrate this item with "coffee stains of the slightly famous, No. 1, for you to cut out and collect". This could be the start of a new craze! Anyway her letter ends: "P.S. Apologies for the coffee stain. It's a specially printed Late Show designer one, but a bit too realistic!" Thanks Jane.



1st March 1990

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SATELLITE SABOTAGE
TV satellite dishes apparently work on non-ionising radiation, which green anarchist groups claim can cause cataracts and leukaemia in young children. Hence activists have started vandalising individual dishes by splattering them with lead-based paint, shooting the receiver arms off with air pistols or, if all else fails, throwing a rope around the dish, tying one end to a car and driving off!



In FF9, JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND speculated about possible satellite dish legends occurring. See on the left the first I've come across (Green Magazine, Oct, 1990). It appears in an otherwise eminently coherent article.



We leave our friends at Fortean Times to cover much Fortean data, but must mention SCREAMING LORD SUTCH for his interest in the Loch Ness Monster, which he hoped to snare with a British Rail sandwich. I am very partial to BR tuna and mayonnaise sarnies and once wrote songs for David Sutch -- so there! At least he was instrumental in ridding us of David Owen's crap political party.



Trolley Folly

By Paul Screeton

"He's very proud of where he dumps his supermarket trolleys."



"These are the same price as yesterday! What's the matter - can't you sell them?"

We in the West are a consumer society. Our modern world is now based on consumption, not truly production, this being the basis of the new social order.

The philosopher Jean Baudrillard believes our new life or perpetual shopping constitutes "a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species." as with Roland Barthes, he studied the life of signs in society and concluded consumer society is not "real" but artificial; culture becoming a vast "hyper-reality" of self-referential images from TV, adverts and soap operas.

Rather than go deeper into the philosopher's bizarre notion that couch-potatoes become revolutionaries in their own leisure time, let's ask why if supermarkets are the new spiritual genius loci, their trolleys have not attracted a mythology similar to that of the internal combustion engine.

Craig Brown drew analogies between his local Sainsbury's being packed while in Ely Cathedral he counter only 15 people. The article "Check out the Lady Chapel" being illustrated with a depiction of a trolley in stained glass (The Times Saturday Review, 22/9/90).

Road accident statistics are sufficiently horrifying and responded to in urban legends, but despite there being a staggering 5,000 trolley accidents each year in British supermarkets to warrant medical attention, where are the foiaf tales? And if you don't believe the statistic, the Health and Safety Executive recently wrote to the Director General of the



British Standards Institution on their design and construction. Remember last September a young girl was accidentally killed in a Milton Keynes DIY store while riding a trolley (The Journal Q&S Magazine, Newcastle, 27/9/90). Also like the car Christine in the Stephen King novel, trolleys seem to have a perverse will of their own; suffering from strange afflictions of crossed wheels.

They are dumped in streets, gardens, canals and down railway embankments; jabs race them in subways and parks; they are unsightly and a nuisance; they are dangerous to the elderly, handicapped and blind. Even coin lock deposit systems seem unable to stem the tide of trolley

population explosion. Various London boroughs are passing by-laws to counter the menace (Evening Standard Magazine, Oct 1989).

THE YUPPIES by ANNIE TEMPEST STRIP CARTOONIST OF THE YEAR



Trolleys are used by tramps to push along their sad belongings; the unsociable for burning garden or domestic rubbish; makeshift prams for older siblings to hurtle around innocent babies; to propel heavy suitcases to the railway station; flower planters for gardeners; missiles to be launched from multi-storey car parks; and so on.



"Wonder what we'll find at the top?"



SUN
ANGLERS dredging junk from the River Ogmore in Mid Glamorgan hooked 73 shopping trolleys. **STAR** 7/5/90

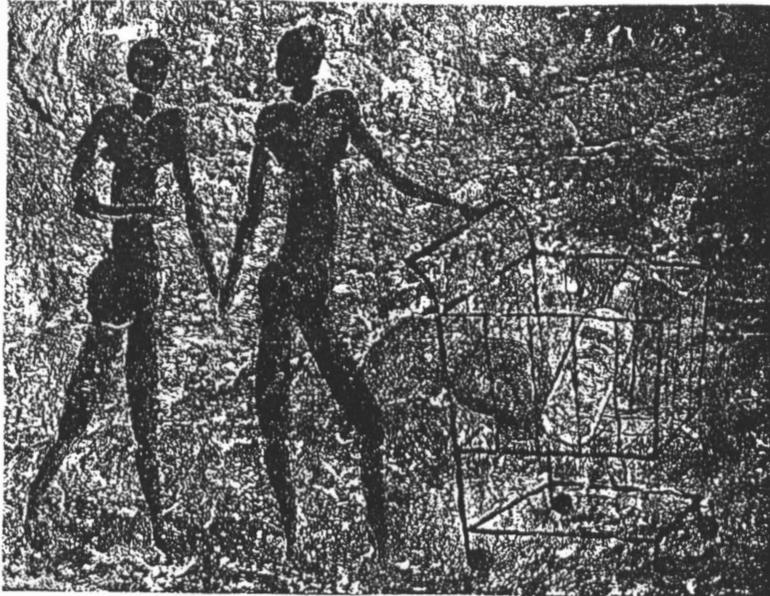


ANGLERS spent a day clearing up the River Ogmore in Mid-Glamorgan and found 73 dumped shopping trolleys.



They can travel long distances, such as the Tesco one newsagent Steve Bowman found in Hartlepool -- 13 miles from the company's nearest store in Stockton (Mail, Hartlepool), 9/1/80).

This writer is convinced all tales have ancient antecedents and was therefore pleased to see a Smirnoff advert showing two Palaeolithic people pushing one in a cave art depiction among hunters, bison and antelopes.

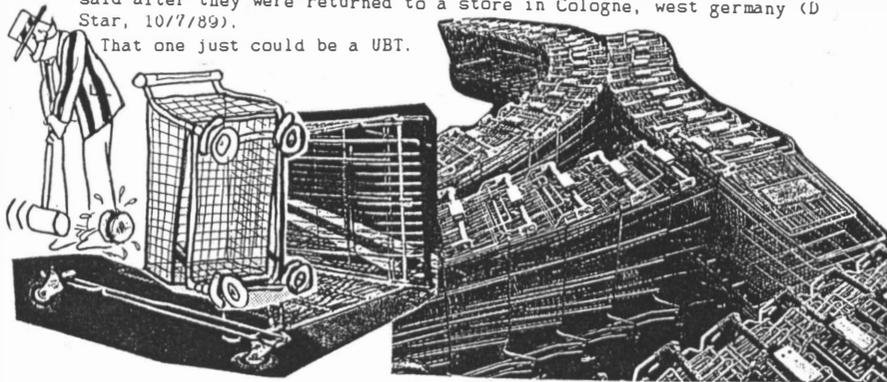


The closest I have come to mythology relating to trolleys comes from these two news items:

* Tesco had to give 800 rogue trolleys the push after their super-rast nylon wheels picked up high charges of static and gave shoppers violent electric shocks. When some patrons threatened to boycott the new store at barnsley, Yorks, the firm spent £5,600 on replacements with rubber wheels (Sun, 23/11/88).

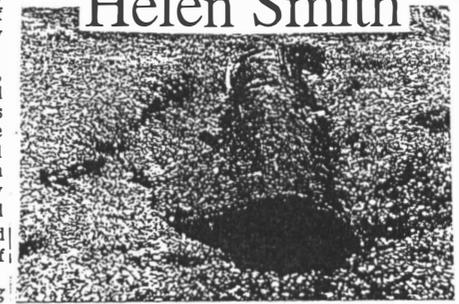
* And police discovered 41 trolleys in a raid on an 82-year-old woman's flat. She said she used them to carry her shopping and then forgot to return them. "I'm so glad they're going, now I can tidy up at last," she said after they were returned to a store in Cologne, west germany (D Star, 10/7/89).

That one just could be a UBT.



Loco chimney mystery solved

By Terry Sykes and Helen Smith



Locomotive boiler excavated near Fort Gilkicker, near Gosport, in the 1960s. Does anyone know what happened to it? See accompanying letter.
W.E.J. Parker collection, Steam Railway, May, 1990.

What happened to the buried loco?

I AM researching the military line which ran from Fort Blockhouse, Gosport, along the Haslar seawall along to Fort Monckton, down towards Fort Gilkicker then along the beach towards Stokesbay Pier.

The 2ft gauge railway was built in the 1880s by the Royal Engineers who were then stationed at Fort Blockhouse. After they departed in 1905, it was used by the Royal Navy during the First World War, and was abandoned in 1935.

The accompanying photograph, taken near Fort Gilkicker, is of a boiler excavated by the Royal Corps of Transport in the mid-1960s. However, I do not know where such remains as were found were taken to. Can anyone help?

W. Parker, Gosport, Hants.

Does anyone know the true story of the buried loco at Garsdale, asks Mr Terry Sykes.

It is said that long ago a steam locomotive dating back to the 1870s, possibly a Johnson or a Kirtley 2-4-0, toppled down the embankment near Dandra Mire Viaduct near Hawes. Efforts to recover the engine failed and finally it was left there and covered over by old ballast and rubble.

The story is told by the late Mr Dick Fawcett in his Book *Ganger, Guard and Signaller on the Settle-Carlisle Railway*. In the book, Mr Fawcett tells how he found the chimney still sticking out of the embankment in the mid-Thirties, and how he dug down and uncovered the smokebox.

Recently, equipped with a metal detector, a shovel, a British Rail permit and optimism, Mr Sykes and Mrs Helen Smith (both in the picture) began to investigate the possibility of the story being true. On their third visit to the site a loud humming from the metal detector provided a clue and they began to dig. "Lo and behold! There was the chimney that Mr Fawcett had found 50 years ago," says Mr Sykes.

"We dug around the chimney and finally reached the bottom flange and began to get a little excited. The top of the double skinned cast iron chimney was rusty and smashed, but halfway down its four foot length was a diagonal rust mark at 45 degrees, and below this line the chimney was in excellent condition!

"The angle of the chimney was a problem though as it was a good way off the vertical. There obviously could be no engine bolted to the bottom of it or the rear of the engine would have been sticking up out of the embankment! So we retired from our third day of excavating feeling tired but flushed with success.

"A few things were worrying us though. Firstly, although three quarters of the chimney was covered in rubble and loose ballast, the bottom part was firmly bedded in clay, and this to my mind was the original embankment. Secondly, another small excavation where the steam dome should have been revealed the same thing, nothing metallic, and clay at the same depth. On the positive side we'd found the chimney exactly where the book's author had said it would be and the evidence of it poking out of the bank in the 30s was unmistakable.

"But could it have been a joke played on a young lad? And now he had carried it on himself? Could it have been a chimney from one of the engines in the Hawes Junction disaster in 1910, tipped down the bank and "planted" by the gangers as an elaborate con? The broken parts of the chimney were all around it; perhaps these had been smashed off when the large stones were tipped down the bank and in turn the chimney had broken off the engine and been carried down the bank a little.

"But what were we to do now? Prodding all around the chimney with a four foot steel rod had revealed nothing significant at all and neither B.R. nor ourselves were keen on any major excavations, for obvious reasons. Thorn EMI came to the rescue!

"Through a colleague on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, Thorn confirmed that they had a total magnetic detector, with a range of no less than nine feet! What's more they agreed to give it to us for one day free of charge, plus two technicians to operate it. So early in January, egged on by cold high winds and occasional horizontal rain, the two gentlemen carried out a methodical survey of the whole bank and sadly reported nothing large and metallic to be found. Still a good day was had by all

and we extend our grateful thanks to Thorn EMI whose contribution was magnificent.

"The following Wednesday Helen and I went up to the site for what we thought was our last time, to removed the chimney so that it could be restored and given to a local museum. But whilst undermining the bottom of the chimney a shock discovery was made, the bottom was in fact the top! It was upside down!

"Beyond doubt now there was no engine in the bank, but the broken pieces in and around the chimney indicate that the chimney had broken off the engine where it lay. So it looks like the story of

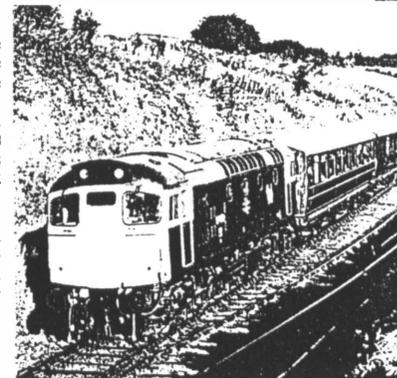


Treasure trove: Helen Smith and Terry Sykes with the ancient loco chimney recovered from the S&C bank. The chimney was carried to a van under Dandy Mire viaduct with the aid of two friends and a sturdy pole. One suggestion for a new home for the chimney is on the platform at Appleby station. Ruth Annison.

the engine is true, but as it toppled down the bank the chimney stuck in the clay and broke off. The engine was almost certainly then recovered, leaving the chimney half buried and protruding.

"Dick Fawcett's account of the story is sincere, his widow, Dorothy, is convinced of that as he was always talking of the engine in the bank, but perhaps he dug down to the flange at the bottom and thought he'd reached the smokebox top.

"In conclusion there never did appear to be enough room in the embankment to hide even a small locomotive, and to think that the Victorians were incapable of winching a small engine back up a 20-foot embankment is also under-estimating their undoubted skills. But we badly wanted it to be there so we pursued it to the end."



PAUL SCREBTON adds: Buried locomotives are a perennial subject, cropping up allegedly under water works (Hartlepool), football stadiums (London) and rubbish tips (a modern class 27 -- like the one pictured above, right, at Patterson's tip, Glasgow). To round off the article previous, there is also a RAF history example buried underground, if local legends are to be believed. However, there is some scepticism over a project of the Bomber Airfield Society to excavate near Brigg, where rumour has it, six World war II bombers and a Hamilcar glider lie 30 feet beneath a wheat field. No one has yet explained way the aircraft were entombed there. The society says that by employing radar (!! -- why not metal detectors?), they can take measurements of objects buried to depths of 140 feet. They plan to put their shovels where their hopes are later this year. As Telegraph Weekend Magazine (23/6/90) puts it: One way or another, it will put an end to nearly five decades of speculation.

Getting further from locos, Peter Christie tells me that in New Street, Bideford, Devon, there used to be a pub called The King of Prussia. When it was demolished 25 years ago, builders could not be bothered to remove a massive grand piano, so they simply broke the floorboards and buried it (personal communication, 19/12/89).

Back to trains (see also book reviews), plans are underway for a new private railway between Kadstock and Frome, Somerset, to be marketed probably as The Jack and Jill Line after the nursery rhyme couple who, legend has it, climbed a hill within view of the railway (Steam Railway, February, 1990).



Lynn... bit on the other side



SPIRITED: Lynne Perrie



SPOOKED: Lynn

Last time we did a Lookalikes (as done in Private Eye) was in FF3. How about this one. Divorcee Lynn Arkley called in a priest to get rid of a ghost she claimed was making love to her. The sexy spook would yak the bedclothes off her and sometimes she awoke to find it having sex. "Twice I was in bed with a boyfriend and the ghost was slamming doors in rage," she complained. After this there was an exorcism at her home in Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear (D Mirror, Sun, 3/6/89). Another Lynne -- Perrie, the actress -- got involved with the spirit world in Coronation Street and we present her as a Lookalike for FF11.

An Obituary of Anthony Roberts, 1940-1990

One must have a heart of stone to read of the death of Anthony Roberts without laughing. What can one write when a tedious and egotistical fool, braggart liar, spiritual cockroach, weasel gas-bag, threadbare juggler, squalid nuisance, demon hypocrite, parasitic jackal on society, foul ghoulash of beastliness, pompous and boresome liar leaves this world? Is one to write a panegyric to the stink of the Pit? Heinrich Heine, a true great writer, once said "One should forgive one's enemies, but not before they are hanged." But it behoves one who knew him to write a few words of truth about this oafish barrel of booze, in the vein with which he was wont to treat friend and foe alike, before the process of post-mortem praise obscures the truth about this most pretentious of profligates. Anthony Roberts was a freakish homunculus germinated outside lawful procreation; a liar, a thief and a cheat, he paid scant regard to truth, nor to any kind of moral obligation. His mental temperament was that of the first Spanish Grand Inquisitor. He was the Torquemada of Earth Mysteries. He would have like to have burned alive the critic who disagreed with him. Since stakes did not stand within his reach, he could at least rave, rant and rage in rabid word, and annihilate the heretics figuratively by the abuse and curses of the gutter. He had but one principle, that of self-interest. He had only one desire, the desire to insult. He belonged to the school of lying, hypocrisy and cowardice. He was a curious mixture of alcohol-induced bonhomie and obscene venom. No-one in occultism denounced more different people than Anthony Roberts did, or in more violent and intemperate terms, and yet nobody complained more bitterly than when one of his targets fought back.

Anthony Roberts was the only person I knew who could strut whilst sitting down. His demeanour was invariably morose, sullen, clownish and repulsive, driven by the fanatical application of his sterile irrationality. I sincerely believe the man to have been in some considerable degree insane, haunted by the Dark Gods that were of his own making. A ruffian who once served time in prison for attacking a Vulcan bomber with a makeshift spear, he became in his later years a spiteful prig, eunuch of language. By the age of his life when he ought to have been at his apex, the ravages of alcohol and drugs inexorably destroyed his once splendid abilities. He became utterly corrupt. Like rotten mackerel by moonlight, he shone and stunk. Anthony Roberts's mind, though in later days that was no name to call it by, turned as unswervingly to the false, the meaningless, the destructive, as the needle to the pole.

The virtues of his own work, such as they were, were quenched and smothered by the multitude and monstrosity of its vices. This crazy, cranky being, wholly degenerate, encompassed a superabundance of foulness. His words, when they were written, resembled nothing so much as ladles of boiling oil, dished out by some fiendish and demented monkey at an upstairs window upon such of the passers-by whom the wretch had a grudge against. His writings employed the dialect of the cesspool and the night-soil collector. This ordure was embroidered with such fragments of flowery rhetoric as he could lap up from the sewage of his mind. His books came from the dirty clumsy paws of a 'divine harper' whose plectrum was a muck-rake. The result was a chaos of dissonance; he was free of all prejudice, he hated all equally. His hypocrisy was perhaps his most repulsive and loathsome characteristic. Disfiguring the work of others with the slime and filth which marked his track, he enjoyed prophesying the imminent fall of modern technology, while modern medicine propped up his decaying, self-abused body. This streak of

charlatanry of a squalid New Age misogynist alcoholic hack was at its most loathsome when, in 1982, after preaching 'peace and love' for years, he visited Portsmouth to cheer the fleet on its way to the Falklands. Finally, abusing every friend and supporter, he was flung back to the situation in which nature designed that he should grovel. Impotent of everything but malevolence of purpose, he could but endeavour to multiply the miseries of others by blaspheming all that was pure and prosperous and happy. He was damned in his going out and his coming in. Stricken with malady, the heavens emptied upon him thunderbolts. The universe lit against him and the earth opened to swallow him up. A more pitiful, gasping, blustering, blathering, spitting tomfool I never knew. May his body rest in peace, and may his soul be delivered from Purgatory.

By Maggie Russell

Oldies but goldies time, folks...

Pick up a penguin

A FUNNY thing happened on the way back from the zoo - or did it? Apparently not, though your trusting correspondent was given cast-iron assurances the alleged incident took place during a conversation held in a Bishop Auckland hostelry the other day. The eminent source of the supposed story will remain nameless to protect the gullible - but the tale related goes something along the lines now described. A social club outing arrives at Flamingo Park Zoo to enjoy the wonders of the wildlife on display. During the visit little Johnny goes AWOL, prompting a parental search of the grounds. Eventually the young tyke is discovered covered in mud and other noxious substances. After a severe reprimand on the bus home the tearaway is ordered to the bath. But he is reluctant to part with his haversack. A determined struggle of to-ing and fro-ing ensues to wrest control of the backpack when what should tumble out but a penguin! Good story - but alas a quick call to the zoo clipped the wings of this particular flight of fancy. "Oh dear" was the reply. "not another one - we have had about 20 calls from Press people about this and it is entirely without foundation. It has never happened here and in fact we have not even had a penguin here for about three years - it is just one of those mythical stories that are put around and seem to gather momentum."

Which just goes to show you shouldn't count your penguin plots before they are hatched.

NORTHEN ETHU, DARLINGTON,

20/9/90.

A WOMAN expecting a baby after a sex romp at a fancy dress party is trying to track down the father, who wore a witch's costume.

The only snag is, he kept his mask on during their spot of saucery and she never found out his name.

Now 24-year-old Rae Ellen has put this advert in her local paper: "Wanted: Costume party witch who had sex with woman in clown suit. We're having a baby."

Rae said: "It would be nice to know who the father is even if he refuses to marry me."

"It must be the witch because he was the only man I had been with in the previous 11 months."

He had his wicked way with Rae when the hotel party in Jacksonville, Florida, turned into an orgy.

Loose

Rae, who works in a bank, admitted she was tipsy on pina colada and "ready for anything."

She said: "People started taking their clothes off and all hell broke loose."

I am not a tramp but one thing led to another and I wound up with this guy with a witch's outfit on."

Rae's ad has attracted dozens of crank calls, but she still doesn't know witch one's the dad.

STAR 13/10/90

A CIRCUS elephant being led under a bridge by its handler in Stockholm, Sweden, staged a sit-down strike - on top of a car.

SPOT

A STAR-studded crowd screamed with delight when crooner Julio Iglesias serenaded watching Raquel Welch at his concert in Atlantic City. Smoothie Julio was lapping up the applause until he discovered the real reason - his flies were undone! SUN, 17/10/89



"Busy won't bother you no more, boss. He's in Crete... con-crete."



UPDATE

BACKMASKING. In FF0, Andy Roberts grooved on backmasking (the practice of recording a verbal message in reverse on a record). Apparently Skeptical Inquirer has also covered the subject and Vol 14 No 1 has letters explaining Aleister Crowley prescribed listening to records backwards for the purpose of training the mind to think in reverse; to enable the student to recall previous incarnations. Meanwhile a former Burton-on-Trent pastor cum hire car driver (Burton Mail, 16/3/90: cr Paul Smith) counsels those affected by heavy metal music. Alex Maloney believes backmasking exists and purports to know of Venom using the backward message:

Satan raised in hell, raised in hell. I am going to burn your soul. Crush your bones. I am going to make you bleed, you are going to bleed for me.

He also objects to Unslaught's forward lyrics:

Happily UK rockers Judas Priest were cleared by a judge in Reno, Nevada, of causing the suicide of two young Americans in a £3.5m action accusing them of using subliminal messages to glorify Satanism and suicide (Today, 25/8/90: other tabloids followed the case but neglected the acquittal -- naturally!).

*"Violence and pain
On the power of metal we strive
Aural assault
Pounding your ears till they bleed
Unholy sound
Thrashers till death is our breed
Leather and metal the forces are
slamming the sky
Louder than hell the thrashers are
screaming to die
Dying to kill
Possessed are the thrashers on stage."*

WINDSORS. More intimate details about the Duke and Mrs Simpson have surfaced (The Independent Magazine, 22/9/90), according to a piece about details in a book by a Mr Ziegler. Reference was made to persistent rumours that the Duke was a "Jack Rabbit", ie a martyr to premature ejaculation" and went on to quote Lord "Porchey" Carnarvon to the effect that the Duke had the smallest "pecker" he ever saw. thus making more credible our correspondent's claims (FF10, p26).

AUTOCASH MACHINES. Jake Williams contributed an article on the subject (FF7, p9). We learn from the Daily Star (8/5/90) that Lyall Watson in his new book "The Nature of Things" (Hodder & Stoughton) many machines in daily use actually are alive, citing the case of desperate Stanton powers, whose hole-in-the-wall cashpoint machine had told him he had just 80p in his account. Kneeling down on the pavement he prayed for a miracle - and got one (Virgin Mary grotto equivalent?). When he checked again, the balance was £150. After more prayers it became £4,800. More prayer and it flashed up £3m. The American believed his good fortune was simply an answer to his prayers. Watson, however, claims we are assisting in the evolution of a new form of life. Must read the book!

KAMIKAZE PIGEONS. Pigeon fanciers are a funny lot (see FF7, p10) and were reported using birds carrying poison pellets to combat falcons. So many valuable pigeons had been killed and eaten by hawks in Wales that enthusiasts had resorted to the illegal campaign. Up to 30 slug pellets covered with weedkiller would be glued to the pigeons' wings. A -- gullible in our opinion -- official of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said: "These people could face fines of up to £2,000." (D Mirror, 5/5/89). What's the betting we'll never see such a case before the courts.

ARCHITECT'S BLUNDER. (See FF5, p20). "As I write this," goes on Peter Christie, of Bideford, Devon (personal communication 19/12/89), I look across a valley to see a whole row of back-to-front houses. They are known as South View Terrace, Northenden Road, and were purportedly built back-to-front to be south-facing though local lore has it they were an architect's mistake."

Dad says body in the morgue is his son — but it isn't him

EXCLUSIVE by DAVID BROWN
DRIFTER John Crawford came back from the dead — after SEVEN people, including his dad, identified a corpse as his.

His grieving parents flew from America and spent £1,800 to fly the body back with them.

While they were on the way, the phone rang at home. It was John, calling to wish his mum a happy 60th birthday. His stunned brother said: "But, you're dead!" So John, 33, went to the Glasgow home of his uncle, Jim Devlin, who

had also identified him. Jim said yesterday: "When he walked up the garden path I almost had a heart attack." The great mix-up began when a body was fished out of the River Clyde 12 days ago.



Police were puzzled, but Jim read the description and rang them.

Lighter

And when he saw the body, he found that like John, the dead man had: A brown birthmark on

GRAVE ERROR. A major article in FF9, p3, by Bob Skinner covered mistaken identification. Here's the latest! (Sun, 19/5/90).

his left arm; a Mexican moustache; long dark hair; and a cigarette lighter initialled JC.

Jim, 50, and sister Ellen McNair, 58, both identified John. So did four staff at the city's Salvation Army hostel where John had stayed. John's parents flew from Kearney, New Jersey, and dad John identified the body.

Last night uncle Jim said: "They even had a plot dug for him." And John? Last night he was drifting again.

ABC. "The Durham Cat" article by Police Constable Eddie Bell (FF7, p11) has a sequel. Or has it? One report (Echo, Sunderland; Mail, Hartlepool - S.E. Durham edition only - both 24/9/90) stated gypsies reported sighting a large black cat with yellow eyes the day after a mare in foal was found dead. The animal was covered in sweat and had strangled on its own halter where it was tethered near Spennymoor. A coal depot security guard called police when he saw a large asiatian savaging a horse but when they arrived the beast was dead. It had three puncture marks in the chest and had been licked clean. The gypsies also said they had heard a howling noise across fields. The next night they said they saw a black cat on a grass verge, standing about 3 feet high at the shoulder. They said it then slunk away towards a copse at Byers Green. However (Northern Echo, Darlington, 24/9/90), had a spokesman for Spennymoor police claim the episode was "pure fantasy", adding "what actually happened was the horse unfortunately throttled itself." odd indeed.

COT DEATHS. Discussed in FF9, p16, were cot deaths, back in the news regarding "electropollution. Roger Coghill, a Cambridge graduate in psychology, who has spent years researching this subject stated: "Cot deaths and leukaemia occur in greater numbers where people live close to power lines, but doctors do not like putting 'cot death' on a death certificate because of the parents. Cause of death is often described as perhaps 'symptomatic pneumonia'." This in a Daily Star (2/10/89) special on killer pylons and their power lines. Again "some researchers" (no names) are referred to in another scare article (D Mirror, 9/7/90). They "blame the pylons for cot deaths, suicide, broken marriages - and even marriages." Also journalistic plagiarism, too, no doubt.

FLASH IN THE PAN. Back in FF9, p16, we covered the tale of the person who lights up in the toilet and is blown off the throne. In "Privies Galore" (Alan Sutton, 1990), Mollie Harris gives a "true" account of a pipe-smoker whose remark after the inevitable bang is, "Bugger me, 'e ses, 'thas the last time I etts pickled onions for breakfast."



TUBE. the Independent Magazine (21/10/89) diarist notes "The Underground has, for better or worse, started to become a great source of urban folklore." Our contributor Nigel Pennick wrote an article on the subject well in advance (Urban Folklore of the London Underground, FFö, p8, 1987).

I strap-hang, therefore I am. Stories about being driven mad by the London Underground seem to come in waves. I liked Auberon Waugh's lurid description, in last week's *Spectator*, of how he needed all his manfulness to overcome the urge to plant a kiss on his unknown Tube-ride neighbour. Female, I hasten to add. All the same, I worry about A Waugh from time to time. Is he reaching the age for his own version of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, tormented by demons which can only be purged by public confession?

A barrister called Caradog Morgan - who sounds like a character from Thomas Malory - has just been reported as having made the discovery that, "There is a convention on the Underground that people do not look each other in the eye." (What was he up to, I wonder.) Perhaps this is what saved Waugh from sin. If he had been sitting opposite, rather than next to, the object of his temptation, he might have looked her in the eye, and been bewitched for ever. The Morgan Le Fay of the Metropolitan Line.

The Underground has, for better or worse, started to become a great source of urban folklore. It was deplorable that the first recorded rape on one of the trains took place the other day, between stations. The attacker, it was said, only spoke a single sentence (time was very short) and the victim was so terrified she obeyed. I regret to report a certain amount of speculation (also deplorable) about what the voodoo sentence actually was.

Miss Victoria Carrington had her own form of demonic possession. A freelance insurance consultant (whatever that might mean), she was fined £400 last week for attacking two fellow-passengers on the Underground, without provocation. Miss Carrington's real surname is Davey. Besides "Carrington", she is also known as "Bonham-Carter". I don't think either of the names was borrowed from the distinguished politicians of the same name, but from the soap opera star and the film star respectively. Very strange.

A MALE WEASEL ON THE TUBE

Sir: Mr Weasel lets his urbane wit carry him away down the underground of the male psyche (Up & Down the City Road, 21 October). He refers to Auberon Waugh's fantasy of planting "a kiss on his unknown Tube-ride neighbour". Although

this woman was happily unconscious of Mr Waugh's presence, she is then referred to as "the object of his temptation...the Morgan le Fay of the Metropolitan line". Mr Weasel suggests he would have been even more worried about his peer had the "Tube-ride neighbour" been male - but would the latter then have been described as a seducer, or seen in the staler light of reality as the object of a potential pass?

More disturbing still, Mr Weasel trips lightly on to refer to a recent brutal rape on the underground as a piece of "urban folklore". He identifies with the attacker ("time was very short") and invites us to speculate, while hypocritically "deploring" this activity, as to "what the voodoo sentence actually was" that made the victim comply. I expect, Mr Weasel, it wasn't so magical: just a crude threat to life. Perhaps you should talk to Ms Weasel before you write about such matters; better still, let her tell us about City Road for a change.

RUTH GARDNER
London N11

PARIS - A considerate reader telephoned yesterday to say she had been travelling on the Metro between Jussieu and Odéon, and she thought people should know what was going on down there.

She was sitting in a first-class compartment, when a man lit a cigarette. Smoking is forbidden on the Metro. Another passenger objected. An argument developed and the smoker became excited and leapt on to his seat.

A third passenger, hitherto silent, then drew a pistol and, holding it with both hands, aimed the gun at the smoker, ordering him to lie on the floor and put his hands on his head. All the other passengers in the compartment then lay on the floor of the carriage until the train reached the next station, where someone climbed to their feet and pulled the communication cord.

The reader of *The Independent* understandably changed compartments at this point. But she says the man with the pistol replaced it in his pocket before the arrival of the guard, and that he was not a plainclothes policeman.

After a pause the train continued its journey. Our reader found herself once again in the same compartment as the smoker, who treated his fellow Parisians to a lengthy complaint about what had just happened to him.

The last time something similar was reported on the Paris Métro was last year. A *clochard* (tramp) was shouting obscenities on the platform at La Bastille when a fellow passenger dressed in a suit and standing on the opposite platform, drew a dagger from his briefcase, climbed down on to the live rails, crossed over, stabbed the *clochard* to death, re-crossed the rails, replaced the dagger in the briefcase and took the next train to freedom, or lunch, or wherever he was going. Nobody tried to stop him.

Some weeks later, this story was reported in London in a somewhat improved version. According to the agony aunt of the *Evening Standard*, the businessman had cut off the *clochard's* head.

Stories often improve as they travel. I look forward to the agony aunt's improved version of the adventures of *The Independent's* reader. For instance, what happened to the cigarette? Did the smoker extinguish it before he lay on the floor? Was the armed passenger also allowed to continue his journey as though nothing unusual had happened? Did the smoker eventually light up again, or had he learnt his lesson?

We have various possibilities here. Is this a story about smokers? Or is it a story about observing the regulations on the underground railway? Does it tell us anything new about Paris? Come on Irma, we want to know.

QUESTION: Are the vapours one smells on British Rail 125 trains when they brake as harmless as British Rail tells us?

YOUR correspondent (December 18) raises the hoary chestnut of high speed train brakes.

I can assure him and your other readers that the air condi-

tioning intakes are closed during braking, so the majority of any smell that enters carriages comes through open windows at the ends of the vehicles or through the connections between the coaches.

As to the fumes emitted when the brakes are applied, we have satisfied both ourselves and the Health and Safety Executive that they constitute no hazard to the health of our customers or anyone else. — (Dr) M. J.

Andrews, Director, Occupational Health and Safety, British Railways Board, London NW1.

□ OK, we agree that the design of the ventilation system was incompetent. But are the fumes harmful or are they not? They don't smell like rubber to me. — Sam Harrison, Oxford.

QUESTION: Are floppy disks corrupted by being placed near the floor on tube trains?

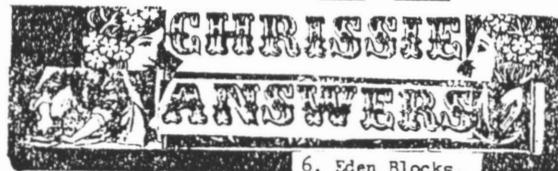
□ IT IS difficult to give a definitive answer. By the very nature of the drive equipment on Underground trains, there is a "noisy" electromagnetic environment within carriages, although this varies according to the type of train, one's position within the carriage and whether the train is accelerating or braking. It is also true

that the susceptibility of disks to corruption varies.

While we can offer no categorical guarantee that disks will not be corrupted, readers may be reassured to know that our own staff have never reported any such problems when transporting disks, nor has our Track Recording Vehicle ever suffered any corruption of data on its own sophisticated computer equipment. — David Bertram, Public Affairs Manager, London Underground, London SW1.

□ I HAVE had disks damaged in the past and I suspect that a tube ride was the cause. Now, whenever I have to transport floppy disks, I always take two copies and enclose both in a small steel box in my briefcase. — Richard Spence, Lutterworth, Leics.

The letter responding to the Independent diarist is dated 4/11/89 for completeness. The other cutting comes from *The Independent* (15/6/88, titled Parisians might stop being rude, and pigs might fly -- based on the part not relevant to use here and anyway the second half (sack the sub-editor) from Patrick Marnham's Out of France column; our monitor Mark Valentine, phew!). Oh, and the *Guardian Notes and Queries* twice covered railway matters. 125s is 28/12/89; floppy disks 12/2/90.



6, Eden Blocks,
Consett.

Dear Chrissie,

My father used to play football for Leadgate United in the N.W. Durham League (snapshot enclosed). He used to say that there were no bathing facilities after matches, home or away. Is this true?

B. Clough.

Dear Mr. Clough,

Your father was not quite correct. Most football teams in the N.W. Durham League, even in the 1950s, were without proper dressing rooms, and players often turned up for matches wearing their football gear. But there were some grounds, South Moor and Craghead in particular, where a tin bath was provided for the players to get washed in. Leadgate United's ground, behind Bradley Shops (NCB), did not have bathing facilities, which meant that players took mud home with them after games played in the rain. During the season 1949-50, two Leadgate players disappeared without trace in a quagmire at the ground of Stanley Athletic, which had notoriously bad drainage. A report of the time says that Stanley won the game 6-1 against a team reduced to nine men, after Colwell (Leadgate) had left the Stanley custodian helpless with a fierce left-foot shot after six minutes.



"You're a lucky guy, Gino. The Mafia don't usually give sporting chances!"

SUN 15/6/89.

BURLY body-builders have been given the creeps by a ghost smelling of GURRY in a gym in a former mortuary at Gosport, Hants.



"The moment I saw his car I knew I had met my Waterloo!"

NEWSLINES

END OF COLD WAR. The end of frosty relations between the West and USSR brought rumours, or course. Rumours abounded (Guardian, 8/3/90, cr. Peter Christie) that arms were being stashed away around Moscow -- "by whom and for what purpose, no one knows." Then in September (cutting no more specific), 23,000 soldiers arrived in Moscow, sparking rumours that leader Mikhail Gorbachev was to be toppled in a secret coup. The Defence Secretary insisted they were there to help with the potato harvest and annual Revolution Day parade.

FOXY LADY. Playing music for odd reasons has become fashionable. Dr John Longstaff reckons Mozart makes plants grow quicker, bigger and taste better. The retired GP's methods were commented upon by TV gardener Peter Seabrook: "It is possible that vibrations make the plants' stems grow thicker, which is better for growth." (Sun, 2/10/90). Meanwhile farmers in Ireland play very loud tapes in their fields to keep foxes away from "herds of sheep". One farmer said: "Kylie Minogue's voice is particularly effective in the night." (TV Hits, March, 1990). However, a keenels in Mansfield, Notts, plays piped pop music to stop their dogs howling. They stay quietest for Kylie Minogue songs (D Mirror, 1/10/90). At a tangent, hypnotist Bill Bakha regressed Kylie, found she was once an Irish peasant girl called Caitrin and her rake-thin figure is somehow a result of starvation that ended her previous life (News of the World, 21/5/89).



PESTILENCE. Thanks to "Pinocchio", folklore avers that a cricket is a gentle insect, but in real life the Mormon cricket is a juice-spitting, mouse-sized devourer of everything it can find. Last heard (D Mail, 12/4/90) canyons in Nevada were to be mined with poisoned bait and then were to be bombed by helicopters. At the same time (D Star, 20/4/90) spiral midges were a threat to the Mediterranean, where they could crawl into the nostrils of unwary sunbathers or into open wounds and lay up to 400 eggs, which when hatched tunnel into victims and literally eat them alive, feeding on living flesh, even brains. They were feared to be blown to Europe, or carried by ship, so the US planned to "bomb" Libya with billions of flies, dropped from warplanes in a \$55m mission to rid Gaddafi's nation of its plague (D Star, 28/3/90). Yes, the Star's stories do seem sequencewise back to front, but then (D Star, 30/4/90) they had more midges allegedly delaying the \$926m Hubble telescope project after 37 of them got inside. But back to creatures boring into you, there's the botfly, whose larvae bore into your skin and emerge 40 days later, as inch-long maggots. Then there's a tiny catfish called the candiru. "If you have a sneaky wee in an Amazonian river the candiru is attracted by the urine. The fish follows the warm fountain up to -- and into -- the source. Having found such a delightful home, the candiru decides to stay. It does so sticking out its spines to lodge itself comfortably in place. One prick, and you've been candiru'd. The explorer Redmond O'Hanlon, who wore a cricket box fronted by a tea-strainer to ward off the amoroso catfish, writes 'the pain, apparently, is spectacular. You must get to a hospital before your bladder bursts and ask a surgeon to cut off your penis.'" (Independent, 10/3/90).

ALLAH BE PRAISED! When Muslim religious leader Hussain Bahtti sliced open an aubergine at his home in Nottingham he saw the black seeds spelled the word Allah. He claims "the something happened in Birmingham and Burton-on-Trent recently." (D Mirror, Sun, D Star, 21/3/90).

HOUSING. Revealing that I had visited a show house in Seaton Carew, a senior colleague then claimed not only that builders open all windows but turn up the central heating as far as it will go, but said that somewhere in the North-East there is a secret factory which makes furniture exclusively for show houses which though smaller to fit the tiny rooms looks psychologically larger.

The salutary tale on the right comes from the Dogberry column of Police (Aug./1988). Also that year (Sun 2/11/88) two young lovers sneaked past security guards for a steamy sex session in the jacuzzi at a £1/4m show flat while puzzled visitors waited outside. It was the penthouse at Glasgow Garden Festival and after barricading themselves in for their penthouse romp complained the water was not hot enough. Suspiciously Laing Homes say the couple's romp may have created interest and increased its value. Then there's the randy couple's sex session in the Venus Probe. The Sun (5/5/89) had the pair boldly bonking where no lovers have lifted off before in front of video cameras at Kennedy Space Centre, Florida. The lusty performers, both centre security guards, thought the cameras had been turned off, but allegedly officials 1,000 miles away at mission control in Houston, Texas, were still checking. NASA men watched 22 minutes of earth-moving passion.

Peter Rogerson wrote back in 1989 about a tale in the Observer magazine -- no details -- of a foat who knows a couple who divorce, wife gets a council house, three years later she sells it, husband sells his house, they reunite and buy a mansion from the proceeds. With so much angst and envy regarding housing we can expect many more such tales. To end, there was the tale of cowboy brickies, all IRA supporters, installing secret compartments in new Belfast housing developments, under the watchful eye of a Provo leader. Unbeknown to its builders, the Poleglass estate is said to be riddled with tunnels and custom-built arms caches known as "hides". According to the Daily Star (20/3/89) the Coldstream Guards cracked the network. One unnamed senior officer said: "They've been hiding weapons ... but this is the first time I've seen hides built into the construction of buildings. How many more estates have these little extras?" It's a wonder they don't go in for foundation sacrifices! Now, read the bit on the right -- now, now -- because I want to see if you have same feeling that I have that it is very suspect. If these people are so backward, how would they understand refrigeration?

DEEP in the Mexican rainforest an anthropologist pads between Indian vil-

lages. Arriving at one she is surprised to find everyone hiding. An old woman appears: "You have come for the heads?", she asks, fearfully. "Heads, what heads?", the anthropologist replies. The woman runs off. The anthropologist goes to the capital and finds that a Frenchman has been looking for 300 head of people to work on a project. She goes to another village, still deeper in the forest. The same happens. "Don't take our heads", says the chief. "No, no," says the anthropologist, eager to set

INSPECTOR Tony Scowen of Bracknell (Thames Valley) has been house hunting. While out on patrol in uniform, he liked the look of some new houses on an estate, and wandered through the open door of the 'show house'. After inspecting downstairs, he went up to a bedroom and was sitting on one of the beds when a lady came in and enquired if she could be of assistance. "Well, how much are these houses going for?" he asked. "I'm not quite sure," she replied, "but when we bought this one about a year ago..."



"...and, had it not been for a crippling mortgage, they would have lived happily ever after."

minds at rest. "They're not wanting heads. They want people to work on a project." "No, no," says the woman. "You're wrong. They want 300 heads to bury in the foundations of a great bridge over the water. They are refrigerating them and sending them there". The anthropologist considers this: "Are you sure it's a bridge. Could it be a tunnel, the Channel Tunnel between England and France?" "Yes, yes, that's it. They are taking our heads for the Channel Tunnel."

(Guardian 14/9/90)

A real frog in his throat!

BE warned! The following is not for the squeamish.

Recently a colleague in the Mail's advertising department was parked by Hartlepool's Burn Valley roundabout.

She was checking notes on a client when her car was approached by a shambling figure.

"He was wearing a blue leather coat and didn't look very clean," she said. "He looked about in his mid-forties, but being scruffy could have been younger".

Being a hotday, the windows were drawn down.

"He poked his head through the passenger seat side window and tried to mumble something," said the nervous rep. "Then he pulled a huge frog out of his mouth".

Fearing he was going to throw the liberated amphibian at her, she accelerated away at speed.

This leaves us with the mystery of why he had the beast



in his mouth in the first place. Talk of having a frog in your throat!

Could it instead have been a toad? I'm reminded of a tale that American hippies lick certain toads, finding that the fluid they exude to ward off predators gives better hallucinations than the drug L.S.D.

A news item in the Daily Star for June 1 also claimed four junkies in Australia have already died from sipping tea made from toads' skin.

Toad-licking is allegedly now illegal in the United States, but dropouts still roam California's Santa Cruz mountains with wriggling toads in their mouths for days.

Has the craze reached Hartlepool's "high society"?



• The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of The Mail or its journalists.

SOME of the best stories in town never actually appear in The Mail and it's probably a good thing if this one is anything to go by.

A bloke was driving along Catcote Road in Hartlepool when a black cat ran out in front of his car and he couldn't help but run over the poor thing. He stopped the car and went back to examine the animal only to find that it was lying on the grass verge apparently asleep.

In order to do the kind thing he got a jack from the boot of his car and hit the prostrate animal over the back of the head to put it out of its misery.

At this point an old lady came screaming from a nearby house that the many had killed her cat. Neighbours gathered round and heard the old lady telling them that her cat often lay by the side of the road watching the world go by.

The argument raged until the police were called and they quickly settled the matter. The cat that had been knocked down was in fact still wedged under the wheel arch of the bloke's car while the poor old moggy by the side of the road had found that not all cats have nine lives.

ITEM ON LEFT: This was written by yours truly in The Mail, Hartlepool (9/8/89) and the rep was Elaine Taylor (pictured). Story's genuine enough -- just seems to be mundane Hartlepool imitating trendy California. ITEM ON RIGHT: This apparently "new" pet's ordeal UBI set in Hartlepool appeared also in The Mail (1/9/90), the columnist subsequently received a letter, whose writer pointed to the tale's recent ubiquity, having heard it first in London and since elsewhere.

THE weird stories are still rolling in. This week's true yarn involves a Stockton pet shop. It seems that a bloke walked into the shop and asked how much the pet rabbits were. The assistant told the bloke they were £1.50 each and went off to serve another customer.

When the assistant came back the lad said: "I'll have two of those rabbits, and have you got something to carry them in." The assistant went out the back to get a cardboard box and gave it to the bloke. The bloke looked puzzled and said that a bag would do. He then proceeded to arrange both rabbits and popped them into the box.

He gave the assistant a fiver and waited for his change and said: "I'll come here again, your rabbits are a quid cheaper than the butcher's next door."

ITEM RIGHT: Actually this one (29/9/90) arrived as a letter without names or locations. Beware a fertile imagination. ITEM LEFT: Damian Spellman a reporter, produced this gem (6/10/90).

AFTER the success of my story about the Catcote Road cat I was told a true story about a rabbit.

A young family were living in a terraced house in the town and the kids had a hutch in the back yard with a pet rabbit that everybody idolised.

Every day the old lady across the back street used to bring scraps of food for Thumper and she used to spend a few minutes chatting to the fluffy, little creature.

When the family moved to a brand new flat in Wynyard Road there was no place for the rabbit so they decided that seeing as the old lady had showed such devotion they should ask if she wanted it.

Come moving day, rabbit and hutch were wheeled over the back street for old Martha and she used to spend a few minutes chatting to the fluffy, little creature. Some weeks later the family were in the town centre when they spotted Martha in Marks and Spencer.

Naturally they were keen to know how Thumper the rabbit was. "How's the rabbit," asked the father. "Great," said the old lady, "the meat just dropped off the bone."

READERS' LETTERS

From Nigel Pennick, of Cambridge. Nov 8, 1989:

With Games of the Gods (review FF9, p21), the publisher cut out the bibliography of several hundred entries and also the index. Publishers are always tampering. Thorsons' editor cut out my reference to the Nazis being a criminal organization in Practical Magic in the Northern Tradition. Quite why, I cannot understand, it is very galling to have them alter one's carefully-chosen words, too. They edited out the word boniness from a runic description in my next one. Incomprehensible!

From Dr Karl P N Shaker, of West Bromwich. Also Nov 8, 1989:

Many thanks for publishing my review of Lake Monster Traditions -- I'm pleased that it was of use; and for reviewing my mystery cats book (Mystery Cats of the World, reviewed FF9, p22). I considered it to be a very fair review, and am most grateful to you for this. With respect to my omission of any in-depth analysis of the paranormal aspects, I can say in all honesty that within my book's original synopsis I had devoted an entire chapter to this subject, writing it up in much the same way as suggested by you in your review. Additionally, I had included a chapter on mysterious domestic cats, eg winged and so-called "flying" cats, out-of-place ferals, bizarre alleged hybrids such as coon-cats and "cabbits" (cat x rabbit crossbreeds -- actually just Manx cats with unusually long hind limbs!), and so forth. However, both of these, as well as certain sections of text and other chapters, had to be omitted from the final manuscript to keep it to a manageable length -- had it been any longer, its price would have been rather higher, which, as it is a specialised book to begin with, may have been detrimental to its selling potential. Equally, it was for reasons of space that in my British coverage I remained principally with the more familiar geographical areas rather than attempting too detailed and expansive a coverage nationwide, so I hope that you'll forgive my apparent "geographical chauvinism". I'm delighted that you found my book to be of such interest, and I can but hope that it proves to be of interest and use to other cryptozoological enthusiasts.

CONTRIBUTORS

HELEN SMITH and TERRY SYKES are strangers to me, but I was fascinated by their efforts to solve the mystery of a supposed steam locomotive buried in an embankment near Garsdale. The article reproduced comes from the Darlington and Stockton Limes (The mystery of the loco chimney, 13/4/90), being reproduced in changed and extended form elsewhere (Searching for Lost Treasure, in Steam Railway, June, 1990). My kind of subject!

MAGGIE RUSSELL is also a stranger -- and, perhaps, I hope she remains so -- whose obituary of Anthony Roberts arrived with a one-paragraph letter sent from Chichester, Sussex. My only comment is that the obituaries of Tony probably said as much about the obituarists as they did of their subject.

PAUL SCREETON, Journalist, author, magazines editor since 1969 and trolley pusher (his wife works at the local Presto supermarket part-time). All being well, 1991 will see published a lengthy study of the Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend by Printability Publishing, of Wolviston.

BOOK REVIEWS

CURSES! BROILED AGAIN! by JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND
(W W Norton, £12.95)

Another fine collection of the best and most modern urban belief tales around. Here is another round-up of contemporary legends presented wittily with his usual blend of entertainment and erudition.

The title is taken from the tale about the girl seeking an attractive golden body who repeatedly visited the same tanning parlour at different times of the day. Soon she began feeling ill, so consulted a doctor. He diagnosed that she had cooked her insides.

More than 70 legends are given here, many adapted from America's leading folklorist's popular national syndicated column, "Urban Legends," included in this selection are legends about sex, cars, pets, scandals, business and academia.

It has long been my argument that all contemporary UBI's have their antecedents; also that at some point they become actuality. To take two examples from Brunvand's book to argue the latter:

1) "Postcards From Little Buddy". This is the one about a Scottish boy in a hospital near Glasgow dying of leukemia or cancer. His last wish isto see his named added to the Guinness Book of Records as collector of more postcards than anyone else in nistory. According to Brunvand the book has no such entry. However, UK readers will recall media coverage of Craig Shergold (pictured), of Carshalton, Surrey, whose get-well cards were a major headache for the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. At this point figures get nazy (funny this, as journalists are dab hands at compiling expenses forms mixing inspiration, imagination, fiction and greed). Five million cards got him into the book the previous November (D Star 6/4/90); he had 7½ million cards, so smashing the previous record of 1,200,265 (Sun 6/4/90); previous record was 1,001,265 (Sun 10/4/90). Then there's also cancer boy Robert Hazeldine who got 600 hats in ten days to claim another Guinness record (Sun 10/6/90).

2) "Bleeping Smoke Alarm". Here a peeping sound is heard in the basement and an exterminator sent for. He traces the sound to technology, not rodents. He had discovered the smoke alarm was signifying it required new batteries. In Britain, kind-hearted Cicely Hammond, of Newton Abbot, Devon, left titbits for a bird stuck up her chimney for two weeks -- only for RSPCA inspector Len Rankin to discover the culprit was the detector alarm going "cheep" to warn that its batteries were down. Hang on though! Wouldn't the alarm conk out within two weeks if the batteries were running low?

then there's "Roaming Gnomes", a sort of slice of peripheral folklore. When I worked in Hull 20 years ago, undergraduates had acontest for who could "kidnap" the most. The scam came out when police stopped a student and found several in his car and placards on the back seat proclaiming "I SAY GNO TO GNOMES". A recent report showed Flora Cooke the kidnapper meant business when he cut an ear off Henry the fishing dwarf and posted it to her with a ransom demand for 3,000 black jellybabies, 265 Smarties and a Findus fishfinger.

"Waiting For The Iceman" reminds me of a supposedly true tale. My neighbour Derek Ness recalled how when a PE teacher his wife Kath was usually dressed in a tracksuit. One day she got on a bus wearing a dress, paid for her ticket and then recollection crossed the driver's face. "Sorry," he said. "I didn't recognise you with your clothes on."



"Shooting the Bull" also reminded me of English variations. Firstly an Urban Man captures a dog he believed to be worrying sheep, but the police to whom he took it explained that in the countryside there were working sheepdogs. American farmers warn hunters not to snoot their beasts by painting the word "COW" or "SHEEP" on their stock in day-glo colours on the side of animals. In a book (West Country Mysteries, introduced by Colin Wilson, Bossiney Books, 1985) there is chapter on "The Exmoor Beast", by Jillian Powell, from which comes: "A number of dogs had already been shot and one man was rumoured to have protected his black labrador by painting DOG in large white letters on either flank." (See FF10, p13).

If you are suffering UBT book starvation, "Curses! Broiled Again!" will be as welcome as the proverbial hair of the dog. Let's hope there'll be another one from him along soon.

MAGICAL TALES by R J STEWART (Aquarian Press, £6.99)



This book will appeal to anyone intrigued by British magical tradition or, say, the books of Alan Garner. the 13 stories are full of wisdom and enjoyment, for so they should in a book dedicated to reawakening interest in story-telling as an art and magical tradition. In his introduction, Stewart discusses the traditional ancient roots of magical tales and epics, and how this powerful imaginative process might be reinstated for renewed psychic health today. In the second part, the author explains how to use his self-penned stories for visualisation, meditation and personal development. Don't be misled into assuming this is New Age clap-trap.

THE RESTORATION OF COCK ROBIN by NORMAN ILES (Robert Hale, £11.95)

The Victorians, being careless disguisers, means the task of undoing their prudery is not too difficult. Iles argues that "nursery rhymes are our forgotten store of sexual song. My work is to restore them to their original forms, and to prove my restorations correct Imagery is my tool; and sense is my goal."

Iles bridges the culture gap by reawakening forgotten symbolism in nursery rhymes and looking beyond nonsense aspects. It is an important task, for as he points out, "sexual suppression is part of intellectual suppressions."

Years ago it was pointed out to me that such rhymes as "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle" taught starlore; that "Jack and Jill" explained the practice of dewpond construction on hilltops; and "Ladybird, ladybird" engendered solar myth and may even have been written in Neolithic times.

But Iles' thrust is aimed at "the palace of entrails," putting flesh back on "the man all skin and bone." The girner leers at the sheila-na-gig female exhibitionist.

The first two sections deal with courtship rhymes and marriage rhymes; restoring to their proper place such familiar pieces as "Goosey, Goosey Gander" and "Dance to Your Daddy."

Many nursery rhymes require a great deal of restoration work. For instance "The Old Man" tries to pretend to be about a real lady going to a real church and sees a dead man. But the church symbolises the vagina, it is a man not a woman visiting and the dead man is in actuality the spent phallus. Here the man's sex was chopped off; the adulterator preferring to scare children with a corpse rather than tell the sexual truth. Such is the background and problem, the repression we are dealing with.

Another section covers carols. Iles argues that a Christian carol is a contradiction and Christianity has no customs of its own. In seeking to

redress the balance here, he includes Yule wassails. Does the author know "The Twelve Days of Christmas" has been given new words with types of locomotives substituted when steam buffis celebrate after running Thomas the Tank Engine Santa specials? This is secularisation to match British Rail's sectorisation. And I'll never look at Jacob's Ladder in Castle Eden Dene the same way again ... tut, tut.

THE LEY HUNTER'S MANUAL by ALFRED WATKINS (Aquarian, £4.99)

As editor of a The Ley Hunter (1969-76), I guess I am well qualified to review this paperback reprint. Since 1927 when Watkins published this field guide to what he believed to be prehistoric trackways, the subject of aligned ancient monuments has grown into the wider discipline of "earth mysteries".

Watkins' vision is as apposite today as it was in the Twenties; since refined and seen reproduced in the esoteric patterns on every continent and in every age.

Doyen of ley hunters John Michell provides a succinct introduction, placing Watkins' work on linear patterns in a modern context. He invites the reader to test the reality of leys by following Watkins' tips to the secret countryside of sacred sites.

THE SCARS OF EVOLUTION by ELAINE MORGAN (Souvenir Press, £12.95)

the idea of an aquatic phase in human evolution as presented here is extremely attractive. The arguments are cogent, forceful and tantalising. The aquatic ape theory certainly merits attention.

Convinced? Well, not really, but I've not read sufficient literature to challenge the idea. I've certainly never been convinced by Darwin, but that is partially, I suppose, in reaction to socio-Darwinism.

The arguments for man's nakedness, bipedalism, sweating, eccrine gland, tears, fat layer, speech and face to face intercourse are strong.

The book is full of insights and factual minutiae to back up the arguments. Also it is not without humour. For instance, discussing animals' salt hunger: in the wooden houses of parts of Montana, men had to abandon their habit of urinating against their verandah posts because porcupines came out of the woods at night and were liable to chew right through the posts for the sake of the salt in the urine-soaked timber."

Lengthy discussion of ventro-ventral mating (missionary position) which also includes orang-utans has a funny side. The female "fidgeted and looked around" (human equivalent would be "the ceiling could do with artexing") or "resumed eating, reaching out and plucking fruits as the male was thrusting" (would be the prostitute eating fish and chips as the sailor copulated standing up).

The aquatic ape theory is presented forcefully and with an international conference on the notion held in 1987, some kind of watershed seems to have been reached. The savannah theory must be in retreat.

Controversial, informative and a rattling good scientific read.

PLACES OF POWER by PAUL DEVEREUX (Blandford Press, £14.95)

This book quotes the experience of myself and wife touching a Whin Sill granite block as a major contribution to the rumour which has circulated for many years that people can receive shocks from standing stones similar to those caused by static electricity. I wrote about this experience in my book "Quicksilver Heritage" in 1974 and the stone at Hart Village, Cleveland, has continued to cause tingling sensations occasionally. Not just a rumour: a fact.

Equally admirably, Devereux's book sets out to turn legend into fact; also exorcise fantasy and replace it with stubborn scientificism. Working from the persistence of rumours of places of power, Devereux looks first at the traditions and record of ancient peoples and

societies, through folklore and the whole gamut of legends associated with megaliths' effects and doings, to anecdotal personal experiences and on to a growing and hardening body of measurable, scientific work.

The second part discusses radiation (I read somewhere that the lavatory in Ivybridge, Devon, police station has the highest radon count in Britain), ultrasound, magnetism and light phenomena.

The reports of individual sites brought back memories or visits to the majority of megalithic sites in northern Britain during the early eighties with fellow researcher John Watson. Though enormously positive outdoors recreation and fascination, my only disappointment was that we experienced almost complete lack of earth energy evidence. Anyway, a few observations on some sites Devereux describes: Castlerigg, visited three times, where there WAS a single area of power in the rectangular section within the circle; Long Meg, where a woman said she had played truant from her husband and son's fishing expedition to visit the site after reading of it in "Quicksilver Heritage"; Twelve Apostles, where when I visited it had been desecrated by a bonfire and was strewn with two-litre cider containers (called "green milk" by Hartlepool's liquid breakfast subculture); Moel Ty Uchaf, where Devereux neglects to mention two in-depth articles in The Ley Hunter No 53 and The News No 5 (Forster Times forerunner) of the devastatingly significant Llandrillo rumblings from Arthur's Table event of 1974; Carn Euny Iogou, to which Paul and Charla Devereux took me earlier this year when I stayed a few days with them and where I felt distinct power rising from the ground through my body for first a time in half a decade; and there's the excellent rhyme:

First was the geology,
then came the lights;
next appeared people,
and then the stones.

(If it seems familiar, try listening to Dire Straits' "Telegraph Road".)

The third part of the guide looks at what Devereux calls "patterns, possibilities and connections." From early in my interest in earth mysteries I have been sensitive to certain sites; generally receiving a sensation at the back of the head, sometimes a feeling of a spiral vortex from the ground and sometimes a lightheadedness.

Though it is generally out of bounds, I felt a deep desire to visit the crypt at York Minster during the early-80s and persuaded an official to open it for viewing. The senior cleric, my wife and I were joined by other curious sightseers and given a talk on the crypt, but though no one else appeared distressed by the location I had to hold on to my wife for fear of fainting as the power was so strong. I felt this to a lesser degree at Lavington crypt, Lady Chapel near Osmotherley, both Yorkshire, and at other Christian edifices. Megalithic sites have had less effect, though the megalithic circle was similar and also in Aberdeenshire, Sun Honey was a decidedly cold and evil place.

From visiting Scottish souterrains, I am convinced their purpose was for vision quests. Also that at such places a form of radiation was no doubt mixed with hallucinogens for purposeful spiritual inquiry. Sadly modern graveyards and the derelict engine shed shrines of a departed steam era attract an adolescent subculture of solvent-sniffing shamans.

As Devereux points out, radiation is inherently harmful to living tissue, but perhaps homeopathic doses of radiation could have therapeutic effects.

On a more mundane level, I must admit it was only Devereux's note about the epithet "earth mysteries" being given to the multi-disciplinary inquiry "by an unknown journalist in 1974" that summoned my attention to the fact I had always assumed Devereux himself had coined it.

More fanciful minds than mine have been at work also. Devereux notes extreme rumours associated with the Dragon Project work, initiated to produce data on energy emissions at sites. One was that Californian coordinator John Steele was a CIA agent and that a project monitor had died from unspecified energy effects at the Kolleright Stones.

The book buzzes with insights and leads to all manner of personal

speculation. Why for instance does the ultrasound signal occur at dawn and not nightfall? Is this way we have Rising Sun rather than Setting Sun public houses? Now we're really talking about alternative spiritual homes. Places of power-ful aie. Mine's a pint of Steam Bitter next time I'm down in Penzance, Paul.

GNOSTICISM : ITS HISTORY AND INFLUENCE by BENJAMIN WALKER (Crucible, 26.99). THE CHALICE AND THE BLADE by RIANE EISLER (Mandala, 27.99)

I, and many other earth mysteries adherents, are frequently expected to be straightforward pagans. Where this nonsense come from is unimportant; it is more to the point that thinking BM followers are likely to be gnostic Christians.

Gnosticism sprang from many ancient cultures, taking elements from the collapsed pagan world and adding to it their own versions of Christianity. It sees the cosmos itself as intrinsically evil, created by the Demiurge, while the true God is utterly remote and a merciful and good God the Father. Christ is fundamental to the doctrine of salvation, a predicament divorced from morality or good works of faith, but dependent upon a kind of transcendent knowledge. This is gnosis (meaning knowledge) and gnosticism is all about secret knowledge.

Its secrecy and contradictions make any study difficult, but the author has unravelled texts and opinions to form as coherent an account as could be expected. This work of exemplary scholarship covers the texts, concepts of their cosmology, Man, Christ's mission, disciples, practices, sects and influences.

They were extremists, particularly in sexual activity, which is fully described. There was incest, intercourse with children, sodomy and they even found St Paul's statement in Acts 20:34 to glorify masturbation. As if anticipating the Satanic child abuse/sacrifice moral panic of 1990, Epiphanius records the abortion of the unborn foetus, its extraction and consumption along with honey, pepper and other condiments to avoid vomiting.

The author attempts also a brief chronology indicating gnosticism's expansion after the early Christian centuries.

It is a work of solid scholarship and also an inspiring study.

Riane Eisler, in her adept reconstruction of prehistory and history, also uses gnosticism to bolster her argument. With passion, she develops a theory of cultural evolution, where we can if we choose effectively intervene. Eisler's thesis contains two models: the domination model, symbolised by the blade (where one half of society dominates the other) and partnership model, symbolised by the chalice (where men and women are valued equally). Not a feminist rant, but a call for a spirit of co-operation as existed in prehistoric societies.



ROSEBERRY TOPPING . . . is an impressive landmark towering above the village of Great Ayton and presents a platform for spectacular views. There is much folklore attached to this conical-shaped, mini-Matterhorn. It is supposedly named after the infant prince Oswy, who was drowned near its summit as prophesied.

Cursed by Old Nan, the witch of Farndale

FARNDALE is best known for its spring display of daffodils, but it is also associated with a notorious witch.

She was Nan Hardwicke, who had a relation who lived at Lowna, one of the remote dale's hamlets. Nan's visits were regular though she was rarely welcomed.

Folk were puzzled over Nan's ability to travel so rapidly over the moors between Danby and Lowna; the answer being that she changed magically into a hare for the journey. Her witchcraft is also displayed in the following tale.

She had crossed the moors to visit Lowna because her cousin's daughter was being wed that day. Although not invited because of her peculiarities, she nevertheless arrived just as the bridal procession returned from the church.

It was customary among dale families to offer a bed overnight to long-distance travellers. Nan had come ten miles from Danby (they did not know in the form of a hare) and expected due hospitality. However, every bed was spoken for, some with more than one occupant. She was told there was no room.

A kindly bridesmaid, however, offered to take her to her home, where she could share her bed. On hearing this, the bride, not realising Nan was within hearing distance, commented: "I know she's a relation of mine, but I'd never have that filthy old thing in my house."

Nan spun around and snapped, "No, but you'd sleep with him!", pointing to the bridegroom. Then she added ominously, "Ah've let tha be wedded, but ah'll stop tha being bedded."

And with that she stormed out of the celebrations.

Quickly her curse was forgotten.

BOOZING

Boozing continued and eventually, as was custom, the bride went to bed some time before her new spouse. One of the bridesmaids — the bridegroom's sister — whispered that the lads intended stopping him reaching his bride that night, but on such occasions the bridesmaids always attempted to frustrate such scheming. Consequently they organised a game of blindman's bluff.

When the music ceased all the girls blew out the candles they carried, while the men kissed the girl nearest. In the confusion the bridegroom slipped out of the house to where a ladder had been placed up to the bride's window. It did not quite reach far enough, so the girls had lashed a

towel to the window frame and it dangled for his final climb.

Quickly he climbed and as he was just about to reach safety, the revellers realised what was happening, dashed outside and knocked away the ladder. The surprise caused the bridegroom to let go, he fell to the ground and broke his leg.

Old Nan's curse had come true. The book has many other persons of all shades between the Devil and the saintly here.

■ "Folk Tales From the North York Moors" by Peter N. Walker, published by Robert Hale, 25.95.

Crayke is featured for its connection with Durham's Saint Cuthbert, whose body was hidden there for four months after his death in AD687. History claims "Cuddy" is buried in Durham Cathedral, but legend avers the skeletal remains found in 1827 were not his, but those of a substituted body.

Another tale with plenty of rival locations to choose from is that of the whereabouts of King Arthur and his sleeping Knights of the Round Table. While Richmond Castle has this strand within its rich folklore, Walker

gives the argument for Freeborough Hill, nowadays a magnet for the modern myth of flying saucers, as a skywatchers' centre, and also has a horticultural reputation for the quality of its magic mushrooms.

The following chapter on Fryup is about fairy rings and the very real fear to the impressionable of being taken away by the fairies if one runs more than nine times around one of these. Some unidentified flying objects spotters even believe such natural circles are evidence of "saucer nests".

WHITE HORSE

From more traditional folklore come the several tales of knights vanquishing dragons; the merman of Skinninggrove and mermaids of Stalthea; white mare legends of Sutton Bank metamorphosing with the White Horse of Kilburn Hill figure and allegedly bottomless Lake Gormire; plus the very good reason why people supposedly eat Yorkshire pudding separately and first and in Yorkshire.

All in all, a fascinating glimpse into folklore and spur to get out and about and discover the places where extraordinary events supposedly took place.

—PAUL SCRETON

THE BIG WHEEL by Bruce Thomas (Viking, £12.99)

Marginally folkloric, I have personal reasons for reviewing this book here.

On the level of general interest, it begins with a rock musician telling how he finds touring America endlessly repetitive — he's referring to each town looking identical — yet Bruce Thomas has created a gem of an autobiographical travel book. Also, because *The Road* is central to modern mythology it takes on a wider perspective of interest for any folklorist. This is Jack Kerouac for the Nineties; rock 'n' roll touring viewed with perception and wit.

Towards the end there is a strange chapter set near Sizewell nuclear power station, whose local fishermen tell the author of "catching fish with giant tumours and of fish that glow slightly in the dark... the blessings of Thatcher's acid reign...."

It is no wonder that the narrator can take America as his main canvas and portray it colourfully, for Stockton-born Thomas trained at Middlesbrough Art College and worked as a commercial artist in an advertising agency and a Teesside newspaper before the lure of the rock merry-go-round. At one point he comments: "It didn't matter that neither of us was an old black man from the Delta or Chicago. We were supremely qualified to play the Blues. We were both ex-art students."

This book is based on his time with Elvis Costello and The Attractions, of which he was bass player, 1977 to 1987. Earlier he was in Village, a group which also included Peter Bardens (son of ghost books author Dennis) and drummer Bill Porter (who wrote for *The Ley Hunter* while I was its editor).

The title *The Big Wheel*, from the showy round big wheel, is a metaphor for endless touring and Thomas's description of life on the road is a roller-coaster of its highs and lows; a rock survivor's memoirs.

It is full of keen observation ("I noticed a bumper sticker: A SMITH & WESSON BEATS 4 ACES. This certainly wasn't SAVE THE WHALE country.") and another bumper sticker ("IN THE EVENT OF THE RAPTURE, THIS VEHICLE WILL BE DRIVERLESS.") or ("He was the

SHAMANISM by MIRCEA ELIADE (Arkana, £8.99) and YOGA by MIRCEA ELIADE (Arkana, £8.99).

Before Carlos Castaneda, Eliade was the student's route to perceptions on the mysterious figure of the shaman. Eliade's true scholarship linked religion, psychology, sociology and ethnology, analysing shamanism's techniques, symbolisms and mythologies.

His chunky tome on yoga looks at the ascetic techniques with regard to technique, religion, alchemy and shamanism.

EARTH MYSTERIES by MICHAEL HOWARD (Robert Hale, £13.95)

Who could hold a candle to this man? Who else could concoct such a cauldron of plagiaristic flotsam -- molars of Michell, waist of Watkins, dewlap of Devereux, brains of Bords, penis of Pennick and scrotum of Screeton?

There is not a single original thought or fact or any attempt at differentiating what is fact and what is surmise. For someone involved in earth mysteries for two decades, the charge of naivete would be ludicrous; this was either written for self-glory or self-aggrandisement. This must be the most sloppy scissors and paste jobs EA has ever suffered and though hardly likely to harm the subject, the author deserves censure, if not total alienation by the movement (Salman Rushdie, Howard makes your insult seem small fry). Perhaps Howard will make amends by donating his royalties to the Dragon Project.

Finally, Howard writes of a "quantum leap in the rock's consciousness." Whether rock as primitive "life" is never considered, but like many before him Howard confuses "quantum" with "enormous", whereas it actually means "negligible". Like so much else here, we get superficial and dubious thought, undigested and unconsidered. You could with honesty get away with it in the early Seventies; the Nineties demand more and much more. Blow out the candle and tomorrow it'll burn just as dim again.

FIRE IN THE SKY by JENNY RANGLES (£1.50 inc p&p, cheques to BUFORA Ltd., C/o 37 Heathbank Road, Stockport, Cheshire.

Impressive booklet on the well-known Peter Day UFO movie of an alleged UFO over Buckinghamshire. This 1973 case with 23 seconds of footage purporting to show a true flying saucer has been the subject of much speculation. In this meticulously-researched monograph, BUFORA Director of Investigations Randles goes over all the testimonies and interviews witnesses herself. There are maps and its only drawback is lack of actual photographs. There are plenty of possibilities here and the presence of an American military jet which subsequently crashed, leaves this reviewer with few doubts that the film must show this F-111 fighter in trouble before its eventual demise. Nevertheless, others will come to other conclusions, and this second case history from BUFORA is a worthy addition to serious ufology.

THE INHABITED SOLAR SYSTEM by JIMMY GODDARD (70p inc p&p from J. Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey)

Jimmy has steadfastly supported the Space Brothers line in ufology for decades. He is well aware that this notion is denigrated by most; even those who embrace the extraterrestrial hypothesis. The idea of cosmic guardians with mankind's welfare at heart does appear touchingly naive.

The booklet is produced by the STAR Fellowship, originally founded by Tony Wedd to create a bond between Earthmen and denizens of other worlds. Not surprisingly much of this booklet has a dated feel: Adamski and Hunt Williamson appear and are lauded; there is support for solexmal, the apparent interlingua of the solar system (much of the work taken up with attempts at translation). Another familiar strand is

Ghostly visions

Spinechiller by Peter and Mary Harrison. A VISITOR to a holiday flat in Whitby glimpses a spectral girl exactly like herself and then again in an old painting in an art gallery. Spooky!

This book is a collection of such authentic ghost stories -- experience undergone by ordinary people. The section on the North of England includes a woman who awoke in a room in

Barnard Castle to witness a dozen bone-thin people stretching out stick-like arms as if trying to rise out of the floor. The next morning the owner asked her if she would like to see the dungeons in the cellars where at one time men had been imprisoned, and tortured. There are many more such spine-chilling tales. Published by Sinclair, £4.99.

goalie. His game was modelled on the Ancient Mariner, 'who stopped one in three.'") and ("here was a guy who made Syd Barrett look like a bank clerk."); and great one-liners ("Now is the winter of our discotheque."), ("The world had been Coca-Colonized.") or ("I bet his house was called Chew Guevara."); and perfect descriptions (vomit "lying there like a pointillist painting."), ("wore so much make-up that it probably had to be hauled to her face by block and tackle"), ("Instinctively I turned to the centre-spread -- aptly named.") and ("coat of many curls.").

More important, however, are the descriptions of separate realities, like when he visits the Magic Pawnshop and in a dream meets a Navaho Indian without claiming a true Castaneda-like experience.

Towards the end there is also a sensitive return to childhood, dreams of being on an A4 class Pacific locomotive footplate and inevitable wet dreams.

To sum up, this travelogue makes our beloved M25 look like the road to Paradise!

conspiracy theorising and the writer suggests reasons for space agencies doctoring evidence to hide the truth of civilisations on other planets from us.

Jimmy admits he is an eternal optimist and ufological romantic. There is a strong *deja vu* to this pamphlet, the Fifties filtering through with the benign beings waiting for us to behave ourselves so we can join the galactic federation. There is a powerful emotional appeal here, almost religious, but it seems intellectual gossamer to me.

Yet it would be equally hasty to assume Adamski was a total charlatan, but he most certainly didn't fly from Saturn in a spaceship. Subtle psychic components must have been active, but what?

It would be easy to dismiss this as a document of delusion, or literary "time warp", but there may be a more substantial structure to this sincerely held view than that of the popular unathomed psychological counterpoint or fashionable earthlights.

STONEHENGE SCROLLS. GLASTONBURY TREASURES. DRAGON TREASURES. EXPLORING ROCK ART. CELTIC SECRETS. Edited by Donald L. Cyr (From 800 Palermo Drive, Santa Barbara, CA, 93105, U.S.A. \$8+p&p)

Five large-size lavishly-produced paperbacks from "The Best of Stonehenge Viewpoint Series". Good friend of mine Donald has been coming over to Britain intermittently for two decades. Most of the material here was written by Donald applying Isaac Vail's canopy climate theory to ancient artifacts Donald associated with the crystal sky and hidden halo ideas.

"Stonehenge Scrolls" covers articles between 1970 and 1987; his first trip -- or expedition -- being in 1973, when he first stayed with us (I'm there on page 47 with former mutton-chop whiskers!). Written with verve, enthusiasm and mental agility.

"Glastonbury Treasures" concentrates on the Heart of Avalon, the mystical Somerset landscape. Additional to the Glastonbury Zodiac are articles on other terrestrial figures, Tor and all the components of this mystical centre.

"Dragon Treasures" covers transatlantic voyages, feng shui and much controversial interpretations.

With "Exploring Rock Art", Donald enters the perilous waters of epigraphy. However, his warning in his introduction is timely: "Whenever a dissident is censored or whenever an 'unknown' is discouraged by his so-called betters, our overall system is impoverished." Much to interest students of early voyages, shamanism, ogam and other mysteries.

Family names in Scottish tartans is one of the many "Celtic Secrets" surprises in store for those who did not get the magazine regularly during the Eighties.

Will Donald consider my study of earth mysteries development, "Seekers of the Linear Vision," which he serialised worthy of this treatment?

IN CONCLUSION



Craig... 16million cards

Craig is a champ, thanks to The Sun

By RUKI SAYID

BRAVE cancer boy Craig Shergold said "Thank you My Sun" last night — after becoming the official champ for the most get-well cards ever received.

Craig, 10, wept with joy after making it into the 1991 edition of the Guinness Book of Records.

The youngster, who underwent radiation therapy after having a brain tumour removed, sobbed: "I could never have done it without The Sun and its readers."

Smashed

Our caring readers — as well as showbiz stars such as Kylie Minogue, Jason Donovan and Frank Bruno — sent Craig an amazing 16,250,692 cards.

They smashed the previous record in the book — to be launched in London on Monday — of 206,120.

Craig is still an outpatient at the Royal Marsden Hospital in Sutton, Surrey.

But mum Marion said: "When Craig broke the record he was like a little boy reborn."

"The cards are still flooding in — we have nearer 21million now."

SUN 9/10/90

I am assured that the following story is true, although it is not one for animal lovers. At the height of the recent heat wave, a lorry driver was travelling through a peaceful Wiltshire hamlet, when a cat ran under his wheels. He stopped and saw a cat lying on the footpath. Taking a spade from the lorry, he went back and was surprised to detect signs of breathing. Realising the poor creature must have massive internal injuries, he put it out of its misery with one blow from the spade. As no-one was around he drove off. An hour later, police called at the depot and they asked who had been driving that particular lorry that afternoon. The driver came forward, and the police asked him if he had been involved in an accident. While he was telling them the sad story of the cat, one PC invited him to look in the rear wheel arch, and there were the remains of his victim. It transpired that a distraught old lady had rung the police to say that her Tiddles had been sunning himself on the path, when a lorry had stopped, and a maniac with a spade...

There's no need for sick tales

I WONDER if I am the only Mail reader who finds distasteful in the extreme the series of weird stories which John Pool is currently including in his Punchlines.

Each example of sick humour centres on cruelty to some animal and presumably the readers are supposed to find these stories hilarious.

Frankly, I find nothing remotely amusing about a cat being killed by mistake and his distressed owner complaining to the car driver. The latest story of the pet shop rabbits seems equally as sick.

If, as I suspect, these are merely tall stories, I can only pity someone in John Pool's position who finds them sufficiently amusing for him to want to share them with others.

One wonders just how far he will be prepared to go to provide a cheap laugh for the more insensitive members of the community while leaving the rest of his readers with an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

May we hope that at last he has scraped the barrel and will now move on to more interesting fare in his column.

Bored Reader

Billingham.

Ozzy 'suicide song'

BRITISH rock star Ozzy Osbourne was last night facing a £10 million law suit over two U.S. teenagers who shot themselves after listening to one of his songs. The fans' parents claim the track, *Suicide Solution*, contained the words "Take the gun and try it". Osbourne says this has been misinterpreted.



OZZY: Law suit

better to have more than less! We've saved for next issue three pages of magazine reviews and three of photocopylore. Briefly on this page we update material on previous pages. Cancer boy Craig is on p20; rock rumour on p12 (Ozzy is D Express, 5/10/90 and CD D Mirror, 12/3/90); cat horror is p18 (Iron Police, Oct/1990 and Mail, Hartlepool, 13/10/90).

★ COMPACT disc users in the States claim by marking the inner and outer edges of the CD with a green felt marking pen, the sound significantly improves.

Even the influential American CD Newsletter admits the craze is 'catching on'.

Mirror Live advises you not to try it — do so at your own risk.