

Folklore Frontiers



No. 13

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READERS' LETTERS

From Peter Christie, of Devon.

Reading the bit about Prince Charles reminded me of two stories I heard about 20 years ago concerning Royalty. In 1972 or thereabouts I met an odd character who was a professional embalmer and he swore that all the Royals since Victoria had been embalmed and were in glass-topped coffins at Windsor — where the living members of the family still visit them to pay their respects.

At around the same time I met a Royal Navy officer who again swore that in one officers' mess known to him they had a prized exhibit behind the bar — one of the Queen's turds pickled in a jar. This had been obtained by some crafty plumbing work during a visit of inspection by Her Majesty. At the time I was told this I believed it, but now after reading FF I don't know. The symbolism is fascinating if nothing else!

From Lucy Fisher, of London.

A friend of mine is at the moment convinced by a "therapist" that she was satanically abused as a child. I'll show her your's and John Michell's articles and hope she sees there may be other explanations.

Did I tell you an eccentric old lady (according to the Haslemere Herald circa 1970) was buried with her vintage Daimler?

Did you know that the author of Captain Pugwash has publically denied that Bates/Staines slur (very widespread)?

My colleagues say it was Richard Gere who was compromised by a hamster in a condom. And one of them tells me that the Coca Cola bottle's shape derives from the coca flower. (I thought it was Mae West's outline).

PS, I see you were sufficiently unconvinced to scatter a lot of nude ladies around the new-look FF12. I'm just jealous of course. Yours Lucy Fisher (42, 32, 41). Nude chaps next time?

Folklore Frontiers is an independent, non-profit making magazine devoted to folklore, in particular contemporary legends or urban belief tales.

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From Janet Bord, of Clwyd.

How about reducing the number of pix of naked (or near-naked) ladies, or at least balancing them with an equal number of pix of naked men?

From Michael Goss, of Essex.

Thanks, too, for offering to take my Jim Morrison piece, but after re-reading it I don't think it's worth publishing. To be honest, it's wordy and not very original — I can't see FF readers caring for it. If I get any inspiration for a shorter and better piece, I'll send one along.

I had intended to cheer you up by sending a frank and full-frontal photo of myself to make a change from all the naked ladies. However, your readers will care even less for that than they would have done for the Morrison article and besides, I was only eight months old when the picture was taken. And not a corn circle in sight.

THE DIARY

Ubiquitous Michael Goss (see various subsequent pages) appeared on the Late Show (see FF11, p3) and as you'll see from his comments below, FF unfairly failed to get a mention.

He writes: "I was glad to hear that you thought the Late Show didn't turn out too badly — speaking to Gillian Bennett last week, I learned that (like me) she thought it was pretty good: bearing in mind that talking about legends is always likely to be pretty dull when the viewer wants to see them in living, vibrant action. Well, of course we both enjoyed doing it. I could even stand having one of the rats nip my finger — they left that bit out, though ((wait for it) Be All Right On The Night ... — ed.). Couldn't complain or use the W. C. Fields line about not working with children or animals, because it turns out that those rats had previously appeared in EastEnders. See, I was working with real professionals.

"One gratifying thing: though I'm still uncertain how they got my name ... the thing that clinched it was definitely Folklore Frontiers. Had I not done that piece about 'canine junkies' for you, I'd never have been there ... Before they started to film

there were plenty of mentions of the magazine and it's a great pity that they couldn't work in a reference to it in the actual show 'though I'm surprised they didn't'. Not for the first time, it has been a case of an article I've done for a small subscription magazine that generates the excitement and I'm grateful to you for making that possible."

We did, however, get a mention in The Wild Places, where editor Kevin McClure writes: "I reckon Paul Screeeton will still be editing, informing — and entertaining — well into the next millennium ... Increasingly well presented ... and the gratuitous toplessness that proves that all is well at Folklore Frontiers!"

In fact, I've been continuously editing magazines since 1969, which make four decades — and I'm only 45! Both Mike Goss and I well enough known, so we'll dispense with a contributors' pen portraits spot this issue.

Lastly, from Northern Earth Mysteries comes a bizarre announcement for a 1991 Loch Ness expedition, organised by the Company of Avallon. Participants are sought, including "particularly a skilled archer." Does this mean their ritual magic (sorry, "ceremonial invocation followed by a meditative vigil") includes crossbow harpooning Nessie?

Articles elsewhere

■ Shape-shifting — a reality? Countryside writer R W F Poole tells three foxy tales which suggest an uncanny connection perhaps between the soul of the hunter and hunted. Chilling (Weekend Telegraph, 29/12/90).

■ For more folklore per inch without it being the main subject, try a piece on Tromso, Norway, where there is no sun for two months of the year and Nicholas Shakespeare logs: libidinous activity including undergraduates' discovery of a pornographic database involving children and animals; a 371 kilo stone supposedly lifted on to a pub bar by a giant who had been refused a drink; beaulies the progeny of Spaniards shipwrecked during the Armada (I was told this one when I went to the Outer Hebrides); that Roald Amundsen set off to search for the lost Italian explorer Umberto Nobile and was eaten by him; that mackerel turned green from eating bodies of sailors drowned when the Tirpitz was bombed; and the Northern Lights can cause opening and closing of automatic garage doors (Telegraph Weekend Magazine, 2/3/91)

■ The gardening column (Weekend Telegraph, 2/3/91) featured the vegetable Lamb of Tartary, botany's strangest legend, one account of which claims lambs grow out of the earth, their navels fixed to the ground by short stems. A conundrum for vegetarians!



■ An extraordinary conglomeration of origins were provided for where the word "gricer" came from and its precise definition. It relates to trainspotters, to some general and others the seedier specimens. Let's hope it was helpful to the compilers of the Oxford English Dictionary (Steam railway, March, 1991).

■ Northampton Central Museum has built up a Concealed Show Index; a register of the 1,500 shoes and boots which have so far been found, mostly within the structures of UK buildings. The index is expanding at the rate of about 50 cases a year. The last eyewitness account of the geomantic practice dates from the 1930s. The article was triggered by the discovery of good luck charms of dead men's shoes in a c1450 Leicester coal mine where four boots have been retrieved and for some reason archaeologists believe a further 200 could be hidden (The Independent, 30/2/91).

4. Serendipitous Detritus

- * Serendipity: the faculty of making happy chance finds (Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary)
- * Detritus: mass of fragmentary substance worn off a solid body. (Pop. usage: worthless residue). (another twentieth century dictionary)
- * "You can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes you find you get what you need." (M. Jagger & K. Richard).

You know how it is. You come across these fascinatingly inconsequential items - almost always when you're really looking for something else, very likely ten minutes before the library's due to close. You ought to know better, but then you're a Fortean/folklorist researcher and they never know when to turn the page and keep going. You make a note of such finds; usually on the self-deceiving grounds that they may be of use to you or to some fellow Fortean/folklorist researcher one day. Perhaps the day never comes. Your executors, already frazzled by the litany of demands your will imposes on them regarding disposal of your Dinky Toys, your Jimi Hendrix bootlegs, your lager label collection, will come upon a detrital mass of notelets, faded newspaper clippings, index cards and the like which your industry rescued from bibliothecal oblivion.

Unless these executors of your will are also data-heads - in other words, unless they are obsessive note-makers like you used to be - they will not be amused at this. They will not be sympathetic. They will not forward your detrital data to the Folklore Society, to the International Society for the Study of Contemporary Legends, nor to Fortean Times. They won't even send it to Oxfam, and who can blame them? You may be reasonably sure, therefore, that with biblical ashes-to-ashes pertinacity, what you so industriously rescued from oblivion is eventually returned in that direction.

Here's a sample of what my executors may find...

Serendipity: I was scanning the February 1874 issues of the Deal,

Walmer, Dover & Kentish Telegram in the hope of finding something about the Goodwins Ghost-Ship. What I got instead (and in no way connected with the Goodwins, much less with ghost-ships) was:

- (1) an allegedly-true story of a house wrecked by a man's efforts to cure or tease his severely ailurophobic wife by learning ventriloquism (sic.) Plus:
- (2) an equally dubious incident in the life of Sir Bartle Frere, formerly famous African explorer/administrator and posthumous star idiot of Zulu Dawn.

It struck me at once that learning ventriloquism was an oddly-tangential approach to the problem of a spouse's ailurophobia. (In case you need it: ailurophobia - abnormal fear of cats. Definition c/o yet another twentieth century dictionary). That noted and conceded, the story went on to say that the husband mastered his art to the point where he could project spurious feline yowls from all corners. Indeed, he mastered his art too well. In a grand, knockabout finale the man ventriloquized, the wife went into terminal panic, the baby's cradle was knocked over, the entire house was wrecked. It reads like one of those legendary and intricately-sequenced comic catastrophes in which the joker gets more than he bargained for. In our urban legends people are regularly knocked unconscious because their wives playfully tug at their private parts when they're trying to fix the sink; their legs get broken when the ambulancemen hear the story and laugh so much they drop the stretcher. The popular contemporary tale of the tricksters who poke a turkey leg out of the flies of a somnolently drunk husband whose wife faints when (a little later) she comes in to find the cat chewing on what she not unreasonably supposes is his penis - that story keeps coming to mind and I wish it wouldn't. Here once again we enter the realm where elaborate jokes not only misfire, but do so spectacularly: "and the whole house was wrecked".

As for Sir Bartle Frere: he is not enjoying the crude meal provided by the crude occupant of the crude hut upon which his African travels have caused him to stumble. He wishes he could find something to pep up the mess of potage and when his hostess (aged crone) exits temporarily, he manages to do just that. A string of dessicated but bean-like objects are hanging nearby and

our hero seizes both his chance and them. Re-enter aged crone-hostess: loud wails proceed when she discovers white visitor has eaten her war-trophies. (Erratum: for "dessicated..bean-like objects" read, "human ears sliced off enemies in battle or after battle, hung up as martial mementoes as per tribal custom." The real mistake was not mine, but Sir Bartle Frere's).

So ran the story originally printed by Le Figaro, whose aim may have been either to deflate the reputation of this great if now mostly forgotten Englishman or to exploit the comic potential of anyone who ran around Africa under a name like "Sir Bartle Frere". A celebrity story, then, and I would be amazed to find Sir Bartle was the only man to have putatively dined off human ears in the legendary history of African travel; the thing works as well if you delete his name and substitute Livingstone or some other. The humour is interestingly ambivalent, though. We shudder at the primitivism of the black savage who keeps human ears strung up like beans as war-trophies. Finally, we laugh at the cultured white visitor whose ignorance of local custom prevents him from recognizing that the 'beans' are in fact war-trophies. Not to mention the possibility that some of us feel he gets what he deserves, if only for the way he lapses from civilized table-manners by taking and eating before he's been asked. Or because, when all things are considered, "Sir Bartle Frere" is a rather silly name.

Of course, these stories serendipitously discovered and promptly thrust from sight in my Contemporary Legends file, may have been wholly or partially true. Nor do I necessarily disbelieve that:

'In desperation, one householder went out at midnight to try to poison the moles in his lawn. To illuminate the mole hills, he turned on the lights of his Jaguar, but the car slid into reverse causing £6,000 worth of damage to his house. To make matters worse an electric heater overturned igniting the petrol and resulting in his car becoming a write-off. He finally solved his mole problem with a ton of ready-mixed cement.'

So says Roger Davies, editor of Gardening from Which? but writing here in introduction to 'some of the calamities suffered by his readers' in The Guardian 2 January 1988. As I just said, it may well have happened like that; on the probability of a Jag or of any make of car shooting into reverse when you put the lights on I can't comment. It's just that, apart from the suspiciously

literary topping of, "To make matters worse.." and "his car (became) a write-off" - the traditional cataclysmic, hyperbolic end to a comedy of errors-type legend, cf. "and the whole house was wrecked" - this anecdote bears generic semblance to a Tesco-bagful of Hunter/Hunted Role Reversal stories which I have randomly noticed over the years.

Roger Davies was only describing the tip of the mole-hill. You probably know the Coyote's Revenge where the eponymous hero exacts vengeance on the sadistic hunter who has tied dynamite to its body by running under his trailer and blowing him sky-high, thanks to Professor Jan Harold Brunvand's including the sporadic-ally told legend under that chapter title in his The Choking Doberman (1984). A cursory glance through my so-called files reveals a cemetery-load of hunters dispatched or badly injured by rabbits, deer, dogs, hares, pheasants, geese, hawks. Plus a fisherman who feeds a shark with a grenade (ker-boom!), a man who puts down his gun after potting a rabbit only to have it detonated by his dog (bannng!) or by a pig (kapoww!). And a fatal car-crash engineered by a ferret. (Insert your own onomatopoeia).

A strong, condemnatory sense of justice permeates this type of story. Gratuitous cruelty even to nominally-pestilent species is revisited on the hunter-perpetrator - to our immense satisfaction; there is the analogue of the thief hung by the sheep he has just stolen cited by Professor Brunvand in the aforementioned Coyote's Revenge chapter. Not unrelated is the pleasure in seeing one of the more competent among us discomfited. It requires a certain skill and expertise (normally) to be a successful hunter. In some ways, it is reassuring to find the killer-elite stricken down in their moment of triumph, even by so trivial a thing as circumstance or accident - and I'm thinking here of those far-from-unbelievable tales of hunters shot by their own dogs or clobbered by the prey in its death-throes. Folk-morality, borrowing from the pulpit, has always warned against over-confidence. The hunters or shark-fishermen who introduce refinements of cruelty are guilty of that.

Or again, take animal revenges as a warning against folly - or of not thinking things through, which amounts to the same. Cross-refer the stories outlined above with: the blacksmith who thrusts a red-hot iron into the thatch of his smithy to destroy a wasps'

nest and succeeds in burning his premises to the ground as per the (circa) 17thC. "Gothamite" tale; a similar jest at the expense of the late 16thC. Schildburghers who set out to burn a cat and burn their village instead; and the 1374/75 Persian variant concerning a conflagrating goat that incinerates the royal elephant stables. (All are in Clouston's A Book of Noodles, 1888, pp.40, 61-64).

Accidents will happen, especially where fire and firearms are on hand. A marksman could be coshed by a kamikaze goose or bodychecked by a moribund deer; arguably, sadists have been known to dynamite coyotes (etc.) and suffered the consequences. So some of these stories may be true, as I conceded in the case of the written-off Jag. No more of that: instead, like the journalist I once wanted to be and never became, I intend to use the fact that story focussed on a car - a recurring character in many of our modern legends - to forge a neat lead-in to Chester Stern and his "Good lord, it's the latest sting" article for the Mail on Sunday of 25 September 1988.

The 'new aristocrat among stings' (a.k.a. con-tricks) of which car-dealers were allegedly being warned by police at the time of reporting featured, fittingly enough, 'a distinguished gentleman claiming to be a peer' and an unnamed Sussex Porsche dealership. Already you will have guessed that he was a decidedly bogus peer. Having voted the £50,000 model "'Just the job,'" he asks the salesman if they can round off the test-drive by showing it to his mother and father - draws up before a stately home, leaves the salesman in the tree-lined approach while he steps inside. Steps outside; invites the salesman in to meet the parents while he makes a quick phone-call. Now let Mr Stern finish off:

'Only when the elderly occupants asked if he was a colleague of the pleasant young detective who had just asked to use their telephone, did the salesman realise he had been duped.

Too late he heard the roar of the powerful engine and rattle of tyre on the gravel road..'

Nice ending. Maybe the story loses a little through my editorial efforts at conciseness; tonal subtleties which have the car-dealers calling the client "m'lud" had to go, for instance. That aside, it has the full aroma of an apocryphal tale in print and once again it appears significantly close in theme to several contemporary car-

-con legends. The thief who steals a car, returning it next day with an apologetic but unsigned note and two free tickets to a concert (which lure the victim out of his house long enough for the thief to ransack it) has become common property since I first encountered him in Rodney Dale's The Tumour In The Whale (Universal Books, 1983; page 129). A fast-rising contender lets the victim narrowly avert being burgled by the taxi-driver who has just driven him to the airport. All these narratives suggest that we privately admire con-men when their "stings" are clever enough and when they don't pick on us rather than on some symbolically-despicable target. Like the car-dealers who supply the Yuppies' Choice, the Porsche, for example.

'I won't say it's not true..,' wrote Rodney Dale of the car theft/concert tickets sting. Unless it is a remarkably popular and frequently practised trick with an amazingly high success-rate, the repetitions of this story - always presenting it as a unique, one-off event - seem to justify us in saying that it is not true. If the Bogus Peer keeps stealing Porsches - or indeed any make of car..if the story keeps circulating in print or in oral format and without names or other corroborating details - we may have to reach the same conclusion.

The lack of specifics here, the absence of names (which Sussex Porsche dealership? which stately home?) are not absolute clues that the story is a legend. Obviously, these are the kind of details the police would wish to withhold. This explanation was invoked by the Kent Police in the recent and celebrated case of the man who was stopped for driving too slowly on the M25. (Driving too slowly on the M25! If you've ever driven on the M25, your scepticism will already be engaged). He had taken ten hours to reach a point which he believed was somewhere up near Durham, but which in truth was about 20 miles from Rochester whence he'd set out. The poor devil had realized a motorist's nightmare: he'd been trapped on a perpetual circular journey round and round and round the M25.

'"We know the identity of the driver,"' confirmed a spokesman for the Kent Police, "'but we cannot release it without his permission. We do not want to make a laughing stock out of him.'" Well, OK. But upon reading this in The Guardian for 27 November 1990 - and

in other national dailies - and having been asked too many times whether it was "one of those urban legends" - I couldn't dispel some doubts.

Now, I live about ten minutes from the M25 as the Ford Fiesta flies. Except "flying" is the wrong metaphor, and not merely because cars can't fly literally. On an average day, nobody flies towards the M25, not around here. You crawl, you judder, you queue, but you don't fly. The reason for this, as all local motorists can tell you, is the looming presence of the Dartford Tunnel, an unintentional safety device which imposes east-west speed restrictions by means of its near-permanent north-south congestion. Likewise and for the same logistical reasons, it imposes restraints on some of the "true" M25 comedy/horror stories which are starting to manifest.

Tom Hibbert extracted a few of these from nameless tabloids in his "London's mad round," a lengthy and observantly cynical description of his own odyssey around the South's showpiece motorway. (Weekend Guardian 4-5 March 1989. Look, I'm sorry. I know it's the paper for trendy lefties, whingeing polytechnic lecturers and for Yesterday's Men in general. I know we've all switched to The Independent. But it has Biff on Saturdays and a "Notes & Queries" feature on Mondays). The best of the M25 "myths", in my opinion, was not the Bicycling Granny reportedly seen pedalling a youthful rate the wrong way up the fast lane, but the "Toffs' Death Race" yarn wherein yuppies were said to meet up in the early hours of Saturday morning and use the M25 as a larger version of Brands Hatch. The "M25 Club" record for a complete circuit was - allegedly, preposterously - 68 minutes.

Preposterous wasn't quite what Inspector Brian Craddock of the Surrey Police motorway unit said when Mr Hibbert tried the tale out on him, but his response was euphemistically close: it needed "a bit of believing." And he picked out the coldest, harshest logistical fact against anyone circumnavigating the M25. in just 68 minutes - a fact that would also spoil the road as a venue for would-be death-racers, toffs or not. This was:

"the Dartford Tunnel, for a start..that's going to slow you down tremendously by the time you've thrown your money in the bin. You've got to laugh, really, haven't you?"

Yes...harshly, sardonically, perhaps, if you know your M25 and more especially the part engorged by the Dartford Tunnel and its metallic lines converging on the automatic toll booths (the "bins" Inspector Craddock speaks of). But laugh you have to, as did my friends and I at the concept of Rochester's Ancient Mariner driving on and on, round and round..yet apparently failing to notice that this was the second/third/fourth/whatever time he had passed through the Dartford Tunnel. As he could not fail to do: the Dartford Tunnel comes to motorists on the M25 just like Death comes to all Mankind or as the dustbin men come to us on every Thursday (bank holidays excepted). How could he fail to notice that he was going through the Dartford Tunnel again? Do all tunnels look alike to some motorists? Is this story a contradiction of the old folk-saw that once seen the Dartford Tunnel is never forgotten?

They've nearly finished the new bridge over the Thames to relieve the congestion of the tunnel under it, however. Doubtless its supports immure the bodies of gangland-murdered felons.. foundation-sacrificed children..human heads and horse-skulls. There will be stories and those stories will be in kind or in plot the latest relatives of what our ancestors told. Anyhow, if I serendipitously come upon any, I'll attach a codocil to my will enforcing the executors to pass on.all details to Folklore Frontiers...

By Michael Goss



Darlington:

You'll never read alone!

One of the last places you would expect to find a platform for railway folklore is a football fanzine — one million of which are now read annually.

However, Darlington's Mission Impossible was on the right track when a knowledgeable — but doubtless over-zealous enthusiast resurrected an old chestnut.

Robin Coulthard pointed out that in the Thirties the London & North Eastern Railway decided to build a later batch of its B17 4-6-0 tender locomotives for its semi-fast trains out of London to Cambridge, East Anglia and Nottingham. Earlier examples had been named after stately homes, but this series was to be named after first and second division football clubs within the LNER's sphere of operation, as a token of recognition of the contribution soccer fans made to its passenger revenue.

All the batch of 25 were to be built in Darlington; 14 at the company's North Road workshops and 11 at Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn's Springfield works.

Locomotives began coming off the assembly line in the spring of 1936; the first four being named after that year's FA Cup semi-finalists, Arsenal, Derby County, Huddersfield Town and Sheffield United — a claim disputed in Railway World (I believe that's the magazine).

This article stated that it was the LNER's accessibility to Wembley Stadium which created the theme and, its authors claim that in 1936 three of the four FA Cup semi-finalists were supposedly name recipients. Jackson & Russell go into Saint and Greavsie analysis even, but fail to shed light on Darlington. Engine No. 2848 was named *Arsenal* in the March and 2848 to 2855 went directly to Leicester.

According to a dubious story, skilled tradesmen of North Road works were unhappy at crafting engines to the greater glory of top clubs when their home town team, the "Quakers," was



MIKE AMOS

Buds of Maybe

omitted on the pretext that it was in the third Division (North). When polite representations to management failed, a night shift conspiracy made a "pirate" set of plates bearing the name *Darlington*. In the end management yielded and a B17 was turned oil carrying official club nameplates.

Coulthard claims *Darlington* bore the number 2852 and had originally been earmarked the name *Sheffield Wednesday*.

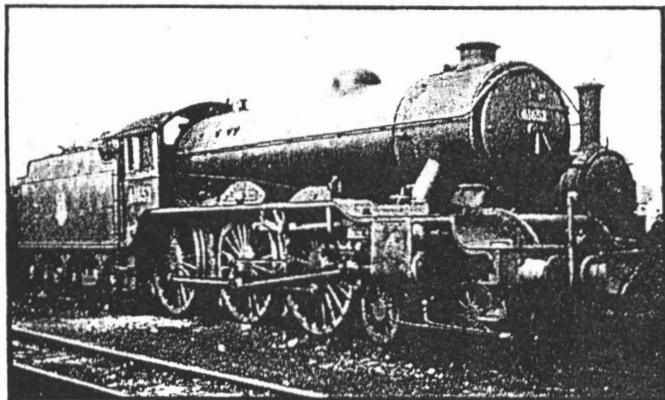
In 1959 the engine was taken out of service and cut up at Doncaster in 1960 (I saw it there).

The tale was picked up by the Northern Echo, Darlington, journalist Mike Amos and his Backtrack column chronicled quite a saga.

A Mr J Bates, formerly of North Road works, challenged the story. "Apart from anything else, he says, he's almost certain there wasn't a night shift."

Another reader sent a photocopy from Ken Hoole's book on the works carrying a photograph of engine 2849 carrying a *Darlington* nameplate and claiming that it was earmarked for *Sheffield United*.

By Paul Screeton



That Hoole had an official photograph of 2849 with *Darlington* plates does suggest that somewhere along the line there may be a grain of truth, but there are many twists and turns to the conundrum.

When 2858 hauled the Princess Royal's train from Darlington to Catterick it was named *The Essex Regiment*. Coulthard reckoned it carried *Newcastle United* plates for a short while, but did it?

Anyway, one of the original *Darlington* nameplates was presented to Darlington F.C., and the handsome artefact in brass, curved with an eight-inch metal replica of half a football, is mounted at Feethams' ground above the stairs next to the boardroom.

Bibliography:
Coulthard, Robin, "It Was Their Express Wish ...", *Mission Impossible*, January, 1991.

Jackson, David, and Russell, Owen, "The 'Footballer' Interlude", *Railway World* (??).

Amos, Mike, "The Darlington Now Leaving ...", *Northern Echo*, 7/5/84.

Amos, Mike, Backtrack columns, *Northern Echo*, 8/1/91; 18/1/91; 25/1/91; 15/2/91; 19/2/91.

Anon, *Darlington & South West Durham*, Bellcode Books, 1990.

I wrote to Mike Amos (who interviewed me when my book *Quicksilver Heritage* was published) to remind him that when a high-speed power car was named *Darlington* in the mid-Eighties, Mike himself recounted the hoary legend. On that occasion he claimed the night shift took in *Manchester City* one evening and next morning sent out the same engine with gleaming *Darlington* name. "Impressed both by their initiative and their handiwork, the LNER offered to provide an engine for their nameplate so long as they got their *Manchester City* back."

Then I came across a reference in an anonymously-penned regional railway book which generally repeated the tale but claimed workers made *Darlington* plates and put them on 2852 overnight. LNER directors were impressed and the officially designated *Sheffield Wednesday* plates were switched to 2861. That said, the item was illustrated by the builders' numberplate for — 28491 Confusing!!

To add more mystery, was it *Grimsby Town* (2850) or *Huddersfield Town* (2853) which was a semi-finalist?

Newslines

ROCK 'N' ROLL HEAVEN. In a case of true Fortean oddness, Liam Knight, of Crawley, Sussex, guitarist with rock band Intensive Care, died in an intensive care unit after being hit by a car five hours earlier (Sun, 30/5/90).

■ Singer Robert Smith, of The Cure, went into hiding after bizarre rumours circulated about his death in tragic circumstances. One report said he had died from a drugs overdose. He felt his life was in danger (DStar 2/11/90).

■ All of which pales into insignificance over media speculation regarding Jim Morrison's "death." It started with (The Guardian, 10/10/90) Robert Pryce's Soccer Diary putting bits from his poems to contemporary soccer rumour. So from the esoteric to the crap surrounding the 20th anniversary of the Lizard King's demise. As his parents drove through a desert, the infant Jim saw a dead Red Indian lying by the roadside and believed that, at that point, the dead man's spirit entered him. The Doors' singer had an IQ of 149 but flashed his willie at an audience. He claimed he was gay to evade draft to Vietnam; got married in 1970, signed the register in his own blood and fainted; fled the law to Paris. There are genuine doubts to his death and whether the grabce where fans hold vigils is correct; as one writer said recently: "it was like stumbling across an illicit drinking party or the dead poets society." He's supposedly been spotted opening a bank account in San Francisco and stealing a tin of peaches from a shop in Georgia (D Mirror, 10/4/91) or he's making music with Elvis Presley and likes rave band the Stone Roses, according to showbiz medium Carmen Jones (D Star, 3/4/91). For anyone uninitiated, that's him on our front cover.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Further to our previous announcements, I still have a large range of books for sale. Although some are unwanted review copies sent to FF, the majority are ones I receive as a local newspaper journalist who also reviews books regularly. I am happy to sell as many as possible at around one-quarter price plus postage to subsidise FF — in other words, buy the books or see a price rise very soon. Main categories are biography, travellers' tales, novels (many by top writers), earth mysteries, New Age, tarot, astrology, green issues, etc. Send for lists, specifying particular interests.

●● We have plenty to catch up on such as social workers' child abuse, Aids update, a bulging sex strangeness file, loads of Newslines items, Christian fundies, backmasking and a huge backlog of our regular Update features. If you're re-subscribing don't delay. All being well No. 14 should be close behind.

14. AN EERIE Oldies but MY goldies MYSTERY

The Mail, Hartlepool, 21/11/90.

CHRISTINE Fothergill thought it was a crying shame when one of her prized new pictures fell off the wall.

But when the picture was examined, it yielded an eerie secret. Behind the frame were two prints of the notorious Crying Boy — a picture reputed to bring bad luck to any owner.

But an even more eerie discovery lay in wait. Every one of the five pictures, which were bought on separate occasions, contained two prints of the same infamous picture.

The unsettling find made Christine, of Cornwall Street, Hartlepool, think of all the calamities that had plagued her home since she bought the pictures, including:

- * an explosion in the boiler.
- * two break-ins in the family car.
- * a broken video.
- * a broken washing machine, and, most serious of all:
- * a narrow escape for her husband Stephen, who was off work after being struck by a flying sheet of metal.

EXCLUSIVE

By PAUL WENHAM

Christine believes her husband could easily have been killed in the incident.

"When my husband told me, I couldn't sleep that night, thinking of everything that had gone wrong since I bought the pictures.

"I'm not really superstitious. These things could have happened if the prints hadn't been behind the pictures.

The Crying Boy picture hit the national headlines a few years ago when it was the subject of a determined campaign by a newspaper which saw thousands of copies destroyed in an effort to stamp out a suspected jinx.



Christine Fothergill with the images of the Crying Boy. M6600.

Update

CORN CIRCLES. An article (Steam World, Sept 1990) with relevant summary (The Crop Watcher, No. 2) has Noel Ingram claiming he was at Swayfield (note name) Bridge on June 7, 1962, when "I was enjoying the countryside between trains when there was a sudden roaring in a crop field to the left of the (railway line). A sudden whirlwind whipped up the crop skyward and then stopped as suddenly as it had begun — leaving a ring of flattened crop I was too startled to use the camera hanging around my neck." Two things next of note. He said it was 6.40pm. I don't know where Swayfield is, but the London-bound Tees-Tyne Pullman left Newcastle upon Tyne at 9.30am and should have been in London by 2.30pm. He also records the train being hauled by A4 class locomotive 60015 *Quicksilver*. *Quicksilver* is mercury and Patrick Harpur (The Cereologist, No. 1) suggests the corn circles are created by the god Mercury. If not a hoax within the article, all this makes for an interesting piece of lexilinking Forteana.

■ The controversy over the Turin shroud was likened to that of corn circles by eminent diarist The Weasel (The Independent Magazine, 5/1/91). As he correctly pointed out, even if the supposedly definitive report dated the cloth at between AD1260 and 1390, it did not explain how the life-size image of a man came only to be properly visible on a photographic negative several hundred years after it had been manufactured. The panel of scientists included our own Prof Edward Hall, of Oxford University. In The Cereologist (see review section), Candida Lycett-Green quotes a friend saying: "I knew it would be just the crankish sort of thing you'd get excited about, Candida. The whole thing is a complete hoax." The speaker was Prof Hall, shroud fake pundit. It's good to find a scientist with no doubts on corn circles.

■ Trust a Japanese to claim to have solved the mystery. Prof Hiroshi Kikuchi stated they are formed by electromagnetohydrodynamic vortices created by dust picked up by winds over the cliffs of Dover (Today, 2/2/91).

■ Finally, the Crypto-Phenomenon Museum, in California, has concluded the corn circles are runes conveying a warning in Old Norse (Guardian, 29/3/91).

CHERNOBYL. In FF3 a girl group referred to Chernobyl. So from Fuzzbox to hedgehogs (stop tittering at the back). Britain has been warned to beware of a new horror ... a plague of giant hedgehogs. Experts say nuclear fallout may have created a hedgehog super-race — and a drivers' nightmare. They fear monster animals could take over the world as they stalk small cars and flatten buses in revenge for the squashing of millions of their tiny ancestors. The bizarre prediction comes from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. It follows a report by scientists on the aftermath of



the Chernobyl disaster which says the Soviet fallout caused genetic defects in hedgehogs. Society founder Major Adrian Coles said the scientists also reported finding giant trees with pine needles ten times their normal size: "If the effects have increased the size of pine needles by ten times, what could it do to hedgehogs? We could be overrun by revenge-seeking giant hedgehogs." (D Star, 22/9/89; Biologist, No. 37, 1990).

■ Meanwhile, a reader reported that two or three days after the Chernobyl incident he was approaching the M25 interchange on the M3 when a loud hissing blotted out the car radio. As he drove out of the storm it returned to normal. A few weeks later at the same spot he espied what looked like huge mushrooms or toadstools growing along the banks of the motorway. An earlier piece on Kyshtym's accident in 1957 had its director admit noticing "abnormally big plants." Are these connected? Readers were asked if they had an explanation (D Telegraph, 9/2/91).

■ According to Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut, in the USA for body radio-activity tests, since Chernobyl children in Byelorussia never go into the surrounding forest because it is contaminated. Instead they are shown plastic trees and birds indoors to learn what nature used to be like (D Express, 4/4/91).

FUNGI FUN. First issue of FF featured two articles on the folklore of drug trips and hippelore. Green Magazine (October, 1990) was censured in some quarters for seeming to advocate — or at least condone — magic mushrooms. Martin Deeson, however, did a great service in pointing out some common misconceptions which could lead to grave physical consequences. Among general information were dangerous myths, mushroom cults, fairy rings, egotism and phallic fungi. Taken from very much a

■ The dodgy food from a foreign eatery or takeaway emporium has been around donkeys' years. It has resuscitated in Caracas, Venezuela. What's in a kebab? Supposedly the local cops know, for they smashed a gang run by a sinister Mr Big, alias "Fat Freddy", who had posed for years as an animal lover unable to resist looking after dumb chums. There were more than 100 cats and dogs in his shanty home. However, he and his gang had been slicing up waits and strays and selling them to local kebab vendors. Fat Freddy's innocence was shattered when the cops found dismembered pussies and bow-wows wrapped up in plastic bags for immediate delivery (independent, date unrecorded).





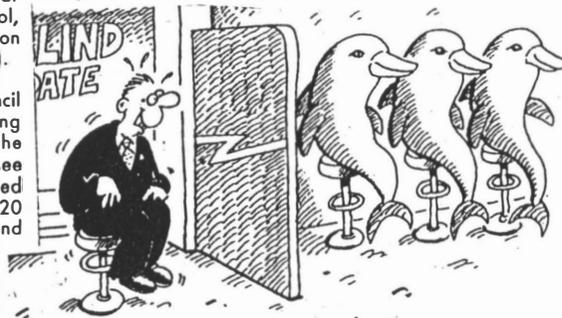
DOLPHIN OUTRAGE. I must admit I expected the alleged act of indecency involving Freddie the dolphin to submerge forever (FF12, p12). Now charges have been brought against a male skin-diver from Abbeyhey, Gorton, Manchester, self-employed gardener Alan David Cooper, 38, who allegedly groped the 12-foot bottle-nose tame mammal. Richard Littlejohn (Sun, 28/2/91) recalled how a female colleague was sent to interview Freddie in Amble bay. She refused to wear a bathing hat, despite being advised to do so by locals. Apparently dolphins are attracted by the scent of women's hair and as she attempted to get an exclusive, Freddie became highly aroused and she was forced to beat a hasty retreat to the beach.

folkloric viewpoint, we liked this advice. "Beware the old hippy saying about fly agaric, 'one you trip and two you die' — it should be stressed that, for most people, the nausea and giddiness produced by fly agaric outweigh the hallucinogenic pleasure." Actually the effects are not those of an hallucinogenic, but rather of a deliriantium.

ALIEN FOXES. Much as with alien big cat stories, the return of foxes to the Isle of Man after an absence of 1,000 years is full of speculation. "To judge by the rumours, there may have been more than one breeding pair introduced by more than one person," said Dr Iarch Garrard, of the Manx Museum. Reminiscent of our inquiry in FF4, p3, regarding alleged releases of urban foxes into the Great Outdoors.

TATTOO HOAX. That believable authority figure the doctor was fooled. Dr Edward Micklow, a child health "expert" on the Isle of Wight warned in The Lancet (7/12/90) of tattoo stickers laced with drugs. The Central Drugs Squad had tried to trace through Interpol the source of bogus leaflets warning of the threat (Evening Standard, 7/12/90, credit John Michell). One of these hoax letters, on official-looking Metropolitan Police Neighbourhood Watch headed notepaper, fooled youth office staff (Hackney Gazette, 7/1/91, credit Lucy Fisher). Police believed a crusading anti-drugs campaigner was behind the bizarre prank. A similar letter had the headmaster of Red House School, Norton, Cleveland, planning extra vigilance on school trips abroad (Mail, Hartlepool, 28/1/91).

STRANGWAYS INDEED. The Press Council censured tabloid newspaper for presenting speculation and unconfirmed reports as fact in the reporting of the Strangeways riot last April (see FF12, p22). The Sun had the headline "They died screaming" and Manchester Evening News "20 dead" — in the event, no bodies were found (Guardian, 18/1/91).



TURTLE THREAT. After FF12, p22, red-eared terrapins may soon be added to the list of naturalised UK wildlife. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle fans alarmed at the size these pets have reached have been dumping them at zoos and there are fears enough have been released into ponds in the South for them to start breeding. A Nature Conservancy Council expert warned they carried salmonella and "could do all sorts of damage" (Today, 12/11/90).

"Quote from sexy Page 3 girl Tracey Elvik during a photo session with one of the teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: 'My what big feet you've got, Raphael ...' I bet you say that to all the turtles! (Sun, 26/11/90).



■ Meanwhile a five-foot long conger eel slid out of a drain on the pavement outside the Imperial pub in Cleethorpes. It stopped customers going into licensee Jim Lumby's boozer and he said: "There were bubbles coming out of its mouth. it was terrible, like something out of the teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." A trawlerman for 29 years, Harold Cartwright, said he'd never seen anything like it. The conger eel was believed to have got into the town's drainage system because of high water levels caused by a recent thaw (Morning Advertiser, 21/2/91).

CHILD ABUSE SOCIAL WORKERS. Police have dropped a probe into allegations that bogus social workers tried to examine young children (see articles FF 12, pp 4-11). Detectives investigated over 250 reports — but only 18 were regarded as "sinister incidents" and remain on file. The nationwide £1m probe, which involved hundreds of police from 23 forces, produced no arrests and no charges (D Star, 1/2/91).



■ Scientists claim there is a link between UFOs and sex attacks. Boffins at the University of Connecticut questioned 170 people with out-of-this-world experiences. They found that many who had seen flying saucers were abused as children (News of the World, 10/3/91).

KILLER FISH. Another tale from the riverbank, where we were in FF 10, p25. Catfish big enough to eat ducks and small dogs have been released into the Norfolk Broads. Capable of reaching 10 feet, live 30 years and use their mouths like mechanical shovels, the East Anglian Water Authority was asking anglers to report sightings (D Star, 25/8/88).

COT DEATHS. A new trigger for the physiological events that can end in sudden death in otherwise normal infants has been posited. In FF9, p16, and FF11, p13, we covered this. Now three doctors have suggested nightmares or fear on waking may precipitate cot deaths; cyanotic episodes causing babies to hold their breath, go blue and die (The Independent, 6/9/90).

Magazines

STRANGE MAGAZINE. US glossy professional magazine equivalent to our own Fortean Times. From PO Box 2246, Rockville, MD, 20847, USA. Cheques in sterling to Mark Chorvinsky. 4 issue sub £13.50. Available several London book stores.

No. 6. Articles on remnant pterosaurs; Jack Parsons, rocket researcher and ritual magician; Bigfoot research philosophy; Greek strangeness; crop circles coverage, Michael T Shoemaker giving excellent Fortean viewpoint. UFO-related material includes discussions on vehicle stoppages; low-frequency wave effects; John A Keel files. Letters of first-hand experiences. Columns on cryozoology, marine life and ghosts.

FORTEAN TIMES. The Journal of Strange Phenomena. Single: UK £2; 4 issues £8; US \$16. Make cheques payable to Fortean Times. Write to Fortean Times —SKS, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

No. 56. Xmas past; Livingston alleged UFO landing revisited; American Autohenges; Madagascar burial rites; eel oddities; worldwide round-ups of Fortean; book reviews.

THE WILD PLACES. The journal of strange and dangerous beliefs. Q. Single issue £1.75; 4 for £6; US \$18 for 4. Payment to Kevin McClure, 42 Victoria Road, Mount Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4QD.

No. 2. Andy Roberts pertinently asks whether authors can alter external reality, citing things grey and small becoming staple fare for UFO witnesses, investigators and literature, at least in the USA; Kevin McClure reviews the fundies' nonsense under the amusing "Cross Talk" banner; grave doubts on survival after death; Jenny Randles plugs wind vortice corn circle theory; a round-up of contactees spelling doom; letters and mags' contents as per FF.

MERCIAN MYSTERIES. Mag for earth mysteries in the Midlands. Q. Single issue £1.50; £5 for 4. Cheques to P A Nix, 12 Cromer Road, St Ann's, Nottingham, NG3 3LF.

No. 5. Bob Trubshaw on, separately, church orientations and Royston cave, Herts.; Clive Potter on pitfalls of UFO investigation; Newark haunting; psychic quest strangeness; DIY maze making; plus joint EM groups' field trip; book reviews and exchange journals. No. 6. Nottinghamshire ancient stones; Vale of Belvoir phantom horsemen; Black Annis; Milton Keynes earth mysteries; Pitsford tympanum; challenging concepts of a winged figure from c13/14 church depiction; dream incubation temples; mag reviews (exchange with MM discontinued by me).

NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES. Journal of the Northern Earth Mysteries Group. Q. Single issue £1.15; £3.95 for 4. Cheques to "Northern Earth Mysteries", 40b Welsby Place, Meersbrook Park, Sheffield, S8 9DB.

No. 45. NEM moot report; Cumbrian subterranean springs; past and forthcoming meetings. No. 46 Articles on Arbelows (extended area of Arbor Low); fanciful perhaps theorising on a North Yorkshire row of stones, optimistic Peaklink Project; Bob Trubshaw on pitfalls of choosing a spiritual path; Roddie Perrett on siting of stone circles (astronomical or/and geological).

TOUCHSTONE. Published by the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Q. £2 for 4. Cheques to J. Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.

No. 28. Beginning of project on Pitch Hill ley with field trip, including interesting case of an 1838 church with fascinating foundation tale, whereby two local ladies watching some boys playing cricket on the site felt very strongly that there ought to be a church there. Editor Jimmy Goddard also provides good reasons for subconscious siting of modern sacred sites in a brief article which people of all religions would find substantial. Touching obituary of Paul Baines. Letters, notes and news.

PENDRAGON. Journal of the Pendragon Society. Q. Sub £4.50. From Eddie Tooke, Chinook, Paxhill Lane, Twynning, Glos., GL20 6DU.

Vol. XXI/1. What Arthur means to various contributors. The Talking Head miscellany column which cannot distinguish between Folklore and Folklore Frontiers, the equivalent of the gulf between the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sunday Sport*, having me editing the former! Traditions and festivals. Lively letters (my suggestion of a possible hoax had my reference to reader's letter scribe Mybol Czaritchyn castrated to Mito Czaritchyn; this in a sexist mag which makes fun of Deidre of Chipping Sodbury); reviews of books, mags, theatre, radio and video.

WEAR WOLF. Sporadic enthuzine. Send 50p + SAE payable to Wolf's Head Press of P O Box 77, Sunderland, SR1 1EB.

No. 1. Corn circles; Glastonbury; back-masked rock; Kuwait predicted?; snippets from the Press include two new ones on me, not a roaming gnome but a wandering garden gate sending messages home and Northamptonshire Police's Don't Drink and Drive rap record.



THE CEREOLOGIST. The journal for crop circle studies. 3 times a year. Single copy £2.50; 3 for £7.50. From 11 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JG.

No. 2. Overview of 1990 by George Wingfield which supports the "intelligence" theory, including cases of UFO events, vehicle interference and formation at ley intersections; old wines in new jars. Wingfield also does detective work on how Operation Blackbird was hoaxed (by the

Army?) and a "Secret Cabinet level meeting called" (were circles Thatcher's — note the name significance — downfall; is John Major John Barleycorn ...?). Splendidly chatty personal account of human reactions to "our circles" of Alton Barnes by Candida Lycett-Green. Also excellent thought in Peter Hewitt's dialogue and argument that the circles are nature spirits' graffiti. Plus Ralph Noyes on predictions; invaluable book reviews; John Mitchell's editorial notes; Centre for Crop Circle Studies' doings.

THE CROP WATCHER. 6 issues a year. Single issue £1.25; £7 for six. Cheques to The Crop Watcher, 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hants, SO51 7TY.

No. 2. Strongly supports Dr Terence Meaden's circle-forming vortices throughout, including assessment of eyewitness accounts leading to challenge to non-supporters to demolish the theory. Circle reports not only from UK but worldwide. More eyewitness accounts (including from *Steam World*). Lengthy response to reviews of corn circle books in *The British & Irish Skeptic*.

No. 3. The lower picture on the cover is described as "The Happy Eater", but drug students will recognise it as "Smiley" of acid house infamy. Eyewitness accounts argument, Jenny Randles on East Anglian circles. Andrews and Delgado's latest book reviewed. Hoaxed examples. Whirlwinds explained.

THE CIRCULAR. Now Q and journal of the Centre for Crop Circle Studies. Mag only £6.30; £8.10 overseas; single copy £1.75. Cheques payable to Bob Kingsley, 58 Kings Road, West End, Woking, Surrey, GU24 9LW.

Vol. 1, No. 2. Off-the-wall ramble of random associations with other hypothetical phenomena; Phil Corker points to flaws in Meaden's thesis and (cont No. 3) in intelligence theory and wider issues; Meadenmania; C.C.C.S. explained; KLF crankery; circles in drawings and photos; remarkable Cheesefoot Head pictogram. Vol. 1, No. 3. Tornado and Storm Research Organisation and its activities; scroll-type circles; circles dowsing workshop; P D Ouspensky on symbolism; pictograms and prehistoric sites, Aboriginal and ancient Scottish drawings being related. Vol. 2, No. 1. Editor's introduction closes with the sensible hope that bridges between science and metaphysics can be repaired. Simon Burton presents a challenging theoretical energy model for cereologists, his organomic energy being a refinement of Wilhelm Reich's orgone researches and which posits possible explanations for the fundamental cereology factors. Jenny Randles' current viewpoint; excellently surveyed East/West Kennet long barrows pictograms; code of conduct; criticism of Press reports.

C R R NEWSLETTER. Similar to previous newsletter in that it has no price and is basically a mouthpiece from Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado. (From 4 Arle Close, Alresford, Hants., SO24 9BG).

January 1991. Eight A4 pages cover Delgado on revelations and research, including suggestion that we now use the term agriglyph, and Andrews on 1990 and the future.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. £3 for 3 from Jenny Randles, 37 Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP.

No. 145. Editorial includes Jenny Randles on why she looks at UFOs from so many angles — I've been baffled by this flux of viewpoints. No. 146. Editorial on changes in ufology, indicating to Jenny Randles it is "born of the wellspring of human consciousness and fulfills a dramatic role at the cutting edge of our culture." Randles also upbraids me by asking "why print such an amazingly tasteless, wretched obituary on the late Anthony Roberts?" Answer: I have spent since 1964 as a professional journalist fighting censorship, so I'm hardly likely to spike a contribution to FF because it might offend someone. As I commented of the correspondent, the obituaries said more of their compilers than their subject.

No. 147. Spot-on editorial on psychic research snobbishness towards ufology, while No. 148 less happy with pseudonymous witnesses as proposed in an editorial on ethics, particularly young persons in the past.

Usual features are: news round-up, articles elsewhere, UFOs in the media, brief cases and case histories.

UFO BRIGANTIA. Journal of the Independent UFO Network. Now Q. £8 sub for 4. From Philip Mantle, 1 Woodhall Drive, Batley, West Yorkshire.

No. 47. Editorial on Keel's support for Japanese Fogo balloon as Roswell crashed UFO reality; Randles and Fuller on crop circles; US abductee's experience; Martin Kotmeyer on world destruction fantasies and ufology as a pathological science.

MAGONIA. Independent UFO mag. Q. UK £4 for 4; US \$10 in dollar bills. Cheques made out to J Rimmer, John deo Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

No. 39. Nigel Watson on turn-of-century invasion films and airship panics; Martin Kotmeyer on alien surveillance thesis history; Roger Sandell summarises recent satanic child abuse cases; in-depth book reviews; letters.

Books

THE DEVOURING FUNGUS by KARLA JENNINGS (W W Norton & Co, £6.95). The fungus of the title releases its spores on almost the last page of this lovingly collected and expressed "Tales of the Computer Age."

With so many people now working with either personal or corporate computers, this book will resonate with millions of would-be readers. In fact, when our newspaper office computer slows down I can feel psychological strain; bugged the repetitive strain injury, years are taken off lives through simple annoyance. That said, the systems manager actually believes one evening he saw a bug visually enter the screen corner...

But the devouring fungus came from a mycologist experimenting with strains of fungi which attacked neighbouring tapes, hitched a ride on them to data

central and transmitted itself onto the read-write heads. A real fungus was passed on to other businesses. Or was it? The story is believable because though it may look imposing, the computer is surprisingly fragile. Like humans they can even be laid low by hay fever; pollensabotaging their chips.

Computer students are told of card feeders which hunger for human flesh or robots which can kill a worker if safety rules are broken. In other words that theme of taboo is alive and well in the hi-tech world. So is the notion that human ingenuity and greed can beat the system; tales of embezzlement or ransom are rather ironic in the light of most hackers previously espousing an anti-materialistic philosophy. There are some great tales of how avarice comes unstuck. Those whose computer crimes are particularly malicious or destructive are technoterrorists. Mostly users are loyal and law-abiding, witness those of "Fred" as the favourite password in Britain.

Perhaps this would explain one legend about computer warfare which even made its way into a Danish textbook. The fable says that during the Falklands war a British fighter jet did not shoot down one of Argentina's Exocet missiles because of the following computer reasoning: 1) Exocet is French; 2) France is not an enemy.

Another enemy is womenfolk. As computer psychos, women have an almost mediaeval reputation for putting a hex on computers. One tale claimed junk bins were getting filled with reject screens when workers' menstrual periods were collectively peaking, that the assembly line women's fingertips became acidic during their periods and messed up the plasmabonding process.

That we feel so much anxiety towards computers allowed the author to use around 400 out of 500 collected anecdotes, jokes, terms, parables, koans, graphics and visions of mass hysteria for the final draft. Because computers live not in our world but in a mathematical universe it is not hard to see why so many legends of its culture have a surrealistic aura. Like that fungus, it is all around us, consciously or unconsciously, an urban guerrilla which has infiltrated society.

Computers have even given us a third great lie, After: "Of course I'll respect you in the morning and 'The cheque's in the mail,' being "Our computer's down."

Oh well, back to my workstation woe to type this — if it allows me.

CURSES! BROILED AGAIN by JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND (W W Norton, £6.95).

We praised Prof Brunvand's fourth collection of urban belief tales in hardback (FF11, pp20/21) and can only re-endorse the paperback. It's his usual masterly concoction of new and updated modern legends. The fact that he's published four such books, has a weekly syndicated column — from which much book material is drawn — only go to show there's no lack of development in contemporary folklore.

The title refers to the practice of getting a tan by mechanical means and in doing so frying one's innards. Most tales are of the cautionary nature. Plenty of horror stories, accidents and mishaps, automobile, animals, sex and scandal, business and professional, and academe.

There are rumours galore and an attempt to classify and compare variations, seeking to figure out where they come from, what changes they undergo and why people continue to tell them despite the power of the media.

MONSTRUM: A WIZARD'S TALE by Tony 'Doc' Shiels (Fortean Times, £8.95 — mail order from SKS, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX, £9.75; \$20).

Authentic Western World shamans are few and far between, but Tony Shiels is certainly the genuine article. A larger-than-life character, he is also the one with the highest profile and arguably the strongest credentials.

I have followed his doings over the past two decades through personal correspondence, gossip, tabloid publicity, paid a surprise visit (he wasn't in) and his articles (several of which I published myself). In fact, I was privileged that he chose a magazine I then edited, *The Shaman* to give me an **EXCLUSIVE** on his monster-raising exploits in the Emerald Isle. He also, at my prompting, wrote on some of his other joys — golf, Guinness and his professional knowledge as a Punch and Judy professor. He is also an author of several books on stage magic, poet, playwright, editor of surrealist magazine *Nnidnid* and artist.

All these aspects of Doc's life are interwoven into this helter-skelter of personal involvement with monster raising in that most mysterious of the four elements — water.

It is generally accepted that Doc has taken the best photograph yet of the Loch Ness Monster and the full story of its taking and subsequent debate and odd happenings are here detailed. Also considerable space is given to his snapping Morgawr, the sea serpent of Falmouth Bay. Also in 1977, Doc initiated the Monstermind project, organising an international group of psychics and magicians to raise up the denizens of many lakes worldwide. The psychic backlash which resulted from this Mafioso tactic upon the international community/conspiracy of aquatic recluses is a salutary lesson to all who would attempt a mediumistic protection racket.

Mysterious monsters intend staying mysterious, but it seems they have the human characteristic of wanting to just show that uncertain willingness to make fleeting appearances to intrigue before vanishing again. To extend the metaphor, the victim will return to the scene of the crime, but as with anything that lives outside the law, take care. As Doc found to his cost, monsters are a phenomenon which can be harmful. They are full of contradictions and he reveals how he tried various models to create a physical reference for them, concluding that his ten-year pursuit of the serpent-dragon demonstrated, over and over, that nothing is quite what it initially seems to be.

Monsters may be physical, psychical or perhaps projections from our own subconscious. Wisely, in 1986, Doc retired from the monster-raising game finally. However, I'm sure he is still a voracious reader and analyst of any fresh sightings or theories.

What is so refreshing about this book is that it is so much one man's very personal accounts and ideas, yet there is not an iota of pretension. Also you either believe a million unbelievable things or you don't.

There's bizarre accounts of a terrifying Cornish Owlman, more horrific than any fiction writer or filmmaker could create. The lexilinking of associations and words will be familiar to Fortean, but would boggle the cells of closed minds. Synchronicities abound. This really is the shaman's world, where contact with otherworldliness exists. It is a surreal romp with faeryland intervening and sky-clad witches stripped.

An incredibly well-read raconteur, Doc has the rare gift of juggling his Gaelic roots, belief in portents, artistic talents and none too serious view of life, while spinning a yarn which mesmerizes and enchants.

Stout fellow!



NEW LIGHT ON THE ANCIENT MYSTERY OF GLASTONBURY by JOHN MICHELL (Gothic Image, £9.95).

As anyone who has been to the delightful Somerset town of Glastonbury will testify, there is something very, very special about the place; brooding mysteriousness and the uncanny presence of the Tor.

With chapter two, Michell plucks out the most significant and original factor in the Glastonbury mystique. He reveals the answer to the riddle of why seven particular islands were specially distinguished, despite their smallness compared with other hills in the same district. Plotting them together on a map it appears they form a pattern which closely approximates the positions of the seven stars in the Great Bear constellation, with Glastonbury itself corresponding to the star Dubhe, on which the constellation pivots. This would have been observed by the early tribes attracted to Glastonbury with the Great Bear associated with King Arthur, Michell's revelation supports the intuitions of several previous writers who have suggested that in ancient times this sacred landscape was marked with some form of celestial design. Tantalisingly, Michell even suggests that the connection was made by tribal people 12,000 years ago.

However, in chapter three Michell enters the world of fancy by suggesting megalithic monuments may have been erected by giants. He imagines the task of this spiritual engineering being concocted as a prehistoric Balfour Beatty contract between humans and giant thought-forms similar to Eastern magicians' tulpas. Let's lay this hoary chestnut to rest here: the only account of this alleged creation of mind slaves appears in Alexandra O'Neill's book on Tibet and has been plagiarised, bastardised, utilised ad nauseum. Just like the tulpa of that book, it seems the notion will not dissolve.

Nor too will the myth of the St Michael Line, a posited long-distance ley from Cornwall to Essex. It is not even approximately straight, nor sufficiently accurate to be retitled with a term such as geomantic corridor. Michael Behrend disproved it years ago, but still Michell and others trot it out as an act of faith. Like some linear tulpa it requires exercising from the geomantic canon.

Michell also deals with other archaeological aspects of varying reputation. He hurries over Katherine Maltwood's other giants, the Temple of the Stars: Michell has never seemed comfortable with terrestrial zodiacs study. However, he is more positive about Geoffrey Russell's revelation

of a labyrinth around Glastonbury Tor.

Much detailed information is related on the Christian tradition in the South-West; of Joseph of Arimathea and even Jesus himself at Glastonbury. One is inclined on the evidence to suppose Joseph physically established Christianity at Glastonbury, but as Michell states: "Like all sacred allegories, the Glastonbury legend has different levels of meaning and has been expressed accordingly in different forms."

He then goes on to impress upon the reader the one common factor of the number 12 in the foundation or refoundation of Christianity at Glastonbury and seeks to explain how the new religion was imposed upon the Druids.

Nearer today, Michell also puts into perspective the doings of Frederick Bligh Bond, his triumphs and tragedies, a salutary lesson in becoming too involved in supernatural adventures. A more circumspect approach might have led to the connection between Stonehenge and Glastonbury. By going back, Michell argues finally we can go forwards to fulfil the archetype of paradise.

He promises it is attainable.



WOLVES AND WEREWOLVES by John Pollard (Robert Hale, £5.95).

TESTIMONY that wolves once roamed the North-East can be found in the ancient name for Wolveston — Wolfraton. Today they are extinct in Britain and much reduced across Europe. However, as this classic study, now in paperback, reveals, people still cry "Wolf!" when usually they misperceive a large dog.

Tale upon gory tale is given semi-fictional form along with much historical data. The reader is left in no doubt that the wolf was a cunning and vicious foe of mankind.

Pollard would place all tales of werewolves in the category of legend, declining to consider supernatural possibilities.

It is an entertaining and erudite study, but marred by lack of index for any subsequent research purposes. Also on page nine credit is given to illustrations, but my copy lacked any photographs (perhaps a note left in erroneously from the original edition).

TRUE GHOST STORIES OF OUR OWN TIME edited by Vivienne Rae-Ellis (Faber & Faber, £4.99)

The compiler was inspired to produce this collection through her own experiences of the supernatural, which are described in the preface. These tales come mainly from the British Isles and many are about recent events, such as a sighting of the Grey Lady at what is now part of Beamish Museum, in County Durham. Many such stories here show how people today are experiencing ghosts in much the same form as past encounters. Different sections cover all types of category of ghosts. Factual material written up in semi-fictional form.

THE SCENTED BATH by Maribeth Riggs (Robert Hale, £6.95)

This book extols the virtues of aromatic bathing, which it claims can affect you in exquisite ways, such as fragrances pleasing to the nose which can alter the mood; you can choose to be stimulated or sedated, the bathtimes in this book being truly special events.

Well, we don't keep coal in the bath in our house, but a bath for this reviewer means the fragrance of Miss Matey with the damp scent of newsprint. As for the book: nice pictures, nice poems, nasty price. The toilet seats' answer to coffee table books.

THE THEATRE OF EMBARRASSMENT by Francis Wyndham (Chatto & Windus, £15)

A distinguished journalist's entertaining collection of interviews, reviews and articles loosely linked by the theme of embarrassment. They present a wry perspective on British cultural life in an age when characterless Eamonn Andrews conned the media but not the public with his chat show and P J Proby habitually split his pants on stage to hide (or rather reveal) his inadequacies. Plenty of other stars are paraded, from Judy Garland to the Krays. An intellectual romp, it's worth the price for the insightful piece on Heathcote Williams.

TOO HOT TO HANDLE by Frank Close (W H Allen, £14.99).

THE public has a fascination with science, which too readily puts scientists in the role of a new priestly elite.

When two of these high priests claimed cold fusion — nuclear fission in water at room temperature — it looked like they would be deified like Einstein and Rutherford; also that the balance of world power could shift.

Unfortunately the drama now looks more like a one-act play; the theatregoer stands in the bar at the interval wondering if the curtain really has come down for good. For Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann's claim has not been duplicated and cracks in the experiment have appeared.

Dr Close explains the cold fusion debate and also exposes science and big business and scientists as fallible beings, often deluded or fraudsters.

THE RAPE OF EGYPT by Peter France (Barrie & Jenkins, £16.99).

PUBLIC opinion has generally held archaeologists in undeserved esteem. These licensed grave-robbing ghoults get their comeuppance in this study, subtitled "How the Europeans Stripped Egypt of its Heritage."

It is a tale of imperial greed, full of plundering disguised as archaeological excavations, conspiracies, personal greed and of crates of priceless unrecorded treasures being shipped out of Egypt to destinations worldwide.

It is the story of Egyptology and Tutankamun's tomb, the Rosetta Stone and the colourful characters concerned.

PATTERNS OF THOUGHT by Richard Foster (Jonathan Cape, £15.99)

Current concerns for the environment and speculation that the Earth is indeed a living thing is reflected in the Great Pavement at Westminster Abbey.

The Platonic image is reflected here in one of Britain's best-kept artistic secrets. A medieval masterpiece, completed in 1268, it is uncovered for several days each year.

Lying before the High Altar, its main purpose was to enable the observer to contemplate the divine order of the universe.

This remarkable book unravels the secret message whereby 13th century symbols fit many of today's scientific concepts.

THE GHOST NOW STANDING ON PLAT-FORM ONE edited by Richard Peyton (Sovvenir Press, £14.95)

Some of the greatest storytellers are represented here, such as Ray Bradbury, Charles Dickens, John Wyndham, Robert Bloch and Algernon Blackwood. Each tells a fictional short story, and each is introduced by enthusiast Richard Peyton, who puts the tales into perspective with his own researches into ghostly happenings, places and their authors. You don't have to be a ghost stories fan or railway buff to get engrossed in this collection.

COR BABY, THAT'S REALLY ME by John Otway (Omnibus Press, £4.95)

THE ultimate panacea to all those rock biographies which rhapsodise about how good a star is. John Otway — right — was a one-hit wonder — "Cor Baby, That's Really Free" — who refused to give in.

Would-be George Michaels or Elton Johns will find here a cautionary tale. Rock may have glamour, but few get to bathe in it.

Otway and partner Wild Willy Barrett created maniacal music and mayhem on stage. They rode



the punk wave in a wholly original manner. But the problem was always Otway's inability to manage his financial affairs, propensity to fall in love and write soppy songs and have bizarre but disastrous career plans.

During his brief period of glory this reviewer saw his show twice and chatted in hotel bars into the early hours with him. Otway was totally down to earth despite his Bentley a friend drove as Otway could not get the hang of motoring. Otway succeeded despite himself; being a genuinely nice bloke, particularly in a business so full of hyperbole.

So why a review here? Well, there's some geomantic material in the lyrics, particularly "Josephine", where the May Queen (17) — sorry about the journalistic usage of age brackets — about the "libertine which lies within our Josephine" and foes who would kiss the ground she stood upon and the value of the new-sown land. Also there's John Michell's viewing Atlantis over White Leaved Cross on the vibrant track "Louisa on a Horse." I can't recall us discussing earth mysteries, but it would not surprise me to find he has an empathy for it.

The fact that this book is well crafted goes some way towards defeating the object of projecting the artist as a "wally". Otway comes over as an innocent abroad, the person who would never lose friends but could never win fame.

Forget your grandiose autobiographies — here is a warm human being whose trials and tribulations make compulsive reading.

THE ILLUSTRATED HERBAL HANDBOOK FOR EVERYONE by Juliette de Balmaci Levy (Faber and Faber, £5.99).

PLENTY of advice on using plants. For instance there is the idea that binding fresh-cut nettles into a bunch and beating the affected parts of the body until great heat is created is good for you. As a brew, nettle will cure dysentery, diarrhoea and expel worms. Of course, not all recipes sound so revolting and much of the herb lore comes from gipsies. With the craze for alternative medicine at its height, this book will have much appeal, but it is a shame the illustrations are simply line drawings rather than colour plates to make identification easier.

MURDER AND MYSTERIES FROM THE YORKSHIRE DALES by Peter N. Walker (Robert Hale, £5.95).

Having been a police inspector, the author is well qualified to reflect upon a number of unsolved murders. Of even more interest is the long chapter on the swindling Mary Bateman of Leeds, after whose execution 2,500 people queued to see the body at three-pence each. She certainly existed but did Robin Hood, and the author does detective work on whether his body was buried at Kirkstall Priory. Also where lies the body of St Margaret Clithrow of York, whose martyrdom is detailed (and might explain the sanctity of the Lady Chapel above Osmotherley — not discussed here). There is plenty of mystery about the Dales and Walker has an easy style with intriguing material.



DEAR CLARE ... by Kiri Tunks and Diane Hutchinson (Hutchinson, £3.99).

ONE of the great myths of today is that soft-core pornography corrupts. Rational people realise that it acts as a safety valve within society. Even to question the Sun's Page 3 policy suggests some personal hang-up.

This book of letters to Clare Short, MP, purports to be about women feel about Page 3 pin-ups. It is full of alleged letters with moons such as: "I recently suffered a 20-minute train journey with a photo of Linda Lusardi thrust in my face. I spent the journey trying to decide whether or not I should speak up and tell the offending reader how I felt." The trouble is all the letters are anonymous and most are even followed by the pathetic and meaningless words "TOWN WITHHELD." Are they all made up, like the ones in top-shelf magazines?

What makes this book really galling, however, is that not one letter printed supports Page 3. Perhaps nine million readers can all be wrong.

THE DRAGON'S TRIANGLE by CHARLES BERLITZ (Grafton, £3.99)

Not content with a Bermuda Triangle, Berlitz posits The Dragon's Triangle in the Pacific. That there are real mysteries to solve is abundantly clear to anyone who has followed the calls for a new inquiry into the loss of the supertanker Derbyshire.

Berlitz calls it a jinx ship, but would relations of its 44 dead crewmen believe they may have "gone to experimentation, annihilation, slavery or a galactic zoo?" Probably not, and probably the vessel had a fundamental structural weakness.

In gee-whiz fashion the author rhetorically asks how the finest examples of our marine and aviation technology simply disappear. Decide for yourself whether there are mundane answers or whether supernatural causes require invocation.

IN BRIEF ...

LAUDED as the world's greatest psychic, judge for yourself from four *Arkana* paperback edition: **On Mysteries of the Mind** by Henry Read covering Edgar Cayce's work on visualisation, dreamwork, premonition and altered states of consciousness; **Remembering Your Past Lives**, by Robert C Smith, a controversial look into re-incarnation and how it may affect you now; and **Secrets of the Universe**, by Lin Cochran, on the secret of our souls and higher intelligence (all £2.99). Plus an overview of the man in **A Seer out of Season**, by Harmon Bro, this is a fascinating biographical memoir (£9.99).

Books which echo Cayce are **Shadows In the Cave**, by G D Martin (*Arkana*, £5.99), a New Age study centred on our consciousness and single universal mind; while **Exploring Reincarnation**, by Hans TenDam (*Arkana*, £7.99) examines the range of explanations for past-life recall. In the opposite direction, **Dreams of the Future**, by Chet B Snow (*Aquarian*, £7.99) studies hypnotic future-life progressions. Hoping to persuade sceptics or preach to the converted are **Astrology: The Evidence of Science**, by Percy Seymour (*Arkana*, £5.99), a scientist himself who believes there is factual evidence, and from the viewpoint of personal health depending upon a harmonious integration with the world comes **A Handbook of Medical Astrology**, by Jane Ridder-Patrick (*Arkana*, £5.99); while **The Karmic Journey**, by Judy Hall (*Arkana*, £6.99) postulates that we are eternal spiritual beings whose post-life patterns can be identified in our birthchart. **Saturn In Transit**, by Erin Sullivan (*Arkana*, £7.99) incorporates archetypal sources and practical use of astrological symbolism, seeking Saturn's useful and developmental influence on our lives; **Creative Astrology**, edited by Prudence Jones, taps the intuitive part of us which understands the most abstruse astrological symbolism, using a variety of practising workers in this area (*Aquarian*, £7.99).

Regarding the future, **Tarot for Relationships**, by Jocelyn Almond and Keith Seddon, looks at yourself, your emotional needs and personal relationships (*Aquarian*, £5.99), and from love and sex to (despite the title it's not masturbational) inner dream body work with **Working on Yourself Alone**, by Arnold Mindell, using psychotherapy and meditation for personal

benefit (*Arkana*, £4.99). Similarly, **Head off Stress**, by D E Harding, teaches how to overcome this common problem (*Arkana*, £5.99). Many physical therapies are covered in **Body and Soul**, by Sara Martin (*Arkana*, £5.99) so you choose which suits you.

Transcendent experiences are detailed in **Seeing the Invisible**, by Meg Maxwell and Verena Tschudin (*Arkana*, £6.99), from an archive of otherworldly experiences; while **Whole in One**, by David Lorimer has impressive credentials as a serious study of the near-death experience (*Arkana*, £6.99); whereas for many music is a passport to other realms and the sourcebook from commentators compiled by Joscelyn Godwin, **Music, Mysticism and Magic** (*Arkana*, £6.99) covers common ground but where is Bob Dylan? In this category also comes **When The Iron Eagle Flies**, by Ayya Khenra, a handbook of Buddhism for Westerners (*Arkana*, £6.99) and **Fire In the Heart**, by Kyriacos C Markides, more Cypriot Castaneda type "wisdom" (*Arkana*, £6.99). Unfortunately most people who oppose feminism do so because they believe in sexual equality. Therefore the idea of an anthology specifically by women, **Voices From the Circle** by Prudence Jones and Caitlin Matthews (*Aquarian*, £6.99) is anathema, unless you think otherwise. Caitlin Matthews is also author of a truly worthwhile book on the Goddess aspect, **Sophia**, well-researched and authoritative (*Mandala*, £14.95); similarly **Lady of the Beasts**, whose subtitle *Ancient Images of the Goddess and Her Sacred Animals* sums up this well-illustrated paperback by Buffy Johnson (*Harper Collins*, £16.99); and equally a reprint of the scholar Geoffrey Ashe and his Marian classic **The Virgin** (*Arkana*, £5.99). In similar vein are **Woman Awake**, by Christian Feldman (*Arkana*, £4.99) on meditation and **Woman of Wisdom**, by Tsultrim Allione (*Arkana*, £6.99) on Tibetan Buddhism.

Spending half its content on the notable astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I, John Dee, **Elizabethan Magic** is a tour de force on the veiled subject of Elizabethan occultism. There are brief overviews of the likes of Edward Kelly, Robert Fludd and lesser figures. Robert Turner provides a good bibliography for the reader who wishes to delve further (*Element Books*, £7.95).

Strangely-titled, **The Unknowable Gurdjieff** is by Margaret Anderson, who worked with the sage in France and hopes here to banish many misconceptions about the thinker (*Arkana*, £5.99). Our primary drive as humans is a hunger for meaning say Jacob Needleman and David Applebaum, and **Real Philosophy** addresses the fundamental questions through an anthology of religious and philosophical writings (*Arkana*, £6.99). As for Gaia: **The Growth of an Idea**, its author Lawrence E Joseph writes admirably and intelligently, proving Gaia is more than the growth of an industry (*Arkana*, £5.99). Another industry was ancient astronauts and the creature Oannes from Sirius, but **Ancient Egypt: The Sirius Connection** is a far more mundane inquiry into the significance of this binary star (*Element Books*, £9.99).