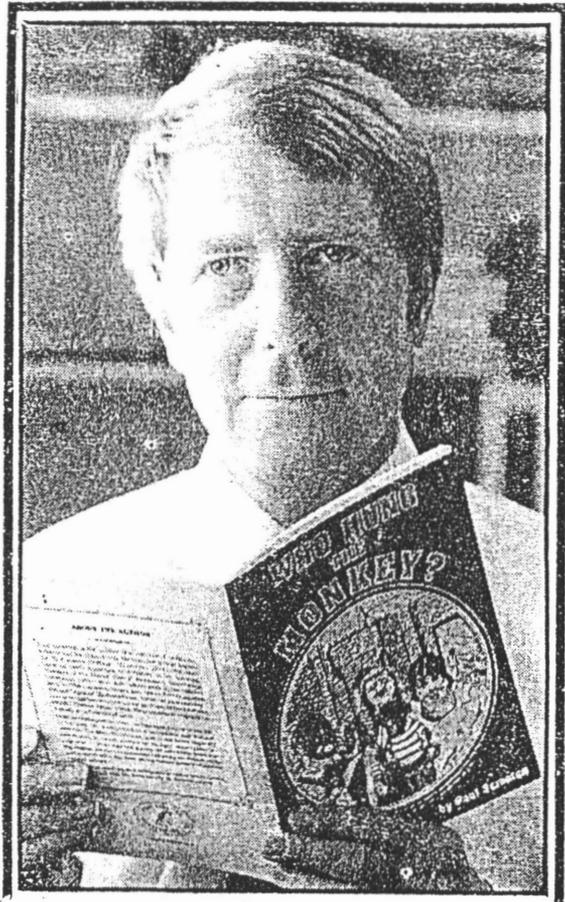


Folklore Frontiers



No. 14

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

The Diary

There are many eccentrics in the journalism game and I happen to work with more than my fair share of them.

One of my colleagues is always ready to tell people how he was once introduced to the Bishop of Jarrow wearing pyjamas (him not the bishop).

The story goes that the night attire was only worn as a barrier between his tender skin and a rather prickly suit but the lads in the office have their doubts as the same bloke once went swimming and sunbathing wearing his wife's bikini bottoms.

Still, if vicars and bishops are allowed to walk around in dresses, wearing pyjamas under your suit seems perfectly acceptable behaviour.

AND

You can't beat a good landlord who puts the interest of his customers before his own, but surely the actions of a Seaton Carew publican this week is taking customer care a bit too far.

A colleague who is keen on a swift half in this particularly hostelry, after a hard shift in the office, was surprised to receive a phone call from mine host telling him not to bother calling in that day because the pub was closing early.



It is published and edited by PAUL SCREETON. Address is 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25 2AT.

Published roughly on a quarterly basis, subscription for four issues is £5; \$12. Single issue £1.25. All payments to "P SCREETON" — NOT the magazine's title. Dollar notes only from USA due to bank charges. A sheet of information on back issues is available on receipt of a SAE.

Readers will note that there has been a price rise, which though regrettable has been necessary.

If your subscription expires with this issue, an "X" will appear on the line below

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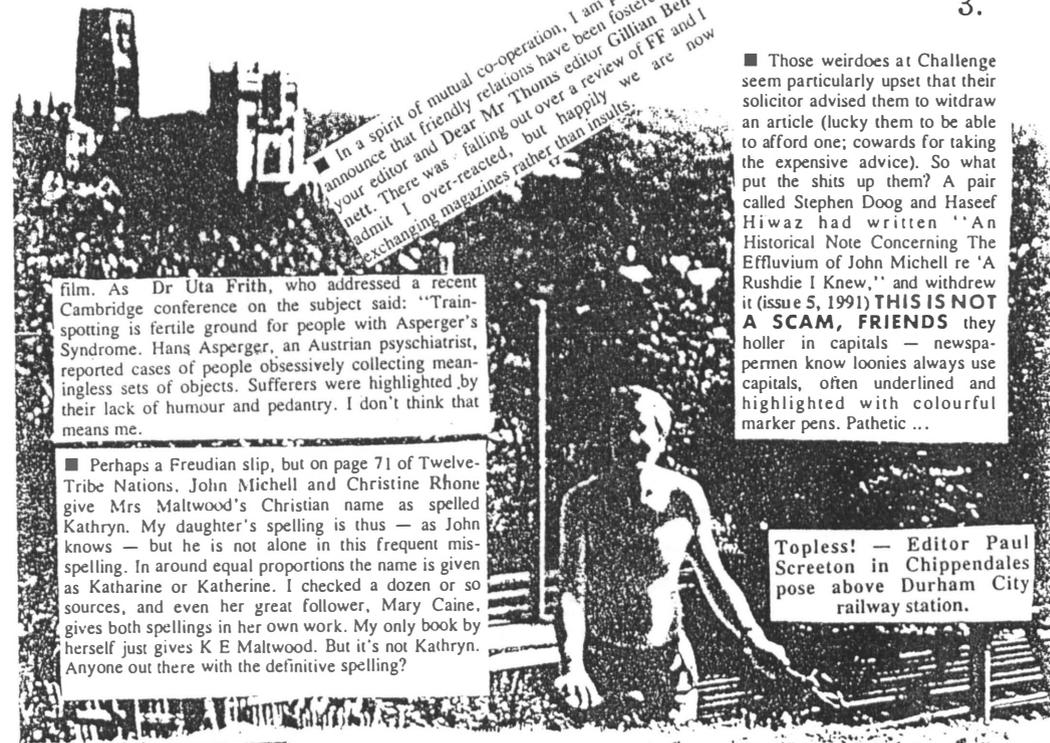
It was a bitter blow on a steaming hot day and we wondered whether the courteous publican had bothered to contact all his customers. Alas no. Only the major shareholder was contacted.

Never bite the hand that feeds so to speak.

Could these items from The Mail, Hartlepool, and its irreverent Punchline! column refer to the editor of Britain's premier urban belief tales magazine and in the latter case Dave Boreland, landlore of the Station Hotel? I think we should be told.

■ While with the Station Hotel, I hasten to add that I only frequent the premises as a handy venue for observing trains. Though perhaps I should never have "come out" on this pastime. A colleague regards ferroequinologists as perverts, but as I pointed out to him, there are more railway magazines in WH Smith's than his beloved gardening glossies.

Yet I had to grudgingly agree that a page lead in one national (Independent, 14/9/91) associating trainspotters with autism was accurate. They, collectors of trivia and walking encyclopaedias, long accepted as eccentrics, may suffer from Asperger's Syndrome, characterised by unusual, obsessive and narrow interests. Thankfully I have so many interests I have never understood the word "bored" and 24 hours a day are far too few. But I would reckon 50% of enthusiasts fall into the obsessive category. Encounters with them is not far from scenes from Dustin Hoffman's Rainman



■ Those weirdoes at Challenge seem particularly upset that their solicitor advised them to withdraw an article (lucky them to be able to afford one; cowards for taking the expensive advice). So what put the shits up them? A pair called Stephen Doog and Haseef Hiwaz had written "An Historical Note Concerning The Effluvium of John Michell re 'A Rushdie I Knew,'" and withdrew it (issue 5, 1991) **THIS IS NOT A SCAM, FRIENDS** they holler in capitals — newspapermen know loonies always use capitals, often underlined and highlighted with colourful marker pens. Pathetic ...

film. As Dr Uta Frith, who addressed a recent Cambridge conference on the subject said: "Train-spotting is fertile ground for people with Asperger's Syndrome. Hans Asperger, an Austrian psychiatrist, reported cases of people obsessively collecting meaningless sets of objects. Sufferers were highlighted by their lack of humour and pedantry. I don't think that means me.

■ Perhaps a Freudian slip, but on page 71 of Twelve-Tribe Nations. John Michell and Christine Rhone give Mrs Maltwood's Christian name as spelled Kathryn. My daughter's spelling is thus — as John knows — but he is not alone in this frequent misspelling. In around equal proportions the name is given as Katharine or Katherine. I checked a dozen or so sources, and even her great follower, Mary Caine, gives both spellings in her own work. My only book by herself just gives K E Maltwood. But it's not Kathryn. Anyone out there with the definitive spelling?



CHRISSEY ILEY

■ **ORGASM.** This one should be in our Oldies but Goldies section. However (Sun, 27/10/91), columnist Chrissy Iley draws attention to Essex girl jokes. "The one about how do you tell when an Essex girl had an orgasm? — when she drops her kebab — reminded me of how do you tell when a Jewish girl has? — she drops her nail file." Never mind the deep and meaningful sociology, last time I heard it the joke was on the Liverpudlian lass — who spat out her chewing gum.

Strange Seaton Carew By Paul Screetton

WHEN I was a schoolboy I was always regarded as a "plodder". This always seemed a backhand compliment, but at 45 it still applies. Doubtless this is why I have only recently responded to an article in the spring 1990 issue of Northern Earth Mysteries.

In his '89 Moot Report, Jimmy Goddard (1) reported that John Barker spoke of various stones, including two "incorporated into walls, one at Seaton Carew, near Hartlepool." Being a Seaton Carew resident for some 20 years this intrigued me and I contacted Mr Barker, of Whitby, who replied that upon reading the Northern Earth Mysteries report he was also mystified.

"It was stated that I included something from Seaton Carew, this was not correct. I have never been to Seaton Carew nor am I aware of any ancient stone there. I am not sure which site was misunderstood to be Seaton Carew. I have the text of my talk and there are several possibilities, but I confined my sites to 'Blackamore' (the old name for an area slightly larger than the present North York Moors National Park)."

I mention this school as it was the scene of a dramatic UFO encounter; two of the witnesses being neighbours of mine. It was built in 1951 and achieved brief notoriety in 1988 when headmaster Geoff Barton was sent to Coventry by his staff. (2)

Back with the UFO, Paul Scott, who was then seven years old, reckons the encounter took place in 1977. It was spring or summer and about 1pm. He recalls it was probably sunny and about three to four pupils were witnesses, including his mother's sister's daughter Jill, who lived next-door to us before marriage. Paul lives two doors away still.

"It was our dinner break," he told me. "We were messing about at the back of the annexe when we saw a big shining object. Crossways it was like the length of a big lorry. It was white and shiny with some sort of dome. There was no sound. It was hovering stationary above the long grass. It was visible for a few minutes. "It felt good. We were impressed.

"Then the bell went and we went to tell someone, a dinner lady. When we went back it had gone."

Seaton Carew is an interesting place. I even managed to write a full page feature on the church graveyard and its oddities, but that's another story. (3)

Pity about the non-existent stone of Jimmy's imagination though!

Notes:

(1) Northern Earth Mysteries, No. 41, 1990.

(2) Staff Send Head to Coventry, Mail, Hartlepool, 11/2/88.

(3) It's A Small But Special Place, Mail, Hartlepool, 24/1/85.

■ An article, virtually identical, has been submitted to Northern Earth Mysteries. I understand our respective subscription lists are almost exclusively different, so there should be no readership overlap.



Newslines

OFF THE RAILS. This magazine is interested in odd folk habits, especially where it seems so peculiar as to be doubtful or dubious. In its The Glorious Years feature (Steam Railway, October, 1991) we find discussion of such rail enthusiasm as shed bashing, performance logging and photography, but the guest photographer claims there was a gricer — general term for lessacceptable trainspotters — who "griced lavatories (both up and down platforms if possible). Well, whatever turns you on! History doesn't record whether a quick sortie through the door counted or if you actually had to use the facilities!"

See **The Diary** for odd trainspotters, but I've mislaid a reference to astronaut James Irwin taking moonrock into public toilets (someone out there tell me where it was).

I must share my favourite piece of railway station lavatory graffiti with you. It was at Newton Abbot, South Devon (the up platform) and began: "Whither atrophy?" after which, perhaps an off-duty schoolteacher, someone had added: "10/10 Very good."

A LIKELY TAIL — A one-paragraph item which caught my eye in The Sun (28/8/91) stated that the tail of famous racehorse Voltigeur has been removed from York racecourse museum because punters keep pulling out strands for luck.

Hart Village, County Durham, was this long-legged colt's birthplace in 1847. In 1850 it won the Derby for Lord Zetland at 16-1 and the St Leger.

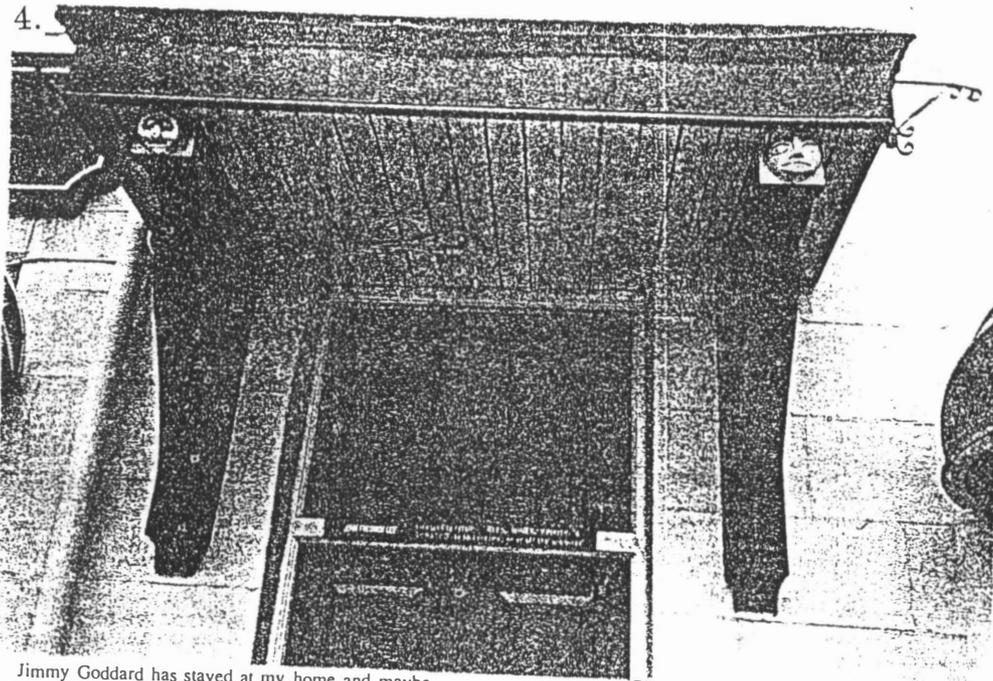
The converted stable where it entered the world still bears the name Voltigeur Cottage.

Voltigeur — tail, apart — is said to be buried locally at Nine Acres.



"I wonder if I could ask a favour of you - ?"

TATTOO YOU. (see FF 13, p 16) Peter Christie sent a clipping (North Devon Journal, 8/8/91) that his local CID reckoned "there are thousands of these pamphlets in North Devon alone," referring to scare sheets, often multiplied in all innocence. The advice being to throw them away.



Jimmy Goddard has stayed at my home and maybe misheard some reference, but we are 20 or so miles from "Blackamore".

That said, and corrected, there are, however, some interesting artifacts in Seaton Carew.

Not least are some stone heads. Two adorn either side of a garage, two more the gateway, and another in a garden rockery. This same house in Byland Grove has a stone couple embracing and has a strong Celtic feel to it. Passing the house frequently, I had wondered if its owner was an earth mysteries enthusiast.

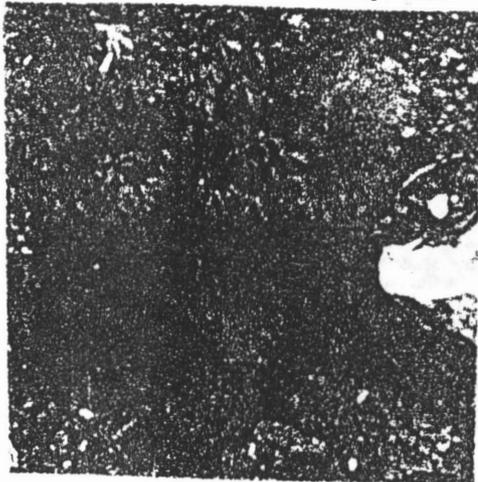
The simple answer, as so often is the case, was more mundane. The owner was Jim Mason, a Hartlepool borough councillor. The heads were recovered by his workforce, for he was a demolition contractor, and the sexy couple were presented by the art college, created

by one of the students, during his year of office as mayor in 1977/8, he told me one Sunday when I interrupted his gardening.

Sadly Jim died in 1989, but there is a mildly humorous tale to tell as an aside. The Hartlepool reporter for The Northern Echo in the late Eighties was Philip Hickey and Jim Mason was his "contact" on the council. If Philip wanted inside information on any council matter, Jim was his first port of call. When Jim was ill in the town's General Hospital, Philip went along to visit him. Upon arrival, however, he was told Jim had died. The obituary appeared in the next morning's The Northern Echo. Unfortunately the general had as patients two Jim Masons and it was the other who had met his demise.

Talking of heads, my local, The Station Hotel, has two carved wooden heads above the door, painted white at present. The pub was certainly there in 1897, the present landlord found a document dated 1850, and the bottle store was probably dates back further, for the bottle store was obviously once a stables, suggesting that the pub may have been a coaching inn. The bottle store also has what I suspect may have been an owl window, though at the moment it is used by house martins. The lounge has a distinctly spooky feel to it, and I'm not the only one to have experienced this, though the adjacent bar has no peculiar feel.

Just outside Seaton Carew to the west in Hartlepool is Golden Flatts School, where there is a squat standing stone. A female former colleague, when a pupil there, said they slid down it as pupils — a dodgy experience I would think. Until six or so years ago it stood in a line of mature trees. They have now been replaced by a car park and the stone relocated and whitewashed, fitted with a plaque which states, "This garden is Dedicated To The Memory of ERIC DOLLIN 'Lollipop Man' Friend To The Children of GOLDEN FLATTS PRIMARY SCHOOL 1989."



Letters

From John Michell, London.

Judging from your review of my Glastonbury book, confusion has arisen about the St Michael line across southern England. This is not surprising because certain important facts were not known until recently, when Bob Forrest made a scientific analysis of the line, allowing for the curvature of the earth, etc. Incorporating his findings, the following features are now established.

Cartographical. The line extends between, as far as one can judge, the extreme western and the extreme eastern points of southern Britain — from a headland adjacent to the present Land's End to the bulge of East Anglia above Lowestoft. The approximate centre of the line is Avebury.

Straightness. The line is not a corridor but like a stretched hair. Its exact orientation is defined by its central section through Wiltshire and Somerset. Bob Forrest has shown that four of its major sites — Ogbourne St George church (a place of ancient ecclesiastical importance), the great southern entrance stones to Avebury, St Michael's church tower on Glastonbury Tor and the St Michael church on Burrow Mump — are in precise alignment. Projected westward, the line passes over the prominent Cheesewring landmark on Bodmin Moor and thence to the westernmost cape of Cornwall.

St Michael sites. As well as Glastonbury Tor and the Mump, which are directly on the line, a chain of St Michael sites through the West Country almost coincides with it. Within sight of it, a short distance on either side, are the most prominent natural landmarks dedicated to St Michael, including Brent Tor, St Michael's rock at Roche, St Michael's Mount and Carn Brea.

The pilgrim's way. There are indications that the St Michael line served as a prehistoric pilgrimage route towards the central temple at Avebury. Fragments of the route still exist, in the Pilgrim's Way along the axis of the Tor, which is aligned with and visible from the Burrow Mump. This gives the precise line of sight towards Avebury, the line closely follows that of the Icknield Way into East Anglia. It makes straight for the most remarkable geomantic centre in the eastern counties, the cave above (below? — editor) the ancient cross and ley centre at Royston.

Traditions. A number of early writers, including Wellesley Tudor Pole, Margaret Thornley and Rev H A Lewis, collected legends about a mystical pathway "first trodden by angels' feet" along the St Michael line from the far west of Cornwall through Glastonbury. Country lore from Cornwall to Somerset said that Jesus had walked that way and would one day pass along it again.

Aesthetic resonance. Unlike most of the geomancy or sacred geography patterns which enthusiasts have drawn across landscapes, the St Michael line has proved widely and spontaneously attractive. Several people have been inspired to walk its length, such as the artist Keith Payne in the '70s, and pilgrims have since passed along it. It is even followed by American mystical tour groups (Sun Bear etc.). Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst went along it with dowsing rods and, in *The Sun and the Serpent*, wrote about the two earth currents of opposite polarity which they detected around it.

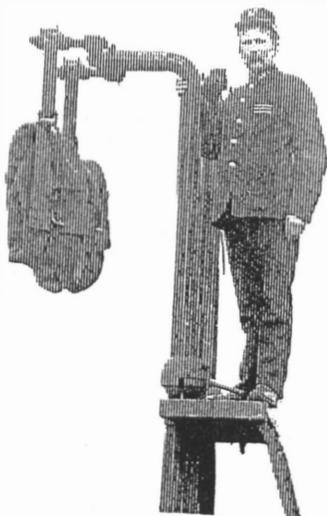
As the poet Harry Fainlight said about the Glastonbury zodiac, whatever may be the level of its existence, it demonstrably "works". Apart from its physical existence, and its accordance with folklore records, the St Michael line is sanctioned by poetry and aesthetics.

St Michael alignments elsewhere. The British St Michael line is not unique. Another, for longer, linking the principal St Michael sites in western Europe and the main Apollo shrines of Greece, has been identified by European scholars and is a basis of sacred geography studies in France and Germany. This alignment, ending at the rock of Skellig Michael in the west of Ireland and with its eastern terminus on Mount Carmel, illustrates topographically the transformation of Apollo into the Christian archangel by way of aligned sanctuaries where visions of the archangel were recorded and where his cult succeeded that of the pagan deity. An account of this line is in the forthcoming book by Christine Rhone and myself, *Twelve-Tribe Nations and the Science of Enchanting Landscapes*.

Summary. The above are the data — the facts of the matter. They are susceptible to a wide range of interpretations, but future researchers should be aware of these facts so as to avoid the various fictions and misrepresentations which tend to confuse modern studies of the St Michael line.

From Eddie Tooke, The Pendragon Society.

But Paul, Pendragon a sexist mag making fun of Deidre of Chipping Sodbury? How could you! As is made clear on page 19 of our issue No. 21/2, there is no connection between your dear departed "Deidre" and our very-much-alive "Deirdre". Your Deidre's first "r" is missing like your first "n" in Darlington.



From Mike White, of Churchdown, Glos.

I was recently talking to an American colleague at work and he told me an interesting story which you may or may not have come across before. A friend of his brother was on holiday in Boston and went out one evening to a bar where he had a few drinks and a generally enjoyable evening. However, as he left the bar he was attacked in an alley and knocked unconscious. The next thing he knew was waking up in a cheap motel room with a scar on his back which a doctor confirmed had been caused by the removal of one kidney. My friend at work **INSISTS** that this is a true story. Now I don't pretend to know very much about medicine, but I do know that to transplant a kidney takes some complex surgery and even more complex tissue matching, so either the supposed assailant must have been carrying a genotyping kit around with him on the off chance, or mist have had a large number of possible buyers arranged in advance. Have you heard any similar medical horror stories like this? (No — editor). It's an intriguing idea that Medics in Black may be terrorising innocent organ owners across America. COMA revisited. PS I like FF as it is including the pictures.

The confusion is almost as bad as that between Folklore and Folklore Frontiers! Regarding the former Deidre, not knowing her I have never made fun of her. As for the latter Deidre, don't you see that the boat is on the other foot where sexism is concerned? Her provocative remarks are cleverly calculated to evoke from me the exasperated "put-down" that has earned me the reputation I have obviously acquired. It is Deidre who is the sexist; I am her poor male stooge — victim as her machinations.

From Dr Gail-Nina Anderson, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Hours of innocent pleasure, more fun than chewing a horse! Concerning the "too many naked ladies" controversy brewing up nicely around your pages, I feel moved to accuse you of rampant speciesism, and to exhort you to balance the situation with more nude goats, dolphins, wombats, newts, etc., etc.



From Lucy Fisher, London.

I don't know if this counts as folklore, but ... A girl tells me the story of her great aunt. When the great-grandmother dies, the great-aunt steals the opal ring intended for her grandmother (because it was her birth stone). But if it's not your birth stone, opals are bad luck. Within six months of the theft, an articulated lorry backs into a lamp-post, which falls on the great-aunt's leg. The leg is amputated. Later her husband dies.

Another amputation story. A man loses a leg in a car crash. In the pub after a few drinks it is his practice to unstrap the leg, fill it with beer and drink from it.

From Lucy Fisher (again), of London.

I can't live without FF. P.S. I suppose the 2 or 3 people (apart from me) who object to naked women are also invented by Clare Short? Actually I should come clean — I really am a Clare Short,

From Pete Rogerson, Manchester.

W a t c h o u t f o r :

- The hordes of feral pit bulls which are about to be released into the countryside.
- The miraculous healings at the tomb of Eric Heffer.
- The rabid rats marching down the Chunnel.



From Tony Shiels, Cornwall.

Many thanks for the latest FF (splendid, as usual, and I'm pleased to see that it still includes pix of naked ladies, plus a cover pic of a topless Lizard King — for Janet and Lucy?). More thanks for your nice review of Monstrum.

From Nigel Watson, of London.

Thanks for the latest action-packed issue of Folklore Frontiers. I will look forward to your review of Portraits of Alien Encounters in the next edition.

You mention Jenny Randles' editorial in Northern UFO News (no. 148). This refers to the ethics of using "old" UFO case material and real names; especially with regard to my book.

The story behind this is that Mike Wootan (editor of BUFORA's UFO Times and husband of Gaynor Sunderland) complained to Jenny and myself about the use of Gaynor's UFO encounter and name in my book. Apparently Gaynor wants to disassociate herself from ufology.

There are several reasons why I used the Sunderland case. The main reason was for the purpose of comparison and contrast with the chapter on Paul Bennett's experiences.

I can understand the Sunderlands' motives and feelings. However, it was they who promoted their experiences, and wanted their real names to be published in at least three paperback books, that chronicle their "adventures" with the unknown. Indeed, one of these books was written by Jenny Randles!

Where possible I did use pseudonyms for people in my book — but it was silly to use them, for example in the Sunderland case, when their real names had already been widely publicised.

I feel that Portraits of Alien Encounters is a very responsible and sober look at very complex human experiences. This whole ethics issue should be looked at more carefully by people who write books about Death by Supernatural Causes (did the authors of that text worry about the feelings of relations or use pseudonyms to protect them from morbid speculation?).

Another point is that as ufologists, or as authors in general, can we justifiably use anyone's real name if we use J*...*'s arguments? If the use of a real name now or in the future is likely to cause upset perhaps we should allocate people with numbers instead of names? (Shades of the TV series The Prisoner!).

Fair enough we should respect wishes for anonymity, but when witnesses have actively sought, and gained, national publicity we cannot hide or disguise the fact. Once cases are on the public record they are there to last whether they like it or not. Jenny should be more aware than most of us that silly threats of legal action, against anyone who writes or says anything that slightly upsets fellow ufologists or UFO percipients, is in the long run likely to ruin any decent research or debate about our subject.

The bottom line is that as researchers we should respect witnesses and fellow researchers, but in turn we should be allowed room and respect for our own views.



GAYNOR SUNDERLAND

Update

CORN CIRCLES. We can largely leave the new crop of cerealological magazines the updating of the corn circles phenomenon. However, your editor spotted some disturbed corn in Cleveland on the outskirts of the village of Newton Bewley. I felt this worth mentioning to the Mail, Hartlepool, newsdesk which despatched reporter Margaret O'Rourke and photographer to investigate. I have a special interest in the location as in the Sixties there was a pond on the field edge, subsequently filled in, where I was almost written off in a horrific autosmash. This is referred to in my 1974 leys study Quicksilver Heritage (Thorsons) on page 268. My companion in the crash was a partner in his father's insurance agency and after our crash three other of their clients crashed there within a month and at the same spot his windscreens wiper shot off, causing him to duck nightschool and volunteer me to accompany him for steady pint or two. As for the 1991 corn disturbance you takes your choice but shepherd John Musgrave said the circles at West Farm were not unusual: "This is not the first year they have appeared, nor is it the only field where they have appeared. They usually form after heavy rain and where the crop is thickest (Mail, Hartlepool, 23/7/91).

• Continued in Page 20.



"My Eric was a great believer in reincarnation — weren't you, Eric?"

Update

CRAIG'S CARD. The national press covered the bravery of cancer-sufferer Craig Shergold (see FF 11, pp20/28) and his record number of get-well cards. One estimate was 23 million (D Mirror, 14/12/90) while it was given as 33 million (Sun, 13/12/90 and more recent dates). A letter (Sun, ?) from Craig said: "Thankyou for sending them, but please ignore any chain letters saying I now want business cards. I DON'T."

Oldies but goldies

■ As a child I was told always to cover unfamiliar lavatory seats with toilet paper. Later I was to hear the excuse for getting venereal disease from such an article only happened to "brigadiers and bishops."

The matter (no pun) was referred to at a libel action featuring Yorkshire Ripper wife Sonia Sutcliffe, to whom it was put there were two unpalatable truths she was unable to face. One was that her husband had sexual intercourse with Helen Rytka before he killed her and the other that he had caught VD from a woman. She denied that Miss Rytka had been sexually penetrated by her husband whom she believed, had caught VD from a warm toilet seat (The Independent, 22/12/90).

Mrs Sutcliffe's response to journalist Barbara Jones was: "He had been driving. Some lorry driver had used the toilet before him. He hadn't washed his hands. The seat was still warm. That is how he said to me he caught VD."

Miss Jones: "No intelligent informed person believes you can catch VD or any other disease from a warm toilet seat."

Mrs Sutcliffe: "I don't know if it's impossible. I think perhaps if germs are kept warm and someone goes to the toilet immediately after..."

Miss Jones replied that she was wrong and that it was an old wives' tale.

Mrs Sutcliffe's startling description brought gasps of astonishment from the jury (News of the World, 23/11/90).

Not quite finished yet. In her book The Ostrich Position, ex-agony aunt Carol Lee found one boy believed that VD is contracted from flying caterpillars out of Africa. Why not? It was originally mooted that Aids was passed to mankind by the African green monkey.

■ Shergar is alive and well and grazing in the Channel Islands (Sun, 28/3/91) or no he's not there (Sun, 29/3/91). A man wanting £365,000 for finding the kidnapped former Derby winner from its owning syndicate was then said to be arch-hoaxer of Fleet Street, Rocky



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.

Ryan (Guardian, 29/3/91), who approached insurers Lloyds as a Mr Turner. Sick of dealing with the story's resurrection, Lloyds denied Mr Turner's involvement and the Sun said Mr Ryan/Turner was not involved. I reckon Lord Lucan's riding him somewhere.

■ A middle-aged woman in a Lausanne supermarket was caught shoplifting after fainting from cold after stuffing a frozen chicken down her bra (The Independent, 7/6/91).

■ Tales of people killed by a gunshot in weird circumstances are quite common and often comandered for Fortean. I reckon they're ours! Here's five recent examples!

A hunter died after being shot through the heart — by his dog. Belgian Jean Guillaume, 66, was on a shooting trip in the Ardennes forest. His spaniel Ben had been chewing his loaded rifle on the back seat of his car and pulled the trigger with its teeth, instantly killing his owner (D Star, 24/6/91).

A man was critically injured yesterday when he was shot in the head by a toddler aged two. The 27-year-old victim was visiting friends near Griffith in New South Wales, Australia, when the child crept into the van. The boy found a rifle, loaded a bullet into it and blasted him (D Star, 22/7/91 — an if you believe that you'll believe anything!!!!).

A boy of four blew his little sister's head off with a rifle. It was one of three shooting tragedies involving four year-olds in New York City at the weekend. The 18-month-old girl was playing in her home in Queens, when her brother pulled the gun off a wall where it was on display. While his mum was in the kitchen, he placed the rifle at the girl's head and pulled the trigger. Meanwhile, a lad in the Bronx shot himself dead after finding a pistol left on a sofa by his dad. Another Bronx boy was critical last night after shooting himself in the chest at his home (D Star again 26/8/91).

Newslines

GULF FAMINE. Despite the media blitzkrieg, the Gulf war scud not create much rumour or legend! There were the hoax call-up papers (FF No. 12, p16) and right-wingers suggested they could be politically-motivated (Northern Echo, 7/1/91; Journal, Newcastle upon Tyne, 26/1/91). Astrology featured, with Sandra Parsons finding the zodiac foretelling Saddam's defeat with the January 15 deadline chosen as it marked a solar eclipse conjunct with Saturn (Today, 12/1/91). If the tyrant was superstitious he was also drug crazy. Because Customs officials on the Greek-Yugoslav border stopped one huge consignment of almost a million Captogen "speed" tablets hidden in a lorry, it was linked with Saddam's expression as dope fiend (D Star, 16/1/91). But was it him? "Sources believe as many as four doubles may have been enlisted by Saddam — and they are convinced plastic surgery has been used to produce an almost identical likeness" (Northern Echo, 24/1/91). Then (Sun, 17/1/91) a Soviet paper claimed Saddam was evil Josef Stalin's grandson, saying the dictator's son eloped to Iraq with a peasant woman.

■ Other war rumours of a familiar kind were that an American pilot was hacked to death by a crazed mob after he had been shot down (Sun, 22/1/91); Iraqi pilot had blitzed Saddam's secret Baghdad bunker in a bid to wipe him out (D Star, 9/2/91) and that "rumours that rich Saudis are holding illegal sex and booze parties in their own country are widely believed" (Sun, 5/2/91).

■ While Iraqi troops were being ordered to burn their underpants, to prevent them waving their Y-fronts as tokens of surrender (D Star, 11/2/91), knitting needles were clicking away as part of Britain's war effort. "Knit your hero a willy warmer" was the command (Sun, 6/2/91) and a full knitting pattern was supplied — sorry lads, one size must fit all — because "Saddam's a plonker" and privates needed warmth as desert temperatures plunged.

■ However, there was one lengthy and serious round-up in Patrick Marnham's column from Paris (Independent, a Saturday early 1991). Quoting from the Foundation for the Study of Rumours, he related how the French were stocking up on costly guns in case of an Arab uprising with increased racial attacks, rumours of internment camps and mass deportations. Marnham

TAMWORTH TRIANGLE. I have travelled tens of thousands of miles by train and only once seen a door open of its own accord. However, the statistic of 212 people having been killed since 1979 after falling out of British trains is hardly reassuring (Financial Times, 6/9/91). British Rail chiefs say InterCity doors are perfectly safe and deaths have been blamed on drink and horseplay. yet wear and tear on carriage door locks is claimed by families of the dead planning a multi-million lawsuit against rail bosses. A fortan factor is a ten-mile stretch of track in Staffordshire where five deaths occurred within 10 months last year and has been dubbed the Tamworth Triangle. How a line becomes a triangle would puzzle Euclid. the stretch is between Lichfield and Atherstone, Warwickshire (details in D Telegraph, 11/2/91; background in D Star, 14/3/91). Most recently a woman travelling alone on the 6.25 express from London Euston to Birmingham was found on the trackside between Berkswell and Hampton-in-Arden stations, Warwick (Journal, Newcastle upon Tyne, 8/4/91). As I write this a train operating between London and Carlisle has a first-class coach not available for public use and fitted out with on-board equipment to monitor effects of outside forces on the doors (Rail, No. 157, 1991).

advises Paris as a place to enjoy the phoney war, "but don't drink the tap water: there is a rumour that 'they' plan to poison it."

■ However, just before the deadline the most interesting of all tales appeared (D Star, 12/1/91). It alleged an RAF missile went out of control, crossed the busy London to Dublin air route chased by two jet fighters which had to turn back as it entered Irish territory. The rocket carried on and exploded on an Irish mountain, causing an earthquake. The Ministry of Defence denied the incident. Oh, by the way, it happened on December 13 — that fact's recorded in the eight paragraph.

■ After the Gulf conflict a couple of interesting stories emerged. More than 40 Iraqi soldiers supposedly surrendered to a robot plane which carried cameras or infra-red equipment (D Star, 11/9/91). And thermal-imaging equipment, "which could spot a lame camel at 2,000 paces at dead of night", was being pressed into action making videos of couples parked in assorted lovers' lanes around Aldershot and Pirbright. these formed a popular form of mess entertainment (Smallweed column, Guardian, 15/6/91).

IT'S A GAS! The travel pages (Independent, 30/3/91) gave a tale with familiar overtones for seasoned folklorists. Diane Pepper reported that last October she met two girls on a train travelling across northern Italy via Venice to Ljubljana and shared a compartment alone. They placed their money and passports in their "bumbags" and used these as pillows to sleep, heads facing away from the door. They awoke in the morning to find their passports and bumbags on the floor, with all their money gone. They could not understand how anyone could have sneaked in, removed the bags from under their heads, rifled through them and then left without disturbing them. The Italian guard produced a card in English, French and German explaining that they had been the victims of an international gang of train thieves, well known on that route. The thieves apparently use some sort of knock-out spray. "This is sprayed through the vent in your door, rendering you temporarily unconscious while they go through your belongings."

An account with detail differences (Sun, 1/4/91) condensed this to: Thieves are spraying chloroform into train sleeper compartment in Pisa, Italy — then robbing unconscious passengers.

Sounds plausible unless you're versed in phantom gasser lore.



"It's the Safety Executive on the phone. They're worried about your carriage doors."

Over 43 days bizarre days in 1933/4 towns in Botetourt County, Virginia, were exposed to incidents where an unknown person or persons sprayed a peculiar, nauseating gas into people's homes causing several forms of symptoms. Though the attacks may have been genuine, there was speculation that the gasser may have been imaginary. Escalation spread to neighbouring Roanoke County. Ten years later, mattoon, Illinois, experienced an almost identical outbreak (Goss, Michael, The Halifax Slasher, Fortean Times Occasional Paper, 1987). Goss's excellent study tells us much about mystery assailant flaps and I would not be surprised to see this theft motive version roam the rails.

THE WILDFLOWER PHENOMENON — A remarkable phenomenon, almost as mysterious as the crop circle outbreak and perhaps connected with it, has been observed this year in the British Isles, writes JOHN MICHELL.

All over the country people are talking about the amazing and unparalleled profusion of wild flowers. In Cornwall during the month of May every square inch of uncultivated land, even the tops of stone hedges, was covered with bluebells interspersed with pink campion, white cow parsley and the vivid yellow of flowering gorse. Cowslips, previously regarded as a dwindling species in need of protection, carpeted meadows and grasslands and, as the summer progressed, headlands and roadsides became glorious with colour and scarlet poppies flourished across the cornfields — in flagrant defiance of the farmers and their chemical weed-killers. Local people everywhere say they have never seen anything like it.

Botanists have been having a field day. Old native plants and wild orchids, unrecorded for many years and thought to have become extinct in this country, have reappeared in wastelands and motorway verges. Gardens have been invaded by rare, unfamiliar plants and the excitement of gardeners and naturalists has spilt over into the popular press. So much talked about is the phenomenon that the Mail on Sunday (July 7) felt called upon to attempt an explanation. It was, they said, due to the activities of certain unidentified 'seed bombers'. These good people, according to the Mail, race round on motor-cycles, lobbing earthenware vessels filled with seeds over hedges and on to the sides of roads. The vessels break and the wildflower seeds are broadcast.

The main interest in this engaging myth is that the wildflower phenomenon of 1991 was so fantastic that it required a fantastic explanation. As Fortean recognize, fantastic explanations — and the more the merrier — are no less significant and worthy of record than the phenomenon to which they are applied.

The absurd story concocted by the Mail on Sunday makes it plain, (well, if that's the best they can come up with!) that this year's wildflower explosion is indeed a mystery. We have seen other, more prosaic 'explanations', one in terms of recent exceptionally dry summers and the other referring to this year's exceptionally wet one; but these seem to cancel each other out. The mystery remains.

One can, of course, link up disparate phenomena to create any myths one pleases and see a connection between the flourishing of wildflowers and the profusion of pictograms, insectograms and geometric devices in this year's cornfields. It may be that the same cause lies behind both effects. For two or three years

now, dowsers who detect earth currents and the energies of ancient sites have been making extraordinary claims, that these energies are rapidly gaining strength, as if the earth's veins were receiving a sudden, intensified charge. This, they say, is reflected in the sudden intensification of crop circle activities. It could well be that the wildflower phenomenon is another effect of what the dowsers are observing. Thus we are led on to see Mother Nature summoning up her powers and forces for a last stand against her human violators; or pleading in her full beauty for mercy; or influencing our hearts and minds towards a new, more spiritually conscious world-view and way of life; or as a prelude to shaking herself free of us altogether. (reprinted from The Cereologist, No. 3).

□□ As for the more prosaic solution. The Darlington & Stockton Times Autumn Farming Review, September 1991 had as a caption — Beautiful nightmare: brilliant red poppies and other wildflowers have appeared in greater splendour than ever this year. The dry summers of the last few years are no doubt partly responsible — when plants and trees are under stress they produce more seeds — and farmers' curbs in the use of herbicides is also believed responsible. A pleasure to the eye, they can cause problems if they appear in profusion in fields of crops.

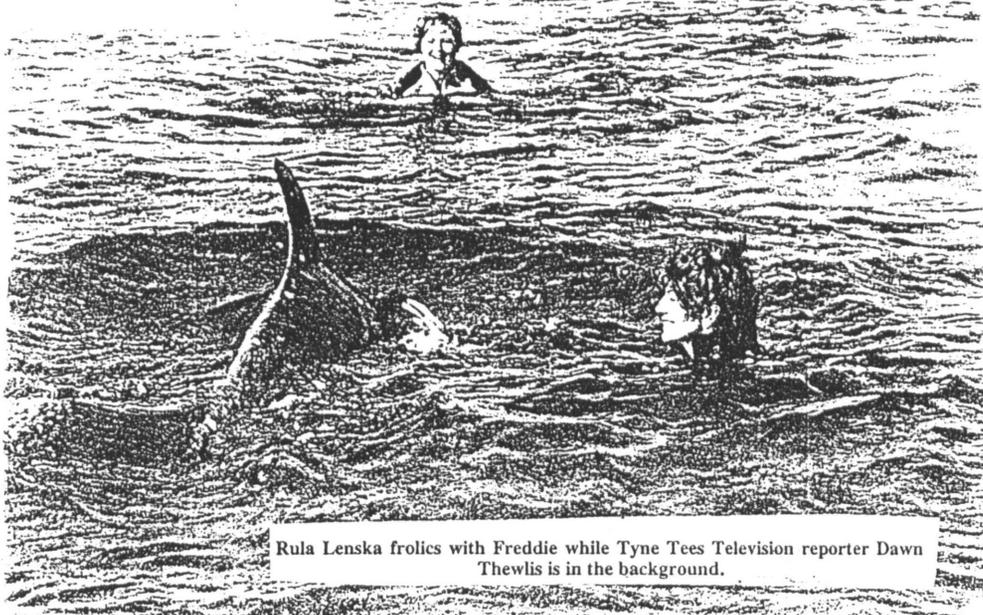
MOCK MAYORS. Covered in some depth (FF, No. 8) we have as the current Mayor of Middleton, down Hartlepool docks, construction worker Les Steel, who took over from Billy Gilfoyle. The Smallcrafts Club, around which the social life revolves, is threatened by a major marina development (like selling fridges to the Eskimoes) and he pledged to campaign for the community using weekend cabins and fishermen's rights (Mail, Hartlepool, 13/5/91). Seemingly referring to a similar tradition (Sun, ?/91) builder Kevin Oatley clinched the village idiot title at Croscombe, Somerset. Another two one-paragraph items (both Sun, 23/7/91) had a saucy French maid society opening in London, where only men can join and they must wear stockings and suspenders to its meetings; while The Ancient Order of Henpecked Husbands cancelled its Texas reunion as members' wives would not let them attend.

WHAT'S BREWING. Your editor's tippie is Strongarm, a canny beer brewed in Hartlepool by Cameron. The fate of the brewery, part of the troubled Brent Walker leisure empire, should be known by the time you read this. Its splendid name came in a blinding flash 30 years ago when the then chairman of Cameron was pondering what to call his new ale. He looked out of his office window and saw the name "Armstrong" emblazoned on the warehouse wall opposite. Such is history (or folklore) and let's be thankful that the long-defunct premises was not named Peccats.

As in other similar traditions, the two red sandstone lions standing sentinel to the Lion Brewery are supposed to roar if a virgin passes by.

■ As Bob Rickard observed, "for every expert there is an equal and opposite expert." They were at it over the benefits or otherwise of alcohol (D Star, D Mirror, 23/7/91; Guardian, 26/7/91) and next day the health value or danger of potato crisps (Young Telegraph, 27/7/91) and beer again (D Star, 6/9/91). Then there's the debate whether amateurs can be as good as professionals. Reader L Rowlands wrote (D Star, 15/8/91) of a college lecturer who told him: "Remember, an amateur built Noah's Ark and a professional designed the Titanic."

Update



Rula Lenska frolics with Freddie while Tyne Tees Television reporter Dawn Thewlis is in the background.

BESTIALITY — As marine biologist Peter Bloom says, "Dolphins bring out the best and worst in people." Yes, we're back with Freddie the Amble dolphin (FF, No. 13) about whom he and other dolphins is the subject of Horace Dobbs' book *Dancing to a Dolphin's Song*, which I have not seen. He's been towed hanging on to Freddie's erect six-inch penis but is not the subject of court action, as is Alan Cooper, 38, of Welbeck Street, Abbey Hey, Manchester. He is charged with committing an act of a lewd, obscene and disgusting nature and outraging public decency by behaving in an obscene manner with a bottlenosed dolphin, to the great disgust and annoyance of divers of Her Majesty's subjects within whose purview such act was committed contrary to Common Law. The charge relates to an alleged incident near Ambleharbour on September 28 last year.

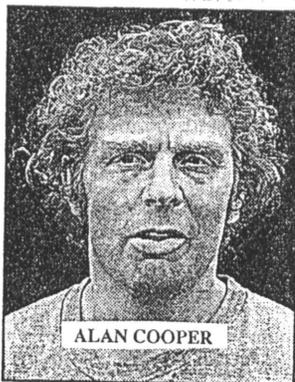
Most people involved with dolphins touch them for their friendliness or for therapeutic reasons, but Bloom says "there are several people involved ... it's an increasing problem with dolphins in the wild." As for the pending action, we should keep an open mind, but Bloom remarks that he saw "a stark naked woman running into the sea shouting 'come on, Fungie, I love you'." (*Forrean Times*, No. 59, 1991).

Then there are these two experts arguing over whether it is right to manoeuvre a dolphin's penis in the crook of the arm to be hauled. Dobbs says it is a harmless sensual experience for the dolphin, while Bloom points to injuries on the beast's willie.

Reporter Ann Palmer (*The Guardian*, 6/10/91) went for a swim with Freddie and "he hooked his little pink organ round the calf of my leg and started pulling ... Good grief! He's towing me with it! At right angles, too ... It was an excellent and sensible article.

A more famous swimmer with Freddie was actress Rula Lenska (*Journal*, Newcastle upon Tyne; *Northern Echo*, 4/9/91) but there was no mention of salaciousness. And delving in my files I found a major

• See
also
Page
27.



ALAN COOPER

feature on Freddie (*Northern Echo*, 28/6/90) and how he uplifts people's spirits.

The latest information is that yet again he is the subject of conflicting reports. Local boatmen reported deep gashes on one side of his body, while police divers said he had five small cuts and was in no apparent distress (*Norther Echo*, 27/10/91).

■ **The Sport**, where else, had a story of a blonde girl hitching up her skimp skirt, shinning up a fibreglass dinosaur and straddling one of its horns. The triceratops was at Dan-yr-Ogof show caves in Swansea. Manager Ian Gwilym said: "She was sitting on one of the horns and gripping the others like she was riding a bike. I was too embarrassed to stop her." (*The Sport*, 16/7/91).

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

Your editor makes no apologies for presenting what amounts to an effusive puff for his latest book. I'll be brief in this introduction as the other contributions speak for itself.

Hartlepool has given me a great deal and, hopefully without sounding trite, I wanted to return the compliment. This book is the only full story of the monkey-hanging legend, so perversely connected with the Hartlepoons. I tell the tale with affection and trust it will strengthen the town's identity and individuality.

Hartlepudlians have been accused of insularity (an amazing proportion of local

people may fellow townfolk), but the workforce is not workshy and has taken the monkey tale all over the world.

During a book-signing at the local branch of the W H Smith regime, I met people from Australia, Botswana and a Mr Fuji, who wanted two copies to take back to Japan.

I hope all Folklore Frontiers readers will also want copies. Do not send cash to me but make cheques to Printability Publishing — £4.45, including p&p — at Atkinson Print, 11 Lower Church Street, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS24 7DJ. Mention you read of the book here.

Paul also puts forward his own thoughts on the real significance of the legend.

And his conclusion? "You will have to read the book," adds Paul.

(From the Mail, Hartlepool, August 16, 1991).

Who really hung that monkey?

By Peter French

LIKE it or loathe it, Hartlepool is stuck with its monkey-hanging legend.

But despite the interest it generates — both near and far — few people have attempted to get to the truth behind the tale.

Now, however, a local man is hoping to provide a few answers with the publication of his new book "Who Hung The Monkey?"

He is Paul Screeton, who works for The Mail as a sub-editor and feature writer.

Paul, 45, is a well-known local author who has written a number of books on folklore and the paranormal.

He decided to undertake the project because so many people had been asking him about the legend.

"It had always surprised me that there was no booklet on the monkey-hanging for anyone wanting to judge the background to the legend," said Paul.

"I came across people wanting to know the ins and outs of the tale and there was no reference for them.

"Having written a book on the Lambton Worm and other northern dragon legends I thought I might as well have a go myself."

The book looks at the popular Napoleonic spy link as well as the tale's connection with railway rivalries in the Hartlepoons.

There are also chapters on "Ned Corvan's Local Epics" and other monkey-hanging legends.

New twists in monkey hanging tale

By Bernice Saltzer

GO to any part of the United Kingdom, mention the place name "Hartlepool" and chances are the taunt will be "monkey-hanging country."

Tynesiders have come to terms with the fact that they are known as Geordies while those from Sunderland have to bear the brunt of being called "mackams."

But it's for a story which, if legend is right, dates back to the Napoleonic Wars that has put Hartlepool on the map.

The story goes that during the 19th century a monkey was washed ashore and mistaken for a French spy by the inhabitants of Hartlepool who decided to take the precaution of hanging it.

It is a tale which has been passed down from generation to generation, with explanations and varia-

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

tions of the story highlighted over the years.

The legend of the monkey has now been turned into a book by Hartlepool journalist Paul Screeton, who has looked deep into the background of the story and tried to come up with a conclusion.

Paul, a sub-editor and feature writer on the Mail, said he was always surprised that no information seemed available on the legend "for anyone wanting to judge the background."

Who Hung the Monkey? puts the record straight, highlighting the various myths and legends which have contributed to the story over the years.

People in Hartlepool vary in their reaction to the mention of the tale, with emotions ranging from annoyance to amusement.

But whatever the feeling, it's hard to ignore a story which has crept into the town's folklore.

Who Hung the Monkey? first reports a "first hand" account of the events told by a James Harrison, who in turn had listened to a magical tale woven by his grandfather Thomas Hood.

Hood was just a young boy in the 19th century and witnessed a French ship, the Chasse Maree, crashing on Longscar rocks.

Among the debris which washed ashore — if Mr Hood's account was to be believed — was a monkey which was hanged on the Fish Sands as a spy after a "lobster-pot court martial."

While this tale fits very nicely with the Napoleonic story, Paul points out that this rendition of the legend appeared in the Mail in 1944 "and so must be viewed in its historical and sociological context."

"Spies, invasion fears, xenophobia, Vichy government; it must have been a period rife with rumours and a classic time for an element of such a folklore to surface," said Paul.

Just when it appears as if the mystery has been solved, Who Hung the Monkey? throws up all kinds of evidence, highlighting the various places where the legend has surfaced and its possible basis in all kinds of fact.

It so fired the imagination that in the 19th century it even became the subject of a song, written by the well-known North-Eastern performer Ned Corvan.

The song Who Hung the Monkey? appeared in Allan's Tyneside Songs published between 1862 and 1890 and then surfaced again in 1972, this time under the title The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O.

Paul Screeton's book follows up every lead in the legend, even highlighting contemporary events such as the Monkey Beer Festival held in Hartlepool two years ago.

And how many people can remember that tribute was even paid to the legend in those famous Brooke Bond tea chimps' advertisement, where the apes boarded the Orient Express with Hartlepool as one of its destinations?

It is a mixture of the factual and the flippant which makes Who Hung the Monkey? so fascinating, and while the book may not offer all the answers, there's more than enough food for thought.

(From the Mail, Hartlepool, August 26, 1991).

REVIEWS

By Michael Goss

So who *did* hang the monkey and (just as necessary to ask) *why* did they hang the monkey!

If you're not from Hartlepool, you will probably need to get Paul Screeton's latest offering in order to find out. If you *are* from Hartlepool, you may think you know the answers already, but you'll want to read the book anyhow. Either way, prescient or not, you're in for a treat.

Folklore Frontiers editorship aside, Paul's track record as a writer on contemporary or not-so-contemporary legend, not to mention things wandering off into Fortean and out the other side, is too well-known to require puffing from me. Here, combining the journalist's eye for a good story with the less easily-developed gift for handling potentially unexciting background data with deceptive lightness and grace, he radiates the confidence that comes from being thoroughly at home — at home not just with the subject matter, but with the cultural milieu from whence it emanates. In less showy language, Paul gives you the impression that he is part of the Hartlepool traditions he writes of here. Forty beautifully-printed pages complete with black and white photos reproduced to a quality rare in small press publications indicate that much, but a good deal more as well.

It won't be giving too much away if I explain that the monkey in question came ashore at Hartlepool from a shipwreck some time during the Napoleonic Wars, got itself mistaken by locals as a French spy and was unceremoniously hung in consequence. Too bad for the monkey that his ship was French and that rank Francophobia prevailed at the time, not least because Boney and his long-promised invading army were expected at any moment. Too bad, likewise, that the monkey was dressed (mascot fashion?) in military uniform. And worst of all that the fishermen of Hartlepool were too parochial — too stupid — to be able to differentiate between man and monkey. Well, it stands to reason that they were, doesn't it? Isn't that the crux of the story?

So the Hanged (Hung) Monkey could be classed as a war-hysteria legend, specifically one that reflected those very real if intangible anxieties about a French invasion which gripped English coastline communities in the early 1800s and which, incidentally, were collected and fictionalized by none other than Thomas Hardy. Yet that would be a label too constrictive and simplistic. Since it is quite unmistakably an example of *blason populaire* or taunting tale told of the inhabitants of one town, district or region by those of another neighbouring town, district or region, the legend has broader implications. Paul observes that, reduced to a slogan cry of "Who hung the monkey?", it was used

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

to deride first a certain part of Hartlepool and then the whole town; that what began life as an internal insult became current among those outside Hartlepool as a means of denigrating those who lived inside it.

Blason populaire's message is too basic to miss. These jocular tales go to prove what you already knew; viz., that the inhabitants of (X) are congenial simpletons, unredeemable idiots ... *hicks* ... Gothamites. You always knew that and besides you've heard the evidence: those stories which have them building a pen around a tree to keep the cuckoo from flying away or trying to execute a cat by setting alight the building in which it hides, with the sorry result that they manage to burn down their village instead. Gothamites, cuckoo-penners, monkey-hangers exist in legends the world over. The marvellous thing is that Hartlepool seems proud to be known as the place where they hanged a monkey as a French spy.

Now you may have heard this legend before and from somewhere else. I have a memory of the unfortunate anthropoid coming ashore from an Armada wreck and being strung up as a *Spanish* spy. I can't recall where this was supposed to have taken place — western Scotland? Ireland? — but it certainly wasn't Hartlepool. So how can the author justify the act of annexing it as a *Hartlepool* legend?

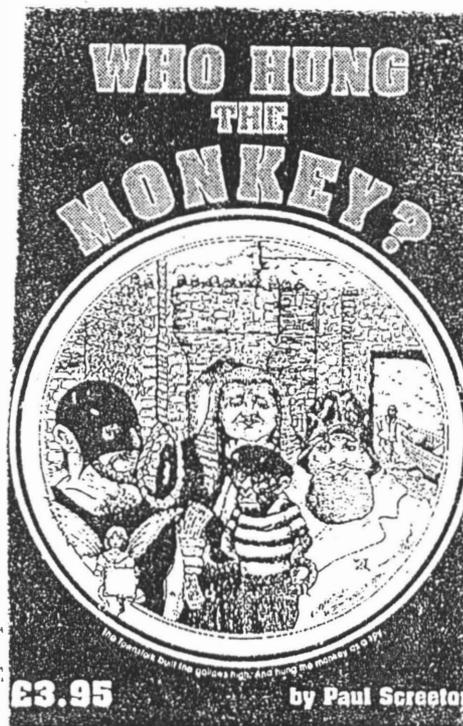
Most astringent folklorists may feel that in the matter of chasing up non-Hartlepool versions and variants a lot of extra effort would have been appropriate here. But in many respects that kind of approach lies outside the scope of Paul's enthusiastically written and carefully subheaded pages.

Besides, he knows that there are such alternative versions and variants. After admitting quite frankly at the start of his fourth chapter that "Hartlepool is not unique in having a community which supposedly hung a monkey of dubious origin," he samples several from Cornwall, Derbyshire and most notably from Aberdeenshire. He is permissibly severe upon another writer's allegations that the latter was the Grand Old Original monkey tale and that Hartlepool stole the story from the fisher-folk of Boddam, degrading it in the process. "Steal" isn't a verb to employ of bi- or multicultural legends.

Nonetheless, the book successfully indicates a kind of umbilical link between Hartlepool and its monkey, so much so that it appears to belong there as as birth-rightedly as the Liver Bird to Liverpool or the Imp to Lincoln. The story is "so deeply rooted" there, he writes, that "no amount of coercion or reason" can shift it, despite the unsurprising fact that "documentation of the monkey-hanging legend from the Napoleonic period speaks volumes by its absence". This lack of historical corroboration doesn't bother Paul Screeton — "Indeed, aren't we getting too academic anyway?" he asks provocatively on the final page — because what interests him is the Monkey's role in "the self-definition of a community": the legend as an expression of Hartlepool's identity, a folk-reconstruction of the local past which has come to be accepted nationwide.

As a speculative but informed foray into the popular culture of now and yesteryear, this book makes the Hanged Monkey seem close to being a uniquely Hartlepool phenomenon: something which is only intelligible if we look at the town's Victorian past or at its 20th century reinterpretation of that heritage. Drawing on his expertise in transport history and other aspects of popular culture, Paul traces the aetiology of the legend through: the virulent competition between two Hartlepool railway companies (and, more importantly, the incipient rivalry between "old" Hartlepool and the newly-emergent West Hartlepool) in the 1840s; a pamphlet of the same time that threw up a bizarre handbill proclaiming the capture of "Aquatic Monkies" which seems designed to have cryptozoologists barking up the wrong tree; a local trade in jennihanivers; and the comic songs of Ned Corvan and others. The quest ends with triumphant proof that the Monkey lives on today in adverts, football fanzines, military mascots, fete day customs and as a spectacularly strong beer.

Yes, Hartlepoolians seem proud to be known as the people who hanged the monkey. They ought to be proud of this book, too.



WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

By Derek Froome

Was the monkey hung or hanged? The question is neither rhetorical nor academic — pictures and game are hung; men (and animals on occasion) are hanged. The difference is not purely grammatical but concerns legality — hanging is a judicial sentence following trial, a legitimised death not a lynching. Hanging animals after trial has a long history, sometimes for the death of a human or for witchcraft (the cock who laid an egg which might have hatched a cockatrice, not a good idea) or for breaking the rules, as in the ballad of the Quaker who hanged his cat on a Monday for killing a mouse on a Sunday. This last is probably a *blason* against Quakers, but it keeps alive the memory of animal punishment which though largely late mediaeval still lingered into modern times.

The setting for the three examples of the hanged monkey quoted by Paul Screeton is the time of the Napoleonic wars, and ports widely separated in the British Isles. In each case the legend is well rooted and widely known, one of the class of migratory legends, widely studied over the last 150 years. Curiously monkey tales are something of a rarity. The massive collection of tale motifs published by Stith Thompson has very few examples, although it does include a Danish example of a dressed-up monkey being mistaken for a nobleman.

The three examples given by Paul Screeton in his book on the Hartlepool monkey legend seem to have been overlooked, which makes a study of this sort all the more valuable. Why do beliefs and legends of this sort survive? There are two principal suggestions — because of their general interest especially where there are unusual events involved and because they are sociologically meaningful and become absorbed into tradition — they exert a useful function in society. What this function is may be inferred by collecting and analysing the tales, the origin and truthfulness of the legend are really of less importance than its purpose and usefulness to the community. Nevertheless the variant explanations are part of the local picture, and they have to be looked at.

Paul Screeton's carefully researched study shows how the Hartlepool legend can be used equally as a gibe (as in the case of the Wise Men of Gotham) or as a unique claim to identity by the Hartlepoolers (*). At the end of the book he asks if the study is becoming too academic. But this is really only a dirty word for a close examination of the evidence free of prejudice, which is what he gives us,

and he has already provided valuable clues on legend survival. He brings by retelling the tale with its corroborative detail as it is found in local memory and local sources. There is still some work to be done here: there are no details of the monkey trial (what is a "lobster-pot court martial"?) which would be very valuable. Some information is tantalisingly referred to but not followed up: one feels there is more to come. Can Thomas Hood's original eyewitness account be traced? Did Wombwell's ape escape to be hanged as a spy? Why did Henry Heaviesides fail to pick up the Hartlepool legend — was he too far off and relying on printed materials? One senses the thrill of the chase throughout the book.

The surroundings to the supposed origin of the tale are followed by a most interesting survey of its growth and elaboration to date, a model of how this can be done. The tensions between the two Hartlepoons at the time of the growth of the port and the use of the monkey motif in pamphlet war and popular song, and the examination of *blason populaire* are woven together to show legend survival in full flow. This is probably more important than using the material to reify the supposed events. The examination of the interplay between Irish labourers and fisherfolk from another port where the same tale is told, and the machinations of the rival railway and port developers, lends a depth to the tale which a mere recapitulation cannot give.

The comparable stories from Boddam in Aberdeenshire (with its rival Peterhead) and from Mevagissey in Cornwall, add to the general interest of the survey. Chalvey's Stab Monks are particularly interesting with the election of a Mayor to perpetuate the memory of the event annually. The men of Hartlepool, having hanged the monkey, retired to the local and drank to the occasion, but apparently they did not elect a Chairman or Mayor for annual carousing. Yet today Middleton in Hartlepool has its own local Mayor. When was he first elected? Has he any connection with the monkey legend? Further information would be good to have, particularly if any link could be established with the legend, although there seems to be no real evidence of this.

The book concludes with a review of recent and current developments. The adoption of the monkey as mascot by the local football team is what one might expect, but the April Fool events and the craft representations are perhaps less common. The monkey (who seems to have had no immediate personal name) has made it into folksong, TV and local authority advertising. It is difficult to see any diminution in his progress.

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

The book is handy-sized and well produced, and a most welcome addition to local studies. It is short on maps, and this and a few more specific book references would help those dwelling in foreign parts, but at the size and price one cannot demand everything. As a monograph on a local legend and its background it is to be strongly recommended, with the additional hope that it will be followed by more of the same tenacious reportage.

(*) Actually, like Liverpool's Liverpoolians, Hartlepool folk are Hartlepudlians — Editor.

It'll be all right on the night, Debbie

It's not always politically expedient to publish sensitive material where it might cause trouble far outweighing its worth.

Just such a case could occur if it was more widely known that I was loaned a video, property of the BBC, to be used internally only. However, it may be of interest to folklore inclusionists who like to know everything about a subject.

I watched it during research for my book on the Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend. Whether this refers to an ape hanged by simple fishermen as a suspected French spy during the Napoleonic Wars, or that it referred to inter-town rivalry during the railway boom and came from a bawdy political song, need not concern us. Read my book and decide for yourself.

The legend was brought to the attention of a children's television programme, Fax, by a staunch believer in the actual hanging, Ernest J. Drig.

A retired gas board worker, Ernie has a monkey puppet he wears at major matches at Hartlepool Rovers Rugby Football Club. It was he who wrote a draft script for the brief factual inquiry into the legend.

The item on Fax was reasonably informative and entertaining. This article looks beyond what was screened. It is an "It'll be all right on the night" view. The "bloopers" metaphorically landed on the cutting room floor, but in actuality remain as out-takes on the internal tape.

"What a way to earn your money. Honestly, I don't know," comments shivering presenter Debbie Rix, telling how Hartlepool is notorious for its people at one time hanging a monkey. At other points she scrambles her words, claiming it was so cold she couldn't speak properly.

According to the uncut timed recording, it was all filmed on one day, December 17, 1986.



An even more choice comment comes during the shooting at the Fish Sands, where the monkey supposedly landed on the beach. As she tells of it floundering ashore, she again gets her lines wrong and segues the script into "oh, fuck. Come on quick, quick, quick. I'm getting so cold I can't think anymore."

Another sequence has Debbie Rix saying there is not a shred of evidence to support the alleged events. She fluffs her lines several times and as she kneels beside the tombstone of clown and showman Billy Purvis, whose pal Ned Corvan wrote the favourite song about the monkey, you hear her cartilages twice crack ominously.

Nevertheless, she's professional and takes direction from Sid Waddell (best known for purple prose darts competition commentaries) with admirable stoicism.

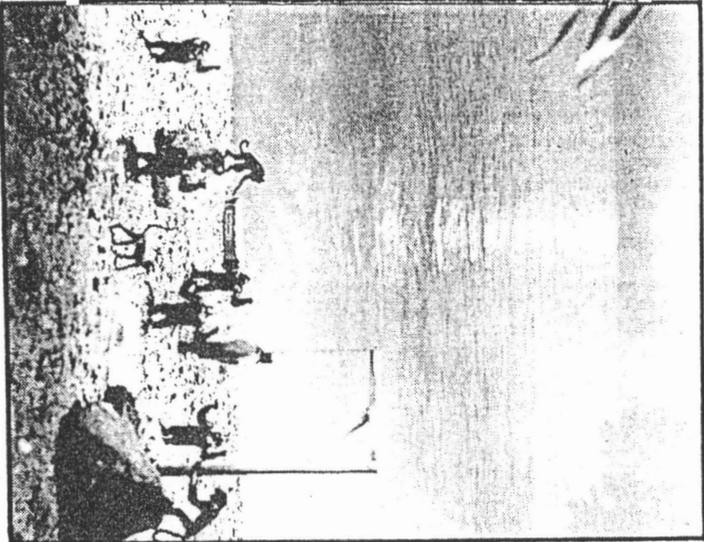
She talks to various Hartlepudlians about their thoughts on the monkey-hanging. Specially funny is where she talks to some young likely lads, whom when she suggests they should think the perpetrators of the Hartlepool event "nitwits", one wag asks where she comes from. "Not Hartlepool," she shudders. Then when she admits London, in her plummy voice, she gets her comeuppance when he responds with "which back-alley do you live in?"

There are shots of the magnificent battlewhip renovated by skilled craftsmen in Hartlepool, which now resides in Portsmouth (there is even now some doubt that it is HMS Warrior, the world's first iron-clad battleship, but as they say, that's another story), historic St Hilda's Church and sunrise shots over Hartlepool Bay.

Filming ends in the bar at Rovers R.F.C. with opinions on the legend, particularly with Ernie Drig and his puppet attacking Debbie Rix in Rod Hull's emu style, knocking off one of her earrings.

It's a pity programmes aren't screened uncut, but at least I've given a glimpse from behind the scenes.

Paul Screeton



HOW THE HARTLEPOOL LEGEND COULD HAVE ENDED

Avengeing monkeys in lightning raid

A DESPERATE band of "foreign nationals" have made a lightning raid on a Hartlepool beach to avenge an ancestor who perished there nearly 200 years ago.

The daring reprisal, carried out during the last full moon, will, say historians, avenge the Napoleonic wars murder and write the final chapter to the long ago tragedy.

Old files from the period reveal that the chief motivation for the crime was total ignorance. None of the band who took part in the murder by hanging were aware that the world was round and that other life forms existed beyond the confines of the Headland and Hartlepool.

What is understood is that the fisherman was probably a descendant of the ring leader of the party who nearly 200 years ago captured a uniformed survivor from a shipwreck off the Hartlepool coast.

When the creature wouldn't speak,

the party carried out a swift justice — and hung their captive on a gibbet on a section of the beach close to the old town wall.

The incident only came to light when outsiders were given a description of the "French Spy" the Hangers believed they had captured and put to the death.

The case of the unfortunate monkey faded into folklore until the recent invasion when a mixed party of monkeys, apes and baboons are said to have struck back in a lightning reprisal campaign.

* Well this is how the story might have read if the picture taken by Hartlepool amateur photographer, Ken Facchihl were for real.

In a whimsical mood Ken carefully set the scene using monkeys, apes and baboons, and of course, a fisherman hanging from the gibbet.

"It's a bit of fun to make people smile," said Ken.

By Margaret O'Rourke

Update

BACK MASKING. (see FF 6) and a crackpot we mentioned (FF 11, p12) gave a backward message given by Venom. Mond Cowie (remember the Angelic Upstarts?), studio manager at Lynx Studios on Tyneside got a call about a hidden message. He later told Stephen Brenckley they had indeed spoken a phrase backwards on one of their recordings. He had not told the inquirer



what it was, but revealed all for publication. It was "Tap Namsop" (Northern Echo, 26/7/90). Is the postie's cat Jess his familiar?

■ Paul Smith, a Burton-on-Trent resident, has been keeping me up to date with the lunacies there regarding the activities of fundamentalists. In particular his community includes one Alex Maloney, who has pledged his life to fighting Satanism in heavy metal rock music. At a sermon at the local Elim Pentecostal Church he played records backwards, claiming specific messages.

Best perspective came in a letter, whose writer asked: "I'd like to know why he thinks he's got the right to tell people what music to listen to."

He should be committed somewhere but not to the church. He forgets he was young once and dabbled in all sorts of music himself and other things. But now he sees the Devil in music he used to listen to himself.

He should straighten his own life out first.

I should know, I was his mother. We've disowned him now. — Mrs Mabney, Beacon Drive, Rolleston. (Burton Mail, 2, 4, 7, 11, 14/1/91). The Burton Mail also had a lively debate with readers over a psychic fair in the town.

■ "Self-styled late-night shithead and armchair antagonist" as Chris Watts (Kerrang, No 339, 1991) writes of James Whale and his Yorkshire TV programme, which in the early hours of April 6 covered Satanism in heavy metal music. Whale disapproves of occultism in HM. likes AC/DC (the band!) and pondered whether HMers' caveman attitude towards women betrayed homosexual feelings. There again. HE didn't get on with — pictured — heavy metallor Lisa

Dom inique!



I'M STANDING AT THE WICKFORD WHEAT FIELDS OUTSIDE OF LONDON, THE SITE OF MYSTERIOUS GIANT CIRCLES, POSSIBLY CAUSED BY ALIENS.



HOW DO YOU FIND THESE CIRCLES OF CRUSHED WHEAT?

© 1981 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.



MY TEAM OF EXPERTS STARTS AT ONE POINT AND SEARCHES OUTWARD UNTIL ...

GOOD LORD! ANOTHER CIRCLE HAS FORMED AROUND US!!



Update

• Continued from Page 8.

Also in the North-East, Matt Ridley, American Editor of *The Economist* and son of Viscount Ridley, claimed that with the sole assistance of his brother-in-law, a sharpened stick and laundry rope created two giant concentric circles on his Blagdon estate in Northumberland (*Journal*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 4/9/91).

Then there were a couple of old codgers who made the front page (*Today*, 10/9/91) and claimed to have created 200 corn circles since 1978. But this scam looks decidedly odd upon scrutiny. Doug and Dave, the claimants, allegedly "collected some meteorites and included them in a special circle at Stonehenge." Meteorites are just too rare. Then Dave was knocked unconscious by an object from space while working on a circle. Meteorite? No, that old chestnut "frozen discharge from an aircraft toilet." If they were up to mischief, it sounds like Fortean retribution.

Cerealologist editor John Michell was quoted saying: "We will have to wait to see what these two men can do under test conditions." In a letter to me, John contends: "There is an energetic disinformation campaign afoot."

* * * * *

Vox pops can be endlessly entertaining and hopelessly unproductive, as *Equinox* (Channel 4, 26/10/91) proved this week during its investigation into corn circles, writes *Folklore Frontiers'* guest TV critic **Keith Newbery**.

Their cameras toured the streets of Wiltshire (where 50 per cent of all such phenomena are to be found) seeking an explanation for them. There were advocates for everyone and everything, from weather aberrations to mischievous young farmers.

One elderly gentleman, florid of complexion and cynical of eye, had no doubt what corn circles were. "What's corn circles?" he snorted. "They're bloody patterns in the middle of fields ain't they?"

It was about as close to basic truth as the programme managed to get. It dealt mostly in opinions, all of them strongly held and none of them remotely conclusive.

However, the investigations did throw up another strange phenomenon that is worthy of closer study.



Why do people who believe in the paranormal have such silly names.

Apparently, the circles have inspired a ritual called the corn spiral dance. It is best described as a kaleidoscopic Ring a Ring of Roses, in which men with beards and women in flowing, floral print dresses gather on a hill, join hands, form circles and shuffle around in opposite directions.

Their spokeswoman was called Jini Lavelle. A book has been written entitled *Where Science and Magic meet*. Its author, who also turned up on the programme to expound on her views, is Dr Serena Roney-Dougal.

An organisation called the Centre for Crop Circle Studies has been formed. One of its field officers is Busty Taylor, and he's a man.

Not one representative of the weirdo tendency was called Sheila or Dave. None of them looked the type to work as a clerk, watch *The Generation Game*, wear an anorak, drive a B Reg Escort or drink *Liebfraumilch*.

Either strange names encourage odd beliefs or people who believe in odd things adopt strange names. It is a peculiar phenomenon of our time and one for *Horizon* or *Equinox* to analyse.

But back to the circles themselves, which have become increasingly more elaborate over the years. They have sprouted inner circles, outer circles, baby circles and key-shaped limbs.

In fact, they have long since transcended the rather prosaic description of circle and are now called pictograms.

Equinox recruited some rascals called the Wessex Skeptics and in the dead of night they pictogrammed all over a Wiltshire field. The experts, unaware of the scam, were asked their opinions.

Busty looked at the dowsing rods revolving wildly in his hands and declared it to be "a cracker."

Dr Terence Meaden, a physicist who favours the vortex theory, said it was typical of the circles he had been investigating over the years and announced that it was "genuine in every way."

When told he had been the victim of a hoax, his face underwent a sudden transformation. Circles and lines suddenly appeared where none had previously existed. His face was a perfect pictogram of suppressed anguish, pain and great anger.

Books

PORTRAITS OF ALIEN ENCOUNTERS by Nigel Watson (Valis Books, 52A Lascotts Road, Wood Green, London, N22 4JN, £10 + £2 p&p; U.S.A. 30 dollars, cash only).

This book will appeal to those who prefer their ufology within a socio-psychological framework. Watson has no time for extraterrestrials and flying saucers; he firmly believes most UFO experiences have a psychological explanation.

He is well qualified to offer an opinion, having spent much time in the later Seventies compiling case studies of "fringe" UFO percipients.

The contents of this book will be familiar to those readers of *Magonia* magazine at this period, much of the text lifted straight from the articles of that period. Largely compiled between 1977 and 1980, this report looks at the bizarre frontiers of UFO belief systems.

The people are largely young and fantasy prone (Paul Bennett and Gaynor Sunderland) or older and likely to be schizophrenic to varying degrees. These are people whose pathology has been influenced by social isolation, apocalyptic anxiety, sexual frustration and religious fanaticism.

With regard to "child contactee" Paul Bennett, he reports that while critically ill in hospital a 30-foot UFO was spotted hovering over the building. He believes it in some way saved his life. This reminded me of Dan Butcher's novel theory that UFOs are humans having OOBES — could this be Paul's psyche transformed and projected into the sky? Weirder things could be surmised.

As an experienced ufologist, Watson asks whether Bennett was telling the truth and concludes there is no clear cut conclusion to come to and it is likely his reality is "faction".

Gaynor Sunderland seems a far more substantial personality; eventually with mother Marion going on psychic quests under the aegis of Andrew Collins.

The person given the pseudonym Norman Harrison saw the world gripped by twin forces of good and evil fighting for supremacy. He received "space" messages, yet appears exceptionally lucid and intelligent.

Another person interviewed at length has the pseudonym Martin Bolton. Parts of the case would be hilarious were they not serious. He "heard" his house plants "speaking" to him telepathically, believed he was receiving communications from nature spirits and spoke back to his plants for several years until he decided aliens were having fun at his expense. At least Prince Charles has not gone this far. More sinister torture he claimed was that there was alleged stretching of his penis every night for three years and on a number of occasions evil forces gave him phantom pregnancies. He blamed vomiting on them, too. On behalf of three female UFO beings he had to look at female attire displayed in shop windows to satisfy their interest in human fashions. On occasions he watched pornographic films on their behalf. Ho, hum, what would Mr Plod think of that alibi?

Watson is at pains to judge his own role of UFO investigator; whether such a presence can be harmful to the percipient, encourage delusional behaviour or mask underlying psychological problems. Also if some ac-

counts of UFO encounters are of such psychological origin, how can they be differentiated from more substantial claims?

On the subject of ethics, Jenny Randles has (*NUFON*, No. 148) criticised Watson for naming the younger percipients here. His response to this can be found in our letters column.

That said, this is a valuable record of the pre-adoptions period and some of its crop of anomalous personal experiences researched in depth.

Also worthy of praise is the quality of production of this hardback book on glossy paper and with illustrations.

Watson gives us facts, well presented, in a quality book and leaves the reader with the final question: "... are there any 'real' objective UFOs for us to discover? Or are we as deluded as some contactees?"

CROP CIRCLES: A MYSTERY SOLVED by Jenny Randles and Paul Fuller (Robert Hale, £5.99).

Crop circles have caught the public's imagination. They are certainly a beautiful and appealing anomalous phenomenon. Unless hoaxers are at work, they are becoming increasingly more widespread and complex.

But what causes the patterns? The authors consider the social context, the theories (from UFOs, to alien intelligence and meteorological viewpoint), the formations themselves and finally how circles supposedly give us the solution to the UFO mystery.

Alighting upon the plasma-vortex theory, the authors can state unequivocally: "The circles mystery is over." Others might argue that the complexity of circle formations suggests this is yet another case of pseudoscientific gobbledegook; its flexibility being its downfall.

As for folklore, many familiar elements of ufology are paraded; more bizarre elements being claims of creation by recently-exploding wartime bombs, play areas for fox cubs, hailstones from aircraft toilet contents reconstituting in the atmosphere to tethered model aeroplane; to Queen quizzing Thatcher on the subject, cereal crops being molecularly contaminated, air crashes and the force encouraging mass murderers.

The authors totally miss the point regarding the 1678 Mowing Devil incident pamphlet: the bottom line, then as now, is that the event was supernatural in content. Today's agro-economy is depersonalised; in those days there was a peasantry far closer to the land and the occurrence was rightly seen as extraordinary.

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Lastly, it is a pity the work is spoiled by a spiteful tone; firstly the carping criticism of Andrews and delgado's book *Circular Evidence*; secondly a snide attitude towards journalism.

EARTH MEMORY by Paul Devereux (Foulsham, £9.95).

PAUL DEVEREUX has been urging the building of bridges between disciplines for years, and finally it is happening with the study of ancient sites. At last archaeologists are looking at wider perspectives, while dowsers need to come to some consensus, not to mention the need for restraint on the wider shores of New Ageism.

This original paperback seeks a holistic approach to decoding sacred sites, bringing together the scientific and the intuitive. The author emphasises that "being and seeing" are requirements for experiencing the earth energies harnessed and used by the original builders. The reader is shown how to look at and tune in to sites, so as to tap the earth memory which is still a potent force.

With all the debate about corn circles, now is a time of frowning public awareness into earth mysteries. Those crop circles are here, as well as stone circles, burial chambers, pyramids, leys, sacred geometry, astroarchaeology, energy patterns, geomancy, shamanism and folklore.

Practical examples of ancient sites are given and advice on comprehending them given. It is a systematic study which will repay dividends for the student.

Outspoken, the author notes "the chemistry that occurs in religious fundamentalism, of whatever variety, produces the antithesis of spiritual insight" and "quite a bit of the tribal wisdom of, say, the Amerindians, belies what they themselves have forgotten, and bears uncanny resemblance to the psychobabble of New Age expectation." And "hallucinogens, while seen as a social problem in fragmented Western-style cultures were part of the spiritual life of many traditional peoples."

He doesn't suffer fools gladly and gets away with it by balancing all those he's encouraged and helped.

CHOIRS OF THE GOD by John Matthews (Mandala, £7.99).

My heart sinks each time I see the name John Matthews. Since his elementary factual inaccuracies over earth mysteries, I have never trusted his work, but this selection of "revisioning masculinity" is a complete crock of shite. I intend utilising my regular column in the magazine *The Ley Hunter* to deal with why this book has so angered me. That said, I ploughed through reams of garbage only to find the frock of gold at the very end. The book is made up of various contributions, but only Peter Lambourn Wilson makes sense — and what wisdom — where he discusses a third possibility after feminism and new male spirituality. His essay on the "runaway child" dispenses with gender and points to freedom of spirit, anarchism, nomadism and adventure. A real jolt. Completely out of place.

ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE by Robert M Pirsig (Vintage, £5.99).

THIS is one of those books everyone has heard of, many have intended reading but few have got around to it. In fact, it's not really about Zen Buddhism anyway, nor is there much factual on motorcycles either. It is subtitled "An Inquiry into Values" and as such this semi-autobiography challenges the way society has its hierarchies of what is worthy. Full of insights, it adds up to an unforgettable trip.

THE BLEEDING MIND by Ian Wilson (Published by Grafton Books, £5.99)

THIS absorbing study dispels much of the ignorant mythology surrounding stigmatics. No doubt to the chagrin of committed Christians, the evidence argues against all stigmatics as saints, miraculously imprinted with the wounds of crucifixion exactly as suffered by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago.

Nevertheless, stigmata are a fact and a fascinating mystery: the flesh really does change. They challenge our medical and scientific thinking; the inner power generating them could even be harnessed to tackle and cure diseases presently beyond modern medicine.

There has been no significant diminution of the phenomenon since it first appeared during the 13th century, since when around 300 stigmatics have been recorded. Indeed, the author interviewed Britain's best-known living example, Janet Hunt, of Ripley, Derbyshire, who proves the phenomenon is not a bizarre syndrome of long-dead Catholic neurotics. She provides a benchmark of factuality, for though she became stigmatised on a significant religious festival for her, Jane is an Anglican.

Wilson finds stigmatics exhibit symptoms akin to multiple personality sufferers; what in olden days would have been termed possession. He suggests these are different aspects of the same phenomenon, both stress-induced and a flight from reality. It would also seem a skilled hypnotist can induce stigmata; verbal or visual input changing the flesh — in addition to the almost theatrical stigmata, visualisation has been used to fight cancer cells and cosmetically enlarge breasts.

Wilson regards these potentials as "not simply a case of mind over matter, but of activity, by some agency beyond our normal conscious mind, overriding consciousness and the body's autonomic controls."

This is a thoughtful investigation into strange powers.

GUIDE TO ANCIENT BRITAIN by Bill Anderton (Foulsham, £5.95)

A shallow unashamed bandwagon-jumping travel guide to con the gullible wishing to visit ancient sites. Too little information is given and it refers to ley lines (sic) and power points (without explanation, understanding or any evidence). This cynical exploitation of earth mysteries studies and anti-intellectual treatment of the average reader/traveller makes this a book to avoid. Far better books on the subject are available — particularly for this purpose by Janet and Colin Bord.

THE GREAT GHOST HUNTER by Elliott O'Donnell (Foulsham, £6.95).

These are true stories from supernatural sleuth Elliott O'Donnell, edited by Harry Ludlam. The collection has been compiled with additional material from the recent discovery of further papers among the great ghost hunter's effects.

There's the Suicide Pool in Epping Forest and haunting at Darlington's North Road station; also in the North, the drama at Willington mill, Northumberland; through banshees, phantom animals, wretched spirits from O'Donnell's notebooks and also many personal accounts. Get spooked!

DYLAN: BEHIND THE SHADES by Clinton Heylin (Viking, £16.99).

THE DYLAN COMPANION edited by Elizabeth Thomson and David Gutman (Macmillan, £8.99)

It shows the measure of his talent and enduring interest that there that there is still a literary Dylan industry.

Many fans deserted Bob Dylan upon his born-again Christian fundamentalist personal and career redirection. However, as many ardent fans realised that his work was always fundamentally religious and took solace in the legacy of Sixties albums.

These books apply themselves to such devotees.

Heylin offers the first serious biography to deal with Zimmie's career in its entirety; finding new nuggets from the well-mined ore of his adolescence, through the painful divorce, religious conversions, and work with top musicians. Heylin is not a blinkered superfan, but questions Dylan's erratic career and looks at rare and unreleased material. This is a big, big tome and one to cherish.

The *Dylan Companion* can be dipped into at random and its contents are a true pot-pourri. They cover every imaginable angle of Dylan's output, life and philosophy, filtered through some of the weirdest egos around. For a multi-religious subject, to call it a veritable curate's egg seems apt. Contributions range from pseud's corner to the enlightening, from the trivial to insightful.

Both books are essential reading for Dylanologists.

UNsung HEROES OF ROCK 'N' ROLL by Nick Tosches (Secker & Warburg, £7.99).

A foul-penned salute to rock's founding fathers (plus a couple of token women). Tosches ably chronicles the artists who came before Elvis Presley and how raw and sensual they were. His bar-room prose does them full justice.



WANDA JACKSON

Today's teenagers may think they invented sex and it was punk and rap musicians who put it on vinyl, but

the Fifties were an era to make the most liberated radical listeners wince. Before Presley gyrated his hips suggestively, others, predominantly black rhythm 'n' blues artists, were performing lewdly and extolling the virtues of libidinous behaviour. Another myth he explodes is that it was not creativity behind rock 'n' roll but the desire to make money.

Typical of such acts, before creating *The Twist*, the Midnighters took the role of gynaecologists for Annie Had A Baby; an inevitable follow-up to the euphemistic *Work With Me Annie*.

As for Screaming Jay Hawkins, his "vocal hallucinations were perceived as being invocatory of all manner of horrible things, from anal rape to cannibalism."

Here a long series of artists are pen portraited along with recording histories; many songs and artists being downright immoral and the author reaches the pornographic in his prose, reflecting the subject matter, particularly regarding Wanda Jackson. "The greatest menstruating rock 'n' roll singer whom the world has known," he charmingly introduces the young lady. He drools that still a teenager she "sounded like she could fry eggs on her mons veneris." Twenty years on he concludes "menopause hath no mercy."

Another sexual condition not mentioned, but apposite is to recall that it was Presley and Cliff Richard who almost castrated rock. It took Bob Dylan, the Byrds and the Band to reboot the art form. Tosches would disagree. "Rock 'n' roll is dead," he concludes. "Deader than the papal penis."

Oh, and the last artist, Esau Smith, what a hoot! I won't spoil it though; I just wish I had the imagination and could write like this guy.

CLEOPATRA by Lucy Hughes-Hellelt (Vintage, £7.99).

Subtitled *Histories, Dreams and Distortions*, this is a scholarly, discursive and entertaining study. If alive today, Cleopatra would be a scheming bimbo. Even in her lifetime legends were accumulating.

This fluent account shows her in changing guises as professional courtesan, political manipulator, exuberant lover, sadistic tyrant and virtuous suicide. Succeding generations have portrayed the fabled queen in the light of their own moralities and achievements.

Erudition and tittle-tattle mix to create a chameleonesque portrait of fantasy and fact, up to and including Elizabeth Taylor winking at Caesar.

There are 12 colour photographs and 38 black and white illustrations

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD CHIMPANZEE by Jared Diamond (Radius, £16.99).

Why third chimpanzee? The author asserts mankind's genes are still more than 98 per cent identical with those of common and pygmy chimpanzee species.

Diamond seeks the two per cent distinction and its effects — which range from our capacity for genocide to lovemaking in private and unconnected with ovulation — but never strays from seeing us as animals ourselves.

The book never questions whether evolution could be a false trail or possible reality in myths of a golden age. Setting our life cycle purely in an animal context is conceited and scientifically unproven. Academic argument here builds theories on an unsound foundation whose weaknesses are being continually exposed.

DANCE TO A DOLPHIN'S SONG by Horace Dobbs (Jonathan Cape, £7.99).

Second book in Dr Dobbs' trilogy on dolphins, in which he tests his theory that those brainy mammals could benefit human beings suffering from stress. Much of the narrative is about his film of a dolphin's positive effect on three depressives who encountered the wild beast off the Irish coast. Following this to benefit all mankind, Dobbs set about making available a cassette of dolphin sounds, which have a powerful meditative effect.

COMETS by Donald K Yeomans (John Wiley, £24.95)

THIS book is a fascinating chronicle of the facts and folklore surrounding those mysterious, exotic and ominous celestial bodies called comets. They are believed by many to be the original harbingers of life itself — and its future destroyer.

Lively to read and excellently illustrated, it is an enthusiastic and detailed history of comet research, including the first comprehensive catalogue of cometary apparitions up to 1700.

THE SECRET LORE OF RUNES AND OTHER ANCIENT ALPHABETS by Nigel Pennick (Rider, £9.99).

THIS is the first book to describe and analyse the symbolism of all the alphabets of the Western tradition, including Hebrew, Greek, Ogham, Runic, Gaelic and the magical and alchemical alphabets of the medieval and Renaissance traditions. He also outlines the numerological significance of the various alphabets and discusses the function and the purpose of magic squares and literary labyrinths, in particular the book demonstrates the major influence of runes — for centuries the major magical alphabet of central and northern Europe.

All alphabets have their roots in antiquity, and it is now widely recognised that the archaic symbols from which they stem had magical and religious significance. The study of the roots and symbolism of alphabets not only reveals to us a great deal about the physical and mental world of our ancestors but can also tell us much about ourselves and the human psyche generally.

This study is likely to become a significant reference work in its field.

Articles elsewhere

■ Photocopy joke sheets as a respected form of folklore was the subject of a lengthy article by John Windsor (Independent, 15/6/91). After being rebuffed by the Ephemera Society, he happily got fax from Gillian Bennett, in Sheffield.

■ For a good satire on corn circles investigation, the hoax letter from Sir Herbert Gussett (Private Eye, No. 773, 1991) had me chuckling.

■ If you want gory pictures of shark attacks then the ecology flagship obliges. (Green Magazine, June, 1991). The issue also has interesting legend and folklore material; from shark worship to human sacrifice, and shark kissing believed to be practised by some Pacific islanders who reckoned once given a smacker the shark would be immobilised and harmless.

■ Lastly, a cartoon on a subject we've covered, Hollywood stars and rodent bestiality! It had to be (Viz, issue 49, 1991).



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. 7. Editor Mark Chorvinsky in conversation with the knowledgeable and legendary Vincent H Gaddis and Gaddis himself on the late Ted Anemmann and his ability to "catch" a live bullet in his teeth. Articles have Michael T Shoemaker arguing the authenticity of a photograph and first-hand description of a South American native anthropoid ape; cinematic Crowleyesque villainy; call for integration between ufology and parapsychology where Michael Grosso goes on to posit an attractive ultradimensional mind hypothesis. Shoemaker and Jenny Randles slug it out in the crop circles square ring. Janet Bord contributes a round-up of UK events (I can assure her British Rail sandwiches these days are delicious — though pricey). Plus readers' accounts, cryptozoology, book reviews and adverts.

FORTEAN TIMES. The Journal of Strange Phenomena. One year (six issues) UK £12. US \$30. Make cheques payable to John Brown Publishing and send to Fortean Times 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX. Now hitched to the John Brown publishing empire (includes Viz), FT is bimonthly and revamped. There is a section for the rotation of leading contributors and a less cramped look.

No. 57. Four major articles on satanic child abuse mania and bogus social workers.

No. 58. popular features remain such as Strange Days (Australian lesbian vampire trial, meteorites, feral Dartmoor porcupines, and so on); From our Files (strange deaths, strange beats, etc); three major piece of cranial trepanation; child abuse and alien abductions; Loch Ness camel?!; book reviews; readers' letters.

THE LEY HUNTER. Senior earth mysteries mag. £6 for 4 issues; US £15. From P.O. Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2LX.

No. 113. Tom Graves provides a timely trashing of the asylum which energy dowsing has become and calls for humility and hard work to rescue and rehabilitate it as a precise tool. Geomantic Alpine rays of light; Paul Screeton celebrates the Lambton Worm's second coming; Nigel Pennick deplores Disneyfycatory cultural amnesia and political dissuasion; extensive book reviews.

No. 114 Major earth lights update edited by Paul Devereux. Paul Screeton takes a critical look at corn circles carnival and Nigel Pennick deplores the New Barbarism and spectre of StonehengeLand Experience. Science of the spirit and the pineal gland; significant Belgian alignment; Polish stone circles. More excellent book reviews.

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. 47. Wharfedale article claims to explain Ilkley's enigmatic Swastika Stone, along with an other covering the mysteries; Seamer Beacon; Catkin' Neet (a custom new to me — must suggest it to the Station Hotel landlord); letters; book reviews; meeting reports.

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

No. 29. Articles on leys centring on Woking mosque; corn circles and earth mysteries, with which I'm in total agreement (very rare); letters and book reviews.

No. 30. Yorkshire and Lincolnshire sites; intriguing possible subconscious siting of Sikh temple with alignments in Scunthorpe. Notes and news.

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.

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

No. 149. Editorial on Stuart Campbell's odd behaviour over the famous Peter Day "UFO" film. Usual round-ups on latest books, major articles elsewhere, UFOs in the media, corn circles, current investigations 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.

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

No. 40. Martin Kottmeyer on aliens spying on humanity, with discussion on guilt and paranoia; Michael Goss on changing psychic phenomena (I'd not heard of the method for getting a hat spinning by using touch); and Bill Ellis discussing similarities and differences in alien abductions and satanic cult abductions; plus book reviews.

AMSKAYA. Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship. Q. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to J Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX.

No. 21. Irritating serialisation of articles; Tony Wedd on perpetual motion machine (cont. 22) and article on a 1967 Nebraska abduction (cont. 22). Correspondent's strange experiences; editorial on Flitney optimism.

No. 22. Ley freak Gordon Harris reprinted from ,Guardian; general UFO piece from an encycopaedia.

BAD NEWS. Britain's most exclusive national circulation pamphlet. 5p — if you can find it.

June, 1991. Childwatch founder Diane Core (pictured) trashed. She comes from Hull — surprise, surprise! I lived and worked there for a year and the Hull Daily Mail finally employed a journalist who exposed this fundamentalist crank whose Satanic ritual abuse myth has caused others such agony. It seems the HDM must have a bigger idiot as editor than the one I had in the late Sixties, though this one allowed his investigative sleuth to dig the dirt on Core, publish it but tempered the editorial with soothing shite. Crackpot Core has also been to see the Yorkshire Ripper — as they say, like attracts like.



THE CEREALOGIST. 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. 3. Merrily Harpur interviews Busty Taylor; cerealogical dowsing; symbols, geometry and meaning; predictions; hoaxing; investigative notes on Bryce Bond's 1972 Warminster adventure; crop circles as art; book reviews, letters and announcements.

No. 4. Insectograms for 1991! Interesting editorial notes by John Michell; lively "diary" column by a German journalist; Michael Glickman with witty new column; Patrick Harpur puts forward on imaginative approach; George Wingfield on insectograms phenomenon; Aubrey Burl trashes Meoden's prehistory book; Michell on extraordinary geometric complex; interview with a medium; a naturalist's viewpoint; Australian UFO "nests"; dowsing assessment; letters.

THE CROP WATCHER. Single issue £1.75; £6.30 for four. Cheques to The Crop Watcher, 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hants, SO517TY.

No. 4. Sensible editorial on hoax theory and its shortcomings. Jenny Randles on various developments. Prof Gregory Forbes, a US expert, demolishes Meoden's thesis. Off piece by Sandy Reid. Disgraceful TV coverage of Little Peover case. Australian case from 1973. Two analyses of hill slope to circle distances.

No. 5. Editor Paul Fuller roils against the "alien intelligence" explanation for corn circles, yet discusses ball lightning and seemingly supports that it can "adopt inquisitive behaviour"; if this doesn't mean alien intelligence, I don't know what does! (over to you Doc). Randles with press round-up and personal comments. Swedish and Aussie circles. Talk in which Colin Bloy postulates St Michael Line could be a source of energy for the corn circles.

No. 6. Interview with Meaden supporter Prof Ohtsuki; response to "Hoaxing and the open mind", four alleged crop circle hoaxes.

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. 2, No. 2. CCCS chairman's address and other CCCS items, including research panels' reports; Rupert Sheldrake looks at the scientific metaphor "field" and reapplies it to the landscape; Simon Burton ponders the possibility of dragon-earth energy writhing free at lost and

being depicted in cerealogy; Erik Beckjord proposes the crop glyphs are an ancient Norse/Berber Tifinag (III) script. readers' letters.



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

Vol XXI/2. Editor Eddie Tooke on what Arthur means to him; Alby Stone on the Fisher King and Norse tradition (to be cont.); Richard Brodley discusses weapon ritual sacrifices; Mary Caine on Glastonbury Zodiac; readers' letters. Vol XXI/3. Alex Schlesinger and Kate Pollard down Pendragon memory lone.



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

No. 2. Nude man on cover! The "one for the girls" is 30-foot penis-flashing Cerne Abbas Giant. Sunderland Echo newspaper gets some stick — particularly female impersonator reporter Patrick Lavelle. Urban folklore coverage of Elvis Presley; jinx heads, with input from Andy Roberts; Gulf war Christian magic; Tibetan football and weather magic. Various snippets, wry fiction, anarchistic worldview.

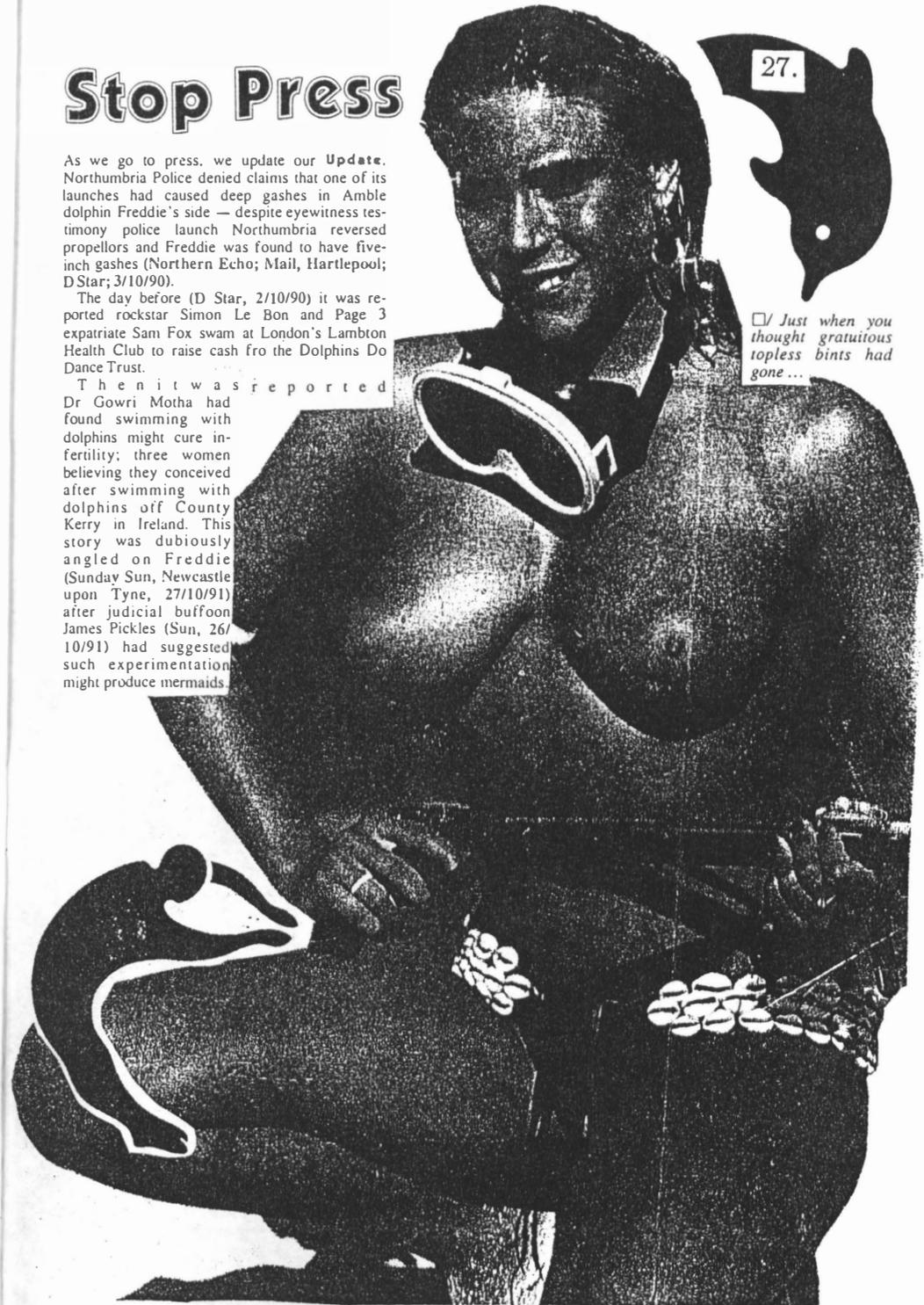
Stop Press

As we go to press, we update our Update. Northumbria Police denied claims that one of its launches had caused deep gashes in Amble dolphin Freddie's side — despite eyewitness testimony police launch Northumbria reversed propellers and Freddie was found to have five-inch gashes (Northern Echo; Mail, Hartlepool; DStar; 3/10/90).

The day before (D Star, 2/10/90) it was reported rockstar Simon Le Bon and Page 3 expatriate Sam Fox swam at London's Lambton Health Club to raise cash for the Dolphins Do Dance Trust.

Then it was reported Dr Gowri Motha had found swimming with dolphins might cure infertility; three women believing they conceived after swimming with dolphins off County Kerry in Ireland. This story was dubiously angled on Freddie (Sunday Sun, Newcastle upon Tyne, 27/10/91) after judicial buffoon James Pickles (Sun, 26/10/91) had suggested such experimentation might produce mermaids.

☐/ Just when you thought gratuitous topless bints had gone ...



Photocopylore

The Word "FUCK"

Describes many emotions. No other word can be used in such varied grammatical nuances.

It can be used as a noun(I don't give a fuck)
As an adjective(It's a fucking beauty).
As a verb in its transitive form ..(The game was fucked by the weather)
And in the intransitive form(He well and truly fucked it up)

Everyday showings of true versatility:

DENIAL I'll be fucked if I did.
PERPLEXITY I know fuck all about it.
APATHY Who gives a fuck anyway?
GREETINGS How the fuck are you.
GOODBYE Fuck Off!
RESIGNATION Go fuck it!
DERISION He fucks everything up.
EXHAUSTION I'm completely fucked.

The word has, of course, been used by some very famous personages through the years, the more notable being:

"What the fuck was that?" Mayor of Hiroshima
"Look at all these fucking Indians" General Custer
"Where's the fucking water coming from?" Capt of the Titanic
"What a place to plant a fucking tree" Marc Bolan
"That's not a real fucking gun" John Lennon
"The fucking throttle's stuck" Donald Campbell
"Who's going to fucking know" President Nixon
"That's not even a fucking swear word" Joan Rivers
"I'm outside the fucking exclusion zone" Capt of the General Belgrano
"Heads will fucking roll for this" Anne Bolyn
"He'll have some fucker's eye out" King Harold
"I thought I could smell fucking petrol" Nikki Lauda
"What fucking map?" Mark Thatcher
"It's my best fucking coat!" Michael Foot
"She's just a fucking secretary" Cecil Parkinson
"He's just a fucking mate" Jeremy Thorpe
"Any fucker can understand that" Albert Einstein
"It fucking looks just like her" Picasso
"We're thoroughly fucked now" Christine Keeler
"Who's fucking black?" Stevie Wonder

■ There's 20 famous quotes! I would welcome readers' suggestions to add to this list. The winner and runner-up with the most apposite/humorous entries will win book prizes (to be chosen by the editor). A selection of the best entries will be published and readers can send as many made-up quotes as they want. Who knows, they could end up being circulated nationwide!

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984. Your name, address and (where known) your telephone number are now stored in a retrieval system for Folklore Frontiers correspondence purposes only. Should anyone wish so, their entry will be removed.
