

Folklore Frontiers



First published in Great Britain by Robson Books Ltd. 1988
 Arrow edition 1989
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No. 18

'Lumme Guv. The broad's a geezer,' croaked Stinker amazedly. The count pulled up his amply filled sweater, unscrewed the end of one of his brassiere cups and pulled out a small microphone. 'Luscious Lena to base,' he called into the microphone. 'I've made contact with the subject and am about to proceed as per orders over.'

There was a crackling noise from the other cup of the brassiere and a tinny, reedy voice said, 'Listen Jimmy when you've picked up that fare can you call at the Taj Mahal and pick up a chicken tandoori with nan bread and an extra portion of madras sauce and a prawn vindaloo off the bone with four popadums and two chapatis.' 'Bloody taxi cabs,' muttered the Count thumping himself on the bust frustratedly. 'What's going on?' asked Dick. 'Who the hell are you and what the blazes are you doing here? And what am I doing swearing like this in a boys' comic?'

Folklore Frontiers No. 18

FEBRUARY, 1993

The Diary

●● We could not resist using extracts from another diary and an intemperate and quirky one to boot. Correspondent Stuart Gray-Thompson contributed this item — and many others.

A VIEW FROM NORTH LOCHS



AIMSIR EACHAINN

For the second time in 12 years I rested last week. I foolishly vacated this columnar chair for a few days and what did they do to me? They allowed an adherent of the Catholic faith to publish his diary, with goodness knows what dire effect on the morals of our young readers.

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

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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.

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

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WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS, FRIDAY,

6 NOVEMBER 1992

It seems the protective fabric of all western religions has worn exceeding thin. Intemperate and immodest language is the order of the day now. So-called liberal tendencies are knocking at the very doors of the Free Presbyterian Deacon's Court. This is no time to permit the Scribes of Rome space to disseminate their propaganda — especially those who appear to have lost curam for their own eternal destiny and claim to have advanced ideas. I pray that he'll be forgiven.

TALKING OF physics, my wee wife recently came across a piece in a learned journal that has caused her great alarm.

I suspected something had disturbed her peace of mind when I came home late one night to find two buckets of water positioned at her side of the bed and several new fire extinguishers strategically placed about the house.

It was one of these befuddled nights when you take the stairs three at a time to prove your innocence, and the extinguishers looked like garden gnomes so I didn't raise any question until the dawn. The cruel, thirsty dawn.

I crawled to slurp from a pail of water but was told it was not for drinking. "It's for dousing when you burst into flames."

Her story goes that some mysterious deaths have been explained by dedicated scientists who discovered that spontaneous combustion can take

place in heavy drinkers (I should point out at this stage that I treat alcohol with great caution and only very rarely go over the score).

Whisky as we all know generates a great deal of heat and also, it seems, powerfully inflammable gases. If these gases are allowed to escape or mix with oxygen the 50,000 volts of static electricity that builds up in the body of the average whisky drinker is more than enough to cause a fire — or, in the case of the man with 21 units, a raging conflagration.

The scientists who made this dreadful discovery will almost certainly be denounced by the Vatican whose bishops are notorious two-bottle men.

P.S. Galileo was, of course, a Freemason of the 33rd degree.

Told that the Littleferry passage stopped about 1930, anxious traveller cycling to Dornoch inquired if it started again at daybreak! (Northern Times 16/10/92)

LOST

LOST — ICELANDIC TUP from Stonefield, Sleat, light reddish brown colour, ½ bottle reward for information. Telephone Tobar (04715) 234 or 235.

(West Highland Free Press, 23/10/92)

(*) Contemporary folklore has been given added impetus by the publication of a slim, popular compendium of tales, Urban Myths, by Phil Healey and Rick Glanvill (review next issue) from Virgin. They also contribute a foaftale each week to the Weekend Guardian.



(*) Cornography, however, is in serious decline. Doubtless the only real losers are the cartoonists, who had a field day with the topic. Here's a few reminders before it becomes purely a sociological memory.



"At least with crop circles you get paid double time for night work!"



"No! I am not going to help you make crop circles."



"There must be something more to life than doing crop circles."



"I remember when all this was crop circles."

Before leaving corn circles behind, our good friend Donald Cyr received a big write-up (Whistling in the Dark, by Neil Strauss, New York Press, June 10-16, 1992) of his whistler theory to explain the phenomenon.

Donald is currently working on the manuscript of my updated history of ley hunting, Seekers of the Linear Vision, which he will be producing from downtown Santa Barbara later this year. We'll keep you posted on how to acquire this essential earth mysteries extravaganza.

(*) Mentioned in Seekers is Nigel Pennick and his sadly-missed Practical Geomancy. It got a bizarre mention (Robert Leedham, Short Cuts column, Guardian Weekend, 14/11/92): "The world of magazines is fragmenting as every hobby and trivial pursuit with more than a dozen participants gets its own specialist magazine. Practical Geomancy and What Snuff, anyone? Now comes..." Further down the column Fortean Times editor Paul Sieveking gets a mention.

(*) Before leaving the straight line mystery business, Loch Ness has more to it than alleged monster??. Nestled on the silt bed more than 600ft down is a near-perfect straight line of 34 objects, 30ft to 60ft high, spaced at regular 180ft intervals, stretching south from Foyers. Theories include pipe moorings or World War I mine-laying practice moorings. At that depth!?! (Press and Journal, Aberdeen, 1/8/92).

(*) And while on the subject of Screetonian scribings, our book on the Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend is selling steadily. It got a mention in the September, 1992, issue of Certifie Legendaire, edited by FF subscriber Jean Louis Brodu.

THE PUZZLE

"Think of a number between one and ten. Multiply it by nine. Add the digits so you get a single number. Now take away five from that number. Then, taking A as one, B as two, C as three and so on, work out the letter that corresponds to your number. Think of a country beginning with that letter. Now think of an animal starting with the second letter of your country. I bet I can tell you what the animal is, its colour and the country..."

Answer below, folks.

Brain teaser

By KIM BARTLETT

A BIZARRE brain teaser is currently sweeping Britain — but the real puzzle is that no one knows how it started.

The mystery quiz nearly always gives you the same answer whatever number you first choose.

Inside a week it has become the latest craze to hit schools, factories and homes across the country.

Experts say it must have been passed on by word of mouth but are at a loss as to how it all started.

■ Heard this being told when in Sheffield at Christmas. From Sun, 21/12/92.

STAR

3/12/92

TELLY soaps like Neighbours and EastEnders were yesterday blamed for killing off local accents. Expert Rick Scollins claimed Midlands teenagers now speak Cockney — with an Australian twang.

3/12/92

Sociologist George Paton, who specialises in humour at Aston University in Birmingham, said: "The elaboration suggests it may have been started by adults.

"But it is too complex to pass on by stockbroker computer screen which is the usual method.

"Jokes normally have some sense or purpose but this does not. It is surreally bizarre."

He said it may even have begun in the playground and then passed on to parents.

The quiz first proves that multiplying any figure by nine and adding up the digits in the answer always gives you number nine.

But the main teaser is based on the country you chose beginning with letter D — which should be Denmark.

Mr Paton said: "Perhaps people choose Denmark because the Maastricht treaty has been in the news and because the Treaty lumbers along a bit like an elephant."

Choosing an animal is easier because for most people an elephant would be the obvious choice.

IN DENMARK
GREY ELEPHANT
ANSWER: A



"Just the usual mumbo-jumbo about a pharaoh's curse."

JOHN NORTH

Pushing a row too far

WE are in a position to solve a long-standing mystery this morning. It concerns a man, who will remain nameless except to reveal that he is a well-known publisher in South Durham, who had a row with his wife. It was over nothing important, but blew up out of all proportion as they tend to do.

Eventually, tired of arguing, the man tried to make up to his wife. Hell having no fury like a woman scorned, she told him bluntly where to get off and then, just wanting to be left alone, jumped in their car and drove off to the local supermarket to do the weekly shopping.

Back at home our publisher was becoming more and more angry at the thought that his wife had spurned his attempts at reconciliation. By now blazing mad, he hopped on his pedal cycle and rode to the supermarket, determined to resolve the row once and for all.

Entering the shop he saw his wife bending over the frozen chickens cabinet. It was a chance too good to miss. Sneaking up behind her, he picked her up by the legs and toppled her into the cabinet, cackling maniacally at the sweet feeling of revenge.

Only it wasn't his wife. It was someone who looked just like her and who was wearing a similar pair of jeans. The publisher thought explanations were superfluous and ran off. If you were the woman who ended up in a freezer, now you know why.

● Odd one (Northern Echo, 18/11/92)

Letters

From Mike Collier, Seine-Maritime, France.

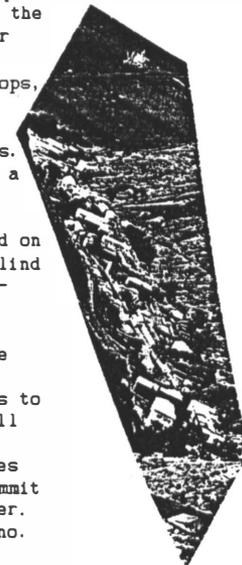
Regarding the June issue, I'm enclosing this photo taken with my Box Brownie camera. They had large negatives and took good photos sometimes. It was the summer of 1951 and the lady is my friend Dors. I have one or two more including one taken of us nearly 20 years later when we were both looking a little world-weary. Lovely, lovely lady. ((Editor: Our tale of Ms Dors being called Diana Clunt got another airing -- (Don't get yourself in a state over Fluck's law, The Guardian, 1/2/93) when Andrew Moncur used it among examples of cock-ups. Dennis Price became Dennis Prick and then Penis Price in the Seychelles Bulletin. Chinks in the Villa defence was altered to gaps but appeared in print as japs ...))

Earlier in the year I did a sort of dowse of Rouen cathedral and found leys coming out like spokes from a wheel. If I had done a complete one I have no doubt that the number of them would have been odd; it always is. I think that Fidler commented on this as well. I also did likewise to two nuclear power stations, at Penly and Paluel. I found exactly the same thing with the lines emanating from the reactors. Could the answer be quite simple? A ley starts (or finishes) in my garden and I stood on this spot and asked the previous owner if he knew what was down there and he replied there was a stream. This suggested to me that the power stations might be sending out the lines simply because of the huge amount of underground water that they suck into the reactor area. Well, it is obviously not as simple as that but maybe it does give us a clue.

From Alan Bowers, Isle of Wight.

I'm writing with regard to your letters column in FF17. In 1990 I had the good fortune to spend some time in the small and peculiarly remote island of St Helena. I often heard in conversation that there were quite a few older residents of the island who had never visited Jamestown, the capital and only town. However, it was not possible to solicit their identity. Jamestown is the main market, business and administrative centre. It houses the government offices, the docks, the main shops, the "cathedral" and the hospital, besides other establishments. Similarly, I have also heard the same story on the Isle of Wight concerning people never visiting Newport, though once again no names. Certainly many of the islanders have never left the island. But for a "Saint" not to visit Jamestown in their career would be quite an achievement. However, Jonathon, a resident at Plantation House (the governor's residence) may be able to claim some record, having lived on the island and not left it for well over 250 years. Jonathon is a blind and very grumpy giant tortoise. He is said to have been a "tortoise-ling" in the time of Napoleon's exile.

To the best of my knowledge, no railway has ever been constructed there. However, at Saint Helena's nearest landfall, 900 miles to the north, on Ascension Island tracks were certainly laid. In 1925 the English Bay Company laid miles of light railway across the lava flows to assist in the collection of guano. A main "harvest" point was a small island on the east coast of Ascension, Boatswain Bird Island. Apparently there still exists here on its summit a shed, some winches and the remains of a light railway. Boatswain Bird Island at its summit is 325 feet above sea level and about a quarter of a mile in diameter. The project closed in 1928, owing to difficulties in mining the guano. The island is the largest heap of guano I have ever seen.



(Ed: I am reminded now of Keith Newbery, an editor in Hampshire of another newspaper in the same group I work for, who it was said always had to be back on the Isle of Wight every night no matter what. Also there was a "tit bit" (D Sport 23/10/92) which seems relevant in this context. It claimed: "Half of New York's residents have never seen a dog in the flesh! And only one in five there have ever smelled grass."

From Nigel Pennick, Cambridge.

Mallorca is a small island with an extant rail system (Palma - Soller). I don't know how big the island is, but it is not enormous. There were also a lot of weird horse tramways around the coast of Holland, including (I think) some on the Frisian islands.

On another topic, soon to be popular here, police spy cameras, there are several observations ... I visit Germany regularly, and so I have personal experience of the police speeding cameras which are everywhere. At least the German cameras are preceded by a warning pictogram that there is a speed trap there. I think the British ones are just there without warning. When they were introduced, the legend was that Scotch Tape or the German equivalent prevents the cameras from photographing the number plates. An "urban belief" story in Stuttgart is of the taxi driver who taped over the registration number so that he would not be caught speeding - then he was caught because the camera recorded his taxi-driving certificate number on the windscreen. In Luzern (Switzerland) in 1988, all of the cameras on the entrance roads to the city were smashed with hammers on the same night.

In the spring (Ed: 1992), when I was driving from Stuttgart to Frankfurt on the autobahn, I was photographed when driving at 95kph in a 100kph restriction. There was no prosecution. Another time, I was a passenger in a car at night on the autobahn near Freiburg-in-Breisgau when a vast red flash of the camera blinded the driver, and she almost lost control through the bedazzlement. Later she was fined.

There is an interesting legal and civil liberties angle on the photographing of car numbers. Because the camera photographs the number plate, the police cannot prove who was driving. If a German motorist denies that he/she was driving because someone else was using the car, then the motorist is compelled to keep a log book of all journeys, noting down who was driving, when and where. How convenient for Big Brother to make people keep score on themselves!

(ED: Exactly. Under the headline "Sorry luv I've been framed", the Sun (6/2/93) noted that marriage problems can follow when the pictures of speeding drivers show them with their illicit partners. According to the report, kindly police in Gloucestershire are to point the cameras at the backs of vehicles to avoid identifying passengers. But is this really true?).

From Nigel Watson, London N22.

Thanks for the latest copy of Folklore Frontiers. I thought your review of "Isaiah" was very even-handed (what Robin Witting thinks of it might be another matter!). Though I should point out that it has a cover price of £4.50 NOT 54.50 as mentioned in your magazine (if anyone is willing to pay such a price they are very welcome). I'd appreciate it if you could correct this - indeed if anyone wants to order a copy and mentions Folklore Frontiers they can have a copy for £3.50 (including postage and packing).

Dubious Transmissions

By Paul Screeton

An extremely varied set of tales, frequently found in newspapers, basically have a single factor in common. The link is the amplification of a broadcast by a piece of machinery not designed to be the receptor. My filing system stashes such occurrences under the title "dubious transmissions". Here radio, taxi, citizens' band, air traffic control, and so on, broadcasts are picked up by church organs, baby alarms, gaming machines, stage circuits, and so on.



A quick analysis of my current collection breaks down the receiving medium list as follows: loudspeaker system 14 (including four concerts, one masonic ritual and remainder in churches; pub gaming machines; telephone 3; aircraft cockpit 3; human dental fillings 2; television 2 (difficult to verify through amateurs' licences and employee's revenge); baby alarm 2; and one each for house radio, CB radio set, racing driver's radio head-set, ambulance control room, uPVC windows, heart pacemaker and ultrasonic baby scan apparatus. These are individual stories (some in more than one newspaper) where allegedly not deliberate.

I made this list after writing up two articles on the subject for other magazines — Fortean Times and Dear Mr Thoms.

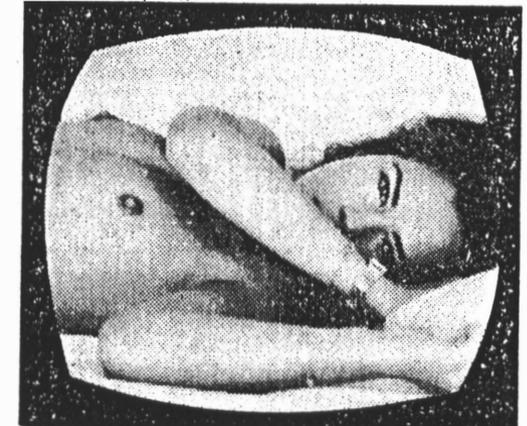
Having despatched these pieces, I took to considering some wider implications, including the aspect of "truth". Many such tales sound perfectly plausible. While working in the office of the Billingham and Stockton Expresses, I picked up the telephone to hear internal ICI Agricultural Division conversations a mile away and the tannoy of the betting shop over the road.

I was quite happy to believe the "Dianagate" tape; that conversation picked up independently on scanners by two nosey parkers finding themselves listening to the Princess of Wales — Squidgy — and a chum. The Sun's Richard Littlejohn seemed the only one to disbelieve the chance interceptions and see a dirty tricks department at work.

On checking through my dubious transmissions file I found an early example of eavesdropping. There was indignation at businessmen using car radio phones from CB users picking up their sexy chat. An unidentified breaker near Reading, Berks, related how he overheard a married tycoon's juicy conversation with his mistress. "She recited all the different positions they used during love-making. There was a lot of kissing and cooing .. But it's a nuisance when it washes out a conversation with another CB user." (Sun, 22/4/85).

A variation is the viewer who suddenly finds pornography on the screen, either by supposed accident, human mischief or a disgruntled employee's revenge.

Just one example will suffice and with Royal connections. A starker Koo Stark flashed on to the screens on the wavelength use by South-West commercial station TSW, after the Plymouth-based company had gone off the air. Prince Andrew's lover, wearing only a sexy smile, looked straight out of the screen at Kevin Cole and his wife Julie and panted "I want to make love with you". Moments later Andrew himself appeared and seemed to doff his naval cap to saucy Koo. This was followed by Bernard Manning telling blue jokes, a nude couple in bed,



KOO STARK

naked girls wrestling in mud, and rugby game stalker Erika Rowe flashing her boobs. Then came shots of nudes clambering over an army-style assault course. The 20-minute show ended with zany Kenny Everett wishing everyone "a fucking awful new year".

TSW staff suspected a rogue technician (Sun, 16/2/87).

More recent general examples have been a

Gorilla sex in tabloid prose

TABLOID newspapers got a bad name for their treatment of the Royal Family in 1992, but what of their attitude to pets? As the new year proceeds it is a fair bet that we shall see more stories like "Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster" from the Sun, or "Mum Gives Birth To 8lb Kitten" and "Scientists Put Dog's Head on Sheep" from the Sunday Sport. Loony headlines like these have now been studied by psychologists, analysing the way American tabloids write about animals.

In a learned article in the American journal, *Anthrozoos*, the psychologists described how they faced difficult decisions at the start. Were Bigfoot or abominable snowmen animals? Harold Herzog and Shelley Galvin concluded that they were. Space aliens, on the other hand, were not. But a story about how a woman was impregnated by a space alien and gave birth to a puppy made them wonder if they were right.

After poring over no fewer than 800 articles and pictures, the psychologists decided that the animal stories followed several themes. One fairly obvious one was stories about animals as loved ones, with headlines such as "Pet Lover Had Horse Move In With Him" or "New Fad... Stuff Your Dead Pet".

Animals as saviours featured in stories such as "Drowning Mom Saved by Killer Croc". Unusual headlines included "A Giant Stingray Carried Me on Its Back for 16 Days!" and "Lion-Hearted Kitty Attacks Pit Bull and Saves Poodle's Life".

However, not all animal stories were so positive. The psychologists said: "We found 128 stories depicting the ways animals terrorised, harassed or

jumbo jet having airport tower messages interrupted by a client's moans in a brothel (D Star, Sun, 13/10/92) and a pensioner picking up his phone only to hear a Manchester local radio station (D Star, 14/10/92).

Lastly, the day I posted the articles and wrote this one, the Daily Sport (28/10/92) published a crude cartoon on the theme.

By Celia Haddon

consumed humans or other 'innocent' species." There were 19 articles about humans being eaten — by big cats, sharks, snakes, crocodiles and ferrets.

One story blamed pop music with the headline: "Heavy Metal Rock Turns Poodle into Vicious Killer." Humans eating (or mistreating) animals provided another category of horrifying thrills. These ranged from "He Didn't Do His Homework So Cruel Mom Kills Son's Hamster" to "Man Swallows Kitten by Mistake While Giving Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation".

Other themes were animals as tools ("Jilted Lover Uses Trained Boa to Commit Suicide") and animals as sex objects or sexual aggressors. Our own Sunday Sport's headline about the kitten baby pales beside such thrilling American ones as "Hiker Battles for Life with Sex-Crazed Stag" or "Gorilla Makes Girl Pregnant".

Three popular themes were animal freaks ("Devil Rats... Mutant Monsters Sent to Invade the US!"), imaginary animals like Bigfoot, and animals with supernatural powers. The latter included a pig that read minds, a dog that saw ghosts, and a bird — "Family Haunted by the Ghost of Thanksgiving Turkey".

What do all these headlines mean? The psychologists conclude that the animal stories are in an age-old tradition of "mythological themes that occur across cultures and time". They also say: "Tabloid items tell us something about ourselves and perhaps our unconscious processes." Wisely perhaps, they don't say exactly what.

Weekend Telegraph, 2/1/93

Dumbtown Legends

By Jan Harold Brunvand

When I listened to quiz shows on the radio as a child, it always puzzled me that whenever someone mentioned being from Brooklyn the audience would laugh. The people of Brooklyn, I gathered, had a reputation for naivete, or perhaps even for stupidity, and the rest of the country found these Brooklynites humorous.

But I never figured out what the "Brooklyn joke" was, nor — as a boy who had seldom been outside of Michigan — was I even certain exactly where the city of Brooklyn was located. Somewhere near New York City was all I knew.

If there was a story that explained the poor reputation of Brooklyn, I never heard it. Since I haven't heard anyone laugh at a mention of Brooklyn for many years now, perhaps I'll never know what it was once considered a funny place to be from.

What might be called "dumbtown legends" continue to exist, though. They're stories about some alleged silly act of the past that forever branded the local residents as dodos. Recently I heard of two such legends about European towns, one German the other English.

Perhaps there are similar dumbtown traditions with American settings that readers can report, or are Johnny Carson's jokes about the mediocre restaurants and nightlife of Burbank, Calif., all that's left of this vein of folk humor in the United States?

The German dumbtown legend concerns the small Black Forest town of Hornberg. I learned about it from a speaker at a recent folklore conference. He said the town is famous for the time its residents fired a cannon salute prematurely, using up all their gunpowder.

The Hornbergers had saluted the wrong person, a mere cowherd returning to the village. When the expected visiting dignitary arrived, the villagers were forced to greet him by shouting in unison "Bang! Bang!" (or, in another version, "Piff Puff! Piff Puff!").

Since that time, even though the misfiring incident is completely unverifiable, many Germans describe a planned event that goes wrong by commenting, "It went off like (or It fizzled out like) the Hornberger Schiessen" (like "the shooting at Hornberg").

Far from burying their silly legendary past, the people of Hornberg nowadays promote the cannon story and even stage an annual reenactment of it for tourists. (Maybe Burbank should bring in fun buses and put on food fairs.)

The other European dumbtown legend I recently learned concerns the town of Hartlepool on the northeast coast of England. As the local newspaper, *The Mail*, summed it up, "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."

The Napoleonic era townsfolk presumably could not tell a monkey dressed in a military-style uniform from a French soldier.

This peculiar story — which turns out to have less-famous counterparts in at least three other British towns — is the subject of a recent booklet called "Who Hung the Monkey?" written by the Hartlepoolian journalist and folklorist Paul Screeeton.

Hartlepool, like Hornberg, celebrates its local legend, despite the negative image in projects of the town's early inhabitants.

The story, although very doubtful as actual history, has been told and re-told in popular songs and poems, on postcards and in numerous articles. The best-known composition on the theme is a comic song composed in the 1860s that began: "In former times 'mid war and strife when French Invasion threatened life, an' all was ready to the knife, the fisherman hung the monkey O!"

More recently, residents of Hartlepool have depicted the legend in brick, wood and even in a glazed sugar tableau made by local members of the British Sugarcraft Guild. In 1989 a local pub sponsored a Monkey Beer Festival and introduced "Monkey Hangar Ale."

Hartlepoolians may as well accept their image, since, as The Mail once remarked, "Like it or loathe it, Hartlepool is stuck with its monkey-hanging legend."

But can anyone explain to me why Brooklyn used to be thought of as funny?

E.T. questioned at Sheffield?

By Nigel Watson

A look at the Independent U.F.O. Network (I.U.N.) conference at Sheffield Library Theatre, 15 and 16 August 1992, titled 'E.T. or not E.T. - is that the question?'

Every year the I.U.N. UFO conference gets better. The last conference featured Budd Hopkins and his scary stories of alien abductions, implants, physical scaring and other odd inflictions of the night. He, alone was worth the admission price even if some of us are doubtful that such events are instances of alien visitation.

This time at Sheffield there were two ufological "stars" from America; John Keel and William Moore. Keel is best known for his book 'Operation Trojan Horse' and his consistent attack on the extraterrestrial origins of UFOs in favour of more Fortean and psychic "explanations". In complete contrast, William Moore has made the Roswell flying saucer crash case, and the MJ12 documents, world famous and revitalised speculation that UFOs do come from outer space.

Attending the conference is like descending into a hell-

like netherworld. The stairway leading to the subterranean lecture hall takes you to a maelstrom of capitalist activity. On three-sides there are new and second-hand bookstalls, on the fourth side is a coffee bar. What do you feed, the mind or body first? There is no hesitation for the dedicated ufologist who often suffers from a starved mind! After the crush of the reception it is a relief to get into the lecture hall even if, at times, the temperature was appropriate for Venusians rather than Earthlings.

This years' theme was 'E.T. or not E.T. - is that the question?' Anyone looking for answers, or even a simple overview of the subject matter would be disappointed. Like most areas of Fortean interest there are no clear-cut solutions, if there were there wouldn't be any need for conferences like this, or for this magazine.

So what do you get for your ticket money? The first day provided a good selection of UFO cases investigated in Britain. Norman Oliver, who has been involved in research for several decades, was first on the stage. He presented very much a selection of his best cases and did not come to any hard and fast solutions. One of his most weird investigations involved a female market researcher, who on visiting a home overheard a morse code message. This said something about "Blue John at 4 p.m." By chance the next day she was passing the Blue John mine, on the outskirts of Sheffield, when she saw a landed UFO. Why she didn't go back to the house to discover the link between the message and the UFO was not explained.

Instead of staying to listen to Graham Allen's stories of his own experiences with UFOs, I went on a less psychic quest for food and sunshine in the heart of Sheffield. This I now regret, because I gather that Allen's initial experiences led to a multitude of weird and wonderful events far beyond anything Sheffield could offer.

After my escape into reality I submerged once more into the bowels of the library theatre, where two 'classic' British cases were detailed. Albert Budden gave us the story of the Mince-Pie Martians of Rowley Regis. This consisted of the observation of an orange light followed by a visitation of three winged fairy-like creatures who were entertained by Jean Higley (see FT 50).

Then Jenny Randles championed the Rendlesham Forest case, once more. A flying saucer was supposed to have landed at a USAF base, and the base commander might even have communicated with the aliens onboard. All this is detailed in her recent book 'From Out of the Blue' (reviewed in FT 62). Here the issue of 'E.T. or not E.T.' was actually tackled, Jenny boldly stated at the beginning of her lecture that after years of avoiding the obvious answer she now thought that there was an alien element to the subject. This declaration, however, was eroded and forgotten by the end of the lecture when she didn't positively say whether the Rendlesham Forest case involved a space ship or not.

What I want to know is, if Britain's premier investigator/writer/researcher spends ten years on one of the better cases, and can't find much proof of its physical reality what makes her think there is a physical reality to the subject in general? Has she been looking in the wrong place, or just taking a leap of faith, or playing to the book-buying believers?

The U.S. equivalent of Jenny's case is the Roswell crash retrieval incident which William Moore presented after the tea break. Most of the details of this can be found in his book, co-authored with Charles Berlitz, 'The Roswell Incident' (Granada, 1985). Unlike many similar cases here tangible evidence was found scattered over a large area of land on 02 July 1947. Unfortunately, the remains look most unexceptional and consists of strong aluminium foil and lightweight strips of 'metal'. William Moore hotly contested John Keel's explanation that this was really a crashed Japanese Fugo balloon (see Fate Jan. 1991).

At last someone had stuck their neck out and proposed that E.T. is the answer, and he had this evidence to prove it! Indeed, he even found a piece of this mysterious aluminium foil at the crash site - though it got lost when sent for analysis!

Moore's ideas were shattered by John Keel's alternative view of UFO history given in his evening lecture. Briefly, he noted that Raymond Palmer, in his tacky sf pulp magazine 'Amazing Stories' had promoted the paranoid fantasies of Richard Shaver long before the term 'flying saucer' had been coined. (See FT 41) When Kenneth Arnold's sighting on 24 June

1947 did bring 'flying saucers' to life Palmer was already prepared to exploit them to the full.

Keel went for the jugular by outlining the top secret Japanese Fugo project, that involved sending balloons armed with bombs towards the U.S.A. during WWII. Understandably, the U.S. didn't want the public to get into a panic about this means of delivering death and destruction from the skies, so FBI officers were despatched to keep any of these attacks quiet. This might well have incubated the latter belief in mysterious Men In Black (MIB) who go round silencing UFO witnesses.

Keel proposed that the strong paper skin of the Fugo balloons was similar to the material found at Roswell. Even more interesting, he told us about project Moby Dick that involved the U.S. sending huge helium spy balloons to the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War. These would explain many of the sightings and crash rumours of that period in the New Mexico region. In addition, he believed that Strategic Air Command (SAC) accidents with hydrogen bombs were covered-up by spreading rumours of crashed saucers, so that any sensible people would ignore stories of the retrieval of things from the sky in the dead of night.

Rather than E.T., Keel gave more merit to spooklights that are playful lights which seem to be an integral part of our planet. To finish his lecture, Keel described many of his own sightings of these lights.

If you were confused by Saturday's proceedings you were ready to be confounded by Sunday's programme. It kicked off with Kevin McClure's sceptical appraisal of the UFO subject. I missed most of it, but when I entered the lecture hall the air was charged with angry indignation!

In contrast, Robert France gave believers a full menu of strange things to ponder. It's hard to know where to start because he began with an encounter with a reptile-like being, experienced by "Shelia", when walking her dog on Reading University campus. This was followed by a visit from a MIB at Shelia's home. He made exaggerated winking signals at her with his eyes, and tried to arrange a date with her. This led France

to discuss fairylore, hell, devilish beings, the unconscious, and race memories. This was a very heady mixture which owed much to the works of Jacques Vallee (e.g. 'Passport to Magonia' and 'Messengers of Deception'). Whether he believed in physical E.T.s or creatures from the unconscious it was certain that Robert France believed in it passionately.

Another curious talk was given by Dr John Shaw, who is a psychologist. Much of what he said made good sense. For example, he noted that there are four viewpoints of UFOs:

1. Literal. UFOs are true or false, real or subjective.
2. They are part of 'another reality' and our theoretical frameworks are wrong.
3. UFOs are part of a Transformation Experience. UFO cases often present images of transformation, eg. death and rebirth. Whitley Strieber's books 'Communion' and 'Transformation' are full of such imagery.
4. Altered States of Consciousness. UFO experiences are common hallucinations, misperceptions or shared memories of 'non-existing' things.

He became more controversial when he asserted that psychology must change its view of the person as merely body and brain. He believes that the UFO evidence must (and possibly will) change the theoretical foundations of psychology. It is my view that psychology must be used to find out more about UFO experiences, but it is premature to think that such study would revolutionise psychology. More likely UFO experiences would be interpreted in terms of existing models of behaviour.

Ralph Noyes gave an eloquent over-view of the crop circle phenomena. Though it was marred by his lack of success with the microphone. It's worth mentioning that Keel had problems with the slide projector's remote control unit the night before - all proof of attempts at cover-ups and the discrediting of ufologists!

The final talk was given by William Moore, and it was important for its implications rather than for its actual content. This time he spoke about how he came to possess the MJ12 documents and his efforts to authenticate them. Basically

they seem to show that there was a U.S. Government project to recover flying saucers and E.B.E.s (Extraterrestrial Biological Entities). Details of these documents are given in Timothy Good's book 'Above Top Secret'.

What undermined the reality of this data was Moore's involvement in the discrediting of a UFO researcher and 'contactee' Paul Bennewitz. This began when Moore agreed to supply the U.S. government with details of Paul's UFO research. The government was interested in Paul because he was unwittingly tuning into top secret radio experiments. They tried asking him to stop but he thought this was an attempt to cover-up what he thought were signals from outer space. Their only recourse was to totally discredit him through Moore's help, and with the aid of the likes of J.Allen Hynek. This resulted in Paul's total mental collapse. (The case is outlined in *Magonia* No. 34.)

This shows, just like the examples given by John Keel, how the U.S. Government has used flying saucer beliefs for its own nefarious purposes. So why should we suddenly believe in the MJ12 documents as being truthful?

The standard of presentation by most of the speakers was very good, and it was intriguing to see the shadows cast by the podium light play behind them. The shadows looked like huge versions of the E.T.s in the film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'. On a more negative note I think that some of the talks were too detailed for a public audience, and that more clarity about the issues involved would have been helpful. Also, it was a pity that we never had a head-to-head discussion between Moore and Keel, which might have created a few fireworks!

At the end of the day the question 'E.T. or not E.T.' was not very well addressed and it was certainly not answered.

Proceedings of the conference are available, price £2.00, from: Enigma Design & Publishing, 15 Rydall Street, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 1HS.

Oldies but goodies

From Clement Freud column featuring Lord Snowden (The Times Saturday Review, 5/12/92).

the attorney accepted... initialised it and put it into the wrong box... the one for KCs.

Father was something of an eccentric, moved from place to place, saying it was either "too small, too small" or "too big, much too big". At one stage, living near Lewes in a house with a park, he encountered a family picnicking in his grounds. He approached them and said: "You're very welcome to sit on the grass and eat and drink on my estate but I do request that when you leave you take your bags and boxes and wrappers and bottles with you."

The father of the visiting family was furious, told the lawyer what he could do with himself and his land, and on departure left a substantial mess.

Armstrong-Jones discovered the man's name and address by tracing the car registration number: some weeks later he was driven to Surbiton, took from his car a plaid blanket and a Fortnum & Mason's hamper and seated himself in the intruder's front garden. The man came out and shouted at him. "Actually", Snowden said, "they became tremendous friends."

We returned then to grandeur at Eton Terrace: them...



Alan Northern Wright Echo 13/11/93 on Wednesday

FUNNY political stories have been thin on the ground lately, but this latest one came from a very good source and is, I'm assured, true.

Let's just say it involves an MP of indeterminate party not a million miles from where we live.

Apparently, our hero was spending the afternoon answering mail in his constituency office and was so determined to clear the backlog that he stayed on into the evening, long after his secretary had gone home.

He was almost finished when he came across one letter which brought a particular smile to his face. It was a 'thank you' note from a local ward secretary giving grateful recognition to the MP for giving up an afternoon to attend a local function.

The lady concerned was, sadly, way at the back of the queue when good looks were given out and the MP was tickled that, after her signature, she had put in brackets 'Horse-face'.

He thought this was so self-demeaning and full of fun that, entering into the spirit, he began his reply 'Dear Horseface...' and proceeded to give thanks for her support and offered all good wishes for the future.

Delighted to have finished his work, our political marvel even franked his post and dropped it into the mail box on the way home.

The next morning, his secretary was delighted that the mountain of correspondence had been removed and expressed her wonder at her boss's industry.

"I see," she said, "that you even managed to reply to the letter from the ward secretary. I wasn't sure if you'd remember who she was, so I wrote 'Horseface' after her name."

The MP's reply is not recorded.

Lift-off for a tall story

THERE is a story sweeping America about an elderly British widow on holiday in New York.

As she stepped into the elevator of her Manhattan hotel, three large black men followed and stood behind her.

Terrified when she heard one of them say "Hit the floor", she threw herself flat and begged them not to take her money.

The men hurriedly helped her to her feet, and the one who had spoken apologised for frightening her and explained that he was merely telling his friend to press the lift button for their floor.

When she checked out of the hotel, the cashier told her that her account had been settled in full and handed

her an envelope. Inside was a letter from one of the men in the lift, again apologising for scaring her and hoping that she wouldn't mind him having settled her bill.

The letter said: "Though I know that you were scared, I haven't laughed as much for a long time. In fact, it was so funny, I hope you won't mind if I use the idea in my next movie."

Signed

The letter was signed Eddie Murphy.

Which is all very fine, except, depending on which American city you are in when you hear the story, it is attributed to half a dozen other black actors, because that is all it is. A story.

It is bound to arrive in Britain any day now, but don't forget you read it here first.

Sorry Mr Editor, we all read it elsewhere first. From Brian Hitchen's Daily Star, 10/10/92.

(#) A familiar favourite is told as true in the political memoirs of Lord David Sutch (*Sutch is Life* published by HarperCollins, 1991). An attractive political groupie asked Sutch to deliver some posters to her address togo with the car stickers she'd already been given. Having a steady partner, the Loony party supreme deputed former bass guitarist Tony Dangerfield, who was helping him canvas. The bassist duly arrived and was welcomed in - and eventually to the bedroom. After some time there was heavy banging on the front door. It was the woman's husband, who delivered concrete for paths. Nipping out the back, the lusty bassist saw a red-faced man sledgehammer a yellow Cortina. As he escaped in Sutch's Red Fiesta he was just in time to see the Official Monster Raving Loony Party sticker in the back window before the sledgehammer went through it. Sutch's car had no such sticker. What do you think he is - a Loony?

(#) It seems one newspaper fell for this familiar one.

It was the story about the fellow from Aycliffe who went with his mates for a night out in Newcastle, met a good-looking girl, missed the coach back and did not turn up until three days later, and then with a scar on his torso. He assumed he had been stabbed but on further inspection it transpired a kidney had been removed.

the penny dropped when a woman rang the Northern Echo to deliver what she claimed to be the official version. You see, the lad didn't come from Aycliffe, but Shildon... (*Northern Echo* (Darlington), 12/2/92).



American

THE story goes that a woman shopping at Neiman Marcus, the posh Dallas store, enjoyed coffee and a cookie in their cafe, then asked the waitress if they sold the cookie recipe. "Yes," smiled the girl, "for two- fifty." "Just put it on my Visa tab," said the shopper.



Three weeks later, she got a bill for her other purchases, plus a \$250 item for the cookie recipe.

Thirsting for revenge, the unnamed victim wrote to her local paper and offered to provide the recipe free to anyone who wanted it.

But the story is not true. The store, explained the weary PR woman, does not sell cookies. It does give away recipes of other things, free, and it does not take Visa.

But, the tale will not die and the store personnel are fed up denying it.

SUN Sun, 22/12/92

A MAN driving his mother home for Christmas in Australia went 30 miles before realising he had left her at a service station.

SPOT

Heavy boozier Armando Arena, 48, fell head first into a vat of wine while drinking in Florence, Italy - and drowned.



POLICE in the Portuguese territory Macau stopped a car and discovered 100 headless cats destined for the dinner table. The cats had been smuggled in from neighbouring China and would have been frozen before being eaten during the winter, a Macau newspaper said.

The Portuguese news agency Lusa quoted a vet as saying the cats had been beheaded because of the prevalence of ear infections. He declared most of them unfit to eat. One man, it was reported, was charged with illegal importation of meat. *Press & Journal (Aberdeen)* 25/9/92.

Old tale but new twist. Most will be quickly familiar with this one. Right, a chap buys a new BMW750c motorbike and invites his friends around to admire it, over drinks. Things get a trifle boisterous and he is challenged to ride it into the house. He does so; loses control on the hall carpet and crashes into the kitchen wall, breaking his leg. An ambulance is called. His wife mops up the petrol, which she swills down the toilet. The biker returns, limping in plaster. He goes to the loo, smoking, and blows himself up. The same ambulancemen arrive again and wondered what has happened now. When told they promptly drop the stretcher while laughing, breaking his other leg (*Guardian* diary, 4/9/91: cr P Christie).

(*) The same day as we learned of Tom Brown's absent-mindedness (see Newsline, **FF**) safety officers warned women to be extra careful when going to the loo after a woman burned her bottom when flames shot out of a toilet pan. A spark of static electricity caused by her nylon knickers ignited a bubble of methane gas which had built up in the lavatory. The Birmingham woman, supposedly actual misfortune was exposed by the Government's Health and Safety Executive (*Sun, D Star* 31/8/92).

(*) *The Guardian* followed up with a couple more old chestnuts, so for completeness here goes ...

1) This one concerns the gent who notices that the roof at the back of his house needs repairs. However, his ladder will only reach so far, leaving a perilous last few feet to negotiate. He decides a safety line is needed and chucks a rope over the rooftop, then pops around and for want of anything better attaches the end to his car towbar. He goes back to the far side of the house and shins up the ladder and knots the line around his waist. Meanwhile his wife emerges from the front door. She is off to Presto. In her hand the car keys. Yes, you know what happens next (*Guardian*, 5/9/91).

2) ... and a charabanc party, about to return to Birmingham from a day trip in Rhyl, finds a reveller, legless, in the deserted car park. Night is falling. Where is he from? "Handsworth," he slurringly responds. The kindly trippers decide to give him a lift home. The house in Handsworth is dark and empty. "Nobody there, love" says a neighbour. "They've just gone for a fortnight's holiday in Rhyl." (*Guardian*, 11/9/91).

(#) Most might believe all of the bizarre blunders on exam papers revealed in teacher Richard Lederer's book *Anguished English*. Maths master David Bowles remembered opening one exam paper and seeing this note: "Dear examiner, by this time you'll realise that I haven't done very well. This is because I've been in hospital recovering from a FATAL illness." (*Sunday Sport*, 9/8/92). It was an oldie for me as I heard it claimed as true in the Sixties when a pupil at West Hartlepool Grammar School and we had no master Bowles.

(#) Recent enough, but so ubiquitous that it qualifies as an oldie is what Healey & Glanville term A Shocking Blunder. Being spring, the foat is preparing the garden. Warily he went to the garage, lifted the up-and-down door, then switched on the light, leaning next to the switch while putting one foot on the heel of the other boot to remove it. Wobbling to remove the recalcitrant welly, a neighbour across the road noticed the gyrating gardener with his hand on the light switch. He hurtled across the road, picked up a handy basketball bat and wacked his neighbour so as to break the contact between man and electricity. In doing so he broke the gardener's arm in two places. Which leads us to this item in *The Journal* (Newcastle) for 4/2/93 in the Tony Jones column. (*GC, The Guardian Weekend*, 16/1/93)

He's still on the trail of the tall tale teller



The Journal (Newcastle), 4/2/93

REMEMBER the tale of the man with his arm in plaster? It was brilliantly told by Newcastle-based financial consultant Murray Baker when he phoned Danny Baker's *Morning Edition* on Radio 5.

To recap: *Man is standing on one leg in a Wallsend allotment and shaking the other leg vigorously to remove a pebble from his boot. He is leaning against the foot of an electricity pylon. The man's father — thinking his son is being electrocuted — smashes him across the shoulder with a spade.*

A true story? Or an urban legend? I tracked down Murray Baker

who said he didn't have any doubts about the story although — here's the rub — it originated with a friend of a friend.

So Murray took up my challenge to check it out with his pal.

Time's up, Murray. "The guy who told me the story is Billy Stewart from Alnwick who is a petty officer on an oil rig supply ship. The father with the spade is also on the ship. He is Bob Carter from Gateshead.

"I'm as keen as you to check this story out. Unfortunately, they are both at sea because they work two weeks on, and two weeks off, but I expect to hear from them soon!"

I had to tell Murray that I've since heard a similar story from John O'Malley from Newcastle. This one concerned a man who was ironing and mutely shaking his head in time to the music on his personal stereo.

The man's wife smashed him across the shoulders with a broom handle.

Murray Baker was shaken but not stirred by this news. He still thinks he will be able to validate his personal story and, if he ever does, I'll certainly let you know.

But his tall tale did at least merit a smart competition sweatshirt from Radio 5.

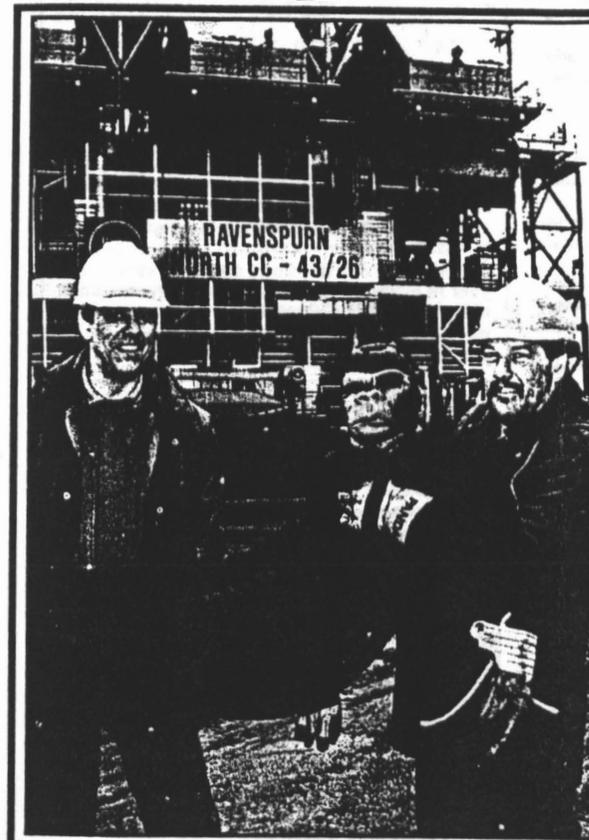
Beaten home

A Norwegian forgot his wife at a petrol station after he failed to see her getting out of the car to stretch her legs.

The 35-year-old man drove 30 miles before noticing her absence then doubled back but could not remember where the petrol station was. When he arrived home she was waiting for him having hitched a lift, Reuters reported.

Mail (Hartlepool), 1/1/93

(#) And a crumbly one to close. A man of 26 — sent out for bread 14 years ago — returned home to Turin with a loaf after travelling through Italy with a circus. (*Sun*, 26/8/92).



GOING APE ... Derek Smith (left) and Graham Bell, who got involved in a little monkey business down on the docks. M7584.

THE MAIL, Thursday, February 4/1993, p. 11

Docks monkey business alert

TWO CENTURIES after the hanging legend started, another suspended monkey has caused a stir in Hartlepool.

Ambulancemen rushed to the scene and three fire crews were on hand within minutes after a report of a body hanging from a crane in the town's docks.

But they all arrived to find the victim was a dummy in a spotless rigger's outfit and a monkey mask.

It is a tradition among the workers at THC to hang a monkey from the giant offshore structures they build at their site in Greenland Road.

However, on this particular occasion someone failed to spot the joke.

Workers Graham Bell and Derek Smith eventually removed the offending ape to prevent further emergency alerts.

"It's given us all a great laugh but we thought we'd better get rid of it now so that no one else makes the same mistake," said Graham.

STAR

HUNTER Mike Kelly made turkey-like noises to attract prey and was shot dead by a man in Florida who heard the sounds.

SPOT

3 STAR 27/1/93

Many more books next issue, including several on earth mysteries

Book reviews

THE STRANGEST PLANTS IN THE WORLD by Prof S Talala and D & J Talalaja (Robert Hale, £9.95).

Illustrated in colour throughout, this book describes the world's weirdest and most wonderful plants in the context of their relationship with man.

There are plants which kill; ones used in human sacrifice, black magic and visionary quest; the largest and the oldest; ones with incredible flowers, peculiar fruits and seeds. Plant behaviour and abilities are discussed along with historical anecdotes and folklore.

Yet truth is stranger than fiction and bee orchids have been called plant prostitutes. Frenchman M Puyanne, when he noted bees making vigorous movements because they were trying to copulate with the flower, was ridiculed by fellow botanists who described his explanation as a fantasy of a dirty old man obsessed with sex, before his ideas became accepted scientifically.

Then there's the venus fly trap which can only catch and digest three insects during its whole life. In trapping these insects it acts like a computer and according to some authors, this plant knows how to count.

"Kicking the habit" comes from the body shaken by involuntary twitching caused by smoking opium, and Russian Tsar Michael Romanov made smoking such a serious offence that those found using tobacco would have their noses cut off and men of the Kwarondo tribe in Africa would smoke cigarettes simultaneously up both nostrils and in each side of the mouth.

Experimenters are warned nutmeg gives a bad trip, asks if kava-kava is really a hallucinogen and records cannabis eaten with honey or jam.

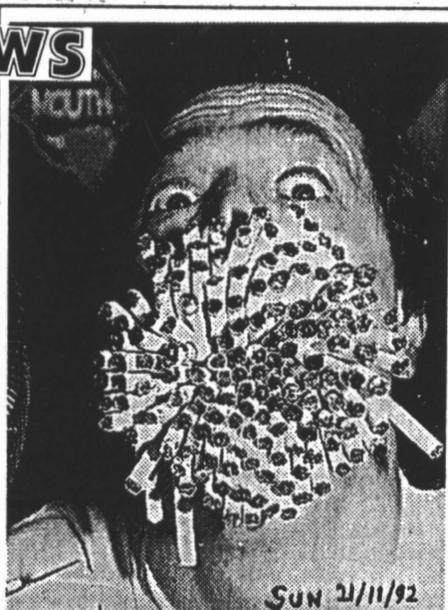
As for tall stories, it is false that birds flying over the upas tree drop dead, while in the 16th century truffles were still believed to be a product of deer semen. Snake gourd root is claimed to have the power to suppress the development of the Aids virus.

The plant with the largest seed resembles a woman's pelvis while its long catkins can be likened to male sexual organs. Several of the

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU, PROFESSOR? by William Hartson (Grafton, £5.99)

"AFTER ten principal components with equivalents greater than unity had been found, rotation of the matrix using the Oblimin procedure yielded an optimal solution of five factors, which collectively accounted for 64 per cent of variance." In other words, there are five main factors out of which all sexual fantasies are made.

This is the deadpan style characteristic of academic pornography as portrayed here, but this semi-serious survey of sexologists is leavened with plenty of humour. For instance, although the female orgasm was first discovered by science in 1953, the author suspects women had probably



Stoking up... Jim on his way to record

Big Jim's got a king-size Mouth

IT'S lighting up time as Jim Mouth goes for a world record — by smoking 154 cigarettes at the same time.

Supermouth Jim adds one cigarette each year to claim a new entry in the Guinness Book of Records in Hollywood.

But he's really a non-smoker and admits it's getting to be a bit of a drag.

strange plants here are claimed to have aphrodisiac properties.

This book is a true garden of delights.

been enjoying sex long before anyone thought to ask them about it.

There is homespun wisdom such as deviation is when you use a feather; perversion is when you use the whole chicken. As for perversion, there is a huge list of voluntarily self-inserted anal objects, but being a 1986 list, it fails to include gerbils (which are only ever there to relive haemorrhoids anyway).

Here is sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, top shelf and under the shelf, Onan the Barbarian (American humorist Dorothy Parker called her parrot Onan because it too spilt its seed on the ground), bearded women and much more.

BOOK OF TORMENTATIONS by Casper Dante (Chapman, £3.99)

EVER wondered where jokes come from, why beauty spots are so called, does thunder turn milk sour, or why men have nipples?

More than just general knowledge questions and answers, the readers of You magazine not only give several answers but sometimes make a witty joke to sum it all up in this compilation from the regular column. For instance, bags under the eyes are medically symptoms of weakened or even diseased kidneys, but to one reader are not bags but merely desks for tired pupils, and for another correspondent come under the security dictum that bags should not be left unattended, so keep your eyes on your bags!

Back to those male nipples, they could be there so women can tell which side of the man is the front or so men can do a convincing impersonation of Kylie Minogue.

Can lip readers detect regional accents and the blind dream? This fascinating book will inform, intrigue, and amuse.

THE SEEKER'S GUIDE edited by JOHN BUTTON and WILLIAM BLOOM (Aquarian, £12.99).

As the editors point out in the introduction, "personal change is not easy, especially when bad habits are as ingrained as they are". Probably only a small percentage of us even consider the possibility of fulfilment. Achieving psychological integration is not easy but for a healthy existence is worth the effort.

This New Age resource book has tried to include as much as what deserves consideration, attempting to tackle huge topics in a few pages without trivialising them. Despite all that's sinful in the world, the movement is basically optimistic; also holistic thinking, green awareness and fresh paradigms are coming to the top of the agenda of human priorities.

This collection brings together books, organisations and suppliers recommended by people in the know. Each section and contribution is designed to stand on its own as being informative, interesting and perhaps fun.

I looked carefully at two sections I feel I can judge with some degree of expertise. Sig Lonegren's earth mysteries contribution is far too dowsing oriented, and not to mention *The Ley Hunter* magazine is unforgivable. Leo Rutherford unbelievably recommends Carlos Castaneda (he spells his surname incorrectly and Eliade's Christian name wrongly) in his shamanism tutorial. Let's hope others are more balanced and accurate.

THE CIRCLE OF SACRED DANCE edited by DAVID LORIMER (Element, £8.99).

For those into the shape and trim vogue, it could be worthwhile to introduce a spiritual dimension to fighting the flab. Here Lorimer describes a modern form of ritual sacred dance devised by the spiritual teacher Peter Deunov. These sacred exercises were called panerhythmy, literally universal harmony of movement, for which he composed words, music and gestures. They are designed to create a conscious link between dancers, nature and the divine world.

DON JUAN, MECALITO AND MAGIC by NEVILL DRURY (Arkana, £5.99); THE TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN by Carlos Castaneda (Arkana, £5.99); A SEPARATE REALITY by Carlos Castaneda (Arkana, £5.99); THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN by Kay Cordell Whitaker (HarperCollins, £6.99).

Drury's 1978 turkey is back; fatally flawed because of its diabolically false reference point. Not only was he conned rotten by the Castaneda myths, but I understand his grasp of tarot and qabalah is simplistic and shallow, plus its attitude to drugs dubious.

As for Castaneda, I began *A Separate Reality* and quickly spotted a narrative time slip and gave up the anthropologist for good.

Similarly I suspect housewife Whitaker's account of her "reluctant" apprenticeship to two Amazonian shamans is a fabrication. The homespun mystical philosophies may enchant others, but I suggest this autobiography be taken with a huge pinch of salt.

THE CELTIC SHAMAN by John Matthews (Element, £8.99).

Matthews has a melodramatic "note to the reader", a disclaimer that "this book constitutes an explanation of ancient shamanic techniques normally undertaken with a qualified teacher. The reader is therefore solely responsible for his or her own action in undertaking the training offered herein." These methods, he adds ominously, are not a substitute for either psychological or medical treatment.

In the introduction, Matthews correctly states shamanism cannot be taught, especially through the written word. So why this book? Matthews regards it as a jumping-off point. He also warns that the book, its teachings and techniques do not guarantee a certificate in shamanism.

All this implies shamanism is a trade anyone can learn — which it is not. Those who make the grade are very much individuals set apart from their fellows: "wounded healers", victims of some psychological intervention. With a "but", "perhaps" and "in the long run" he also wrongly stresses shamanism is a way of working with the self. Not self, it's selfish. The shaman is not there primarily for personal self-aggrandisement, though without it he cannot perform his true destiny, that of informing his fellow tribespeople. Thus, Matthews fails to comprehend the twin pillars of shamanism.

Frankly little of this book is of value. It's just another load of New Age nonsense with Barbour-jacket bearded veggies jumping a gate replacing sheep in its numbing dream incubation yawn inducement.

LETTERS FROM A WILD STATE by James Cowan (Element, £6.99); THE CEREMONIAL CIRCLE by Sedonia Cahill and Joshua Halpern (Mandala, £7.99); BEAUTIFUL PAINTED ARROW by Joseph E Rael (Element, £6.99).

Cowan describes the Australian Aboriginal environment and viewpoint in a series of letters, mapping the sacred geography of the wild state,

which is in reality a condition of the heart. The Dreaming territory is described with true feeling and understanding and the reader in the city cannot help but be moved and question urban values.

Cahill and Halpern utilise Native American traditions to take seekers back to the sacred technologies. Shamanic practices are described and applied to create a ceremonial circle. Various rites of passage are opened up for the initiate to experience and revolutionise his or her life.

Rael's book, as is Cowan's, is from Element's Earth Quest series and has the hallmarks of truth. The essence of forgotten wisdom is transmitted through metaphor and teaching stories based on the author's own visionary experiences and traditional Native American children's stories. These, along with interpretations and practical exercises are aimed at releasing the individual's true potential.

THE FOUR WINDS by ALBERTO VILLOLDO & ERIK JENDRESEN (HarperCollins, £13.99; paperback £7.99); **THE EAGLE'S QUEST** by FRED ALAN WOLF (Mandala, £16.99).

The first is an American psychologist's shamanic apprenticeship in the Amazon jungle and amidst Inca ruins on the high Andean plain; the second is a physicist's search to understand shamanism through interacting with shamans worldwide and

THE COMMUTER'S TALE by Jonathan Margolis and Gabrielle Morris (Chapmans, £3.99)

COMMUTING is a strange and artificial activity which has created a tapestry of both life's very real happenings and a rich vein of apocrypha and urban mythology; full of preposterous stories of triumph and downfall in adversity, through deceit and one-upmanship to the downright ludicrous.

British Rail undertook a survey and claimed half its 300,000 customers left home too late even if its trains ran on time. Its Southern Region was also blamed by a sex therapist in Winchester for a nasty outbreak of impotency in the town, which was blamed upon BR and the strain of commuting.

Here is an old chestnut attributed to a real *barren*...
Conceivably the ultimate nightmare commuting

A FRIEND of a friend, a strait-laced office worker, attended his office's New Year party in London's West End, and rather overdid it on the drinks. He made a complete nonce of himself and ended up being violently sick over his pinstripes. Aware that his garb was ruined, but not wanting to miss his train to Brighton, he nipped down to Mr Byrite on Oxford Street for some new clobber. Apparently, he spent less than two minutes choosing the stuff, throwing it into a pile on the till, hur-

riedly paying for it. He managed to catch his train as it pulled away, and rushed straight for the toilet. Then he tore off his stinking damp trousers, shirt and jacket, and recklessly threw them out of the train window. But when he opened the bag to put on his new togs, he discovered, to his dismay, that all he had bought was some socks, a T-shirt and two cardigans.

The Guardian Weekend 2/1/93

A selection of Healey & Glanvill's Urban Myths is published by Virgin.

discussion with other shamanic researchers. Both lay emphasis upon taking the vine of death, ayahuasca, with a Peruvian shaman. Villoldo utilises a professional fiction specialist to "novelise" his Cast tuda-style experiences and the book is doubtless no worse for the treatment. Against my better judgement, I found myself carried along by the story. Historical facts and religious commentary appear introduced clumsily and there's quite a sexual dimension. There's a bizarre climax, whose nature I'll leave to the reader. Reviewers no doubt feel uncomfortable with such books after Casteneda's licence to print money, but even on the level of fiction this is riveting; if it's broadly true then that's a bonus.

Meanwhile Wolf includes fantasy episodes and dream material which the reader may not feel shares the importance placed upon it by the author. Again there's a sexual dimension with the 54-year-old making a pass at a 20-year-old Indian girl and admitting a wet dream. He also seems to accept Casteneda at face value and spins a good yarn himself, which again I read right through, finding constant his own back-tracking no problem.

As for misgivings, Wolf particularly gave me several. He accepts that the shaman is born, not made, in his final analysis. Yet he himself seems firstly a doubtful candidate, while secondly he can state patients are simply initiated into

experience tell to spike miigan > publisher, Jack Hobbs, when he suffered the embarrassing result of eating something which did not agree with him. Hobbs rushed squelching into an Oxford Street store and demanded a new pair of trousers, which to his impatience, the assistant spent ages parcelling up. Rushing lat, parcel under his arm, Hobbs raced to Waterloo just in time to catch his train. On e on board he headed straight for the lavatory where, removing his own trousers with relief, he joyously threw them out of the window. He then unwrapped the parcel to find in it the beautiful fluffy pink cardigan that the assistant had so lovingly wrapped for him.

(see below)

Here are dozens of stories of commuting cock-ups and travelling disasters. Each is succinct and makes for easy reading, though some tales leave you wondering "what happened afterwards?" or just what it actually had to do with commuting.

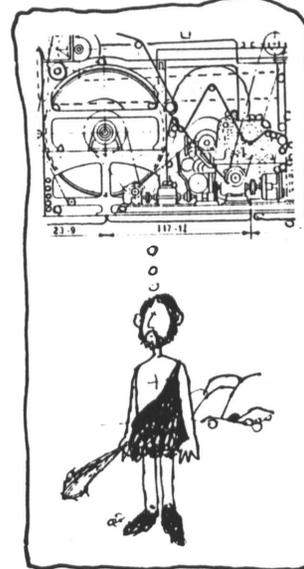
experience tell to spike miigan > publisher, Jack Hobbs, when he suffered the embarrassing result of eating something which did not agree with him. Hobbs rushed squelching into an Oxford Street store and demanded a new pair of trousers, which to his impatience, the assistant spent ages parcelling up. Rushing lat, parcel under his arm, Hobbs raced to Waterloo just in time to catch his train. On e on board he headed straight for the lavatory where, removing his own trousers with relief, he joyously threw them out of the window. He then unwrapped the parcel to find in it the beautiful fluffy pink cardigan that the assistant had so lovingly wrapped for him.

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shamanhood whether they wish it or not — about as convincing as vampirism. As for firewalking, I understood it worked because the surface area of foot to coals was minimal — a proposition not even considered by this physicist. Foreign words are used in odd ways, but isn't there a Spanish name for the middle type of medicine people: brujos, shamans and cuanderos?

Wolf's book is to my mind the better, though it poses more questions than it answers. The various people he talks to along the way offer information of a contradictory nature within the full framework. Dr Cabieses, for instance, claims that shamanism only evokes what is already within the individual, thus negating the collective unconscious, which surely is the link between shamans of different continents. British readers will find Paul Devereux informing Wolf that megalithic monuments are the remnants of the physics labs of the Old World shamanism and two Anglo-Saxon researchers explain the "web of wyrd".



I fear that the floodgates are about to open for the sorcerer's apprentice fiction genre.

IN BRIEF

In Britain, with doctors looking after their own budgets and hospitals opting out, this timely American book looks at doctors as pawns of a "medical arms race" where cash is foremost in treating patients. **The Way of the Physician** by Jacob Needleman (Arkana, £8.99) seeks to educate doctor and patient alike through

perceptive insights. Another analysis of the present and future of the world economy, changing social structures, democratic movement implications and relationship to the environment is presented in **Starseed, the Third Millennium** by Ken Carey (HarperCollins, £8.99). Contemporary concerns are also voiced in **Living Philosophy** by Henryk Skolimowski (Arkana, £8.99), an attack on modern analytical philosophy, politics, architecture, language and so on, calling for a recycling of our minds.

One for archaeoastronomers and Velikovskians is **The Death of Gods in Ancient Egypt** by Jane B Sellers (Penguin, £7.99), a reappraisal of Egyptian mythology and religion leading to a



theory linking precessional loss and total solar eclipses.

As someone whose daughter is treated by homeopathic medicine, I am sympathetic to **Flower Remedies** by Christine Wildwood with its extolling of Edward Bach's natural healing with flower essences and the "rescue remedy" we keep in the fridge. This comprehensive guide in the Health Essentials series has a companion volume in **Shiatsu** by Elaine Liechtl, outlining the Japanese massage for health and fitness (both Element, £4.99).

□ □ □ □

Reincarnation: Fact or Fable? (Arthur & Joyce Beyer; Aquarian, £8.99) deals impartially with this complex and controversial subject, with contributions from leading authorities in reincarnation research. **The Forces of Destiny** (Penny Thornton; Aquarian, £7.99) has an author who believes astrology is "spiritually arid" without a framework of reincarnation and karma, and seeks regeneration through the meeting of astrology and psychotherapy.

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Magazine reviews

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



Vol. XII/2. Chris Lovegrove humorously recalls digs in the late Sixties; plus seeking Arthur in Brittany; a return to basics on Arthur and his

DEAR MR THOMS. A non-profit making folklore miscellany, distributed to members of the British Folk Studies Forum and its friends. Sub is £5 for approximately six issues. From Gillian Bennett, 28 Brownsville Road, Stockport, SK4 4PF.

No. 28. Mark Moravec designs a folklore abstract; Chesterfield's crooked spire; Russian vampire fears; more photocopied homilies; updates on satanic abuse, crocodile in sewer and stolen kidneys.

THE WILD PLACES. The journal of strange and dangerous beliefs. Going bimonthly. Single issue £1.65; 4 for £6; US \$18 for 4. Payment to Kevin McClure, 42 Victoria Road, Mount Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4QD.

No. 4. Perceptive editorial on favourite topics and their cultural context; i.e. subjectivity. Jenny Randles rambles but finally tells us there's an alien contact — "the event comes FROM us, but speaks the words of others". Chris Harvey's argument for an afterlife spirit might equally be explained by a time and space travel experience before death as it is akin to *deja vu*. Leslie Price discusses the alleged religious significance of psi. Martin Kottmeyer reminds us of the old *ouf* theory that Earthlings form a sort of interplanetary Devil's Island penal colony. Phil Hine delineates the role of the occultist in postmodern culture. Peter Hough on alleged alien contact. Seven pages of magazine reviews and addresses

"designer" Celts; Arthur and the Welsh; with each issue book reviews; rather academic (to me) letters column; Talking Head miscellany.

Vol. XII/3. Arthur of Scotland and England.

Vol. XII/4. Soldier-saint Arthmael proposed as 6th century emigrant leader who inspired the legend of King Arthur.

No. 5. Articles cover near-death experiences from a paranormal removal viewpoint; censoring for various reasons; Proustian musings; Seventiesish round-up of Be Macdhui tales.

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. 10. Special humanoids series of articles: John A Keeel's piece actually dates back to 1975; Jerry Clark on early cases and how come the ubiquitous "grays" of today weren't around before 1959; Nigel Watson on weird UK cases; Ulrich Magin on sirens/mermen. Other reports on American canid-hominids; Nessie; Bigfoot; hooped mystery animals; Sable Island ghosts. Plus round-up of anomalies and book reviews.

WEARWOLF. £2 for 3. Leave "pay" line of cheque/PO blank. From Wolf's Head Press, P O Box 77, Sunderland SR1 1EB.

No. 5. Editor's pot-pourri of miscellaneous items. Basically Fortean/folkloric. Topics include Durham Puma, crop circles, occult shops hoax, modern Salem, Antichrist, reptiles round-up, number 42, and so on.

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.

No. 61. Major feature on Christopher Columbus and the flotillas of seeming claimants to have found the Americas before him. Of particular interest to FF readers will be the reports on a failed Satanic child abuse prosecution and social panics, including phantom social workers. Other subjects include homing moggies and mystery submarines. Columnists cover the topics physical psychic phenomena; American Fortean; and UFOs.

No. 62. Tony "Doc" Shiels — a FF contributor — interviewed sympathetically by editor Bob Rickard discusses the main themes and controversies in his family's extraordinary life. Piltown Man begins new "Hoax!" series. Columnists discuss near-death experience; corporate threats to research; dire deeds among jealous scientists; and retrocognitive dissonance. Usual round-up of odd events worldwide, including Oz feline marsupials claimed extinct. Letters.

No. 63. Colourful "Observer's Guide" to carn circles centre pull-out. Jenny Randles & Peter Hough on difficulties encountered in probing SHC cases. T Lobsang Rampa and "acid transfers" demystified. Lizard-like horror creatures on our planet. Columnists are Paul Screeton on Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend; Mick Goss on the endangered status of ghostly black dogs; Nigel Watson on ufology's inconclusive evidence; and Brian Inglis on clairvoyance and the Colossus of Rhodes. Peter Christie's Fortean extracts of old.

No. 64. Articles on Spielberg's Fortean themes and a survivor of a giant wave. Interview with Michael Bentine. Contributors discuss virtual reality, TV trivialising ufology, sceptics' stibbornness and astronomer's elf. Plus such subjects as Satanic video scare, *Alternative 3*, and alien big cats.

No. 65. Structures on Mars of alleged alien origin are featured strongly, along with their supposed relationship to significant earthly prehistoric earthworks. Jenny Randles invites a return to skywatching. UFO philosopher and investigator John Keel interviewed. Other articles on meteorological falls; blood miracles of St Januarius; Hampstead Heath seal hoax; Finnish lions; rooftop sleepwalking. Of the regular contributors, Mick Goss reviews the sensationalist tabloids and concludes they pose no real threat to the "purity" of oral folklore; Kevin McClure challenges us to assess not the message but messenger of anomalous information; Paul Devereux spreads his spirit lines doctrine; Brian Inglis sees new hope for psi research.

No. 66. Earth's age challenged; Ashmolean Museum origins in cabinet of curiosities; cities seen in Alaskan skies; rock star Julian Cope interviewed on his EM interests. Folklorists will savour updates on satanic child abuse; bogus social workers; electromagnetic fields and illness; spy planes and sonic booms. Columnists cover:

Paul Devereux on spirit lines; John Keel on June 24 ufological deaths; Bill Ellis on *Alternative 3*; Brian Inglis on mind/brain distinction.



"Dad, this man says he wants to see you about planning permission."

THE LEY HUNTER. Four issues £7; \$22 air, \$15 surface. Dollars must be notes or drawn on US bank account. Cheques to "Empress Ltd." From P O Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2XL.

No. 116. Landmark issue which could upset a great many people. Editor Paul Devereux previews two of his forthcoming books, which will cause problems for those who wish to retain a stable state ley hunting and also he dives ley dowsing short shrift. Readers are urged to consider alignments in a spirit path context, be it out of the body experiences, shamanic trance or corpse-carrying traditions. Ley hunters live in interesting if not dangerous times. Paul also assesses state of play in the Dragon Project Trust's dreamwork programme at sacred sites. Ulrich Magin discusses meieval Christianisations of pagan stones in Germany and the role of dead straight spirit paths. As for columnists, Paul Screeton bashes men's groups nonsense movement; Nigel Pennick reviews colonists' name domination; Chris Ashton frightens on Aids. Ted Armstrong takes a critical look at John Michell and Christine Rhone's "Twelve-Tribe Nations" and sees it as "an altar of fundamentalism" which it is, for as I argued in my review in FF 15, Michell is an unashamed hierarchy supporter of social engineering. Readers' letters and book reviews.

No. 117. Large special section on spirit lines. Prehistoric steam bath speculation. Bizarre main article proposes the Aids virus is a by-product of Haitian zombieism and its ramifications — not to be missed by Aids-lore collectors. Columnists Paul Screeton on personal rites of passage and Nigel Pennick on eco evils. R D Y Perrett obituary.

NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES. Q. £3.95 for 4. New address: 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks, HX7 5NP. Cheques/PO payable to Northern Earth Mysteries Group.

No. 50. A new editor takes over, John Billingsley, who has been on the EM scene for many

years. Articles include Paul Screeton on strange aspects of Seaton Carew; posited Ryedale terrestrial zodiac by Ion Taylor; overview of archaeoastronomy by Bob Trubshaw; letters and meeting report.

No. 51. Title change to **NORTHERN EARTH** and planned wider implications coverage in mag. Articles cover enigmatic remains in a West Yorkshire wood; a Whity stone triangle by R D Y Perrett; interview with artist David Hyatt.

No. 52. Billingsley on the division over leys in EM itself; Peak District severed heads; East Yorkshire alignment.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE EARTH MYSTERIES. £5.75 for 3 inc p&p. From P O Box 258, Cheltenham, Glos., GL53 0HR.

No. 14. Gloucestershire chauvinism over Arthurian connections. Interesting Sussex sacred landscape geometry. Oxfordshire stones and Glos ley. Psychic perspective on a conical hill. Review of Busty Taylor talk. Glos 1992 corn circle season and interview with a Wessex Skeptic. Book reviews.

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

No. 32. Excellent reports as always from Jimmy on The Ley Hunter Moot 1991 and Northern Moot 1991. Fundamentalists pagans condemned.

No. 33. Resume of talk by Philip Heselton giving a personal view of EM. Jimmy on trips to Kentsites and Bath University. Notes and news.

No. 34. Jimmy on trips to Norwich University and Norfolk.

RUNESTAFF. Published sporadically with no subscription in advance. Readers wishing to receive issue No. 2 should send an SAE to Nigel Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD. They will then be notified when the next issue will be ready. Issue 1 is sold at 75p. Cheques/POs to Nigel.

No. 1. Begins with strident polemic forecasting breakdown of the present world order. Pennick continues with a persuasive essay on mankind's ecological rape. Prudence Jones on broomsticks.



"Case No 42—criminal damage to a cornfield."

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

No. 6. Editor John Michell amusingly sums up the theory contenders wittily and bows to popular support to revert to the original mag title. Provocative argument from Ken Brown to suggest some "trill" sounds at circles were actually the furtive grasshopper warbler. Merrily Harpur sees certain corn designs as the work not of hoaxers but tricksters. Michael Chorost finds pro-hoax arguments inadequate. Colin Andrews predicts a major breakthrough in the near future. Gerald Hawkins points out that circle formations have an internal geometry with ratios which parallel those of the diatonic musical scale. There's paranoia at the Waggon & Horses; soil samples reanalysis; dodmanograms; previous psychic flurries; Bermuda and Dragon's triangles invoked in a physicist's scenario; diary column by Michael Glickman, including humour scalpoglyphs; editorial notes; letters.

No. 7. Ernest Moyer provides a lucid and attractive argument for non-human intelligence at work, while Ken Brown asserts hoaxers have been playing a major role for years. Otherwise the general tone is one of disappointment, doubt and frank paranoia. Tormented crop watchers review hoaxes and trickery with the crop circle contest well documented. Exquisitely-written Merrily Harpur interview/profile of George Wingfield. Doug 'n' Dove concluded to be hoax hoaxers.

THE CROP WATCHER. Single issue £1.75; £6.30 for four. Cheques to The Crop Watcher, 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hants, SO51 7TY.

No. 10. Invaluable, in-depth computer-generated survey of 1990 UK crop circles by student Andrew Hewitt (though many aspects are open to accusations of biased sampling from all shades of opinion). Tully, Australia, flying saucer "nests" revised. Continued pasting of Wessex Skeptics' letter in previous issue. Circlevision video reviewed fairly. Jenny Randles on her Preston Brook, Cheshire, investigation where her parents were injured in a stationary car by an out-of-control motorist (coincidence?) (concluded No. 11). Various seeming hoaxes; comprehensive mags reviews; letters.

No. 11. Wittily calling itself "The Private Rye of Circles Research" (foreign readers note the UK's satirical fortnightly is called *Private Eye*), the editorial deplors the motives and possible menace of a major hoaxing cash contest. Fuller also contests Chorost's latest response (this will run and run). Noyes also gets a rough ride, predictably from this corn organ, though as always there are rights of reply; as does Montague Keen's 48-page A5 scientific evidence booklet. Plus other reviews; 1990 Gloucs hoaxes; Croydon garden crop circle mystery.

No. 12. Australian historical cases analysis; Meaden annoyed by review of one of his books by David Clarke; explanation found to traces found on media personality's lawn; strange information heard by Jenny Randles in US.

No. 13. Entertaining confrontation of crop luminaries in inn "shoot out"; major editorial on Doug 'n' Dove; David Icke in custody of the woodwork incarnation recalled; various hoaxes;

Conference report, ufology and litigation (also 14); Clive Potter's over the top review of *The Circlemakers* and Andy Collins' response.

No. 14. Basic reference list of pre-1975 crop circle events. Jenny Randles on her promotional trip to Hungary; Busty Taylor strutting his stuff in Stroud and Henry Azadedel disinformationing. Andy Collins on Tully. Magazine reviews.



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

No. 153. Jenny Randles' editorial attempts to clarify her ufo "abduction". Livingston Development Corporation's deplorable behaviour towards ufology over a plaque. Warminster warning. Usual features include news round-up; major articles elsewhere; ufos in the media; current investigations; case histories; corn circles; book reviews.

No. 154. Editorial responds to hostile review of Randles' latest Rendlesham revelations.

No. 155. Radio 4 programme on ufologists discussed. UK mid-air encounters.

No. 156. Private ufologists' seminar. Likely F-111 explanation of Peter Day film. Rochdale's ufo cowboys.

No. 157. Editorial on "missing baby" abduction tales.

No. 158. Editorial on televised ufology.

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

No. 51. Articles look at the abduction experience as basically a standard scenario and unlikely to be anything but humanly induced (Hilary Evans); alleged Roswell retrieval (Terry Jones); introduction to historical psychic questing, part one (Clive Potter & David Taylor); 1952 Spitsbergen ufo crash/retrieval probe, part one (Ole J Braenne). Book and video reviews. Letters from Ralph Noyes and Peter Wilcock (the latter lampooning the strategic steam reserve myth, whereas my serious one isn't printed).

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. 42. Hilary Evans challenges folklorist Eddie Bullard's contention that abduction claims

are not folklore but real events; seeing the abduction experience as never *simply* folklore, but always folklore with admixture. Patrick Harper casts a sympathetic eye upon imaginative reality; the projection and reflection of the marvellous from the mundane. Roger Sandell updates the disturbing influence of the Satanic child abuse panic. Plus book reviews and letters.

No. 43. Nigel Watson puts into perspective 1897 airship scare as newspapers saw it. Cat abduction panic stories round-up.

No. 44. Folklorist Eddie Bullard reiterates his argument that ufo abductions are stable narratives and this suggests they are events different from classic folk accounts. Dennis Stacy draws a parallel between the New Revised Abduction Scenario and abortions; the hybrid babies being the "avenging angels" of rage and suppressed guilt. Martin Koitmeyer examines those early ufologists who propounded a flying saucers are hostile stance.



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

No. 25. Reprint begins of talk given by the late Tony Wedd on leys and othoteny. Gordon Millington assesses 1991 crop circles. Anomalous aerial white lights scrutiny and speculation.

No. 26. Bizarre tale of ancient astronauts, some of whom did manual labour for 100,000 years each in African gold mines before complaining.

Stop Press

DUBIOUS TRANSMISSIONS -- CODA. To the list in the article earlier we can add six "core" cases with the receptor being: radio, from cordless phone; hearing aid, from police; police radios, from musical Christmas decoration; public house PA system, from dialling 999; shop intercom, from backstage pantomime commands; and a faulty cable allowing people in Regensburg, Germany, to listen to calls between a 36-year-old tennis instructor and his 18-year-old pupil, which led to his wife seeking a divorce (News of the World, 10/1/93). There was also a disc-jockey who allegedly broadcast live a call to a woman with a man who was not her husband in bed with her (Sun, 12/2/93) and radio DJ who rang a sex line after his show and accidentally transmitted it to 20,000 listeners in Norway (Sun, 30/1/93). Also a steamy tale on a ship-to-shore link was related by a retiring coastguard, the woman not realising she was on a VHF emergency channel (Sun, D Star, D Sport, 3/12/92). And as for unexpected porn, Julian Fiddler's pals bought him the Manchester United Hall of Fame tape but he saw naked lesbians in Satin Angels instead (Sun, D Sport, 7/12/92); an Italian language course was not properly covering top porn star Moana Pozzi (D Star, 12/11/92); and hackers from as far away as America sent obscene material to girl students at the University of Central Lancashire (News of the World, 27/12/92).

Small star war over space messages that wrecked The Bill

Martin Wabwright Guardian
4/1/93

ADDICTS of the television series The Bill in the Penine market town of Sedbergh will settle down tonight to a programme safe from bursts of messages to the planet Venus.

Households in the town have been startled by sudden, unscripted exchanges between ITV's tough detectives on the lines of: "Hello, Venus. Earth calling. Is there anyone there?"

Sedbergh is known for rocky television reception in bad weather and families called in TV engineers. But after assurances that their sets were in working order, suspicion spread that an amateur interplanetary scientist was somewhere on the loose in the Howgill Fells.

"We were given this peculiar card to put up on our notice board," said a man at Sedbergh post office, who initially thought the affair was a prank. Instead of the usual "Rabbit hutch for sale" or "Gardening service - £5 an hour", the notice, placed by a group of families, read: "Will the person who is transmitting messages to Venus on Thursday nights please pack it in, because we can't watch The Bill."

The messages have stopped since the departure of a well-known Sedbergh character, Hilary Bullock, an inventor lo-

cally nicknamed Catweazle because of his white beard.

"He told us he had a powerful transmitter and that Thursday

evenings were the best time to get through to Venus," said one neighbour. "But then, he used to say a lot of things."

Contributors

JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND. High-profile American folklorist Jan teaches at the University of Utah and is author of four seminal commentaries and collections of modern legends. Another book, The Baby Train, is due March, 1993, in the USA. His syndicated column was discontinued midway last year but not before he utilised my monkey-hanging book. He wrote to me: "I was trying to figure out how to get a whole column out of the monkey-hanging -- one that Americans would understand, anyway -- when I heard the paper on the Hornberger Schiessen at the California Folklore Society annual meeting ... So here it is, a new folk term 'dumbtown legends'."

NIGEL WATSON. Long-time figure on the UFO scene, he now lives in London and works as a copywriter. Author of Portraits of Alien Encounters, he began interviewing UFO witnesses in the 1970s. His continuing interest is seen in his conference report (no harm in letting you know EE publishes it where others dared not).

PAUL SCREEFON. Now into his 25th year of unbroken publication of small magazines, he currently has a focus on folklore in its broadest sense, particularly modern legends. His local study Who Hung the Monkey? is his latest book. The main article here is one of a trilogy on aspects of "dubious transmissions" covered also in Fortean Times and Dear Mr Thoms. Looks to low profile for 1993/4 but has poor track record for prophecy.