

Folklore Frontiers

No. 19



Folklore Frontiers No. 19 June, 1993

THE DIARY

It may say June above but I'm putting this together in early July. We are introducing more sub-sections -- like a tongue-in-cheek It's Grim Up North and other one-offish bits. Keep the articles coming -- we've a few this issue -- also cuttings, letters and comments. Urban legends are our mainstay but anything vaguely folkloric will find a place. Nor do we attempt to categorise material -- your editor has been a Fortean for too long for his leopard spots to change.

The story on the right tickled your editor. From the diary in The Guardian, 11/6/93, it is about Jack Dormand, the former Labour MP for the colliery area of Easington, in South-East Durham. They weighed his ballot slips rather than count them.

STARTING WORK FOR THE FIRST TIME? 10 THINGS YOU MIGHT BE SENT TO FETCH

- 1 A tub of elbow grease
- 2 Some invisible nails
- 3 A pair of rubber scissors
- 4 Two dozen sky-hooks
- 5 A left-handed monkey-wrench
- 6 A glass hammer
- 7 A long weight
- 8 A horizontal ladder
- 9 A right-handed mug
- 10 A tin of striped paint

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TRUTH ABOUT THAT



THE legend of Marianne Faithfull -- and what she was supposed to have done with a Mars bar -- is firmly rooted in pop mythology. Now Tony reveals the truth for the first time.

"The police raided a house in which the Stones were thought to be taking drugs," he says. "Mick, Marianne and a Mars bar were allegedly all discov-

ered in a bizarre sexual threesome. "Marianne was wearing a shawl and nothing else."

She was immediately led upstairs to be searched by a policewoman.

"But, sorry folks," adds Tony. "There was never any Mars bar, nor any item of confectionery, anywhere near. I hate to ruin a good story, but the Mars bar was just the invention of a dirty-minded police officer."

News of the World, Sept 29, 1991, adaptation from Up and Down With The Rolling Stones by Tony Sanchez.



Marsbarianne Faithfull

By Paul Screeton

Years ago the editor of a prestigious poetry magazine thought my brief one-liner

MARSBARIANNE FAITHFULL

was brilliant. So did I at the time

As years go by, the reality I will relate -- or the myth -- remains as potent as ever. The claim is that when drugs squad officers raided the home of Rolling Stone Keith Richard/s, a girl was present, clad only in a fur rug. She was not named at the time, but a picture of Marianne Faithfull arriving to visit Mick Jagger in jail, juxtaposed with a headline referring to the basically naked girl, left the reader to draw the conclusion that Marianne had been the girl present. For those with poor memories, or too young to remember, in the mid-Sixties Richard was sentenced to one year's jail for permitting his house to be used for smoking cannabis (quashed on appeal) and fellow Stone Mick Jagger faced three months in prison for possessing pep pills (given a conditional discharge on appeal -- they were Marianne's anyway, honourable fellow). The sentences were unnecessarily savage and the issue was raised to national debate status by a lengthy and fair editorial in





Jagger enjoys a Mars bar - from The Uncyclopaedia of Rock by Angus Deayton, Jeremy Pascall and Geoffrey Perkins (Ebury Press, 1987).

bye-bye lifestyle more outrageously than The Stones.

But perhaps the most notorious incident occurred when Keith Richard's home was raided by the police and Mick Jagger was charged with being in possession of a Mars bar and eating it in a manner - and in a Marianne - liable to cause offence.

The Stones' raunchy reputation preceded them to The States and caused a

The Times, written apparently by the editor himself, William Rees-Mogg. (*) A full account published immediately after the appeal was a first-class record of the trials and furore which followed. (**)

The raid took place at the home of Richard, Redlands, in West Wittering, Sussex, on Sunday evening, February 12, 1967. Malcolm Morris, Q.C., prosecuting, described a young lady on a settee. "All she was wearing was a light-coloured fur skin rug, which from time to time she allowed to fall, disclosing her nude body. She was unperturbed and apparently enjoying the situation ... We are not in any way concerned with who that young lady was or may have been...."

It seems that though the judiciary guaranteed the anonymity of the female

ROBOT RON

SUNDAY (NotW) mag 13/12/92

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY AMBITION TO RETURN TO MY PLANET AND OPEN A LITTLE PUB!



OH, YOU MEAN A MARS BAR!



guest, a majority of the Press juxtaposed "nude girl" headlines with pictures of Marianne Faithfull bearing gifts for Jagger in jail. As Oz summed up the situation: "The cruel innuendo was basic Press strategy - too ungenerous to protect her completely, they were too gutless to name her outright. The Times, the so-called newspaper of record, was the worst offender, with a fuzzy headshot directly beneath 'Young Woman Wearing Only Fur Rug'." (x)

Since penning a rough draft in 1991 on the topic, I can now do no better than introduce at this point the most complete and fair commentary on the Mars bar rumour. To paraphrase would spoils its flow and thrust.



Within hours of the revelation about Marianne and the rug, a crazy story began to spread through the country. It was said that at the time police interrupted the house-party, Jagger was performing cunnilingus with Marianne who had a Mars bar inserted between the lips of her vagina. It is not known from where the falsehood originated but it is believed that it was either from one of the police officers involved in the raid or a fellow prisoner at Lewes with a need to embroider the tale of his meeting with Jagger. It caught many cynical imaginations, including the staff at the satirical magazine, Private Eye, and they dedicated their next cover to the theory, with the credulous heading of 'A Mars bar fills that gap'. Sniggering adolescents began asking shopkeepers for a 'Marianne Faithfull' instead of a Mars bar.

Like the foremost rumours, the Mars bar story took on a life of its own and grew increasingly fantastic. Some versions had all the members of The Rolling Stones nibbling away at it (even though three of them were patently not at



Redlands on the night) and in the United States, the very same incident was supposed to have taken place at Woodstock. Christopher Gibbs, after the trial, consented to several newspaper interviews in which he rebutted the smutty claims and his assertions were briefly accepted, because as an Old Etonian and nephew of the Governor of Rhodesia, he was eminently credible.

"I thought it was all a lot of nonsense, all the stupid Mars bar jokes. I thought it was rather childish and ungallant. It was all down to the glamour of the participants and the nature of vulgar journalists. The way everyone was painted by the press was ridiculous. I found it hard to understand at the time, but now, of course, I realise that people are always looking for victims to get their teeth into, and victims offer themselves up unknowingly all the time. I don't think Marianne and Mick were comprehending it all. I don't suppose you do until you've had the full glare of the searchlight on you. I did what I could to protect them. I protested, but one is made to feel useless. Their lives and destinies were being interfered with by forces outside anybody's control and there was nothing



anyone could do about it," says Gibbs.

Other guests who had been at Redlands stoutly defended Marianne but the myth stuck with tenacious might. There seemed to be a honed attempt to assassinate Marianne's character and the ridicule of the rug and the Mars bar was to repeat itself for many years. Clearly, there had been a concerted attempt to erode Jagger's reputation but the combined force of the police, press and judicial system subsequently failed and had to settle for the next best, his girlfriend, who was always by his side and obviously sanctioned his sneering defiance anyway.

Reporters were frustrated by the Mars bar story because to relate it properly they needed to use banned words like vagina, cunnilingus and oral sex. These days, they would refer to it as a 'perverted sex act with a chocolate bar' but in 1967 they had enormous trouble making themselves understood because of their own sanctimonious check-list of forbidden words. Gossip columnists made snide allusions to it for months and the fact that it remained partly clandestine



only added to its attraction. Unfortunately for Marianne, the joke became part of her biographical fabric and understandably wore paper thin. In an American magazine interview in 1987 the subject was broached again and the response was the same as it has always been. "I just sat there in my fur rug, with no Mars bar. It's a folk legend, and if people want to believe that when the cops walked in there was this incredible orgy going on, they will, but get it straight."

On the last day of Richard's trial, a final mention was made of Marianne's alleged immorality. Morris asked Richard whether he would expect a young girl to be embarrassed if she had nothing on but a fur rug in the presence of eight men. "We are not old men. We're not worried about petty morals," was Richard's famously indignant response.



Mars ARE MARVELLOUS

THIRD A MEAL IN A MARS



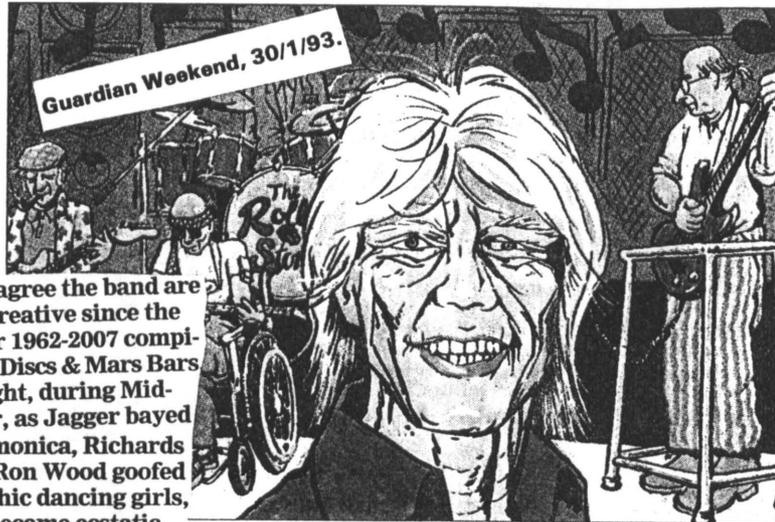
CHOC FULL OF CULTURE

★ SCULPTOR Sara Byres reckons she's got the art world licked with her latest work - a giant chocolate tongue made from 150 Mars Bars.

Yesterday, chocoholic Sara's exhibit was under close guard - to stop food fans getting a taste for art. The 8ft by 3ft tongue, called Comfort Eating, shows the temptation of turning to chocolate in a crisis.

As student Sara's work went on show at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, she said: "It was great - I could eat as I worked!"

News of the World 13/6/91



Critics now agree the band are at their most creative since the release of their 1962-2007 compilation, *Slipped Discs & Mars Bars*. Indeed last night, during *Midnight Rambler*, as Jagger bayed wildly on harmonica, Richards coughed, and Ron Wood goofed with holographic dancing girls, the audience became ecstatic.

Futures: The Rolling Stones, 2010

Biographer Mark Hodgkinson was too young for the Sixties, like Marianne's son, who also felt he had missed something. "It's hard to imagine Kyle Minogue doing something indecent," added an interviewer of Marianne, "let alone with a Mars bar, but Faithfull maintains there is nothing wrong with today's squeaky clean image of pop." (b)

I can't remember when I first heard the Mars bar story, but recall it metamorphosed to a banana. Also that when Ms Faithfull's film "Girl on a Motorcycle" was screened by Anglia TV, Rowntree allegedly advertised the popular product during one of the commercial breaks. It continues to crop up in the media — three in two months during 1987 even. Recalling the *Summer of Love*, one magazine editor recalled it as the time when the Rolling Stones were "forever getting busted and strange allusions to Marianne Faithfull and Mars bars." (x x) Nina Myskow, commenting on general election TV coverage, snidely noted: "We all know what kept David Dimbleby going: the most famous Mars Bar since the Sixties." (***)

And a sex fetish article referred to applying butter as in *Last Tango in Paris* and "if we wish, stick a Mars bar in a sexual orifice a la Marianne Faithfull and invite your lover to partake of it." (xxx)

I also mentioned the incident in an articles anthology I put together over a decade ago. (c)

Marianne Faithfull is still occasionally in the public eye, almost inevitably with the gratuitous confectionery reference. Such as: "Her name and a handful of things the name triggers -- As Tears Go By, fur rug, Mars bar, Mick Jagger -- are buried deep in the collective British memory. And they show no sign of decomposing." (d)

A younger colleague had heard the tale but had heard it attributed to a mutual snack involving Mick Jagger and his then wife Bianca.

As for Marianne, notoriety has followed her everywhere. Heroin addiction and booze; then there was an alleged suicide attempt in Australia — "I did not consciously try to kill myself. I just happened to swallow 150 pills." Interviewer Jean Carr noted Marianne believed she was influenced towards that near-fatal act having just completed the role of Hamlet's suicidal girlfriend, Ophelia, at the Roundhouse. The profile also mentioned her second marriage to punk musician Ben Brierley, who called himself Ben E. Ficial, a joke which had backfired when a gossip columnist wrongly reported Marianne was pregnant and mused whether the baby would be called Super Ficial. (+)

Then there was the 1979 "Broken English" album containing "Why D'Ya Do It?", sexually-explicit cunnilingus jealousy which was offensive to some and a

SADIE Frost has been signed up to star in the British answer to the hit movie *Thelma and Louise*.

She will play a psychotic young woman who goes on the rampage in her car in London's West End. Her partner in crime will be played by Jude Law.

The film, *Shopping*, also features 1960s singer Marianne Faithfull in her comeback role as a tough policewoman.

Shopping has been tipped as one of the biggest British films of the year and it is already gathering a lot of interest in America.

"Everyone is saying it's *Thelma and Louise* go ram-raiding," a movie insider said. "American audiences love movies like that."

"They're even talking about it being a possible Oscar-contender. In the light of *The Crying Game*'s success, British films can do well in America now."

Sadie and Jude play two streetwise women who are driven mad by the boredom of their lives. They steal a high-performance car and go wild across the capital, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.



SADIE FROST: Motoring mayhem

© Daily Sport 3/6/93

a wheel?, July 1, 1987.

(**) Hewart, Tim, Rolling Stones File, Panther, 1967.

(x) Oz, No. 4, 1967 (sheet insert).

(a) Hodgkinson, Mark, *As Tears Go By*, Omnibus, 1991.

(b) Rowe, Gillian, *The Guardian*, May 17, 1990.

(x x) *Midweek*, June 4, 1987.

(***) *News of the World*, June 14, 1987.

(xxx) Sterne, Belinda, "What's Your Fun?" *Fiesta*, May, 1987.

(c) Screenshot, Paul, *The Ballad of Marianne Faithfull & other Star Profiles*, Outlaw Press, 1982.

(d) Popham, Peter, "As Years Go By", *The Independent Magazine*, May 5, 1990.

(+) *Sunday Mirror*, November 18, 1979,

(j) *The Guardian*, August 8, 1987.

* Foot(fanny?)note: The first Mars bars were made by hand on Bank Holiday Monday, August 1, 1932, on a Slough trading estate. Forrest Mars, an elderly American living in the UK, made and sold them for two old pennies each.

Heathcote Williams' song with Faithfull additions.

I interviewed her a couple of times during the mid-Sixties. Slim and buxom, honey blonde with seductive smile. Approachable and candid. She's still all of those things, but the voice is husky, cheek scarred from being twice broken, a golden girl tarnished having foughtknocks.

As for the future, she was heard hoping to participate in record producer Hal Willner's project for an album of songs from Walt Disney, ironically having thankfully been spared from playing an inset scene as his mother with Sex Pistol Sid Vicious in "Who Killed Bambi?"

Prediction — I can't see her entertaining long-term planning, for as she said: "I project negativity into the future automatically. It's an alcoholic trait." (j)

References:

(*) *The Times*, "Who breaks a butterfly on

Jagger Unauthorised by Christopher Andersen (Simon & Schuster, £16.99)

JUMPIN' Jack Flesh would have been a better title as Andersen throws in every sexual scrap he can find, desperately trying to shock on page after page.

The author churns out the Mars Bar story, Marianne Faithfull, the drugs, the sex, the court cases, etc etc etc with boring repetitiveness — but barely touches on the music and Jagger's writing partnership © *Journal*, Newcastle

When old news travels fast

By Martyn Harris



A FEW weeks ago there was an interesting letter in this paper about New Age travellers from Mr Nicholas Peto of Oxfordshire.

"Last year the Home Office assured the rural community that it would not be subjected to the indignities of these people in 1993, but nothing has happened.

"Recently some of these travellers urinated in deep freezers in a Gloucestershire supermarket. When the food was thrown out as a result of their revolting behaviour, they stole it."

Mr Peto was out when I phoned, but I knew such a good story would have been covered by the local papers. A headline like "Hippies surprise pees" would be irresistible. Curiously, neither the *Gloucester Echo* or *Gloucester Chronicle* knew anything about it, so I tried the *Wiltshire Times*, which is an excellent paper at the heart of New Age traveller country. They said they loved my headline but had never heard the story. "In fact we don't get many horror stories about the travellers. The only problems seem to arise when the police move them off a site suddenly, and they have no time to clear up."

Eventually I got hold of Mr Peto on his car phone (he is an insurance broker who commutes to work in

London). Where did the hippies commit their foul deed? Mr Peto said readily that he hadn't actually seen the incident himself. "It was hearsay. Someone told me it had happened, two or three Sundays ago, at Moreton-in-Marsh."

To tell the truth, I wasn't surprised, for I had read the story ages before — in fact I fear I may have invented it. The year was 1986, and the travellers were a newish terror to the respectable citizens of the south-west.

A CYCLING tour had led me to the village of Liphook in Hampshire. The travellers were camped up the road at Stony Cross and were widely expected to march on Liphook at any moment.

The landlord of the pub I was staying at had barricaded the doors and windows, and terrible rumours were flying about. Hippies had made love in the launderette; they cooked rat soup; they practised Satanism; they had beaten up a farmer who had a bad heart, they fired shotguns from the windows of their trucks; they had even — yes — they had even urinated in a supermarket deep freezer.

Next day the Hampshire police broke up the travellers' camp — which was on a desolate common miles from anywhere. They con-

fiscated the vehicles, most of which were perfectly legal, and announced a startling haul of contraband: drugs, knives, occult apparatus and — most dramatic of all — "a high velocity rifle, equipped with sniper sight", which was of course prominently reported in the national media.

The rifle sounded so sensational that I spent several days trying to find it, but as I searched it grew ever more elusive. First the police said it was at one station, then another. Then they said it was not a high velocity rifle, but an ordinary one, and finally they said it had been returned to its owner. "So it was licensed?" I asked, and they said no, it didn't need a licence. It was an air gun.

I WROTE up a heavily ironic story for the *Observer*, repeating the stories of the rifle, the freezer, the rat soup and so forth, as examples of the ridiculous fantasies people were willing to believe about the travellers. Within a year I heard sensible people repeating the freezer story as true — "It was in the *Observer* I tell you" — and now here it is again, come back to haunt me.

This year the travellers are camped outside Bath, near the university, in a patch of common land called Rainbow Wood. As

always their vehicles are incredibly shabby, their clothes incredibly filthy, and their hairstyles incredibly hideous. As always they are gentle and hospitable, offering cups of tea and lentil slices to the visiting journalist, even though they know full well the press have done little but demonise them over the years.

I wouldn't like to have them at the bottom of my garden, but are they really any more of a threat to "the rural community" than, say, the City insurance broker spraying carbon monoxide on his daily commute to London, and inflating country property prices beyond the reach of real country people?

I told the travellers about the deep freeze story which made them laugh, and they told me a new one, about a village vet in Gloucestershire who had told the locals that the travellers were infected with a bug you could only get by sleeping with sheep. I shouldn't be repeating it, though, because you never know what kind of idiot will believe it.



MAGAZINES

DEAR MR THOMS. Non-profit making folklore miscellany, distributed to members of the British Folk Studies Forum and its friends. Sub is £7.50 for approximately six annual issues. From Gillian Bennett, 28 Brownsville Road, Stockport, SK4 4PF.

No. 29. Paul Screeeton on dubious transmissions. Article on green man depictions; psalm 23 parodies; photocopylore; homilies; cake update.

No. 30. Jan Harold Brunvand on cat rumours; with a spate of homilies, Brian McConnell muses that perhaps the recession brings out the moralists or is it the approach of the millenium?; single day school absenteeism lore; media response to horse rippers; Aussie's vanishing hich-hiker song.

WEARWOLF. Single copy 60p + stamp. Cheques etc payable to 'Wolf's Head Press. Address P O Box 77, Sunderland, SR1 1ESB.

No. 6. Mainly clusters of clippings — "continuing diary of a mad planet via filler items from the printed media" — under such categories as month by month short stories, urban folklore,

Xmas, ghostly happenings, crop circles, auction items, Cheshire cat, fishy tales and Matchbox monster toys. Also mummified cats and Hallowe'en warnings. Editor Kevin also casts doubts on archaeologists' methodology through his Enterprise Training conscript experiences in his part in orthodoxy's downfall. Nor did I know that composer John Cage was an expert mycologist until Wearwolf notes so in a potted guide. Hilarious but printed equivalent of staring at the sun/Sun.

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. 6. By coincidence editor Kevin McClure sat in the seat in front of me on a train in Cornwall. He tells of an even more enlightening happening in "The Endless Encounter" — his ferocious personal conversion experience. Articles on editing Biblical scholarship/opinion; worthwhile but unoriginal overview of fantasy proneness alleged in UFO witnesses. Large mags review section with personal commentaries and reservations/recommendations.

The Killing of Doc Shiels

By Tony Shiels

I am not allowed to smoke in Paul Dever's house. Certain people are not allowed to eat vegetables in mine. Such is the way of the world.

Should I regard Rockville, Maryland, as Dumbtown, USA? Not entirely, perhaps, but it has strange leanings. One of its eminent citizens - Mark Chorvinsky - has fallen for a few snippets of CSICOP-style gossip, concerning that unrepentant mountebank, Doc Shiels. Mark made the fateful mistake of maligning a wizard but, eventually, surely he will be forgiven.

In the role of 'Doc', I am used to being attacked - physically, intellectually, and spiritually - by all manner of upstart insects. It is a regular hazard of the thaumaturgic trade. On occasions, a repellent spell has to be employed. 'Mister Nice Guy' becomes faintly irritated and is forced to take appropriate measures. Michael McCormick will, in the fullness of time, be forgiven, too. It's too late for the too late Bishop of Truro.

Such nonsense!

Ten years ago, I photographed some aquatic Irish 'monsters'. At least one of the resulting photographs - when enlarged and analyzed - proved to have some very bizarre qualities. All a matter of subjective interpretation, one supposes. Then again, how can one be sure? Paul Screeton may disagree (I doubt it), but I often suspect that involvement with what I must call 'anomalous phenomena' sometimes leads to psychological problems. Our only defence, in such situations, is humour. Yes, I know I have said this many times before, but it bears repeating... like classic joke.

Did you hear the one about the guy from Rockville? Or was it Albuquerque? Or was it Ponsanooth?

'Doc Shiels' - whoever he, she, or it may be - deserves to be knocked down in a flurry of well-aimed thunderbolts. The character has been a problem to me for many years. I think 'Doc' should be harpooned, hanged, and harangued. I'm prejudiced, but let's give the beaver-hatted bastard a dose of pure hell! Meanwhile, let's be kind to me.

My name is Tony Shiels and I'm a painter. Painting is more important to me than monsters (mythic or otherwise). Most arguments concerning 'anomalous phenomena' are unspeakably dull and dim-witted. Include me out.

Surrealism is the only authentic saviour, but it abhors such concepts. I cannot blame it.

Nmidnid.

Hands off our Monkey!

CHEEKY Scots are trying to hijack the most famous legend in Hartlepool's colourful history.

Some now reckon they hanged a monkey years before people in Hartlepool even thought of the dirty deed.

But they are being warned to keep their hands off the monkey tale which has brought worldwide fame to Hartlepool.

News of the cross-border raid - to steal Hartlepool's claim to fame - comes in the June edition of a magazine

called Scottish Memories, published in Edinburgh.

It claims the people of Greenock, Ayrshire found a monkey, wearing a French sailor's uniform, wandering the hills and hanged it in 1760 - 30 years before the noose was fitted to the unsuspecting creature in Hartlepool.

Coun Brian Smith, the Mayor of Hartlepool, said today: "How can the Scots suddenly come up with this legend now? It must have been their best kept secret for the last 260 years."

"They need not think they can get in on the act now."

"Hartlepool and the monkey-hanging myth have been around for years. Wherever you go in the world, people know the story."

"I'm sure no-one has even heard of the Greenock story before."

He could be right. Even the promotions officer for Inverclyde District Council

- which covers Greenock - knows nothing about the story.

"This is news to me. If

By Phillip Hickey

we had a story like that we would have been boasting about it for years," Helen Drummond said.

News of the "other" monkey-hanging legend came from Mail reader Brian Carberry.

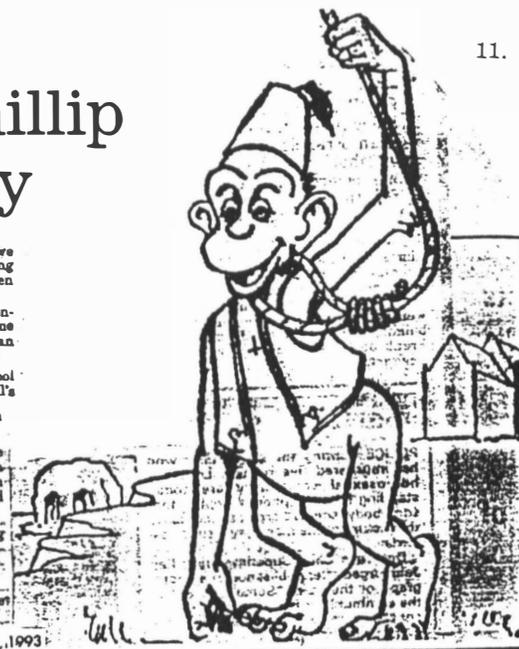
He lives in Hartlepool but is working on Shell's Brent Charlie North Sea oil platform.

A colleague spotted the report of the Scottish legend in the Scottish Memories magazine and showed it to him.

"We all know who hung the monkey," said a spokesman for Hartlepool Borough Council.

"And it wasn't the Scots"

THE MAIL, Friday, July 2, 1993



Bosom Serpent Thoughts

By Peter Christie

Almost by definition, the nativity of urban legends is untraceable. One of the "oldies but goodies" is where a person swallows an animal, usually a reptile, which continues to live inside them until vomited up or surgically removed. A recent example comes from Malaysia, where a man claimed a foot-long snake he had swallowed was still alive in his stomach. (Fortean Times, No. 66, p. 10).

Recently I located an interesting series of letters on this legend in the First Series of "Notes & Queries". In issue No. 149 (September 1852) "A Londoner" wrote in to inquire about a paragraph he had seen in the Doncaster Chronicle where an 11-year-old girl called Watson, living at Blaxton, was reported to have swallowed a reptile with some ditch water she had drunk. This reptile survived and grew inside her "just above the diaphragm" causing her "incredible pains" especially when it crawled up her throat "in quest of food." on these occasions friends poured "warm milk and water" down her throat to keep it quiet.

The correspondent asked some pertinent questions; had the editor seen the reptile?, how did the editor know it was a reptile? and had any genuine, as opposed to quack, doctors been called in to the case?

This query was followed up in issue No. 154 by a letter signed "KPDE" who confessed themselves "quite unable to give A Londoner an answer" but who could quote another example. This appeared in the Stockport Advertiser and concerned 16-year-old Joseph Bailey, of Shadow Moss in Northern Etchalls, who drank ditch water and swallowed a reptile some time in 1842. Over the next 18 months he became very ill and had to give up work. On taking some medicine he vomited up a seven-inch long reptile which "his sister so much crushed and mangled" that "further inspection was almost impossible."

A further letter on the subject appeared in issue No. 159 signed C. Mansfield Ingleby who reckoned the story originated from the medical treatment of hypochondriasis, that they have swallowed reptiles in drinking ditch or pond water." The only way doctors could persuade such people they were cured was to induce vomiting and, by sleight-of-hand, introduce a reptile into the vomit, thus convincing the patient of the cure. he added "A feigned accouchement is often the only method of dispelling one class of these extraordinary delusions" (i.e. phantom pregnancies) == presumably producing a living child from up their sleeves!

To my mind both the original story and the explanation qualify as urban legends. Has anyone come across an earlier mention of this story? Certainly "KPDE" suggests in his letter that similar stories were fairly common before the appearance of this particular one.

Spanish is the Loving Tongue (Liquorice in Pontefract) By Paul Screeton

When I was a child, I would claim to speak Spanish. "No you don't! Go on then, say something in Spanish." So I'd reply obliquely, "Liquorice."

As we all know, Pontefract, in West Yorkshire, is the liquorice capital of the universe. There they recently created for the local museum the largest Pontefract cake in the world, almost three feet across and weighing as much as a ten-year-old, the thick circle of Spanish baked, lacquered and put in a cabinet with ancient die-stamps moulding the traditional owl-and-gate symbol, engravings of 17th century liquorice fields and tins stamped with the slogan: "The sweet that's good for you."

Next to the giant cake is a sepia photograph of Emily Money. A writing course run by Yorkshire Arts Circus produced a book on the topic, "Talking Spanish." Ian Clayton, who led the course, was instrumental in the tracking down of Emily, who won a fancy dress competition at Pontefract town hall dressed entirely in liquorice.

She recalls in the book: "All the lads started grabbing the strands off my skirt and eating them. It was just as well I had black knickers on."

Sharron Cocker, a Castleford mother who edited the book, said: "It was always lads down the pit, lasses into the liquorice round here."

Another contributor, Audrey Haggerty, recalled: "I'll never forget seeing a finger, just one all on its own by the chopping machine used to cut the allsorts."

Workers recalled taking contraband liquorice laces out of the factories tied around their waists, and moulding liquorice phalluses on the production lines to initiate blushing newcomers (Pontefract cake offers a giant slice of the past, Martin Wainwright, Guardian, ?/?/?).

A native of the Mediterranean, the plant is the root of legend. The Spanish name is colourfully ascribed to a Yorkshire schoolmaster who in 1588 recovered a bundle of liquorice sticks from the wreck of an Armada galleon. It was alleged that he used the sticks for birching boys, who would bite on the plant to lessen the pain, so discovering its pleasant flavour.

Academics favour the theory that the root -- *Glycyrrhiza glabra* -- was first imported by monks in 1562, but evidence is far from conclusive.

Whatever its origin, the plant flourished in the laomy soils of the Friarwood Valley, being highly prized by medieval monks for its medicinal properties.

From as early as 1614 a precursor of what became the Pontefract or Pomfret cake was prescribed for stomach complaints. In 1760, local chemist George Dunhill added sugar to the recipe and created the world-famous cake or Yorkshire Penny.

Its popularity was unassailable until 1900 when a rival treat arrived by accident. An inebriated salesman from Sheffield hopelessly mixed up his samples but was sufficiently quick witted to pass them off as a new line. Thus supposedly Liquorice Allsorts have been firm favourites ever since (Prospect of Pontefract, The Dalesman, February, 1987).

However, medical experts in Finland claimed those eating liquorice daily would find themselves turning blue. Sufferers' skin and blood would change colour until they gave up eating it (Today?, D Star/, ?/?/?).

A spokesman for Trebor-Bassett -- which produces around 60 million Liquorice Allsorts a week -- pooh-poohed the dubious claim.

The feathery-leaved bushes, once everywhere in Pontefract, survive only in a commemorative hedge.

John Betjeman was inspired to create a simmering ode to a fictional liquorice worker lover:

"Red hair she had and golden skin,
Her sultry lips were shaped for sin.
Her sturdy legs were flannel slack'd,
The strongest legs in Pontefract."

To come up to date, history has repeated itself. "Tasty Amanda Rodgers, 18, has had a liquorice dress -- with Allsorts accessories -- run up for her at Pontefract, West Yorkshire (News of the World, 28/2/93).

Let's hope she wears black knickers!

Contributors

PAUL SCREETON. Needs no introduction. Marianne Faithfull fan since meeting her twice during the mid-Sixties. The Mars Bar article has been gestating for years, whereas the Pontefract piece was created on a whim (that's Emily Money on the cover in her liquorice dress).

PETER CHRISTIE, regular contributor of items from back copies of Gentleman's Magazine to Fortean Times, Peter is a teacher in North Devon.

MARTYN HARRIS. His "Odd man out" column piece here is from the Daily Telegraph of June 5, 1993, and sent to us by Chris Fletcher. Know nowt about the guy.

TONY SHIELS. Names are of great importance and Tony has chosen FF in which to renounce his "Doc" addition. Author of Monstrum, books on presdigation andhead of what the Sun called theweirdest family in the land, Tony is an occasional contributor to FF.

PHILLIP HICKEY. In journalism there are cases of "don't let the facts get in the way of a good story" -- Hickey's contribution was a case of "don't let the facts get in the way of a sod awful story." Desperate for a front page lead, a straightforward, low-key piece about the Greenock monkey legend (to which I contributed as resident monkey-hanging tale expert) was totally recast. See separate item. Hickey is the Mail's chief reporter.

Articles elsewhere

In "Frankenstein stalks the urban jungle," Alison Brooks went in search of modern legends for New Scientist (21/1/93). Despite public anxiety over science, she was hard pressed to find modern legends to reflect this particular area of society.

A perceptive piece developed from Desiree Ntolo and her mud hut saga, "No boudoir? try a mud hut on wheels" (D. Telegraph, 1/7/92), had Lesley Garner full of insights worth our consideration within a folkloric/sociological framework. Such as "thousands of women have discovered that the most private space is more easily available in the car."

An excellent survey -- D. Telegraph, 2/4/93 -- into disastrous sales promotions, "Now here's a good wheeze," kick-started by the Hoover debacle, had a cautionary -- and dubious -- concludory paragraph.

"There is a thin line between the arrival of lots of entries - success - and the arrival of lost and lots and lots of entries - disaster. Faith Lee recalls the lorry loads engendered by a spot-the-goal competition. The picture had been carefully selected, the art studio had effectively airbrushed the ball, and the players were effecting suitably misleading contortions. But when the sacks were opened, another executive went belly-up. The entries were all the same. Each had a cross marked in the background - right where the linesman was standing, holding another ball."

Cosmologist John Michell noted that people will project their private perceptions upon Stonehenge and see them reflected. In "Love him tender, love him true, take him to your art" (The Times Saturday Review, 5/12/92), Cynthia Rose writes about a travelling museum of Elvis Presley run by Joni Mabe. Mabe said: "... he spans all our perceptions about 'high' and 'low'. Also he is blank enough that people read into him what they need." She feels death made Elvis truly real and the Mabe travelling Panoramic Encyclopedia of Everything Elvis has such relics as Elvis sweat, Elvis hair, Elvis toenail and an Elvis wart from the King's right hand.

There's some interesting material from the Dean of Salisbury, Hugh Dickinson (Weekend Financial Times, 24/12/92) in "Preserving the sceptre in this isle."

"People dream about the Queen. Not just a few, but, if the polls are right, most people have significant encounters with their monarch. Jung or Freud will no doubt tell us who she is standing for in our unconscious world." and "The monarch is part of the sacral centre, that mysterious system of rites and ceremonies which invests a nation with continuity and without which chaos looms."

Funnily enough when he stayed with us, John Michell dreamt of Elizabeth II as a "young chick" who fancied him!

At the other end of the scale are 21-year-old twins Dave and Mike Clarke, who collect memorabilia about the Krays. "We're addicted to the Kray twins" (Sun, 22/12/92). Sarah Edwards makes sure Sun readers are aware that the Kray twins "are both 59."

For Austrians, however, their obsessions began 100 years ago when Mary Vester and her lover, Crown Prince Rudolf Habsburg of the Austro-Hungarian empire, were found dead in the royal country retreat of Mayerling. "Invasion of the body snatcher" (Guardian Weekend, 3/4/93) develops from Vester's body being dug up secretly. Rudolf, a Kennedy figure of his time and paralleling our Prince Charles ("It's difficult being a crown prince all your life"), is so at the centre that "every true Austrian has their own Mayerling theory." Was he killed by the Masons or bludgeoned to death with a champagne bottle during an orgy by one of Vester's jealous lovers. The 17-year-old girl had a colourful reputation and Rudolf, who contracted gonorrhoea when 17, afflicted scores of women with it, repeatedly reinfected himself and his wife, Princess Stephanie of Belgium, and in the 1880s also contracted the then incurable syphilis. The most outrageous account was penned by a young

Benito Mussolini who believed Rudolf had ired of Mary and that she, plotting revenge, had lured him into spending one last night with her. Exhausted, Rudolf finally fell asleep. Mary then swiftly cut off his penis with a razor. Walking in agony, Rudolf reached for his cavalry officer's pistol, shot Mary and then himself.

Demythologising articles of interest are:

No man's land soccer -- "A pitch too far", Guardian, 24/12/92.

S.H.C. -- "Human fireballs", Fiesta, Vol 26, No 7, 1992.

Stictles -- "The privates sector", New Woman, August, 1992.

Infibulation -- "Female circumcision", New Woman, August, 1992.

Playtime -- "Rude stories in the playground". The Independent, 11/3/93.

Conspiracy -- "The man who shot the man who may have shot JFK", Weekend Guardian, 9-10/5/92.

Letters

From Nigel Pennick, Cambridge, England.

Re: Dumbtown legends (FF 18), J H Brunvand touches upon a much larger phenomenon, which may have some bearing on the psychology of group identity and prejudice. In England, the "Wise Men of Gotham" tales come to mind (Gotham = Nottingham?), and in Denmark tales are told about the people of Aarhus, the second city of the nation, in similar vein. In Zurich, Switzerland, the jokes are about the dumb people of the city of Bern. In England, Soham, Cambridgeshire, seems to fit this category, being a place where a yokel put his pig on the churchyard wall so that it could watch the Salvation Army band parade.

On a wider level, a certain area of country, or another country, is often singled out. Irish jokes in England, Belgian jokes in Holland, etc. This sometimes leads to some interesting middle-stupidity jokes, such as those circulating in north Holland about Nord-Brabant. Nord-Brabant is the southern province of Holland, bordering on Zuid-Brabant, which is in Belgium. North Dutch jokesters tell tales of their Brabantese countrymen and women in the vein of Irish jokes in England. One Dutch joke concerning Nord-Brabant is "what happens to the average IQ of Holland if a Nord-Brabanter goes to live in Belgium?": answer "The average IQ of both countries increases."

Similarly, in Germany, the residents of Ost-Friesland, on the border of Germany and Holland, are the butt of such jokes. Like Brabant, divided between Holland and Belgium, Friesland (Frisia), divided between Germany and Holland, is a country in its own right. And of course in Ireland -- butt of jokers, people from the western county of Kerry are the dumbsters in the jokes.

I will keep my ears open for more "Dumbtowns."

(Editor writes: A great many tales are told against the Austwick Carles, carles being an old word for simpletons. See Folk Stories from the Yorkshire Dales, by Peter M Walker (Robert Hale, 1991). Regrettably I failed to clip the article recently from Daily Sport about a comedian in trouble from the burghers of Hull for taking the piss out of the residents of the notorious Bransholme estate (I lived just down from it in the late Sixties). An example was "How can you tell the bride at a Bransholme wedding?" Answer: "She's the one with the clean T-shirt.")

From Capt John F Peffley, SC, USN (ret), of Vienna, Virginia, USA.

Reading your article "Dubious Transmissions" in FORTEAN TIMES number 67, brought to mind a similar occurrence which I experienced in 1946. I thought you might like to add my experience to your collection.

In October 1945, I was appointed an Ensign in the Supply Corps of the United States Navy. Since this is a very technical specialty, the Navy had established a 16-week course to provide us with the necessary information to perform our assignments. The school was established in Cambridge, Massachusetts on the campus of Harvard University. The classrooms were in a converted gymnasium. I mention this because the hugeness of the classrooms made it essential that the instructors use a loudspeaker system in order to be heard. The amplifier and speakers were high on a wall near the center of the room and a co-axial cable connected them to a microphone on the instructor's desk.

Each class session lasted about an hour. Between sessions, the instructors gathered in a special lounge for coffee and a cigarette. They also exchanged jokes. When class reconvened, the instructor might pass along a joke to the students. Since it was an all-male group you can imagine that most of the stories were X-rated.

One morning our class had reassembled and the instructor proceeded to tell us the story he had just heard. Just as he finished the punch line, a strange voice came out of the loudspeaker saying, "Are you kidding?" To say it broke the class up is putting it mildly! Not only was the timing perfect, but the inflection couldn't have been better if it had been rehearsed.

There seems to be little doubt about the source of the voice, since the students discovered that by wiggling the co-axial cable they could pick up the broadcast of one of the local Boston stations during recess. By wiggling it again at the start of class the station could no longer be heard.

I guess we will never know why on that morning, when no one moved the cable, such an appropriate and well-timed message was received.

C7 Elizabeth Court
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27 April 1993

Dear Editor,

Baall was the last name of John Major's father; Ballardur is Prime Minister of France; Blythe was Bill Clinton's last name until he changed it in his teens. The fact that all three leaders have family names whose first two consonants are BL corresponding to the Canaanite BAAL, king of gods in the pagan pantheon, is not, by itself enough to prove that we are ruled by a BAALARCHY. But the convergence of Baal names - those family names whose first two consonants are BL, VL or WL - with positions of power, influence and control in numbers extraordinarily disproportionate to the frequency and consistency with which such names occur in the general population proves not only their presence here, but also that they govern our lives in ways most of us would never have guessed.

Names, whose first 2 consonants are BL, VL, WL, are not rare. In the Bournemouth phone book WALKER has 4 columns, WILSON 6 columns and WILLIAMS 11 columns. BLAKE has 2 and BALL 1½. These compare with SMITH 22 columns which

is not an occult significant name. Walker is the most occult significant Baal name with possibly as many as 20% plus of them vermin. Williams could be as low as 5%. There are of course many times more vermin with other occult significant names but specifically Baal names are the single most frequently used and if you focus on them you can prove the case without inviting too much ridicule. All you need is Whitaker's Almanack 1992, available in any library. Page 861, 5/50 United States governors - Wilson, Weld, Wilkinson, Walters, Wilder - have Baal names. P.833, 5/22 South African cabinet ministers - Viljoen, D.de Villiers, J.de Villiers, Vlok Welgemoed. P.241 only 27/650 members of the House of Commons have Baal names which is less than I expected. However 4 are named Walker and only 2 Williams. But as with the U.S. presidents many M.P.s have spouses with Baal names. There is naturally some variation in the concentration of such names but you don't have to be very selective to find them.

Page 391, 5/53 Chief Constables in the U.K.: Wilmot, Blakey, Williams, Wells, Wilson. P.381, Circuit Judges: Midland & Oxford 6/62; North-Eastern 3/45 including 2 Walkers. Wales & Chester 3/26. You can count the Recorder total from page 382 but 36 have Baal names. Of these 3 are named Walker and 3 Williams. Walker pops up everywhere much too frequently and it's useful to compare it with how often Smith crops up. You'd expect at least five times more Smiths but that's not the case. Of the 194 top army, navy, air force officers in the U.K. from page 396, 3 are named WALKER, one Williams and only two Smith. There are some vermin called Smith since though they are at least 50% endogamous they do marry often talented unwitting humans and have what become vermin children. But they do have a tendency to revert to occult names. One of the Recorders listed is a Walker-Smith. 17/194 military top brass have Baal names. You can work out the percentages and if you have a computer and a big city phone book you may be able to work out with what percentage of Baal names in the general population to compare them. My own estimate is near 4% of the population have names with the first two consonants BL, VL and WL. Partly I based this on the number of presumably just plain folks who respond to Notes & Queries in The Guardian. Volume 3 of these published by Fourth Estate in 1992 has 20/504 Baal names. During the month of April 1993 of 165 names monitored on the Channel 4 TV quiz programme Fifteen to One I counted a total of 6 Baal names in the 11 programmes I saw: 6/165. It's quite likely none of the 165 was a verm. The contestants on Magi Magnusson's Mastermind are also probably human but the production crew has 3/11 Baals: Dee Wallis, John Wilson and Jill Wells. BeLarius produces Quantum Leap shown on BBC2.

Whitaker's page 224, 8/73 surviving recipients of the George Cross have Baal names including 2 Walkers, no Williams, no Smith, no Jones. It's very easy to risk life and limb for demon operated puppet corpses that have no life to lose, feel no pain and whose limbs are often, too often, thrown away to express their contempt for the human body. If Martin Bell, the BBC TV reporter wounded during one of his very compassionate reports from Bosnia, is one of them, that would be typical. Six of the journalists in last Wednesday's Independent have Baal names: Larry Black, R. Block, Wilkie Williams, Wolmar, Blumler. The Guardian has at least seven leading names: Diplomatic Editor Ian Black, Foreign Affairs Editor Woollacott, Ed Vulliamy Sally Weale, Billington, Wolf and Washington correspondent Martin Walker. It's likely that most leading journals are top heavy with vermin though Baal names do not always feature but other occult significant names do.

Harriet Fanshawe was Mick Jagger's grandmother. In Hebrew Fanshawe means 'Pan who is in'. Bush means 'in man' of Admiral Bobby Ray Inman. Pan means face which reflects the vermin obsession with the body and its parts; defects, particularly peculiarities linked to walking cf Genesis 3:15, and the movements associated with the 'ecstasies' of pagan worship like frenzied dancing. One might think that Whole Lotta Shaking going On is sexually suggestive but actually the lyrics are all references to Canaanite bull worship. Written by Dave Williams it was featured in the film Great Balls of Fire, the song of that name written by Otis Blackwell. Performed first* by Valerie Wellington (the Duke of Wellington's middle name was Valerian)

18.

and then by Jerry Lee Lewis. He, Roy Orbison, Elvis (who married Priscilla Beaulieu) and Johnny Cash all began their careers with Sun records in Memphis whose owner Sam Phillips was played in the film by Trey Wilson. Alec Baldwin played Jerry's cousin, preacher Jimmy Swaggart. When Cash (means snare or trap) sings 'God gave me that girl to lean on/Then He put me on my own/Heaven help me be a man/And have the strength to stand alone/I don't like it but I guess things happen that way' - 'that girl' is Eve and 'lean on' is what the serpent did to her in the Garden of Eden. The name of Eve is often evoked; e.g. The Locomotion by Little Eva (cf I will follow him by Little Peggy March). You can work out the Baal ratios in the Church of England lists, pages 411-420. Just 4 column inches on page 415 has archdeacons Footitt and Handley, and Bishops Bone and WALKER. The Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey (means opposition) is married to Eileen Harmsworth Hood, cf Robin Hood, earl of Lockesley. Hood means majesty and Lck means WALK. This mixture of fact and fantasy is fully justified in this context since the pseudo-human vermin epics and tragedies always embroiling humans (without whom they wouldn't bother of course) in their scandals, conflicts and wars, are best compared to myth and fairy tale than to genuine human experience. Anne Boleyn's head meant as little to her as it did to Henry for whom Wolsey fixed things as Walsingham did for Elizabeth I. Theatre, film and TV, virtually a vermin monopoly are just more drama by other means. You'll find abnormal Baal ratios just as much among the dramatic personae as among the cast and production crews. Today there were WALKERS on the crews of the Australian Neighbours, U.K.'s On The Up, and U.S. Dream On. 4/12 of the team on Toyah Wilcox tour of Salisbury for Meridian TV were Baals. Last night's Coronation Street written by Martin Allen and Ken Blakeson had one-footed Don given a haircut by Denise Osborne played by Denise Black whose real deformed hand (Anne Boleyn also had a deformed hand) was the occasion for a five minute dialogue. Mike Wallace had 3 Baals in his Sixty Minutes crew the other night. There are many, many more such telltale convergences. Ghoul rule surely will not end before they are exposed and by spotlighting the Baal name ratios particularly that of WALKER - that combination of Baal name and movement - you can expose them.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm S. Spector

Malcolm S. Spector

*Night club performance of Whole
Lotta Shaking Going On credited to Valerie
 Wellington.

Folklore Sport

* With our earlier feature on Mars bars we start with Graham Taylor, who after announcing his team was asked to do an interview for the BBC. A Football Association functionary, concerned that the England manager was wearing a logo for a company that contributes FA to the FA, insisted that Taylor should change. Eventually the Mars logo was covered by a Kaliber sweatshirt and the interview allowed to go ahead. For radio! (Guardian, 3/4/93).

* Our Diplomatic Correspondent writes: Frank Warren took part in a radio phone-in this week. Anxious to make polite conversation, a female producer asked casually: "Whatever happened to that boxer, oh, what was his name, awfully bright, I think he was a fireman ... ? The newspaper added that its lawyers supposedly advised them not to print his reply. (Guardian, 20/2/93).

* Commentary faux pas claim time. In the wake of a Chinese player called Shi-Ting (pronounced shyting) Wang wouldn't be at Wimbledon, BBC presenter Barrie Davis recalled: "It reminds me of the time an American golf commentator told viewers that the great Arnold Palmer had a good luck charm. He said his wife would kiss his balls before he left home to go out and play. Realising what he'd said, he added quickly 'Golf balls, that is,' and he was promptly sacked!" (News of the World, 20/6/93).

Newslines

CUFF LUCK. A clueless pair of prisoners who escaped while handcuffed together had heard a prison folklore tale that you can break a pair of handcuffs by running either side of a lamp-post. They leapt from a coach while being taken to court in Reading, Berks. Mike O'Shea, 20, and Richard John, 17, tried this and both broke an arm. A police spokesman said: "What happened to these chaps proves the prison rumour is untrue, unless you happen to be wearing dud cuffs (D Sport, Sun -- latter not mentioning rumour -- 13/11/92).

HEAD CASES. Scepticism aside that a "lost" tribe had been found in Papua New Guinea, it is interesting that the Liawep worship a rock shaped like a human head which they carry with them as they move from one camp to another through the jungle. Sounds just like "talking head" Bran of Celtic legend fame (D Telegraph, 26/6/93).

STITCHED UP. Britain's 1,149 Inner Wheel clubs were conned by a hoax into knitting woolly jumpers for seagulls to stop them freezing after rescue from an oil slick. One concerned bird-lover sent 11 mini soccer shirts, knitted in the colours of the Chelsea team to the animal welfare centre in Scarborough, Yorks. More than 4,000 other winter warmers arrived. The hoaxers have not been traced (D Sport, 25/2/93).

BAA! Would you believe a flock of sheep flew when a 100mph whirlwind allegedly picked them up and dumped them in a field half a mile away. The freak "twister" whipped through a village, ripping off roofs and flattening buildings. Farmer Dilwyn Rees said: "I heard this terrible roar and saw my Land-Rover being blown away and bits of roof being sucked into the air." He later found 20 of his sheep in his neighbour's field at Pantydwr, Mid Wales. "There is a river and stone walls between us," he said. "They could only have been blown here by the storm."

BODILY FUNCTIONS. The next few paragraphs are not for the squeamish.

A Royal Marine was suspected of leaving a turd on the back seat of a taxi in Plymouth -- and may have come from a regiment dubbed ... the Loggies. Troops from the Commando Logistics Regiment were being interviewed after the Devon cabbie demanded compensation to cover cleaning and disinfecting his upholstery (Sunday Sport, 23/5/93).

Another dubious character, Edward Lordan, of Witton, Birmingham, drenched women passers-by with urine from a special set-up in his cab. He filled the windscreen reservoir with his urine and fitted a copper pipe to spray the pavement. He admitted five charges of assaulting women and four counts of causing criminal damage to their clothes. He got 18 months' probation (D Sport, Guardian, 22/5/93).

A prankster who left bottles of urine on doorsteps with a Christmas message was urged by doctors to give himself up. A GP tested one of the "samples" in Honiton, Devon, and found the joker could be ill (D Star, D Sport, 23/12/92). Note here contamination motif.

The late Robert Maxwell apparently would be caught short in his cabin and the crew had the unenviable task of mopping up pools of urine. A diarist had assumed this to be "apocryphal Maxwelliana" until he heard Maxwell would step out of his helicopter, walk to the side of the Mirror headquarters and pee over the edge (Guardian, 7/12/91).

An oldie but goodie, verbatim, goes "Widow Sang Yeul Lee, 35, was awarded £1m damages after her husband, Ho, died while urinating on an electrified track" (Sun Sport, 23/5/93).

Of course, dogs are the worst offender in all this. I was amused by a letter responding to a query about cockroaches' niche in the ecological scheme of things. I heartily endorse the writer's sentiments.

"Before the genetic engineers set to work on producing something that eats cockroaches, can I ask them to develop a predator for dogs? They



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are considerably larger and juicier than cockroaches, yet have even fewer redeeming features. -- Geoff Black, Cambridge."

Sculptor Ray Bowler staged an artistic protest over pets fouling a Cornish beach by making a 10ft long brown sculpture of dog shit with giant steel flies (D Star, 14/4/93).

One TV reviewer suggested these sewercreators could be herded to crap and replace a few power stations and when past their prime be sold to Korean restaurants which have dog on the menu (reference unknown).

Lastly, a Dr James Jefferson of the University of Wisconsin, sent out 1,000 questionnaires on snot -- sorry, rhinotillexomania; well, nose-picking, actually. Which finger, do you look at it, etc. Or as Groucho Marx put it: "That's a nice nose you've got lady. Did you pick it yourself." (Sun Times, 24/11/91).

Update

DUBIOUS TRANSMISSIONS. I covered this in some depth last issue and here's more to add. It was even the subject of the second programme in the excellent Channel 4 series Serie Indiana -- my favourite TV programme. Here a boy with braces on his teeth was receiving messages from dogs.

Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi would play a preposterous guitar solo spot and at Birmingham Odeon, in his hometown, this was spoiled as the speakers crackled with the message "Car 22, could you pick up at New Street station travelling to Cradley Heath ..." (Apocryphal Now, Part I, New Musical Express, 1991). The telephone system in Brussels for Eurocrats picks up local radio stations and passing taxis pick up an electric piano on their two-way radios and vice versa the piano's speakers (?) would crackle out in Walloon, "Jacques, I can't hear you. All I can hear is this awful piano playing." (New Scientist, 10/4/93). Alex Whitnell's new doorbell in Edinburgh rang day and night until he discovered that a neighbour's bell was transmitting on the same frequency (Sun Mirror, 18/4/93). Police walkie-talkies in Bassetlaw, Notts., 65 miles inland, picked up radio messages between Norwegian trawlermen (D Mirror, 26/6/93) and police chief Supt Chris Furber, of Hereford, heard radio buff Keith Hales chattering away on his television and was trying to block Keith's bid for a bigger mast -- which would surely improve matters (D Sport, 20/4/93) A TV signalling fault had people on the Winayates Green estate at Redditch, Worcs., receiving flashes of foreign sex channels (D Star, 3/6/93).

Meanwhile a shocked Detroit mum found the Best of Popeye video for her toddler son contained eye-popping hard core porn scenes.

We also touched upon pilots allegedly losing control through transmissions and a page lead claimed electronic hand-held games sent navigational equipment haywire (Sun, 5/3/93) and a DC-10 coming in to land at New York's Kennedy airport almost crashed because a passenger switched on his portable compact disc player (D Sport, 13/5/93).

A new twist to all this came when girls at £10,000-a-year Edgarley Hall school, Somerset, opened class set text Harriet the Spy to find drawings of penis and good-sex tips for men. publishers HarperCollins believes the pages were accidentally inserted when the kids' adventure book and a sex manual were printed at the same time (Sun, 28/6/93).

EMPLOYEE'S REVENGE. When introduced (FF12, pp21,23) this channel was not realised to be so common or varied. It raises questions of anecdote, the deliberate, the genuine error, Freudian slip, and so on. The file is beginning to bulge, so here are a few random cases.

Pony show bosses angered rider A. Perris by misprinting his name A penis in the official programme -- three times. Printers at Kirkbymoorside, N. Yorks, of the Egton Show programme said the responsibility for reading proofs was with the show officials. Production director Tony Bofoni said: "I've checked up and we only printed what we were told to print" (Northern Echo, Darlington, 23/8/91; Sun, 24/8/91).

A correspondent to a readers' queries forum referred to a report by Taylor & Walton, entitled Industrial Sabotage: Motives & Meanings (1971). "They had to throw away half a mile of Blackpool rock last year, for, instead of the customary motif running through its length, it carried the terse injunction 'Fuck Off.' A worker dismissed by a sweet factory had effectively demonstrated his annoyance by sabotaging the product of his labour" (Guardian, 7/1/91).

Going back awhile, British workmen who built Saddam Hussein's £5million Baghdad palace supposedly booby-trapped it in retaliation for being held hostage. They rigged it so either his toilet would explode or bathroom flood and Union Jacks were hidden under (D Mirror, 26/12/90) or imprinted on (D Express, 26/12/90) plaster.

Not an "employee" but a claimed booby-trap. While filming dressed as a policeman, TV joker Jeremy Beadle had his £2,000 car phone stolen. He reckoned he would have the last laugh as "the phone's booby-trapped. They won't be able to use it ... and if they try they're in for a nasty surprise." (Sun, D Sport, 4/7/92). Cross-reference this to the familiar "stolen contaminations" theme.

Lyndsay Fegan, six, unwrapped her new doll -- and found a sex advert in the box. The ad, torn from a porn magazine, pictured a "novelty" sex organ which expands in water. It boasted "it's magic." Mum Margaret bought the leotard-clad doll for £1.99 at Toys 'R' Us in Harlow, Essex. The ad was used to pad its toy sports bag. Margaret, 42, of Hoddesdon, Herts., said: "The picture was very realistic." Toys 'R' Us branded it a "filthy joke" and checked all their doll boxes (source not known).

DEVIL CARS. Since last looking at the "Satanic 666" jinx (FF10, p14) company boss Peter Cavanagh, owner of a Rover P6 -- 666 CRY -- claims all the petrol evaporates overnight and it mysteriously moved 6ft from where he parked it the night before. Peter, of Carlton, near Barnsley, S? Yorks., was offering it at £5,000 "but if I can't sell it I'll give it away."

Chris Page gave away his Vauxhall cavalier because of its reg plate XUG 666X. His brother and mother and father-in-law all died within days of riding in it (Sun, 1/4/93).

Garage boss Willie Quinn bought a 16-year-old Allegro -- HFR 666S -- for £45 twenty months previously. The first time he drove it the reg plate snapped when hit by a piece of cardboard in a high wind. Soon after his Newcastle upon Tyne garage was ransacked in a £10,000 raid ((why did he only buy so cheap a car, anyway?)). Then wife Marjorie, 66, died of a heart attack after riding in the car. In a second raid the garage was burned down leaving him with a £80,000 bill. The Allegro was involved in a string of minor crashes and the roof lining was found burned, with no other sign of a fire. He said he planned scrapping the car so it would bring no one else bad luck (Sun, 26/4/93).

JINX LOCO. Latest reports on errant diesel locomotive 47299 (FF16, p8-11) note morbidly that it has had its doors painted black (InterCity, vol. 20, No. 9, 1992) and caught fire at Healey Mills, W. Yorks., on August 18 whilst heading a Leeds to Crewe goods train (InterCity, vol. 20, No. 11, 1992). Its chequered career was also related for modellers, focussing on modifications it has received (Rail, Sept., 1992).

CHASTITY BELTS. Invented by an Italian in the 14th century, when they were better known as Florentine girdles, the cumbersome iron and velvet chastity belts were designed to protect women from the unwanted advances of invaders (Rick Sky column, D Mirror, 8/4/93). We had a cover story on these (FF6, p2), where we related the case of a Peruvian woman dying of a fatal infection. Perhaps the one sentence filler telling of the lock rusting and and Peruvian police arresting a man and accusing him of his wife's death was the same one (D Sport, 12/3/93). New, and sounding apocryphal, was another filler claiming security metal detectors at Beirut airport went berserk when an Arab sheikh's harem filed past -- the devices had got a buzz from the concubines' chastity belts (D Star, 6/10/92).

Country purr suits



The Beast of Exmoor is back according to farmer John Fitzgerald, of Dunster, near Minehead, Somerset. He claimed his tough Doberman dog was ripped apart. A rambler found the mutilated dog, but it was put down as a front leg was ripped off and right hind leg was hanging off. "He wasn't hit by a car," said the farmer. "I'm sure it was the Beast." He saw it a few days before and said: "It was the biggest cat I have ever seen -- certainly bigger than my collie dog." He believes it had also killed a piglet and attacked a goat on his farm (D Sport, 22/7/93).

Earlier a big animal charged a car being driven along a country lane in Somerset (location not specified). Two women and five children encountered a huge black cat which bared its fangs and charged the car. Susan Stritch stopped to see if she had killed it but "there was no blood but it left a huge dent in the car." (D Sport, 16/12/92).

Stuart Gray-Thompson sent a front page lead about a black, panther-like beast rumoured to be prowling throughout Kintyre (Campbeltown Courier, 4/12/92). Shepherd Paul Grumoli, with 16 years' experience, said it was about the size of a big dog and was perhaps a puma. Argyll Wildlife Park owner Malcolm Moy suggested the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 led to its release.

We interviewed policeman Eddie Bell on County Durham ABC sightings (FF4). Promoted to sergeant, he believes fresh studies show there could be up to ten wild pumas loose in the North-East (Northern Echo, 25/5/93; Hartlepool Mail, 27/5/93).

With the headline "Scientist confirms pumas are roaming Britain", there was an interesting piece about FF contributor Dr Karl Shuker (The Times, 28/12/92).



D Mirror 13/7/93 & 16/7/93

It's grim up North

***** Now mock mayor of Middleton, Hartlepool, is Barney Walls. On Easter Monday he was elected for the year in an area being encroached upon by a marina. The Cleveland community now constitutes 48 huts by the Smallcrafts Club, and Barney, who now lives in Jesmond Gardens, was born in Middleton in 1937. As one of Britain's rare mock mayors he has his own chain of office and his role involves opening functions, presenting charity cheques and being a spokesman for the dockland community (Hartlepool Star, 6/5/93; Mail, Hartlepool, 7/4/93).



***** Regular readers will have seen mentions of my journalist pal Mike Amos. His exemplary Backtrack column (Northern Echo, 2/7/93) had a correspondent asking "Who survived the Munich air crash and still

plays football for a top English club?"

Amos had encountered the question previously, something about an air stewardess's womb, and rang Allen Nixon for the answer.

John Lukic, he answered.

Since the Munich air disaster was in February 1958 and the baby Lukic arrived in December 1960, this meant that his poor mother had a mammoth gestation period of getting on for three years. All those pressurised cabins, presumably.

Stokesley stockbroker Nixon was apologetic, but instantly reminded of Dennis Healey's comparison of Labour party policy making and elephants mating: "It takes a long time to get everything in place and about another seven years for things to come to fruition."

***** Confession time. I fear that I should dig into my pockets but there again perhaps the BBC should have the crisis of conscience. You see, I slipped down Castle Hill, at Bishopton in County Durham, around 13 years ago whilst filming for the brief, ill-fated regional Mike Neville show. I keep expecting my undignified descent to

appear on one of Dennis Norden's "cock-up" shows. Actually councillors were asked to contribute towards an English Heritage improvement scheme at fairy-haunted ley centre Castle Hill (Journal, Newcastle, 1/3/93). The supposed 12th century Norman motte and bailey castle has suffered from severe erosion -- with your editor partially responsible.



Correctly-punctuated graffiti on a bridge in Seaton Carew, Cleveland.

***** Boaring story coming up. January this year saw a wild boar called Bonnie run for her life just before slaughter at Chris Pinder's Wilbor Farm, Newfield, County Durham. Farmer Alan Dixon claimed he saw Bonnie savage one of his sheep so a 13-strong posse set for to capture Bonnie, dead or alive. Pinder and his chums were sceptical about claims Bonnie had turned savage. Dixon's wife said at their Ox Close Farm, Willington, that "something has killed six of our sheep. My husband has seen only this boar once, but it was actually on the sheep's back, pulling at it. The animal died a few hours later." (Northern Echo, 25/1/93). It took a national newspaper to make the folkloric connection. Richard Holliday wrote: "Bonnie is said to have struck at a farm near Brancepeth -- following in an ancestors footsteps. Brancepeth was originally known as Brawn's Path after a beastly boar that terrorised the village 300 years ago. It was finally killed by a Prince Bishop plunging a lance in its heart." (Mail on Sunday, 24/1/93). R W F Poole wrote an interesting background piece after visiting the farm Bonnie left behind (Weekend Telegraph, 30/1/93). Later Janet Pinder reassured the public Bonnie would be well hidden in sprouting undergrowth -- "She won't hurt anyone out there. She's too shy and she'll run." (Northern Echo, 14/4/93). She was also seen swimming the River Wear several times and was thought to be living on grass roots at Brancepeth. Chris Pinder reiterated -- "You've got more chance of being bitten by a dog. Boars are very timid." (Northern Echo, 5/7/93).



BRANCEPETH

The name Brancepeth is derived from 'brawn's path' after a ferocious wild boar (a brawn) who terrorised the neighbourhood. It was trapped by Hodge of Ferry who dug a pit in its path.

***** We thought this ludicrous notion had died away after Donovan's Mellow Yellow (spoof?) record. Det Sgt Norman Kirtland, of Northumbria Police, told a meeting in Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, teenagers unable to afford designer drugs were peeling bananas, eating the fruit and drying the inside of the skin to make a type of cannabis substitute. "We can't arrest children for possession of a banana." Then came the obligatory warning that for many youngsters using a banana for a "high" can lead them on totaking harder drugs. (Northern Echo, 6/7/93).

***** Are small dogs being stolen for dog-fighting? Christine Hall, animal agony aunt of Friskies Pet Line, said she had received calls from five distressed owners in as many days. In Stockton, Cleveland, a distinctive chihuahua went missing -- or was that because it was a Mexican sewer rat (Northern Echo, 27/11/92).

THE MAIL, Saturday, May 22, 1993.



It's a dog's life on the Fens Estate

HARTLEPOOL people have hearts of gold especially when it comes to animals.

A shaggy dog story reached my ears this week that proves that while a dog may be man's best friend, a dog's best friend is usually the man's wife.

A young lady on the Fens Estate decided to take the family pooch for a walk and all the way from the front door, round the block and along the road to Greatham she was followed by a little poodle.

She tried to shoot it away but failed. Eventually she headed for home with the little dog tagging behind. It followed all the way home and outside her front door she decided to have a look at the identity tag.

The little poodle it seemed had trotted all the way to the Fens from Sedgely.

To cut a long story short, the lass eventually persuaded her hubby that they should phone the people who the dog belonged to and tell them it was safe. Several phone calls later and still no answer she persuaded him to drive all the way through to Sedgely to take the dog home.

When they got there the house was empty. Eventually a woman came from across the road and told them the dog's owners were on holiday in Florida for three weeks.

It turned out that the dog had been left with relatives in Hartlepool while the family were on vacation.

The address -- next door to the house on the Fens Estate where it had originally turned up.

THE MAIL, Saturday, January 30, 1993.

A SOCIAL club in the town was having a bit of bother with the television set. An engineer was called who pronounced it almost dead.

He reckoned that while the sound was great, the set needed a new tube which was going to cost almost as much as a new set. A new tube was duly purchased and the old model was thrown onto a skip outside the club.

Thankfully, charity is alive and nicking in Hartlepool and an enterprising club member took the set out of the skip and passed it on to an acquaintance who is blind -- for the tidy sum of £30. My informant knows the name of the club and the person who perpetrated this sneaky crime but at the moment he's refusing to tell. Unlike the tele he's not making a sound. When he does I'll name names.

THE MAIL, Saturday, February 6, 1993.

Tuning in to twisted logic

MY piece last week about the enterprising scally who managed to sell a television he rescued from a skip brought back memories of another television comedy.

Back in the days when TV sets with remote controls were new fangled (can you imagine what it must have been like having to get out of your chair to turn over?) a social club in the town decided to invest in one of the new models without delay.

The set arrived and was fixed on the wall of the lounge complete with its own swivel bracket. Three days later it had been nicked.

A new one was ordered and delivered and this time it lasted about a fortnight before thieves made off with it along with the balls off the snooker table and one or two other bits and bobs.

The third set was put in place and a month later it went the way of the others.

By now the club committee were getting a bit sick of this and decided to call an extraordinary meeting of the members.

The chairman stood to address the members and launched into a vitriolic attack on the "thieves in our midst". He almost choked on his pint when he was confronted by an angry voice on the floor who placed the blame for three TV sets going missing fairly and squarely on the heads of the committee.

Asked how he came to th a baffling conclusion the wag replied "well it was the committee who decided to put the TV where everybody could see it"

That's the sort of logic I like.

THE MAIL, Saturday, July 3, 1993.

ON THE subject of things that women are good at, it seems that quizzes are certainly their forte if events at one social club in the town are anything to go by.

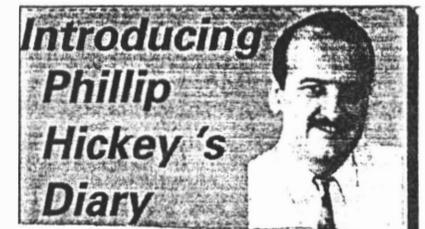
Rumour has it that this club has a quiz every Sunday lunchtime and there are separate male and female teams. When the quiz is over the female entries are marked first so that the little lasses can toddle off home and get the Sunday lunch ready while the lads have a few pints.

In may sound like something out of the dark ages but if I tell you that in the same club women are not allowed in the bar and are not allowed to become members, you won't think that their caveman stance is too hard to believe.

What's more, women who want to have a game of dominoes (hope they are better at doms than tennis) will struggle in this backwater of small mindedness. They aren't allowed to get a set of dominoes from behind the bar.

It's not that they have anything against women playing doms you'll understand, it's just that only members are allowed to borrow dominoes.

10 - THE MAIL, Friday, July 23, 1993



Robson's choice

Addressing an audience of businessmen, including a party of Texans, at the opening of ENRON's gas processing plant at Seal Sands, broadcaster Eric Robson said our friends from the States would probably regard him as the English equivalent of Walter Kronkite.

Kronkite is a TV newsman known all over the world.

Eric Robson currently presents a gardening programme on Tyne Tees Television.



Eric Robson

Magazines

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.

No. 67. Pull-out colour section on 20th century cryptozoology, dinosaur hunter interviewed and recent yeti searches. Reactions to BBC Ghostwatch pseudo-documentary. Of interest to folklorists is a Calais social panic, fate of Hitler's body, Swedish mystery submarines and Italian woman mugged by space aliens in 1954. Forum columnists include David Sutton on leys, Andy Roberts on abductions and Paul Screeton on dubious transmissions. Usual fortean features.

No. 68. Two excellent approaches to the US cattle mutilation problem and update on UK horse-ripping epidemic. Fascinating interview with conspiracy researcher Mary Seal. Kevin McClure on World War I bowmen and Angel of Mons. Croglin Grange vampire hoax. John Michell on crop circles. Karl Shuker on hybrid feral and non-native alien big cats in the UK. There's a special supplement of pictorial phenomena introduced by a potted history of the mag. Black Madonna of Montserrat. Contributors' forum from Robert Anton Wilson, Brian Inglis (also obituary on him), Dennis Stacy and Jonathan Downes.

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. 11. Novice cryptozoologist's chatty account of his search for two species in Belize; major inquiry into H P Lovecraft and his writings, including references to Anthony Roberts' work; pitted car windscreens cover-up; also articles on hoofed mystery animals and sea cows; dwarfish South American entities; hoax wildman hoax; and Janet Bord's UL round-up. Book reviews.

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. 118. David Cowan discusses Aboriginal lore with editor Paul Devereux. Colin Wilson on timely Windsor mysteries rewrite. Another spirit line section, redefining the "dead straight" tracks without the grid circuitry or dowable energy components. Columnists are Nigel Pennick on anima loci; Laurence Main on spirit lines; and Paul Screeton asks why 1950s archaeologists could be household names (remember pissed Glyn Daniel?) but not in the 1990s. Reports on 1992 Moot and an archaeologists' Neolithic Britain conference (ceremonies of the whore's men). Lively letters, particularly on man-hating Monica Sjoo, and big reviews section.

EARTHQUEST NEWS. £1 inc p&p; cheques to ABC Books. From P O Box 189, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 1NF.

Vol. 2, No. 1. Back after seven-year gap, it includes discovery of the "seventh sword" and more psychic questing updates, including freemasonry and other chivalric orders. Plus how to start a questing group and 1992 crop circles.

Vol. 2, No. 2. This issue £2.50. For those who've followed the seven swords saga, they all come together for a ritual at a sacred site: separately editor Andy Collins also looks at the Dalziels' role in the affair. Tully "saucer nests" of Australia put into a wider context. Photographic anomalies reassessed. Hoax crop formations as foci for paranormal phenomena. For those who enjoy Andy's adventures in the landscape, his piece on Great Totham, Essex, will enthral.

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

No. 159. The Skeptic mag damned with praise (sic) in editorial. Thankfully Robert France's ramblings are concluded. Usual sections on news round-up; major articles elsewhere; media matters; corn circle debate; current ufo investigations; and case histories. **No. 160.** Editorial on TV ufo documentaries. Books of the moment.

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. 15. Personalities come before circles themselves: interviews with Doug Bower and editorial hits at Birdsall and Azadehedal. Plus Canadian 1970s rings; events according to Robert Irving; Orgone93; did the 1990 Alton Barnes pictogram reveal our solar system with the then undiscovered mini planet 1992 QB1? **No. 16.** Lack of headlines and signposting makes this confusing to find your way around. Editorial accuses John Michell of crop circle history revisionism; Bower interview concluded; call upon Colin Andrews to apologise; ufo physical trace catalogue entries revisited; Schnabelgate round-up, including sex between humans and praying mantises; plenty more but what has a defence of Jason Donovan's sexuality got to do with cornography?

PENDRAGON. Journal of the Pendragon Society. Sub £6. Q. From Fred Stedman-Jones, Smithy House, Newton-by-Frodsham, Cheshire, WA66 5SX.

Vol XXIII/1. What Merlin Means to Me theme. Plus Preceval and the Red Knight; book reviews. Farewell issue from editor Eddie Tooke, so best wishes to you in retirement (aged 73, his comments seemed like a post-hippie 40something).

TOUCHSTONE. Published by Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Q. £2 for 4. Cheques to J Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Adlestone, Surrey, KT15 2PX.

No. 35. Guildford and its numerous ghosts; ley dowsing in Florence. **No.36.** Ancient stone seeking and odd grass semi-circle in Surrey; Longleat model Stonehenge project; field trip to Herfordshire.

BOOKS

URBAN MYTHS by Phil Healey & Rick Glanville (Virgin, £4.99)

The good points are that it's British, cheap and has plenty of tales which are new; the down side is that it trivialises, is intellectually shallow and lacks subtlety.

Not that we should take contemporary legends too seriously, that they should be sanitised or that they require academic analysis. Perhaps, at root, it is telling that when invited to subscribe or contribute to this magazine, the authors chose to ignore my missive.

I bought this as a Christmas present to myself in York and read it during my evening bath-time sweat lodge rituals. Basically, all your old favourites are retold in anecdotal fashion (they are recirculated each weekend in the pair's Guardian newspaper's slot). If it brings added awareness to the public all well and good; even better if -- unlike the authors -- interested persons pursue an interest in the burgeoning literature on the subject.

At page 26 I began to find many hi-tech tales unfamiliar to me, covering satellite dishes, fax, airliners, superloos and fake phones. There's new to me nasty tales about a dog's dinner, swooping owl, bistro bog bother, and so on.

Some tales seem simply stupid and others, I suspect, are made up or jokes dressed up. At least one I didn't understand at all, but the authors make plain their understanding of the basic concepts and their cognisance of bored sub-editors who treasure space fillers of five or so lines with scant detail.

I'll close with one which really tickled me:



When I was a DJ in Walkers Club, Newcastle, one of the regular clubbers told me a story about a Geordie lass he'd encountered.

He was dancing in the club and chatting up a real bonnie lass, who was coming on strong. He bought her a drink and they had a good laugh together. Shortly, she whispered that they should go back to her place, which they did.

So they were sitting on the sofa and the lad's hand started to wander up the Geordie girl's thigh. Suddenly she broke off, slapped his face and shouted indignantly:

'Where's yer manners. like? Tits first!'

DISCOVER YOUR PSYCHIC POWERS by RODNEY DAVIES (Aquarian, £7.99)

Working from the premise that the reader believes in extra-sensory perception, that it is possessed by us all in some degree and that the reader wishes to discover more about its applications, he examines such topics as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and retrocognition, and their application through dowsing, psychometry, astral projection and crystal-gazing, and their manifestation in dreams.

The style is easy, chummy and without layers of technicalities. A mixture of the anecdotal, historical and contemporary research, it will be of value to anyone seeking to raise their awareness and develop inner powers.

OFFICE HUMOUR II

By Pete Fagan and Mark Schaffer

THOSE subversive photocopied notices which get passed around offices where staff feel they are unappreciated and slave-driven have become a branch of the publishing industry themselves. This collection is full of mutinous memos, anti-homilies and cries for help. Some are purely words, others incorporate cartoons.

Ignoring the specific American origin of many, this reviewer can see plenty of these being copied in offices all over the country to remind bosses just who does the real work.

Published by Grafton, £3.99.



"I can't say if you've got the job 'I've still got several unsuitable applicants to see."

Proto- legends

A MAN was killed and 11 others were seriously injured by a giant TORTOISE, it was revealed yesterday.

The victims were in a pick-up truck which overturned and plunged down a gully after hitting the massive creature on a road in South Africa.

The 2ft-high Great Mountain tortoise, which was hit by the 14-ton truck at 40mph, waddled off unhurt.

Last night police captain William Groot explained: "The men were driving to work just before dawn.

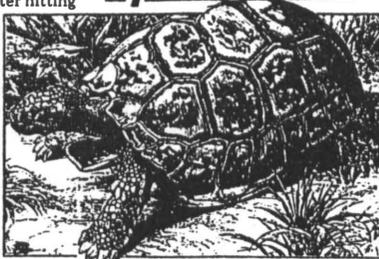
Crushed

"The driver did not see the tortoise in his headlights until the last moment.

"He tried to swerve, but the front wheel ran over the shell."

The open-top truck flipped over and crushed Simon Jwanibi 34, to death near the East Cape township of Graaf-Reinet.

Eleven other black workers suffered broken



LETHAL: The giant tortoise killed a man

By DAVE WOODMANSEY

bones and internal injuries. People in a passing car alerted the emergency services several hours after the crash when they spotted the upturned truck.

Three victims were released from hospital after treatment.

(Left: D Sport, 19/1/93.
Right: Sun, 27/11/92)

CRUISE PAID THE BILL

Truck wrecked by a monster

TOM CRUISE picked up the \$100 restaurant bill for a rowdy group of students after watching them serenade four girls by singing 'You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling.

He roared with laughter as the lads—all dressed in dinner jackets—dropped on bended knee exactly the way he did to Kelly McGillis in Top Gun.

As they reached the end of the song, Tom quietly walked over to the boss of the Texaco Grill in Memphis, Tennessee, and told him to put the bill for the ten students on his credit card.

His old owner John Grisanti: "That was the funniest thing I've seen for years. They remind me of when I was a bachelor."

Tom, 31, who is filming his new movie The Firm in Memphis, asked very disappointed Tom wasn't there so they could thank him.

Grisanti said: "The students were so surprised when they found out—and very disappointed Tom wasn't there so they could thank him."

"They'd obviously got the idea from Top Gun and gave the song everything. It worked, too—the girls loved it."



"Take it easy, Maud, show a bit of shelf discipline."

Stop Press

* MONKEY-HANGERS. Despite the note with contributors that a separate item would be reviewing the Hartlepool V Greenock trumped-up rumpus, as I write, this saga is still in flow -- so we'll have an overview next issue.

* YOURS FAITHFULLY. A raunchy mag called Bite apparently lists novel sex aids. Extra strong lozenges Fisherman's Friend is described as an oral sex aphrodisiac. Others include a "Mars bar where lover boy can nibble it." (D Sport, 15/7/93) and same paper, same day, in a preview of Ms Faithfull in the film Ghost Story on TV, Mark Harris referred to Mick Jagger and Faithfull -- "Their bedroom antics even turned the humble Mars bar into the trendiest sex aid in town. It was Mick and Marianne who put the fun into work, rest and play." Then when Mars bars helped four mountaineers survive Arctic conditions in Russia, Andrew Parker wrote a most readable, fact-filled article on the choc bar (Journal, Newcastle, 17/4/93). Lastly tufty time with a spate of sweet shop raids sparking a security alert at Humber-side's Hessewood Hall, but the thieves turned out to be a gang of squirrels. Five were seen scooting up a tree carrying Mars bars. (Today, 17/7/93).



"Damned litter louts"

* LICKED. Is it the same dress we mentioned earlier? A dress made of liquorice from Pontefract cakes and allsorts has been created by sweet factory workers for a display to highlight the history of the West Yorkshire town. (D Star, 20/7/93).