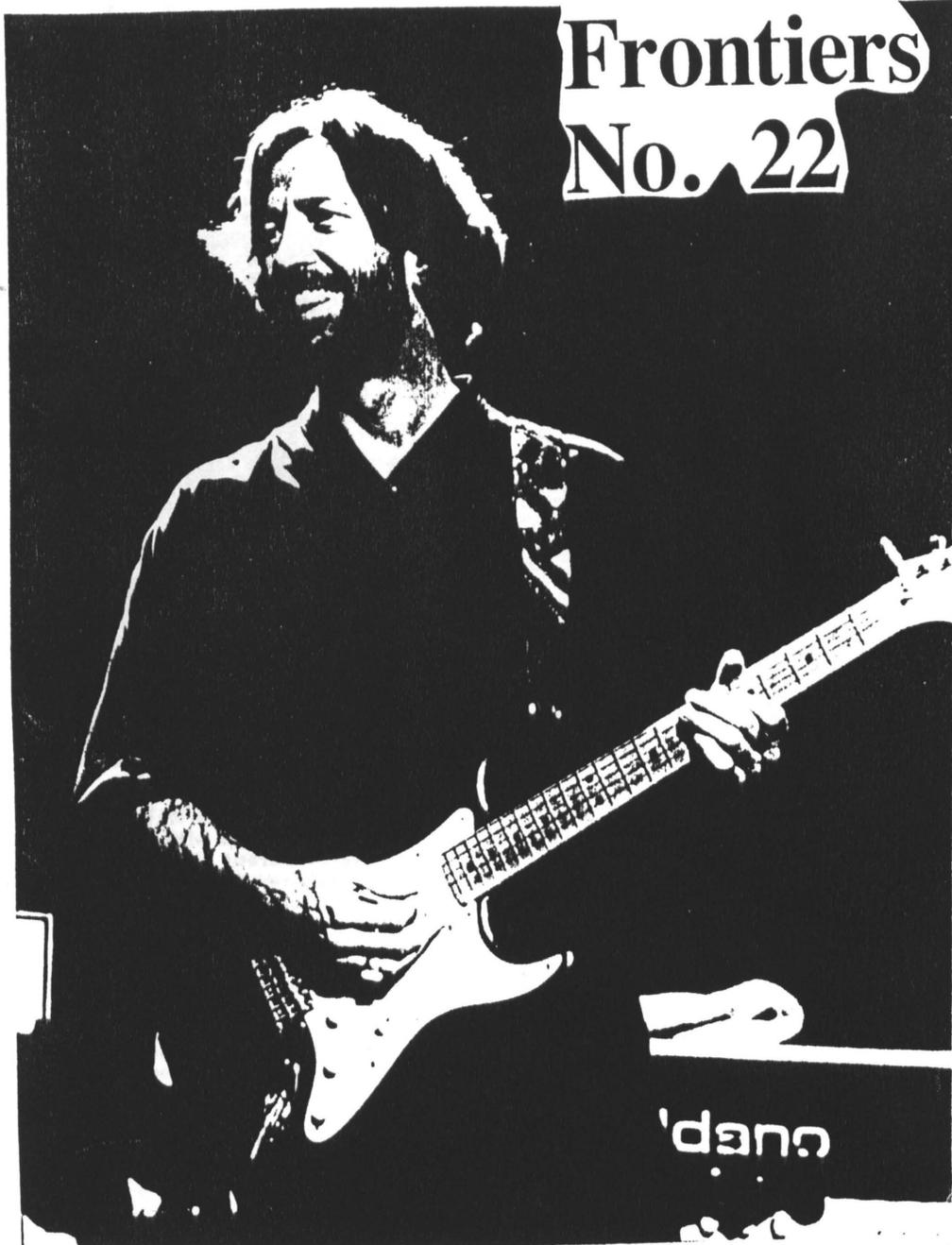


Folklore Frontiers No. 22



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April, 1994

Folklore Frontiers is an independent, non-profitmaking magazine devoted to folklore and folklife, particularly urban legends and contemporary happenings.

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The Diary

An interesting topic arose in the Eating Owt column in the Northern Echo (19/1/94) written by our good friend Mike Amos.

It is apparently unlucky to keep pigs on Holy Island or rabbits at Staithes, N. Yorks. His correspondent Steve Verrill also claimed Staithes fishermen won't put to sea on Fridays if they see a clergyman, or a woman, first.

"But I reckon that's just an excuse for a day in the pub," he said.

In the same column Mike also went to the Collingwood Arms in Newcastle upon Tyne: "It is a tribal pub, papered with Newcastle United propaganda and with Sunderland abuse. About eight men are in. None (how can we put this) seems likely to be a paid-up member of the St James Park Platinum Club. The television, the juke box and the bandits bray simultaneously. It is only (of course) that we do not care for liver that we skip lunch, heading across the river to the Trafalgar in Gateshead. The Trafalgar is in Trinity Square, opposite the Metro station. Between the two is a hideous statue that appears to be of Hilda Ogden breastfeeding a tortoise."

The Echo's new editor has spiked Mike's column!!!! I wish I could write a quarter as well, though I can certainly pan bad food and pubs with equal verve and as the Hartlepool Mail's pub bar meals secret gastronomic scribe torpedoed The Schooner rations. They replied with an orchestrated campaign, begging customers in their own homes to write condemnatory letters to the Mail editor. One irate writer barked: "I would be obliged if you could furnish your readership with the name and address of your correspondent who considers himself to be Hartlepool's answer to Egon Ronay!" He or she then hid behind the pseudonym Musroom Stroganoff, Hartlepool. Egon Ronay -- with my address I should be Egton Ronay!

Still with Mr Amos, remember our no knickers selection (FF20:6-9), he was in Jesmond and pondered: "Was it Jesmond of which the late Scott Dobson" (he wrote larn yersel' Geordie books) "originally wrote that it was 'aal fur coat and nee knickers,' or was that Gosforth?"

Police attempt to put face to severed head

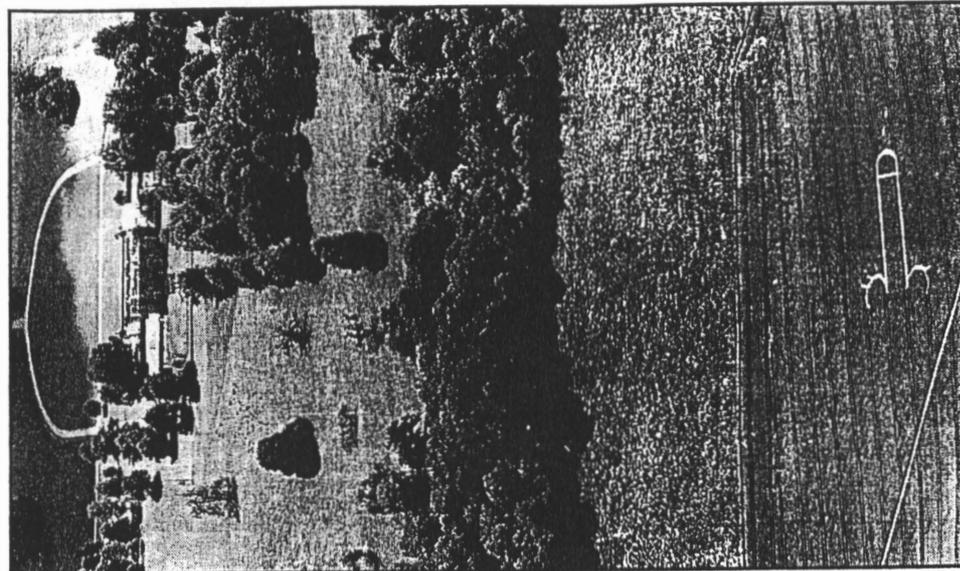
A SEVERED HEAD un-identified beside a playing field in Staffordshire last week belonged to an unknown young man whose body was found in Manchester seven weeks ago, police confirmed yesterday.

The 'face' was 'badly' disfigured, apparently by blows, and 'an attempt' is to be made to reconstruct its features.

Insensitive headline in Guardian, 8/2/94.

* Writers of the spoof TV news show The Day Today obviously know their Fortean and urban tales. One sketch took off the BBC real-life emergency programme 999, a woman is killed by a shaft of frozen urine from an aircraft and a sheepdog is seen landing a helicopter after his master passes out!

* Corn circles! Remember them? Northern UFO News keeps me up to date on matters ufological, but editor Jenny Randles in referring to a giant phallus appearing near Prime Minister John Major's Buckinghamshire retreat Chequers, notes in parentheses "pictures of which did not appear in the national press! "Does this suggest suppression of the media? Is one of us paranoid? Anyway, there was a 200ft penis with semen spurting from it and it was depicted in the media (at least Today, 6/8/93, where our picture comes from).



* It was a sad day when Kelvin MacKenzie moved on to pastures new after being editor of The Sun for 13 years. FF cannot allow this to pass without comment, so firstly here are three items about the man which suggest apocrypha:

1) A candidate for a reporter's job was refused because his head was the wrong size.

2) A letter to an astrologer about to be sacked began: "As you will already know . . ."

3) MacKenzie banned a complaining reader from reading The Sun. Ten minutes later the man's wife rang to ask whether she was banned too.

David Banks, his rival at the Daily Mirror, said of MacKenzie: "He is either loved or hated here, a real one-off. Very humorous, a very loyal person -- I like him." What was really below the belt, however, was the observation that he "can't take his drink." That's unforgivable!!!!!! (Guardian, 22/1/94).

* Rumours spread like wildfire in Hartlepool. Filling this bottom of page gap while putting FF to bed, so to speak, tonight (13/4/94) I was told our local £250,000 pools winner had been told Linda Lusardi would present the cheque - instead it was someone I'd never heard of called Gareth Chilcott. Last rumour to sweep the town centred on tragic James Bulger, murdered by two little boys. Gossip claimed he had been found with eyes removed and electric batteries placed in the eye sockets.

Draw your own conclusions. I found it quite interesting. (Guardian, 4/2/94)

Is she or isn't she..?

□ THE decision to move the statue of Ralph Ward Jackson from its resting place could have consequences that our councillors are not aware of

□ HARTLEPOOL folklore has it that the old guy will stand up when a virgin walks past

□ HOW will the likely lads know the virtue of local lasses heading for the Church Street drinking dens on a Friday night if they don't have that test any longer?

□ NOTE for students of Hartlepool history. No-one has ever seen the statue stand up yet.

Mentioning to a friend that the three red sandstone lions outside Hartlepool's Lion Brewery (owned by the Camerons Brewery Company) were supposed to roar if ever a virgin passed by, he told me that the statue of Ralph Ward Jackson was supposed to rise from his seat if a virgin walked past. Philip Hickey used my informant's information in his column (Mail, Hartlepool, 18/3/94). However, his wife was not best pleased -- regarding it as sexist. Why should it just apply to women as all we men had supposed? Jackson, incidentally, is regarded as the founder of modern (West) Hartlepool.

Phone prankster adds one more joke to the Des O'Connor record

John Ezard

NORMAN WEBSTER'S little problem started the day his nephew said: "Uncle, there's a strange man singing down the phone."

Mr Webster picked up the phone and found himself an unwilling part of a rich showbiz pageant of japes and jokes. There, warbling away shamelessly and unstoppably, was the voice of the singer whom Eric Morecambe used to call "Deaf" O'Connor.

That was three weeks ago and the recorded voice has now stepped up its calls to Mr Webster's home in Woolton, Liverpool, from one to three a week, often filling the answering machine tape. "I used to scream down the line to try and find out who it was, but all I got was Careless Hands," Mr Webster said yesterday.

And Dick-a-Dum-Dum and I Pretend and When You're Smiling and practically every hit Des O'Connor has waxed in 40 vocal years. "Sometimes I just want to laugh and sometimes I feel like crying. It's driving me nuts," the victim added.

To Mr O'Connor's press spokesman, Clifford Elson, the Liverpool persecution is one

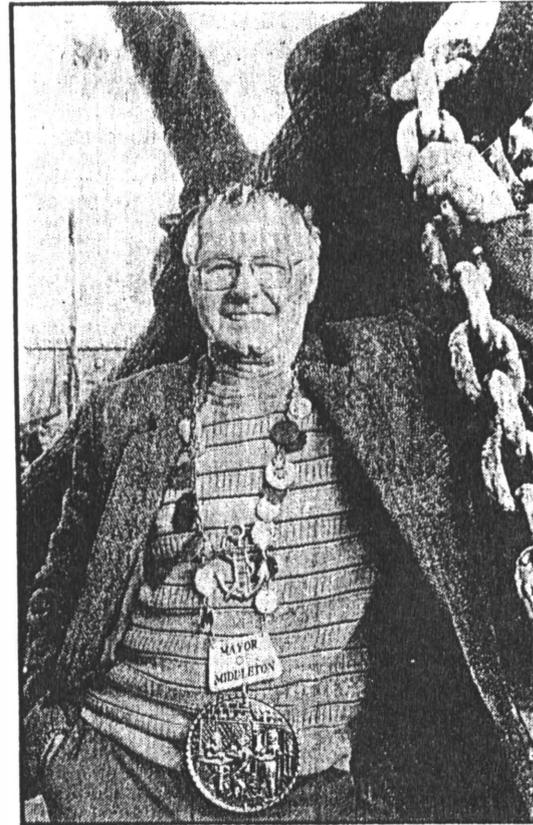
more feature of the climate that surrounds his client's highly successful career. The joker may have got the idea from a Barnsley court ruling last March that a busker's rendition of the O'Connor repertoire was a breach of the peace. The court impounded his karaoke kit.

Disc jockeys say that mothers write in to request an O'Connor record at 8.45am precisely "because it gets the kids off to school". The effect extends to inanimate objects. Traffic police investigating why a car spun out of control and plunged into a lake were reported to have found that the cassette player had just begun an O'Connor number.

Over the past six years Mr Elson has collected 27 press cartoons, including one with British troops confronting Saddam Hussein's National Guard muttering, "Throw them some Des O'Connor records".

The Sunday Times wrote of 62-year-old crooner's "hysterical geniality of a man drowning in a vat of warm saliva".

Luckily Mr O'Connor enjoys being sent up. Mr Elson said: "At least we know that there is somebody out there buying his records. Des is good natured about it. He shrugs and smiles -- or, as I should say, smirks."



The new Mayor of Middleton Derek Gordon Douglas. M12112

THE MAIL Wednesday, April 6, 1994

Mayor keeps up spirit of Middleton

THE SPIRIT of Middleton lives on with the election of a new Mayor.

Derek Gordon Douglas, 63, becomes the 24th mayor to hold office in Hartlepool's historic heartland since the position was revived in 1970.

And although he has no civic duties to perform, the post comes with its own mayoral chain, which Mr Douglas will be entitled to wear for a year.

Mr Douglas said: "I'm extremely honoured to be named Mayor of Middleton. Although I was born in Hartlepool, I was introduced to this area by my grandfather when I was four and have been here ever since."

Although the community of Middleton is lost -- the community spirit lives on.

And in preserving the spirit Middletonians feel they are keeping their independence from Hartlepool.

Left: Middleton mock mayors formed the subject of an article in FF8.

Below: FF23 will have an article on employee's revenge or mischief. From The Guardian, 20/10/84, this is a taster.

THE DAILY Telegraph is one of the Fleet Street papers to emerge less scarred than most from Henry Porter's forthcoming book, Lies, Damned Lies and Some Exclusives. But those who treasure it for its scatter of obscure one-paragraph fillers detailing unlikely doings from around the world will have their faith shaken by Mr Porter's revelations about Mr Raphael Duvant.

Mr Duvant is a character whose prolific actions were frequently chronicled in the paper -- here he was at the Queen's silver jubilee celebrations; there attacking Tony Benn's views on the aristocracy; here again being discovered 150 miles up the Congo by Brigadier Blashford-Snell; then having his leg-iron struck by lightning while umpiring a cricket match in North East England.

For Mr Duvant was the product of the fertile imagination of a Telegraph reporter who endeavoured wherever possible to give him a minor role in whatever story he happened to be writing at the time.

The end came when he was attacked by Scottish football hooligans while travelling to fish salmon (his rods were reported to have been broken over his head) in Scotland. The ever-watchful Sir John Junor, editor of the Sunday Express, thought this story suspicious, salmon being out of season, and telephoned a senior Telegraph executive. Mr Duvant passed away shortly thereafter.

Alan Rusbridger

Dubious Missionary Positions

By Paul Screeton

Some even weirder versions than in my previous trio of articles on the subject (FF No. 18; Fortean Times, No. 67; Dear Mr Thoms, No. 29).

Themes quite similar: the pick-up receiver, employee's mischief, police, flights, sex ... you decide which may be genuine and which ones' status is dubious.

The cops as authority figures naturally figure prominently in this collection. A cross-Channel mix-up means Hampshire Police share the same airwaves of much of Europe. Control room police have heard irate Parisian taxi drivers, German executives doing deals on their car phones and swearing trawlermen (News of the World, 15/8/93)

In Derbyshire, cops have been banned from using personal radios because when they switch them on the engine cuts out in their Vauxhall Astras, whose electronic ignition systems share the same frequency (Today, D Star, 2/8/93).

The Northumbria force's prerecorded messages were interrupted by a tipster offering "red hot certainties" after admitting a bad run and promising to repay punters with a string of winners (Northern Echo, 10/3/94).

Next comes the tale of the elderly Mae West in her hecically dreadful Sextette picking up police radio through her wig-covered hearing aid and blurting out traffic reports instead of the lines her colleagues were expecting (Tony Curtis: the Autobiography, by Tony Curtis and Barry Paris, Heinemann, 1994).

Britons going to France have been warned to leave their mobile phones at home as if switched on there, they cause havoc with military networks. One Brit's car phone was ripped out by a gendarme (D Sport, 5/7/93).

When David Sandland used his new cordless BT phone to fix a night of nookie his neighbours picked it up on radios all around the estate in Garston, Liverpool (Sun, 1/9/93).

A randy couple romping at 5,000ft in the cockpit of a private plane were recorded by air controllers when they left their transmitter switched on, jamming airwaves for an hour and forcing 15 flights to switch to an emergency frequency (D Mirror, D Star, 7/10/93).

The premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Sunset Boulevard was ko'd when its electric command system caused sets to move if taxis and couriers passing outside used their radios (D Teleg, D Mirror, 13/7/93).

BMW bosses were to issue a warning after experts suspected mobile car phones could trigger off inflatable airbags in new cars, after a series of mystery incidents (D Sport, 28/3/94).

Young computerprogrammers "mucking about" with a new computer system at the 1st Saxon Group garage in Fareham, Hants, were blamed when a woman filled up her car and got a computerised receipt telling her: "Thank you for calling, now sod off!!!" (Sun, D Star, 15/10/93).

A familia variant -- often as here not substantiated -- is the kiddies' cartoon which sees the action switch to hard-core porn. Firstly Vidtape of New York, which overprints cartoons on used tapes, was recalling the adventures of a pig in Porky's Garden, when the porn grunted on screen (D Sport, 10/8/93). Secondly makers in Milan had used old porno cassettes to save money, failed to rub out all the sex scenes and a video about Santa Claus kept being interrupted by a naked blonde having sex with a well-endowed stud (D Sport, 21/12/93).

Thirdly a computer buff was horrified when a £20 floppy disk of Bambi was instead two naked men doing obscene things, much to the purchaser and his five-year old niece's surprise (Sun, 17/3/94).



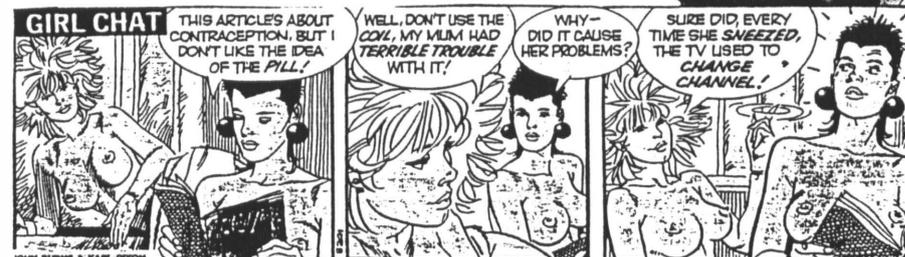
Fourthly the Disney TV cable channel in New York had instead of Alice in Wonderland a steamy sex romp called Throbbing Casanova; its bosses suspecting deliberate sabotage (D Mirror, 18/2/94). Another Disney classic, Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, had thousands of laserdiscs revealing full frontal nude shots of sultry Jessica Rabbit and worse when mischievous animators turned Jessica into a flashing, knickerless bussy. Usually viewers would never see the subliminal inserts, but laserdisc, action is scene frameby frame, revealing Jessica in all her glory (D Sport, 17/3/94).

A surgeon was suing a patient to get back a seven-inch mechanical penis. The man refused to pay because the device operated every time his neighbours in Recife, Brazil, used their TV handsets (News of the World, 4.7/93).

It was neighbours' TVs which went haywire when randy Anne Gray used her vibrator. When Jack Robinson's telly screen kept going fuzzy engineers tracked the interference down to Anne's high-powered dildo next door.

Jack moaned: "Me and my wife would sit down to watch the TV and the picture would go berserk. She was at it day and night." Mum-of-two Anne, of Sydney, Australia, said: "I'll have to go back to the bicycle pump." (Sun, 3/10/93).

*** Below: from D. Mirror, 23/8/93.



Contributors

MICHAEL GOSS. A prolific article writer on modern folklore, Mick uses a keen intellect and fine sense of humour to create his stylised pieces. His *The Evidence for Phantom Hitch-Hikers* is an exemplary study of a single urban tale theme. He is also FF's most regular contributor. He writes here of guitar heroes, in particular Eric Clapton, aged 43 just like me. "Slowhand" is currently involved with Susannah Doyle (pictured), grumpy secretary in TV comedy *Drop the Dead Donkey*.



PAUL SCREETON. Has just had published in book form *Seekers of the Linear Vision* (see elsewhere this issue). Already working on FF23, hopefully to follow this issue relatively quickly.

BONNIE VAUGHAN. The untimely, if not exactly unexpected, death -- apparent suicide -- of Kurt Cobain, leader of grunge band Nirvana, led me to include at the last minute Bonnie's piece on Kurt's wife, Courtney Love. It appeared (Guardian, 9/4/94) the day of his demise announcement. Embarrassing/fortuitous/synchronous? The other cutting on the harridan (D Sport, 8/4/94) just beat the news. Hole were Nirvana in ankle socks and I'm sure plenty of apocrypha on Corbain and Love will surface. Regard this as a Blonde Icons series special.

Head to Head : or how Eric Clapton won a Wife In a Guitar Duel

By Michael Goss

Fierce commitment to a chosen art and to the way of life dictated by it: that's what we expect of the Hero. He does not follow an ordinary, mundane pattern of existence. He exists only for his Art, so that calls upon his time and emotional energies of the sort to which we mere mortals must defer are mercilessly ignored by him. We don't blink when we hear of a painter who leaves his wife and children because they intrude between him and his work by their very existence. Painters are like that. When we read that he made his wife lie immersed and motionless in a bath of cold water for twelve hours because he needed a model for his painting of "Ophelia"...well, we blink, of course, but we can understand it.¹ Great artists are extreme in their pursuit of excellence. People around them may be reduced to properties simply because the artist, who is prone to sacrificing his own comfort, cannot see why others should be spared.

All of this is a prelude to the story of how Eric Clapton won the wife of fellow rock superstar George Harrison in a prolonged guitar duel. The story was certainly current around the time that the events upon which it was based occurred (say, 1974). Its background lay in the mutual admiration and friendship between the two men which began around 1968 and found expression in such acts as Clapton's gift to Harrison of a red Gibson Les Paul Custom guitar, his contribution to this Beatle's album tracks and their cowriting of the highly-popular Cream number, "Badge".² Still more relevant was Clapton's prolonged, desperate and apparently hopeless love for Pattie Harrison nee Boyd whom Harrison had married in early 1966.

E.C. has spoken of this milestone in his life as a case of love at first sight; notwithstanding, it is certain that by 1969 and despite the burgeoning friendship between the two guitarists, he was deeply and, he felt, haplessly in love with the Beatle's wife. "It was an impossible situation," he testified later. "Nobody ever steals a Beatle's wife. It's not on. They'd become very big Establishment figures..."³ Yet without any hint of doublefacedness - Clapton was and remains wholly sincere in his affection for George Harrison - this was what he set out to do. The affair was destined in the opinion of his biographer Ray Coleman to become 'one of the most romantic love stories in popular music.'⁴

And out of it came one of the few rock songs to really deserve that tired DJ epithet, "classic": Clapton has affirmed many times that "Layla" was a determined effort to communicate his painful situation to Pattie and she has commented on the powerful effect it had upon her.⁵ As the love affair progressed through clandestine meetings, a less creative manifestation of the guitarist's romantic obsession was a descent into heroin addiction. Clapton pursued Pattie Harrison vigorously, even while he was involved with other women; around 1970 her refusal to leave her husband (along, it must be said, with other factors) sent EC into a three-year affair with heroin from which he emerged by a near-miracle and thanks to sympathetic personalized medical care. It was at this time

that Clapton walked up to George Harrison at a party and announced: "I'm in love with your wife. What are you going to do about it?"⁶ Harrison, then as now noted for his yogic detachment from petty jealousies, allegedly replied that Clapton could have her. Pattie (less noted for yogic detachment and having felt for some time disenchanted with her husband) regarded this as confirmation that the time had come to part company with him. In fact, she joined Clapton not long afterwards (1974). Her marriage to Harrison was dissolved two years later and she married E.C. in 1979.

Clapton's wooing and winning of George Harrison's wife was conducted amiably (though not painlessly) in a way that did not destroy the noted guitarists' friendship. Rumour legend offers a more histrionic and in some ways satisfying version of the critical moment when E.C. triumphed. The way my friends and I heard and retold it (with only minimal incredulity) Clapton had challenged Harrison to a guitar duel with Pattie as the tacit or overt prize. The contest raged for hours with each man capping the other's efforts, reaching musical heights unscaled in the annals of the electric guitar - heights unimaginable to all but angels or rock journalists; but finally Harrison had to bow to E.C.'s superior talent and yielded his wife without rancour.

The only approach to confirmation that I've ever found for this anecdote came from Tony Edser, founder-editor of the Clapton fanzine Where's Eric! He had heard that Clapton visited Harrison to talk over their mutual situation and that in order to release their pent-up frustrations they had seized guitars and played for hours with the desire (verbalized or not) of outdoing one another. He had also heard that E.C.'s recollection of the event had included the impression that he had come out on top, skill-and-improvisation-wise. But Tony had not heard that Pattie Harrison had been the trophy that went with winning the impromptu guitar duel.

Perhaps the stakes were understood even without the two men having to reach a prior verbal agreement about them; perhaps on some symbolical level the story could be described as true. Otherwise it acts as a dramatic episode in a great rocklore romance and still more importantly as an example of how rocklore revisits and revives old narrative motifs.

Artistic genius, as I just said, implies excessively strong, monoideological commitment to a chosen craft. In this case, it focusses upon the craft of playing the electric guitar. Such 100% commitment always commands awe; in the rock music world, it is often put forward as a sign or proof of genius in itself. We hear of modern "metal" guitar maestro Steve Vai practising for fifteen hours a day - thirty minutes to an hour of which may consist of not actually touching the instrument (let alone attempting to play it) but in walking around and meditating upon it: statements which this artiste apparently does not deny, although he recently said that he never meant them to stand out as a badge of superiority.⁷ We can accept this. The Masters are not like us. They exist on another plane of being. We enjoy stories which confirm they are...well, like that. And here we have a story which is a testament to this

kind of bizarre, all-conditioning dedication - a story, not without its humorous hyperbole, of two men so deeply committed to their art that they allow it to determine an affair of the most serious emotional - nay, *spiritual* import that most of us can imagine.

Beyond its intensely unworldly flavour, the episode also repackages that most attractive of narratives, the epic clash between two undefeatable masters. Lancelot fights Galahad; Irresistible Force meets Immovable Object. Rock guitar fans are passionately prone to debate the relative merits of their heroes. In the Sixties, for example, we argued over whether or not Peter Green was a better guitarist than Eric Clapton (whom he'd replaced in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers) and likewise the claims of Alvin Lee over Jeff Beck - all this without stopping to define the criteria on which the arguments were based, or indeed what the hell we meant by a "good guitarist", much less a "better" guitarist. Nowadays the blue and red corners may be occupied by such as Eddie Van Halen and Nuno Bettencourt or (superheavyweight bout!) Vai against Joe Satriani, with frequent assertions from the new generation of fans that these heroes are "better than" Eric Clapton *et al.*, ever were, are or could be. All this acknowledges that rock music contains a moderate or not-so-moderate element of competition which occasional surfaces in guitar "duels".

These 'head-to-heads' may be so called because the contestants meet in head-on confrontation with crania metaphorically and sometimes literally lowered like a pair of belligerent buffaloes, but also with reference to the fact (still metaphorical/literal) that they are opposing the headstocks of their guitars.⁸ Treasured icons of the aggression supposedly contained in the music, such events can be actual facts of the rock world. Duels in which rival guitar-players competed to outplay each other in terms of technique or sheer violence were elevated into somewhat predictable and histrionic features of early 1970s stage performances, the contestants advancing on one another meaningfully at strategic points of a song, standing face to face and perhaps leaning so close that the necks of their respective instruments collided. Raising the whole body of your guitar and thrusting it into the opponent's mush as if you were about to shove it down his throat was also commended. In less public arenas, or so I have heard, antagonistic players would appear at rivals' gigs and challenge them to play until one was shamed into leaving the stage. I daresay that rock enthusiasts can recite examples of some legendary contests which took place late at night in small, anonymous clubs with only a tiny audience present and sadly no recording apparatus...

Guitar duels seem to have been a legacy from the world of jazz; otherwise, they appear to have evolved from the concept of jam sessions, those glorious and usually ad hoc occasions where musicians meet up to improvise together even when (most especially when?) they are total strangers. Ostensibly, jams are collaborations where the music and the process of making it surmounts personal animosities and jealousies. In practice, they often contain an element of trying to "beat" or outplay your fellow-musician, for, humans being what they are, there

is always satisfaction in demonstrating to your audience and/or to your fellow jammer that you can play what he can't and faster and better. As an inveterate jammer, Clapton has acknowledged that jamming *must* have such a competitive element and without conscious hyperbole describes his approach to these situations through the simile of a master swordsman challenged by some brash upstart as per The Seven Samurai: "I let the loudmouth or the villain, mouth off, get it all out of the way and then I just come in very quietly...Just one note or something that will shut everyone up, if I can find it."⁹

Eric Clapton seems well qualified to talk about guitar duelling. I can remember an interview (but cannot cite full references to it) in which he spoke about a period of his life when practically every invitation to spend a friendly evening at someone's house ended with him pitted against another visitor in a guitar duel - a visitor who ostensibly just happened along, though evidently with the unconfessed purpose of mortifying the great E.C. So there is no point in trying to discredit the factuality of head-to-heads; even more evidential is fans' relish for tales concerning them. It is not over-cautious to suggest that many of the latter are sharp embellishments of more prosaic facts. The Clapton-versus-Harrison duel over Pattie seems to fall in that category.¹⁰

Clapton's choice of simile ("just like in samurai films") is remarkably apposite. Rocklore has rediscovered in its legendary guitar duels the perennially popular motif in which some quiet, unassuming master (typically, belonging to the older generation) is reluctantly inveigled into a test of skill and technique by a brash, ill-mannered pretender (typically, of the younger generation) who seeks to enhance his own reputation at the expense of what he regards as the master's ill-merited one. In these episodes the old order never yieldeth place to new. The standard denouement is for the older man to inflict a devastating defeat on the challenger by recourse to a beautifully simple technique, the kind born from long years of dedicated practice and experimentation, but also from the spiritual enlightenment that evolved with and beyond that technical process.

You may recognize this or something like it if you were brought up on a diet of "Westerns". In those romantic sagas every other saloon had its resident braggart (frequently an ill-shaven one, at that) whose whole *raison d'être* was to coerce the gunslinging hero to show what he could do - despite statutory non-provocative responses, needless to add. If he was lucky, the bellicose one would merely be shown as totally inadequate for the iconoclastic task he had set himself; the hero would settle for shooting the gun out of his hand, for example. If he wasn't lucky, he'd wind up on Boot Hill via the saloon floor. (Note in such pictures the omnipresence of that popular comic folk-type, usually portrayed as a small scuttling man of macabre aspect and rusty black suit. I refer, of course, to The Undertaker).

But, as Clapton's remark indicates, the same motif is even better illustrated in Japanese samurai lore and the films which exploit it. A frequently recycled version has the ill-

mannered disrespector of age and reputation force a contest upon the master of the style which its inventor enigmatically calls "the art of fighting without fighting". The confrontation normally takes place on a small boat; given no choice other than to put his "fighting without fighting" style to the test against the upstart's, the elderly master politely suggests that as there's insufficient space for them to do themselves justice, they should row across to a convenient island or beach. As the vessel grounds in the shallows, the master courteously invites his challenger to step ashore ahead of him, which he does in the alacrity of his enthusiasm for the duel which is to come. He bounds up the beach - turns around - and sees the master rowing slowly but away. "And that," floats back the voice of the steadily-receding old swordsman, "is what I call the art of Fighting without Fighting."¹¹

This is a nice, clean and satisfying story with a witty core. Brashness and *lese majeste* are reprov'd - bloodlessly, but in the most decisive fashion. The intellectual and moral superiority of the hero are vindicated as much as his technique. Moreover, the validity of his art and all it encapsulates prevails over crude energy and ambition: all this with a masterly economy. Rocklore has its own versions to confirm the acknowledged merit of certain performers and their styles in the face of challenges from rival schools. At a time when rock guitar is increasingly evaluated in terms of the unremitting speed, loudness and raw power of its leading proponents, 60s-bred players and listeners sense a rejection of the "purity of line" or "simplicity" which they (retrospectively) find in the music of their era. Perhaps the newcomers are saying they are better than the guitar heroes of yesteryear? and that their music is better? The brash young fretboard samurai need a lesson and rocklore legend hands them one.

We just heard Eric Clapton, who in his Bluesbreakers/Cream days was taken as an embodiment of speed, loudness and raw power, alluding to an esoteric technique: the solo of 'Just one note...that will shut everyone up.' Like some aged swordsman who has studied, assessed and summated a huge number of techniques over the years only to reject them in favour of the utter, all-expressive simplicity of the "one cut" or single sword stroke that negates rivals' complexities and pretensions, he has spoken several times of a desire to be able to move audiences to tears with a solitary note or, failing that, with a solo comprised of only a few notes radiating a matchless kind of intensity.¹² This may sound like a guitarist's equivalent of the composer's fabulous Lost Chord, but rocklore possibly has occasions when it needs its Holy Grail and a few rumour-legends reflect that some have found it.

A good example of what has been called the "One-Note Blow-Away" comes from Robert Wyatt's account of what happened when jazz guitarist Larry Coryell took on rock luminary Jimi Hendrix. Coryell, highly rated in his own musical field, appears to have believed that there was nothing to this business of playing rock and so, in Wyatt's words, became:

'....one of the few people who ever got up and tried to cut Hendrix. It was at the old Scene Club in New York, and he was leaping backwards and forwards, his fingers flying, and Hendrix - when it came to his solo - just went "ba-WO-O-O-OWWWW" and it just erased the last ten minutes with one note. It was silly for Coryell even to try. It was like walking into a blowtorch...the fool!¹³

Wyatt, let it be confessed, is a Hendrix admirer. We might object that judging the outcome of so rarefied a thing as a guitar duel is likely to be a subjective affair and that other observers - a jazz fan, for instance, or perhaps even Larry Coryell himself - might have evaluated the outcome of this one rather differently from Wyatt. Can we be sure that Hendrix triumphed so completely, or even at all? The envoi to the story given by Charles Shaar Murray - that Coryell generously admitted that he'd better go back to his record collection and practise, 'because it's going to be years before my version of rock is as together as his' - suggests that we can.¹⁴

The Coryell-v-Hendrix anecdote brings together the theme of the epic clash between two rival masters (Rock versus Jazz) and the motif of "Master defeats Challenger through simple technique" (the one-note blow-away: notice how the narrator emphasizes the power of that single note and its unutterable ability to decide the issue - 'it just erased the last ten minutes...'). These stories dwell upon the special quality of the Master - perhaps enshrined in one unimaginable note or action. They confirm for us that the Master is as good as we have always believed him to be; that the respect and awe that we have lavished upon his name has not been misspent and that his art (which, by our choice of him as our idol or inspiration, is *our* art) has been ratified over all rival systems and options. What argument can there be about his superiority? The story upholds our standards and critical or emotional responses to the Master and his Art.

The Master defies Time. His Art resists the challenge of Youth, which is a challenge of Change. Through him we defy growing old and ineffectual. He is not as other men..

Michael Goss 1993.

ENVOI

Just when you thought that this article couldn't possibly be any longer...The guitar-duel waged between human antagonists has obvious extensions or analogues wherein *one* of the contestants is *not* human, but supernatural. This ultimate opponent is frequently identified as the Devil).

Just as rocklore's head-to-heads derive from earlier non-musical battles between Masters - a point insufficiently developed in my article, for all its length! - these duels with the Devil have older formats in which the contest may

vary from wrestling or riddle-solving to bagpiping or fiddle-playing. (Anyone remember that devilishly catchy C&W number some years back which pitted Johnny against Satan in an all-out fiddling contest? As somebody protested in the rock press at the time, the duel was biased by virtue of the composer's giving Johnny all the best instrumental breaks).

The price of victory or defeat here was usually the human contestant's soul. An imaginative and well-known updating provided the climax to the 1986 film, Crossroads, where the young white blues player has to take on the Devil's representative (Satanically played by metal maestro Steve Vai) in a guitar duel to save - not his own soul, but that of his companion, the elderly harmonica-man Willie Brown. You get no free FF subscription renewal for guessing who comes out on top; aficionados still treasure the memory of the clang emitted by Vai's guitar as he throws it down prior to quitting the arena.

Crossroads was really all about Robert Johnson, arguably the best-loved of pre-War blues artistes (though I expect that blues purists may want to sneer a bit at that description). Johnson's canon consists of the 29 songs (including second takes) which he completed before dying under clearly homicidal yet still disputed circumstances in 1938. Ignoring the film's debt to Johnson in its title,¹⁵ Crossroads took its theme from the durable legends that (a) at least one more Robert Johnson numbers remains to be discovered - which is what the film's youthful hero Eugene hopes initially to achieve when helping Johnson's friend Willie Brown to escape from a senior citizen's home and get back to Mississippi and (b) that Johnson acquired his musical skills as a result of signing his soul away to the Devil - as Willie Brown had done also - during the tradition-sanctioned midnight meeting at the crossroads. Here again is a type or motif which dates back to pre-Rock days when fiddlers, pipers and even banjo-players enjoyed the status now accorded to guitarists. Interviews with several rock stars of today suggest that the easily-rationalized rumour concerning Johnson's "deal" with the Man in Black is still current and not altogether disbelieved.

I could write more on this, much more...But the guy down the street's comin' round with his Strat and I gotta go practise my licks...Starting with "Layla", obviously, and then "Wonderful Tonight"...

MG

¹ An experience almost undergone by the beautiful Elizabeth Siddal when posing for Sir John Everett Millais's "Ophelia" during the Winter of 1851-1852. In the grip of Pre-Raphaelite mania for realism, Millais placed her (fully clad in a specially-purchased antique dress) in a bath warmed - faintly, one would guess - by lamps positioned underneath it. The figure took him four months to complete, though needless to say Ms. Siddons didn't have to spend all of that period in the bath. Millais's dedication to artistic truth was much admired as a result; you can admire the results of it at the Tate Gallery, London or in Christopher Wood's The Pre-Raphaelites (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981) where the picture is reproduced on page 33. In Ch.31 of Joyce Cary's The Horse's Mouth (1944) the sculptor Abel makes his wife and model Lolie hang from the top edge of a propped-up dining table so that he can capture the effect of 'declivity' and 'descending shapes'. She is subsequently

found 'hanging on - like a side of pork, cold as wet meat' and unconscious. 'The diagnosis at the hospital was exposure, shock, displacement of the caudal vertebrae and malnutrition', but she does not complain. As the hero remarks, this sort of treatment is all part of what Lolie is married to.

² Written in 1968, "Badge" appeared as a track on Cream's "Goodbye" album (Polydor 583053) the following year with Harrison playing second guitar. The single was released later in 1969. (Details from Tom Schultheiss, The Beatles. A Day In The Life. The Day-to-Day Diary 1960-1970. London/New York etc.: Omnibus Press, 1980).

³ Quoted in Ray Coleman, Survivor. The Authorized Biography of Eric Clapton. (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985; Futura paperback edition, 1986; page 125 (all quotations here are taken from the latter edition).

⁴ ditto, page 172.

⁵ First released on the double album, Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs in December 1970. It has remained central to Clapton's performances and, apart from becoming a rock "standard" the song has been popularized further by the use of its motif ("riff") for TV adverts; incidentally, an intriguing number of rumours surround allegations that the original riff (or other parts of the song) did *not* originate with Clapton. Other songs directly related to his love for Pattie include "Wonderful Tonight", which some would regard as even more typically associated with Clapton. Inevitably, "Layla" has become one of those test-pieces which all self-respecting guitarists are required to know (at least, in part) and as such has become over-familiar to music shop owners across the Western hemisphere; a weary letter from one such salesperson in Guitar Player for September 1993 castigated 'the pacemaker-safe versions of "Layla" that every over-the hill 40-something "rocker" insists on playing these days'. Remember: when trying out your next axe, avoid ..._that song. Avoid "Wonderful Tonight" as well.

⁶ Coleman, op.cit. page 181.

⁷ "When I said I practised for ten or fifteen hours a day, it was only because I was asked...Believe me, it wasn't suffering...I really enjoy practising." - Steve Vai in an interview with Brad Tolinski, Guitar World 12:4 (April 1991) page 76.

⁸ The headstock is the furthest extension of the guitar's neck and on most instruments provides a location for the machine heads (or tuning pegs). On contemporary guitars, headstocks may be lobe-like, extremely pointed at upward or downward angles or may not exist at all.

⁹ Quoted in Coleman, op.cit. page 231. For more of Clapton's thoughts on the subject, see page 249.

¹⁰ Modern musical duels (as opposed to duets) have not been the exclusive prerogative of guitarists, of course. Clapton's former Cream colleague, the flamboyant Ginger Baker, once 'fought' a well-publicized percussive battle against jazz drummer Buddy Rich after weeks of mutual taunts about the other's inflated reputation. The result, if anyone cares, was declared a draw. At the time, not many people did care.

¹¹ This anecdote has been attached to several famous or near-legendary Japanese swordsmen, including Miyamoto Musashi whose career has been embellished by a whole library of apocryphal adventures. It was utilized as a way of establishing the hero's subtle intelligence in the Bruce Lee martial arts movie, "Enter The Dragon" (Golden Harvest, 1973) with the variation that the braggart is enticed into stepping out of a large boat into a smaller one. The master (played by Lee, of course) then pushes the small boat away and leaves his spluttering would-be opponent to drift half-submerged in his wake at the end of a tow-line.

¹² Clapton's one-note and (more obviously) the samurai's one cut can be compared with martial artist Bruce Lee's famous and apparently actual one-inch punch. Lee is an example of a modern master who, having spent years of intensive research into or sampling of established systems, rejected or adapted them in favour of simplicity. Criticising the unnecessary formality of classical martial arts - Lee was particularly scathing about Japanese styles with their elaborate *kata* - and the impracticality of the self-defence techniques they taught, he developed his Jeet Kune Do on the principles of economy of response and movement. His "masterpiece" was the one-inch punch, delivered across that distance and with right arm already extended, which propelled the recipient backwards for several feet. (See Glen Barclay's *Mind Over Matter* published by Arthur Barker, 1973, page 72. The same page mentions several analogous feats from other highly trained martial artists).

Inevitably, perhaps, Bruce Lee's short life and extraordinary influence in martial arts circles has attracted a number of legends testifying to his expertise and dedication. But then, martial arts lore in general contains numerous episodes to attract folklorists, including such controversy-ridden topics as the "delayed death touch" or *kiai-jitsu* ("spirit-shout art") which you may find in E.J. Harrison's *The Fighting Spirit of Japan* (Slough: E.J. Foulsham, 1955) but still more egregiously in John F. Gilbey's *Secret Fighting Arts of the World* (Charles Tuttle & Co., 1963). The latter features a number of unlikely-seeming "single blow" matchwinners guaranteed by their proponents to terminate a contest before it has really begun; for example, "The Liverpool Nutter", the "Macedonian Buttock", the "Dinky Little Poke" and (even better - no, I surely mean even worse!) the "Parisian Haliotic Attack".

¹³ Quoted in Charles Shaar Murray, *Crosstown Traffic. Jimi Hendrix and Post-War Pop*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1989) page 198.

¹⁴ ditto.

¹⁵ "Cross Road Blues" (*sic.*) remains one of Johnson's most popular songs. The opening shots of the film recreate the moment when he recorded it a hotel room session in San Antonio, Texas, on 27th November 1936. And quite poignantly in the opinion of this writer (who is one of few blues lovers prepared to admit not only that he actually *liked* *Crossroads* but thought Ralph "Karate Kid" Macchio took the part of Eugene well).



PATTI BOYD



GEORGE HARRISON

Blonde Icons

HOLE LOTTA Love



This is the week that boss-marrying AOR songbird Mariah Carey tops the UK album charts. This is the week that sickening Swedish pop-reggae combo Ace of Bass top the US singles chart with *The Sign*. This is the week that Euro-geeks Doop top the UK singles charts. This is the week that we need — *really, really* need — Courtney Love.

The rock world has become a safe place, home to photogenic popsters and positivity proselytisers. It offers us the ethereal, little-girl caterwaulings of Björk; the bouncy/Lycra-fuelled gyrations of Salt 'N' Pepa/En Vogue; the fake heroics of Bruce Springsteen; and the nostalgic retreats of Elvis Costello. Where's the danger? The scandal? The gossip? Where's the sex and drugs?

Stagger to your feet, Courtney Love. Born of genuine siltles stock (Dad was a roadie for The Grateful Dead, Mom a hippy), she was destined for the Bad Girl life which lay ahead. Dates are deliberately vague where 26-year-old Love is concerned (some say because she's not a mere 26 at all): her Drew Barrymore-esque early adolescence led to expulsion from school at 11 (for drinking), and institutionalisation at 12 (for shoplifting); by 15, she was ensconced in the heart of the Liverpool scene, circa Teardrop Explodes, where she shared a house with Julian Cope (providing him with the inspiration for a famously nasty poem) then grubbily lost her virginity in a council flat ("I had all this blood and fluids running down my legs," she recently recollected with characteristically trashy glee).

Task completed, Love returned to the States to form a string of prototype Riot Grrrl bands: The Italian Whore Nuns, Sugar Baby Doll, and Faith No More, while stripping to pay the rent. And she was fat — a condition immortalised in her two, not-terribly-memorable, cinematic outings in *Sid And Nancy*, and *Straight To Hell*.

Then came Los Angeles, weight loss, the band Hole, a natural drift towards

the Seattle grungeteria, and the inevitable pairing with King of the Scene, Kurt Cobain. Before Kurt, none of Love's outlandish, loud-mouthed behaviour registered even a blip on the scandal-ometer. After Kurt, *le deluge*.

It made great copy, and those of us starving for a good, juicy rock story followed it with relish. We dined out on the speculation that she'd ball-busted Kurt into romantic submission; that she'd put a spell on him, had laced his food, or worse. We bought the rumours about their Sid and Nancy existence; that she kept him hooked on heroin; that she, in Julian Cope's words, "sucked his brain dry"; that, Yoko-like, she caused a rift between Kurt and the band.

We devoured the Infamous Vanity Fair article which revealed that, throughout her pregnancy, Courtney and Kurt sat at home all day, in the dark, drinking and smoking and shooting up. And we savoured the equally infamous photo in that issue of a damaged-looking, extremely pregnant Love, grubby fingers poised aloft, clutching an airbrushed-out cigarette. We clucked and we tut-tutted and we decided the baby was doomed; that the two-headed monster now known as Kurtney was doomed. And we couldn't wait for the next instalment.

Well, baby Frances Bean is alive and kicking, and the Kurtneymobile is still firing on all cylinders. And scandal still clings to them like flies to mudhoney. First, the notorious unauthorised biography, which provoked Courtney and Kurt both to leave rambling threats on the female authors' answering machine (Kurt: "I could throw out a few thousand dollars to have you snuffed out..." ooh, rock'n'roll!). Then, a headline: 'A Coma Scare for Nirvana's Kurt Cobain.' Kurt's cocktail of prescription drugs and alcohol, taken while on tour in Rome last month, proved not to be lethal (awww, shucks — he coulda been a legend). But what's this? "The quick response of Courtney Love, who called for help when she found her

husband unconscious, saved his life," chirped *People* magazine. "Contrary to popular belief, Courtney is actually a very good influence, especially in terms of substance abuse," oozed (authorised) Nirvana biographer Michael Azerrad.

Saint Courtney Love? It can't be! We can only pray it's a temporary glitch. Because what makes Love such good value is that saint she ain't. She harangues bad music hacks from the stage, she accuses other women of being competitive bitches, she rudely blew out Madonna and her alternative wannabes at Maverick, she wrote a self-referential fanzine called *And She's Not Even Pretty*.

From feminist provocateur to plain old foul-mouthed harridan, she is consistently intriguing. We may look at her and see a lumpy-faced blonde with Baby Jane make-up and a fuck-you sneer, and we may scoff "Hag from hell". But secretly we admire her. Love loves her *Bad Girl* rock'n'roll lifestyle. She has her million-dollar record deal (with Geffen, Nirvana's label). She means it when she says, "It is completely normal to do pretty much almost anything I've ever done. Nobody sees that. They're angry because I can't be like a 'real girl.'" And she got her man.

And the music? Well, let's face it, it's abrasive sub-Nirvana garage rock with punchy feminist lyrics. It won't make a major mark. But who cares? As long as Courtney Love is making records, the articles will keep on coming. And boy oh boy, do we need them.



● THEY'RE aren't many vices that outrageous Courtney Love hasn't tried out during her 28 years. The controversial singer with all-girl group Hole admits she was a bit of a wild child and has sampled most things at least once.

Courtney, who is married to Nirvana front-man Kurt Cobain, once earned £1,150 a week as a stripper in Japan and worked in a seedy topless bar in Guam.

● The former drug addict says: "The bar showed a lot of porno movies. When I'd seen *Callula* three times, I knew my shift was over." The brazen blonde isn't shy when it comes to discussing her love life and the effect it has had on some of her lovers.

● She boasts: "Three times people have gone gay after me. I take it as a compliment." God knows what tricks she gets up to in bed. But it must have been enough to put three guys off the opposite sex for life.

Articles elsewhere

*** Last issue we had three cases of rare cars round abandoned and forgotten, casting doubts on the tales' veracity. *Classic Detective Work* (*D Express*, 1/1/94) tells of Robert Brooks, who would "follow rumour, gossip, a casual reference in an old newspaper cutting, or a simple hunch." Among his finds since breaking away from Christie's in 1989 are cars other experts claimed had been sold for scrap years ago or vintage ones which had been hidden away in barns all around the world. The article, by David Williams, in singling out a car which netted its owner £27,000 is referred to by the term "barn discovery." Now we have a generic name for this.

*** Rock stars' involvements with ghosts was the subject of *It's a Shame About Wraith* (*New Musical Express*, 25/12/93- 1/1/94) by Fred Dellar. Of interest to supernatural fans.

*** In *Ghosts of War* (*D Telegraph*, 27/11/93), W F Deedees writes about Lt-Col John Cray, who leads America's Missing in Action task force, checking rumours and pursuing every "village legend," despite saying: "I do not believe there is any American alive." There is, however, the counter argument that US servicemen are held captive still in Indochina and that there is a conspiracy within the US government ranks to cover it up.

*** Broadcasters' cock-ups, real or rumoured, are legion. The *Centipede* column (*Guardian*, 2/12/93) in looking at radio argued "how easily cubic and become public, news can become nude, a floppy disk can become a floppy dick." He then notes that "legend recalls an impressive recovery reputedly made by the newsreader who, owing to a typing error in his script, reported a fatal collision not between a lorry and a car, but a lorry and a cat. It was out before he knew it. He paused briefly, and said softly: "Poor pussy."

INSIDE YOUR GREAT VALUE MAIL TONIGHT...

MARKS & SPENCER



HOW OUR MAN SCRETON-CHANGED
...centre pages

WORKING HOLIDAYS

SOME GREAT OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST

page 6

...PLUS THE BEST TV AND SATELLITE GUIDE AROUND

*** FF editor Paul Screeton featured as one of two guinea pigs transformed from fashion slob to smart men about town in *Clothes Maketh the Man* (Mail, Hartlepool, 4/1/94). But why did feature writer Bernice Saltzer think "Our man Screeton" fitted the role? Did it have anything to do with

*** Quest for the Hereford tramp (*Mail*, Hartlepool, 12/1/94), by Paul Screeton, a slightly shortened version of the piece on Peter McMahon (FF21).

*** 122 were 'allowed to die'. (*Mail*, Hartlepool, 17/12/93). Sensational claim 79 years after notorious bombardment of Hartlepool by German battlecruisers that Admiralty had cracked a code and hoped to sink the ships as they returned. Many questions still remain unanswered - such as how did the Germans get back safely?

Oldies but Goodies

His death unleashed a grand little piece of urban legend revisionism when Richard Cohen, his editor at Hutchinson, remembered Anthony Burgess's reaction when he unwisely suggested a series of amendments to the manuscript of his novel The Piano Players, published in 1986. "I didn't know that Burgess never accepted editors' suggestions," he said. "Towards the end of the book he had a couple going to France with the mother-in-law, who dies while they are there. They strap her body to the roof-rack, but when they stop for lunch they return to find the car has been stolen. I told Burgess this was one of the oldest chestnuts around. With his usual charm he wrote back to say that he was well aware of this fact, but he himself had invented the story back in the Thirties and was therefore going to leave it." (The Times Magazine, 4/12/93)

As for Hutchinson, this one is apposite and also claims dubious authenticity -- but we know better! When a literary editor asked Jeffrey Robinson for a photograph to accompany a review of his latest book, The End of the American Century: Hidden Agendas of the Cold War (Century Hutchinson), he was only too pleased to put one in an envelope and telephoned for a motorbike messenger. At the same time, Robinson's young daughter was struck down by a sore throat. The family doctor, fearing complications, asked for a sample. Robinson's wife, Aline, placed the sample in a Jiffy bag, and also rang for a courier. Later the medical laboratory called back to thank Robinson for the photo. He has yet to hear from the literary editor . . . (D Telegraph, 8/7/92).

Which brings us neatly to a piece in the John Pool column, Mail, Hartlepool, 19/3/94. Paul Wilderspin, chief sub-editor, swears it happened to a friend of his.

A wee spot of bother

THERE are embarrassing moments in life when you just want the earth to swallow you up. And there are times when it's even worse than that. The ultimate in vexed abashment occurred when a friend of a friend had to go for a check up after his vasectomy.

The young nurse at the clinic asked the man if he had brought his sample. The man answered in the negative and was given a small plastic pot and sent to a small room. He returned some moments later and handed over the sample to the young assistant only to be told "Actually it was urine we wanted"

Update

MARS BAR. At least in Britain everyone will have read of nurse Sue Brady who gave children as young as nine a lesson in how Mars bars were used in sex games. When a pupil at Highfield Primary School, Shadwell, near, Leeds, asked what a "Mars bar party" was, she explained how some people melted chocolate bars for use in oral sex. (Sun, D Star, etc., 23/3/94). We discussed this with regard to Marianne Faithfull (FF19:3-7) and The Independent leader column (24/3/94) put it into perspective. It reckoned the nurse dealt sensitively and carefully with the worst crudities her charges could throw at her, saying it was not her fault that the term "shagging" has been common currency among children for years. It went on: "Rock 'n' roll legend, not Highfield Primary, must take responsibility for giving Mars bars their sexual cachet. And sex education cannot be blamed for the fact that Gillian T aylor's libel case put 'blow jobs' on the national curriculum for people of all ages."

Shortly before this adverts in Smash Hits, Just 17 and Shoot mags showed a Mars with three condoms. Roman Catholic Bishop of Motherwell Joseph Devine told his flock: "Examine your conscience before buying another Mars bar." A Mars spokesman said: "It's not an incitement to sex." (News of the World, 6/3/94).

BACK TO FRONT BUILDING. Filing material, an article on World War II pillboxes caught my eye and upon reading round it stated that the siting of each box, and position of the gunslits, was apparently decided with great care. A retired Peterborough builder told Mike Keeble, a farmer who talked about his "mild obsession" about them on the BBC's Farming Today programme, how he was instructed to build a line of boxes at sites marked out with pegs by an army officer. At one site, where someone shifted the pegs, the pillbox was built facing the wrong way. "Rumours flew around that there was a German spy in the village," said Mike (Northern Echo, 9/3/92). The Fortress Study Group has been cataloguing all remaining such structures.

* See Trolley Folly, FF11:4.

DAILY STAR, Thursday, February 24, 1994



CRUELTY TO R.S.P.C.A. Animal rights idiocy tales are getting common (FF21:17). Insp. Brian Cowing, of the RSPCA, felt a right bird-brain when he realised the complaint he was investigating at Perth market, Scotland, was a "prize every time" slot machine mechanical furry green and blue parrot. "The complaint was genuine," he claimed, "but you'd have to be very shortsighted to mistake it for a real bird when it's got an electric cable up its backside." (D. Star, 9/8/93). Pub landlady Jacqui Philips was accused of cruelty - to a plastic fish. She bought Fillet, a yellow and black angel fish in a tiny replica porthole, to give regulars a laugh. However, a woman tippler flipped when she saw battery-operated Fillet and thought it was a real goldfish. Insp Janet Harvey arrived at the Anchor Inn, Thornbury, near Bristol, and snapped: "I want to talk to you about how you're treating your goldfish." It ended with a gulp and laughter (D Star, 9/3/94).

But is there journalistic mischief at work; perhaps a freelance concocting a story to sell? The next tale began as a hoax but as you'll see those animal lovers got fooled again. There was disappointment for randy punters when they turned up for the opening of the sleazy Club Bonk in Liverpool. A review in the city's L. Scene mag which had promised dirty dancing, wank parlours and Gladiator-style "cock fights", was a hoax, and the clubbers tempted to the Old Post Office in Victoria Street took their frustrations out by battling with animal rights activists. They'd arrived because the article said there'd be a caged panther suspended over the dance floor. "It was bloody obvious it was a hoax," sighed a mag spokesman (D Sport, 11/4/94).

FREDDIE AND THE DREAMTIME PLUS ESTIALITY.

Is Amble's Freddie the dolphin dead we asked (FF21:19), unable to locate an important cutting. We found it. Expert Dr Horace Dobbs (whose book Journey into Dolphin Dreamtime -- Jonathan Cape, £8.99) said: "He is probably enjoying himself thousands of miles away in the sun." (Journal, Newcastle, 28/8/93). Other mentions being (Journal, 10/8/93; Northern Echo, 5/8/93).

Dr Dobbs sat through the infamous case of alleged sexual molestation of Freddie. But what if a dolphin is taken advantage of another mammalian species? When a whale which mated with a dolphin it gave birth to a six-foot "wholpin" at an aquarium in Enoshima, Japan. It was to be named by local children (Sun, ?).

Folklore Sport



Mixed views of Eric Cantona in Leeds, after his acrimonious crossing of the Pennines from Leeds United to Manchester, writes Maev Kennedy (Guardian diary, 3/4/94). His autobiography, Cantona - My Story, doesn't provide many clues as to why the Manchester terraces keep chanting allegations about the footballer and other players' wives, but it is sealing awfully well. Best selling, in fact. The Yorkshire Evening Post, based in Leeds, was forced to concede last night that it is the number one best seller, but listed it under Fiction.



Julian Cope, eccentric rock star, has revealed (RT:bo) that he's an astroarchaeologist and putting together "The Modern Antiquary," a book on stone circles. He produced a worked object he found in the Oranys and told the interviewer: "I call it a megalithic dildo. Do you think it was for giving the Goddess a good seeing to? I must find out more about it. It's going to be in the book." Nice way to ostracise pagan buyers, Jules! Can't wait to see the book.

Rock star! A replica of our ancient monument Stonehenge - but one-twelfth the size - is the new star attraction at Babbacombe model village, near Paignton, Devon (Sun, 23/3/94). I went two years ago and it's really worth seeing.



Books

SEEKERS OF THE LINEAR VISION

By PAUL SCREETON

It is good to see Paul's documentary of the ins-and-outs of ley hunting finally published under one cover. Originally it came out as a series of articles in Donald Cyr's remarkable periodical Stonehenge Viewpoint, and this reprint (with additions) is a most valuable personal view of the historical development (and personages) of ley hunting, from Alfred Watkins until 1992.

Illustrated with rare photographs of half-forgotten, yet important (to ley hunting) events, and even more "period" photographs of some of the more prominent protagonists of earth mysteries. It is impossible to overstate the value of this work for the historian of geomantic research (for it is history already).

Seekers of the Linear Vision is a timely reminder of the fashions through which ley hunting has passed over the years. It is a model showing us how much the present-day ley fashions - shamanism, death-roads, dreamtimes, even paganism - can come and go, to be replaced by other plausible hypotheses that fit the zeitgeist. The rancour that earth mysteries generates between protagonists of minutely different theories is partly because of these changing fashions. Those who invent the fashions seem to resent those who question them, and vice versa. If one dares to question certain "celebrities," even in the most friendly terms of goodwill, then one can expect to be vilified in print almost to the point of libel. Fortunately, this is something that Paul Screeton (to his enduring credit) has never done. Others are not so mature and balanced, as a perusal of certain EM publications today will demonstrate.

As a bonus, this book contains a sort of postlude by the indomitable Donald Cyr, expounding his philosophy in The Science of Ley Hunting.

Needless to say, it is a challenging piece. Overall, I would recommend Seekers of the Linear Vision to all geomantic enthusiasts.

-- Nigel Pennick, 7.2.94.

* Price £5.95, including p&p. Orders only to Specialist Knowledge Services, 20 Paul Street, Frome, BA11 1DX.

HAUNTS OF THE BLACK MASSEUR

By Charles Sprawson

A sprawling, quixotic book full of the individuality not normally tolerated or encouraged by publishers. Hailed in hardback, this extended essay on the swimmer as hero - and heroine - is full of the famous and flamboyant, wittily and eccentrically written, full of facts and figures, plus a great deal of trifles and trivia.

It will either captivate or irritate, covering various cultures and attitudes to the act, art and skills of swimming, and to water in general. The author produces a whirlpool of obsessions, anecdotes, classical allusions and heroic perspective of swimming.

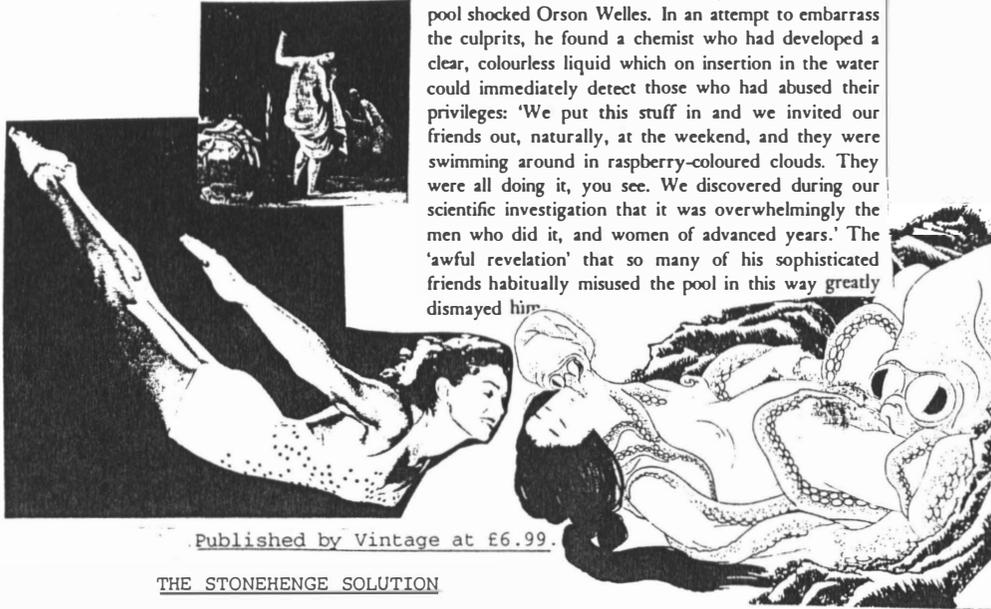
Swimming, like sex, became associated with the devil and was almost suppressed during the Christian domination of Europe. Not until the beginnings of the 19th century did its popularity revive.

Basically about the psychology of swimming, it also covers all matters aquatic.

Those barbaric Romans would weep over the death of their favourite fish and slaves who had broken plates were thrown into ponds to feed the lampreys. Gustave Moreau had "painted some majestic slave girls writhing in soldiers' arms before being dropped as fodder into a pool of lampreys to create the Roman delicacy, those strange fish with suckers instead of mouths, whose horny gums and rough tongues tear up their victims and in making love devour and disembowel the female."

Sprawson suggest we had a former marine existence - lampreys' kidneys and gills at the embryonic stage, which vanish at birth.

This book's particular interest to folklorists will be in such aspects as psychology, mythology, springs, wild children and evolution. But is there a "proper" urban myth? Well, try this: Signs of urine in his



pool shocked Orson Welles. In an attempt to embarrass the culprits, he found a chemist who had developed a clear, colourless liquid which on insertion in the water could immediately detect those who had abused their privileges: 'We put this stuff in and we invited our friends out, naturally, at the weekend, and they were swimming around in raspberry-coloured clouds. They were all doing it, you see. We discovered during our scientific investigation that it was overwhelmingly the men who did it, and women of advanced years.' The 'awful revelation' that so many of his sophisticated friends habitually misused the pool in this way greatly dismayed him.

Published by Vintage at £6.99.

THE STONEHENGE SOLUTION

By George Terence Meaden

Diving Girl and Octopuses, 1814, Katsushika Hokusai

If *The Sun* (2/6/92) can be excited by this book, why not me? Headlined WHY DIRTY DRUIDS BUILT STONEHENGE, there was a picture of the monument with the caption: "Stonehenge ... was it a sex ring?"

Subtitled bravely or stupidly *The Secret Revealed*, Meaden told the *Sun*: "My explanation is dramatic, logical - and very sexy." Having read the book, the name Onan comes to mind.

Published by Souvenir Press at £18.99.



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

By Derek Picot

BUGGING devices, a drunk countess who sponged her face with her pet jellyfish, Typhoo for the hotel inspector ... these are some of the hospitality hiccups and calamities revealed when the general manager of a top London hotel reveals some nightmares of his trade. Many are amusing, many plain dull to all but those in the business.

These improbable tales are all claimed to be true, but as one might expect there are several variations of familiar apocryphal tales: the philanderer left with the baby when caught by his wife bedding his secretary; the honeymoon couple who in the dark and their frenzy mistook identical tins of Kiwi black shoe polish and Zambuk medical jel; the best suite redecored for blind Stevie Wonder; Duke of York on telephone mistaken as pub and not aristocrat; "send usual cockroach letter"; Fawly Towers rat (palm squirrel claimed) in the Cyprus swimming pool.

Missing is the famous black man in the lift with fierce dogs who pays the bill; also plush reception where bridegroom gives honeymoon tickets to bride and best man for their infidelity (supposed to have happened to a Hartlepool couple at the Gosforth Park Hotel and whose manager had heard the tale when questioned by a reporter, but had heard it occurred at the Grand Hotel - Hartlepool).

Published by Robson Books at £4.95.

THE BEAST WITHIN

By Adam Douglas

THIS impressively scholarly study of specula-

tions regarding werewolves covers a great deal of ground in detail.

He treats lycanthropy as a myth, assuming tales of transformation to be the result of hallucinations, psychiatric disorder, rumours and mass hysteria or tabloid newspaper slanted



Never does he consider seriously the possibility of genuine shape-shifting ability, despite lengthy discussion and sound comprehension of Carlo Ginzburg's medieval shamanism explanation for some witchcraft claims.

Despite a lengthy passage on the cult of the severed head, Douglas misses the opportunity to examine the beasts seen at Hexham and Southampton in connection with the same archaic heads (see *Tales of the Hexham Heads* by Paul Screeton). Too much like the real thing, perhaps?

He ranges through cinematic projection, Mowgli, feral children raised by wolves, full moon connection and why silver bullets counter lycanthropy.

A good, solid read from Palaeolithic animal cults to modern psychiatric wards.

Published by Orion at £5.99.

CRAIG SHERGOLD: A MOTHER'S STORY

By Marion Shergold with Pamela Cockerill

THE nation's heart went out to Craig Shergold, the nine-year-old boy with a malignant tumour who was offered one last chance to live by an American billionaire and a neurosurgeon with a revolutionary surgery technique.

Craig was far from unique but when he returned home fit and well, it gave hope to thousands of others.

On the level of the lad's courage this is a truly moving story. The other aspect is equally interesting and heart-warming - the campaign to get enough get-well cards to win an entry into the Guinness Book of Records. Eventually he received more than one hundred million cards!

But this was only after book boss Norris McWhirter forced a return; overriding book editor Donald McFarlane, who believed the appeal would "cause more distress than positive value." And that it was policy not to accept any more records that depended on media appeals.

Not mentioned in Marion's book, but obviously what McFarlane was aware of is the similar campaign in the US, but there the cards were sent for a non-existent patient in Glasgow known in modern mythology as "Little Buddy" to get him into the Guinness Book of Records. With Craig, real life mirrored rumour.

Published by Bantam Books at £4.99.

Magzines

DEAR MR THOMS. Non-profitmaking folklore miscellany. Sub £5 for approx 6 issues. From Gillian Bennett, 28 Brownsville Road, Stockport, SK4 4PF.

No. 32. Editor Gillian Bennett, of Stockport, on the media reaction to the offer of food parcels for its poor folk from Pakistan. Michael Goss finds antecedents to several urban myths in Poe, Stevenson and Hardy. Plus emoticons update; playground games; photocopylore; Atlantis reconsidered; Tour de France cycling legend; severed penis. Book reviews.

No. 33. Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend and variations covered in quite some depth; Mary had a Little Lamb perversions. Updates on emoticons, seven hills and severed penis (a la Bobbitts).

WEARWOLF. Single issue 60p plus stamp. From Wolf's Head Press, P O Box 77, Sunderland, SR1 1EB.

No. 7. Topics include garden gnomes; religious happenings; ghostly goings-on; Vlad the Impaler; Dracula and vampire theories; mythical felids; crop circles. Plus magazine reviews and dreadful mercifully short poems.

+^+^+^+ A6 size! Size halved now and also price. 5 issues for £2.50; single copy 30p + stamp.

No. 8. And you thought FF was trying to make you go blind (sometimes in more ways than one). Sixteen tiny type pages. Weird, to boot. Begins with nasty Wenceslas revisionism short story, but of particular interest to FF readers will be items on Christian condemnation of Hallowe'en; message-in-a-bottle; "who won the FA Cup and never scored?"; ufo-logy; Elvis detector. Mag reviews; filler items.

FORTEAN TIMES. UK six issues £12; US \$30. Cheques payable to John Brown Publishing and send to Fortean Times, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

No. 71. Jim Schnabel on self-victimisation syndromes. In an interview Terence McKenna expounds on psychedelics, flying saucers, abductions, and the transcendental attractor at the end of time (circa 2012AD). Of particular interest to folklorists are pieces on McDonald's allegedly funding the IRA (actually standing for Individual Retirement Account on payslips); colour pull-out of 20th century aliens; exotic rumours from the Balkans conflict; the medium Mirabelli; 1930s fairy sightings; stigmatics; and Callanish. Contributors to the forum section cover astrology, brain's electrical rhythms, foetal memory in alien abductions and future human matter transportation. Plus book and mag reviews; letters; and 16 pages if worldwide strange recent events.

No. 72. Interview with Jenny Cockell by editor Bob Rickard, who when I saw her "past life" TV presentation I was convinced. Plenty

to interest folklorists, particularly the team who drilled down into Hell; SCA update; jungle cat progeny; JFK assassination. Contributors cover Candyman as legend of black revenge and film for all urban tale buffs (by Michael Goss); Preposterous Perception (Robert Anton Wilson on our unwitting acceptance/embracing of the irrational); crashed flying saucers (Dennis Stacy on dodgy ground comparing Holocaust victims and this topic); sorry, no DNA replica dinosaur (Anthony McLuskey defends geneticists). Usual stuff.

No. 73. Of special interest to urban folklorists will be an investigation of urban foxes allegedly released in droves in rural areas; latest alien big cat roundup; Blessed Virgin Mary sightings. The road ghosts piece spooked me considerably for the spot shown on page 30 is where on two occasions last year I was present when a fellow member of the InterCity Railway Society was dropped off. The day after my FT arrived I was on an ICRS trip when I learned we would not be doing the Stockbridge drop - with its phantom hitch-hiker monk - as the chap had committed suicide. Forum contributions are: Munchausen's syndrome (alarm bells on these crazy psychiatric categorisations rang for me when harmless traintopping became Asperger's syndrome; SHC (piss-take of Randles & Hough book - at least they quoted my letter to them faithfully in it, though I warned there was no SHC angle); John Michell on Fort's world-as-hermaphrodite-view) and little(-known) Ern(-sts).

STRANGE MAGAZINE. US glossy Fortean mag. From P O Box 2246, Rockville, MD, 20847, USA. Cheques in sterling to Mark Chorvinsky. 4-issue sub £13.50.

No. 12. Mysterious plants to the fore (does the Venus flytrap come from outer space?). Nigel Watson on phantom airship scares. Cryptozoology, ghosts, ufos, thunderbird photo. Plus book reviews; letters.

THE LEY HUNTER. 4 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. 119. Three articles rather mystified me. Firstly the Irish sweathouses and how their purpose was shrouded in the Great Forgetting, plus how even during the famine the Irish would not eat such free nutrients as blackberries (Frank Carson has referred to the Great Forgetting as the potato famine - when the Irish forgot where they planted the spuds). Perhaps the Irish really are stupid bog trotters (in fact, were the sweathouses bogs, i.e. privvies?) or was the article a hoax? Secondly there is an attempt to link vampires with shamans within the current thinking, which I think is dubious and also misses any consideration of contemporary vampire connections and Aidsore. Thirdly the bizarre spirit trap theory. The layering of organic and inorganic material in prehistoric

mounds must surely be only to give them the structural longevity which has led to their survival. Paul Devereux points to John

Michell's earlier references to spirit paths and Michell himself writes of mysterious above-and-below routes and Devereux discusses types of alignment. Plus articles on continuing megalithic culture in Japan; Marfa Lights and scientific methodology and earthlights. Letters and book reviews.

No. 120. The "them and us" duality of archaeology and amateurs discussed by Bob Trubshaw. David Clarke on a living pagan ritual landscape in Scotland. Danny Sullivan quizzes Andy Collins on his orgone experimentation. Nigel Jackson on lycanthropic warrior-shamans. Paul Devereux on a Cornish ley. Paul Screeton on straight-walking Hereford tramp Peter McMahon. Plus prehistoric roads in Puerto Rico, neo-primitivism; true shamanism; Blenheim's warrior line.

NORTHERN EARTH. Journal of the Northern Earth Mysteries Group. Q. £5 sub. Cheques payable to Northern Earth Mysteries Group. From 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmrovi, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. HX7 5NP.

No. 56. Editor John Billingsley, himself a self-confessed headhunter for 15 years, questions the modern understanding of the "Celtic head," pointing to a process of recurrence rather than continuity, and suggests as a generic descriptive for this whole class of heads, "archaic head." Andy Roberts discovers a sheela-na-gig in Cumbria known to locals as Freya. Julia Smith writes about Killin, in the Trossachs, where my wife and I stayed for a week a couple of years ago. Other articles on Christianity and continuity; three local customs visited. Plus Northern news and ephemera; letters.

No. 57. Billingsley invites two women to give their views on the female perspective to EM: the lovely Jill Smith sensibly and the repugnant Monica Sjoos takes a side-swipe at my era of The Ley Hunter editorship ("entirely patriarchal" - what about Mollie Carey, Jan Roberts, and so on, contributions?). Gordon Harris mentions me with regard to his Martian linear structures espousal and others, too, examine such controversial possibilities. Editorial on endangered landscapes. Saddle form in sacred landscapes; notes; Bride church clusters.

BRIDESTONE. Promotes sane paganism and edited by Amanda the Grand Octopus. Q. £5 for 4; single copies £1.50. P.O.Box 18, Hessele, Hull, HU13 0HR.

No. 15. A contributor is allowed four pages to attack paganism which shows the mag is fair. Articles on Freya; pagan hospital visiting; climatic change; and greetings. Letters, exchange mags and notices.

No. 16. Plenty more gentle paganism and responses, including a reasonably argued defence of religious paganism.

Out of sequence No. 14. Amanda kindly sent photocopies of a couple of articles as the issue is now out of print. Controversial piece

by Philip Heselton on integrating personal sexuality into EM; aspects of Grimsby folklore (never realised it had a legend of being built on and around seven hills).

GLOUCESTERSHIRE EARTH MYSTERIES. £5.75 for 3 issues; £2.25 for 1. Cheques to Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries. Address P.O. Box 258, Cheltenham, Glos53 0HR.

No. 16. In his erudite way, John Michell puts into focus "The Fuss About Leys" in 11 paragraphs, seeking to point a clear way forward. Responding, editor Danny Sullivan sees dangers in revisionism, particularly a total denial of dowsing and energy lines. Also covered are haunted highways; quadrangle of landscape lines; Jack Fidler's dowsing research revisited; lost mazes; "yew turn" on motorway bid; interview with "esoteric astrologer" Peter Morris (you get the feeling the editors gave up at the end when not following up his claim in conversation of "I had an abduction experience and I had an ET implanting stuff in me" - just when it got, ahem, interesting, like); Tysoe horse hill figures and Templars. Miscellany includes debate on the Cerealogist's content while cornucopia reprints John Michell's Oldie magazine article, Meaden's position and Schnabel's book. Plus other book reviews.

THE CEREALOGIST. Thrice yearly: single copy £2.50; sub £7.50, inc p&p. Cheques to "The Cerealogist," Specialist Knowledge Services, St Aldhelm, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

No. 10. Under new editor George Wingfield, who looks at Satanic implications in the circles and certain key figures in its community. Review of 1993's motley formations. Lucy Pringle finds Schnabel's circle-making efforts gravely wanting. Plus dead porcupines in Saskatchewan circles; a US viewpoint; foreign formations; letters.

No. 11. Subjects include spontaneous images; corn circles as information from extraterrestrials to earthlings; sex symbolism in 1990 pictogram; difficulties in taking scientific approach to crop circles; worldwide reports: Cornference '93 report.

THE CROP WATCHER. Bi-monthly. Single copy £1.50; sub £9, inc p&p. Cheques to "Paul Fuller," 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hants., S51 7TY.

No. 18. Editor Paul Fuller vigorously supports Doug Bower and produces a detailed and basically sympathetic response to Schnabel's book. Plus ball lightning conference report; Schnabel circle-making; Imperial dimensions and Doug & Dave sighting; letters; 1993 circles crop.

No. 19. An indication that crop circles are now becoming a non-sustainable mag subject is a lengthy, major article here on the Linda Napolitano Manhattan Transfer ufo abduction claim. Ken Brown again presents Doug Bower in public and his circle-making claims, which are not universally accepted. Swedish circles. Paul Fuller quits BUFORA.

No. 20. Colin Andrews and United Nations

connection challenged; French crop circles; reams of exchange mags reviewed to fill up; sod of earth microwaved in oven on full power (in fact, sod it, we'll discontinue our exchange arrangement).

TOUCHSTONE. Mag of Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Q. £2. From J Goddard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Surrey.

No. 38. Chris Doherty dowses "one hand" as he cycles the byways of Surrey and finds "dragon lines" and circles ending in dog excrement piles on commons. Bristol ufos. Mars and Avebury connection?

ALIEN SCRIPTURE. Research into non-human intelligences. Q. 4-issue sub £7.50; single copies £2 or \$5. Payment to "Kevin McClure". Address 42 Victoria Road, Mount Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4QD.

No. 1. Editor Kevin McClure explains the point of the magazine and in an article the current state of Spiritualism. Hilary Evans meticulously fair as ever on the abduction experience as psychological process. Martin Kottmeyer considers the problem of Noncontact and argues that its lack of logical force leads to the conclusion that the E'TH has very low order of probability and should be rejected as a viable theoretical construct for the ufo phenomenon.

MAGONIA. Interpreting Contemporary Vision and Belief. Q. Sub £4; US \$10 in dollar bills. Cheques to "John Rimmer". Address John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

No. 47. Commonsense wisdom on abduction cases from Peter Rogerson, connecting them with abuse and initiation, and concluding with a persuasive working model of the ab-

duction experience and what might generate it. This being a continuation of a Rogerson article also in this issue which looks at abductions before the mass publicity given to the Hills and Antonio Villas Boas. Extensive article on the UMMO Spanish affair regarding extraterrestrials (who could take seriously the expeditionary group who make their first transcendental discovery ... "some fragments of white-yellowed, flexible and brittle sheets .. full of characters. ... and stained with faeces" to which they attributed ritual meaning. It is really too much that the first document preserved for galactic posterity should turn out to be some pages of the French newspaper *Figaro* used as toilet paper by a peasant!). Plus letters and book reviews.

No. 48. Most urban folklore students will have come across the Mattoon Gasser, even if the details are hazy, and Willy Smith here looks back 50 years and concludes things probably ain't what they seem/ed. 1952 US saucer scare reassessed. John Rimmer looks at a hypnopompic "driveway transient" and asks if it offers an insight into virtual experience.

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

No. 161. Editorial on Schnabel and his corn circles book. Tried and trusty format of news round-up; ufos in the media; major articles elsewhere; case histories; current investigations; corn circles; Fire in the Sky movie review; hook and mag reviews. No. 162. Editorial on media hype involving Bristolians believing Venus to be a repeating major ufo event. Albert Budden on paramnesia (since consistency challenge).



"Now let's not confuse things by bringing in facts."

FF 23 will be out very shortly. All the usual mayhem and reviews will include *The Baby Train*, by Jan Harold Brunvand, and *The Lost Ark*, by Dr Karl Shuker.



"My wife is out, Mrs Chatmore. Would you care to leave a rumour?"

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