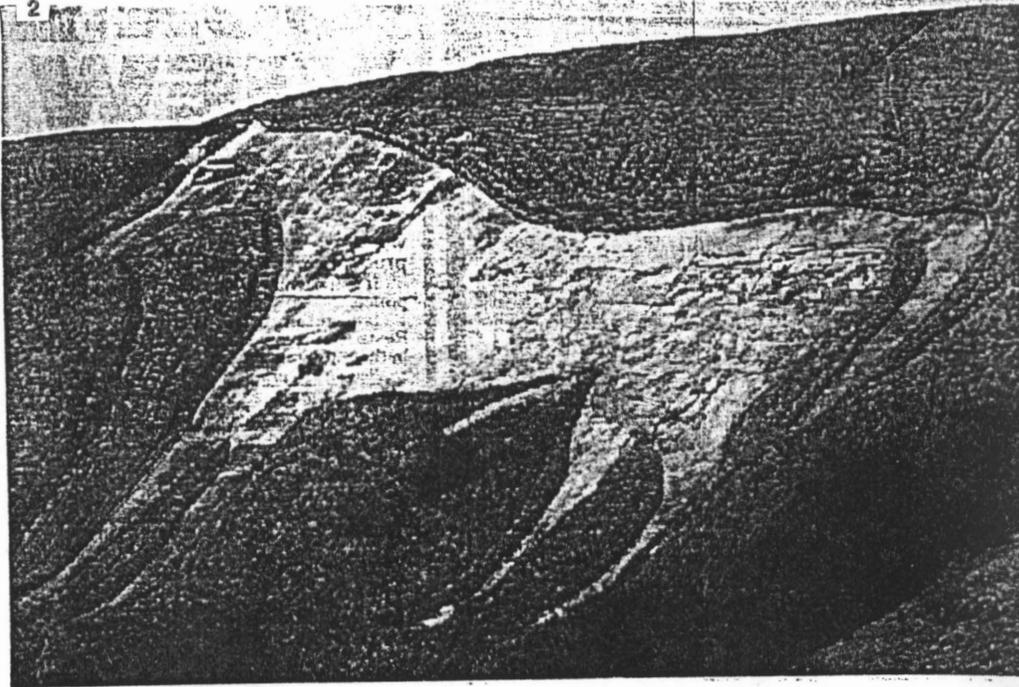


Folklore Frontiers 28





Long Man has Lots of Bottle

By Paul Screeton

With a newcomer in the editorial chair and marking this columnist's 20 years writing under the pen name Long Man of Wilmington in *The Ley Hunter*, it seems appropriate to make hill figures the theme for an article. Indeed, the past couple of years have seen widespread coverage of the subject in the media, though generally focussed upon sexual slants.

Martin Symington (*Weekend Telegraph*, 30/3/96) described the noted archaeologist as "impassioned and perspiring" (do I detect an innuendo of alcohol abuse?), noting most locals at the meeting in Cerne Abbas village hall believed the giant to be much older.

This March, a "Commission of Inquiry" was organised by Bournemouth University and the National Trust, custodian of the Cerne Giant, to probe the enigma of when the chalk hill figure was created. Not unexpectedly there was no consensus of opinion among the alleged experts. Controversial Dr Ronald Hutton, of Bristol University, caused some consternation, by suggesting the priapic personage was likely to have been created as recently as the 17th century.

Symington notes "the pitiful sigh" of one "expert" (his quotes!) who remarked "if only the giant could talk." He notes "there's not a boffin who can make a watertight case for any theory" and spoke of "games of academic ping-pong." He also referred to "dear old ladies cheerfully peddle pornographic souvenirs as if they were lace doilies" and "in tea shops, families daintily nibble round the private parts of shortbread gaints."

Symington went to have a look at the 26-foot phallus and noted infertile couples have "visited" the giant, it

DAILY SPORT Saturday, January 3, 1993

"Any rumours that we tried to slip a condom on it are untrue," said police Sgt Dave Thom.

It's not the first time vandals have horsed around with the monument.

It was given a red nose on Comic Relief Day and has been a zebra.

Mare the merrier for saucy vandals' horse play

THE historic Westbury White Horse has been given a monumental sex change.

The ancient mare became a proud stallion after pranksters erected a 12-foot extension with dozens of boulders.

Wiltshire police switchboards were jammed when stunned villagers caught sight of the amorous addition.

And red-faced bobbies had the gruelling task of gelding the beast to return it to its more familiar appearance.

Folklore Frontiers

28

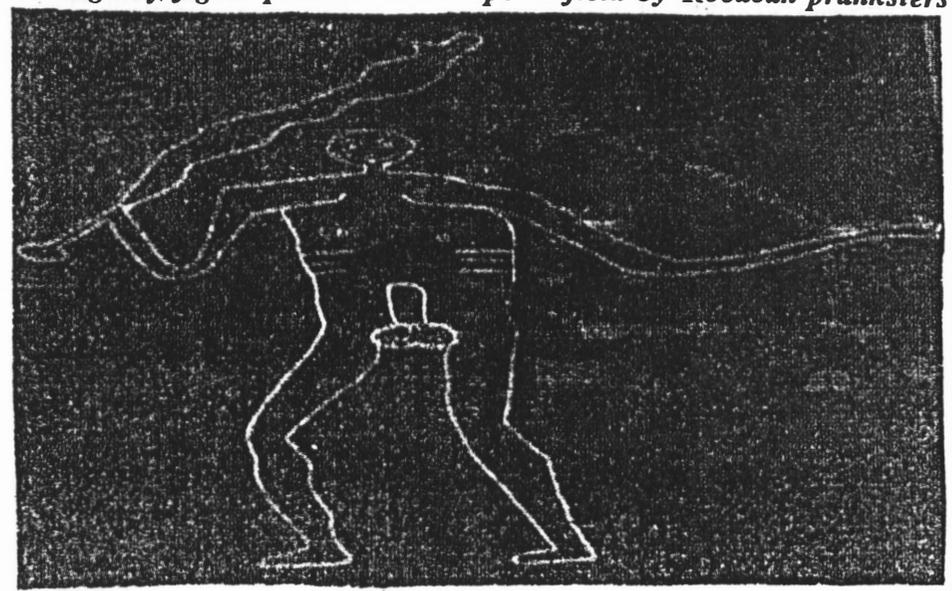
June, 1996

FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent, non-profitmaking magazine covering folklore and folklife, in particular contemporary beliefs and actions. urban myths and new social trends are our speciality. The magazine is broadminded and far ranging in expressing contemporary concerns.

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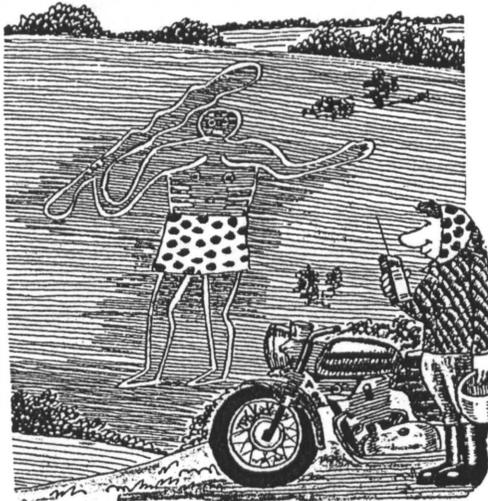
The big boy figure painted on the sports field by Roedean pranksters



being credited with various conceptions including, apparently, the Marquess of Bath's daughter Sylvy Cerne, born in 1958.

Hutton, according to one source (D. Star, 16/3/96) reckons the giant was constructed by pranksters out to upset village puritans and had his manhood extended during the 1800s. He claims 16th century records from a nearby monastery don't mention the hill figure. The Daily Star even penned an editorial on the subject of the "append-age." A wit wrote that the villagers should not get uptight - "three centuries ain't bad. Some ladies would be happy with three minutes."

Some young ladies took the subject seriously and the end-of-term prank for top public school Roedean pupils painted an 80-foot version of the Cerne Giant on their sports field. Their anatomical knowledge was so embarrassing that the school's sports day had to be moved to another site, after being



"Mission accomplished Mrs. Whitehouse!"

designed with the groundsman's line machine (Today, ?)

Hardly by coincidence surely, Roedean humanities teacher Rodney Castleden is the man who "for two years has been using a Heath Robinson device for measuring soil disturbance to study the figure and, according to him, the giant's penis is a good deal

smaller than we thought." (The Independent Magazine, 28/5/94). Castleden's tests supposedly revealed he had a five-foot navel and a 19-foot willy, but when it was recut 85 years ago, the penis was extended seven feet into the navel (D. Mirror, D. Sport, 9/10/94).

In 1993 it was announced his nose was being raised nine inches after being worn away, while at the same time it was revealed that current Heritage Secretary Peter Brooke revealed to Arts Review that the favourite piece in his private art collection was a saucy wood engraving by Hilary Paynter of the Cerne Giant called A Victorian Girl's Nightmare, where he is seen charging through a fence after busy girls with his manhood erect (News of the World, 4/4/93).

The year 1993 was newsworthy for the Cerne Giant. Firstly it was reoperted he was having nine inches added to a prominent feature - his nose (Sun, 1/4/93). Then around 150 people circled the figure to demand more help for childless couples (D. Sport, 17/5/93). Then it seems tabloid journalists confused the 26ft willy already there with a 40ft depiction created overnight for a film by Ken Russell, creating a fantasy for the new movie (Sun, D. Sport 27/7/93).

Was, perhaps, this 40ft figure coincidence? I ask, because Philip Carr-Gomm, Chief of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, had suggested a few months earlier that the 227ft Long Man of Wilmington should have received a 40ft penis, supposedly removed by Victorian pruders. This hill figure near Upper Dicker (stop sniggering at the back), Sussex, had Carr-Gomm claiming aerial photographs show where it would have been.

But John Farrant, a fellow of the Sussex Archaeological Society, said: "I do not think it is a cult fertility symbol, but a warrior figure. If anything should be added, it should be a helmet and arrows." (D. Mirror, D. Sport, 28/6/93; the latter again 11/8/94).

Ho hum! I chose to see him as a dodman-surveyor 20 years ago and stick by it. In such guise he appears on a strong cider bottle introduced by Merlydown. The striking design is depicted on screen-printed 330ml bottles of premium quality, draught-style six per cent ABV, light, dry, refreshing taste cider. Just the thing to quench a dodman's thirst after a hard day's surveying (The Licensee, 16/4/96).

Arachno-magnetism

FolkJokeOpus

By Michael Goss

AT time of writing - and it may add point or impact if I explain that "time of writing" coincides with the bleakest, coldest part of the proverbially bleak-and-cold midwinter - I seem to be pursued by spiders.

I'm well aware that spiders in houses scarce constitute anomalous phenomena. I know also that some make a habit of coming into houses during autumn and stay on through the bleak-cold months that follow, doubtless enjoying the benefits of central heating without having to pay for it. But I am also aware of the good old Fortean law of synchronicity, which states that once you become more than casually interested in something, it starts cropping up everywhere you go and ends up haunting you.

On those terms, I may be held accountable for the spider invasion that has taken place in our house. Back in late 1995 and for reasons I won't bother you with, I was inspired to make what had been a persistent but fairly aimless interest in spiders into a more serious pursuit. I did the usual stuff that marks the onset of this kind of intellectual eruption: read books on spiders, compiled copious notes on spiders - even joined a society for people who regard spiders as more than slightly interesting. Stopped short of arachnophagy, though considering the number of spider enthusiasts who eventually succumb to curiosity and start eating them, I guess that's something to look forward to.

You'll suspect from this (correctly) that I had heightened my awareness of spiders and if you suspect further that I was in consequence all the more likely to notice ones in the house where priorly I'd have missed seeing them - well, I couldn't and wouldn't argue. What began to puzzle me, though, was the sheer number and variety I was finding. Had I really been blind to them all these years?

It all began when, whilst engaged in an arachnologically-tinted phone conversation, I suddenly noticed a fine specimen of *Pholcus phalangioides* crouched half under a discarded carrier bag against the wall and about eight inches from my face. I'm not arachnophobic - would an arachnophobe join the British Arachnological Society, for God's sake? - so the discovery was a lot less disturbing than the conundrum of why my wife should have slung that discarded carrier-bag against the wall.

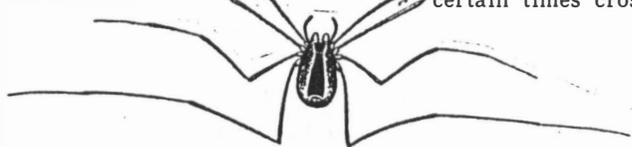
Alarmed or upset - no. If anything I was mildly enchanted. *Pholcus*, the popularly-named "daddy long-legs spider," is one of my favourite species. It is a ridiculously long-limbed contraption for whom walking ought to be an

ergonomic impossibility and it builds a tangled scaffold of a web that suggests it must have lost interest in the project five minutes after it began. Being congenitally nervous, it vibrates this bare sketch of a web rapidly when disturbed or else beats a retreat so rapid as to prove it has absolutely no trouble with walking, ergonomics or not. And it has a propensity for entering houses to hibernate in winter, albeit and as far as I know, never until now has it openly come into mine.

I'm quite fond of *Pholcus phalangioides*, then, which proved to be just as well. Because it seems that when this particular individual came in from the cold, it brought several pals along for company.

Days later, this specimen or one like it was in the kitchen. Soon thereafter, what I took to be a *quite different* specimen needed assistance in getting out of the bath, while yet another - I swear it was a different one! - was found making a painful ascent of the stairs (having heard, mayhap, that the bathroom was free). Meantime, a notably spindly newcomer had taken up residence in the overhang behind a sideboard, where in due course it posed beside a slightly-smaller cousin.

So far, I haven't seen any in the out-house (or, as we prefer to say, the "conservatory"). This is the chosen habit and racetrack for a tribe of smallish but robust and dull-coloured spiders - again, not ones I can remember having encountered there before in winter. They give you little opportunity to study them closely, but having managed to corner a straggler I was able to identify it (tentatively) as *Scotophaeus blackwalli*. I got this partial ID by inviting the thing to play on my hand while I fumbled with a magnifying glass and Field Guide to the Spiders of Britain. It was illuminating to see that, besides setting forth the characteristics of *Scotophaeus*, the book cautioned against handling it. Apparently, it's one of the British species that can give you a bite. Not enough of a bite to harm you, of course, but enough to alarm you. This one didn't nip me, as it happens, but I felt I'd had a close call.



The arachnological *piece de resistance* came when my wife called me out to the garage. "because there's something that will interest you." There was - it did: spreadeagled against our car's windscreen on the passenger side (*my side!*) was a spider of moderately formidable aspect. My wife had assumed it was building a web; in fact, it had chosen that spot to die, most likely from Arctic cold. Having tried to identify it with my magnifying glass and field guide and failed, I popped it in a matchbox. I suppose it's still there. I'm scared to look in case it isn't.

For I've begun to feel slightly uneasy about the superabundance of spiders in my immediate vicinity, coinciding (as I've said before) with a desire to learn more about their branch of the arthropod kingdom. I'm not arachnophobic (as I *also* said before). I can live with a spider siege. But I am conscious of being far from the first person to notice how, the moment you have become caught up in research - or, more often, just after you've decided that line of inquiry is going nowhere and you've abandoned it - allusions, references and reminders of it creep in from all angles.

If you own a copy of *Fortean Times* No. 23 for autumn 1977, take a look at Robert Anton Wilson's article about *The 23 Phenomenon* on pages 32-35. He relates how, following a precedent set by author William S. Burroughs, he began to collect examples of the manner in which that seemingly undistinguished numeral materialized in statistics, in dates, in significant addresses and moreover in his own daily life. Twenty-three ran through them all like a musical motif. Why 23? Elsewhere, though I can't recall precisely where else, another researcher has described being beset by *clowns* the moment he began to study them as a Fortean phenomenon. Lastly, if your FT collection goes as far back as the days when it was known simply as *The News*, dig out No. 5 (July 1974) and turn to page 15. The bit I find particularly intriguing, given my current circumstances, is a summary of a letter sent to the *Daily Mirror* of October 30, 1973 by a Teddington lady. Mrs I. B. is reported that she was dogged by a pair of large black spiders that certain times crossed her dining

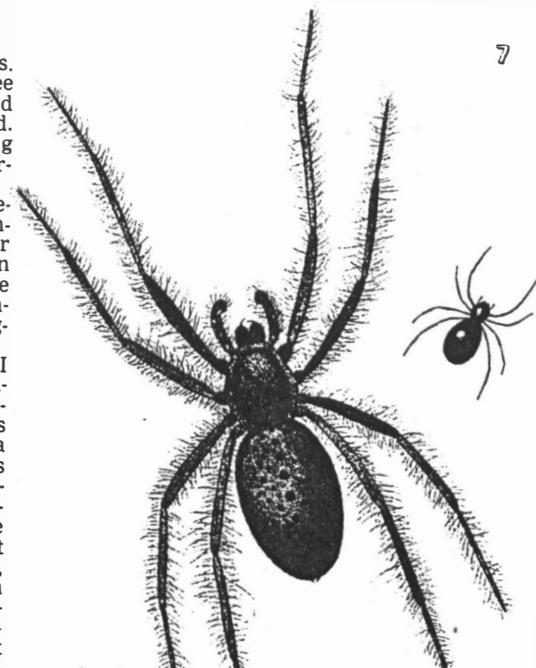
room floor from opposite directions. "This has happened in my past three house moves, in three counties and miles from each other," she explained. "Moreover, it is always in the dining room." Had any other reader experienced the like? I reckon not.

It's a pity that the writer didn't specify how she felt about spiders in general. Was she fond of them, for instance? Maybe spiders can home in on people who are sympatico; maybe there are among us folk whose sympathy turns them into arachno-magnets. Maybe I've become one.

If so, no problem. After all - did I mention this before? - I am not arachnophobic. As a folklorist, I also realise that spiders are to be considered as benevolent beings. The credo that a money spider landing in your clothes indicates an influx of cash is ubiquitous throughout Britain and the activities of web-building genera have long been taken indicators of the next day's weather. Less meteorologically, the future was said to be encoded in spiders' webs and the movement of spiders themselves could signify the approach of a visitor, a friend, a present or some other form of pleasurable surprise, depending on the direction the arachnid took: towards or away from the observer, up and down the web. A spider saved the baby Jesus during the Flight into Egypt (and did much the same for Robert the Bruce, King David, Mahomet and half a dozen other cultural icons). All told, there are many more positive beliefs about spiders than negative ones.

But I keep coming back to this business of synchronicity, an aspect of Fortean folklore which I find increasingly fascinating. Rings recovered from fishes, cinemas blown down by gales while showing "Gone With the Wind", suicides electrocuted while trying to hang themselves: whether they be journalistic fabrications or real-life events, these stories teach that we are governed by some mighty Agent with a connoisseur's taste for irony or *alternatively* that in some inexplicable way we are responsible for drawing to us the very things we seek (or seek to avert). The researcher simulates manifestations of the thing being researched; the act of research creates a sensitivity to events which are relevant to it and which might otherwise have passed unnoticed. Either or both - take your pick.

Being a fairly cautious sort of person, I have always inclined towards the view that you notice these things more often because you've mentally geared yourself to notice them. But I



am less sure about that now than once I was. The trivial of everyday life and the plans you make for it can simmer with synchronicities if you look for them and recently have been looking.

Two more examples: I was collating some material on bizarre accidents last week when the phone rang to tell me my mother had broken her arm. Hers was not an especially bizarre accident but its timing seemed oddly synchronistic in view of what I was currently involved with. Or again, a month after my formulating a plan to create a Raquel Wolstenhulme Appreciation Society Newsletter which would have been entirely devoted to the doings, sayings, wit and wisdom of the Siren of Coronation Street, the actress playing her announced she was leaving the series. How could she have known what I had in mind for her?

While I'm not disposed to read too much into this sort of thing, I can understand that there are times when even the least superstitious person feels his or her intentions observed and commented upon by some unseen, ironically-fond force.

One more damned and curious thing: since I started to work on this article boasting my hitherto-latent powers of arachno-magnetism, I haven't seen a single spider about the house ...

Letters

Dear Paul,

One for your files that I was told recently. A man bought some furniture from a well-known flat-pack furniture retailer and took them home to assemble. As he opened the packaging he noticed that one of the parts had a small sticker attached with the kite mark and a British standards number. On the strength of this he was sufficiently impressed with the quality of his purchase to buy more items from the same store. Some time later he thought to check the exact nature of the BS number and discovered that it related to the minimum standards for bulk storage packing cases.

Mike White

Dear Paul,

Please find enclosed a PO for my subs renewal. Your magazine has remained as funny and entertaining as ever in the last year. Its compact size means I can smuggle it out of the office to read in the toilet !!

GOOD LUCK



NICK BROWN

From Brian Chapman, Canada.
In your article on aural simulacra - or homophonies to coin a pun - you suggest that this is an overlooked area of folklore. You may not be aware of a recent book devoted entirely to misheard lyrics of popular songs. It's called "Scuse Me While I Kiss This Guy" (Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky, by Jimi Hendrix) by a fellow named Edwards (whose first name escapes me), published by Simon and Schuster.

Those who are trying to develop accurate voice transcription systems still haven't been able to overcome the ambiguities of speech. A classic example: "This new display can recognize speech" confused with "This nudist play can wreck a nice beach."

Dear Paul,

The cutting below reminded me of a FOAF tale I heard a while ago.

A couple entered their daughter's pony in a auction of horses as she had outgrown the animal of which they were all very fond. The bidding went extremely well, the animal fetching far more than was expected. The happy vendors went to meet the purchaser and wish them well with the pony. The buyer turned out to be a, "European" gentleman.

"Trixie is a marvellous pony", the Mother enthused. "Yes", added the Father, "Annabel and her were very good in the dressage". The purchaser lit a cigarette and replied, "Let's hope she as good in the sausage, eh" !

Horsemeat bargain

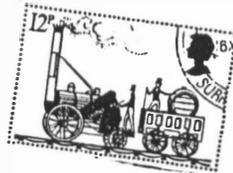
DAILY SPORT, Wednesday, April 10, 1996

SLAUGHTERMAN Bob Walker is cashing in on the mad cow beef crisis by opening a horsemeat shop. The best cuts at Cheval Butchers in Smethwick, West Midlands, will sell for just 80p a pound. Bob, 47, said: "It tastes very much like beef but slightly sweeter and is very good value. People ate horsemeat round here in the war. My son and his friends have tried it and keep coming back for more." Horses killed will be certified free of disease.

A RIGHT LOAD OF BALLS ?

It had to come. A, "I would've been rich, but..." story about the National Lottery.

A lady who worked for a local authority as a cleaner was saving up to go on holiday. Every week she placed the same numbers on the lottery on a Saturday afternoon at the same newsagent's. This particular Saturday, she had been offered a morning's overtime. Obviously, needing the money, she accepted. Coming in at lunch



time she inadvertently fell asleep in the arm chair. Only to wake quite a few hours later AFTER the lottery draw had taken place. Yes you guessed it ! All six numbers were the ones she had been placing every week. Actually I was told this by my Mother, who knows the alleged woman involved, and indeed the newsagent who confirmed the disaster. Does a FOAM story carry any extra authority ? Thought not.

Reading the, "Aural Simulacra" article (issue 27.) brought to mind another phenomena resulting in disgusted viewers. On screen vomiting. I thought I'd indulge myself and recall couple of priceless moments of TV involving antiperistalsic eruptions.

Probably the best known screen spew episode must be the then U.S. President George Bush's Old Faithful impersonation for the Japanese government. Despite his best intentions of his entourage to hold the flow, that sushi just would not lie down.

However, the crown spew event in my book, was comedian Rik Mayall's nasal vomit live on the, "Tube" in the 80's. Jools Holland when discussing the event some years later, recalled that some old dear actually called the police (yes, that's, 999 !) in disgust and reported the incident !

Diverging a little into FOAF territory. As a child with a keen interest in horror movies, I remember a tale that movie goers entering the cinema to watch, "The Exorcist" were handed sick bags. I'm sure I read the tale in the 70's "Monster Mag" and have heard it told as a FOAF since.

Possibly my interest in seeing someone heave on TV stems from the fact that as far as bodily functions go, vomiting is surely the most difficult to disguise. Which immediately rouses my suspicions as to what "motions" (surely not !) our statespeople and celebs are getting away with while on screen !

Back to the "Aural Simulacra", I thought I'd chip in with my favourite bit of TV aural obscenity. Kieth "Wha-Hey" Chegwin answering callers on his, "Silly Sound" competition on Swap Shop :

Chegwin : "Who's on line one, what do you think the sound is ?"
Line 1 : "Can I suck yer cock ?"
Chegwin : "Pardon ?"
Line 1 : "CAN I SUCK YER COCK ?"
Chegwin : "What, all of it ?"

Top work Cheggers, it's my round.

AURAL SIMULACRA STOP PRESS !!!

Was it just me, or did Bob Monkhouse refer to Britain's premier crosseyed seer, Mystic Meg, as, "Spastic Peg" during last Saturday's (18/5/'96) National Lottery draw ?

* * * * *

The following tale was told to me by a friend, who is the doctor involved in the story. I therefore can't claim it's folklore, but I'm sure it has all the ingredients to become such.

A man goes to see his GP and explains that he has a tapeworm. The doctor explains that tapeworms are exceedingly rare in this country and that he must be mistaken. "No", the patient explains, "I'm sure it's a tapeworm". He then goes on to describe the animal which made a brief appearance out of his bottom !

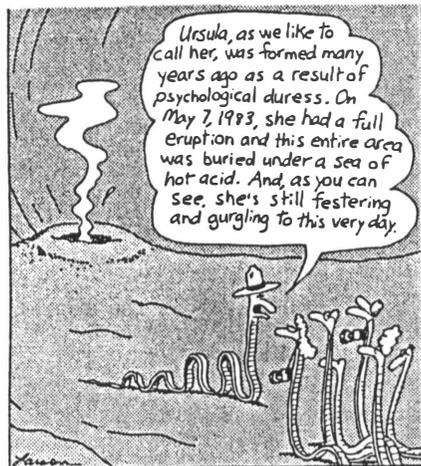
A classic tapeworm sighting, the doctor had to agree, however in order to contract a tapeworm, the patient must have had to come into contact with tapeworm eggs contained in segments of the worm. Had he visited a country with a tapeworm problem, such as Abyssinia? "No", the patient replied, "But I do eat raw pork".

Alarm bells now of course. The doctor explains that due to the extreme rarity of the condition, he would have to investigate the matter with a specialist. The patient agreed and left. Ringing a laboratory with knowledge of human parasites, the doctor explained the case. The chap in the laboratory was sceptical but excited. A deal was struck in which if the doctor could prove the man actually had a tapeworm, then the laboratory would provide the medicine required to remove it.

The patient was then supplied with a specimen jar and instructions on snipping a few segments from the creature next time it, "Came out for air". After a couple of days the sceptics were dumbfounded when the sample bottle was returned containing segments of *Taenia Solium*, the pork tapeworm of man, which can attain lengths of around three meters! The doctor received news of the arrival of the rather exotic medicine at the chemist's the next fortnight.

And that, so my doctor friend thought, was that. Until over six months latter he was at a function with the chemist who happened to mention that the prescription for the tapeworm medicine had never been collected! Thinking perhaps something had happened to the patient, the next day the doctor telephoned him to stress the importance of him receiving treatment. After ringing for a long time the telephone was answered by the chap who seemed quite unconcerned, and never actually stated he intended picking the prescription up at all. "Altogether", the doctor said, "he seemed quite happy with the situation as it was"!

The incident brings up interesting questions regarding the manipulation of man by animals, such as the, "Begging Pigeon" question raised last issue. Could the segmented squatter have established some kind of mental hold over it's host in order to survive? The doctor has told me that he intends to chase the matter up. Watch this space!



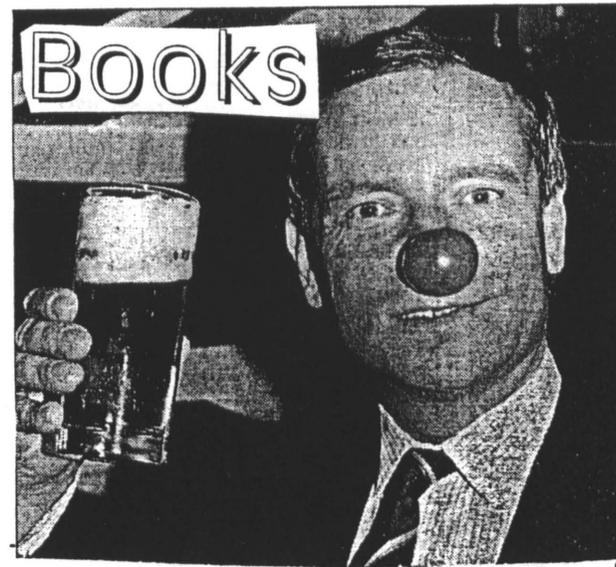
Tapeworms visiting a Stomach Park

Best Wishes,

John Tait.

The risk of tapeworm comes from either cat, dog or fox faeces — is this likely on your lawn? As for coccidiosis, you can buy Coco rabbit pellets with inbuilt anti-coccidiosis preventative. I think an animal's happiness is worth some risk, anyway. So does Sue Hunter, a rabbit-owner doing a research project on house rabbits.

"Many rabbit-care books are written by people who still keep their rabbits in boring hutches," she says. "They're still rather conservative."



ALIENS - THE FINAL ANSWER?

By David Barclay

THE final answer is that this must be the worst UFO book ever. Barclay experimented with a ouija-board, became the target of an entity initially claiming to be "the shade of Nefertiti" and outside were "flying saucers of every conceivable kind." That was mid-Sixties.

Mid-Nineties he's speculating dinosaurs produced an intelligent race which achieved an interplanetary capability. Though he does not explain how. I thought this crap died out in the mid-Seventies, and here's speculation that most dinosaurs died out at the end of the Cretaceous period through a nuclear war. Not all, of course, because these dinosaurs had created a "pet" dinosaur by evolving a bipedal being much like ourselves, breeding mankind from one of the wild dinosaur types of the time, just as we domesticate and

breed dogs. "Oh, and it went wrong and it was us who nuked them.

If there was any justice in this world, a velociraptor would have crept into Barclay's home and savaged him before he spilled the beans about this revolutionary, evolutionary diarrhoea.

Published by Blandford Press, £9.99.

ELIZABETHAN HUMOUR

By Chris Meads

IGNORE the archaic English, and parts of this compilation could be used by Bernard Manning in his Daily Sport column. Gynaecological, scatological ... folk centuries ago were as obsessed with bodily functions as Carry On films' scriptwriters.

Raunchy and bawdiness is here aplenty, plus quaint tales and bizarre jests.

Folklorist will doubtless be most interested in — though doubtless familiar with — several ex-

TWELVE RED HER-RINGS

By Jeffrey Archer

ARCHER, despite jibes from people who have probably never read any of his books, is an excellent writer, and this collection of 12 short stories is masterful, with most being about individuals, men and women, trying to put one over, steal a march, to score points.

I particularly enjoyed the suspenseful tale of Saddam Hussein's former minister in terror at finding himself unwittingly at Baghdad airport; the panic and perspicacity of a minor governor general upon a visit by Lord Mounbatten; an oarsman's misdemeanour reverberating through time.

Archer acknowledges nine of the stories are based upon a "known incident," some so familiar that they suggest an affinity with urban myths, such as: how a wily woman manipulates two rich men; how an Aids scam backfires on an insurance salesman; and the well-attributed tale of the would-be assailant who sneaks into the car.

Published by Harper-Collins, £4.99.

amples of *blason populaire* from the Nottinghamshire village of Gotham, where the inhabitants were regarded as "mad" (and later "wise") for such acts as trying to pen in a cuckoo so it stayed all year around and taking an eel from one pond to another to drown it.

Published by Robert Hale, £6.99.

THE SUNKEN KINGDOM

By Peter James

THE name Atlantis conjures up mystery and adherents of its ever existing range from New

Agers who reckon it was a super-civilisation whose cosmic engineering destroyed it, to dry as dust archeologists who believe it was a memory of the Aegean island of Santorini blasted by a volcanic explosion.

James reviews these and many other theories in a lucid and scholarly manner before returning to Plato's original source, which leads to a city he believes lies buried in Turkey.

The city is Tantalus, but to simply see this anagram of Atlantis (in English - not Greek) as proof is surely to create another myth built on further dubious foundations.

Published by Jonathan Cape, £18.99.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

By Richard Wilson

ADOPTING his Victor Meldrew personae, the actor has compiled a collection of true, unusual occurrences from newspaper and other reports.

Sections and lists include love and sex, legal matters, acting and animals (goldfish remember better in cold rather than warm water).

Fortean will welcome the credence given to showers of odd objects and creatures (ice was falling from above before aeroplanes were invented and three-inch sand eels fell out of the sky on Sunderland in 1918).

As for "true," some urban belief tales have slipped in, such as the woman who trashes her home upon finding a strange toothbrush with traces of lipstick on the bristles, only to find her mother-in-law had been to stay and left the brush behind beside her son's.

Other tales, too, have

a dubious ring to them, but who cares - just have a good chuckle.

Published by Michael O'Mara, £7.99.



THE BOOK OF THE CELTIC SAINTS by Courtney Davis and Elaine Gill (Blandford Press, £18.99)

The lives and times of male and female saints from early Christianity are seen in vivid artwork and informative text.

LOVE AND THE SOUL by Robert Sardell (HarperCollins, £15.99)

As a closet conspiratorialist, I did not realise the Templars devised banking for pilgrims and that their downfall came in 1332, i.e. twice 666. Beware 1998: 666 x 3

Apart from that, I found this the usual tedious New Age phiosophising I find so personally pointless. Atom bomb, Final Solution, Sophia, and so on. Keep stirring.

FACING THE WORLD WITH SOUL by Robert Sardello (HarperCollins, £7.99)

Offbeat ideas on all manner of aspects of modern living; specially bizarre on disease, particularly cancer.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HERESIES AND HERETICS

BY LEONARD GEORGE

Heresy is necessary: an institutionalised belief system, being an orthodox, needs it to enhance its own self-awareness. The with hunts go on, be they medical "witch marks" of zealous Cleveland doctors or satanic child abuse fantasies of social workers.

Here are more than 600 detailed entries covering the complete history of heresy and the lives of heretics. Both intriguing and practical, this book will captivate the general reader, while providing an essential reference guide for the more serious student and scholar.

Published by Robson Books, £18.95.

THE ROMANOV: THE FINAL CHAPTER

By Robert K Massie

EVER SINCE in 1918 the Russian royals were assassinated, the story has fascinated the world. For there have been rumours of survivors, and Massie pieces together competing forensic evidence, claimed imposters and conspiracy theory involving British royalty.

Massie claims to have solved this compelling historical mystery in this scholarly and highly readable true-life detective story.

Published by Jonathan Cape, £17.99.

DIVINE MAGIC

By Andre & Lynette Singer

A lavishly-illustrated tie-in with a Channel 4 series, this book covers just about all aspects of the supernatural. Its authors are academic anthropologists and the

emphasis is on cross-cultural similarities and changing viewpoints upon paranormal phenomena.

From voodoo and shamanism it passes on to Western spiritualism and channelers. Further chapters cover magic and alchemy; human sacrifice and prayer; witchcraft; monsters; oracles, prophets and premonitions; afterlife and past lives.

An impressive sweep of the supernatural, made accessible to the average reader without being shallow.

Published by Boxtree, £18.99.

TIMPSON'S ENGLISH COUNTRY INNS

By John Timpson

FEW things in life beat finding a cosy, countryside pub with character and fine ale. Here Timpson describes 100 or so such taverns with interesting tales and personalities.

He enthuses over Egglecliffe's Pot and Glass, one of the reviewer's all-time favourites. Its ghosts and tunnel legend are here, but poor proofreading has Stockport mentioned twice instead of Stockton (mentioned correctly once).

The tales about Beckhampton's Waggon and Horses are fascinating, but Timpson neglects to mention its new role as unofficial headquarters of the cerealogists (perhaps corn circle fanatics give the wrong image).

Published by Headline, £17.99.

SUPERNATURAL DISAPPEARANCES

By Rodney Davies

DOUBTLESS people and objects do vanish into thin air, but frequently when a diligent researcher takes on a case, the supernatural element itself disappears.

This scissors and paste concoction boasts its author returned wherever possible to original sources (indeed noble in itself), but had he checked the work of later sceptics he would have produced a slim book indeed, having been forced by facts not fancies to jettison the Bermuda Triangle, Philadelphia Experiment, Benjamin Bathurst and the discredited teleported cows of Ripperstone farm.

Shallow and flimsy. Published by Robert Hale, £14.99.

CLAPTON

By Christopher Sandford

Subtitled *Edge of Darkness*, it is a revealing biography of a man who emerges as repulsive until foreswearing drink and drugs in the late Eighties. Since then he has shown staying power through business acumen and keeping a middle-of-the-road musical course. He has been resourceful in both the face of tragedy but shown an inability to keep a stable relationship despite marring or dating many of the world's most beautiful women.

Elusive still.

Mick Goss wrote in FF22 about how Clapton "won" Pattie Boyd from George Harrison in a guitar duel, but it's not mentioned here.

Published by Gollancz, £5.99.

WHY IS PUBIC HAIR CURLY?

By Vernon Coleman

ACTUALLY the title is the second question answered; doubtless *How do Wrinkles Develop?* was regarded as less of an eye-catching title. As for the answer to the title: a) it either supports or more likely mocks evolution; b) I

don't believe a word of it.

Coleman also claims female breasts were designed to make calendars more interesting. Get the picture? Yes, it's not one of those usual pious, earnest medical advice books. Very funny; just the tonic for depression (whose sufferers the good doctor mocks anyway).

Folklorists might find familiar his hazards of masturbation and contraception myths.

Published by Blue Books, £9.95.

WITCH-CHILDREN

By Hans Sebald

THE professor appears to have exactly the right credentials to tackle the thorny topic of the young accusing their elders, having written books on both adolescence and witchcraft.

From the Middle Ages' Inquisition, through the Salen witch-hunts to the metaphorical "witch-hunts" epidemic of children accusing adults of molestation, with or without satanic dimensions, he points to the common circumstances. Here are the contemporary tragic consequences of police, judiciary, parents, therapists and counsellors too easily believing children's allegations.

As such this is familiar ground for seasoned satanic child abuse students, but the book analyses a previously unknown case of "Witchboy" to provide a detailed case of a child enmeshed in the machinations of the Inquisitorial witch-hunts.

It's a pity this timeless problem is only seen from an American perspective.

Published by Prometheus Books, £21.

Here Be Dragons

IN SEARCH OF PREHISTORIC SURVIVORS

By Karl P. N. Shuker
DOCTOR SHUKER presents the case in this book for the undisclosed survival in disparate corners of the world of many different types of animal - in fact, the subtitle is Do Giant 'Extinct' Creatures Still Exist?

Here he avoids full-scale Lost World Syndrome, cautiously using clues and indications, such as eyewitness accounts, to make a cryptozoologist's sober assessment of just what elements of the prehistoric menagerie may still be lurking out there.

The "living fossils" or anachronistic anomalies covered is wide-ranging; the more spectacular including dinosaurs, flying reptiles, giant birds, sabre-toothed tigers and mammoths. In other words, real 200,000,000BC stuff. Sorry, but no fur-bikini'd Raquel Welch (and Shuker has left survivors of the man-beast variety for a companion volume).

Shuker's style makes for easy reading and he has an eye for the abnormal and novel, which adds a touch of humour. Such as how before Western science caught up with the coelacanth, the Comoro Islanders were habitually using the fish's scales as a sandpaper substitute for mending punctures in bicycle tyres. Or the secret nature of many undiscovered animals owing their success "as much to bureaucratic barriers as to environmental ones!"

Shuker's launching point is an assessment of the elusive Congolese dinosaur mokele-mbembe, a subject well documented in contemporary Fortean literature. This leads to an unlikely ceratosaurus of the Arctic Circle (identified by a priest, so it

must be true).

Not surprisingly, aquatic monsters take up the largest amount of the book, water covering so large a percentage of the earth's surface. This section refers to this magazine's old friend, the shamanistic trickster Tony Shiels and his involvement with Morgawr, the Falmouth Bay sea serpent.

This leading expert on cryptozoology has produced a ground-breaking, controversial and very fascinating and readable study.

Published by Blandford Press, £18.99.

DRAGONS: A NATURAL HISTORY

By Dr Karl Shuker

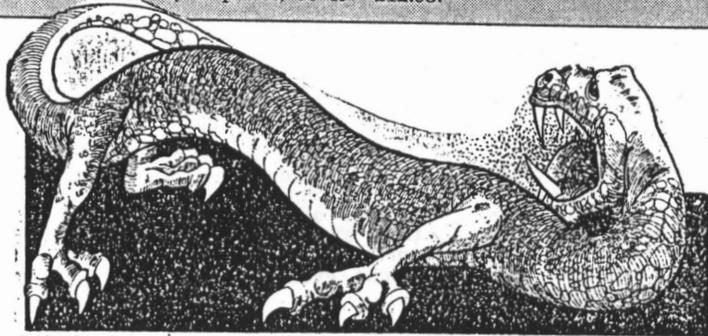
DOCTOR Shuker has come up with a superbly illustrated taster on dragons, retelling the tales of familiar and less well known legends from around the world.

Dragonlore is a perennially popular subject and dressed up so attractively will have enormous appeal. However, Dr Shuker is rather catholic in his choices, including even Australia's bunyip!

The Wantley dragon tale and its disgusting personal habits were a revolting revelation. I know this tale of the Yorkshire horror and it is actually a political satire.

This is a splendid entertainment, covering not only the UK, but other parts of Europe, the Americas, Middle East, Africa, Asia and, of course, the Antipodes. The "conceived, edited and designed" reference at the beginning gives provenance to the creeping influence of packagers, not bad in itself and excellently executed here.

Published by Aurum Press, £12.95.



POLICE HELPLESS AT DRUG PARTY

Daily Telegraph



CANNIBAL VICTIMS SPEAK OUT

Edited by Mat Coward

NO newspaper is free from bloopers, however vigilant its senior journalists presume as this collection of press cuttings proves. Papers from quality broadsheet to humble weekly fall prey to howlers in absurd headlines, accidental puns, double entendres and other typographical horrors.

This selection is also liberally scattered with funny illustrations by David Lyttleton.

Apart from expected usual sources, Coward has trawled the less likely columns of *Men Only*, *Mayfair*, *Morning Star* and *Ruislip Recorder*. Not, thankfully, the *Hartlepool Mail*, which many years ago published the headline "Blind man looks to the future."

There's only one urban belief tale, from *The Observer*: "One of the pickets admits he went to daub 'Czech scab' on the man's house. 'But I couldn't spell Czech, so I wrote Polish scab' instead."

My favourite was from *Garden Answers*: Have any readers got a record-breaking bush? Send me a photo. Second from *Daily Mirror*: A pub menu offering King Herod Baby Burgers and

Crucified Kippers was branded tasteless by a local priest in Studley, Warwick.

Published by Gollancz, £3.99.

DOLLY: MY LIFE AND OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS

by Dolly Parton (HarperCollins, £5.99)

"You will get to know the heart behind the boobs like never before." Well, she said it! The autobiography tells how she made it to the top and stayed there. A trifle tacky but with real human feelings. She can also be folksy and humorous, as with "God and I have a great relationship, but we both see other people."

WICCA by Vivianne Crowley (Thorsons, £8.99)

Leading figure in world of Western paganism argues for the relevance of the old religion as non-dogmatic and natural. The God and Goddess within us, initiations and its future.

THE MONKS OF WAR by Desmond Seward (Arkana, £8.99)

Highly-readable account of the military religious orders formed in the 12th century up to the present day, includ-

ing the destruction of the Templars by the Inquisition. Facts galore for the fertile minds of conspiratorialists and chivalric nuances perceived by earth mysticians.

THE HIDDEN TRADITION IN EUROPE by Yuri Stoyanov (Arkana, £8.99)

For those fascinated by medieval Christian heresies, this scholarly piece of detective work will delight for it is not a flimsy pot-pourri, but secrets revealed from below the surface of official history.

THE BOOK OF LIFE by J Krishnamurti (HarperCollins, £9.99)

Daily meditations of a commonsensical sort on topics such as sex, hate, violence and exploitation.

BEGINNINGS OF LEARNING by J Krishnamurti (Arkana, £7.99)

Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, argues the philosopher, and her lively and often intimate exchanges with students, teachers and parents at schools he's set up, turn on practical, everyday matters, as well as the metaphysical.

A CRITICAL DICTIONARY by Charles Rycroft (Penguin, £7.99)

This book fell at the first hurdle when I looked in vain for multiple personality disorder.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERSONALITY by Liz Greene & Howard Sasportas (Arkana, £7.99)

Combines the best of depth psychology and astrology to give a fresh look at subpersonalities.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OCCULT AND SUPERNATURAL MURDER

By Brian Lane

AS WELL as involving witches, ghosts and psychic attack, these true stories take in Crippen, David 'Son of Sam' Berkowitz and Charles Manson.

There are also criminals who hide behind the paraphernalia and ritual of bogus religions and weird cults, such as the Mexican blonde prostitute who was offered the "job" of goddess by two evil brothers cheating gullible peasants, and who eventually to add spice to the cult ordered dozens of innocent villagers be butchered, but came unstuck after killing a policeman...

Published by **Headline**, £5.99.

THE BREAST BOOK

By Dr Miriam Stoppard

"THIS book is for everyone who has breasts and everyone who loves breasts."

So writes Dr Stoppard in a book where much is given over to breast care and health (a disturbingly large proportion to cancer), but there is also much about the history and sociology of the breast, its sexual function as well as lactation, variations and plastic surgery, through more than 200 illustrations. More than a medical book, it is a celebration of breasts.

Published by **Dorling Kindersley**, £14.99.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS by Richard Maurice Bucke (Arkana, £7.99).

A 1901 book which looks at illuminated masters - Christ, Blake, Bacon, even Walt Whitman - and discusses mysticism and the evolution of the human mind.

ASTROLOGY: A KEY TO PERSONALITY by Jeff Mayo (Arkana, £7.99)

Book for novices wanting simple instruction on how to interpret a chart or seasoned students seeking a fresh perspective.

WORKING WITH YOUR DREAMS by Lyn Webster Wilde (Blandford, £7.99)

An informative manual explaining how dreamwork has developed and can be used for self-development, healing and contacting the inner self. For anyone who takes dream content seriously.

DESERT WISDOM by Neil Douglas-Klotz (Thorsons, £10.99)

Sacred earth traditions of the Middle East from ancient Goddess cultures to Sufi mysticism, taking in the ancient unity of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Ancient texts retranslated to provide story, poetry and practice.

THE MEDIUM, THE MYSTIC AND THE PHYSICIST by Lawrence Le Shan (Arkana, £8.99)

Reprint of 196 classic which argued the three groups in the title had been working toward a description of reality that is essentially similar. Pioneering book on beyond sensory reality.

TIME TRAVEL by Jenny Randles (Blandford, hbk £14.99, pbk £8.99)

Despite enjoying the author's books, the subject of time travel has a deadening impact upon me. Maybe Michael Moorcock's pronouncement of its impossibility blanked out any personal interest. But it's had good reviews elsewhere

Also there's a revised and expanded edition of **THE CULT OF THE BLACK VIRGIN** by Ean Begg (Arkana, £9.99).

Formerly a closed book to the West, the subject of the title, **LIGHT ON LIFE - AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ASTROLOGY** is here clarified and explained by Hard deFouw and Robert Svoboda (Arkana, £8.99), while **THE GOD BETWEEN** by Freda Edis (Arkana, £8.99) sees Hermes as an itinerant rapist while making an engrossing study of the astrological Mercury.

More sub-Castaneda shamanism and global conspiracy is to be found in **QUEEN OF THE SUN** by E J Michael (Thorsons, £7.99).

Personal development books abound plenty and **JOY** by Alexander Lowen (Arkana, £7.99) is a body/mind therapy calling upon the reader to surrender the body to recover joy, sexual pleasure and heightened spirituality. **A SOUL'S JOURNEY** by Peter Richliu (Thorsons, £7.99) claims to be a teaching through out-of-the-body experiences that fear of death is irrational.

Generally we only hear of candles when children burn to death when their boozy parents have had their electricity cut off, but **FINDING YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL THROUGH INCENSE & CANDLE BURNING** by Michael Howard (Thorsons, £4.99) equally brings out the cynic in me.

All you ever wanted to know on the subject is to be found in **ESSENTIAL TIBETAN BUDDHISM** by Robert A F Thurman (HarperCollins, £12.99), while Taoism and Chinese philosophy can be found in **THE BOOK OF CHUANG TZU** translated by Martin Palmer (Arkana, £8.99).

STRANGE BUT TRUE? CASEBOOK

By Jenny Randles

DISMISSED in the Daily Telegraph as "marvelling idiotically" and "the whole gamut of urban myths and tabloid tales," such scepticism passes the bounds of true reason.

There is a gosh! wow! element here, but basically Randles takes a sane and balanced look at such supernatural subjects as UFOs, ghosts (with a section on phantom hitch-hikers), time slips, near-death experiences, poltergeists, healing, past lives and curses.

This reviewer even gets a mention as monitoring in print the chequered career of locomotive 47299, which does seemingly have a genuine jinx. However, Randles' assertion that renumbering of traction "was quite unusual and tended to occur only when a locomotive had a new engine" is too simplistic.

Nevertheless a fine adjunct to an excellent TV series.

Published by **Piatkus**, £10.99.

THE PRYING GAME

By Christopher Browne

THE first two chapters are the slow burn factor: one on proprietors, the other on editors.

Then comes the nitty-gritty approach after the cautionary comment: "Whereas the serious editor attempts to find out what a public figure is trying to say, the popular one wants to know what he or she is trying to hide."

The latter forms the meat of this book and the public's appetite for sleaze. Much is familiar territory, but even a seasoned journalist such as the reviewer was unaware that the original Squidgygate story almost didn't make the front pages as the first version, written by John Twomey of the Daily Express, was spiked because of its sensational content.

The remainder of the book is an assessment of the darker aspects of the Fourth Estate, but it is penned by a journalistic version of a prude. Fascinating, basically fair, but a great opportunity to really dish the dirt has been missed.

Seasoned scribe though he is, the author obviously unwittingly includes what must be an urban belief tale. This is the story of a Daily Star editor, who supposedly went to the aid of a lovesick polar bear.

"Lucky the bear had been pining at Chester Zoo after the death of his mate. So, in the interests of a good story, the editor decided to send a team of bear-catchers to the North Pole to find him a new mate. They duly found and captured a likely-looking female and brought her back to England. As the romantic meeting was to take place the following day, the bear's minders decided to hire an icy pool for the night. Like most polar bears, she decided to spend the night on the pool bottom. The following morning, needing air, the polar bear rose to the pool's surface and tried to break through the ice at the top, but hard as she tried she could not do so, and after several attempts, the hapless animal stopped breathing and drowned. When her minders arrived to take her to her love tryst, they saw a notice above the pool pointing out that the thin layer of ice on the surface was in fact a piece of fibreglass. Sadly, it was too late to resuscitate the animal. The Daily Star's editor had wasted valuable manpower and money on a heart-lifting story that never took place."

Published by **Robson Books**, £15.95.

ARTHURIAN books could well be overtaken in volume by Celtic tomes to go by my postman's lot. **CELTIC MYTH AND LEGEND** by Mike Dixon-Kennedy (Blandford, £16.99) is an A-Z dictionary style volume of people and places with Celtic myths and legends (no Hexham, of Heads fame, so I'm not impressed). The ubiquitous R J Stewart weighs in with **CELTIC MYTHS, CELTIC LEGENDS** (Blandford £9.99), gathering together a range of tales representing the Celtic tradition of story-telling. **THE CELTIC CONNECTION** by Michel-Gerald Boutet comes from our old friend Don Cyr's **The Best of Stonehenge Viewpoint** series and brings a new visual dimension to organic images (available from L C Smith, 16 Solstice Rise, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wilts., SP4 7NQ, price £8).

The writings of John Michell taught me to respect the magic of numbers after mind-numbing maths teachers' efforts, and **THE MODERN NUMEROLOGY** by John King (Blandford, £8.99) could well rekindle enthusiasm for the mystery factors such as gematria in you.

Dwindling congregations suggest we need to recover the mystical heart of Christianity and **RIDING WITH THE LION** by Kyriacos C Markides (Arkana, £7.99) aims to bring awareness of esoteric traditions of both East and West. **THE ESSENTIAL JESUS** by John Dominic Crossan (HarperCollins, ?) argues for a Jesus as radical philosopher and social agitator, leading us back to his original voice; while **ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST** by St Romanos (HarperCollins, £11.99), of the sixth century, via chanted sermon approaches the Christian mystery through an exploration of the key events in the life of Jesus.

Magazines

LETTERS TO AMBROSE MERTON. Q folklore miscellany. Successor to *Dear Mr Thoms*. Sub £7.50. To Gillian Bennett, 28 Brownsville Road, Stockport, SK4 4PF.

No. 3. Extraordinarily personal letter begins the issue which I at first imagined satirical, but upon re-reading reads as if some rambling cry for help from Craig Fees, PhD. A no less controversial figure, the libellous Veronique Campion-Vincent, reviews a variety of source material on antisatanism, whose veracity is greatly diminished when she describes the county of Cleveland as a "middle-sized town of northern England." Plus more Craigs with a Craig Richards doing a Craig Shergold (still receiving five bags of cards a day!); Irish baby burned alive on beach by heat of the sun; alien big cats; Good Times Internet virus as urban legend; that old pub quiz chestnut of what is the only manmade object visible from space (Great Wall of China) aired.

FORTEAN TIMES. Q. Newstand availability.

No. 82. Loren Coleman argues for the serious purpose behind the popular X Files television series in a scholarly fashion. The alien autopsy footage gets another run out, this time suggested as being in the tradition of snuff movies.

Folklorists will doubtless enjoy an examination of an occasional Oriental shrinking penis social panic; a new explanation for unidentified submersible objects in the Baltic as being mammalian minks.

Plus Papua New Guinea lake monster; Chinese curiosities news, including foetus eating; Glastonbury Tor; Alexander the Great revisionist history.

Forum columnists explore: or wth Bonny-bridge ufos waffle; Satanic influences upon music; and a proposition that telepathy is central to our understanding of psychical phenomena.

No. 83. Peter brookesmith details how the investigator, not the subject, determines the content of abduction narratives, while accusing the world's three leading abductionists of gross intellectual sloppiness. Also horse whisperers' dirty tricks of the trade and "joining up" as a substitute for breaking in a horse; Cornish alien big cats; the Abominable Showman interviewed plus far eastern horrid hominids; New Jersey Devil sighting.

No. 84. Extremely well-argued assessment of recall techniques; Hull fishermen's pig-totem superstition; superbangs, rumours and UFOs at an Italian airbase; Roswell alien autopsy viewpoints and follow-ups; Nova Scotia kangaroo. The Forum section

has a silly big hairy monsters in South-West England piece and more intelligent look at the mutual dependence of investigators and the investigated, linking monks with alien abductees.

Reviews, letters and Fortean topics from around the world each issue.

THE ANOMALIST. Cheques to D Stacy, PO Box 12434, San Antonio, Texas, 78212. \$12.50 inc p&p.

No. 2. Our American friend Donald Cyr mailed a copy of this and what an excellent publication it is. FF subscriber Hilary Evans discusses *faits divers* folklore from eagle abductions to alien abductions, where it is not foaftales but named persons, places and dates. A basically unconvincing assessment of alien abductions did, however, interest me with its condemnation of the multiple personality diagnosis (to my hooror applied personally a couple of years ago). Dennis Stillings describes as spontaneous fantasy of nuclear power, Jahweh and cattle mutilations which took on a life of its own. Plus Guatemala organ (don't photograh kids, so the author does) theft rumours; original Big-foot tale a spoof?; possibility that hominids lived in Siberia three million years ago; pigeons' homing ability still unsolved; remote viewing. Letters.

MAGONIA. Q. Interpreting contemporary vision and belief. Sub: UK £4. Cheques to John Rimmer. Address: John De Cottage, 5 James terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

No. 53. Peter Rogerson believes it "highly likely that ideas of abductees being beamed out of houses through solid matter derives from pop iconography of the Rapture," this coming within an article covering stigmata, spontaneous initiation and apocalypticism, with special concern for the abuse scenarios. Michael Goss studies hypnotism show. Letters and reviews.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. £7 for six issues. Cheques payable to Northern UFO News. From 11 Pike Court, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8QF.

No. 171. Editor Jenny Randles discusses at length the Roswell autopsy film and the British Unidentified Flying Objects Research Association's commercialised involvement.

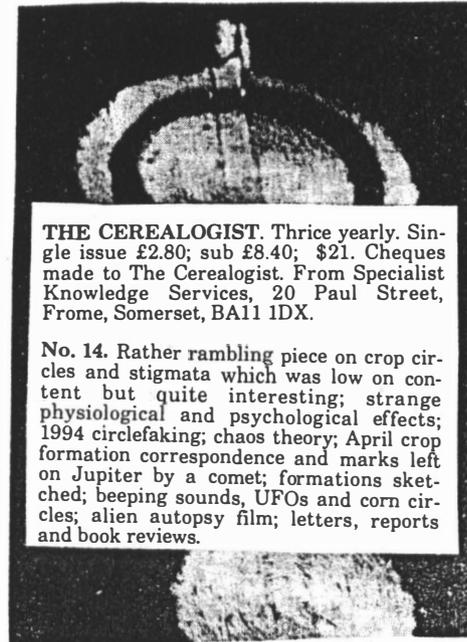
Usual features each issue include mags round-up; media references; corn circles news; ufo sightings cases.

THE LEY HUNTER. The Journal of geomancy and earth mysteries. three issues £5.25; USA \$15 (sterling or dollar bills). OPayable to "Empress". From P O Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2BX.

No. 123. The main article reports on field-work into the hypothesis that certain Neolithic structures possessed resonant acoustic properties that may have contributed to their functional purposes (though I fail to see how rock art patterns are seen as inimical to the 20th century gadget patterns). Other articles include dense, waffling, pebbledash crap on mesmerism/romanticism/shamanism(?) by someone called Peter Redgrove; direct mind-machine interaction; a Western isles mountain funeral path; sun shrines in India and "city" planning. Book reviews include Peter brookesmith's "Without Comprehension" piece on Nagaitas and Mantle's Without Consent. Letters.

DeVILLE'S ADVOCATE. A forum for serious, semi-serious and downright pointless speculation. Fanzine available "fos usual" such as couple of stamps, contribution, etc. From Mike White, 62 Goodmoor Crescent, Churchdown, Glos., GL3 2DL.

No. 1. Pieces are on DeVille's life and work (spoof); sleep and inter-universal travel (SF); comparison of abductions and near-death experiences (neurological trauma theory); employee's revenge (Muscovite urban legend?) and snippets, including thrills from pumping air up the anal passage.



THE CEREALOGIST. Thrice yearly. Single issue £2.80; sub £8.40; \$21. Cheques made to The Cereallogist. From Specialist Knowledge Services, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

No. 14. Rather rambling piece on crop circles and stigmata which was low on content but quite interesting; strange physiological and psychological effects; 1994 circlefaking; chaos theory; April crop formation correspondence and marks left on Jupiter by a comet; formations sketched; beeping sounds, UFOs and corn circles; alien autopsy film; letters, reports and book reviews.

Romeo's one jump too many

A JEALOUS husband killed his wife's bungee-jumping lover by swapping the elastic cord for a longer one.

Scheming Juan Nava watched as Efrían Niani tied the cord round his ankles — and plunged head first to the ground.

Juan hatched his plot after listening in to a phone call between wife Anna and Efrían about a planned jump at a carnival.

Juan, of Chinca, Peru, swapped the 115ft cord for a 140ft length after he lured operators away by starting a fire.

Police said: "Efrían had no chance." Juan now faces a stretch in prison — for murder.

D. Scar 5/19/96



"That's something you don't often see — a bungee jumper who doesn't understand the metric system."

Proto-legends

A friend who lives in the badlands of London's Herne Hill (but so, he comforts himself, does the Governor of the Bank of England) had a prowler in the back garden last week, or so the police informed him when they'd stopped trampling his dahlias and scrambling over his fencing. They chased the intruder through a dozen patios before they got him, with the help of a snarling Alsatian. Calling the beast to heel, the uniformed handler muttered "Good boy, Oser". "Oser?" [said my friend] "What kind of name is that for a dog?" "You're not saying it right," said the policeman, "It's spelt with an Xh. Xhosa".

Why, my friend inquired, have you named a police dog after a Bantu tribesman from the Cape Province of South Africa? (Visions of reversed racism coursed through his head: weren't they taking this community-policing thing a little far? Would the Brixton force soon own a German shepherd called Marley?). "It's not like that," said the cop. "We call each new dog litter by a different letter of the alphabet. By the time we'd got to X, there was a litter of 12. Caused the inspector's wife no end of trouble. She 'ad to look in the dictionary: X-ray, Xylophone, Xanthippe ..." He considered. "Then we ran out and we 'ad to call the last one Excalibur, but that's cheating, of course ...". Something wrong with Xenophobe?

Ink-riminated

GUESTS at a recent weekend party in the Highlands included a young blade from London and his girlfriend. Awaking in the early hours, he decided to visit her room which was some way down the corridor — and duly re-enacted one of the chestnuts of country house life.

Our man reached for his bedside lamp, knocking over a glass, which he blindly felt around for on the carpet. Giving up on the light idea, he eased open the door and, with damp hands felt his way along the landing to her door. Some hours later he emerged to return to his own bed. It was only then that he realised that the "glass" had been a bottle of ink. There was, consequently, a line of handprints along the corridor wall.

While in Scotland I was told about a memo which appeared recently on the noticeboard in a Highland police station. "Will the person who removed the cake from Supt MacPherson's office please return it as it is needed for testing in a poisoning case."

Is this cake an urban myth or, as they say in Dundee, a meringue?



● The piece (above top) from John Walsh's diary (*Independent*, 14/9/95) in its spelling/pronunciation correctness reminded me of a reversed tale my father told me — as true — of a PC Plod who found a dead horse in Baldersara Street, but unsure of his literacy ability, dragged the beast into Park Road, which he knew he could spell in his notebook.

● Don't believe this either (above) from Peterborough column by Quentin Letts (*D. Teleg.*, 16/9/95). Note rude number 69 on door.

● And never mind the authority figure (left), here's another dubious Indy tale (*Independent*, 15/9/95) from the diary by Paul Valley.

□ Three tales in three days!

DOG DAYS

or three stories which may seem kind of familiar published in three different newspapers within a fortnight of one another

BURGLAR FINGERED

A GUARD dog bit off a burglar's finger — then ate it.

Duke the two-year-old greyhound was dozing on a settee when the intruder broke in.

Owner Barry Holland found the little finger on his lounge carpet when he returned to his flat in Milton Keynes, Bucks. He

said yesterday: "Nothing was taken so the burglar must have run off pretty quick."

"He didn't even stop to pick up his finger."

But police were unable to take the villain's fingerprints.

Duke swallowed the evidence while Barry was phoning them.

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Other departures from the "standard" script of the legend: the dog's heroism is not belatedly discovered by a vet (along with the robber's digit) and consequently there is no emergency call which reveals the stricken culprit still in the closet. I heard a more orthodox version from a Staffordshire bull terrier owner in 1994. Despite wanting to impress on me the bravery of the breed, he didn't try to pretend his dog was the canine hero — it was just a story he'd heard somewhere or other.

When the Van Hilst family of Terheijden bought a mongrel at a Belgian pet market four years ago and called him Loupy, they did not realise his bite would be much worse than his bark — in fact, he would never bark.

Despite his apparent charm, Loupy proved impossible to train, very difficult to manage and grew much larger than ex-

Call of the wild

pected. "He was always off hunting," Van Hilst said. Then a visit to the vet revealed that Loupy was, in fact, a wolf (*Canis lupus*; perhaps the family had a premonition). He is now in a wolf shelter.

● The Mexican Pet (cue Prof. Brunvand again!) becomes the Belgian Pet. How clever of the owners to anticipate events by calling the pup "Loupy" — a happy choice not lost on reporter Christine Aziz. As a point of historical interest, some out-of-place seem attributable to exotic canid juveniles (wolves or jackals) sold to members of the hunting fraternity as fox cubs and "turned down" for future fun and games. Tally ho indeed ...

● This story almost manages to be Professor Brunvand's Choking Doberman ... except, of course, that the dog concerned isn't a Doberman and doesn't choke. In fact, the amputated finger seems to have slipped down its gullet quite nicely.

The Observer, 4/2/96

STREET TALK From Christine Aziz in Amsterdam

'Cursed' tourists send souvenir rocks back to aboriginal site

The Guardian
Reporter in Sydney 13/2/96

TOURISTS who pocketed pieces of Australia's most famous rock have started sending them back to Uluru national park, complaining that the souvenirs brought a curse on their lives, the park's manager said yesterday.

Julian Barry is encouraging belief in the curse to end the souvenir-hunting at Uluru, formerly known as

Ayers Rock. He said he had received a few packages a month for the past two years from people who felt their pieces of rock brought nothing but bad luck.

He said officials in Uluru national park, in the out-back about 1,200 miles west of Sydney, and the rock's aboriginal owners refer to them as "conscience rocks".

He described one letter as typical of the dozens he had received from around the world. A New Zealand man wrote of his son's bad luck after taking pieces of the rock. He said his son's father-in-law had died and his son had broken his back in a motorcycle accident.

Mr Barry, who does not believe in a curse, said: "We are jumping on the bandwagon by saying to

people that it's an offence to take rocks as souvenirs. It's culturally inappropriate."

** Oh, all right, then - fair enough: this story has absolutely nothing to do with dogs. Instead we have a solid example of the storyline in which a person seeks to remove some baleful influence by returning the purloined object (stolen jewel, idol, mummy) to which it is attached. I can recall a near-identical report in Fate Magazine of accursed stones sent back by nervous, ill-luck-bound tourists to the sacred Mauna Loa in Hawaii.

ARTICLES ELSEWHERE

ON THE PROWL by Matthew Dale (Weekend Telegraph, 21/1/95)

RUN, RABBITS, RUN - BUT WHERE'S THE CAT? by John Hodder (Weekend Telegraph, 21/1/95)

The latter an attempt to get evidence of the Beast of Bodmin; the former a general piece with a participant concluding "that the Ministry's new initiative" (aren't all initiatives new? - Editor) "is a propaganda exercise which will conclude that there is 'a lack of positive evidence.' We shall see."

And see we did.

WE DON'T HAVE A CLUE ON THE BODMIN BEAST by Lewis Panther (sic) and ALUN REES (D. Express, 20/7/95)

TIDDLE S WOWS THE CRITICS IN THE BIG CAT FILM SHOW by Paul Callan (D. Express, 20/7/95)

THE FEARSOME BEAST OF BODMIN/ MORE LIKE THE MOGGY OF THE MOOR by Bill Mowland (D. Mail, 20/7/95)

Case of six months and £8,200 later, men from the Ministry of Agriculture say: "It might exist, we can't prove it doesn't." Farmers reckon it's a cover-up.



STOP PRESS

We reported Francis When (FF27:15) writing of the Apollo/Internet/moon/oral sex tale. It resurfaced, so to speak, with the name changed from Gorsky to Goldberg in an "exclusive" (D Star, 1/12/95). Sorry, no further details as a colleague extracted the basic part and left only the headline behind.

(D Star, 5/9/95)



Shadowy influence: a victim of the 'body-snatchers'

Another ministry now - that of Defence.

ET LIVES, SAYS MAN FROM THE MINISTRY by Nick Fielding (The Mail on Sunday, 27/7/95)

Actually the strap line said it all and better: "Whitehall shock as its chief alien-watcher admits: I believe in UFOs." Nick Pope, a mere 29, who had headed the Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a office, with a brief to deal with inquiries about flying saucers and other unexplained phenomena, had apparently become a convert to the extraterrestrial viewpoint. Colonials went backwards, so to speak, and he went gray or green.

Which brings us -- same day -- neatly to:

PROFESSOR MACK AND THE LITTLE GREEN MEN by William Langley (Sunday Telegraph, 2/7/95)

Harvard academic Dr John Mack in the cack, and rightly so, for taking too literally alien abductions.

Next crop circles.

POP LEGEND PRESLEY IS ALIVE AND LOOKING FOR ALIENS IN AND-OVER by Robert Chalmers

Reg Presley that is. Quite interesting piece on Troggs' singer's interest in corn circles and the infamous Troggs Tapes and their 114 expletives. Their svengali manager Larry Page had the dubious pleasure of being interviewed by me in Stockton's Royal Oak, but enough of name dropping ...

SHC now

GONE IN A FLASH by Tony Hoare

General piece on spontaneous human combustion, but being the Daily Sport "in Benidorm, Spain, a topless bather was burned to a crisp in seconds." A leading expert, supposedly, Dr Roger de Bast, said: "Our best guess is that all the victims had deep-seated psychological problems and actually willed themselves to burst into flames."

Well that's that solved, thankfully!

Oh, and it was on page 8. On page 9 "engineer Bill Green's phone burst into flames in his pocket as he sipped a pint in his local. Bill, 47, of Kenilworth, Warwicks, said: 'I looked down and my jeans were ablaze.' He beat out the flames and then his boss rang - on the badly-melted phone."

* Chalmers' piece on Presley -- (Observer Magazine, 19/6/94)

** Hoare's piece on de Bast -- (D. Sport. 29/1/95)

NEWCASTLE UPON CRIME by Rodney Tyler (The Mail on Sunday Review, 22/10/95)

WHEN in Newcastle on a night, only to change trains, I go to the Bridge Hotel. You're careful when you drink on Tyneside. Ramraiding was invented on Meadowell estate, but this article is about the Sixties.

Much myth surrounds the visit in 1967 of the Kray Twins. One version has them arriving at Central station, only to be met by Supt Jack Vinton, who supposedly escorted them back across the bridge and put them straight on the next train back to London. Later the myth had evolved to Vinton finding them in La Dolca Vita, a famous nightclub of the time, and got a waiter to present them with a railway timetable, open at the relevant page, on a silver platter. Another tale was that they wanted to take over the one-armed bandit business in the workmen's clubs, but the police told them, in that case, they would have to appear before the committees of each and every one of the 400 clubs in the area!

Tyler then relates what really happened, but as it is fact and not legend we must skip on (The film Get Carter, starring Michael Caine, captures the myths and reality excellently).

A chief constable of Cleveland a few years ago said that if he could take 40 families from the county and dump them in the sea, crime would drop by 90%. Similarly Scots scum has invaded Newcastle with various problem "families." However, the quest for a measure of respectability hit one particular tribe, and here we suspect are two real urban unbelief tale. Apparently several of them decided to change their surname. The story goes that they chose the name of their solicitor, because they used it so often that it was the only one they could spell.

Then there was the family claiming to have won £300,000 on the National Lottery (more likely gained by nefarious means). Having moved into a posh area, they decided to have a barbecue to get to know their neighbours. One, a bank manager, asked the head of the family if it had been difficult for them to make the change to middle-class splendour. "Howay," the head replied, "it's simple, man. We used to eat inside and shite outside. Now we eat outside and shite inside."

The Hole Story of My Life has Jenny Gathorne-Hardy describing her reasons for having a hole drilled in her skull, while John Michell in Trepanation in History cautions about this practice of relieving the brain and uplifting the mind (Independent on Sunday, 17/9/95).

An outcast, yes . . . but a man? has Hugo Vickers taking fellow biographer Michael Bloch to task for his suggestion that Wallis Simpson was a man. Bloch suggests that the Duchess of Windsor was a victim of AIS, meaning the child is born with the male XY chromosome, but develops externally as a female, though with no internal reproductive organs. He advances the theory because in 1980 a doctor told him in the Saville Club: "There's no doubt of it, for I've heard the details from a colleague who examined her. She's a man." That doctor died in 1982. Vickers notes she has always been surrounded by "weird myths." She captivated the Duke with "special ways" acquired in China. While the girls in the bars stooped down to pick up pennies, employing what the French called the "Cleopatra clip", Mrs Simpson was "able to pick up a Sovereign, ho ho." Then there was the joke that about the Duke -- "He started off as Admiral of the Fleet and ended up as third mate on an old tramp." (The Independent, 16/5/96).