

Folklore Frontiers

32



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FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly urban/rural belief tales, ancient and modern traditions and lore, and contemporary culture.

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The Diary

All being well, later this year I will have published a new book on Northumbrian dragon legends. Author, columnist, world-renowned crypto-zoologist and FF subscriber Dr Karl Shuker kindly contributed a foreword.

His interest has led him, quite unfairly, to be labelled one of "Britain's nuttiest professors" ("Raving Brainiacs" by John Hind, Night & Day, The Mail on Sunday magazine). The article mentions his own dragon book -- "that one IS mytholgy" -- but erroneously the pen portrait claims he's "the man who believes in giant Scottish squirrels" but as the actual piece points out he discovered an Australian wombat, deceased. Apparently Karl's PhD was an investigation into how an upside down fish mates -- hardly hilarious or kama sutra invoking. The remainder was standard condensed cryptozoological fare.

Another friend of FF is Sergeant Eddie Bell, animal liaison officer for Durham Constabulary, who has been in our columns with regard to the "Durham puma" and other alien big cats.

His latest foray into the media spotlight, however, involved a pregnant white mouse and a police car exhaust pipe. The pet was accompanying Fiona Hamilton as she and boozy friends Sonia Fowler and Janet Waters walked to a Chinese takeaway. On the way, Darlington magistrates heard, the mouse jumped into the exhaust of a car parked behind Cockerton police station. Five officers found Hamilton on her knees rootling around the pipework. Things turned nasty when the bobbies asked how the rodent got there and Hamilton stormed: "It doesn't fucking matter. It's my fucking mouse and it's going to die."

Fiona, 25, was bound over for a year for a breach of the peace, and Sonia, 38, and Janet, 34, all of Darlington, Co. Durham, were given a 12-month conditional discharge for causing the late-night mayhem.

As for the mouse, when Sgt Bell arrived at 8am next day, he checked that it wasn't in the engine and had a colleague start the car. The mouse then "shot out of the exhaust." Two days later Mini gave birth to eight little mice and Sgt Bell adopted it. (The Sport, 24/12/97; D. Telegraph, 7/2/98).

* Inside we have a varied selection. Once again can I ask readers to send clippings. There's even an international snip here, a classic hysteria rumour from the Star and South Africa Times of 1/4/98, monitored by Ade Dimmock. Also the counterfeit scare on the same page has similarities, coming from The Guardian for 31/12/91, monitored by Peter Christie.

* The front cover picture relates to my Dukeries article and shows locomotive 58049 at Worksop, with The Mallard entrance on to the platform on the far left (photo by Alan Hopkins).

WILDLIFE experts have discovered a new species of fish which only swims backwards. Several of them have been captured off the coast of New Zealand and have been named the Maororia.

THE SPORT
27/4/98

A TEENAGE girl has rocked America by claiming she is pregnant with Bigfoot's child. Pretty Abigail Hutch, 19, of Arkansas, says she made love with the hairy seven-foot beast after it came to her rescue when she was fleeing from the grip of a would-be rapist. The college student says she was a virgin before her encounter.

THE SPORT 27/4/98

"INVISIBLE PRINCE" OF WORKSOP

By Paul Screeton

I offer you a Dukeries detective story without a solution. I've done some spadework on this underground mystery and hope this account whets others' appetites to consider whether there is a geomantic dimension. If not, it is a rattling good example of eccentricity, both factually and in fiction.

Although Booker-nominated novel The Underground Man (1), by Mick Jackson, is based upon the life of William John Cavendish Bentinck-Scott, fifth Duke of Portland, there are additions, omissions and subtle changes regarding the "Invisible Prince."

The duke was a reclusive, hugely wealthy Victorian aristocrat with a penchant for subterranean passages and chambers. My attention was drawn to a claim that the largest of these was wide enough for two coaches to pass, running from the ancestral home, Welbeck Abbey, to Worksop railway station. (2)

Knowing this Nottinghamshire mecca for rail enthusiasts well, I thought I would check out this particular "fact" for myself. For, I guessed, the most likely terminus for the tunnel seemed the former buffet at the station, currently masquerading as The Mallard (named after the record-breaking steam locomotive), a small, convivial one-bar pub. There had been some alterations since I was last there in the mid-1980s when it was owned by Bill Southard (there being no longer direct access to the platform -- "in case someone having had too much to drink fell under a train" one of the two current brother co-owners told me). Although a shadow of its former prolific rail movements, there is still plenty for the avid trainspotter to observe. (3)

Bill once had cellar work to do, trustingly leaving me in charge for 20 minutes; and it was this cellar and basement used by a folk club (an upper room was used by Freemasons) which made me connect with the alleged tunnel. (4) However, one of the 1998 co-owners assured me there was no tunnel exit there, nor had he heard of one elsewhere at the station.

Now, suspicious of the Guardian-based tunnel credentials, I sought out the library/museum and a helpful lady there put a real dampener on the quest. Despite Jackson's fictional duke arriving at the station by his tunnel, this had to be poetic licence, for the nearest tunnel culmination was a mile from the railway at Sparken Hill, by the present A57 bypass.

Much subsequent information is taken from a book the fount-of-knowledge lady sold me (5), in which references are made to the unfulfilled plans to tunnel to Whitwell railway station and the possibility of a personal halt on the line.

However, in 1869, the Worksop Drive tunnel was completed along with its 80 "sunlight clusters" of gas lamps (previous to this was the underground tramway from the kitchen block to the dining-room, utilising a wagon large enough to carry one complete course of a dinner for ten).

My main source is deficient on any organised attempt to present a coherent description of the tunnel network or provide any truly justifiable reasons for the prodigious constructions. However, hiding buildings underground or well away from it, is seen to be so the palatial country seat could be seen to best advantage.

Nevertheless, we must consider the duke's health. Apparently being prone to neuralgia in the slightest chill, his heavy clothes, umbrellas and those tunnels would keep him warm and dry, though the subterranean option seems a drastic solution. Shyness insecurity and obsession with privacy might also have a bearing on the tunnelling (the land above the main tunnel was a public right-of-way).

The ultimate expression of the duke's underground experiments was a subterranean library with a floor made of waterproof concrete. Also proposed in 1872 was an underground chapel (never consecrated or ballroom as it somehow became!). Another huge excavation was planned as a bachelors' hall, larger than the size of a football pitch, where young men could be as rowdy as they wished without disturbing others.

The works at Welbeck remained unfinished upon the duke's death on December 6, 1870.

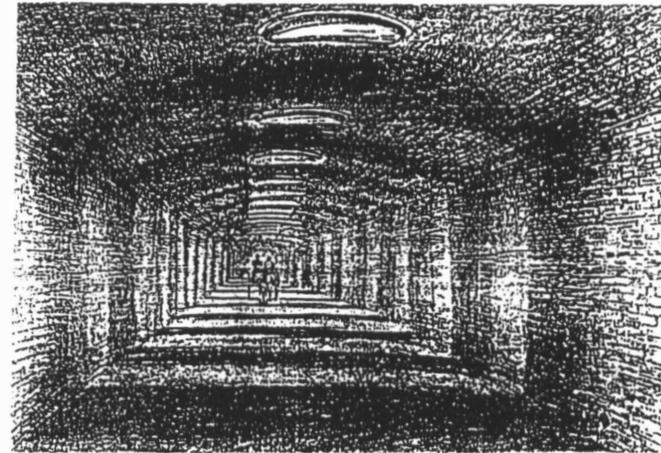
If I have raised questions without a resolution and created disappointment, maybe I can make amends by recommending a reading of Jackson's book. This sinister fantasy has a number of fictional aspects added to the real duke which should interest earth mysticians. At one point he visits Creswell Crags, where some of the earliest evidence for man's Ice Age habitation were found. Also his rail adventure from Worksop takes him to Edinburgh, where he steals an instrument to perform self-trepanation. Not only did he dig under his land, but drilled into his head. The novel, alternating between the duke's journal and testimonies by servants, is a portrait of a descent into madness.

As for the original duke, much legend crystallised around him, including an unfair tale of a bonfire of paintings worth a fortune. His death led one commentator to write that he was seen either "as a baleful wizard or as a benevolent sprite like Robin Goodfellow." (6)

On a personal note, I would like to recommend Worksop as a charming and friendly place; the pubs are particularly hospitable, excellent and cheap bar meals being available. One boozier called the Golden Ball has been known to local patrons by the nicknames Gilded Testicle and Lacquered Knacker!

Testimony that eccentricity and strangeness is alive and well comes from a few cuttings I have recently clipped regarding Worksop people.

Looking out of the Abbey Branch entrance of the Worksop Drive tunnel.



In the Worksop Drive tunnel. Views from "The Graphic" 8-15 Jun 1887.

- * A mystery woman animal lover rushed on to a busy Worksop road to rescue a pheasant ... and walked off with it, causing a three-car pile-up. (7)
- * Worksop mum Dawn Smith was bravely breastfeeding baby Callum... born with two teeth. (8)
- * That most shamanic of all sports, golf, has as its latest prodigy a future Tiger Woods in Worksop's Lee Westwood, already a millionaire at 24. (9)
- * And lastly and appropriately back to subterranea. Mourners stared askance at Worksop cemetery after the coffin of 6ft 3in ex-Barnsley FC soccer star John Saunders was too wide for the grave and got stuck six inches down. Then was revealed the gravedigger's bare buttocks when his trousers slipped to the ground. To add more horror to the jinxed funeral, widow Jennifer almost fell into the grave when the edges crumbled. (10)

POSTSCRIPT. The 5th Duke had a London residence at 19 Cavendish Square, called Harcourt House. A tunnel was built in 1862 from the house to the stables at the end of the garden. This action was to form a cornerstone of rumour which led ultimately to the notorious Druce case of 1896-1907, when a long-deceased London merchant's grandson claimed he had been the fifth duke in disguise, moving underground between Harcourt House and his shop in Baker Street. George Druce, from Australia's outback, claimed to be the true heir to the estate, and said his grandfather's grave in Highgate would contain only lead piping. In a final act of excavation, Druce's remains were indeed exposed -- as was the claimant's scam.

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- (6) Obituary in *The World magazine*, July 3, 1878.
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- (8) *Sun*, Sept. 13, 1997.
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BEER GARDEN PARTY UFOBy PAUL SCREBBTON

Forteans must surely live in the hopes that some day they will witness some phenomenological event. A sighting to confirm their belief there is a non-ordinary world out there. One in the eye to skeptics they would give their right arm for.

Yet, as readers should realise, life is not so straightforward. My thesis is quite simple. Gifts from strange realms are not always appreciated. Even by those most expected to welcome them with open arms -- and open minds.

"Look, look up there by that plane! It's a UFO!"

The cry of joy should have brought an amazed, shared reaction from the gathered throng. For this was the 1995 Travel and Earth Mysteries Society annual garden party at Lionel Beer's home, where members were lounging around in the sun, many discussing UFOs.

The irony was that most members carried on chatting, particularly those with a strong ufological interest. Seemingly others, mostly the women, pointed out to each other a silvery-white disc speeding upwards around a passing aircraft. Their reaction was one of awe and delight. UFO-spotter on the day Eileen Roche reported that desultory remarks were uttered by those who had not even looked -- "It's not a UFO, of course" -- "Rubbish, it must be a balloon" -- "It's a joke, it's not true." She summed up sadly: "So, a world in microcosm. Ufologists react much like the general public to a report of a sudden sighting of a UFO." (1)

I have sympathy with the hardly-disguised contempt of this lady towards these garden-chair ufologists. A few years ago walking along a Devon country road, I stopped to ask a woman stranger if she knew when there would be a bus for Tiverton. As she scanned a timetable leaflet I, too, spotted a daylight disc. As it passed into clouds she began reciting the time of the next bus and I was too polite to interrupt and point out the ufological happening. By the time I had assured her I understood where and when my transport would be, the UFO had gone.

Similarly, on a foggy Sunday car trip to visit prehistoric monuments in Northumberland with driver John Watson, we spotted a fully-grown black panther making a leisurely crossing of the road in front of us. What did we do? Screech to a halt, get our cameras, pursue it? We panicked. I was still shaking as we headed into the first pub we next encountered.

Another tale with irony pertinent to this trail of thought concerns two dozen photographers attending a seminar on wedding photography, during 1995, at the Knockomie Hotel, Forres, Grampian.

The words and wisdom of American snapper Heidi Mauracher were interrupted when it was noticed that the Highland cattle in a nearby field were acting strangely. No, not a black, unmarked helicopter on a mutilation mission, but as participant Les Hester described: "It was about the size of a Labrador but definitely feline. It was dun-coloured and moved just like a big cat." Concentration on the speaker and model bride accompanying them outside now lost, the party saw the beast run beside a fence before darting into the undergrowth.

With so many photographers present, surely one was capable of providing incontrovertible film evidence of alien big cats in our midst. Well, no.

Mr Hester admitted: "We were at the seminar to look and listen so we didn't have our cameras with us." (1)

Ardent Fortean and chief photographer at the Hartlepool Mail, Dirk van der Werff, several years ago spotted a big cat at Hurworth Burn, County Durham, stopped his Mini and grabbed a camera from the back seat, which was fitted with a long lens. He went through a gap in the hedge he assumed it had used, but could get no sight of it, until turning back to the car he sighted a large black panther lying lengthways along a ditch in front of the hedge on the roadside.

"I was perhaps within three feet of the cat and I stood frozen in fear. It was looking directly ahead to the edge of the ditch and didn't seem to see me at first, but then it turned its head and looked up towards me.

"I immediately started to move very slowly and walked backwards to the car, praying that it wouldn't come for me. When I touched the car, I grabbed the handle and quickly opened the door. I jumped into the seat, turned the key and sped straight off along the road.

"I feel annoyed with myself that I didn't hang about and take photographs, but I was very frightened and wanted to get away as soon as possible," recalls Dirk.

But all is not lost. Beer again. A boozy ufological seminar in a Wigan pub in 1996 was interrupted when one of the students cried out, "Look, look it's Jesus" and they all witnessed a Shroud of Turin-style face of Christ.

At the Orwell pub, paranormal investigator Ian Hawthorne had just been discussing the phenomenon where holy images can be seen in everyday things. Then was spotted the bearded face appearing as paint flaked off the side of a canal bridge. (1)

Summing up, is there a reason for some avowed Forteans running away mentally or physically from uncanny events? Is the phenomenon itself the arbiter? Or is just plain human nature? Whatever, it can be bloody embarrassing!

Articles elsewhere

STARTING POINT. Tales of the City by Paul Staheli (Livewire, April/May 1996, The InterCity mag for East-Coast rail travellers). Excellent overview of urban belief tales, taking in the storyteller's social aggrandisement, our primal instinctive fears of coming to harm and the unknown, elevating ourselves above contemporary media icons, their genesis from news stories with adaptation and evolution, and the fine line between telling a FOAF tale which is stupid or one with credibility.

IN THE NAME OF PRIDE. Usually-known UBT Architect's Blunder, a variation appeared in a travel section (Weekend Telegraph, 22/11/97). Writing on Anglesey, Byron Rogers (a friend of mine knew him as a swat at school where they called him "Prof") wrote of Holyhead Breakwater (on a train-spotting trip around 1971 our bus got stuck trying to reach this outpost worked by two class 01 diesels and ripped both sides on the narrow walled road), where a Disneyland-style castle was built 150 years ago for the engineer. It stillexists, but Rogers was told the engineer met an ignominious end -- "He killed himself here. He looked down one day, saw the channel he had designed had a kink in it and he couldn't bear the shame."

I'm sure the phenomena of the *Chupacabras*, or Goatsucker, of Puerto Rico needs little introduction to those with an interest in contemporary myth. No where is the dividing line between cryptozoology and folklore less apparent, if indeed there is actually one at all. The old Goatsucker seems to have been adopted as, "Evidence" to support a multitude of theories and causes from Extraterrestrial life to escapee laboratory experiments gone haywire - It all depends on which account you read.

But what appears to be at the core of the *Chupacabras* shenanigans, is the discovery of mutilated animal corpses. Now one goat with puncture wounds on its neck and drained of blood is one thing, but two... three.... forty? Something, my dear Watson, is afoot.

Which is why I am becoming concerned over the amount of seal deaths being reported in the local north east papers of late. The most spectacular, and puzzling being reported in *The Journal 15/1/98*. Under the banner, "Police Solve Blood on Beach Mystery". Apparently a couple out walking had alerted the local police about a gruesome trail of blood leading down a flight of steps to a local beach. Fearing the blood belonged to some unfortunate person, a full scale investigation was launched.

However, after detailed forensic analysis, it was revealed that the blood was not human, but was believed to have come from a seal. Fingers were pointed at local fisherman who some believed, were killing seals for raiding their nets. "Not so", cried the fisherfolk, who although admitting their catches have been reduced by marauding seals, denied anyone besides a madman would actually go to the lengths of killing and butchering one. A crazed crusty old sea dog with a hatred of *Pinnipedia* roaming the north east coast?

I feel our somewhat conservative local press have been rather slow on the uptake with regard to the potential of this incident, and, think a more daring editor would have wasted no time in introducing the good readers to (Dan da-dan Dan Dan), THE SEALSUCKER.

For a spooky kick off, no body was actually found - just the bloody trail. And the police supposition was that the trail had come from, "...a seal which had been killed and dragged down the steps to the beach". The italics are mine. I can't pretend to be Inspector Morse, but surely it would be more logical for a seal to have been killed on the beach and if anything, its carcass dragged up the stairs to leave the trail? Or perhaps the blood came from an escapee mutant ninja seal which had been bred in a top secret military establishment in Whitley Bay.... - I've always wondered what was in that white dome at Spanish City.

Perhaps noting the newsworthy status of seal carcasses, *The Northumberland Gazette 16/1/98* reported that the discovery of some bones washed up on the coast had sparked off a murder fear in the small coastal village of Beadnell. After a brief police investigation, the bones turned out to be those of a seal. Not even a blood trail left here, the Sealsucker had left nowt but a few gnawed bones. A month or two later, *The Northumberland Gazette 13/3/98* is obviously as concerned as me about the Sealsucker's activities when they report that the carcass of a seal had to be removed from the beach at Seahouses Golf Club. An official of the club refused to comment as to the reason for the corpses removal, but perhaps it is significant that he actually hung up the telephone when I began to probe the club's strict dress code.

"Sealsucker my arse!" I hear you cry. The north east coast has a healthy population of seals, and one of the largest colonies of Grey Seals is in the Farne Islands, just off the coast of Seahouses. The odd dead seal is no proof of Sealsucking skulduggery. OK then, so why have the newspapers began to find seal corpses so newsworthy? - Nope, neither do I, but one must suppose that goat deaths were not particularly headline grabbing until some brave soul in the San Juan Bugle tallied them up and announced the arrival of *El Chupacabras* to the world. Remember, you heard it hear first. And I'm going into the T shirt business.

Writing about seals made me inevitably think of over-rated 80's singing sensation, Seal. Or more particularly of the stories involving the mystery origin of his facial scars. I seem to remember hearing tales of strange African scarification rites, although nasty acne was also mentioned. As far as I know, no one ever asked the guy what they were - Well, you don't do you. The taboo associated with asking such questions to people in the public eye leads inevitably to rumour. And more recently I have heard various theories being

banded around as to the mystery impediment to singer, Gabriel's hidden eye. The favorite seems to have been an optic defect present from birth, although car and domestic accidents were also certainly in the running.



NO I'M NEVER
GONA SURVIVE, UNLESS
I GET A LITTLE CRAZY.

shampoo in a spoon and inhale the fumes, intoxication results. Not any old shampoo though. Oh no, its got to be from the award winning *Pantene* range. Although as far as I am aware, the press have yet to launch their inevitable moral crusade, the threat of our kids wandering around off their heads (& Shoulders?) on *Pro V* fumes is allegedly taken so seriously, that police in inner city areas have alerted officers to take note of areas littered with *Pantene* bottles and blackened spoons. So if your teenage kid's nasal hair is in great condition despite staggering around in a drunken haze, I'd switch to *Vosene*. me.

John Tait.

KILROY, who was there, has gone. On the other hand, he may still be here. You can never tell with history's most ubiquitous man. He was always turning up when least expected.

Francis Kilroy, said to be the originator of the Kilroy-was-here calling-card that was scrawled, daubed and carved everywhere in the wake - and, inexplicably, often in advance - of America's fighting men, has died in Boston and has been buried with astonishingly little ceremony, considering his status as a folk legend.

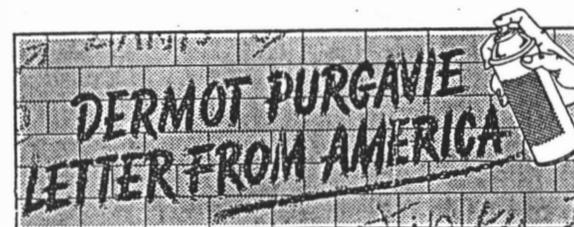


However, this Kilroy, who served in the Army Air Corps in Europe, North Africa and Romania, was not the only one who claimed to have inspired the best-travelled, most memorable, most enigmatic piece of graffiti the world's walls have ever known, and, given it's reach - from Liverpool, to Berlin, to Guadalcanal to Yokohama - more than one seems reasonable.

Kilroy was the most enduring, and enduring, legacy of World War II, and afterwards so many Americans demanded to know from the Army the full identity of he who had done so much for military morale that on September 27, 1946, the Pentagon had to announce to the Associated Press that 'as far as we are concerned this Kilroy simply doesn't exist'.

It was one of the great public relations blunders - the nation wanted a Kilroy and should have been given one - but fortunately the Pentagon was shouted down by 10 million ex-GIs who knew, or knew someone who knew, the original Kilroy and could, and did, testify to where he got started on his compulsive global scribbling. Wherever it was, as the allies advanced Kilroy was there, eventually everywhere, and frequently he seemed to have been there first and moved on again.

No place was too remote or inaccessible for



Daily Mail, Monday, March 23, 1987

him. According to the lore, Americans stormed ashore at Anzio, Okinawa and elsewhere to find that 'Kilroy was here' already. On the Normandy landings, it's said, the invading 4th Division discovered it on a pillbox on Utah Beach while, simultaneously, the 1st Division was reading it on a pillbox on Omaha Beach.

He was the first liberator, leaving his mark on New Guinea mountaintops, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and the shrapnel-scarred Marco Polo bridge in China. And when Americans went aboard the Queen Elizabeth for her first trip as a troopship, Kilroy had already carved his was-here on the handrail. He is even supposed to have penetrated Stalin's bathroom at the Potsdam talks.

His mythology was not harmed by his exposure to the first atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in 1945. After the bomb was dropped, those who swear it hadn't been there before found Kilroy's familiar proclamation inscribed in huge letters along the side of the biggest target vessel, the venerable old battleship New York.

The following year, for reasons that are still unclear, the American Transit Association decided to try to determine which of many putative Kilroys was the real McCoy. It eventually gave the distinction to James, another of the Boston Kilroys.

According to his own account, in 1941 he worked in the shipyards and, apparently after some criticism of his quality control, he started defiantly chalking 'Kilroy was here' on work he had inspected. Ships were leaving so fast there wasn't time to paint them and they, and the 14,000 yard workers who joined up, carried Kilroy's celebrated, contagious and cryptic declaration into history. That Kilroy died in 1942.

So far Kilroy has failed to make the listing of the 100 most influential people in history - but then so have Socrates, Archimedes, Lincoln and Churchill. There is only one recorded instance of good sense (obviously brought on by his experiences at Bikini Atoll) overwhelming his instincts. In the ashes of Hiroshima they found signs saying 'Kilroy didn't want to be here'.

RIP Kilroy, wherever you are.

SINATRA GIRL DIGS UP DEAD HUBBY!

THE SPORT Monday, March 3, 1997

Another **Sport** showbiz exclusive



She wants ashes at home

SINGER Nancy Sinatra has had her late hubby **DUG UP** — 12 years after his death.

The daughter of legendary crooner Frank had Hugh Lambert's casket unearthed and his remains cremated... so he would be closer to her.

Now the 56-year-old singer will keep his ashes in a special urn at her home in Los Angeles. Nancy, who had a worldwide hit in 1966 with *These Boots Are Made For Walking*, said: "Hugh's passion was reading so I bought a bronze urn that looks like a fancy book for the ashes."

"We're going to place him in the family library. When I go on holiday I'll even be able to take him with me."



FRANK: Ailing

By CARLA MOSS

Hugh died of cancer in 1985 at the age of 55.

And pals believe Nancy's desire to have his remains nearby has been prompted by fears

that she will soon lose her ailing 81-year-old dad

But she said: "My daughters were 11 and nine when they lost their father and they've been urging me to do this for some time."

STEAM RAILWAY

MAY 1996 ISSUE No. 218 ON SALE APRIL 24

Railway volunteer arranges his own funeral train

A STEAM railway volunteer from the Midlands has become the first enthusiast to pre-book his own funeral train - even though it could be another 30 or 40 years before he's ready to make his final journey.

The enthusiast, said to be from Stoke-on-Trent and in his early 50s, has selected the steam locomotive of his choice - BR Standard 2-6-4T No. 80080 - specified the music to be played during his final journey - and even chosen the menu for the mourners who will accompany his coffin down the line to the Midland Railway Centre's own Woodland Burial Ground at Swanwick, when the time comes.

Peace Burials, the Ormskirk, Lancashire company which in 1995 set up the UK's first funeral train 'package' agreements with the Midland Railway Centre and the Llangollen Railway, has completed all the arrangements for what director Mary Mallatrac promises will be "a very personal and dignified funeral."

She declined to identify the enthusiast - an active volunteer from another unspecified railway - but

NEWS EXCLUSIVE BY DAVID WILCOCK

confirmed that the train is the first that Peace Burials have been asked to arrange in which the body of the deceased will be carried on board, and then interred at a lineside grave. The MRC did, however, run two trains for Peace Burials last year in which the ashes of the deceased were carried, and later scattered.

"For someone who has had a lifetime love of trains, it's a lovely way to go," said Mary Mallatrac, whose initiative for "themed railway funerals" was first disclosed to Steam Railway readers in December 1995. Peace Burials was also in the process of making similar steam-hauled funeral train plans for three other clients, she said.

The Llangollen Railway has yet to run a funeral train, but said Mary Mallatrac: "There has been a lot of interest not just from men but ladies too, where perhaps the line holds fond memories of childhood days, or because people have had happy times on the dining trains."

NANCY: She'll keep Hugh's remains in a special urn in the family library

Murder hysteria grips school

By CASARET ABAARDE

hoax.

Lenasia South primary school pupils have been so traumatised by a spate of mutilated bodies in an informal settlement near their township that their imaginations are now feeding their fears.

Last week an 11-year-old girl's claim that she had seen a body in the veld was so convincing that she persuaded first her parents, then a community leader and the police, that the body could be found in the veld.

Soon the whole township was talking of a serial killer who was targeting schoolgirls in the neighbourhood. But the story appeared to be a

hoax. After the child related the story to her elders, a rumour that four children's bodies in school uniforms had been discovered near the local garage by a municipal worker spread through the community like wildfire.

Some residents were convinced a serial killer was stalking their children.

Shanaaz Ahmanto (32), a member of the Lenasia South Community Committee, said the girl's claim was a hoax.

She said the 11-year-old ran home to her parents last week and told them she had seen a child's body in the veld

while walking home with a six-year-old friend. The girl's mother then approached Ahmanto.

"When the girl persisted with the story, I phoned the police. The rumours started with the mutilated bodies in Finetown, which occurred several months ago. I suspect that the squatter kids spoke to the Lenasia kids and their imaginations ran wild," she said.

Nobody found anything, but some residents are not convinced.

Rehaan Ebrahim (33), who lives opposite the field, which stretches for about 500 sq m, was convinced that police had found something, but were

hiding it from the community.

"They were here till late. There was a huge amount of Casspirs and police vehicles. I think they found something," he said.

He added that what had convinced him was that police had ordered the council to cut the tall grass. Police had visited Lancaster Primary School, which his children attend.

Ebrahim's nine-year-old son came home with the news that his vice-principal had apparently warned them "to walk in groups, not to go out late or alone, and that there was a serial killer on the loose who was going to kill us when he catches us".

Counterfeit scare over uncrowned head

John Mullin

ACOUNTERFEITING scare centring on the £1 coin seemed to the people of Dromore, County Down, to be an audacious attempt to strike at the figurehead of British rule.

The residents of one of the UK's smallest cathedral cities, founded almost 1,500 years ago, were baffled. It was the Queen's head which worried them. Instead of wearing a handsome upright crown, in some of the coins she seemed to be bereft of any form of headgear.

Amid whispers of a complicated terrorist plot, the townsfolk scoured their pockets for fear they had been duped.

Derek Brien, aged 56, said: "You know how things go around in a small country town, and there was somebody insisting the paramilitaries were behind it."

"A few people rushed into the shops and were trying to change their coins, but in the end we realised there were just too many for them all to be forgeries."

Jackie Reid, who runs Dromore's main news agency, said: "I had to take it seri-

ously for a while, but it was all over quickly." It turned out that the differences between the Queen's profile on the coins were legal.

Indeed, they had been sanctioned by her husband, the chairman of the Royal Mint's advisory committee, which decided more than five years ago to replace the portrait of the Queen on all its coins.

Out went Arnold Machin's 1968 tiara portrait, to be replaced by Raphael Maklouf's 1985 crown portrait.

Yet it was the earlier portrait, with its barely-noticeable tiara, which prompted the panic.

The new coin, with the Queen wearing a crown, seemed perfectly acceptable, and because £1 notes have been slow to disappear in the province, it was more familiar to most people.

Rajendra Persaud, a psychiatrist at the University of London Institute of Psychiatry, said: "Research has conclusively shown people are often unable to describe or recognise details about items they see every day."

"Rumours generally spread about matters over which people are anxious — it happens at the Stock Exchange every day."

Doctor, we've got a nasty case of the grolies

By David Millward (D. Telegraph, 20/12/97)

THE secret code used by doctors to warn colleagues about patients' idiosyncracies has been revealed.

Thus if a GP comes across TEETH written in bold capitals on a file, the medical advice is not to seek a good dentist but to counsel: "Tried everything else, try homeopathy". TATT is not an observation on the patient's fashion sense but a warning that he or she is "Tired all the time".

SIG is not a new drug or treatment, merely a "stroppy ignorant git".

The secrets of the surgery were disclosed in the latest edition of *Health Service Journal* by Dr Phil Hammond, who combines being a

stand-up comedian with working as a GP and lecturing in communication skills at Bristol University.

Such communication skills employed by Dr Hammond, also presenter of BBC2's *Trust me I am a doctor*, include describing some women patients as GROLIES — Guardian reader of limited intelli-

gence in an ethnic skirt. Medical students, sticking apparently to their traditional sense of values, talk of TUBES, referring to "totally unnecessary breast examinations" on attractive female patients.

Northern doctors writing FAS on a file regard their patient as "fat and stupid" whereas in surgeries in the south this means "fickle and smelly". In Winchester patients regarded as stupid are described as NFA — "normal for Andover". In Taunton, NFB translates as "normal for Bridgewater".

A patient described as PAF0, if he were sober enough to read the file, would learn that he was "pissed and fell over".

Dr Hammond explained: "Like many NHS staff I am addicted to black humour. Doctors and nurses may still be gods and superhuman, caring machines in the public eye, but anyone who has worked with us knows it just ain't so."

From Steve Middleton, Brighton.

I like the magazine. It is good to see an unconventional/unpredictable approach to the odd process of the urban myth.

I've also got a story for you which I heard about three years ago in Brighton from a friend who, of course, had been told it by someone else. I've no idea if this story is widespread, but I've never heard it or read of it since. My apologies if you already know it.

A man, somewhere in the Brighton area, has procured a large tropical spider -- a bird-eating spider no less -- which he keeps in a glass tank in his living-room. For a while, he feeds the spider mealworms and suchlike, but he can't resist the temptation to see if the spider will live up to its name. So somehow or other (it was not stated how) he captures a sparrow and places it in the tank with the spider. The spider promptly kills and starts to eat the unlucky bird. The idiot owner is absolutely horrified at this. He freaks out. Can't handle it at all. He decides to dispose of the spider, but reckons he can't manage it on his own. He calls up a mate who comes around that afternoon. They take the spider in its tank into the back garden. The squeamish arachnid-fancier carefully opens the tank, while the other stands by with a garden spade raised. Whoosh! The spider shoots out at great speed. The slow friend fails to clobber it and it disappears, free to roam the outskirts of Brighton.

Me and my friend speculated that if this story were true, the spider might last a long time, what with the hotter weather we'd been getting. Not long after, if I remember correctly, there were factual reports in the Brighton and Hove Evening Argus, of a harmless relation of the black widow spider thriving in various parts of Sussex. I wonder how many other stories with relation to climate change and introduced fauna is one likely to hear? So far I've heard nothing of poultry-killing spiders roaming the Downs. Come to think of it, I'm not entirely sure that bird-eating spiders really do eat birds! Have you heard this story or one like it? (Editor: No I haven't, but have any readers? Anyone know if they do eat birds?)

Another story, or rumour to be more accurate, I heard when I was in my mid-teens and living in Bradford. Not long after Peter Sutcliffe was finally arrested, I heard a few people claim that a particularly crass shopkeeper, somewhere in town, was trying to cash in by selling Peter Sutcliffe masks. I never found out where this shop was meant to be, and I don't recall any mention of this in the local paper, which you would have expected. The strength of feeling at the time was such that anyone being that tactless would have had their windows bricked. This was one of a number of rumours relating to the Yorkshire Ripper / Peter Sutcliffe case.

Lastly, re Tait's Gallery (FF31), the "wanking contest" story has appeared in a literary contest. Jean Genet refers to such a competition taking place in an inter-war French borstal or its equivalent in his novel "The Miracle of the Rose" (1946). The prize involved was a coin rather than a digestive or any other confectionery!



THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 25 1998

Whites put faith in hippo grease

FROM SAM KILEY
IN JOHANNESBURG

ENGLAND'S footballers may have the healing hands of faith healer Eileen Drewery on their side, but the South African national team, known as Bafana Bafana, can harness the secrets of hundreds of African medicine men, who use lion fat and hippopotamus grease to enhance players' performance.

Across Africa, men and women the colonial officials labelled "witch-doctors" have been enjoying a renaissance in popularity. In South Africa, whites are the fastest-growing market for purveyors of lozions and potions to enhance sporting, sexual and business performance. "At least 80 per cent of all South Africans go to a traditional healer before they go to a doctor. So we are the most important part of primary healthcare," said Seth Seroka, the chairman of the African National Healers' Association.

His consulting rooms, hung with dried monkey and reptile skins, could come from Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. "I can tell you that Bafana Bafana travel with a *nanga* (a male traditional healer). No one wants to come forward to say who it is, because obviously if they don't win or do well, then the healer will lose business." Dr



Haggard: African stories of adventure and sorcery

K. M. Naidoo, a qualified doctor but also a *nanga* and herbal specialist, owns a *muti* (medicine) shop next to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. He said the team's *nanga* would "be using a lot of his own special magic, as well as some we all know. Hippo fat rubbed on the legs is very good for strength."

Dubbed the "white witch-doctor of Africa" after the magic he worked coaching West African sides, Philippe Troussier, the Bafana Bafana coach, last week underwent a

cleansing ritual presided over by a *sangoma*, the female equivalent of a *nanga*. At Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's home, he washed his hands in the blood of a goat.

White South Africans are beating hurried paths to the rooms of famous *nangus* and *sangomas*. South Africa has between 250,000 and 300,000 traditional healers, most of them recognised by Mr Seroka's organisation. By comparison there are only 30,000 doctors and 200,000 nurses. Traditional healers have opened their own hospitals. Now sanctioned by the Government, treatment by a *nanga* can be claimed on some health insurance schemes.

"Most of the business we do with whites is about their love lives, or about crime," Mr Seroka said.

One satisfied customer is Linda De Luca, owner of a plant nursery on the outskirts of crime-infested Johannesburg. For about £200 she took out "muti insurance". She did not have a burglary or vehicle problem for the two-year period guaranteed by Mr Seroka.

There is a dark side to *muti* too. Scores of women alleged to be "witches" have been driven out of their homes. In Johannesburg, police are investigating the murders of several children for body parts to be used in medicine.

A SPORTSMAN who was on a life-support machine after being knocked out playing football later recovered — only to be killed playing cricket five weeks later, an inquest heard yesterday.

Peter Hill (26), an engineer from Youlgreave, Derbys, was thrown to the ground with six other players when a thunderbolt struck the village pitch.

(Aberdeen Press & Journal 22/1/52)

All wrong, Jack

THE day before the surprise announcement of Charlton Athletic's Lennie Lawrence as Middlesbrough's new manager, a wonderful rumour swept the town.

One of the YTS lads had, genuinely, overheard club captain Tony Mowbray discussing the new gaffer's identity.

All he picked up, though, were the words "Charlton" and "manager."

By the end of the afternoon, every pub in town had Big Jack returning in prodigal glory.

The Northern Echo
July 16, 1991

EAR WE GO!
A SOCCER player yelled "goal" after hitting the winner in a match for deaf and DUMB people in Turkey. His team was disqualified.

SUNDAY SPORT
26/3/95

* **MAGIC SPONGE.** Staying non-League, success was credited by Cornwall's Porthleven FC to the unused sponge mascot at the front of the team bus. At Christmas, Bill Tearney received a DIY football fame kit: a bottle of bath potion with novelty sponge shaped like the FA Cup. When pressed it played the "Match of the Day" theme tune. They had bobbed through successive rounds of the FA Vase to reach the quarter-finals. The club was established 101 years ago, and Sarah Edworthy (D. Telegraph, 28/2/98 -- and NO next week's issue didn't record who won) added that according to legend, a fisherman found a ball floating in the sea, brought it ashore and the first game of football was played on the beach. Villagers clubbed together and formed the team which until recently consisted solely of fishermen.

* **TITS OUTED.** Your politically-incorrect mammaryologist editor even found an odd reference in Danny Baker's column (The Times, 4/4/98), where a recent poll to discover which footballers had breasts like women, the top three votes were for John Hartson, Jan Molby and Thomas Brodin.

Cup victory a glass act

SOCCER fan Peter Doherty is so proud of Barnsley beating Manchester Utd in the FA Cup that he's had the 3-2 scoreline and date engraved on his glass front door.

Peter, 42, of Bolton upon Dearne, South Yorks, said: "People think I'm crazy, but that famous score will now be with me forever."

THE SPORT

April 28, 1998



Andrew Baker
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
Cover Story
SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1998

KENNY DALGLISH slipped into the press room at St James' Park and sat down at the little desk next to the tea urn. Ranks of reporters pressed against the tape that prevented them from leaning on the desk itself. Beyond them, through the windows, drifted the sound of hundreds of fans berating Newcastle's board and in particular its two errant directors. "You couldn't score in a brothel," they sang, among other less presentable ditties.

Less seriously, there can be times when being celebrated for not saying very much can be turned to commercial advantage. The improbable notion of Dalglish as a compulsive chatterer, for instance, is behind his British Telecom television advertisement. There is a rumour - no doubt without foundation - circulating in football circles which suggests an even deeper irony. Dalglish's schedule was so hectic, the story runs, that some extra scenes for the advertisement had to be filmed using a 'body double' for Newcastle's manager. It's good to talk - but not if you have better things to do.

Buenos Aires: A torchlight procession of football supporters dressed in white marched slowly into the stadium, where a special mass was followed by a rock concert.

The ceremony was all part of Racing Club's attempts to banish what they claim are evil spirits who have prevented them winning the Argentinian championship for 32 years.

More cynical observers believe that the problems at Racing, who are best remembered in Britain for an infamous World Club Championship defeat of Celtic in 1967, are down to bad management and crippling debts.

Racing's exorcism proceedings ended with a friendly against Coln... who beat them 2-0. (D. Teleg, 21/3/98)

A GIRLS' football team in Grosseto, Rome, has infuriated a local bishop by signing a sponsorship deal with a condom factory. The girls will each have a picture of a king-sized johnnie on their shirts.

(The Sport, April 22, 1998)



Parish pump

FOOTBALL is a superstitious old game in Bedfordshire, where Biggleswade Town are being urged to urinate in all four corners of their new pitch before relocating to Langford Road.

The ground needs to be dug up and relaid because it was used by travellers as a lavatory, a Mid-Bedfordshire district council spokesman tells *Bedfordshire on Sunday*. But the bizarre advice to urinate comes from the Peterborough United boss, Barry Fry, who believes it could counter any curses that may or may not have been visited upon the site.

"I don't usually believe in all that kind of stuff, but when I was in charge at Birmingham we went three months without a win. I later found out that our ground had been used by gypsies," he said. The remedy to curses, real or imagined, is "peeing in the four corners of the pitch", he added. "So I did - and we avoided relegation."

Cuckoo in the Hoddle camp

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

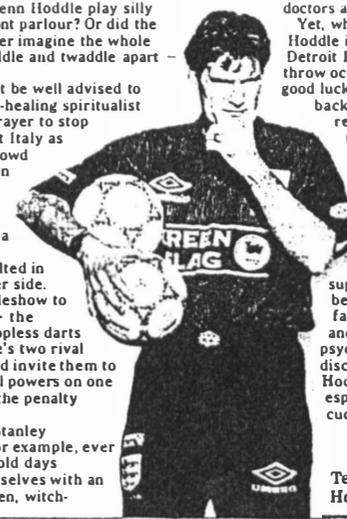
MAY 2, 1998

AND so it goes on. Did Glenn Hoddle play silly beggars in Uri Geller's front parlour? Or did the mind-bending spoon-bender imagine the whole thing? Does anyone - Hoddle and twaddle apart - really care?

The England coach might be well advised to tread carefully, for if faith-healing spiritualist Eileen Drewery can use prayer to stop Ian Wright scoring against Italy as she claims ("to prevent crowd trouble", so she says), then heaven only knows what mischief Geller might wreak on behalf of Romania, Colombia and Tunisia at France 98 if his legal wrangle with Hoddle resulted in him going over to the other side.

Perhaps as a freakish sideshow to the World Cup, Live TV - the channel who brought us topless darts - could lock away Hoddle's two rival forces in a sealed room and invite them to unleash their supernatural powers on one another. A novel twist to the penalty shoot-out.

But how, I wonder, did Stanley Matthews or Joe Davis, for example, ever get where they did in the old days without surrounding themselves with an entourage of voodoo women, witch-



doctors and Tibetan mystics? Yet, when it comes to mumbo-jumbo, Hoddle is still at level one. Fans of the Detroit Red Wings ice hockey team throw octopuses into the arena for good luck, a superstition which dates back to 1952 when a local seafood restaurateur tossed one on to the ice hoping the eight legs would inspire the Red Wings to the eight victories they needed to win the Stanley Cup. This they duly did, and so a ritual was up and running.

As far as the England camp's dealings in the supernatural go, I can do no better than adapt David Frost's famous observation made in another context: a team of psychiatrists are trying to discover what makes Glenn Hoddle tick. And, more especially, what makes him go cuckoo every half-hour.

Team spirit ... but Glenn Hoddle is a mere beginner

* **AURAL SIMULACRA.** An FF favourite is mishearing leading to bizarre consequences. Legend has it that the ashes of the bails used in Australia's first Test win on English soil in 1892 were burned and put in an urn to mark the "death of English cricket." Now, Rosemary, Dowager Countess of Darnley, says her mother-in-law created the Ashes when she burned her veil to gain the attentions of England captain Ivo Bligh. But "veil" was misheard. (*The Sport*, 17/4/98).

* **HARDY COUNTRY.** Groundhoppers are soccer non-League devotees who are more interested in watching a game rather than its standard. David Powell (*The Times*, 11/4/98) notes that they have various rituals: one insists on touching both crossbars, another on photographing the corner flags.

* **TEE TIME CRAZE.** The businessman lining up a putt on his office carpet is a stockjoke of cartoons. Office golf is now the latest sport and its first championships were held in Chicago, where 64 contestants were picked from 300 companies in order to play for a prize worth £210,000.

Colman's YOUR CLUB BY GRUB GUIDE

LOVELY grub or stomach churning gives it to you straight about the booze? Today we serve up another standard of food dished up to fans at offering from the newly launched soccer grounds around the country. Colman's Football Food Guide which CLUBS AWARDED STAR MARKS OUT OF FIVE.

HARTLEPOOL

THE Victoria Park place provide essential central heating to combat the winds whipping off the North Sea. They're the size of a plate, with the jumbo sausage rolls (for once justifying the description) as big as your hand.

Hartlepool has for years been the butt of many a joke - just don't mention the monkey - but, as fans with a big appetite will find, now it's far from humorous in the food department.

Bistros and restaurants line the streets and the stadium itself is a revelation.

New Hartlepool, as local MP Peter Mandelson might say.



CRICKET has a long obsession with initials. There was once little chance of capturing a county unless one had three. Slegfried Sassoon was an expert on them and David Foot's engaging book *Beyond Bat and Ball*, out on Monday, recounts an occasion in 1953 when he took the Cambridge team out to dinner.

Sassoon was in mid-monologue on pre-First World War players' initials when a waiter emptied a bowl of soup over Swaranjit Singh, a Sikh in the party from Fenner's. "Oh, Christ!" someone cried in horror. Sassoon's rejoinder was immediate: "Let me see now. Christ J. wasn't it?"

GUARDIAN 30/10/93

Magazines

LETTERS TO AMBROSE MERTON. Q. £7-50 for 4. Payable to David Cornwell, Psychology Section, Dept of Education Studies, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP, Scotland. No. 11. Murphy's law; tooth fairy; chain letters; Men in Black; official initials bastardised. Book reviews. No. 12. Paul Screeton focuses on two recent moral panics -- alcopops/tots and TV Teletubbies (at the top of page 17 it should read "its nose-nozzle knew cocaine abuse"). Princess Diana death jokes suggest a nation far from consolidated in mourning. Plus origins of term "gremlins"; Guy Fawkes and bonfires; updates and press cuttings.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE. Sub £10 for 5. New paranormal/Forcean mag. Cheques/POs payable to Mystery Magazine. Address 48a Bridge Street, Killamarsh, Derbys., S21 8AJ. No. 1. Plenty to interest folklorists, including West Yorks black panther or "super cat" (also Scottish ones); Spring-Heeled Jack in Sheffield; astronaut Gordon Cooper interviewed on his belief in aliens and their spacecraft; Edwina Currie. Lots of small items. No. 2. Dumb idiot tales; 64 ghosts (more promised up to 101); Men in Black; reptile motivation; West Yorks crop circles; libellous pet food claims; skywatching and UFO reports; Chinese dragonlore; tons of Forcean-style snippets.

MAGONIA. Q. Interpreting contemporary vision and belief. 4 issues £5; \$13 in \$ bills. Cheques payable to John Rimmer only. From John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB. No. 60. Peter Brookesmith on the political (and religious) dimension of ufology; Peter Rogerson looks at books appertaining to the US siege mentality; Rael Foundation revelations. No. 61. Jenny Randles on Rendlesham Forest close encounter; David Sivier on religion, ufology, prophecy and sport; two forgotten UFO writers of 1948 and 1950 resuscitated, one of whom believed flying saucers were piloted by Martian bees. Interesting catnapping in Mousehole, Cornwall, following children's fiction book; also Princess Diana cult formation. No. 62. Early evolutionary speculation which leads indirectly to the concept of the Greys' form; aerodynamic designs in early prehistoric cave art and symbolic contents from UFO display. Also for folklorists are notes on crisp packet collecting for non-existent charitable reason, urban fox napping and secret underground railway network.

NORTHERN EARTH. Q. 4 issues £6. Payable to Northern Earth Mysteries Group. From 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks, HX7 5NP. No. 68. Belgium's St Mort; wells; Gordon Harris sugg-ests alien vehicular involvement at Nazca; ancient sacred groves; Cumb-rian corpse ways. Book reviews and miscellany. No. 69. Alien (or augmented small native population) Big Cats; historic skull at Lance pub; Preston eggrolling tradition; Devil's Arrows and Thornborough henge (cont 70). No. 70. Hummadruz soundings; propheticwells and springs; ideology of museums; ABC; modern chanting induces passage tomb light phenomena. No. 71. Haunted Sunderland and John Wesley; rolling sun phenomenon; hummadruz; earthquake forecasting. No. 72. Mythical sovereignty resonances in the death and funeral of Lady Diana; Loch Tay developments; Rollright sale; wells cleaning; fly agaric on greetings cards; hummadruz accounts; pre-historic rock art; Native Amerindian Florida.

No. 73. Sam Watson stalks ABCs in Yorkshire; Phillip Heselton reassures ley hunters they need not worry about the curvature of the Earth; Stanton Drew discoveries; a Northumberland prehistoric ritual complex; Bonfire Night sparklers as dowsing L-rods!

THE LEY HUNTER. UK £7 for 3; \$18. P.O. Box 258, Cheltenham, GL53 0HR.

No. 128. Paul Dovereux calls for a total discernment and objectivity in geomancy; examples of straight landscape lines and clockwise funeral paths; megalithic sites vandalism past and present and site protection (cont 129/30); Portuguese-Spanish stone row; Stonehenge and the Hartlepool playbus; Lincs Neolithic landscape; Ulysses, Atlantis and a Cornish ley. Abrasive book reviews and miscellany. No. 129. Antidota to newer theorising by Eugene Zimmer, who wrote for TLH under my editorship, here reassessing astro-leys in northern Gaul; out-of-the-body experiences also reassessed; new light on Cerne Giant; Wisconsin effigy mounds; Swedish rock art; an Aberdeenshire archaeological Disneyland; 1997 TLH Moot. Columnists on the cyber-shaman, German Rollright confusion and Paul Screeton on an Italian sect which seems to have much to offer earth mysterians through their massive invisible fault line temple. No. 130. Metrology; an unblinker look at archaeology; Lundy; sacred space. Columnists: Paul Screeton on Lottery millionaires and a UFO author fallen on hard times; Mike White finds there's more than one rabbit away; and Ulrich Magin warns of taking flight legends literally.



"Out-of-body experience or not, Mr Fisher... stop looking down my dress!"

N-MAG RAG. Q. Newsletter of Northern Mystery Animals Group. £5 for 4. Payable to J C Tait. Address: Rosetree Cottage, Thropton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7NA. No. 4. Summary of Northumberland mystery dig cats listing; pine martens alive and well; cuttings from various newspapers. No. 5. A farmer writes on Grampian ABCs; Kellas cats; suggested connection between Northumbria's legendary "worms" and the oarfish.

THE DRAGON CHRONICLE. £7 for 4; \$15; sample £2/\$5. UK cheques only, payable to Dragon's Head Press. Overseas cash only -- US dollars or sterling. From PO Box 3369, London SW6 6JN. No. 11. Chinese and European dragon legends compared; crocodiles, monster lizards and paranormal beasts; "dragon bones" and ammonites; French dragon festival; Tolkien tarot; Romanian sky myth. Short stories, poems, Internet sites, magazine listing and book reviews.

STRANGE MAGAZINE. No. 17. Thorough investigation into Patterson Bigfoot film and whether a make-up man made the monster; Fellini's films; a US 1949 secret UFO invention fiasco; cryptozoology galore from Karl Shuker. Book reviews. No. 18. Warminster in the Sixties reassessed; mutated earthworm squids swimming around in an oil emulsion pit of toxic waste; Grim Reaper encounters; cryptozoology; ghost stories; lizard people under Los Angeles.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. New subscribers £6 for 6 issues. New address: 1 Hallsteads Close, Dove Holes, Buxton, Derbys., SK17 8BS. Cheques payable to Northern UFO News. No. 176. Carlisle Football Club chairman's UFO contact furor; false reptilian alien in Israel; Lancs and Lincs mystery triangular aircraft; Peak District impact zone search (updated 177); man in black. Book reviews, sightings and forthcoming events. No. 177. Editor Jenny Randles challenges the ethics of publishers Orbis to recycle 17-year-old articles from The Unexplained in books suggestively up to date; Rendlesham Forest revisited. Mag reviews return. No. 178. Jenny Randles on the enemy within ufology.

Twice yearly.
£14.95 UK for 4. inc p&p.
Cheques to Mark
Chorvinsky. Address:
PO Box 2246, Rockville,
Maryland, 20847, USA.

FORTEAN TIMES. News-stand. £2.50. No. 96. UFO investigators vanishing or whose deaths are suspicious; ufology and anti-gravity in Finland; stigmatics; hunters' inability to shoot/ capture a Bigfoot. Forum contributors look at ufology in the UK, USA and Cornish earthlights. Reviews, letters and worldwide weirdness rounded up. No. 102. Lake monsters latest; Papal speculation; UFO photos analysed; disappointing Forum section, except for Karl Shuker on white buffaloes, but what has Steve Holland's movie piece to do with Forteana?!? No. 103. Paul Devereux's guide to earthlights; I corresponded with Barry King in the Seventies and now Andy Roberts turns the spotlight on "The Voice"; Creationism triumph; giant salamanders; catnapping; a cult suicide piece by Les Prince which is the biggest load of crap I've read for yonks, particularly in comparison to Margaret Jervis who does a fine job demolishing Satanic child abuse myths; Dracula centenary weekend. No. 104. Princess Diana; electronic voice phenomena; 1997 crop circles; exotic escapees recaptured or shot; Roswell (yawn); mystery aircraft; human biters; mystery whale. No. 105. Mind the gap! between fact and fiction, perhaps there are subterranean cannibals in London or just a Michael Moorcock fiction, like Henry Mayhew's tale of seven pigs, whereas here Michael Goss suggests some capital ideas about understanding urban legends. Also: thunderbird phantom photo; transient lunar phenomena; multiple birth myths. Forum: likely new Diana cult; Richard Dawkins' arrogance; Irish UFO flap; celebrity ufologists; Roswell and conspiracies; where have all the secrets gone? No. 106. Fascinating inquiry into the racial origin of the Melungeons of USA's Appalachians; all you ever needed to know about fish falls; can human consciousness change the performance characteristics of machines?; how to shrink human heads. Forum: CSICOP rubbished; Patterson Bigfoot rumours mill; trickster artistry; movies; Afghan millennialism; alien abduction. No. 107. Paul Devereux & Peter Brookesmith on a (possibly absurd) neuropsychiatrist's investigation of a corroborative abduction case; overview of the life and work of Wilhelm Reich; mysteries of a High Peak valley. Forum: possible second Loys' ape photograph; numerological devilry; Fort's scientific method; posited UK UFO hoax. No. 108. Of enormous interest to your editor was Joe McMally's state-of-play temporal lobe epilepsy assessment; the "spook in the computer" case and attendant media/paranormalist interest analysed; birds as dinosaurs hypothesis aired. US-oriented Forum: co-operation in US ufology; dead common Hollywood; American werewolves; cowboys, Indians and aliens; transistors as alien backwards engineering. No. 109. Weirdness includes toad mutilations; doomsday cult; 1850s winged men on Moon legpull/satire+ many other hoax examples; Mexican hockey-puck shaped UFO wave. Forum: current state of UK ufology; Ashtar's believers; pseudo-melanism in tigers. No. 110. Turin Shroud; is Jesus buried in Japan?; Betty & Barney Hill abduction. Forum: shamrock myth; ufological "deranged old fraud" colonel; conspiracy theory; negating anthrax; Loch Ness monster.

Face of Christ a-piers at Wigan

COCK-UP! Due to an oversight spotted as I was about to send FF the printers, the relevant references missing for pp6/7 are: (1) TEMS Newsletter, August, 1995; (2) Weekend Telegraph. 25/3/95 and FF26, 1995; (3) Daily Star, 23/8/96).



Books

THE UNEXPLAINED

By Dr Karl P N Shuker

BEST known as Britain's foremost cryptozoologist, Shuker here widens his scope to produce a large format illustrated guide to paranormal mysteries.

Shuker writes with enthusiasm, authority and not a little scepticism as he deals continent-by-continent with a wide range of subjects, including UFOs, crop circles, mystery beasts, weeping statues, lost continents, frog falls, enigmatic persons, and so on.

The format is novel and thankfully rather than a "gosh! wow!" approach, subjects are treated rationally and where he believes there to be fallacy or fraud he explains so with hard facts.

As the front cover candidly boasts – the truth is in here.
(Carlton, £16.99)

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

By Owen Chadwick

A WELL-ROUNDED overview of the spread of Christianity from being an obscure Jewish sect to its uneasy relationship with the state, Reformation, Protestant work ethic and on to European decline, birth control, women priests and TV evangelism. Altogether an illuminating and readable history book.
(Phoenix, £14.99)

MYSTERIOUS SCOTLAND

By Michael Balfour

THIS splendid Scottish heritage book with fulsome research and sumptuous illustration evoked memories of the reviewer's week's perambulations of Aberdeenshire's recumbent stone circles and a magical sojourn on Bèrmeray opposite the farm where our current bonnie Prince Charles stayed.

Balfour's weird and wonderful accounts begin with the mystery of the circle builders, Pictish symbols and Stone of Scone.

Following chronology, the book then covers such riddles as travellers' tales, field sports, secret Edinburgh, whisky galore, island mysteries, Loch Ness Monster, murders, superstitions and even a plaque (in the wrong place and since stolen) marking where a forester was attack by flying saucer denizens!

Too much general history and topography, too little real mystery.
(Mainstream Publishing, £17.50)



GHOSTLY TALES & SINISTER STORIES OF OLD EDINBURGH

By Alan J Wilson, Des Brogan and Frank McGill

FEUDS, assassinations, torture, riots, revenge, adultery, suicide . . . all human folly and inhumane behaviour is here, along with the discamate, such as Johnny One-Arm, King David and phantom stag and headless woman.

Also here are body snatchers Burke and Hare, industrious witches, pickpocket Jean Brash, villainous Deacon Brodie and tiny coffins on Arthur's Seat.

More than 100 tales reveal the darker side of genteel Auld Reekie's history.
(Mainstream Publishing, £4.99)

COMPANION TO THE COSMOS

By John Gribbin

COMET Hale-Bopp had people skywatching who would never previously have considered outer space.

After an extended introduction setting out current knowledge of the universe, the author covers the Big Bang, black holes, gravity, relativity and so on, in feature articles, shorter entries and biographies of the scientists.
(Phoenix Giant, £11.99)

THE UNDERGROUNDMAN

By Mick Jackson

THIS first novel works on several levels, being based upon a real, eccentric duke who built a massive tunnel system beneath his estate.

The hero may fear the outside world to a degree, but he also has a paranoid view of what he carries inside himself.

A total hypochondriac, towards the book's close he trepanns himself, creating a hole in his head – like emerging from his tunnels – he releases himself.

Yet the denouement is even more horrific.

Structured as an alternation between the duke's journal and servants' eyewitness accounts, the latter rationalise the duke's doings.

A serious and colourful novel, it is craftsmanlike and absorbing despite virtually no plot. True tunnel vision.
(Picador, £15.99)

Black Comedy Country

FINALLY, for the people who start reading magazines from the back (and our researchers tell us there are more than you'd think!) - WELCOME

EVIL BEASTS OF PREY

BY JERRY LAWTON

SICK poachers were chopping off animals' ears to win points in a grisly competition for trophies.

Cops say those of rare animals are worth most - a common rabbit ear nets one point while a rare deer's is worth TEN.

The brute with the most points at the end of the year wins a prize.

Cleveland police uncovered the "horrific contest" when they found a

sheep with its ears stripped off. They have launched a major probe in a bid to smash the poaching gang.

Pc Peter Clifford said: "These are depraved people and we are determined to put an end to this...
Horrific

"It seems a covert group of poachers have a scoring system for animals they kill, using the ears as proof. "I suppose it goes back to the days of big game hunting in Africa, when

the heads of animals were used as trophies on walls.

"But I can't find any similarity between hunting a lion and butchering a sheep in a field.

"The contest has even sickened hardened crooks, who came forward with information on the gang.

One cop said: "We had help from members of the criminal fraternity.

"Even villains can be animal lovers. And they can't stand this sickening cruelty." (P. 5 & 7, 18/10/97)



AT RISK: a prized deer

TIT

Crabs were fooled into boobying tennis balls in tests to find seduction perfume. Welsh boffins found male crabs are attracted to mates by whiffing their pheromones but go for the smell no matter where it's from.

BIT

THE SPORT Tuesday, May 5, 1998

May 5, 1998

THE SPORT Tuesday,

Curtain down for 'scope perts

A PAY-AS-YOU-VIEW telescope has been removed from a hilltop after only three weeks after fears that pervers were spying on villagers.

Locals in range of the zoom lens on the Burton Dassett Hills in Warwickshire feared they were giving 10p "peep-shows". One resident said: "No one was happy with it."



A CONFUSED pelican is perching on a telephone pole in the Norwegian mountain town of Trysil while it tries to find its bearings. The bird is 1,200 miles north of the Mediterranean, its normal home. But experts say it will survive - provided it can figure out which way is south.

It's a Dad's life!



with Peter Barron

THE THINGS THEY DO

COUNTY Durham farmer Jim

McMillen collared the other day to press on a delightful story from his childhood.

Now 58, Jim told me how, when he was about five, he'd had to collect and press wild flowers in his school book.

There was an annual race for the best collection of pressed wild flowers and Jim claimed to have won it every year.

"We used to have three aunties come to tea every Sunday," he explained. "They were all, ya know, stout women."

"Do you mean fat?" I inquired.

"Aye, if yer like," he replied. "Anyhow, they were real big. All I had to do was put me book under the settle cushion every Sunday and I had the best pressed flowers in County Durham."

THE HARTLEPOOL MAIL Wednesday, May 6, 1998

THE SPORT Thursday, May 7, 1998



A FARMER who claims he can speak SNAKE LANGUAGE plans to live for a record-breaking week with 100 of the poisonous reptiles in a glass room.

Boonruang Buschan, 29, said as he climbed in with the hissing Sids in a Bangkok shopping mall yesterday: "We are friends. We understand each other."

He said he was more worried about catching a cold from the air-conditioning than the fangs of cobras and other deadly snakes that will alither over him for the next seven days.

Boonruang, who claims he was a snake in a former life, is attempting to break an unofficial world record by staying in the tank with the reptiles for a full week.

THE SPORT

T-shirt girl's snake shock

SECRETARY Jaqui Sanders was delighted when her shoes gave her a T-shirt from his safari holiday in Namibia.

But her delight turned to horror when she found a poisonous SNAKE inside. Experts at first took Jaqui, 30, of Wigston, Leicestershire, which is deadly Black Fang, which grow to 1.5 feet and is extremely venomous. But it was later identified as a rare slug-eater with toxic saliva but no fangs. (P. 4/19)

TIT SPORT

DAD Stephen MacDougal, 32, went hiss-terical when he was confronted by a six-foot Black King snake at his home in Jarrow, South Tyneside. The harmless reptile had been missing since Xmas from a neighbour's.

28/4/98 BIT

TIT

Baffled cops are investigating after a woman taking a stroll found an 8ft long python lying dead on a beach near Hayling Island, Hants, yesterday. A spokesman said: "There is no evidence to suggest it was washed up on the shore but we are clueless as to how it got there because it is some distance from the nearest houses."

27/4/98 BIT