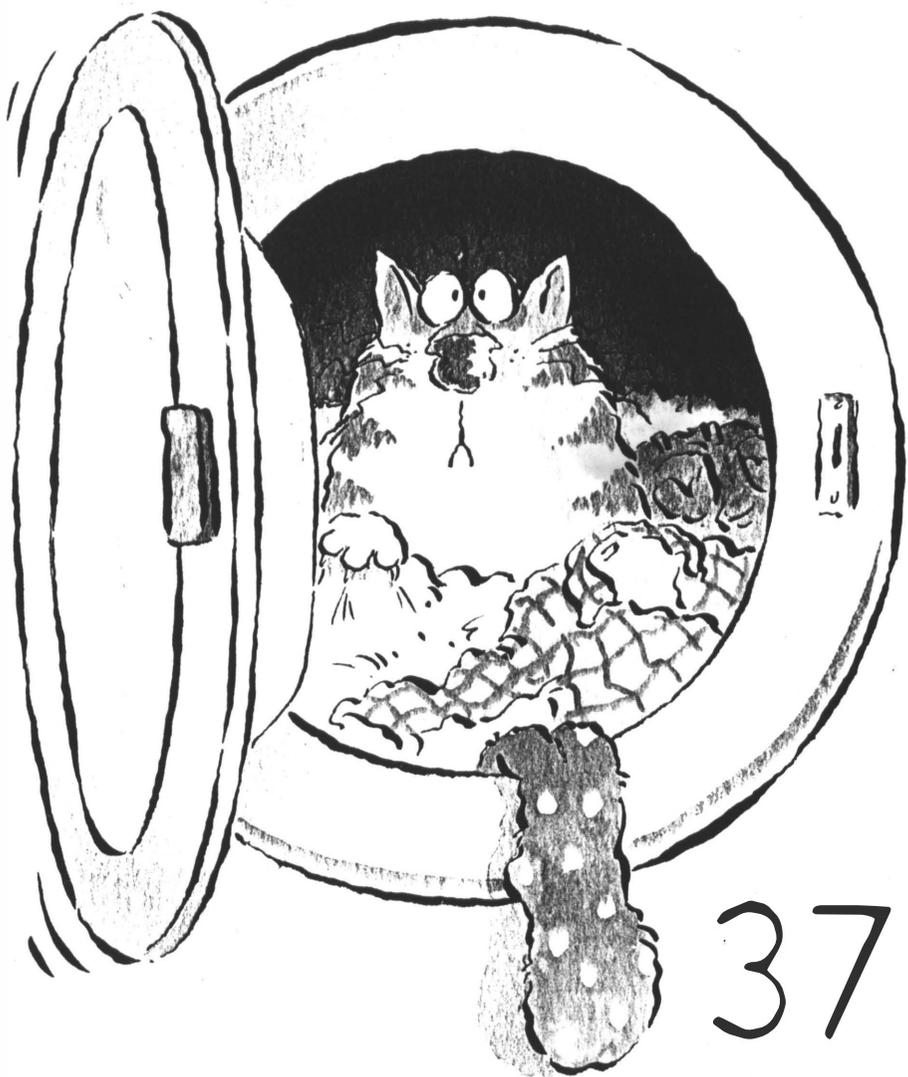


FOLKLORE

FRONTIERS



37

FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

No. 37

APRIL 2000



FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly contemporary legends and culture. It is edited and published by Paul Screepton, to whom cheques should be made out (NOT to Folklore Frontiers). Address: 5Bpton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, TS25 2AT. Four-issue subscription is £6; US \$14 only in dollar bills. If your subscription expires with this issue an X will appear below:

The Diary

* The following gives me an excuse to mention that for several years I was The Hartlepool Mail's undercover Pub Spy, the scourge of bar meal provision. Reviewing *The Caraw Arms, Crowcumb, Somerset (eat soup, no. 1, 1996)*, the writer scanned the blackboard menu and ordered: "I think we'll try the roast hedgehog in brandy sauce for two persons. Do you think we'll need a starter with that?" The blithe reply was "I'm not sure we have anything left." (Rather like the old dirty joke where mermaids' tits on toast are ordered, only to find the hostelry is out of bread). Another squint at the menu and a local proffered: "had roast puffin on there on Sunday," he says. "Some bloke from London got really excited and ordered it. Told him they were fresh off the rocks at Klive." "Believed it too," says another voice. "But there aren't any puffins at Klive." There is general hilarity at the dopeyness of Londoners.

* Staying with dopeyness and bar meals, Jane Sharp, who cooks for the Bateman Arms, in the Herefordshire village of Shobden, formerly had a sideline to supply "Red Dragon Pies" to an organic food shop in nearby Leominster. A trading standards officer asked what her pies were made from and she explained that they contained aduki beans, which the Chinese say "give you the strength of dragon". The Jobsworth replied: "If there are no dragons in the pies, you cannot call them dragon pies." When Jane jestingly suggested: "I suppose I cannot call them pies either, because they have a potato topping?", the official agreed. "What about my cottage pies? Should they have bits of cottage in them?" A glimmer of sanity crept in. "No," he replied. "Cottage pies and shepherd's pies are exempted from the Trade Descriptions Act." "Am in a lot of trouble with my Red Dragon Pies?" asked Jane. "No, not a lot of trouble, but some." Jane now confines her cooking to the bateman Arms. (*The Sunday Telegraph, 23/5/99*) All of which makes me wonder why the "Desperate Dan Pies" are no longer offered at The George and Dragon, Yarm, North Yorkshire, where I occasionally dine.

YOU GET A BETTER CLASS OF APOCRYPHA IN BROADSHEETS

PAUL SCREETON

The argument I will put forward is hardly contentious, but I feel it will be salutary to consider the differing quality of contemporary legends in broadsheets and tabloid newspapers.

In fact, broadsheet diary columns are particularly fertile ground for a patrician style of apocrypha.

Take, if you will, this story about Derry Irvine, the Lord Chancellor. He was in the Garrick Club for dinner and summoned a waitress. "We'll have the lamb chops. And two bottles of claret," he said. With his bold order he would not have bothered her again. After chatting for an hour, he was hungry and parched. "Look here", he said to the passing waitress, "I ordered lamb chops and claret - two bottles".

"Very well, sir," she replied, returning with lamb chops and a brace of carafes - all to replace those Irvine had already consumed, doubtless too excited extolling the virtues of New Labour to notice. (1)

Andrew Yates continued his posh name dropping with a tale from the Travellers Club in Pall Mall. The grand old man of English Catholicism, Monsignor Gilbey, was ascending the stairs when he encountered the Queen Mother. "How nice to meet you," she ventured as she descended. "I believe that we are the same age."

The stooped old man dismissively retorted, "Don't be ridiculous, the only person the same age as me is the Queen Mother".

Another unlikely Queen Mother yarn Yates recounts regards her becoming partial to helicopter travel. "The chopper has transformed my life - even more than that of Anne Boleyn," she observed wryly. I used the word "unlikely" expressly because the nonogenarian royal is supposed to have little or no ability for witty remarks. The only previous quip attributed to her came when two effeminate lackeys were quarrelling and she proclaimed that "This old queen would like some service".

From clubs to theatrical anecdotes, which Frank Johnson (2) utilised with some aplomb to flesh out his notebook column.

Firstly, the late actor-manager had sacked from his company the actor playing Seton, who has scarcely more than the line, "The Queen, my lord, is dead". When Wolfitt, as Macbeth, asked the question in that evening's performance, the aggrieved actor replied, "The Queen, my lord, is very much better".

Secondly was one told to him about Wilfred Lawton, the actor renowned for being the worse for drink on stage. As he entered as Richard III, a voice from the audience cried: "You're drunk". He replied, "True, but wait until you've seen the Duke of Clarence".

Thirdly, still working in his 80s, Bransby Williams tended to forget his lines. In some thriller, when the phone rang he had to pick it up. He forgot what he had to say, so he cunningly passed the receiver to another member of the cast with the words, "It's for you".

Lastly, an actor called Ralph Michael, who was playing Gloucester in *King Lear*, had a row with the actor playing Cornwall. Cornwall asks Gloucester "Where hast thou sent the King?" to which the reply is "Dover". But that night the truculent thespian replied "Margate".

However, I reckon TV inquisitor, Jeremy Paxman, managed four items of apocrypha in one column. (3)

Mistaken identity was the theme and boozy Sixties Foreign Secretary, George Brown, the culprit. The legend goes that he was once at a diplomatic reception in South America. The room was awash with admirals and generals in gold braid, diplomats, ministers and many of the most beautiful women in the country.

As the band struck up a particularly jaunty tune, Brown glimpsed a vision in purple across the room. Swaying tipsily, he approached and asked, "I wonder if I could have the honour of this dance".

"No, for three reasons," came the frosty reply. "First, you're drunk. Second, this is the Peruvian National Anthem. And third, I am the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lima."

Paxo, pushing likelihood near the limits, then claimed he got confused with motoring guru, Jeremy Clarkson. One morning he awoke to the sound of a mighty roaring outside the house. "Brought the Aston Martin" said the man in overalls who rang the bell.

He then regaled readers with anecdotes of people recognising and then insulting him, ending with one person's profundity "Are you who you think you are?"

Lastly, he reported a royal belief tale I think I first read in *Private Eye*. When King Constantine was being brought into the Television Centre for an interview early one morning, the driver explained to the security guard on the gate, "I've got the King of Greece in the back". The guard consulted his clipboard, found no note of the arrival, poked his head into the car and asked, "Where did you say you were king of, mate?"

National and local tabloids, and Tyne-Tees Television, had a field day when it leaked out that my drinking buddy George Scott had held a "party for his penis" in the Station Hotel, Seaton Carew, the night he had an operation for cancer. Happily for Scottie, all has seemingly gone pretty well, but it has taken Viagra to perk him up fully.

A more sober slant on Viagra stories is typified by this broadsheet treatment of U.S. authorities. Mimicking the old pilots' rule of "eight hours from bottle to throttle", telling aircrew not to take Viagra within six hours of flying because it might impair their ability to distinguish blue and green in cockpit lights and on taxi-ways. Some airlines are already ahead of them with pilots banned from using the drug for 24 hours before flying, through awareness of reports that it makes three per cent of those using it see through an odd blue haze. (4)

Meanwhile, the tabloids will treat us to stories of hoax army conscription calls, poop-scoop dogdirt thefts, foul-mouthed aural simulacra, collapsing hypothermic shoplifters, couples stuck in sexual congress, pet dogs are really sewer rats, swapped samples show men are pregnant, forgetful boxers entering the ring without shorts, phantom hitchhikers, and so on.

References

- (1) *The Times Weekend*, 9 January 1999.
- (2) *The Daily Telegraph*, 16, 23 and 30 January 1999.
- (3) *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 21 October 1998.
- (4) *The Sunday Telegraph*, 1 November 1998.

WRITE AND ROLL



Rock and Roll legend meets Bill Hailey

THIS Mag is proud to bring you an interview with a man who has shared a chocolate digestive with Dusty Springfield, had a door slammed in his face by Cilla Black and witnessed the removal of a bogey by Shadows guitar hero Hank B Marvin. Yes folks the secret world of being a journalist with the North East's top daily paper (that's the Hartlepool Mail) is finally divulged when we probe the inner recesses of the mind and memoirs of Paul Screamton.

We caught up with the man himself in Seaton's Marine Hotel to get the story that no other publication dared or thought to publish.

Right from leaving school at the beginning of the 60's Paul had his heart set on a literary career and had penned four novels by the tender age of 18. Sadly no publisher was able to recognize the latent talent lurking beneath this juvenilia but undeterred Paul began his working life for the Billingham and Stockton press. Being a young stud as the 60's started to swing Paul was soon rewarded with the job of covering visits to the area

EXCLUSIVE POP PORTRAIT
OF CREATIVE PAUL SCREETON
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
MR SCREETON



Screaming Lord Sutch and Screamton discuss the potential of a political life

by stars of stage, screen and the about-to-boom beat group scene. Paul plunged straight in the deep end, interviewing everyone from The Beatles to Bill Haley.

In those pre Hartlepool Studio, pre Newcastle Arena days groups performed at such prestigious venues as Stockton's Hippodrome and ABC Cinema and a lesser known dive in Billingham called the Kave Dwellers Klub.



Dione Warwick:
The Lady Don't Like Liver.

Paul remembers one of his first assignments was to cover a press call with the Rolling Stones.

"I remember asking whether they would record another Buddy Holly song to follow 'Not Fade Away' and this received a resounding 'no'. I then boasted that Mick Jagger's new girlfriend looked very much like mine, which drew from him the type of graphic description of Miss Faithfull's physical attributes which could not be published in a family newspaper; and all this time Keith Richards was attempting to chat up my girlfriend".

The week that Herman's Hermits (who were to rival the Beatles in the States) got to Number One with 'I'm Into Something Good' Paul remembers accompanying them to the Smiths Arms In Billingham. "Singer Peter No One bought a round of drinks but went back to complain to the landlord that he couldn't taste any spirit in his rum and coke. The Landlord gently explained that there was no rum in the glass because his schoolgirl daughter had recognized the rising star and also that he was well under age for drinking".

At this time Paul's ambition also ran to becoming a British Lieber and Stoller song-writing duo with his friend Richard Wilson (Now of HR Wilson, Insurers fame). Paul admits that they even once gave a demonstration recording tape to Mal Evans, the chief road manager, friend and minder to The Beatles, who promised to pass it on to the lads in case they were short of a good tune!

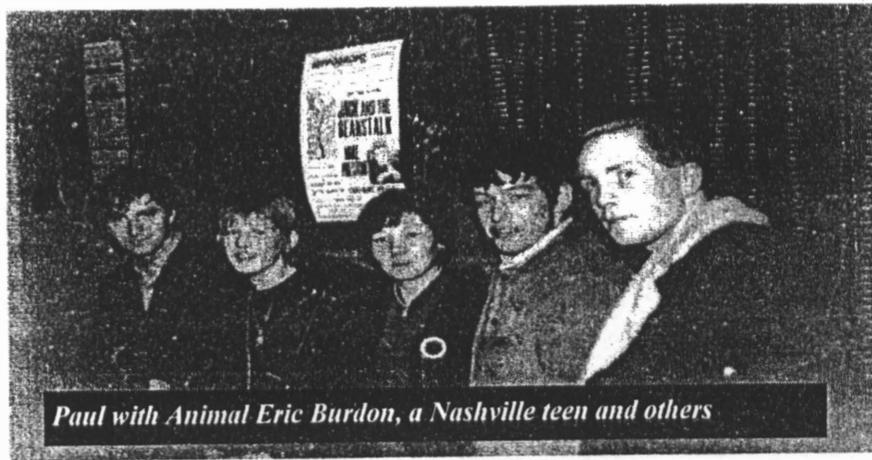
At this point Paul and Richards place in the Hartlepool Rock 'n Roll Hall of 'close but no cigar' fame becomes cemented when they offered three songs to legendary (and now late) eccentric rocker Screaming Lord Sutch. The also eccentric (and also late) pop producer Joe Meek assured the songsmiths that said songs would be included on Sutch's next L.P. Unfortunately Joe Meek subsequently topped himself (and his landlady) and the L.P. never found it's way into British record shops. Rumours still persist however that a USA version of the L.P. was released, so if anyone comes across it Paul and Richard will be pleased to collect 25 years of song-writing royalties.

The oddest incident that Paul found himself in was after a concert by The Kinks who had a notorious reputation for in band/fraternal squabbling (like Oasis only for real) "I was just going into the toilet at the Stockton ABC when Dave Davies ran in and locked himself in a cubicle chased by brother Ray, threatening him with grievous bodily harm and hammering on the door." Needless to say when the furious big brother stormed off Paul asked for and got little scamp Dave's autograph.

Paul admits to committing the odd howler in his formative reportage like not bothering to watch the late replacement act for PJ Proby, "I'd never heard of this young Welsh lad called Tom Jones and assumed that he wouldn't be up to much! A great example of how not to phrase a question was when I



Finding Fame—Georgie Fame



Paul with Animal Eric Burdon, a Nashville teen and others

asked Cilla Black how she felt knowing that The Righteous Brothers version of 'You've Lost that Loving Feeling' was better than her own version. Cilla's considered and perfectly reasonable response was to slam the dressing room door in my face."

As the 60's drew to a close Paul began his mammoth stint at the Hartlepool Mail and although leaving his own musical aspirations behind him he continued to interview and write about the local and national music scenes and get to meet the odd (and we mean odd) musical hero. In particular Paul was a big fan and champion of those other great British eccentrics, John Otway and Michael Chapman (remember John's epic song 'Beware of the Flowers Cos I'm Sure They're Gonna get You Yeah?'). Paul particularly has fond memories of interviewing Michael Chapman in the Clansman pub after Michael had been asked to leave the Grand Hotel for being too scruffy (aaaaah those were the days).

The hairiest occasion for Paul was backstage after a gig by American Deep South band 'The Flying Burrito Brothers' when in deep discussion with guitarist Joel Scott Hill. "Much alcohol had been consumed by all and Joe took exception to my line of questioning, especially when I called him a red neck. Joe explained, in such a way that intimated that these would be the last words of the discussion that 'back home I have to wear my hair underneath my hat!'" At which point Paul sensibly made his excuses and left.

Away from the wonderful world of Rock 'n

Roll Paul has found more fame with his literary exploits in the non fiction genre. These have included two books on Ley Lines 'Quicksilver Heritage' and 'Secrets of the Linear Vision'; a book on Celtic mysteries 'Tales of Hexham Heads', his best known work 'Who Hung the Monkey' and a book on North East Dragon legends with the delightful title 'Whisht lads and Haad Yor Gobs'.

Since finally hanging up his sub editor's pencil at the Mail Paul now edits the 'Folklore Frontiers' magazine, which focuses on urban belief tales. Current projects in progress include a book on Yorkshire Dragon legends and a study of the phenomenon known as Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. This last is something that Paul has encountered at first hand having had a number of distinctly odd experiences over the years, which have defied traditional explanations.

Meanwhile the music of Bo Diddley, Michael Chapman, John Otway, Duane Eddy and a myriad of 60's girl groups continue to grace his record deck and at present he is looking forward to the forthcoming tour by 70's pop punks Blondie.

At this point it was my round so your humble THIS reporter made his excuses and left.

T A I T ' S GALLERY

Well hello there, and a very warm welcome to the first gallery of the millennium.

And hey! We all survived the dreaded and much hyped, Millennium Bug. I wonder who thought of that one eh? despite the anti-climax of, "The most catastrophic event of the twentieth century", those who have been living very nicely thank you, on its perceived threat, still warn of possible disaster in the months to come. flogging and very dead horses for some reason spring to mind

From an urban myth point of view, I simply can't ignore the incredible hype surrounding the move, "The Blair Witch Project". Made on a shoe-string - earned the camcorder wielding makers millions. Is it any good? Couldn't tell you. In the high level of research you've come to expect from me, I haven't seen it. But hey, this is about the evolution of myths, not the Johnny Vaughn Movie show.

Whether or not it is a good movie is irrelevant, what is interesting was it's hype development. All of the movies momentum was built up through the internet. The movie The Blair Witch Project had its very own website (www.blairwitch.com, and yeah, I have been to have a look at this OK) a whole year before the movie was released. The site contained spoof documentary "evidence" for the plot. Very reminiscent of the increasingly popular Fly on the wall

documentaries, which we all know are often as phoney as Terry Wogan's hair. Expect a million similar gritty "Real" movies in the years to come.

I heard a nice tale the other week about a lass who went to her doctor complaining about pains in her head and dizziness. The doctor took a look into her ears and after a sharp intake of breath explained that she would need to visit the hospital, "For a more thorough examination". When she arrived she was whisked into a theatre where several green masked surgeons shone lights into her ear and muttered amongst themselves. Finally they explained that there was something attached to her ear drum and they would need to remove it immediately. A few minutes later, the offending "something" was removed and placed in a dish. What was it? Why a spider of course. But not just any old spider, oh no, it was a female spider AND it was pregnant to boot. I'm sure if there was an arachnid strain of AIDs, this spider would have had it.

As a punchline to the tale, the teller leaned over to her audience and exclaimed, "...and this wasn't in the Sun or anything you know." So there you are.

Is there any reader out there who is planning to take a trip to the Millennium Dome? I ask because we seem to be having rather a lot of TV coverage featuring families who have

been given a preview of the delights on offer under the "Flat Tit on the Thames". And of course all of them thought it was wonderful. Fantastic. Brilliant. But I am yet to hear of ANY-ONE who actually plans to go and visit the thing. Are these "Families" nowt but actors, employed to rouse a little enthusiasm for the multi-million pound exhibit - Which of course WE paid for? I recon it would have been more successful if the government had made the dome more of a Blair Witch style project. Costing a couple of grand or so in an abandoned warehouse near Hull, with exhibitions which truly reflect the state of our society in the new millennium: Exhibitions of tramps fighting themselves after three bottles of White Lightning, a virtual tour around a modern hospital where we guess what pieces of equipment were bought at a car boot sale, rounding off with our visit to the local police station to report the theft of your car. Mmm nice.

Sorry, went off on a tangent there. Right, the Internet, that hot bed of intrigue and filler of column inches in every newspaper on the planet. I was recently forwarded an e-mail which is such a classic bit of chain letter shenanigans, I thought I'd include it in full below:

I am forwarding this because the person who sent it to me is a very professional business person and a good friend and does not send me junk. Microsoft and AOL are now the largest Internet company and in an effort make sure that Internet explorer remains the most widely used program,

Microsoft and AOL are running an e-mail beta test. When you forward this e-mail to friends, Microsoft can and will track it (if you are a Microsoft Windows user) for a two week time period. For every person that you forward this e-mail to, Microsoft will pay you \$245.00, for every person that you sent it to that forwards it on, Microsoft will pay you \$243.00 and for every third person that receives it, you will be paid \$241.00.

Within two weeks Microsoft will contact you for your address and then send you a check.

I thought this was a scam myself, but two weeks after receiving this e-mail and forwarding it on, Microsoft contacted me for my e-mail and within days, I received a check for \$24,800.00.

You need to respond before the beta testing is over. If anyone can afford this Bill Gates is the man. It's all marketing expense to him. Do Well!!!

Do well indeed. The note was accompanied by an acre of lucky individuals all awaiting their pay-day with baited breath. Not being a Windoze user, I'm afraid I could not be one of the happy throng and am still sadly without a pot to piss in. Sheeesh, eh.

Anyone wanting to forward me an e-pot can do so at: pots@jtd.co.uk.

Best wishes,

John Tait



Proto-legends

** WHISKEY GALORE. An acquaintance of mine, Mike, sales director of a plant based in Seaton Carew which produces flavourings for various commodities -- I was blaming additives for hangovers, not the amount consumed -- got around to discussing beer and than whiskey colourings. He claimed that when a Dewar's container for distilling required replacement an exact replica had to be manufactured. It was measured so accurately that a dent inflicted in an industrial accident with a fork-lift truck had to be replicated exactly so as not to alter the constitution of the product. (Tale told in Marine Hotel, 4/5/99)

** PAPER WAIT. As a newspaperman I was told computers would make paper obsolete. No way, as this story of a techno-conscious multinational company which recently took part in a video conference linking offices on either side of the Atlantic reveals. When a woman logged on, the meeting was already in full swing, but there was a slight problem: her American colleagues had accidentally pressed the mute button, and although she could see them arguing, she couldn't hear a word. They couldn't hear her either, but didn't notice. Her solution? She grabbed a pen and wrote "I can't hear you!" in large letters on a piece of paper, which she held up to the camera in the hope that someone would see ... Does this reflect US regard in which British opinions are held that it took them several minutes before they noticed? (Feedback column, New Scientist, 13/3/99)

** CRUISE 2. We had a proto-legend previously (FF19:28 "Top Gun" tale) about actor Tom Cruise, the recently UK resident with actress wife Nicole Kidman, and according to a new legend he popped into his local branch of Blockbuster Video in Bushay Heath, Herts. However, having all that cash and one of the most famous faces in movies, he couldn't get membership as he was unable to produce two forms of ID required. Caroline Westbrook snootily wrote that that was how the "darned tabloids" told it, but what really happened was that Cruise, having recently moved into the affluent suburb, merely poked his head around the door of the store to find out what he would need to join, received the information and left, without even switching off his car engine. (The Mesr. 1999 -- glossy to get schoolkids reading wags) It reminds me too much of that other bungled shop scenario of Peter Mandelson and the avocado / mushy peas.

** F-RIGGER. I was fascinated to see recently a cat by Eaglescliffe station which was enjoying the warmth of compost as it lay on the polythene sheet covering the garden manure. Others, more technologically sophisticated, enjoy the warmth of fax machines. Calia Haddon's pets column in The Daily Telegraph (7/99) claims: "Last month, Kigger, a stray cat adopted by a bus company pressed the "send" button during his nap and faxed confidential details to the company's main rival, losing it a £20,000 contract."

** RIFLER SHOT. A burglar was shot when Fritz Gruber, while cleaning his rifle it went off, and blasted through the ceiling and shot an intruder in the flat above in Andernach, Germany. (D. Star, 21/7/94)

** FIESTA TIME. A woman trying to sell her Ford Fiesta for £500 was left with a Skoda ... and an old lady ... when a prospective buyer went on a test drive leaving them both as "collateral". After Patricia Wakelin, of Westbury, Wilts., advertised her car, a man arrived to see it, apologising for bringing his granny along. He went on a test drive, but never came back. Police found the Skoda was stolen -- and the confused old lady was from a home and thought she was being taken out for a drive. (The Guardian, 24/8/94 -- credit Patar Christie)

**** MONKEY BUSINESS.** Zoo boss Victor Bernal went apeshit when he found out the gorilla he bought on the black market was a man dressed in a monkey suit. For U.S. animal watchdogs were tipped off Bernal needed a new star attraction for his clapped-out wildlife park in Mexico, and they had an agent dressed for the occasion when he paid £63,000 to a shady dealer in Florida. Bernal, who has been charged with illegally importing an endangered animal, said: "Somebody made a monkey out of me." (D. Sport, 9/2/94)

**** WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT?** Disabled Verne Lake was fined £1,000 for smuggling a rare bird into America ... inside his wooden leg. The 58-year-old businessman was nabbed after airline staff spotted a pile of splinters at his feet as the WOODPECKER tried to escape on the flight from Peru. (D. Sport, 10/10/93)

**** ULTRA-VIOLET.** Russians were warned not to be alarmed if they saw a couple with violet-coloured skin strolling through the city of Iver. The city's evening newspaper reported that the man and woman were heavy drinkers who had swallowed lacquer polish based on violet-coloured methylated spirits. (D. Star, 18/10/93)

**** WOLFVOMAN.** Redhead Caroline Jeffreys looked a routine plastic surgery operation to mask an ugly scar caused by a burn so she looked her best for her wedding. Skin was taken from her inner thigh and grafted on to her right hand. But when the bandages came off she was horrified to find her palm covered in pubic hairs. Caroline, 36, was so upset she suffered a nervous breakdown and the romance broke up. She has since had two more ops and is waiting for a fourth to remove the damage of the first, she told Woman's Own magazine. (D. Sport, 28/9/94)

**** LIGHTNING STRIKE POUND.** Is this a variant on the stuckcouple? A married boss and his secretary were killed by lightning -- making love in a rubber dinghy in the middle of a lake. Thomas Gormann, 32, and Maria Tlek, 22, were found by a forestry worker next day still locked in a naked embrace. They had rowed out after sneaking off to a log cabin near Osnabruck, Germany. The store chief's wife, Jan, 36, said: "This was God's intervention". (The Sun, D. Star, 21/6/99)

Oldies but Goodies

WATCHING THE DETECTORS. Gullible features writer Bernice Saltzer fell for a familiar tale from Cleveland area manager for TV Licensing, John Blance. His favourite story concerned a visit to a house where the door flew open just as John arrived. "A woman came dashing out and said she was on her way to work but said to ask her husband to show me the licence, which was stuck behind the television," said John. "So I knocked on the door and the husband came out, but when I asked him to show me the licence, he said he didn't know where it was." John suggested that the man look behind the television and he went back inside and returned moments later - looking completely amazed. He had the licence in his hand and said that he knew the vans were good but he didn't think they were that good!" laughed John (The Mail (Hartlepool), 18/5/04)

WHAT A DUMP! Portsmouth city council engineers were trying to work out why a public lavatory in Eastney exploded, causing minor burns to the legs and buttocks of a sailor from Plymouth. A leading weapons engineer from HMS Drake dropped a lighted cigarette into the loo and the theory is that it ignited a build-up of sewage gases. (D. Telegraph, 26/7/97) A woman was blown off a petrol station's toilet by a freak explosion. The blast, sparked by a faulty heater igniting anti-freeze in a storeroom, sent the shop worker three feet in the air. The unnamed woman, 43, suffered bruising and shock. The blast set off a blaze at the tesco garage in Portsmouth garage which fire crews put out. (Sun, 6/6/98) I even wondered if this second tale was real and self-fulfilling, but note BOTH are in Portsmouth, whose News news editor is another gullible former colleague of mine, Mark Acheson.

READING about the firefighters' industrial dispute and the efforts of ACAS to sort it out, reminded me of the last time the Fire Brigade took industrial action, donkeys years ago.

The Army turned out to do their best to fill the gap, in ancient Green Goddess fire tenders.

One crew were called out by a lady who was anxious about her pet cat, which had been stuck up a tree for several days, and the squaddies sped to the rescue.

Having spent half an hour trying to coax the marooned moggie down with food and baby-talk, the trained-to-kill platoon sergeant opted for the ladder and, just as he was within reach of her, Miss Fluffy Cat decided she'd had enough of the high life and made her own way down to the arms of her relieved owner.

The lads good-naturedly shrugged off her apologies, got their gear together and prepared to leave.

The roar of the Green Goddess engine startled the cat so much that she leapt out of her owner's embrace and as the lads pulled away they ran over the unfortunate animal and killed it.

It just goes to show that when your number's up ...

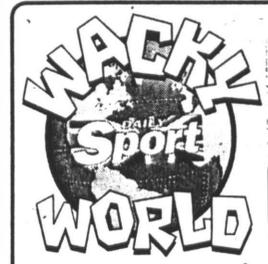
The Key (HARTLEPOOL MAIL 1995) Hastler column

HEARD IT BEFORE

Ignoring the "true" part of this page's very title, recent yarn-spinners have been falling over themselves to tell us the story of a woman who arrives home, smears mayonnaise on her genitals, then gets the dog to lick it off - only for her family to suddenly burst through the door with a birthday cake shouting "Surprise! Surprise!". No - pathetic.

(FHM 113, 1999)

(DAILY SPORT Thursday, October 28, 1999)



BORIS ZENNER tried to avoid national service in the Russian army by getting his diabetic girlfriend to provide his urine sample. He expected to be turned down on health grounds - but was left speechless when the army doctor told him he was pregnant.

Worra bag of sh*t!

- ★ A THIEF got a stinking shock after snatching Mary Williams' bag. Cos it was full of ... DOG CRAP. Mary, 67, had just scooped up after her two pooches as she walked them her local park when the bike mugger struck.
- ★ Said Mary, from Cheltenham, Gloucs: "He must have thought I'd been shopping and the bag was full of goodies. I had to laugh as he rode off. And my only regret was I couldn't be there when he opened his spoils."

(D. SPORT 25/4/95)

HUNDREDS of innocent young children are missing after being snatched by evil CLOWNS, police revealed last night.

And the fear is the kids may have been sold on as SEX SLAVES.

The evil gang dress up in baggy trousers and spotty shirts with red noses and full clown make-up then scour the streets seeking out their young prey, a senior detective said.

Sometimes toddlers have actually been torn from the arms of their screaming mums.

One wept: "One minute we were laughing at the antics of these men prancing round the streets. The next I had a gun pushed in my face and my beautiful little boy was being pulled from me." Cops

SEX TERROR OF KIDS SNATCHED OFF STREETS BY RED-NOSE RATS

say up to 300 children are missing in cities like Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula in Honduras, Central America.

A spokesman said: "We fear the motive is sexual and these infants, of both sexes, are being passed on to child porn rings."

Real clowns are so outraged they are burning their costumes in mass protest.

One, Ramon Martinez, said: "Our purpose is to make people laugh.

"We cannot bear the thought that we are being limited to bring so much evil and sadness." (D. SPORT 6/11/95)



Country matters

GRASSED UP: Alan Titchmarsh's floral pet hate is pampas grass. He reckons it looks like a collection of feather dusters in an umbrella stand, blocking out light when plonked in a bed in the front garden (You, 29/8/99). However, I doubt he is connected with the Anti-Pampas League, which had struck four times in Cheshire to remove the grasses from gardens in the dead of night and were being sought by the police (Independent on Sunday, 10/8/99; D. Telegraph, 23/10/99).

DEATH OMEN: Country diarist Robin Page's parents would quote a piece of Cambridgeshire folklore that if a robin came into the house it was a sign of a death in the family. I have been in my cottage for 16 years and during that time it has been robinless (apart from me). On the Thursday before my father died, I went to London; on my return, I found that a quite flustered robin had been shut in all day. On the Friday it was shut in again, quite unperturbed and in no hurry to leave. On the Saturday, my father died. On the warm days since, my doors and windows have been open as usual but the robin has not returned. Strange but absolutely true." (D. Telegraph, 19/9/98)

ARACHNIDS AND LADYBIRDS: Mick Goss and I, separately, dealt with Robert the Bruce's antecedents (FF25) and he cropped up in an article by Stefan Buczacki, compiling a comprehensive survey of British fauna (D. Teleg, 8/1/00). Buczacki pondered which of the 500 or more British species of spider supposedly inspired Bruce. He added a snippet of folklore of which I was unaware: "And how valid is the often quoted assertion that because of King Robert's experience, Scotsmen never harm spiders." On another topic, he writes: "There are several ingenious theories relating to the best known of all ladybird rhymes which suggest just why her house was on fire. The commonest links the rhyme to the itinerant hop-pickers of Kent and the need for ladybirds to escape before the burning of the old hop crop at the end of the picking season."

And here's me believing the rhyme was Neolithic (Screeton, Paul, Ancient Mysteries 18, 1981)

NUN TOO NICE: In a bid to create a race of supercows, British cattle are being injected with nuns' pee. The urine is collected from sisters at an Italian convent who are going through the menopause. The holy water contains a hormone which helps the cows produce more than the normal single egg. Once the embryo starts to grow they are taken from the beasts and implanted into ordinary cows so they can give birth to supercalves (D. Sport, 16/8/99)

REED THIS: Echoing the corpse roads as leys debate, it may be of modern significance that departed tippler and actor Oliver Reed was buried beneath a large beech tree in Churchtown cemetery, Co. Cork, on the 13th anniversary of his father's funeral. At his request, his grave was id to point towards his favourite pub, O'Brien's, just a few yards across the road. Still with folklore, Reed once dropped his trousers in a Caribbean bar to display the tattoo of a cokerel on his manhood and was forced to escape over a balcony because the locals feared it was a sign of voodoo (Sunday Times, Sunday Teleg, 16/5/99)

SNAKES 'N' BLADDERS: Mum of two Jill Renwick went to spend a penny — and fled screaming as a schoboy neighbour's 6ft snake slithered around the U-bend. She was at her mum's house when she spotted the monster serpent as she lifted the lid. The pet Florida king snake called Monty had escaped three months earlier — down a loo three doors away. Jill said: "I just ran into the garden screaming hysterically. The neighbours must have thought I'd gone off my head. At first I thought my mum had put an old brown coat down the loo. Jill's mum, Linda, said: "I'll never go near that toilet again." Owner Josh Liceon (8) has vowed the snake won't escape again.

HOW DOES IT FEEL,
Mrs LADYBIRD, NOW
THAT YOUR HOUSE IS
ON FIRE AND YOUR
CHILDREN ARE GONE?



WACKY: A 78-year-old hunter is planning to trap legendary Bigfoot with hot dogs and bacon. William Zupancic, who lives in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, claims the 8ft beast loves barbecued food. He said: "In the past he has stolen hot dogs off my grill." Bill, who has seen Bigfoot on several occasions, claims the monster has "Big brown eyes and a well-formed body that would be the envy of any man." He added: "My age might stop me capturing him, but I'll have a team of people ready to help." (D. Sport, 8/1/99)

THE BIG CAT FLAP by ADAM EDWARDS

(Daily Telegraph, 15/1/00)

There is a big cat in our village. I do not mean the plump domestic marmalade mouser that occasionally waddles across the green, nor the feral tom with delusions of grandeur that scratches around the dustbins.

I mean the sort of cat that has taken over the role so ably played by the Loch Ness monster in the post-war decades — the fabled fang-toothed carnivore that has been variously named the Beast of Bodmin, the Cougar of Cupar and the Fen Tiger. It is the sort of panther-like beast that is known intimately to the readers of the Sun, thanks to that newspaper's regular printing of a blurred black and white photograph of the killer moggie, but remains hidden to the rest of us.

And now, I can reveal, there is another such cat and it is in Gloucestershire — the Cadmore Cat. Claimed sightings, paw prints and other hard evidence have left the Husky-clad locals of the Hare and Hounds whispering over their Chardonnay.

In social terms, it is the most magnificent development. Big cats are the smart village accessory these days.

On first sight, this phenomenon would seem a little unlikely around these distinctly unwild parts. The Coln Valley in east Gloucestershire is hardly *Cold Comfort Farm*. In fact, it is the life's work of the residents of this corrugated-iron-free zone to ensure that there is nothing at all nasty in the woodshed. The string of manicured Cotswold villages that chase the river from Northleach to Fairford is a limestone idyll. And the only documented large wild beasts to live here are fat cats.

Which is why I was surprised when my neighbour Simon Scott-White, a gentleman farmer and former student of Cirencester Agricultural College, recently

produced a set of cow bones that he claimed had been gnawed by a big cat. It was, he said, the final proof that our village was being stalked.

"I first saw these big paw prints in Cadmore Wood," he says, as we sit by the Hare and Hounds' crackling fire, tucking into an excellent goat's cheese salad and a glass of Burgundy.

"The prints were about four times the size of a domestic cat. I didn't think any more about it until, a few weeks later, a neighbour said he saw a large cat-like creature run from the wood and cross the lane."

When Simon began asking around, the reports came thick and fast. A local lorry driver had hidden in his cab because he saw it and was frightened. A couple of chaps on a pheasant shoot had taken a pot shot at it. A man building a dry-stone wall was shocked to see a beast jump the wall and then, the next day, to find two dead sheep by it.

Then, in April, came real proof. Simon was out stalking with Richard White, a local estate agent.

"I was lying in a field of wheat looking down a steep valley towards Barnsley Wold," he says. "It was suspiciously quiet. There were no deer — there are usually 50 or 60 there — and no rabbits or birds. Suddenly, I saw a large black object running 15 or 20 feet along the hedgerow before it disappeared. It was no more than 180 yards away. We were both looking through binoculars and we both saw it. A few seconds later, it came out again and took off up the valley towards the village.

"Richard got up, turned to me and said: 'Tell me that wasn't what I think it was.' They were his exact words."

Then, last month, Simon found

European wild cats have been released in the Forest of Dean," he says.

In fact, once Terry starts on his big cat stories, there is no stopping him. He has tales of black leopards shot at by the Army, of private menageries released into ancient forests, and of "ghost" cats that craftily walk on the side of their paws so as not to leave any prints.

He seems unconcerned that in all his years noting big cat movements nobody has ever found the carcass of such a creature — let alone photographed or shot one.

"Recently, on a lantern shoot on the outskirts of Cirencester, the guns shot at a stationary big cat, but the shots fell short," he says. "So they moved forward a few hundred yards. The cat moved exactly the same distance backwards and waited for the next shot. These cats are extremely intelligent." With cunning like that, I thought, it can only be the Cadmore Fat Cat.

But at the Hare and Hounds, there are no doubts. The pub's New Zealand handyman and part-time waiter is called Ty Gurr (this is not made up). He claims he was riding his bicycle along the lanes a few weeks ago when a big black cat ran into the road and knocked him off his bike. He knew nothing about the previous sightings. "I was attacked by a big cat," he says, simply.

The view at the Hare and Hounds is that nobody called Ty Gurr could make up a story like that. So much so that a local farmer has put up a wager of £1,000 that the cat will definitely be found and eventually shot.

But in my view, the Cadmore Cat won't last that long. In these parts, it's not the bullet he needs to worry about, but the competition — the steel Jaguars that race through the narrow lanes will remain the most feared predator in the Coln valley.

Until then, though, we in the valley can gloat that we have a monster much more mysterious and ferocious, and, let's face it, much smarter than that mangy old Bodmin beast.

the bones in the splendidly named Dead Man's Copse, a clearing in the wood that has never seen a cow. They were gnawed at one end — the marks were those of the teeth of a wild beast. Simon phoned the police, who took a look at the bones and reported it as an official big cat sighting. They did not take away the evidence.

I decided to call Terry Hooper, the self-styled head of the Exotic Animal Register, to hear his theories about the Cadmore Cat. Terry, who lives in Bristol and logs sightings around the country, was very excited and claimed he knew of at least three cats that moved around Gloucestershire.

"A puma has been sighted in the area and we know that



COPS used fowl play when they failed to find a teenage motorcyclist who had crashed into a lake in Bergen, Norway. Local folklore reckons cocks can locate submerged bodies, so police rowed a bird on to the lake and within minutes it started crowing. Divers went down and immediately found the body. "I have no logical explanation why it works, but it does," said the cock's handler Olav Arvid Skaalheim.

The Sport 8/9/98

CALL OF THE WILD

WILDLIFE MYSTERY

AN ANIMAL expert today forecast that big cats could become a familiar sight around the Hartlepool and East Durham countryside.

Sightings of pumas have been common over the years, but more often than not have been met with ridicule and disbelief.

But after yet another sighting — this time along the Castle Eden Walkway — big cat experts say a puma could have made its home around Teesside.

Terry Hooper, of the Exotic Animal Register, said puma sightings were becoming more common.

"The reports go back over the years. There were sightings in Seaton Carew in 1995 and 1996, Wheatley Hill, and there were quite a few sightings in Hart," he said.

"They are shy and elusive animals, but as long as there are sheep, rabbits and deer, and forest to live in, the puma will survive."

The most recent sighting came a few weeks ago when a walker spotted a big cat — three times the size of a domestic moggie — prowling the paths of the Castle Eden Walkway near Stockton.

Although the cat, which had spots, could have been an ocelot, Terry thinks a puma could have made a permanent home in the region.

"There may be a cat crossing the territories between Northumberland and County Durham and that

By JONATHAN WARD

may be the one seen about Hartlepool in the past," he said.

"But we need people to report their sighting so we can work out its movements."

Puma sightings in Britain can be dated back to the early 1900s thanks to several zoo escapes and illegal releases over the years. Although they are native to the Americas, the British climate is ideal for the puma and has allowed the animal to breed successfully in the wild.

A rough estimate places the current British puma population at about 200, although Terry says that figure could shoot up over the next century.

But he said there was nothing to worry about as long as people kept their distance.

"There's nothing really to panic about. Leave them alone and they will keep away," he said.

● Have you seen a big cat? Call Jonathan Ward on (01429) 274441 and register your sighting with Terry Hooper on (0117) 9024807.

BOOK REVIEWS

Terry and Natalia O'Sullivan claim to have rescued spirits all over the world and they have written Soul Rescuers as a fascinating journey to the spirit realms through the stories of their encounters -- from an English ghost (died circa 1954) in Eaton Square made furious by new Chinese occupants who moved in with their family shrine and spirit ancestors, to a group of terrified Hottentots (massacred circa 1880) crowding a basement in Cape Town -- they tell the stories of the spirit guides, ancestors, poltergeists and ghosts whom they have encountered wandering the unseen regions (Thorsons, £14.99).

At first sight American Indian Healing Arts by E. Darrie Kavasch & Karen Barr looks to be a U.S.-centric work with herbs and remedies unavailable over here, but the rituals have their counterparts -- the powwow's calendrical gatherings being exactly on a par with our gypsy fairs (Thorsons, £12.99). Another angle on ritual is The Healing Wisdom of Africa by Malidoma Patrice Somé, a shaman and scholar, who brings insight into the spiritual life of West Africa's Dogon people (Thorsons, £9.99). A self-help guide using traditional Chinese techniques to release your body's own medicine is The Healer Within by Roger Jahnke (HarperSanFrancisco, £19.99).

Finding a partner who will really suit you (and remedies if things falter) is the basis of NLP & Relationships by Robin Prior & Joseph O'Connor, where NLP means neuro-linguistic programming (Thorsons, £9.99).

I'm attracted to crystals but am sceptical of their healing properties, while impressed that the Danaburians built their temple in a fissure of mylonite (andly not in the A to B here). Nevertheless, I am sure The Book of Crystals (no author) will be a popular choice with New Agers (Thorsons, £6.99). This also applies to The Spiral Dance by Starhawk, released as a special 20th anniversary edition with a new introduction by the author, who explains how the Goddess religion and ritual practice has adapted over the past two decades (HSE, £12.99).

-- A "Principles" series which proclaims "the only introduction you'll ever need" is some hoist. I've had a long-standing interest in the Kabbalah but Jewish Spirituality by Sara Isaacson taught me much about Jews in general I should have previously found time to understand (I'm Rob Delam's No. 1 fan). Spirituality by Lynn G. De Swarte, editor of Psychic News, looks at all the aspects of mediumship in a very commonsense way, while Psychic Protection by July Hall is on more controversial ground and comes over as rather loopy. More medically sound, practical and commonsensical is Breathwork by Sewani Ambikanand Saravali (all Thorsons, £5.99).

Islamic mysticism in one excellently compiled compendium is Essential Sufism edited by James Fadiman & Robert Frager (HSE, £6.99), whereas One Monk and The Philosopher has philosopher and confirmed agnostic Jean-François Revel who exposed his son Matthieu Ricard to all the "tenants" (the publisher means "tenets") of Western philosophy (Thorsons, £9.99). What with Stargate and the New Egyptology, doubtless An Egyptian Book of Shadows by Jocelyn Almond & Keith Saddon with its general overview of ancient religions and magical beliefs will prove popular and for pagans generally (Thorsons, £12.99). Another publicity blurb bloomer is Complete Book of Spells, Curses and Magical Recipes by Leonard K. N. Ashley packed with hundreds of genuine "incantations" ("incantations" were likely), being a comprehensive guide to magical practices throughout history and worldwide (Sovereign Press, £10.99).

MAGAZINE REVIEWS

FORTHEAN TIMES. News-stand. £2.50. No. 127. Ray Palmer, Richard S Shaver and caverns under the Earth; alien-hybrid skulls; the search for red mercury; Joan of Arc; bird executions. No. 128. The Blair Witch Project controversy; first-class research into the Philadelphia Experiment; crackdown on Chinese Falungong sect; more new tedious UFO rumours. No. 129. Millennium preview takes up most of issue. No. 130. Saddened to see my old teenage hero Colin Wilson falling for the New Egyptology and its ineffectual chum Atlantis; attempt at show tree

explanations by US folklorist (see FET:10); highly-readable examination of enigmatic Voynich Manuscript; timely analysis of multiple personality syndrome; anaesthetic dislocation ravidawad. No. 131. Imaginary assailants analysed; Abbots Bromley horn dance; necrophilia; Essenes and drugs. Plus international odd happenings round-up, letters and reviews.

THE LABYRINTH. Rory Lushman's new enterprise to report upon investigations which interest him personally. No price or regularity given. From 99 Charter Street, Accrington, Lancs., EES GSA. Vol. 1, issue 2. Search for the rumoured strategic steam reserve takes the editor and chum to one of the alleged key sites, the dodgy Rhyd-y-Mwyn, in North Wales. The ed then amusingly explains the arcane modus operandi of the rail enthusiast (the inebriates at Carlisle reminded me Hunter Davies once described Citadel station as "a marshalling yard for Scottish drunks") and separately produces a potted history of 21st (that's Accrington native power depot for non-ancraks). Setting up of UFO Investigators' Network to objectively take ufology into the 21st century. Plus Rwandan genocide and alleged triangular craft seen over North Sea.

LETTERS TO AMBROSE WERTON. Q folklore miscellany. £7.50 for 4. Payable to David Corwell, Psychology Section, Dept. of Education Studies, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP. No. 18. Paul Smith corresponds with a photocopying provider for whom it is a commercial venture and not a hobby -- a true exception -- with his choice 10 examples, including an even more pawdy version of "Ernie the Milkman". David Sivier finds a 1795 reference to white slavery -- naked, kidnapped London prostitutes in Sierra Leone. No. 19 I feel that with a little more scrutiny Jacqueline Simpson would find C. S. Lewis wrote not the "Scrawtop" but "Scrawtaps" letters; exploding brains; silly chop slogans; U.S. footballers' easy university questions; and a section entitled "Dr Suess parodies", which obviously is U.S. inclined, but the tolerance/joke was lost on me.

MAGONIA. Q. £5. Cheques payable to John Rimmer. Address: John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB. No. 69. Curtis Peables' search for experimental aircraft debris and what it tells us of alleged UFO "crash sites" such as Roswell; David Sivier finds strong Oriental and African elements in the abduction myth (Greys as revenge for collective Western feelings of post-imperial guilt). Book reviews.

3rd STONE. The Magazine for the New Antiquarian. Q. 4 issues £10; sample issue £2.75. Payable to 3rd Stone. From P O Box 901, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 2TS. Issue 36. Brilliant summation of the antiquity and modern representation of the Wicker Man; Alexander Thom's metrology and astroarchaeology supported; overview of main elements of myth and mythology; early trance-journey traditions; an earlier white horse at Westbury; Wiltshire's "Celtic" fields and huge rubbish tip; Stonehenge reassessed. Issue 37. Challenge of site interpretation through both archaeology and folklore; folk medicine remedies; Aubrey Burl argues that Pleistocene glaciation, and not human transportation, took the Preseli bluestones used at Stonehenge to Salisbury Plain; as an unashamed champion of a North-East King Arthur location, I dismiss the scholarly-seeming claim of an Arthurian South-East Wales. Plus witty diary column, news update, abstracts and reviews.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. £5 for 5 issues. Address: 1 Hallsteads Close, Dove Holes, Ruxton, Derbyshire, SK17 2ED. No. 182. Still going strong on its 25th anniversary Blueprint for a new U.K. ufology which by No. 183 has hardened up to create UFOIX, an investigation and research team of disaffected and high calibre U.K. ufologists, more or less based on the Internet and devolved from the usual structure of groups and mag, to which I wish them well. Confusion over early release of Ministry of defence file on UFOs via Public Records Office. Book and mag reviews; latest UFO investigations.

Articles elsewhere

PRESS CUTTINGS – Foresters have taken the first cuttings from the Fortingall Yew in a churchyard above Loch Tay, Perthshire, which, it is hoped, will grow into dozens of individual yew trees to be planted in arboreta and church grounds across the country. The tree is generally regarded as the oldest living thing in Europe, with Dr David Bellamy asserting in 1989 that tests had shown it to be 9,700 years old (The Scotsman, 24/2/00; or Dr A S L Rae).

Fortingall, guardian of mysterious Glen Lyon, is also reputedly the birthplace of Pontius Pilate, though it is regarded by Prof Jill Harris, of St Andrew's University, as being unlikely as the Roman occupation of Scotland did not start until AD80. But how did such a story originate (The Courier and Advertiser, 24/2/00; or Dr A S L Rae)

Letters

From the Rt Hon Peter Mandelson MP

Thank you for taking the trouble to let me have a copy of the magazine Folklore Frontiers. I hope it continues to do well.

From Nick Brown, of York

On a lighter note, listening to local radio coverage of York City Football Club about a year or two ago, I heard an interesting and amusing anecdote about a former York keeper (Andy Leaning) who was currently in the team at Chesterfield. He was unable to play following a bizarre pre-season accident. Staying with in-laws, he was at the bottom of their garden in close proximity to an electric pylon. For some reason (I think he was trying to shake off one of his wellies), he was shaking his leg violently. Thinking he was having an electric shock, his family member whacked his leg with a spade, causing the said injury. You might want to check this out with the local sports department on the Chesterfield paper. (Editor: No need to, this is a well-known tale and examples can be found in FF18:18/19)

From Neil Mortimer, Editor, 3rd Stone

Thanks for the cheery write-up of 3rd Stone 35. Sorry to hear you thought the Silbury piece was a load of cock. Re: The Mighty Sabbath Stonehenge Replica; my brother saw a documentary about the Sabs last week on Sky where the story was repeated by Ozzy Osbourne. He reckoned it really was a full-size replica of the stones. But I guess he ain't a surveyor. S'good story though.

I enjoyed the hill figure article in issue 28. Did you hear about the advertising executives who put black bin bags over the Ceme Giant's legs last year in order to promote the US jeans company 'Big Smith'? The National Trust had the giant debagged (hoho) as soon as they heard about it, of course. A few months after this happened, the clothes manufacturer Tommy Hilfiger announced they had won a contract to design a range of trendy gear for the NT.

Stop Press

Apologies to readers for what is a right dog's dinner of an issue. The trusty Amstrad (a venerable 15 years old) decided to simultaneously give up its cathode tube and printer. I have salvaged some copy from it, though the printing will be substandard. I also padded out with a piece on me from THIS Magazine (Hartlepool arts freebie, 1999 issue, written by Jimmy McKenna, formerly of Chiswick label punk band Disguise, and not very accurate); other bits nicked from tabloids and broadsheets; and an article by me which appeared in Letters to Ambrose Merton No. 17. A Brother word processor has now been purchased and I'm trying to get the hang of it. God, how I hate new technology.

(Printed by Emjay Reprographics, 117 Harwill Crescent, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 5LA)

FRONT COVER – Corky the kitten escaped death when he emerged from a 10-minute spin in his owners' washing machine. The seven-month-old black puss fell asleep on a pile of washing inside the machine and owner Gill Stockman switched it on without realising. But hubby Alan heard Corky's cries for help and freed him in Adgestone, Isle of Wight. (D. Sport, 8/1/99)