

# Folklore Frontiers



**No.**

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# FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

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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. It is edited and published by PAUL SCREETON. Address is: 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, TS25 2AT. Subscription for four issues is £6, payable to Paul Screeton (NOT Folklore Frontiers). U.S. 15dollars in bills only. If your subscription has expired an "X" will appear on the line below.

## THE DIARY

Here in Hartlepool, the monkey-hanging legend is regarded by some as a mixed blessing. A Holly Samos holiday programme recently featured Hartlepool without mentioning what tourism chiefs regard as a negative image. It showed the exciting historic quay, museum and marina, plus the seaside resort of Seaton Carew, where our Folklore Frontiers Towers stands.

However, our third division football club's mascot, seven-foot monkey-suited mascot H'Angus disgraced himself away at Scunthorpe. It's claimed that he pretended to have sex with a 35-year-old promotions woman during the half-time lottery draw. This outraged club chiefs and he was frog-marched from the ground. A club insider said: "He was simulating sex. It was beyond a joke - he was gyrating behind her. She felt humiliated." Hartlepool fan Stan Donovan said: "She whacked him in the head. It was a hell of a roght hook." H'Angus - real name Stuart Drummond - claimed the woman and Scunthorpe had accepted his apology (D. Sport, 9/11/00). H'Angus caused more controversy as if re-enacting the famous Winnie Jones squeezing Paul Gascoigne's testicles when he encountered Exeter's mascot, a Greek warrior. As the Hartlepool Mail put it: "The fans' favourite gave a whole new meaning to a high tackle when he literally got to grips with his opposite number" and a photographer caught the moment (8/1/01).

A similar legend to Hartlepool's (where the monkey was hanged as a suspected French spy washed ashore during the Napoleonic Wars) attaches to Boddam. In nearby Aberdeen, landlady Jane Casey, formerly of Hartlepool, was renaming her pub the Noose and Monkey and was appealing for appropriate memorabilia (Hartlepool Mail, 1/9/00)

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In the Seventies, alternative culture Compendium Bookshop in Camden, North London, sold The Ley Hunter magazine, which I then edited and produced. Late last year it sadly closed. This was hardly to my surprise as on calling I always had trouble getting my due money off the scatty owners. Mark Sanderson's books pages diary (Sunday Telegraph, 17/9/00) noted "there is no truth in the local myth that, fed up with being asked for "bread" by Bohemian beggars, the staff used to keep a wrapped-up sandwich in the till."

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On the subject of breastfeeding (see Diary elsewhere), academic Gillian Bentley has come up with a new theory as to why women's tits are big. Bentley, a biological anthropologist at University College, London, says women have breasts which stick out because humans have flat faces. It was a discovery she made while breast-feeding her own daughter, she told the journal New Scientist. Apes are flat-chested but their babies have a jutting jaw and mouth. Human babies have a flat face and, said Bentley, if her breast was flat then her daughter's nose would be buried in flesh as she tried to suckle. In other words, breasts stick out to let babies breathe and not to titilate men. Bentley said breasts evolved into the shape they are today to avoid smothering babies while feeding.

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Talking of boobs, glamour model Jo Guest (pictured) has proved (it says here - D. Star, ?) she's no dumb blonde - by falling for an author. Jo, 29, is dating university graduate David Hurst, 34, after meeting him to promote his latest book, Rumour-Fueled Society (Anyone out there know anything about this - sounds interesting). Jo said: "Many people might think Page 3

girls just go for muscle-bound beefcakes or millionaire footballers. Well, I'm fed up with all that. It's what's in a guy's mind that matters, but David is good looking too."

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Your editor has written two books on the Lambton Worm and other northern dragon legends so he was amused when police issued a warning about a persistent young offender nicknamed the Lambton Worm who had gone on the run after being remanded into council care. The name is taken from the legendary beast which according to folklore terrorised the boy's home town of Chester-le-Street in County Durham (D. Telegraph, 26/2/00)

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And lastly, in answer to the question "can having too many orgasms damage your health" we learn: "The Nazis pondered this question. To test it out they forced a prisoner of war to masturbate every three hours, day and night, for the duration of World War II. After the war he apparently went on to father several children and lived to a ripe old age." (Guide to Getting it On by Paul Joannides, Vermillion)

## Navel manouvres: Britney Spears, blonde icon

By Paul Screeton

The dotcom revolution has led the formerly staid Encyclopedia Britannica to take a profitable interest in an American teen temptress.

It's doubtful when he founded the venture in Edinburgh in 1768 that William Smelly could envisage his brainchild embracing teenage jailbait.

Yet since 1996 Jacob Safra, when a Swiss investor bought it, he has overseen its transition from a £1,200 set of books to a CD-rom costing £40 and a free website. A big change from door-to-door salesmen hawking the 32-volume, leather-bound encyclopedias and extolling loftily dry statistics, siege of Troy or the aerodynamics of bees.

The new internet incarnation sought which search terms were requested more than any other. The name Britney Spears is one of the most searched for phraes on the worldwide web, consequently the editors commissioned an article that deconstructs her bare midriff.

Entering the twilight world of anatomicalnuminosity, Miss Spears' navel is decrised as "a heated boundary between baby and babe." It continues to note "she was perfectly outfitted in the iconography of the coquette -- pleated skirt, kneesocks, pigtails." There's more: "There have been bare midriffs before, but there was something different about this particular expression that lifted the lithe teen to a unique position in the pantheor of teen pop stars ... halfway between head and genitalia, not strictly sexual, but -- like Spears herself -- 'not that innocent' either, the belly button is a liminal marker." Wow!

Actually dimensionally her navel is more midway between tits (more ofwhich anon) and fanny.

An E.B. spokeswoman defending its reputation for recording current affairs, said: "There is clearly a history behind the belly button. The world is fascinated with Britney Spears' navel and our job is to take a contemporary event or personality and put it in context."

Call me cynical, but all I see is clever marketing and cash registering. (D Telegraph, 10/2/01)

\* Talking of money, a boy aged seven from Tasmania pulled out all his teeth with a pair of pliers because he wanted the tooth fairy to leave enough cash for him to buy the new Britney Spears CD. (Sunday People, 27/8/00; D Sport, 28/8/00)

\* Prince William's a fan butshe upset middle America by appearing on the cover of Rolling Stone wearing only a bra and hotpantssurrounded by fluffy toys. Shealso caused uproar when it appeared she had her breasts enlarged. She went into hospital complaining of a knee injury and miraculously reappeared a few days later with a more generously-proportioned bosom. (Sunday Telegraph, 28/1/99). She's denied this, insisting "breast implants are fine but I think 17 or 18 is too young" and on the claims "that whole thing has been pretty unpleasant. People were even starting to come up to me to stare at my chest." Dear, they'd do that, implants or not. (D Sport, 23/11/00). For an expert opinion we have Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr Sheldon Rosenthal, whowatched her steamy performance in a skimpy outfit at the MTV Music Awards, who proclaimed: "When she raised her arm you could clearly see a depression when incisions are made for implants. The fact that there is little or no bounce left suggests the surgery was done in this way." (D Sport, 26/9/00).

Tits and navel out for the lads!

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## TROPHY WIVES

**Car lads hoard pants**

About a year ago, I sold used cars for a city-centre dealer. We worked out of two huge Portakabins, one nice and clean for the customers, the other a "snake pit" for eight salesmen. It was horrific, full of dirty magazines, men swearing and filthy mugs. Our favourite item, however, was what we called the Trophy Tree. Basically, whenever we delivered a car, we would ask to use the toilet. Whilst in there, a quick root through the laundry basket was undertaken, and the dirtiest pair of knickers stolen. The offending item then went on the tree, points being awarded on a scale of sauciness, amount of material soiled and sex-appeal of the owner. One day one of the lads was lounging around in our private cabin when the door flew open and in walked a customer. "What's that?" laughed the bloke at the door, pointing at our tree. "It's a trophy tree," my friend Mark answered sheepishly, explaining that the boys brought in knickers from the girls they had scored with over the weekend. The customer thought it was brilliant and recounted bawdy tales of his youth. As he left he pointed at a nasty grey pair and sighed, "That's all my missus wears these days, though." We never heard from him again, but the awful fact is that they were the dirty grots of his beloved wife. Mark had stolen them the previous week.

Jason Kenny, Manchester



References: Baby intercom - "First person" column, Nigel Farndale, Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 2/7/00; Trophy wives - FHM, No. 113, 1999.

There are more urban myths about baby intercoms than there are on any other subject. But we do know a couple – and to prove they are not mythic their names are Alex and Clare – who were caught out spectacularly. They held a dinner-party. Halfway through, Clare heard the baby crying through the monitor and disappeared upstairs to breastfeed it. Exhausted, she fell asleep. The husband eventually went to see where she had got to. 'How could you just leave me with them like that?' he hissed. 'They're your bloody friends.' Alex returned downstairs to find the bloody friends putting on their coats and filing gingerly out of the door.

**E-MAIL OF THE WEEK**

CHEERS to the 400 people who sent me this e-mail this week. It's a bit "hit and miss" but it has its funny moments.

It's all about "definitions", but the one they forgot is the one which still haunts me from school — Definition of pain: *Sliding down a razor blade and using your bollocks as brakes!*

1. Definition of honesty: *A pregnant woman asking the bus conductor for a one-&-a-half ticket.*
2. Definition of technology: *Condom with zip.*
3. Definition of foolishness: *A guy peeping through the keyhole of a glass door.*
4. Definition of revenge: *A bastard puncturing all the condoms in a contraceptive factory.*
5. Definition of noise: *Two skeletons f\*\*\*ing on a tin roof.*
6. Definition of an itch: *A one-handed man hanging from a cliff with his*

*balls itching.*

7. Definition of unemployment: *Cobweb in the hole of the prostitute.*
8. Definition of laziness: *A guy lying on a girl and waiting for an earthquake to do the rest.*
9. Definition of competition: *A guy peeing beside a waterfall. OR: A topless lady standing near Mt Everest.*
10. Definition of sophistication: *Sucking nipples with a straw.*
11. Definition of disgust: *While wiping after a good toilet dump, your finger pokes through the paper.*
12. Definition of fashion: *A female applying lipstick to her vertical lips.*
13. Definition of patience: *A female lying naked under a banana tree and hoping for a banana to fall in her pussy.*
14. Definition of accuracy: *The banana falling right into her pussy.*
25. Definition of pain: *The whole bunch falling into her pussy.*

ABOVE: D Sport, 5/1/01. BELOW: D Sport, 10/11/00  
From Shaun Ryder column ghosted by John Warburton

DAILY  
**Sport**

**WHY WOMEN ARE LIKE FOOTBALL PITCHES...**

1. There is a vast difference in grounds with regards to length and width, thus varying the quality of the play.
2. Pitches vary from the well-grassed to the completely bald.
3. Remember, it is possible to score at both ends.
4. Tackling from behind is not always an offence — check with ground owner.
5. Be careful if, after a few pints, a ground appears to be of Premiership standard as it could turn out to be not even eligible as a council dump.
6. Only some grounds offer five-a-side facilities.
7. Don't ever make public your desires to play at Wembley. Also never mention pitches previously visited.

8. Extra time is dependent on subsequent pitch bookings.

9. If the ground does not seem to have under-soil heating, suggest calling the game off, possibly even contact the coroner.

10. When building a team it is always nice to finish with Seaman at the back.

11. Wet pitches allow for long sliding tackles.

12. Always ask before leaving the pitch and entering the tunnel.

Conversely, DO NOT expect to be allowed to come straight from the tunnel to the goalmouth and score. That can leave an awful taste in the mouth of the pitch owner and may prevent further use of the ground.

13. Personal morals may be compromised by local derbies.

14. It is illegal to play on small unturfed pitches.

15. From time-to-time the goal may be obstructed by a highly-absorbent goalee.

16. Russian grounds are frequently more grassy.

17. French grounds are frequently very nice to look at. However, there can sometimes be an awful smell from the terraces.

18. Very few grounds are found with executive boxes.

19. Be wary of grounds with room for coaches.

20. Always be on the look out for grounds that host ladies' football two evenings a week.

21. Pitches with a water-logged end can be out of bounds for up to five days a month, although this can be longer if you piss the owner off by continually asking to play up the good end instead.

22. Players will have to agree personal terms with the club before being allowed to play.

23. Always look for a ground that has never been played on before (or a least hasn't had many visits). That said, unused grounds may have better facilities and will really know how to get the best out of a player.

# Folklore of the Settle-Carlisle Line

By Paul Screeton

A tale which challenges townies' image of countryfolk as simpletons should not be dismissed because of its doubtless apocryphal nature. One woman who lived by the Settle to Carlisle line allegedly regularly lined up a row of empty bottles on her garden wall. In the days of steam haulage these proved irresistible to crews, who would take pot shots at them with lumps of coal. Their innocent fun unwittingly kept her stocked up with fuel throughout the winter. (1)

This tale is typical of folklore which has attached itself to the dramatically scenic railway between Settle Junction and Carlisle (S&C). It was "the line that refused to die" despite Machiavellian machinations and statistical manipulation and which has been vindicated.

Celebrations, including a firework display, were held this April to mark the ten years since the line was saved by a Government minister's reprieve announcement on April 11, 1989. More than 22,000 people -- and a dog -- submitted objections which led to the longest public inquiry into a rail closure proposal in UK railway history.

But it is not history, but folklore, which concerns us over this 72-mile line across the backbone of Britain.

Before the S&C's reprieve, it was used as a test bed for two initiatives. The first was "closure by stealth" which had ramifications for all other "uneconomic" lines; the second had it being touted almost until the last minute as a precursor for the overall rail privatisation. The British Railways Board tried to find a private buyer to develop the line as a tourist attraction, but before it came to nothing the "Sunday Express" published an unconfirmed news story that in addition to five serious inquiries, an unnamed 15-year-old Saudi Arabian prince had entered a bid.

During the systematic rundown of the S&C, British Rail claimed the magnificent 24-arch Ribbleshead viaduct was on the verge of collapse. At one stage, BR estimated that to replace this principal structure would cost between £4.5m and £7m. In the event, the bill was only £2.5m.

Battered by westerly gales racing up Chapel-le-Dales, Ribbleshead viaduct became the subject of much fanciful speculation. It is said the wind could bring trains to a standstill and blow protective tarpaulins off trucks to waft them away like autumn leaves (a windfall in a literal sense to any local farmer around when they fell to earth) and the doubtless exaggerated claim that cars had been blown off wagons and smashed to the ground. (2)

Former editor of *The Dalesman*, W. R. Mitchell, observed that the parapets deflected the wind from railwaymen crossing it -- "they did not have to crawl as some writers have fancied," (3) Nevertheless, the wind can be awesome and the anemometer kept at Ribbleshead station recorded 92mph in November, 1961.

More than once I have come across the wild claim that on one remarkable occasion a track ganger had his cap blown off, only for it to ail under an arch only to rise again and land back on his head, but the wrong way around. He is even quoted as concluding his narrative with the observation, "Thorr can't have ivverything." (2)

**F**RIENDS' recommendation of The White House after its recent refurbishment had us trek up to the posh end of Hartlepool.

Was it worth it?

Sorry, but you'll have to wait while I digress discussing tegestology - that's beer mat collecting for those who don't take part in pub quizzes.

The White House was once a Roman Catholic school, so we'll start with the teaching profession. And my opinion of schoolmasters would make John Pool seem positively politically correct.

New teachers are being recruited with adverts on cinema and bus tickets and even beer mats in a £7m. campaign. The Government hopes it will bring 19,000 people into the profession and beat the current vacancies crisis.

Beer mats pose the question: "Can you lift spirits?" and gives the phone number of the Government's teacher recruitment agency.

The campaign's slogan is: "Those who can, teach."

Ralph Tabberer, head of the Teacher Training Agency, said: "We are tackling head-on the old myth that 'Those who can, do - and those who can't teach'."

I recall colleague John Pool adding . . . "and those who can't teach, take PE classes."

Now for an alternative grub's up look at life.

As an inveterate clipster of newspaper story oddities, all the following are the same tale but recycled by tabloids.

First off, chef Phillipe Maupas got fed up with a complaining customer, so he took a beer mat, marinated it in wine, coated it with batter and served it with vegetables to the customer as veal.

The diner in Paris continued to complain, saying the veal was fine but the greens were poor (*Daily Sport*, June 19, 2000).

Six days later readers were told a nameless Parisian chef served a beer mat in a batter to a man who moaned about the veal and got roasted because the vegetables were poor. (*Sunday People*, June 25, 2000).

The urban legend was picked up again in August where a battered beer mat was served as a veal cutlet to a Paris diner.

Monsieur Maupas' Christian name had slightly changed to Philippe. (*Sun*, August 3, 2000).

The rag which published version two thought the story was so good it was worth repeating but unlike the *Sun*, which spelled the customers' moans as whinging spelled it whinging. (*Sunday People*, August 27, 2000).

The obvious moral of this story is to order veal, but ask for a salad to complement it.

I used to collect beer mats and one shows



Harold Wilson reclined in bathing trunks, while on the reverse was printed his famous broadcast statement of 1967 on devaluation: "That doesn't mean of course that the pound here in Britain - in your pocket or purse or in your bank - has been devalued."

They disappeared very quickly, either through collectors, or withdrawn for political reasons.

Anyone out there able to tell me if my example is going to make me rich?



"Martha! Eating beans before a performance isn't funny!"

**J**im Gardener, inventor of beef and mustard flavour crisps, must be one of the most infamous heroes of our time. Jim worked as a lab technician for a flavour producing company when he invented a mustard flavour that he thought would go down a treat with an existing beef flavour. The resulting beef and mustard flavour was soon to grace the shelves of newsagents and off licences throughout the land.

Of course, the flavour company got all the credit. But our Jim didn't care, he was busy making his boss's car stink. He used a compound called trimethylamine which is used in scampi and prawn flavoured snacks. "He was a right cunt so I thought it would be poetic justice to make his car smell like one," says Jim.

Some folklore has an element of the ludicrous and the notion that this Victorian cobweb of a viaduct's piers were built on wool is one. Stability, however, was established by shafts sunk to the bedrock at about 25ft and the dressed limestone which was conveyed by tramway from nearby Littledale, was placed on six feet of concrete. The wool story has also been attached to nearby Dandry Mire viaduct, near Garsdale, and I've personally heard it said implausibly of Yarm viaduct over the Tees. Yet V. R. Mitchell speculated that wool could have been used to prevent seepage of water into shafts or perhaps Ribbleshead was built with money earned through wool, i.e. built on Bradford wool merchants' brass. (4)

Shortly after the viaduct is Blea Moor tunnel, length 2,629 yards, and "a 'presence' has been detected at the southern portal" claims W. R. Mitchell. (5)

Next viaduct along the line is Dent Head. Here, legend avers, an engineer killed a woman and dumped her body into one of the shafts being excavated. As at Ribbleshead, the immense piers were set on a bed of concrete and once poured in all trace of the victim was lost. By the time details of the crime became known, the viaduct was almost completed. Being impracticable to seek any trace of the body in the foundations, all that could be done was to fix a commemorative plaque high on a pier. (6)

Of course, such apocrypha goes back aeons to foundation sacrifices and forwards to notions of notorious East End gangsters as "hardened criminals" holding up motorway flyovers.

At another viaduct, Ms Gill, there is a footbridge known as hangman's Bridge, supposedly after a suicide. (2)

There are other interesting names, such as Samson's Cave by the line where a man of that surname hid after killing a fellow navy, eventually being found, tried and hanged.

We all know of local places once given far-off names because the locality was somewhat distant from a better and larger settlement --California, Quebec, Spion Kop, and so on. The navvies building the S&C bestowed upon their shantytowns such names as Belgravia, Salt Lake City, Jericho, Sebastapol and Inkerman. The latter two names were transferred from Crimean War places of siege, where doubtless the militia's privations were re-enacted in wildest Yorkshire.

As related previously, wind can be harsh along the S&C, but the apocryphal tale of a locomotive propelled at 70mph for some time on the turntable at Garsdale is a classic. Former General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, Sid Weighell, has claimed it happened several times and the engine involved would turn for hours.

"There was no way you could stop it and no way you could get the engine off, not until the wind had died down," said Sid. "They built a shelter round it in the end." (7)

The protective shelter was actually a stockade of discarded upright sleepers though their purpose was ostensibly to keep the pit free from drifting snow,

Anthony Lambert swallowed the story and described an engine as spinning like the sails of a windmill, only to be halted when ballast was thrown into the pit. (2)

Putting a slower spin on the Garsdale story, Stanley C. Jenkins had a freak of nature taking place where "the wind took charge of it and the locomotive was turned slowly round and round on its axis until somebody shovelled stones and cinders into the turntable pit." (8)

No exact date, no real authentication, but at least a specific culprit is recorded in one account. I'll let Peter Brook tell his version:

*"About 1936, Kingmoor shed was receiving new motive power in the form of the Jubilee class 5XPs which unassisted were able to take loads of 350 tons over Ais Gill. Trains in excess of this loading were provided with a pilot to Garsdale, where a turntable was provided for a comfortable return trip with the engine chimney-first. Turning on Garsdale's turntable could be difficult in stormy weather in view of the absence of a windbreak, and there was a case on record when Kingmoor 2P 4-4-0 No. 40602 spun round like a windmill for three hours before the Helm Wind dropped. This even took place in 1949."* (9)

One astute commentator seems to have both disproved the tale and offered a likely origin for it,

"Assuming the tender presented a greater wind resistance on one side of the pivot than the engine did on the other, it is possible that a strong wind could have taken over - but for only a limited part of a revolution. As soon as the tender side came round into the face of the gale from the other side of the pivot, the movement would have been arrested and the locomotive stabilized in a neutral position - just as with a simple weather vane," wrote E.S. Youldon. "The only way the engine could have rotated continuously was if the wind, was also rotating continuously! As with all such yarns, there must have been something to start it off, and I suggest that what happened was this: the engine was being turned, but when it neared the run-off point it became side-on to the wind. Wind force took over, and continued to pull the engine until it stopped too far around. It therefore had to be pushed back again -but the same thing happened, and perhaps went on happening until assistance arrived" (10)

Veteran railway correspondent Peter Semmens relocated the myth in Devon, featuring one of Q.V.S. Bulleid's Light Pacific locomotives. He claimed one of the class got "itself blown round for several hours on the turntable Ilfracombe during a gale. It was impossible to hold it against the force of the wind on the air-smoothed boiler casing until someone drained the tender, which unbalanced the turntable." (11)

The trainspotting fraternity, particularly those who frantically recorded the last months and rites of steam operation during 1968, created their own folk customs.

At the Temperance Hotel, Kirkby Stephen, a celebrated Jam-buttie eating contest was inaugurated by regular attenders. Contestants would arrive from S&C vantage points; one of who arrived from Ais Gill set the all-time record of Spreading and eating a Jam-buttie in a phenomenal eight and a half seconds. (12)

Sadly, it seems the passing of regular Steam-hauled trains was the death knell for a living folklore, but luckily we still have past memories and a bright future for the S&C.

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## NEWSLINES

**WE CAN'T BEREAVE IT.** Fans of TV's grumpy Victor Meldrew laid flowers and wreaths at the spot where he died. Victor, played by Richard Wilson, was mown down by a car in the final episode of BBC's *One Foot in the Grave*. Since then tributes piled up at the location scene at Shawford railway station, near Winchester, Hants (D *Mirror*, D *Sport*, 24/11/00).

**UNDERNEATH THE ARCHES.** When Thorpe Thewles viaduct on Teesside was demolished, local people recalled a piece of folklore stating that during construction a horse and cart fell into one of the parapets and it was hoped to find evidence of this event. Similarly an investigation into Loch nan Uamh viaduct, on the West Highland Line, should reveal whether the hollow central pillar contains a horse and cart lost during construction. The viaduct was built as part of the Fort William to Mallaig extension over 100 years ago. Originally, the horse and cart was thought to be entombed in Glenfinnan viaduct, but an examination in 1999 revealed nothing. The new project is managed by the Institution of Civil Engineers with Weeks Laboratories of Glasgow appointed to bore holes through the 5ft thick walls of the central pillar to photograph the 11ft by 30ft cavity inside (Rail, No. 396, 2000).

**ONCE AND FUTURE PARROT.** John Simpson has made a bid to usurp Monty Python with a dead parrot anecdote of his own. The veteran Beeb broadcaster was recalling life at the Commodore Hotel in Beirut during the Israeli invasion in 1982. "In spite of all the new marble and brass and mirrors, you can still trace the outlines of the bar where journalists gathered," recalled Simpson in BA's *High Life* magazine. "It was gloomy and wood-pannelled, and there was a parrot in a cage in one corner. This parrot did an imitation of an incoming shell which was so realistic on one or two wonderful occasions new arrivals threw themselves to the floor. At last, a Syrian shell that was not an imitation hit The Commodore, and nothing was left of the bar or the parrot except a few tail-feathers. As with Barbarossa or King Arthur, stories used to do the rounds that the parrot hadn't died and would return; but it hasn't happened yet." (D *Express*, 14/6/00).

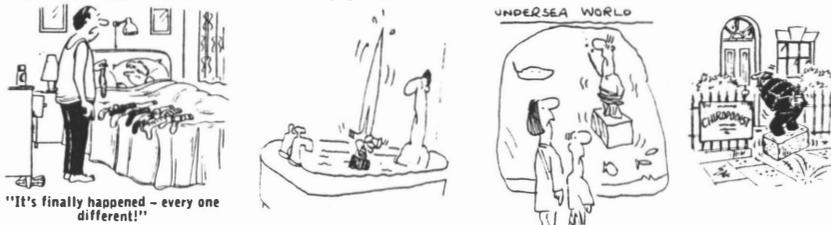
**LONG LIVE THE KING.** An award of £10,000 is being offered by American TV to anyone who can arrange a live interview with Elvis. The latest theory doing the rounds is that the King is working as a petrol attendant in Alberta, Canada (D *Sport* 27/10/99).

**PANTOMIME TIME.** Paul Marton suspected apocrypha when recalling a tale about Old Mother Riley, the creation of character actor Arthur Lucan, whose portrayal of an Irish washerwoman entertained audiences for three decades. Appearing in pantomime in the Fifties, he suffered a fatal heart attack in his dressing-room during the interval. The theatre manager stepped out from behind the red curtain and nervously addressed the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I have some very sad news. I'm afraid that Old Mother Riley has just passed away." As one, the audience shouted back, "Oh no she hasn't!" (Sunday *Telegraph Magazine*, 17/10/99).

**EXPERIENCED.** Bill Gates, of Microsoft, has built a museum in honour of Jimi Hendrix in Seattle. There are 80,000 items. A late addition was the FBI file on the 1963 song *Louie Louie*, which was investigated after complaints that it might contain an obscene message (D *Telegraph*, 24/6/00).

**BLIND FAITH.** As we were reminded at his memorial service, Alan Clark was once stopped by the police for driving with a girl on his lap. Friends offered another anecdote about the late MP's motoring career. On a summer drive through Oxford, Clark was pulled over for speeding. Pointing to his dark glasses, he apologised and explained that he hadn't realised how fast he was going because he was blind. Legend has it the policeman waved him on (Peterborough *column*, D *Telegraph*, 4/2/00).

**NUMBER'S UP.** An alleged phone scam which sparked fears is just an elaborate but harmless hoax. Concerned community groups are believed to have issued flyers to warn



Hartlepool residents about the apparent sting. It was said that con artists were phoning people out of the blue pretending to be telephone engineers and asking them to dial 90 before pressing their telephone hash key. Leaflets distributed in the town claim the bogus caller could then access the phone line to make a call which would be billed to his victim. In this way it was feared fraudsters could make costly overseas or sex line calls at another's expense. But Francis King, a spokesman for BT, said: "It's an urban myth which has been doing the rounds for about five years. It resurfaces from time to time. Community groups get to hear about it and then tell other people about it. But nobody is actually doing it and if they were they couldn't access a phone account for anyone. We understand people are giving warnings for the best reasons, but it is a hoax." (Hartlepool *Mail*, 21/3/00).

**WARNINGS RUNG IN.** The 10,000 users of mobile phones in Burma were warned that a virus threatens to hang them up forever. The telecomms department warned that an unnamed virus was likely to strike the system and could destroy a phone. Meanwhile, Lebanon was the victim of a rumour that the Chernobyl computer virus would play havoc with mobile phones. The virus did not hit, but the system crashed due to overloading when users called friends to warn them (Guardian, 21/5/99, cr: Peter Christie).

**GREATER RISK.** Cordless telephones could pose a similar threat to health as mobile phones. Scientists believe radiation emitted by the handsets, which are found in millions of British homes, could interfere with the brain causing memory loss, headaches, dizziness and even cancer. Scientist Dr Gereard Hyland, an expert on electromagnetic radiation, says cordless phones could pose a greater risk than mobile handsets because they are used frequently and for long periods (D *Mail*, 5/7/99).

**GABBY HAYES.** The colourful former MP Jerry Hayes was talking to a friend as he rushed out of a House of Commons restaurant. "Oh God," he said suddenly. "I've left my mobile phone behind." Still chatting away he returned to the table. The phone wasn't there. Then he realised he had been speaking to his friend ... on his mobile phone (Sunday *Mirror*, 12/11/00).

**NAZIS TARGET CHURCHES.** Thieves are stealing church silver embossed with eagles to meet the demand from right-wing groups in Germany, according to Church Watch (Independent on Sunday, 22/12/99, cr: Dr A S L Rae).

**BABY FOR HIRE.** Supermoel Iman claims an African fertility custom helped her conceive with rock star hubby David Bowie after months of trying. She borrowed model pal Christine Brinkley's baby for a day -- and got in the pudding club. Iman (44) said: "In Africa there's a tradition that when a woman wants to conceive she should hold another woman's baby. Christie and I were on a shoot for *Vogue* and she let me hold her baby all day and boom -- I got pregnant" (D *Sport*, 19/4/00).



**BUFO LEGOVERUS.** More than 1,000 people touched a 'magic' toad to boost their sex performance in a bizarre moonlit ritual. The toad is a rock formation on a hillside overlooking the Spanish village of Alcala de la Selva. Those who stroke it during a full moon become vigorous lovers, according to local folklore. Mayor Benito Ros (47) joined the ceremony, but pointed out: "I have four children. I don't need any more fertility" (The *Sport*, 16/9/98).

**THE SCURRA** This column in The *Mirror* turned up two crackers two days apart, which I reproduce as published:

a) Martine McCutcheon may have had elocution lessons to prepare for her West End role as Ekiza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, but she's still grappling with the subtleties of the Queen's English. The former EastEnders recently dined with a European aristocrat who pushed aside his asparagus risotto to say: "You know, I am a real count." With a face wreathed in concern, the cockney actress took his hand and aid: "No, you ain't. I think you're luvverly." (19/3/01)

b) "Going down?" asked an attractive middle-aged woman as she entered a lift at Scotland Yard. "Oh, can't we have a kiss and a cuddle first?" responded the uniformed policeman inside. Unfortunately for him, she was a senior officer and he has been suspended pending an investigation into her complaint. Well, that's the story circulating at the home of British investigation. But a call to the press office confirms the worst: "It's an urban myth that goes round every few months." (21/3/01)

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## ARTICLES ELSEWHERE

**KNOCKOUT PUNCH:** My friend Tony 'Doc' Shiels wrote about his trade in FF12:9-11 and a fulsome account of current Punch & Judy shows by Stephen McClarence puts the politically correct non-violence brigade in its place. One Professor (the term is an honorary title suggested by Queen Victoria, an unlikely enthusiast for domestic slapstick) described it as "the highest form of begging." There are fewer than 25 left on our beaches, and ten with venues, period and phone numbers are given (*The Times Weekend*, 1/7/00). Meanwhile, in a bid to get grants, fractious factions in the puppeteering world had called in a troubleshooter to provide a united front. Marionettists often regard their art as high and P&J as lower art, writes Michael Paterson. However, some puppeteers are suspicious of sponsorship, so unity was far from certain (*Sunday Telegraph*, 23/5/99).

**CRYSTAL BOOBS:** According to a Chinese horoscope method, the shape of a girl's boobs determines her fate with 95% accuracy, writes Sarah Stephens. In fact, the Chinese believe all body parts can be read as a way of telling the future (hand shape relates to stature and career, arse about how you deal with the world, and so on) (*D Sport*, 5/12/00).

**LUCKY CATS:** The legendary exploits of theatre cats were chronicled by Andrew Eames, revealing that for a long time cats were thought to bring luck to the house. Richard Huggett, in his book *The Curse of Macbeth*, even suggested that a cat's crap in a dressing room is the luckiest of all omens, citing such happening to Noel Coward on the first night of *The Vortex*, which went on to be a great success (*The Times Weekend*, 30/12/00).

**GRAIL QUEST:** Our old friend Rosslyn Chapel, near Edinburgh, has been back in the news. Dr Andrew Sinclair discovered a hand-printed linen scroll in a Kirkwall, Orkney, masonic lodge. Quite simply he discovered a ground plan of the Temple of Solomon which matched exactly the plan of Rosslyn Chapel, writes Gavin Bell. He believes refugee Knights Templar his sacred artefacts - including the holy grail and Christ's mummified head - here and it is a treasure map. Sinclair's detractor are quoted and anyway, by law, no more excavation is allowed (*The Scotsman*, 22/7/00, cr: Dr A S L Rae). Reporting on how Britain's ancient places are magnets for the new spiritual tourists, Mark Chadbourne focused upon Rosslyn Chapel and asks why are there carvings of New World com long before it was heard of in Britain? Well, as I understand it, the anachronistic crop is pineapple (*The Times*, 27/1/01).

**HONOUR AMONG . . .** The Queen keeps neglecting me when drawing up her honours so I read Gyles Brandreth's social climber's guide. There (*Sunday Telegraph*, 31/12/00) he wrote that Harold Wilson sought an honour for Harold H Corbett, the actor who played Steptoe Junior and was a Labour Party supporter; the OBE was offered to Harry Corbett, the creator of Sooty, the glove puppet. This reminds me that I once read that being a lover of nature programmes, Her Majesty ordered a knighthood for David Attenborough, but it was mistakenly bestowed upon his thespian sibling Dickie. The matter was subsequently rectified.

**FOOLED YOU.** The difference between April Fool spoofs and ordinary news is getting harder, argues Jasper Gerard. He noted that perhaps the greatest flaw in the genre was that they mature badly. "So April fools will never win a place in the pantheon of great cosmic jokes, but their very absurdity makes them entirely appropriate for this, the most trivial of ages," he concludes. (*The Times*, 1/4/00)

**LESBOS FINGERED** Martin Fricker wrote that after researchers in San Francisco surveyed 720 people, they concluded that males and females with a big length difference between their second and fourth fingers are probably gay. These findings were reported in the prestigious journal *Nature* and also revealed men exposed to high levels of male hormones were more likely to be homosexual and so are men who have lots of older brothers. (*D Sport* 30/3/00 -- of course its *Nature* source might have printed it as an April fool spoof)

**FIELD OF DREAMS.** Documents and contemporaneous evidence supposedly prove the transition between the old

and modern versions of football occurred in Callender, Perthshire, claims Frank O'Donnell and Jim McBeth. Apparently a Shrovetide ball game was played beside a Roman camp and stretching credence, it is noted that as early as 44BC the Romans played a form of football known as harpastum which, it is believed, they took with them to Britain. For inclusionists the ancestry of football can be traced back to 206BC, when a game known as tse chu was played in China. (*The Scotsman*, 29/4/00, credit Dr A S L Rae)

**YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVING FELINE:** When Marianne Kavanagh's family moggy went missing she was "haunted by all the pub stories I had ever heard about satanists, secret research laboratories and restaurants serving exotic meat. Or was there a mad resident with a grudge?" A cat behaviourist, Peter Neville, whom she consulted added: "There's a huge myth about gangs roaming about stuffing cats into bags for their fur, but I can't think of a less profitable operation." (*D Telegraph*, 28/10/00).

**ANORAKWATCH:** Where pathetic journalists use the anorak cliché to demean rail enthusiasts, and fill columns easily, but where it reveals the paucity of their inventive skills.

1) Christopher Middleton claims "you can hardly hear the station announcements above the clack of anorak toggles" when 60,000 copies of the national rail timetable are delivered to terminii bookshops (*D Telegraph*, 29/1/00).

2) Tony Durant, writing about climbing the Munros - the 284 Scottish peaks higher than 3,000ft - says purists accuse "baggers" of being "nothing more than glorified trainspotters who bury their heads in a guidebook then tick off the relevant page before plodding downhill." There are also Corbetts, Donalds, Grahams, Hewitts and Marilyns, which are bumps in Britain with a 500ft drop on all sides. He ends: "And if none of these appeal, you could always try something far less strenuous, perhaps along the lines of buying an anorak, notebook and train timetable and heading for the nearest railway station." (*D Telegraph*, 15/4/00)

3) Next day Paul Sieveking, who really should know better, wrote about Asperger's syndrome - people with unusual and narrow interests, coupled with poor social skills. He cited Bristol Temple Meads station signalman Harvey Brant, who became an electricity pylon spotter after being bored by his workmates' talk about trainspotting. He also quoted the Dull Men's Club which suggests tractor spotting for those "who find trainspotting too exciting." (*Sunday Telegraph*, 16/4/00)

4) On May 11, 2000, in *The Bill* on ITV, the character Chief Inspector Derek Conway exasperatedly suggested a pathetic character should get a hobby "like stamp collecting or trainspotting."

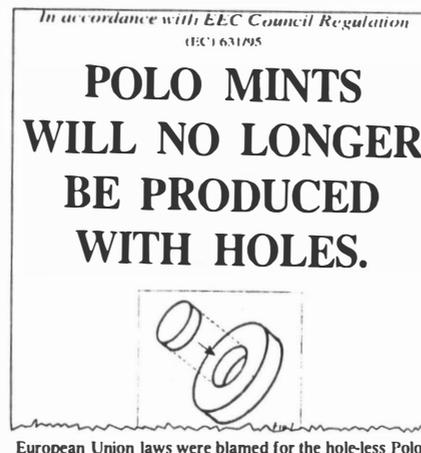
5) A less condemnatory comment came from my favourite columnist, Rebecca Tyrrel, with: "Never again, as I stand here with neuralgia creeping around my skull, hammering away at my inner ear, will I dismiss trainspotters ... I will not be able to, knowing, as I do, that I have produced one who has the rest of his life in which to fill infinite numbers of notebooks which he will no doubt keep under his bed, along with his newspaper clippings and cache of lethal weapons." (*Sunday Telegraph* magazine, 26/3/00).

**ATLANTIS FOUND:** Former RAF cartographer Jim Allen's 20-year quest has amassed 50 pieces of evidence, proving (at least to his satisfaction) that Plato's description of an island city on a plain encircled by mountains fits the unlikely Bolivian Altiplano like a glove. (*Independent on Sunday*, 17/10/99, cr: Dr A S L Rae).

**COPROPHILIA CLAIM:** Paul Krassner, responsible for an unfortunate political legend, has wound up the magazine he founded in 1958 and edited, *The Realist*. It was this organ which in 1967 created, as Duncan Campbell wrote, a bizarre tale which is still repeated as fact in parts of America to this day: that Lyndon Johnson had committed an unnatural act on the exit wound of the slain Kennedy as the body was being flown back from Dallas. Of the stories that had most effect, Krassner cites the edition that claimed to print "the parts left out of the Kennedy book" (*The Death of a President* by William Manchester). "That issue reached a circulation of 100,000," says Krassner. "Recently I met a 25-year-old who told me about that LBJ-JFK encounter. She believed that it had actually happened. What I had originally intended as a metaphorical truth had become, in her mind, a literal truth."

Krassner managed to continue to offend until the end; the penultimate issue of *The Realist*, which came just after the death of *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz last year, showed the loveable *Peanuts* characters in various acts of coitus. This was too much even for some of Krassner's supporters. (*The Guardian*, 12/2/01)

**ANTI-HAUNT PROTESTERS.** Residents in Pluckley, Kent, with 15 ghosts Britain's most haunted village, dread the curious descending for Halloween raves beyond the grave. Tony Durrant found an element of "we don't like strangers here", though the local expert believed spooks got their energy from trees and water rather than leys. (*D Telegraph*, 28/10/00)



## OLDIES BUT GOODIES

**BUGGED.** Ever since I became aware of urban legends, I have believed most, if not all, will actually be found to come true at some point. This one certainly appears true enough with photograph included, though its source may make some doubt its provenance. A holidaymaker who heard scratching sounds was horrified to find a one-inch bug had burrowed into her ear. Barbara Jenner's sunshine break turned into a nightmare after discovering that the creature had been gnawing its way into her head. Barbara (45) and husband Dave contacted a doctor after 12 hours of torment. He confirmed that a tiny shelled slug was lodged in her ear and armed with a skewer, he removed the insect -- by that time dead -- and made sure it had not laid any eggs. Barbara said: "All I can think is that it must have been nestling in a blanket I had thrown over me by the pool in Turkey. The doctor said it was extremely rare for this to happen but it has left me paranoid." (D Sport, 27/6/00)

**SEED YOU NOW.** This old chestnut is quite similar to the previous tale. Could it be true? Mechanic Ramon Marin's blinding headaches baffled doctors at three hospitals. Then the problem was solved -- by his dentist. Ramon (46) who had a full set of dentures went for a job for a gum infection, and when the dentist removed his gnashers he found a trapped tomato seed had taken root and sprouted through the roof of his mouth into his nose. Ramon, of Mexico City, promised to clean his teeth more often (D Sport, 20/3/95)

**CRUSH ON YOU.** Our mortality is a common contemporary legend theme and bizarre death a fortune favourite. Here's one. A young couple were crushed to death after they chose an old banger in a scrapyard for a late-night nookie session. The pair fell asleep in each other's arms on the back seat -- and next morning it was sucked into the jaws of a giant metal crusher with them still inside. The operator didn't hear the screams of Marlene Dufour (21) and Peter Menze (23) until it was too late. By the time he stopped the machine their bodies were mangled beyond recognition. The workman who was operating the crusher in Weimar, Germany, has not been named by cops (The Sport, 15/4/97)

**STUCK COUPLE.** Two newly-weds were stuck together on their wedding night at the home of the bride's parents -- when she had a vaginal spasm. Dr Kate Elliott (79) recalled the incident in a book about her work as a GP in Heanor, Derbyshire (D Sport, 7/12/00).

**BOING BONK.** Passion led to a bedspring piercing a girl's bottom during lovemaking somewhere in Surrey. Her boyfriend managed to get dressed and call emergency services. "The young lady was in considerable pain and very embarrassed," said a senior ambulance service source. "It was a very unusual rescue manoeuvre." (D Sport, 2/1/01)

**SURPRISE BIRTHDAY.** A more obscene than usual version of the traditional birthday surprise story is written up as true. But we know better. Here it is. Jilted Isabella Vasquez found a sexy pal to ease her lonely hours. She stripped off, smeared herself in dog food and lay on the floor stark naked while her pet poodle Pietro licked it off her boobs, but her fantasy came to an end when her family lay in wait to spring a 26th birthday surprise. They burst into her kitchen and found the two in a tangle. Isabella's mum Consuela (54) said: "My 60-year-old husband got the worst shock. He shouted an obscenity before collapsing in a dead faint." Subsequently animal welfare officials in Talca, Chile, ordered bank clerk Isabella never to see her pet again. Police could not prosecute her for bestiality because the dog had been neutered as a puppy (D Sport, 29/7/94)

**SCOOP.** Nigel Farndale writes about embarrassing death syndrome as fiction, but then in his claim for actual occurrences cites: "A few years ago, forest fires spread through the south of France; planes were used to scoop water up from a nearby lake and dump it on to the blazing pines. A snorkelling tourist was scooped up by one such plane and dropped from a great height on to one of the fires." (Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 5/11/00).

**ONE TRACK MIND.** Rail buff Kurt Bricker (41) planned on nicking a toy trainset, but was nabbed by Hamburg shop staff the next morning - still playing with it (Sunday People, 26/11/00).

**FIFTH DEGREE.** Sneaky New York detectives persuaded Roger Willis (23) to confess to a series of burglaries by putting a colander on his head and convincing him it was a lie-detector (D Sport, 27/12/00).

**STONE ME!** Signs used to put up in Yorkshire, supposedly, with the message "Do not throw stones at this sign." Now we have billboards illegally erected in parts of Montana, USA, protesting about beautiful country roads being ruined by .... billboards (D Sport, 24/4/01)

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM: A REVELATION by JOHN MICHELL (Gothic Image, £8.95)

Today the Old City of Jerusalem can be regarded as one large temple and a sanctuary of three global religions - Jewish, Christian and Islam. These compete among themselves, as any reader of the broadsheets knows, for the same sacred places with the authorities bound to keep the peace between rival religions and sects.

It has as Michell describes it a "messianic axis", a mythological path rather than a secular highway, and which will be familiar to the current generation of ley hunters as a spint path or way of the dead.

Michell believes that the rectangle he perceives, stretching across the newer, northern part of the Old City, forms the outline of a large-scale temple, being "a temple of the spirit, seen by the spiritual eye, invisible to the grosser faculties. It has no cult or priesthood of its own, no property or possessions, nor does it demand tribute from the separate religions in Jerusalem, to all of whom it gives protection."

Michell sees his revelation as prophecy and his long-term interest and interpretation from measures has been awesome to a near-innumerate like myself. Ever since the seminal work *The View Over Atlantis* he has doggedly pursued esotericism and this latest scholarly work is the latest jewel.

I'll admit that this book has somewhat baffled me despite close reading. As Michell says it's "a deep and mystical subject" and the 12 tribes connotation has passed me by.

I must admit my interest in the subject focuses upon the notions adumbrated in *VALIS*, a strange work by Philip K Dick, in which the character Horselover Fat had seen a two-world superimposition of Ancient Rome, circa 70CE, when the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, and U.S.A. 1974, a Black Iron Prison, where both were under attack. Dick's book draws in Gnosticism, Sirius star system extraterrestrial life, St Elmo's Fire and time dysfunctions. Also a cypher of revelation for Horselover Fat comes from seeing a doorway with the ratio 1:618034 to a Different Realm. Has this any relevance to Michell's 1:6 ratio on page 44?

Being venerated by the three great monotheistic religions, Jerusalem has been the bone of religious and political contention throughout the ages. Mayhem and violence has ranged from the decapitation of the city's populace during the Roman repression of the great Jewish rebellion in 70CE, to slaughter during the Crusades and lately Palestinian suicide bombers.

All sensible folk are agreed on the need for a compromise over Jerusalem as part of a wider Israeli-Arab peace. Perhaps Michell's book will go some way to legitimising its plural character, politically, demographically and spiritually.

ANCIENT ENERGIES OF THE EARTH  
by DAVI D COWAN with ANNE SILK (Thorsons, £9.99)

This book is based upon dowsing, which is no longer favoured in earth mystery circles, and seeks to convince the reader of a great many strange characteristics of energy fields. Also Cowan's concept of ley lines is dodgy.

His personal energy, both physically and mentally, is impressive but the conclusions leave me rather sceptical.

We have the St Michael Line resurrected alongside new alignments of earthquakes, which are frankly even more desperate and nonsensical.

Nevertheless, Cowan is a good raconteur and the book reads easily - take for instance the ghost steam train of Balquhiddier or the raising ladies' loo lavatory seat.

Albert Budden electropollution followers will find much resonance here and also covered are earthquakes, earthlights, ball lightning, geological anomalies, poltergeists, crop circles and Devil's footprints.

However, the book reminds me painfully of how I would have enjoyed a week's holiday with my wife around 12 years ago at Killin, Perthshire, if I had taken a map to visit the prehistoric sites around there where Cowan did his investigation. The hotel food was foul, but we did manage a couple of walks by Loch Tay, though never inquiring about antiquities such as Killin stone circle or the mysterious Glen Lyon of Anne Ross fame. We could even have walked to Fortingall to see its ancient yew and Pontius Pilate's supposed birthplace.

There are some gems here to dispel the gloom of weird alleged energies, and I was

intrigued to come upon discussion of "gravitic anomalies", where streams appear to flow uphill, with examples I had not come across previously, and the usual scientific claim that it's all optical illusion.

Rather enjoyable if look at with a sceptic's eye.



THE CELTIC WISDOM OF TREES by JANE GIFFORD (Godsfield Press. £16.99)

I first became aware of the subject of this book, the Beth Luis Nion tree calendar, or ogham alphabet, when I began editing The Ley Hunter magazine and a 1970 contributor wrote on the topic.

I had always enjoyed trees. My Uncle Fred presented a lilac tree to my parents for me when I was born (a regular custom 50 odd years ago?) and was sad when our two poplars were felled as my father deemed them a hazard.

When Plant a Tree in Seventy Three came around we bought one for outside, but it died and so did its replacement. Perhaps it was for the best as it would have blocked out the light. In winter and spring I can see rains through a gap between houses at the back, but in summer and autumn trees block my ferroequinological view.

But enough of me and my spurious credentials to appreciate this lavish, well-written and superbly illustrated celebration of trees and their lore.

Each tree in the calendar is described in a separate chapter. Take for instance the yew, where its age is a feature and the venerable example at Fortingall (mentioned several times in this and other recent FFs) gets a deserved mention. Each has notes on healing, health warning if apposite, mystical associations, ogham name, calendar date and Latin name.

Subtitled Mysteries, Magic and Medicine, here is everything you ever wanted or needed to know about such native species as the birch, ash, rowan and willow in an informative text and stunning photographs.

PUMPSAINT ZODIAC by IAN HENNING (Midwarp Press, Lampeter. £1.83, inc p&p.  
Cheques to Adam Stout at Glen Denys, Silian, Ceredigion, SA48 8LX.)

Back in the Eighties I reprinted and sold a pamphlet called THE WELSH TEMPLE OF THE ZODIAC by Lewis Edwards with an introduction about the author. Recently Ian Henning has chosen to revisit this terrestrial zodiac field and produced a booklet redolent of anarchic, conspiratorial and perhaps tongue-in-the-cheek ideas.

It revives an area of earth mysteries which has been generally neglected in recent years and is far more contentious than leys. I'm not too sure how serious Henning is when he states that freemasons "have their roots in construction, they are secretive, powerful and into symbolism. To them I would say, if we haven't really got a terrestrial zodiac: Can we have one?"

On the general subject of terrestrial zodiacs, Henning is in the "Hedgehog Song" predicament - "you know all the words, you know all the tune, but you never quite understood the song" - wanting to believe but not quite fully committed. Think of another song - "Elus & Butterfly."

At least he has a swipe at my old friend and E.M. Joe Bob Forrest for his pedantry.

Henning discusses various zodiacal signs in the landscape before reprinting Edwards' original piece of 1948, which appeared originally in Atlantean Research.

To think that Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's agent was into this. Though, maybe...

Shamanism and the Mystery Lines, by Paul Devereux, published by Foulsham/Quantum, £9.99  
Reviewed by Jimmy Goddard

Paul Devereux is a researcher who has done much interesting work in a number of fields, but unfortunately his extreme exclusionist attitude is irritating and damaging to the subject. Whatever he has ever found must, it seems, always replace entirely all other ideas and work, with a stronger sense of heresy than any religion.

He found a number of leys associated with holy hills, and ley centres or nodal points of several leys were ruled out - even though they have been found in all areas in which ley hunters have worked. He discovered light phenomena associated with earth stress and fault lines - and pronounced this the answer to all UFO sightings, even constructing complex explanations for structured craft seen. He found that there were alignments associated with death rituals - and excluded all ideas of energy currents in the leys, in spite of all the evidence that has built up over the years.

All these feature in this book - all interesting and worthwhile discoveries, but their value reduced by his use of them to devalue the ideas and work of others. Finally, the book culminates in the idea (once again well-researched) that the alignments have association with shamanic spirit flight, eliminating (to him) all previous ideas about the leys as naive fantasies, including Alfred Watkins' original concept of the ley system - and despite the crucial importance of out-of-the-body travel to his theory, even denies the reality of this.

The book is well worth having for its fascinating information on alignments worldwide, from the cursuses to the ancient American aligned structures, but would be infinitely better without his rabid exclusionism. Despite Paul Devereux, what has been found about leys in the past forty years is that they form a system of landscape alignments, evidently world-wide, of which some at least (e.g., the St. Michael Line and the E-Line) are earth-circling. They seem to be lines of an unknown form of energy, pulsing according to the time of day, with widths varying and discernible by dowsing, doubling in width for a short time around sunrise and sunset. They also seem to represent a self-repairing system in which buildings associated with worship of all kinds seem to be important and which are caused to be subconsciously sited on the energy streams.

Hear Tony Wedd of Chiddingstone, who brought the ley subject out of obscurity in the 1960s, speak on these subjects on the Internet at:

<http://members.netscapeonline.co.uk/jimgddrd/tonywedd/extrasci.htm>

I utterly repudiate the reviewer's charge that I exhibit "rabid exclusionism". Instead of making such generalised accusations, it would be more productive for Jimmy to state exactly what it is he feels I exclude, and precisely why he disagrees with my reasons. Indeed, it is surely not about exclusionism, but about *reassessment* - there is a huge difference. I have been heavily engaged for 34 years in the earth mysteries field -

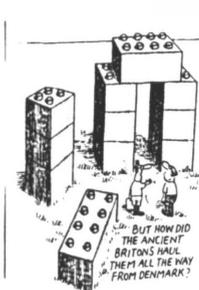
it has been my full-time day job for 14 years - and if I state that some things are a sham within its remit I do so on the basis of detailed study, knowledge and experience, not due to some casual prejudice. To not grow and mature over the years as one's knowledge-base increases, to not accrue deeper insight with the passing of the years, is against the laws of nature as far as I am concerned. We are so privileged to be able to consider earth mysteries topics, considering that most of the rest of the world's population doesn't know where its next meal is coming from and doesn't have the leisure or means to dally with such matters. For us then to be so self-indulgent as to cocoon ourselves in modern myths past their shelf-life is inexcusable in my view. I want to honour the actual legacy of ancient and traditional peoples, and learn from it, not to stuff myself with the mind-candy of modern beliefs that must never be re-

assessed. The New Age cultish adherence as apparently championed by Jimmy has become a new establishment whose tenets must never be questioned, it seems.

Further, I have to say that it seems as if Jimmy's prejudices get in the way of his comprehension. So, for example, I do *not* deny the reality of the out-of-body experience: the experience is real enough, as I know personally. I merely question what its true nature is (and right now I'm not sure). And my view regarding UFOs is considerably more complex than the caricature he presents - just read UFOs and UFOLOGY to confirm that. Anyone who truly *reads* my books, such as the recently published THE SACRED PLACE, will know that Jimmy's sweeping indictments of me are a crude misrepresentation.



Paul Devereux



## IN BRIEF

Having studied architecture for A-level art, it is a subject which I have since enjoyed and fully endorse. Nigel Pennick's thesis on the spiritual relationship of humans to their true buildings. Where I holiday, Portugal's Algarve, there is a dramatic division between the towering new hotels and the ancient housing with each building having a special chimney. On Building in the European Tradition explores themes relating to tried and tested techniques, to building materials and diminution of craftsmanship (£1.10 from N. Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD).

Any idea who for the past decade has been America's best-selling poet? Remarkably eight centuries after his death it's Jalalu'ddin Rumi. Lavish is the word for The Illustrated Rumi, splendid illustrations in the Sufi and Islamic tradition going with the mystic's stories, poems and parables (Thorsons, £18.99). I recently dreamt I was in the sea with a big leatherback turtle. Waking and an hour later, I opened my post to find contributor John Tait had sent me some clippings, one of which was of a dead, washed-up leatherback turtle. Yes, Synchronicity: Meaningful Coincidences and the Story of Your Life has resonances from such a simple coincidence to prophetic dreams. Deike Begg teaches how to differentiate between hunches and intuitive insight, how synchronicities are our signposts and get our attention, and the best in various contexts (Thorsons, £6.99). Following his Zen Guitar and Zen Computer, Philip Toshio Sudo has turned his attention to Zen Sex, and 'riding your naked lover tonight, sing your mating song.' In zen sex, you must 'kiss your lover's mouth throughout intercourse, feel the circle created.' Never mind the deeper penetration of doggie style, a job job's definitely out? Actually no. 'Cunnilingus could end a man's spiritual searching.' Seriously there is much wisdom here (Thorsons, £14.99).

In The Enneagram, Karen Webb describes nine personality types and seeks to help psychological or spiritual development, or bridge the gap between them (Thorsons, £5.99); in Thorsons' way of series comes Reincarnation, where Judy Hall gives evidence for and against, plus answering other questions on the subject, while Vivianne Crowley treads the magical path that is Wicca, giving all the information you need to gain an in-depth knowledge of witchcraft religion (both £7.99).

There can't be much wrong with an author who gets her tits out in her book and espouses the drinking of mead. There again feisty Fione Home is managed by the same company which promotes Kylie Minogue and is Australian author of Witch: A Magickal Journey -- A guide to modern witchcraft for today (Thorsons Directions for Life, £14.99). I don't want to sound too cynical and we are living in the modern world, so cyber-sorcery and making magick on the net had to come. The publicity describes her as "funky" and "extremely cool". She has four tattoos, a stud through her chin and looks as fit as a butcher's dog. Oh, and the book's pretty entertaining, but believe this and you'll believe anything. Hardback with colour pictures. More boobs on display than you get in an average FF.

## MAGAZINES

LETTERS TO AMBROSE MERTON. Q. Folklore miscellany. £7.50 for 4. Payable to David Cornwell, Psychology Section, Dept. of Educational Studies, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP. No. 23. Paul Screeton on David Beckham's drastic haircut change connected to a Hartlepool nits panic; luck-bringing significance in footballers' rituals; apostrophewatch; instructions for a happy life; Glasgow Herald diary items. No. 24. Here described as "commentary" (I've wondered why the mag does not have the usual readers' column), David Sivier discusses hererosexual U.S. astronauts having gay sex in orbit and "real" genetic experiments on chickens. Long ago when I was at school a triangle had three sides and points, but here a Sawney Bean "death triangle" is from "Ayr to Ballantrae." Cuttings and reviews.

FORTEAN TIMES. Newsstand. £2.70. No. 139. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe review the Glozel archaeological mystery, bring in Rennes-le-Chateau, Antarctica, Oak Island Money Pit and Templars, which if not convincing is intriguing. Plus Hitler's crackers quack; King Arthur buried in Croatia; Noah's Ark fever; Dracula hammered; ancient skull debate. No. 140. Dogon tribe's Siriusknowledge demystified; Haiti voodoo at close quarters; U.S. presidential content conspiracies; crop circles; earthquake predictors; time vortex shifts; ABCs; el chupacabras wave; bigfoot. No. 141. Extremely gripping article by Patrick Harpur on persons in the landscape who encounter an insurmountable panic; all you'll ever need to know about fungal fairy rings; role of exotic travel in religious movements' foundation myths; vanishing headless ghosts; tips on Fortean research; Craig Shergold update. No. 142. Reports on witch bottles; long and peculiar history of ghost aircraft; being pixie-led (including in a car); UFOs; Beckenham marsupial. No. 143. Meteors' quick transition from scientific heresy to universal acceptance; aerial antics in the year 1783; Frederick Bligh Bond at Glastonbury; 15th century gargoyles with apparent mobile phone; bizarre ramblings from Namia (actually Isle of Wight); sky "creatures" reassessed. No. 144. Contacts between ancient Mediterranean civilisations and the north of Europe; ghost lights, particularly the new "orb" phenomenon, captured on film; artist, visionary and magician Auston Osman Spare. No. 145. "I am a rock, and a rock feels no pain" incorrectly transcribed and attributed by Barry Baldwin to Peter and Gordon when it was Paul Simon, later Simon and Garfunkel. Strange medical syndromes; pig-faced women; infrasounds; electrogravitics; stigmata; Stonehenge and Avebury; dinosaur hunt. No. 146 Jan Bondeson's account of incorrect diagnosis of death argues that "well-documented accounts seem indistinguishable from contemporary 'urban legends'" within the larger context of being buried alive; ABC survey 2000; Christ and others where death apparently induce by mandrake is followed by resurrection; Rennes mystery and Christian relics; bizarre magical rites on Anglesey witnessed; full moon weirdness; demythologising Count St Germain; Templar stone riddle. Plus each issue: reviews, readers' letters and irreverent diaries.

MAGONIA. Q. £5. Cheques payable to John Rimmer. Address: John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB. No. 73. Long ago a bit of wisdom I read was some pundit who wrote that he most admired anyone who had the honesty to admit "I don't know." Garth J Medway ends a commentary of the Brookesmith one-sided debate in Fortean Times by doing just this. Editors won't encourage this seemingly weak and defeatist attitude and readers expect an argument one way or another, even if they disagree. "The case for fence-sitting" (concluded 74) is a healthy reaction and one I endorse, as having seen what appeared to be structured alien craft on several occasions, I still cannot embrace the ETH or abduction scenarios. Meanwhile, David Sivier suggests "the literature of alien abduction, like this antiquarian pom, performs exactly the same social function: it documents and promotes an increasingly radical alienation from the state" or basically he reassures most abductees that their sexual or emotional problems do not stem from abuse by aliens. No. 74. Travis Walton abduction case and Victorian ghost story deconstructed. Regular features being back page diary, letters and reviews.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. 5 issues for £5. Payable to 'NUFON'. Address: 1 Hallsteads Close, Dove Holes, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8BS. No. 185. In her editorial, Jenny Randles sees a new breed of objectivity paving the way to "stunning revelations soon to come"; latest crop circle teatouring, with Colin Wilson castigated. Usual features are: news, major articles elsewhere, book reviews, UFO investigations.

THE WISENT. Magazine of the Library of the European Tradition. Sporadic. No price. From N Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD. Prolific Nigel Pennick is back editing a small mag as he did so splendidly particularly in the seventies. Articles on dancing with broomsticks; Cesare Ripa's contributions to formalising the European iconological tradition; the European goddess Zisa. Catalogue of publications.

**NORTHERN EARTH.** Q. £6.50 for 4. Cheques payable to Northern Earth Mysteries Group. From 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks., HX7 5NP. No. 84. Northern labyrinths; Mayburgh non-confrontation; 1997 The Ley Hunter moot revisited; Big Grey Man of Ben MacDhui; The Bible Code commentaries. No. 85. Sacred space and spiritual dimension questioned; call for misrule holiday on April 1, Mayburgh orientation; climbing Rivington Pike as a Good Friday recent tradition. Usual features being archaeological round-up, book reviews, editor's musings, letters, events.

**AMSKAYA.** Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to J Goddard at 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. No. 45. Editor Jimmy Goddard argues that other planets in our solar system are inhabited by basically human space visitors. The open communication which seemed so possible in the 1950s was crushed by contactees being threatened by a shadowy group of Earth people; abductees not being so harassed. The 'Silence Group' and our perception of the 'greys' has led to real space people seemingly withdrawing. Jimmy reproduces an account by Reinhold Schmidt (strange how his alien contact spoke English with a German accent) of his being invited aboard a spacecraft at Kearney (interestingly for geomants this being the exact centre of the United States). Two personal cigar-shaped craft seen by Jimmy in 1999. No. 46. Rundown of aerial cigar-shaped craft seen by the editor and others. German boy's recollection of being contacted and taken aboard a flying saucer when aged 14 in 1957. Reprinted tribute by Tony Wedd to Sixties ufologist Philip Rodgers. Appeal for whereabouts of Silpho Moor saucer. No. 47. Tony Wedd's 1970 London talk on the Silpho Moor saucer/disc/vehicle and how he handled it at a Scarborough solicitor's, plus transcript of the message it contained. Wedd's 'lost' manuscript of Earth Men, Space Men located. Was Tunguska explosion the crash of an intergalactical spacecraft? No. 48. Jimmy reports a Holiday TV programme on where Desmond Leslie (co-author with George Adamski of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*) lives, Castle Leslie, and which show an alleged Venusian's footprint. Plus letter from Leslie and pieces on his actress wife Agnes Bemelle regarding UFOs. Mars canals "proven."

\*\* Students are enrolling for classes to study flying saucers and how to greet and communicate with visitors from outer space. Claude Dupier, spokesman for the college in Lille, France, said: "It is our most popular course. We have a two-year waiting list." (*D Sport*, 27/10/99).

\*\* Meanwhile, Susan Clark took up the Topless Challenge to shut her boyfriend up. Why should the 36C-26-34 body interest us here? Just that above her left breast there is a tattoo of an Adamski-style flying saucer' (*D Sport*, 24/11/98).

**TOUCHSTONE.** Irregular newsletter of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Same address and price as Amskaya (above). No. 54. Editor goes cycling checking leys and finds a museum cum library remarkably architecturally like a flying saucer. He also checks out Cambs and Hants leys. No. 55. Jimmy locates a ley from Buckingham Palace to Weybridge. Reprint of Anthony Roberts' article on the Monk's Ford ley in Somerset (*The Ley Hunter*, June, 1971) following Jimmy's visit and full agreement with Tony. Plus letters, notes and news.

**MIDWESTERN EPIGRAPHIC JOURNAL** \$15 from 3653 Big Run Road, Grove City, OH, 43123, U.S.A. Vol. 12/13. Memorials to the late Don Cyr include "A Tribute to Donald L Cyr" by Paul Screeton, written shortly before his sad death.

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References: \* Page 6, Pub Spy, Hartlepool Mail, 6/1/01; \* Page 6, employee's revenge, loaded food supplement with April 1995 issue; \* Pages 7-9, Settle-Carlisle line folklore, *The Labyrinth*, issue 3, 2000.

## STOP PRESS

**FORTINGALL YEW** (passim). Europe's oldest living thing needs no introduction and is still in fine fettle for a 5,000-year-old. Now foresters have taken cuttings and it is hoped to grow dozens of individual yew trees in arboreta and church grounds across the country (*The Scotsman*, 24/2/00. cr. Dr A S L Rae) That article and another both mention the legend of Pontius Pilate being born at a Roman encampment here. However, one piece casts doubt on the Judean governor's birthplace. "It is also unlikely given that the Roman occupation of Scotland did not start until AD80!" comments Prof Jill Harris, of St Andrew's University. Nevertheless the journalist is more sanguine: "Whatever the story - and someone must have started it ... Perhaps the Young Pilate was one of the boys who broke the famous yew's trunk." (*The Courier & Advertiser*, 24/2/00. cr. Dr A S L Rae?)