

# FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

No.  
46

## Jesus Christ

..by David Bailey and Damien Hirst



THIS naked woman on a cross with a barbed wire crown is part of Damien Hirst's controversial new series of works inspired by the last hours of Christ.

Jesus is Stripped is a collaboration between the shock artist and photographer David Bailey.

Also in their Stations of the Cross collection is a picture of a crucifix littered with cigarette butts, entitled Jesus Dies on the Cross.

The images, at the Gagosian Gallery, Central London, are expected to fetch about £15,000 each. The gallery said: "Bailey and Hirst have produced an engaging, visceral body of provocative images."



### Outrage at topless babe on a cross

RELIGIOUS groups have slammed a saucy fashion advert showing a topless model draped on a cross outside a famous cathedral.

The controversial ad shows a stunna baring her hot cross buns to promote a new range of designer T-shirts released this Easter.

The caption for the ad — designed by internet fashion company BDBX — reads: "Don't sacrifice your style."

But church leaders in Liverpool are livid that the city's Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral was used as a back-drop for the marketing stunt.

Monsignor Peter Cookson, dean of the cathedral, said: "I've never seen anything as outrageous. It is blasphemous."

A BDBX spokesman said: "Liverpool's the city of culture. We thought it was appropriate."

FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly urban belief tales, ancient and modern traditions and lore, plus contemporary culture. It is edited and published by Paul Screeton. Address is 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, TS25 2AT. Subscription for three issues is £6, payable to P. Screeton (NOT Folklore Frontiers). We can now be contacted at: [Pauline.screeton@ntlworld.co.uk](mailto:Pauline.screeton@ntlworld.co.uk) If your subscription expires with this issue an X will appear on the line below

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THE DIARY . . . . . THE DIARY . . . . . THE DIARY

**APOLOGIES** for the schedule continuing to slip, but a protracted illness including a period in hospital has slowed all manner of aspects of my life. With F.F. I've again chosen to go for self-printing and all the drawbacks in illustration ability. There's still the usual mix of articles and round-ups of particular topics.

**THE COVER** this issue is an amalgam of "What a way to spend Easter -- BritArt style" and an advert campaign to see who could be offended or titilated. Top story and illustration appeared in D, Mirror, 1/5/04; lower in D. Sport, undated 04. Hirst's co-created blasphemy might explain the blaze which mercifully rid us some of the excesses of modern art -- see modern art catastrophes article in this issue.

**THE REPRINT** of a 1999 article of James Hewitt complements last issue's feature article and was selected because the paternity issue just won't go away. For instance, top marks to the American hack who nobbled Hewitt at the premiere of "Starsky and Hutch". Just as the upper-class cad was whizzing along the red carpet, the interrogator stopped him with the question: "Is Harry your son?" (Scurra column, D. Mirror, 16/3/04)

**FLYING SCOTSMAN** disgraced itself during a run to Doncaster on May 27 in preparation for its scheduled majestic entrance into York on May 29 for the celebration of 200 years of steam traction. Mechanical failure led to it arriving at Yorkfest on a road haulage company's low-loader. It was recently bought for the National Railway Museum through a £1.8m grant, public donations and Sir Richard Branson's chequebook for more than £3.2m, with money left in the kitty for a complete overhaul.

In F.F.'s Articles Elsewhere section this issue, I debate its dubious claim to being the world's most famous locomotive. I've since come across another dent in its prestige and claim to fame. In a 75th anniversary tribute to Sir Nigel Gresley's A3s, Keith Farr writes: "Although not at the time the best Top Shed A1, Flying Scotsman was selected for a high-speed trial from King's Cross to Leeds and back on November 30, 1934. With just four coaches, Soke summit was passed northbound at an unprecedented 81mph. Returning with six vehicles, 100mph was officially claimed by the LNER down Stokes bank, although (timekeeper par excellence -- FF editor) Cecil J. Allen recorded only 98. Driver Sparshatt and fireman Webster were in charge of No. 4472 for the entire record-breaking 372-mile return marathon." (The Railway Magazine, November, 1997)

**THE BLIND BEGGAR** pub in Whitechapel, east London, immortalised as the place where the late Ronnie Kray shot dead rival gangster Georg Cornell is up for sale at £125,000. One of the bullets is said to have ricocheted off the bar and into the jukebox. When the track became stuck. legend has it that Kray grinned, and said: "Well, the sun ain't gonna shine for him anymore." (The Time, 27/3/04)

# Greenhouse Hyperbole

By Paul Screeton

HERE it is -- another global warming warning. This time to our wildlife and an estimate that more than one million species worldwide will be wiped out during the next 50 years. Climate change being a bigger threat than terrorism!

Pretty (facially and dim) Ruki Sayid claims our warmer climate has boosted the breeding of a "potentially-deadly" scorpion species in Kent. She specifically points to the one-inch long, yellow-tailed British variety at the brickworks around Sheerness docks (D. Mirror, 18/5/2004).

Zoologist Bernard Betts estimated a colony of 50,000 could exist when interviewed in the 1990s. Invertebrate expert David Rushen regards the U.K. species, *Euscorpius flavicaudus*, as harmless and capable of causing no more serious a threat than a pin prick (D. Telegraph Weekend, 17/2/96).

Meanwhile, Sayid stated others have been found in "Harwich, Pinner and Ongar Underground station." The latter being a contentious issue as despite the beasts' ability to withstand more than 200 times the amount of radiation humans can stand and go without water for more than a year, a fire underneath the platform at Ongar destroyed its colony. Article writer Robert Verkaik said Betts claimed that some press coverage stirred up bad feeling by making out that he had "planted" tropical ones there. "It was so ridiculous I didn't bother challenging the reports," he said. As I recall, there was a rumour that the insects had been introduced deliberately in an unsuccessful bid to have the station declared a site of special scientific interest in a move to reverse a decision to close the station and its Tube branch line.

(As an aside, while composing this article, I watched a BBC portrait of Cher in which an interviewee discussing the singer/actress' fortitude reckoned that after a nuclear holocaust all that would be left was "cockroaches and Cher." (BBC 1, 11-30pm, 15/5/04).

Another journalist, Simon Hoggart, was collecting similar scare stories, quoting a "plague of caterpillars is connected to global warming" from the previous week's Telegraph. Sayid's litany of many more juicy threats such as Great White sharks, Portuguese man o' war jellyfish, tuna, turtles, seahorses and so on, might have sounded more convincing if this sub-tropical scenario were built upon more substantial foundations.

Spoilsport Hoggart asked if readers knew that the "father and onlie begetter of the greenhouse effect, Roger Revelle, changed his mind before his death last year? He recanted, saying: 'The scientific base for greenhouse warming is too uncertain to justify drastic action at this time. There is little risk in delaying policy responses'." Of course, this is not widely known as it challenges the current paradigm of climate change. Doom-mongers happily ignore material which contradicts their fateful apocalypse.

My mate Harry got angry about the U.S. rotting slopbucket hulks of discarded warships towed across the Atlantic to be broken up a mile or so from where we were chatting in Seaton Carew's Marine Hotel (coincidentally a Daily Telegraph reporter interviewed me with Harry and his son Les on this very subject for his Saturday vox pop column -- although on this one occasion it never appeared). Harry also wanted to know how Greenpeace got the money to challenge the planned demolition of tis "ghost fleet" of scrap metal. Hoggart had the answer: "there seems to be a suspicion that if we were told the truth, we would all relax and stop doing what the militant ecologists tell us -- and stop sending them money. So we can't be allowed to hear it." (The Observer, 12/7/92)

Those scorpions may not sting your body, but beware "The Sting" from the environmental lobby greedily eyeing your wallet.

# Salad & Undressing

By Paul Screeton

"THERE'S been a lot of fuss about bags of salads recently," wrote Xanthe Clay (D. Telegraph, 22/5/04). As in many homes, we find these a time-saving device, "but now horror stories have emerged about this innocent, healthy-looking staple – stories of exploited, grotesquely under-paid workforces preparing the salads with dubious hygiene: of salmonella, E coli and listeria lurking in the bags."

In the same weekend section of the Telegraph that day, Germaine Greer also touched upon vegetables and ritual, worth for its folkloric implications quoting in full: "Some sources tell that the grieving Venus laid the dead Adonis in a bed of lettuce, as is only fitting for a spring vegetation god mown down in his juvenile beauty, even if it does make it seem that in death he had become a salad, which is also typical of the vein of parody that runs through his cult. At the vernal equinox, the ladies of ancient Greece used to plant fast-growing annuals in shallow earthen bowls and place them on their rooftops, where they grew apace for a few days before collapsing and dying of thirst, which was their way of celebrating the boy-god. The 'Gardens of Adonis' ritual must have been meant to remind the lady of the house that the sexual attractions of the immature male were of short duration and she had better content herself with the less exciting attentions of the head of the household."

Same day's Telegraph weekend hostelry column described pub grub at the Star Inn, near Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire, without mentioning salads, though there is a stuffed hare with deer antlers gummed to its head (I've seen a picture of this or similar somewhere).

By more synchronicity, Adam Nicolson's commentary column had him deplore salads but praise salad dressing. He found "salad, like 99 per cent of naked bodies, is in that way deeply disturbing." He goes on, "Leighton, the most gifted of all English painters of the human figure, used to paint his models nude and then clothe them on the canvas, painting on those marvellous fabrics, bringing about a kind of transformational beauty, the acculturating opposite of the striptease."

This reminded me of a conversation partially overheard conversation last year at the bar in Seaton Carew's Marine Hotel. A stranger was describing a men-only special evening in North Berwick, near Edinburgh, where for reasons I missed (I think it was a celebration of an eccentric poet who wrote verses in reverse order). At this do, firstly the usual closing highlight of the evening, the stripper, appeared naked and proceeded to slowly get dressed in front of the male audience. Then in this order they tucked into the nosh: coffee and mints, cheese and biscuits, desserts, main course and soup. Bit like a friend of ours whose children's parties began with jelly or blancmange.

Nicolson also touched upon the supermarket health/moral panics this article began with, seeing "salad leaves drenched in chlorine, deprived because the way in which they are packed of much of their goodness, imported from the hideous poly-tunnel cities of southern Spain, where migrant African workers survive virtually enslaved: all of this is what the hunger for lovely available, bright-green, washed rawbess-in-a-bag now feeds off."

At least as I nibble rocket and chives at home I do so with a clear conscience. I don't regard my horticultural endeavours as self-exploitative.

# Auto-destructive Art

By Paul Screeton

WHEN millions of pounds worth of controversial BritArt was destroyed in a fire at the Momart warehouse in east London, its detractors gleefully tipped the new pile of ashes as an early contender for the Turner Prize.

I know about "art arson" as a former girlfriend, Moira Twist, was pictured on the front page of Hartlepool's evening newspaper setting fire to rubbish in a field and boasting it was "auto-destructive" art. (FF42:5)

Such notorious "con artists" as Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin had works lost, as was Jake and Dinos Chapman's "Hell", commissioned for £500,000 by Charles "I'm not one of those who think that painting has died" Saatchi. Distraught reclusive millionaire Saatchi said: "I feel pretty sick. This is probably the worst thing one could imagine happening." Emin said: "It is a tragedy for British culture that so much art was destroyed." A spokesman for Hirst, who lost 16 "paintings", said: "Damien is upset about it but the important thing is that at least no lives were lost." (D. Mirror, 27/5/04)

The fire is believed to have been accelerated by acetylene cylinders that exploded frequently, keeping fire crews at bay. An insurance assessor said that the blaze had been so ferocious that it might be impossible to tell whether it was an accident or had been started deliberately. (The Times, 29/5/04)

They say great events cast their shadows before them. The cover of FF shows Hirst acting in shock mode with a crucified bare-breasted black woman wearing a crown of thorns, and as if taunting the Gods to go one better, John Hind published a top five of modern art catastrophes, where the fire in Leyton would see it take over the top spot. The previous "tragedies" were:

1. FREUD IN THE CRUSHER. A plant study by Lucian Freud, valued at £100,000, arrived for auction in 2000 at Sotheb's in London. Believing the cast the painting was in to be empty, two ports threw it into a rubbish crusher. A spokesman said: "It's an extremely unfortunate situation."
2. SACHS IN A DUSTCART. Among her art collection the actress Gina Gershon had two bullet-ridden phone books -- a work by the conceptualist Tom Sachs -- valued at £50,000. Returning from a trip, she discovered her maid had thrown them out and placed two new phone books on the sideboard. "There was nothing I could do but weep," said Gershon.
3. HIRST IN BIN-BAGS. For his show "painting by Numbers" Damien Hirst constructed an installation, representing an artist's studio environment, in the window of the Eyestorm Gallery in London. The morning after it was finished a cleaner named Emmanuel Asare arrived for work, sighed and cleared the "debris" valued at £10,000 into bin-bags. Hirst said: "Fantastic, very funny."
4. BEUYS IN A BUCKET. "Greasy Corner", a controversial work worth £17,000 by Joseph Beuys took the form of butter attached to a wall in Dusseldorf State Academy. A team of new cleaners scraped it all off into buckets. Said Beuys's protegee Johannes Stuettgen: "I'll sue."
5. KERRIGAN IN THE SCRAPYARD. The artist Colin Kerrigan, having told his 72-year-old Brentford neighbour that he hoped to tidy up his back garden soon, returned from holiday to discover the man had got a passing rag and bone man to take away all Kerrigan's conceptual metal sculptures on a cart. "I find the whole thing incomprehensible," said Kerrigan. (Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 4/4/04)

Meanwhile, Saatchi has been showing his New Blood anniversary exhibition, where Tim Noble and Sue Webster's cartoon-style neon figures are covered with graffiti; one has "angry bitch" and "good shag" scrawled, while the other has "sod off" and "Wanker." (The Times artsreview, 20/5/04) Talking of which, Newcastle University student Ben Ashton invited a select group to watch him masturbating -- and he filmed the ten-minute display to show to his tutors. But Father Terry Drainey, Rector of Ushaw College, Durham, asked: "Is it artistically acceptable -- never mind morally? Is that art? I would say this guy needs help." (D. Sport, 17/5/04)

# Hopping Mad at Frogs

By Paul Screeton

STEPHEN POPE had advice for troubled record company Chrysalis, suggesting it might usefully re-examine its frogs budget. New band Stup's video required the label to fork out for 1,000 of the amphibia as an epic "plague" backdrop for the group's single "Charlton Heston". "Animal lovers may have been distressed to learn that cannibalism and a clumsy foot claimed the lives of five of them – survivors either being released or retired to stud in Norfolk," concluded Pope. (Independent, 15/7/88)

In a wider slaughter, a frog which swallowed a gold chain that a woman bather had left on a river bank led to a massacre of many frogs in south-west India. Relations of the woman in Thannermukkom, a village in Kerala state, caught the frogs and slit their bellies in search of the 16-gram chain after the frog that swallowed the trinket popped back into the water. The Hindu newspaper reported. They found the chain in the belly of the 68th frog. (Aberdeen Press & Journal, 31/10/92)

Oregon's newest state park won't need artificial lighting: it will glow in the dark <sup>is</sup>unaided. That was the word in Rainier, where locals were astonished at plans to turn Portland General Electric's Trojan nuclear plant into a recreation area for camping and fishing. "Oregonians have always believed that Trojan was the inspiration for the nuclear plant on "The Simpsons". Creator Matt Groening grew up 40 miles to the south and apocryphal tales of eight-legged frogs in the lake are not too far from the mutant fish Marge Simpson serves for dinner," went the lurid story. (The Times, 21/8/99) Another mutation tale with little credence claimed Oxford University experts believed a common green frog that had turned out red probably had a fright when it was a tadpole. (D. Star, Sun, 28/12/84)

On a personal note, this year a xanthistic (that's yellow to you) and strangely angular frog was almost shredded as my wife cut the back lawn. In previous years we would be revisited by a red, or rather non-pigmented, frog where the colouration is actually an illusion caused by the blood coursing through its veins. Whenever I mention odd migrants to my pond, we ponder whether they have any connection with Hartlepool nuclear power station around one mile away.

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## Brown Willy, Balls, Buttock & Brokenwind

By Paul Screeton

DOM LOWE has compiled an A to Z of Britain's rudest place names from Airy Point, Devedon, to Wylliholes, Scotland, after spending hours scouring hundreds of maps with a magnifying glass to find the lewd locations.

But before looking closer at Dom's research, remember last issue residents of Beavers Crack were campaigning for a name change. However, residents of Hooker are so proud of the name they were holding a competition to find the best one-liner joke about their tiny town in Oklahoma (D. Sport, 12/12/03). While a village called Upyor Crack, in northern Siberia, is changing its names after dozens of amazed English-speaking tourists have nicked the sign over the years (D. Sport, 24/3/04).

Dom's favourites include Lord Hereford's Knob, Tittie Hill and Rotton Bottom. He began his hobby when he spotted Fulking Hill, near Brighton, during a school geography lesson, and now has more than 70 titilating titles. Dom, 36, said: "Some people will think it's sad, but everyone who sees my rude map has a laugh and it's great fun." He now intends researching the meanings behind centuries-old names such as Cornwall's Brown Willy and Cumbria's Wide Open Dykes. (The Sun, 15/3/99)

# 'His artillery hangs halfway to his knees'

DAILY SPORT Tuesday, August 31, 1999

**LOVE rat James Hewitt wants to make even more money selling sizzlin' sex secrets about his six-year fling with Princess Diana.**

**But today we reveal the skeletons in his closet:**

**Q: How did he lose his virginity?**

**A:** He was seduced by childhood pal Sarah Portley, who was 27 when she took 19-year-old James to bed.

She visited him in Germany when he was in the Army. They shagged five times a night in a hotel — and it wasn't just missionary. She even carried on seeing him after she married.

Since then he has become a serial womaniser and brags he's had thousands of women.

He's even had three in one day. He dumped cosmetic beauty queen Cindy Jackson for Kate Simon, 50, estranged wife of the multi-millionaire behind the Monsoon clothing chain.

He two-timed fiancée Anna Ferretti with Spanish heiress Sandra Ybarra.

He's also bedded ex-Page 3 girl Jilly Johnson, weather girl Sally Faber, divorcee Maggie Moore, Lucy Kennedy, Sophie Von Rheden, Camilla Courage and Emma Stewardson.

**Q: Didn't Cindy Jackson have a chequered past?**

**A:** She lost her virginity in the back of a car with a farm boy at 18 and once bonked on top of a skyscraper, "in full view of a sleeping city". She spent £50,000 on ops to improve her appearance.

**Q: Hasn't he got a 10-inch manhood?**

**A:** There were rumours that Diana's letters refer to it. His friends call it "his artillery". Pals in the Army said that when soft, his willy dangles halfway to his knees.

Caroline Kemp, press officer for a Bond Street fashion store said it was too big for her.

**Q: What's he like in bed?**

**A:** Cindy said that as an ex-Army major, he always took the lead. He isn't into

By DEBBIE MANLEY

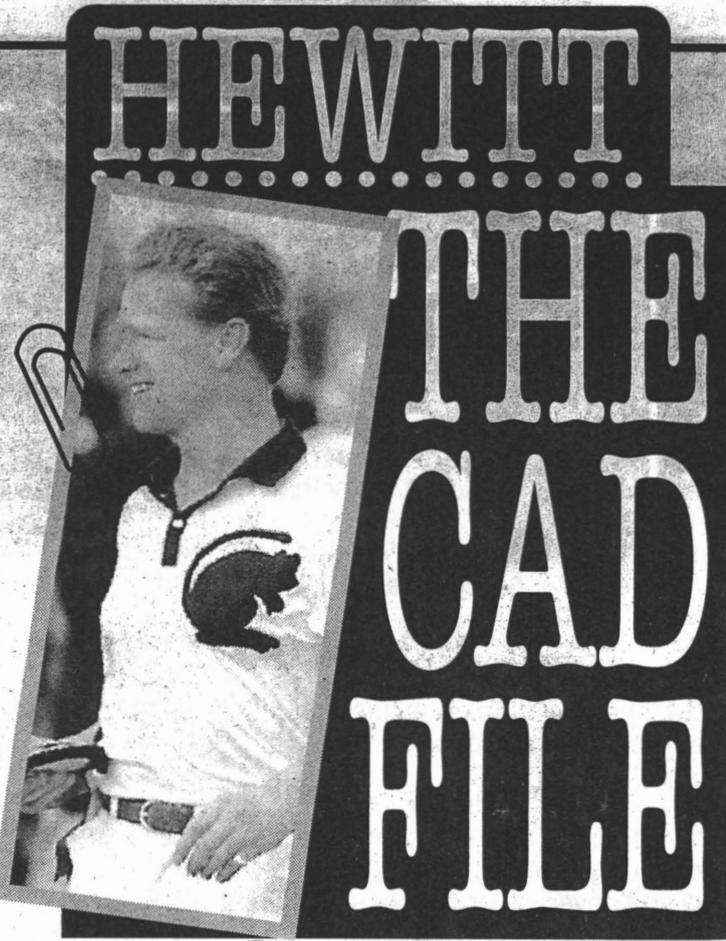
anything kinky but has great stamina.

But Anna Ferretti said he only lasted as long as it took to boil an egg — three minutes!

She said he had a great body but didn't know what to do with it. She branded him a selfish lover.

**Q: But why has he been seeing a prostitute for four years?**

**A:** He pays up to £150 a time for sex and massage.



**plaining about?**

**A:** He believes he's been wronged and misunderstood. He said: "Mass murderers and child abusers get a better press than I do."

**Q: Are there any more stories he can tell about Diana?**

**A:** Anna Pasternak's book Princess In Love stopped at the bedroom door. Hewitt threatened to reveal how he gave Di her first orgasm and how he shagged her in a swimming pool, at Athorp and at Highgrove. But then so could MI5.

They apparently filmed Diana and Hewitt bonking in his back garden. (see below)

Hewitt liked playing sex games in bed and asked her to describe a lesbo fantasy. She gave him 10 out of 10 in the sack.

**Q: Hasn't he got a**

**drink problem?**

**A:** Yes, he confessed last year that alcohol enabled him to cope with his fear and anger — and helped him sleep.

When his 62 love letters from Diana were stolen he said he was so depressed he considered shooting himself.

**Q: What's he com-**



Di's coat slips away and they collapse to the ground in a red-hot clinch



# NEWSLINES

STAFF at national bar group Brannigans gave drunken revellers free hangover kits as they left Christmas parties to help them recover for work the next day. The Back-to-Work bags included energy tablets, a bottle of water, headache pills, a voucher for a free bacon sandwich and even an alarm clock. (D. Sport, 3/12/03) Earlier in the year the same tabloid's Deano's World column had another idea. "As a chap who has woken with more than his fair share of hangovers, I feel well placed to offer my own remedy. Paracetamol, aspirin, a fry-up, Im Bru -- they all work to an extent. But nothing beats a good old wank to shake off the beer blues." (D. Sport, 28/8/03) That great imbibor and author Kingsley Amis had much to say on alcohol, its effects and, for that matter, Patsy Palmer and her Five Friends. Sex with your wife or partner as vigorously as possible if willing tones you up emotionally, but he cautions: "(1) If you are in bed with somebody you should not be in bed with, and have in the least degree a bad conscience about this, abstain. Guilt and shame are prominent constituents of the Meataphysical Hangover, and will certainly be sharpened by indulgence on such an occasion. (2) For the same generic reason, do not take the matter into your own hands if you awake by yourself." (On Drink, Hutchinson, 1972)

MEANWHILE, recent studies in Australia concluded that masturbating helps you live longer (reduces prostate cancer risk); strengthens the IC muscle (equivalent to sending your willy to the gym); beats stress (releases "happy" hormone, dopamine; and guarantees a better night's sleep (after ejaculation heartbeat drops), so don't hit the hay with a full sack. (D. Sport, 12/2/04)

ON the subject of penises, Los Angeles blue movie stud John the Stallion, 24, has insured his for \$3m. as that is what he reckons he could earn over the next ten years, working out at \$250,000 per inch. (Zoo, May 7-13, 2004)

DOCTORS have slammed the idea of DIY vasectomy kits on sale in Brazil. The box contains bandages, anaesthetic, 14-inch extra-sharp scissors and a detailed diagram. Users are encouraged to engage the help of a close friend (D. Sport, 13/5/04)

A MAN went on a year-long spree squirting young girls with his semen from a water pistol. Joseph Nichols, 29, sprayed nine girls and sometimes took their photos after the bizarre attacks. He was jailed for four years in Orlando, Florida, after he pleaded guilty to lewd or lascivious acts with a child and seven other offences. (D. Sport, 14/12/00)

A BIT out of date and a silly one. Leafing through the bulletin of the British Lichen Society, as one does, the Peterborough column was reminded again of the thrills of the lichen-hunter's life. Jeremy Gray spouted a luxuriant growth of Parmelia lichens on the back window of a D-reg Lada in Penzance, Cornwall. He immediately pulled a reckless U-turn in his own car and gave chase. The woman Lada driver, terrified, "accelerated, leaving quite a lot of rubber on the Tarmac, and swerving violently into a tiny lane ..... drifted wildly round awkward bends, turned right-angle corners on two wheels, went through red lights, crossed the pavement twice and broke every rule of decent driving." She failed to shake off her pursuer, however. When they eventually stopped, Mr Gray skidded to a halt, leapt out and started taking notes. He was overjoyed to find 21 different species. (D. Telegraph, 5/5/01)

ALSO hardly contemporaneous, police were stumped when they were called to a mystery head-on smash near The Wizard pub at a top druid haunt. The two green Rover 214 Si motors involved were exactly the same age, had done the same mileage and had virtually identical registration numbers. Also the drivers in the crash at the accident blackspot at Alderley Edge, Cheshire, both lived at houses with the number 17. One officer called to the scene said: "It was like something out of the X-Files. The cars involved must have been next to each other on the assembly line. (D. Star, 28/4/00)

POLICEWOMEN in Chile are getting bulletproof bras after an increase in officers getting shot in the tits. (Zoo, May 7-13, 2004)

# UPDATE

CELLAR HOLIDAY (FF17:19; FF20:13). Over the years I've covered tales of families too poor to go on holiday so they hide for a week at home while pretending to be abroad. Here it is cartoonised. (D. Telegraph, 16/9/03)



SWIM POOL PEEING (FF44:15). Sharron Davies admitted urinating to put off following competitors, so this vintage cartoon strip seems appropriate. (Viz, April/May, 1994) Plus an undated amusing one from an undated Daily Sport.



TITS 'N' BOOZE (FF30:4-7). Topless dancers at a nightclub in Spain have to pass an intelligence test before they can be hired. Bosses at The Paradisimo, in Seville, insist dancers have an IQ of at least 135 -- the equiva-



FANNY'S (FF24). Prototype TV cook Fanny Craddock died in 1994 and "husband" -- they were not actually married -- Johnny in 1996. Victor Lewis-Smith trotted out the memorable one-liner partner Johnny is alleged to have spoken: "May your doughnuts turn out like Fanny's." (D. Mirror, 24/8/96)

**TATTOO BLUNDERS** (FF33:15, *passim*). Footballer David Beckham risks paralysis if he ever tries to get rid of his new tattoo. The ink is so heavy and dark that experts say he would need skin grafts from another part of his body to blot out the winged cross (or "Gothic crucifix" in a style preferred by football hooligans, prison warders and violent skinheads." -- leader article, Sunday Telegraph, 23/5/04) on the back of his neck. The tattoo has already been condemned for looking thuggish and setting a bad example to young soccer fans. Meanwhile, Dr Martin Skinner, a social psychologist at the University of Warwick, said: "A tattoo with wings normally means the person, whether consciously or unconsciously, is trying to rise above and overcome issues. And judging by his personal life of late, David has certainly got a lot of that to do." (Sunday Mirror, 23/5/04)

Mormon men must shun tattoos, the leader of the Church has said. Gordon Hinckley, president of the Church of Latter-day Saints, said that men who were considering having tattoos must remember that the body is a temple of God. "If you have ever considered such an idea, pause and ask the Lord about it," he advised. "How can anybody who blesses or passes the sacrament have a tattoo?" (The Times, 22/5/04)

**WRONG ANIMAL RIGHTS** (Letters to Ambrose Merton, No. 15; FF33:3-5). An RSPCA inspector called by a member of the public to rescue an owl thought to be trapped in a church spire found the bird was stuffed. When the RSPCA man arrived at St Michael's Church, Bath, Somerset, he was told by a church official that the owl had been put in the belfry by the owners of a nearby camera and binoculars shop so customers could focus on it. (D. Sport, 28/11/02)

**MARSBARIANNE FAITHFULL** (FF19:3-7, *passim*). Not content to mention that spurious gossip once, interviewer Nigel Farnsdale had two tiresome goes. "She became the stuff of urban legend when ... the police raided Keith Richards' country house, Redlands, in Sussex. There was a drug-fuelled party going on and Faithfull was arrested wearing only a fur rug. It was alleged that she was performing an intimate act involving a Mars Bar at the time, but she denies this, saying it was a story put about by a vindictive policeman." (Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 4/4/04). Mentioning how Moors murderer Ian Brady had broken his four-year "hunger strike" by secretly eating a few Cadbury's Creme Eggs, Farnsdale referred to the "pleasure you can't measure!" campaign as innuendo filled following the alleged indelicate incident in 1967 involving Mick Jagger, Marianne Faithfull and a Mars Bar. (Sunday Telegraph, 18/4/04)

**HARDENED CRIMINALS**. The body of a successful New York banker was found in a suitcase encased in concrete in New Jersey, USA. She was identified by the serial numbers on her breast implants. (Sunday Telegraph, 22/2/04)

**WEIRD WORKSOP** (FF32:3-5, *passim*). "As no one has written to me yet with a letter, I've once again taken the 'pick of the bunch' of the many e-mails we've had. These are, I stress, genuine, but the Web don't half attract some funny 'uns!

Re: Worksop

i didn't like the bit in yor (sic) mag about worksop. weve got a mothercare here now and a macdonalds and a new set of traffic lights. anyway they say that all roads lead to rome but thats wrong. the a57 doesnt go to rome, it goes to worksop.

luv peter p the puffy puffer (41Z magazine, ?)

**INBREEDING**. Among top U.S. T-shirt designs are "Welcome to Kentucky ... set your watch back 20 years" and "West Virginia: 1,000,000 people and 15 last names." (The Times, ?) Then in Rebecca Tyrrel's excellent column she refers to her eccentric Daily Mirror columnist husband, Matthew Norman, on holiday in Devon: "While he likes and admires people with such a strong sense of family that they insist on breeding within it, he doesn't ant to live among them." And better still: "We went to no fewer than six shops and not once did he offer a shop assistant his traditional country farewell which he thinks is hilarious. It goes: 'Do give your mother abd sister my best when you see her this evening.' When we bought bread sauce he even forewent his usual line about 'in-bred sauce'." (Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 10/2/02)

**PREGNANCY SEAT**. Tesco boss Steve Duffield, 37, is hiring checkout staff to cover for nine women who all got pregnant after sitting at till No. 8 in Blandford, Dorset. (The Sun, 27/3/04)

# PROTO-LEGENDS

DESPITE this tale's august provenance, I regard it as suspicious. When a 15-year-old barmaid from Lesotho, in Southern Africa, was found to be pregnant, her doctor was somewhat surprised since the girl suffered from a rare congenital deformity which mean she had no vagina. "Curiosity could no longer be contained," Dr Douweouwe Verkuyl wrote in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, "and she was interviewed with the help of a sympathetic nursing sister to ascertain how she could have conceived a child when normal sexual activity was obviously impossible." Eventually, the girl admitted that, nine months previously, she had been interrupted by a former lover while having oral sex with her new boyfriend. A fight ensued, during which she had been stabbed in the stomach. While the wound was being operate on, sperm had leaked from the stomach and had been washed up the fallopian tube -- with miraculous consequences. (The Complete Illustrated Encyclopeda of Erotic Failure, Dr Peter Kinnell, Futura, 1989)

FROM a similar book source comes Vera Czermak, who when finding her husband had been unfaithful, her first thought was to throw herself out of the window of their third-floor flat in Prague and put an end to her misery. With a tragic irony she almost succeeded. Leaping from the windowsill, she fell directly on top of a passer-by walking along the pavement below. Mrs Czermak received only a few cuts and bruises, but her victim ws killed instantly. To her amazement (and no doubt his) he turned out to be her miscreant husband. (The Encylpaedia of Sexual trivia, Dr Robin Smith, Robson Books, 1990)

A SAUCY BLONDE was distracting drivers in Cooperville, Kansas, with her cheeky number-plate ... NO NIX. Sheila Green, 23, a secretary, said: "Men slow down and stare when I'mout for a drive, and once when I wore a bikini there was a traffic jam andthe police warned me about my skimpy clothing. It seems the men thought I was not wearing my bikini bottoms." (D. Sport, 28/10/03)

KEEP-FIT GIRLS in skimpy costumes sparked off fire alarms with their steamy exercise routine. Firemen kept rushing to a hall in Queens, New York, only to find the panting women had set off the heat detectors again. (D. Sport, 5/8/03)

A MAN accidentally shot and wounded six friends after they had arranged a surprise party for HIS 40th birthday. The man had overheard their plans and hid in a hut with his shotgun -- hoping to turn the surpise on them. When the 30 guests showed up he blasted a round into the air to shock them for a joke. But when he emerged from behind the cabin he tripped and the gun went off again -- badly injuring one woman's legs and wounding five other guests. They were taken to hospital in Frederikstad, Norway -- along with the gunman, who was suffering "deep shock." The party was cancelled. (The Sun, 18/8/03)

A MAN with amnesia walked into a police station and asked officers to find out who he was. Detectives checked their computer files and arrested the 35-year-old after discovering he wasa convicted fraudster wanted on several charges. (D. Sport, 2/12/03)

DAN FEEGLE, 44, from Sydney, collects poles from pole-dancing clubs which are closing down or being refurbished. So far he has 212 of them. (D. Sport, 19/12/03)

MY FAVOURITE was reported in the Inter Alia column by Melissa Katsoulis. A customer walked into an East London bookshop and asked for anything about Brick Lane. The proprietress grabbed a copy of Monica Ali's book and proceeded to rave about it. "This ain't what I want at all," says the customer, "I wanna book for me son, 'e's doin' a GNVQ in brick layin'." The Times weekendreview, 4/10/03)

JAPANESE tourist Hiroshi Motoki was arrested for stealing a tram in Brussels, Belgium. In court he insisted he had only obeyed a policeman's instructions. He had asked how to get to an art museum, and was told: "Take a tram." The case was dismissed. (D. Sport, 18/12/03)

AN unidentified lusty 20-year-old caused permanent damage to his todger after attempting sex with a padlock. He was left in eye-watering agony as emergency services removed it with a saw. A hospital spokesman said: "Unfortunately his penis will remain curved forever, but it has preserved all its functions" after he stuck his erect willy into the padlock on a barn near Moscow, Russia. After calling for help rescuers from the local fire brigade attempted to make his penis go floppy by pouring cold water all over it, but they were forced to use the saw because the fit was too tight. The whole procedure took an hour. (D. Sport, 13/5/04) Same story, single paragraph, same source. (D. Sport, 23/2/04)

THE racial aspect alerts me this could be false, but it's claimed a dozy lorry driver kept himself warm by running a pipe from the exhaust into his cab. Police feared a suicide when they saw the parked lorry with its engine ticking over in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. They had to point out the potential danger to the Irish driver, who was unharmed. (D. Sport, 24/5/04)

IT'S from an Irish source but Harpeet Devi, a taxi driver in Bhatinda, India, once had to drive 35 miles (56km) backwards after his gears became stuck in reverse. He liked it so much he decided always to drive that way, and so, for the past two years, he and his passengers have reversed through traffic at up to 25mph. He has covered 7,500 miles (12,000km) backwards. He now wants to reverse into Pakistan, taking with him a message of peace and friendship. (Irish Examiner, 24/12/03)

I OFTEN sneeze if I think about sex (or locomotives for that matter -- must be some deep psychological connection) and Morris Adams is allergic to women with big breasts and every time he sees one suffers a sneezing fit. Morris, 37, of Maseru, South Africa, said: "I get such severe wheezing that I have to go to bed for hours." (D. Sport, 5/2/04)

TWO MEN working in a public swimming baths in Chansha, China, were rushed to hospital with severe stomach pains after taking a pill which a conman said would make them invisible. The men took the pill to spy on the women's changing rooms. (D. Sport, 24/2/04)

IN A similar voyeuristic vein, bikinis that disintegrate as they get hotter, have been pulled from stores in Sweden, after many unsuspecting women were given them as joke presents before they went on holiday. (D. Sport, 5/2/04)

I couldn't quite comprehend this one monitored via Fortean Times. A man returned a computer to a department store in Kaiserslautern, Germany, saying it didn't work. Staff found its working parts had been replaced by small potatoes, so they gave him a new one free of charge. Shortly after, the shopper returned with the second computer, saying he didn't need one any more and asking for his money back in cash. When this too was found to be stuffed with spuds staff called police and the man was arrested. (Guardian, 13/1/04) F.T. had headed it "WRONG SORT OF CHIPS" but I still seem to be missing the point -- and what was he charged with?

CRAFTY BAKER Heinrich Muhi told customers he lost a diamond ring in the dough, and the finder would get a reward. He counted the cash as customers flocked to his shop in Lingen, Germany, buying up every loaf. But customers overheard him telling his wife of the scam and organised a boycott. (D. Sport, 13/1/04)

ALSO in Germany, a Berlin vet was charging £3,500 for a sex change for pets. He said: "Like humans, pets can find themselves trapped in the wrong bodies." (D. Sport, 20/1/04)

CHUCK STRICKLER has spent 30 years as a welder at U.S. nuclear power plants, which has left his fingerprint ridges worn down. Since nuclear plants now insist on fingerprints as ID, Strickler has been given the sack. (Independent on Sunday, 11/1/04)

A GROUP of shocked American tourists stumbled upon a small village in northern Cameroon with 20 human heads on poles at the entrance, with a sign reading: "This is what happens to people who ask for directions." (D. Sport, 19/12/03)

# ARTICLES ELSEWHERE

**CENTENARY CONTROVERSY.** The article standfirst says it all: "Controversy has dogged the 100mph record claimed for City of Truro and will continue to do so as long as there are railways left to discuss." However, two experts, Peter Semmens and Major General P. H. Lee, claim in this, the centenary year of the unofficial record of an estimated 102.3mph down Wellington bank, that in all probability the Great Western Railway 4-4-0 achieved "the ton" before Flying Scotsman (whose other general claim to fame of making the first non-stop London to Edinburgh run was in fact achieved by a double-headed express of the London Midland and Scottish Railway). (The Railway Magazine, May, 2004)

**BESTIALITY TABOO.** Edward Albee's new play about bestiality, "The Goat, or who is Sylvia?", reminded Rod Liddle that "only a couple of years ago a chap was arrested near Hull for pleasuring a goat, in full view of the passengers on the 12.17 train to Goole. Midday! The man couldn't even wait until the pubs had closed. He just had to do it there and then. A vet who examined the animal afterwards said that the goat appeared "discomforted", and "at a loss". Back in the late 1970s a fellow pupil in my North Yorkshire comprehensive school had sex with a cow and pronounced the experience "lush". After some discussion of taboo swearwords, Liddle recollects a somewhat dubious court reporting incident from his days on the South Wales Echo: "A chap who lived near Bridgend was charged with having sex with a sheep. During the proceedings, it was revealed that he had come home one evening from his farmyard tryst to find a plate of grass on the kitchen table and a note from his wife saying: 'If it's good enough for your girlfriend, it's good enough for you'." (The Times weekendreview, 14/2/04) It seems this is the place for a couple of shorts. 1) A judge in Durban, South Africa, jailed taxi driver Paul Amadas-Front, 44, for repeatedly breaking into farms and using livestock for his own pleasure. Farmers claimed many sheep had been too disturbed to leave their barns for the past year because of the assaults. (D. Sport, 5/5/04) 2) Kim Lee Chong, 61, was jailed for 15 years after a court in Phuket, Thailand, convicted him of sexually assaulting a five-ton elephant. Chong claimed the female pachyderm was the reincarnation of his wife. (D. Sport, 30/3/04)

**SCRIPTING THE SCRIPTURES.** Debating the problems of portraying Christ on screen, Stephen Dalton reckons "Hollywood folklore still surrounds John Wayne's 1965 cameo as a Roman witness to the Crucifixion in 'The Greatest Story Ever Told'. 'Truly that man was the son of God,' the Duke drawls. Pressed to repeat the line with 'more awe' by the director, George Stevens, Wayne replied, 'Awww, truly that man was the son of God ....' An unlikely story, but too good not to print." (The Eye, The Times, 20/3/04)

**KYLIE SHOCKS.** Pop babe Kylie Minogue is so hot that she almost burst into flame. The Aussie singer says she nearly died from spontaneous combustion, explained by by-lined Gary Johnson as "the phenomenon in which people or objects burst into flames for no apparent reason". Kylie, 35, said: "People will think I'm nuts, but it's true. I was just about to fall asleep when I felt electricity go through my bed and jolt me three times. I don't know what it was. The fourth time sparks started flying from my arms and legs. It hurt very much. It was like an electric shock and lasted for about 15 seconds." She added: "Later I learned that what happened was similar to spontaneous combustion. I was scared for days as I did not want it to happen again. It really was the worst experience of my life". (D. Sport, 16/9/03)

**BUTCHER CHURCHILL.** A resume of the German bombardment by three battleships in 1914 of the twin towns of Hartlepool and West Hartlepool is adequate up to a point. However, Bill Hunter fails to debate the evidence that Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had prior knowledge of the forthcoming carnage, but sacrificed more than 100 civilians and militia so the enemy did not suspect we could intercept their coded messages. Incidentally, my late father claimed all the free-roaming dogs and cats in the towns headed for the safety of countryside fields before the warship were sighted and the shelling began. This act of psychic intuition and unison sounds like a precursor of the material published these days by Dr Rupert Sheldrake. (This Magazine, Hartlepool, No. 13, 2004)

A CULT MOVIE designed to show the uniformity of life under communism, still shown regularly to this day on Russian television, tells the story of a man who mistakenly takes a train to Moscow instead of Leningrad after celebrating New Year. At the station, he gives his home address to the taxi driver and is taken to an identical apartment block on a street of the same name, and he key even fits the door. In his stupor, he goes to be in the identically-decorated flat and only realises his error when the real tenant arrives. (Scurra column, D. Mirror, 31/1/03)

HAIRDRESSER Carlos Zipprone has put four piranhas in a charity wishing-well in his salon in Madrid to stop people stealing coins thrown into it. (D. Sport, 6/1/04)

A COCA-COLA delivery truck driver was fired in California after being seen drinking Pepsi. His union was fighting the move. (Sunday Mirror, 15/6/03)

I ALWAYS look forward to reading Lucy Pinney, who wrote of chatting to James Braxton before the filming of BBC's Bargain Hunt Live. The valuation expert claimed that: "While appearing on a Flog It! roadshow earlier this year, where members of the public brought in heirlooms to be priced, he noticed a shy old lady hugging a box. Inside, swathed in wrapping-paper, was a potato. She was not abashed when the valuer pointed this out. "This is not just any old potato," she said proudly, "there's a royal connection: it is a King Edward." (The Times, 31/5/03)

LIB DEM leader Charles Kennedy had a salutary encounter in a hospital with a man who had a bandaged head, recalled Press Association veteran Chris Moncrieff. This is how it went. Patient: "I'm a huge admirer of yours and I vote for you at every possible opportunity." Kennedy (beaming proudly): "Wonderful. And if you don't mind me asking, what treatment are you undergoing?" Patient: "Major brain surgery." (Scurra column, D. Mirror, 1/4/03)

A naughty schoolboy in Charleston, Virginia, who squeezed behind a wall to watch girls in a changing-room, became wedged and had to use his mobile phone to get his father to come and rescue him. (D. Sport, 8/4/03)

U.S. and Soviet pilots were showing each other pin-up pictures while flying wing-to-wing over the Sea of Japan. (Sun, 15/1/88)

NOW some takes from the judiciary. \* A convicted bank robber was to get a second trial during which he would be called "Mr X" after a judge in Texas said the jury at his first trial must have presumed that a man named Rob Banks must be guilty. (D. Sport, 4/3/03) \* Two prosecution lawyers who wore ties depicting a hangman's noose during a murder trial in Louisiana were ordered not to do it again. (D. Sport, 14/1/03). \* Piet Maas, 44, told a magistrate in Amsterdam that he made an illegal u-turn on a motorway because he missed his turn-off and didn't want to be late for the final session of a driver-improvement course conducted by the police. (D. Sport, 19/03). \* Burglar Karl Schultz, 42, who took his dog on 50 raids, was jailed for three years after police found a paw print which matched his Labrador at a break-in at Dornbirn, Austria. (D. Sport, 3/7/03)

DRUG SQUAD cops swooped on 16 birds' nests made of leaves, dirt and £300,000! The parrots pinched the notes from cocaine barons in La Paz, Bolivia, to build cosy homes for their chicks. Insp Fidel Perez laughed: "We've lifted valuable fingerprints from these bills." But local wildlife groups were angry at the cops for destroying the parrots' nests. (D. Star, 21/1/94)

MORE DRUGS. A weedy recluse's flat was so filthy, a cannabis plant took root in a pair of his mouldy old underpants. Neighbours, who called to complain at the stench coming from half-starved Aaron Kite's New York apartment, found the 4ft-high bush, along with thousands of empty beer cans, sweet wrappers and sardine cans. Police said they would not press charges for drug possession after 57-year-old Kite promised a spring clean. (Sunday Sport, 6/9/92)

A MAGAZINE in a sleepy Iowa town published the headline Imogene Zoo Closes over a three-word story saying: "The chicken died". (Sun, 12/8/93)

**LOST FOR WORDS.** Built around his stolen research notebooks, Tom Fort, together with additional dramatic literary disappearances by Tom Gatti, relates the rumoured tale of T.E. Lawrence leaving the first draft of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* at Reading railway station waiting-room. Getting regularly namechecked in A.E. is John Michell, a late starter to the literary world, whose first manuscript was absent-mindedly left a motorway service station, if I recall correctly, but luckily he retained his notes and had to start all over again on his debut *The Flying Saucer Vision*. (The Times weekendreview /Nov/03)

We're obviously all agog as we await the forthcoming autobiography of Geordie former football ace Paul Gascoigne. However, Hunter Davies, the deluded soul who agreed to ghostwrite the book, has been having difficulties persuading Gazza to read the manuscript -- even though it had been with him for six weeks. Eventually, Davies travelled to Newcastle and sat alongside Gazza as he went through the proofs, making his marks. On the train back to London, a relieved Davies enjoyed some alcoholic beverages, then took a taxi home and went to bed. Then he realised he had left the manuscript in the back of the cab. Thankfully, the cabbie tracked down his home, knocked on the door, handed over the treasured tome only for his efforts to merit a fiver -- the only cash Davies' novelist wife Margaret had in her purse. "The taxi driver had gone up and down our street knocking on doors as he hadn't seen which house I had gone into," wrote Davies in the *New Statesman*. "All for a measly fiver. I definitely owe him one." (Scurra column, D. Mirror, 1/5/04)

When Bruce Forsyth, now 76, was 21 he met and married Penny Calvert, a beautiful 18-year-old dancer at the Windmill Theatre. After the split she started an autobiography to be called "Your Dinner is in the Dustbin, Darling". Fortunately for Forsyth the manuscript was stolen from her car. (Sunday Telegraph, 25/4/04)

Then there's Labour's newest peer, Philip Gould, who is probably best known for losing things. In 1997, it was the election campaign: he left the entire strategy, every advertisement and every poster, at the Burger King in Euston station on the first day of the campaign. (The Times, 1/5/04)

Meanwhile, freedom for justice perversion liar Maxine Carr had her freedom thrown into doubt when it was revealed that documents relating to her secret new identity were stolen from a car. The paperwork, including a new passport, was snatched from a Ford Fiesta parked in Hampstead, north London. All the documents were found dumped on nearby Hampstead Heath almost four hours later and were handed in to police. Officers were initially puzzled because the items appeared to belong to two different women. Then it was realised they had been snatched from the car belonging to a senior Home Office civil servant. (D. Mirror, 13/5/04)

Barry Baldwin lists further instances of manuscripts being left and not recovered from railway stations. (Classical Corner column, Fortean Times, No. 185, 2004)

**EXPLODING MOBILES.** The "mythconceptions" column (Fortean Times, No. 176, 2003) warns against using a mobile phone at filling stations because its battery can produce sparks which could cause the petrol vapours to ignite. Mat Coward explodes the "viral myth" which has been around since 1999. It reminded me of an oil company production worker friend, Derek Henson, who told me cameras were banned for the same reason. This did not stop and his Seal Sands factory colleagues photographing a semi-tame vixen in their office eating kitkat out of Derek's hand. She would come twice a night until her final appearance outside at 2 a.m. with her newly-born cubs to show off. (Paul Screeton, The Mail, Hartlepool, 20/3/89) More recently a ban on using mobile phones in hospitals should be lifted as it puts patient care at risk, say doctors, refuting health chiefs' claims that mobiles can interfere with hospital equipment. Medical correspondent Rachel Ellis' article also has a panel dealing with myths which have sprouted since their introduction ten years ago. Experts once claimed that mobile users risked causing explosions at garages because the batteries could spark and ignite petrol fumes. While warning signs remain common, there have been no blasts and the alert is now widely discounted. Other, mostly internet, myths are that mobiles attract lightning, set off car alarms and interfere with air traffic and jam emergency services' channels. (The Mail of Sunday, 2/5/04)

**A.B.C.** Maybe the best evidence for alien big cats has come from the Lincolnshire Panther of Horncastle; well witnessed, videoed and hairs identified as a leopard's. Having seen a black panther in the wild I need no convincing that something -- flesh 'n' blood or supernatural -- is going on, but doubters are directed to an article by Daniel Foggo. (Sunday Telegraph, 19/10/03)

By uncanny synchronicity, Lionel Fanthorpe provided an item on ABCs for TV viewers shortly after I edited the above paragraph (This Morning, ITV 1, 8/6/04)

**BITTER PILLS.** Columnist Julian Lloyd Webber, discussing favourite musical jibes, gives a selection from conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, though noting that the most notorious "story" attributed to him was, in fact, delivered by the conductor Sir John Barbiroli. Interrupting a lady cellist mid-bow, Barbiroli said: "Madam, between your legs you have one of the most beautiful instruments known to man. And all you can do is there and scratch it!" Conductors are an excellent source of anecdotes, writes Lloyd Webber, adding another about the hapless foreign maestro who tried to berate his orchestra in broken English: "You zink I know fuck nothing, but ze truth is I know fuck all!" (D. Telegraph books+arts, 2/8/03)

**DUMB TO WAITER.** Talking to Andrew Perry about his iconic brand of amplifier and speaker "stack", 80-year-old Jim Marshall instructed his manager, Phil, to give Perry a tour of the Milton Keynes factory. Phil delivers the story that best sums up the Marshall amp, best associated with Jimi Hendrix: "It concerns a current band by the name of Raging Speedhorn, who had been trying out a new 350-watt Marshall transistor amp in their tiny rehearsal room, and weren't satisfied that it was loud enough. They packed it off back to the factory and went for a curry. When the waiter arrived to take their order, they didn't notice him, because, to all intents and purposes, they had gone deaf. So long as the quest for ultimate loudness continues, Marshall amps will surely reign supreme." (D. Telegraph arts+books, 2/8/03)

**SYNCHRONICITY.** The No.1 bestselling book "Eats, Shoots and Leaves" mentions "Carrotts' potatoes caulis cabbages ..." where the familiar greengrocer's misplaced apostrophe is correct as it is the Carrott family's business. I only mention this because immediately behind where the review appears happens to be an advert for "An Audience with Jasper Carrott". (Sunday Telegraph, 23/11/03) The origin of the book's title refers to a panda invited back for a meal at a girl's house where he eats, is then persuaded to have sex where he "shoots" his load and then leaves the premises. People probably buy this book as they think it is full of such smutty jokes rather than being an unlikely study of the foibles of punctuatory misuse.

**BEING QUIZZED.** Defending quiz show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?", scientist and mathematician Simon Singh applauds the programme's art. "It's also interactive -- you can see people watching all around and there is the wonderful 'Ask the Audience' lifeline (although I've heard that in Russia they don't ask the audience because their answers are too misleading)." (The Times weekendreview, 3/1/04)

**CATNAPPING.** When I worked for our local rag, stories and readers' letters supported the belief that mystery surrounds a missing cat. As a freelance for the paper a couple of years ago I spotted a missing cat notice in our newsagent's window and rang to do a story on the fled felid. Wrong moment. The woman had just begun the grief cycle upon learning her beloved pussy had been found run over by a train on the tracks behind her home. An article by Andrew Gimson notes that owners who do not know what has become of their pets can fall prey to the most dreadful fears. "There is a very widespread rumour that cats are stolen for their fur. Many people have also heard that domestic pets are kidnapped and taken to laboratories, where unspeakable experiments are performed upon them. And then there is the worry in some districts that your cat might have been thrown to a fighting dog, to inflame his bloodlust before he enters the ring," he wrote. "The truth is almost certainly more prosaic, although not necessarily happier. An estimated 60,000 cats a year are killed in road traffic accidents, 90 per cent of those at night." In fact 165,000 or so cats are thought to go missing each year, and with eight million pet cats the number is probably higher. (D. Telegraph Weekend, 29/11/03)

**CROP CIRCLES.** Richard Madden sees theorising on this topic as a good pub pastime before the serious drinking gets underway, seeing himself as a rational sceptic -- those who "remain convinced that a secret society of men in anoraks" create them. Nevertheless, he concludes with the realisation that "to struggle endlessly for an explanation is to miss the point. Just seeing them and being in them is meaning enough." (D. Telegraph, 5/6/04)

# BOOKS

FAIRY PATHS & SPIRIT ROADS by PAUL DEVEREUX (Vega, £12.99)

ONE of the defining moments in my life came in the unlikely environs of Hull, but only because a liveried servant of Her Majesty had delivered a copy of I.T. containing an article by John Michell mentioning leys. I hastened to the city's Central Library that same day, borrowed "The Old Straight Track" by Alfred Watkins and knew I'd "come home" and destiny beckoned. On reflection, I agree wholeheartedly with another reviewer of Paul's latest book, John Billingsley, who wrote: "Finding alignments has always been elusive, ever since Alfred Watkins claimed rather more than could be proven, and rather more than could be dismissed."

If Watkinsian leys could be regarded as alignments mark I, then mark IIa was dowsable energy lines and IIb flying saucer flight paths. For mark III we get an even greater choice of sub-divisions -- IIIa aboriginal songlines, IIIb fairy paths, IIIc corpse ways, IIId shamanic passages, and IIIE prehistoric linear monuments. If each generation has a new perspective on alignments, I tremble at how mark IV will split into further multiplicity of viewpoints: IVf, for instance, aligned public toilet facilities, IVq national branches of Boozebuster, IVx venereal disease clinics and IVz injury compensation claim companies' offices.

Despite this book's persuasive arguments, I feel mark III is clutching at straws somewhat and this rattle-taggle attempt at revisionism will neither satisfy the true ley believer of earlier modes or fool those like myself who see it as an emperor's new clothes bid to reassess alignments from a flimsy and ultimately needless bid to breathe new life into what a small cadre of self-styled experts see as a new paradigm to explain the numerousness of paranormal and social aspects pertaining to a newly-perceived set of alignment standpoints.

Actually, I wrote those thoughts without even opening Paul's book. My favourite science-fiction writer, J G Ballard, has publically admitted to having written lengthy book reviews for quality broadsheet newspaper arts sections without a glance at the contents of the book in question -- a questionable if foolishly honest admission. And I was being equally guilty, defending a traditional ley hunting rigidity against a dismissal of all those new meandering (physically and mentally) notions which had poisoned the chalice of Watkinsian bloodline.

A mixture of culpability and enforced hospitalisation caused me to reluctantly check whether Paul's book deserved scrutiny. Firstly I found the book to be no extension of ley lore; the focus being upon the internationally fragmented yet cognitively connected American ritual roads, European death ways, OZ songlines of dreamtime and supernatural Irish fairy paths.

\* Relatively close to where I live still exists the Lyke Wake Walk, regularly tramped by intrepid hikers who receive a celebratory medal. Such corpse roads were mainly mediaeval and teams of bearers would carry the coffin or bier on a wooden stretcher to cemeteries that had burial rights, often involving necromantic associations. There are still examples of dead straight alignments ending or originating at a cemetery in Germany and continental Europe. In fact, I drew the author's attention to the high percentage of such found in northern England by Guy Ragland Philips in his ground-breaking geomantic book "The Unpolluted God" and find this omission greatly surprising.

\* A very detailed field guide to elementals precedes a discussion of fairy paths, particularly in Ireland.

\* Explorer and writer Bruce Chatwin published Australian aborigines' creation myths and their retention of comprehension of landscape both as a physical, mental and spiritual geography.

\* Then came the familiar Nazca lines with stright causeways elsewhere in the New World, all seen as shamanic routes.

\* Concluding with British Stone Age spirit ways.

The bulk of the book then focusses upon a sampler of otherworldly routes, mostly from The U.K., but also Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the U.S.A. What fun (and hard work) this research must have been. I envy Paul and disciples' discipline in this respect (last time we met Paul hijacked me from the pub to the Rollrights and the old antiquarian enthusiasm came flooding back). Still, I've made my contemporary legend bed and lie upon it enjoying my own daytime dreamtime..

Paul's descriptions are a contagious delight and along the way he recalls a childhood multiple sighting of a mysterious silent black airship over a churchway, a reassessment of the "Saint-

-bury ley and coming full circle Tony Roberts' Monk's Ford mystery which I first published in my salad days of 1971 hippiedom. I'm so glad I ignored Ballard's eccentric slant on remote viewing reviewing.

## MAGAZINES

**FORTEAN TIMES.** News-stand. £3.20 with extra 16 pages. No. 181. Princess Diana death conspiracies; remote viewing of pub; facts and folklore of Delphic oracles; mystery terrapins; Zatec UFO crash; meeting with an extraterrestrial; cockroaches ruling post-nuclear devastated world?; Charles Berlitz obit; cats' purr mystery; ancestral spirits in the S. Pacific; museum mammoths. No. 182. In search of monsters issue, covering Mongolian death worm expedition; orang-pendek; lake moonster photo analysed; Bigfoot speculation; Barcelona zoo's tragic white gorilla; and eunuch eels theory for lake monsters. Also x-ray eyes vision; ghosts; reincarnation; birthmarks; dragons; contrails explanation; cannibalism. No. 183. News-stand price rises to £3.40 -- though my No. 184 has £3.20 on cover, for real or error? How a bizarre deep-sea sponge led to early or extraterrestrial civilisation antennae artifact speculation; Jesus in Kashmir and German Virgin Mary apparitions; Arthur Machen's "The Bowmen" compared with an illustration in the earlier "A Child's Book of Saints" by William Canton (coincidentally, I have a copy of the 1907 edition). No. 184. The resurgence in popular culture of author H. P. Lovecraft; Paul Devereux on macular degeneration, a specialist medical condition which argues we do not see with our eyes alone; compulsive collecting; bodily incorruption; Faustian saints; Iraqi mystery weapon; Bilderberg Group; JFK conspiracy and the U.S. secret wars of colonisation. Regular strange days worldwide weirdness round-up, ufology, alien zoo, science, saints strange deaths and modern myths, plus letters, reviews and archive tales each issue.

**TERRESTRIAL ZODIACS NEWSLETTER.** From Stable Cottage, Priest Bank Road, Kildwick, N. Yorks., BD20 9BH. No price). Issue 1. I originated, edited and printed this duplicator-created round-up of landscape effigies between 1977 and 1981. A couple of years ago Mark Valentine asked if he had my consent to resurrect the newsletter and I was more than happy to comply and assist. My first issue was a free giveaway at an event, as is this. Four A4 pages contain resumes of major TZs, checklist and "Temple of the Stars Man Looks Back, in which I briefly recall my editorship.

**AMSKAYA.** Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to J. Goddard at 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. No. 57. Paul Screeton on a 2003 personal UFO sighting at Westbury; Britain's x-files with reference to hippiedom and Tony Wedd "disciple" Paul Baines; Bernard Byron and musical extraterrestrial language Solexmar used musically; Concorde "foo fighters." No. 58. Sixties article on carvings at Stonehenge by Mollie Carey, whom I met and published during my "The Ley Hunter" editorship; an Italian contactee's Fifties trip in a Venusian spaceship; widest ley and Broadlands connection (repeated in Touchstone)

**TOUCHSTONE.** Mag of Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Same address, price and frequency of Amskaya (see above). No. 64. Paul Screeton on the UFO sighting at Westbury which has made him re-examine his views on spacecraft, followed by articles by Doug Chaundy (1966) on a white horse triangle and purported Salisbury landscape star map; kind review of my book "Seekers of the Linear Vision", including Jimmy's perceptive comment that "The common thread is that each person involved has been inspired, as the title suggests, by the linear vision of the landscape and its depth and breadth of meaning for everyone living on Earth; confirmations of a Roman road. No. 65. Surrey ley vindicated by no prior realisation of four convergences at one spot, including largest mosque complex in western Europe (with former Express Dairies chimney as miaret) and "subconscious siting is alive and well Mr Devereux" castigation; more recriminations surface in a precis of a history of ley hunting given as a talk by veteran researcher Rose Heaword.