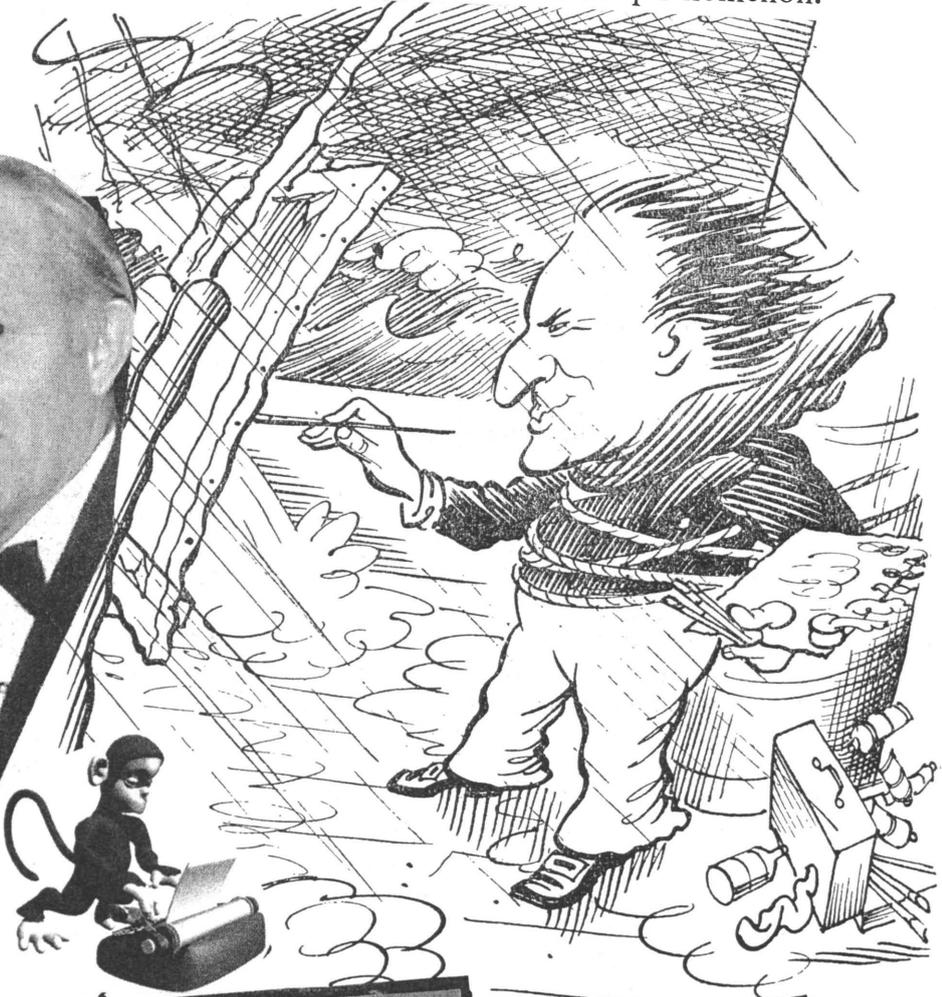




# FOLKLORE FRONTIERS No. 50

## TURNER

Nature's most brilliant discerner;  
 He'd get himself tied to a mast  
 And paint while the tempest roared past.  
 When they'd cry: 'What à sky!'  
 He'd reply: 'All me eye.'  
 His habit of life being a common 'un  
 Made him even an odder phenomenon.



**LOOK NO HANDS**  
 Is it possible to make a girl come without touching her furry parts?  
 SIMON BARRETT, WIMBLEDON

Definite urban myth. It's hard enough making them come even by touching them. Or so a lot of other blokes say - obviously I find it really easy.  
 AT, VIA E-MAIL



**PLUS!**  
**What Diana was like in bed**  
 by James Hewitt



# Folklore Frontiers No. 50

August 2005

FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly contemporary legends (urban belief tales, if you prefer), 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) If you subscription expires with this issue an "X" will appear on the line below.

## 50 not out !

♣ For the 50th issue of Folklore Frontiers I make no apologies for depicting a real artist on the cover, J.M.W. Turner (1775-1881) The illustration comes from *Art Ain't all Paint* by Jan Gordon & H.M. Bateman (Feature Books, mcmxlv), found in the Thomas Sheraton pub library. The book's potted biography goes:

TURNER. A mystery. Made thousands of pounds turning out the most daring landscapes ever made in paint and the most delicate sketches ever done in watercolour, but lived in filth with unattractive mistresses. Quarrelled with his engravers over a few pounds and negligently let thousands of pounds worth of prints go to ruin. Travelled incessantly. Disguised himself as a retired sea-captain and lived a double life in Wapping. Left more than half his work to the nation and all his fortune to the founding of a home for distressed artists; but the lawyers robbed him and us of the latter.

♣ Last issue's cover was based on material taken from an article by Morgan Falconer on artists' fascination with snow (*The Times*, 4/12/04). With regard to Turner, my favourite artist, Falconer wrote:

His most mythologised depiction of the snow is undoubtedly *Snowstorm: Steamboat off a Harbour's Mouth*, which was exhibited in 1842. It depicts a boat locked in the rotating vortex of the storm, and Turner put about the story that he had been lashed to the mast of the ship for a full four hours to experience its power. It's unlikely: Turner was not in good health at the time and if he really had gone up there he

would surely have come down dead. Others weren't persuaded by the picture either. 'This gentleman has, on former occasions, chosen to paint with cream,' one critic wrote in *The Athenaeum*, 'or chocolate, yolk of egg, or currant jelly -- here he uses his whole array of kitchen stuff.'

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

♣ AS the author of the definitive book on the Hartlepool monkey-hanging legend, *Who Hung The Monkey?*, I was naturally interested to read the silly season story linking the tale with a foot-long bone found on the beach at Seaton Carew. Police were alerted but lost interest when a pathologist deemed it to belong to a monkey or gorilla. (1) Zoo archaeologist Dr Peter Rowley-Conwy, of Durham University, suggested it could have been a ship's pet, which upon dying was thrown overboard. He mused: "But could it be the legendary Hartlepool monkey? Well it depends what happened to the monkey after it was hung. It could have been buried in a comon grave like criminals were at the time, or it could have been flung back into the sea. If so the possibility of this bone belonging to the Hartlepool monkey cannot be ruled out." However, Dr Rowley-Conwy confirmed it was not from a primate but was the shin bone of a red deer and dated from at least 6,000 years ago when Britain was still part of mainland Europe.

References: (1) Felicity Collinson, *Monkey mystery is investigated*, *Hartlepool Mail*, June 2, 2005 (2) Mail reporter, *Bone more Bambi than King Kong*, *Hartlepool Mail*, June 23, 2005

♣ THE Whitsuntide Bank Holiday weekend was marred when in Oxford a hatchback, overcrowded with boys of 12 and 13 going to a birthday party, veered across the central reservation on the city's bypass and hit oncoming traffic at about 7.30pm on Saturday, May 28. Four boys died. On the Sunday, Hartlepool Football Club were playing in the Division Two playoffs and the town was gripped with promotion hopes excitement. My wife and I went to Seaton Carew Sports and Social Club to watch the clash with Sheffield Wednesday on Sky Television. The club was abuzz with the rumour that a bus carrying Hartlepool supporters had crashed somewhere that day at 12.30pm and four were dead. By the Monday more details emerged and my wife returned from a neighbour's who had heard 16 coaches had left the supporters' club at the ground, the Corner Flag, and four in coach No. 10 had been killed. Just shows how a fevered atmosphere warps a tragic event by "localising" it wholly wrongly.

## Q&A

Jason Manford

*Buoyant Northern comic Jason Manford is currently dabbling in altogether darker material as he prepares for his debut solo show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Urban legends are the name of the game, and Manford discussed a few scary myths with Metro prior to his appearance at The Hyena this weekend.*

**Is it tough doing your first hour-long show?** It's hard because, with my usual set, the jokes mature in the clubs. You try a joke one night and it gets a little laugh, then the next night you tweak it – after six months it's perfect. But, the Edinburgh stuff is mostly untested. You time it at home and it's an hour, but then you do it at a club and it's 20 minutes.

**Have you always been interested in urban legends?** It goes back to when I was 12. There's an old legend about a babysitter being terrorised over the phone, and when the police trace it they tell her to get out of the house because the call's coming from the extension upstairs. I was babysitting my cousin and I could hear her crying over the baby monitor, but every time I went up to check on her she was sound asleep.

**Um, is this gonna be scary?** So, now my heart's beating fast, and then I hear a man's voice over the monitor say: 'Daddy's here, sweetheart.' And that's when I wet myself. But, I thought: 'What kind of babysitter leaves the child in the hands of a ghost?' So, I ran upstairs, grabbed the baby and legged it to my



neighbour. It turned out that the monitor was on the wrong setting, so I was picking up someone else's house.

**So, no legend's ever been proven as real?** They're too well-plotted to be real. They're like Chinese whispers, with everyone adding their own little embellishments.

**What about the gang members who leave their car headlights off and then kill anyone who flashes them?**

Someone told me that happened in Nottingham, which kind of takes the romanticism out of it. If you were told it happened in New York, you'd probably believe it. When you hear about a guy with a hook who's killing lovers, and you go: 'Where did that happen?' and they say: 'Doncaster', well, automatically you don't believe it. *David Baldwin*

*Fri and Sat, The Hyena, Leazes Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, 7.30pm, £10, £9 adv. Tel: 0191 232 6030.*

*Metro: Monument. www.thehyena.com*

the psychic atmosphere. The **Norfolk Triangle** covers most of the north-east of the county. The area has an above-average level of UFO sightings and a headless ghost spotted at Blickling Hall.

Anne Boleyn is regularly spotted at Blickling Hall. There have also been reports of Doctor Who-style time travel experiences including a Vikingslip which re-creates a Viking funeral.

Mr Fanthorpe, President of the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, said: "The three affected areas have all experienced battles, plagues, trauma and tragedy over the centuries – factors which may stimulate increased paranormal activity."

"But the presence of ley-line intersections, irregularities in the Earth's magnetic and gravitational fields, or even extraterrestrial activity could all play a part in forming these mysterious triangles."

The Bermuda Triangle is believed to be a paranormal site where the laws of physics are violated. Ships and planes have disappeared under bizarre circumstances in the area between Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Florida.

Flight 19, a squadron of five US Navy bombers, famously vanished in the region after sightings of strange lights on December 5, 1945.

By **HEATHER BROWNE**



Penzance Triangle. Frequent UFO sightings have been reported in Falmouth Bay – also home to Morgawr, the Cornish equivalent of the Loch Ness monster.

Other strange beasts include the Zennor Mermaid, who has been spotted off the coast, and the Owman who is believed to live in Mawnar Wood near Rosemullion Head. The Dolphin Inn at Penzance was originally used as a courtroom in the 17th century by "Hanging" Judge Jeffreys.

## Ghost

Locals have reported seeing the figure of a sea captain who was unjustly executed as well as a ghost ship at Porthcurno.

The research team found two other British versions of the Bermuda Triangles.

The **York Triangle**, between York, Harrogate and Leeds, has had many UFO and ghost sightings including a procession of Roman soldiers in York. The researchers said the city's labyrinth of underground passageways added to

**FIRST there was the legendary Bermuda Triangle, an area of ocean where ships and planes mysteriously vanished without trace.**

Now paranormal researchers have identified three more treacherous areas a lot closer to home – the Penzance, The York and the Norfolk Triangles.

The **Penzance Triangle** is a 226-square-mile area of Cornwall between Land's End, St Ives and the Helford Estuary. Here you are twice as likely to spot a UFO and three times more likely to see a ghost, than in the rest of the UK, according to research by Sky Travel.

The region has the most sightings of unexplained phenomena in the country.

The researchers, led by paranormal expert Lionel Fanthorpe, spent months collecting documented cases of UFO and ghost sightings, crop circles and mysterious creatures, then plotted them on a map.

The boffins, commissioned by Sky Travel for their Mysterious World series, were stunned by the concentration of supernatural activity in the

# GOSSAMER BRITANNIA

THE SUN, Tuesday, July 26, 2005

# Sex on the tracks

By Paul Screeton

READING (or ogling) top-shelf mags can either be seen as healthy (heterosexual) behaviour or unhealthy (singular) onanism. When Piers Morgan edited the Bizarre column he despatched a minion to Crewe and his piece was splendidly illustrated by a graphic artist's depiction of a stereotypical spotty spotter, including a rucksack "packed by mum - trainspotters' guides, emergency Kit Kat, Accrington Stanley scarf and mittens. Playboy magazine (not packed by mum)." (1)

Around this time Razzle, Parade or some such august gynaecological journal focussed on Swindon's nubile and a memorable picture depicted a row of posteriors in G-strings as the women spotted a Westbury-based 'Class 56' loco in large-logo livery. (2)

The Sun newspaper showed its political incorrectness via Gary 'Sodomy Kills' Bushell writing: "The saddest truth about the Gay Rights brigade is that they are life's losers, the trainspotters of politics." (3)

And Amanda Cable, Sun Woman Editor, on gays and lesbians after their march. "We left behind on the train the most sordid bunch I have ever met ... They could have been trainspotters from Peckham, bird-watchers from Basildon ..." (4)

While columnist Fiona Wright followed a letter on the Pantie Liberation Front Organisation commenting: "I suppose its better than collecting train numbers." (5)

The play 'Anorak of Fire' - a hit at the Edinburgh Fringe - written by Stephen Dinsdale claims the divorce rate and the fall in population are directly linked to an increase in the number of trainspotters. (6) The one-man show's actor, James Holmes, is a complete idiot anyway, throwing in the bin accurate numbers sent by enthusiasts to use instead of inaccurate ones. (7)

There are visual clues to sexuality according to Andrew Martin. "Steam locos - built for beauty as well as efficiency - were the kings of the transport scene, and symbols of virility. No wonder young men like them," he wrote. "Now, trains resemble bars of soap, and theorists on trainspotting are as likely to equate it with infantile disorders as awakening sexuality. The very word 'train-spotter' has become a generic term for an anal-retentive, and a not very nice-looking one at that." (8)

Talking of arseholes, a prime example is Jonathan Margolis who believes "trainspotters are our worst nightmare," and adds that "we are obviously talking anal retention as an Olympic event here." (9) Penis, too: "For these guys a train is not just a phallic symbol, but an entire phallic percussion section."

There are also the crap claims of enthusiasts stripping off. "'DB' spends his time posing naked by train tracks because he is known in trainspotting circles as a 'gricer' - a hardcore locomotive fanatic who will stop at nothing to catch his prey. Gricers are perhaps described as the punks of trainspotting. They take pictures of big, sexy diesel engines that thunder along inaccessible freight lines in the dead of night. Once a gricer is inside the depot, he drops his trousers in front of the train." (10)

Or how about: "Gricers like to break into rail property late at night and photograph one another atop rare engines - in the nude." (11) Absolute drivel, of course.

Or even: "A train driver almost went off the rails when he saw a trainspotter waving at him from a bridge - wearing only a woman's girdle. The scantily-clad spotter had vanished by the time Transport Police arrived at the bridge at King's Worthy, Hants., where he had waved at the early evening Basingstoke to Winchester train." Crass! There's no hyphen and no evidence the weirdo was trainspotting rather than being a sad exhibitionist. (12)

Or worse: "Transvestism is a cheaper hobby than golf, and more socially acceptable than trainspotting." (13)

In these contexts, I once saw a lad masturbating joyously and jerking his penis in full view as my train passed through the closed Rotherham Masborough station. (14)

Paedophiles did not have the high profile they enjoy today when I was a lad. We just thought a man nicknamed 'The Bamboo Kid' was a fairly harmless simpleton who thought he was a railway policeman, but now recognise him for the pervert he was.

More recently, a prominent railway photographer, John E. Auguston committed a horrific sex attack on a 13-year-old boy by the lineside at Hart Station in 1989. 'Augie' told a friend of mine that he suddenly found himself "spunking all over this lad" who even

comforted his attacker after the ordeal. He added that if his court case appeared in the Mail (Hartlepool) he would sue the paper and even me personally for some reason. Expecting at least six months in jail, he escaped with an 18-month suspended sentence at Teesside Crown Court after admitting indecent assault. Depressed and reclusive, bachelor Auguston, 45, suffocated himself with a binliner at his home in Hartlepool. Coroner Olof Bjorkeröth said a post-mortem revealed he had died from asphyxiation and recorded a verdict of suicide. (15)

Anyway, Auguston was also remembered for a huge nose. You know what they say about people with big noses! But are trainspotters' todgers bigger than average? Alicia Arden, expounding on orgasms, wrote: "There's nothing quite like a Grade A tube-emptying to turn a macho brute into a snivelling sissy. The disturbing thing about climactic behaviour is its unpredictability, I suppose. It's similar to dong size, really. Gigantic hulk, six foot four in his toe nails, biceps like sack of new potatoes. Expected whanger? Eight inches of majestic man muscle. Actual whanger? Two and a half inches of stunted chipolata. Runtish trainspotter in NHS specs and BhS anorak. Expected whanger? Limp linguine. Actual whanger? Perpendicular pork sword. Could double as a yard stick. (16)

That champion of spotters Nicholas Whittaker, whose autobiography attempts to rescue the reputation of railfans, had his priorities: "She was the first girlfriend who'd allowed any heavy petting. But I knew I could never be happy with someone who got so bored in derelict railway buildings." (17)

Not like my eventual wife, where early in our courtship I persuaded her to visit Holbeck depot in Leeds during steam's dying days. After by chance finding one of her colleagues spotting there, I got her to bunk me up the back wall to see what steam engines were lurking in the shadows of the decrepit roundhouse.

It is a fact that "some people sneeze when they become sexually aroused." (18) With me it can be simply thinking of Kate 'Garrawench' Garraway naked or a photograph of a shiny ex-works 'B16' sunbathing at Sexhow. Both can equally make me sneeze. Hold on, where's the tissues? For my nose, not my coupling rod!

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- (1) Dan Collins, 'Silly Buffers', The Sun, 30/1/92
- (2) Folklore Frontiers, No. 16, 1992
- (3) The Sun, 9/4/93
- (4) The Sun, 24/6/93
- (5) Daily Sport, 3/1/94
- (6) Mail, Hartlepool, 27/1/95
- (7) Mail, Hartlepool, 21/1/95
- (8) Andrew Martin, 'Going loco', Evening Standard, 17/10/97
- (9) Jonathan Margolis, 'Platform Souls', The Sunday Times, 16/5/93
- (10) The Guardian, 27/3/96, monitored by The Railway Magazine, September, 1996
- (11) Jonathan Margolis, The Mail on Sunday, 24/5/98
- (12) Daily Star, 5/9/92
- (13) The People, ?
- (14) Paul Screeton, 'Anoraknophobia', Fortean Frontiers, No. 25, 1995
- (15) Mail, Hartlepool, 29/12/95
- (16) Alicia Arden, Women Only, Vol. 1, No. 7, 1993
- (17) Nicholas Whittaker, Platform Souls: The Trainspotter as 20th Century Hero', Gollancz, 1995
- (18) Elizabeth Nash & Richard Fox, 'The Pleasures of Love: An Erotic Guide to the Senses', Pavilion Books, 1995. Also " ... erectile tissue in the nose expands when a person is sexually aroused" claims Dr Alan Hirsch, head of the Smell and Taste Foundation in Chicago, saying that telling a lie can also prompt a release of hormones that triggers the nose - The Sunday Times, 16/5/99. My former colleague Chris Cordner told me he sneezes when he sees a pretty girl and from The Sport, 17/7/98: Salesman Maurice Adams is allergic to big boobs and suffers a sneezing fit when he sees a pair. Maurice, 34, of Geelong, Australia, said: "I get such severe wheezing and sneezing that I have to go to bed." The allergy started five months ago when Maurice's well-endowed wife, Hazel, divorced him. Doctors are trying to treat him with steroids and have warned that until a cure is found he must stop looking at big-breasted women.

\* Researching Mary Baines, the Witch of Tebay, who died in 1811 aged 90, an Internet discussion forum of railway ghosts elicited the tale of a late steam era photographer at Tebay on the West Coast Main Line, David Johnson, finding a cloaked figure he had not noticed at the time on a snap he had taken of a 'Britannia' loco. (1A) Discussion went as to whether it was Baines and if so was it a projection to check her 'carriages without horses' prophecy or her seeing the train from the past? Tangentially participant 'Cufflink' uses a made-up word and Scotswoman 'Thistle' responds that she will file it alongside 'underwear soilingly scary' before adding that the sybil supposedly now haunts the Cross Keys Inn at Tebay. What a broad-minded moderator the site has. (2A)

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- 1A. John & Anne Spencer, The Ghost Handbook, Boxtree, 1988
- 2A. [www.unexplained-mysteries.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=11131&st=0](http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=11131&st=0)

# NEWSLINES

**DIGGING DEBBIE.** Let Peter Paphides gently ease us into this one. "The excitement never quite matches the peaks of those first few days. The initial hours with a piece of new equipment seem to afford endless possibilities. With no set habits acquired, you find yourself doing things that you'll never feel inclined to do again. Remember your first weeks on the web? Infinite possibilities a mere click away! And what did we do? We looked for Debbie McGee dog pictures that never really existed." (The Eye, The Times, Feb. 19-25, 2005) To give some idea of the antiquity of this tale, the following reference exists by chance as below it was a piece about David Blunkett and Jim Davison sharing a rail journey clipped for a special project. The McGee item at the time made no sense to me, as I had not then read how stage magician Daniels had contacted the Daily Sport (15/12/00) after fresh rumours circulated on the Internet about a X-rated photo of his missus and a dog. Allegedly a national newspaper photographer visited the celebrity duo at their mansion for a photo shoot. As he made his way to the front entrance he looked through a ground-floor bedroom window - to spy Debbie having sex with a dog and quicklu took a snap of the compromising sight. Bizarre mag columnist Mark Pilkington claims: "The photographer allegedly saw Debbie on her back being, er, serviced by either a great dane or a collie. Accounts vary." Paul Daniels says they've never had pets and it never happened. (Bizarre, January, 2001) **THE UK Confidential** column reported: "Frankly, Shaft's completely fed-up with all the criticism levelled at Paul Daniels's gorgeous wife, the lovely Debbie McGee. No, honest I am. Because little does she, or anyone else know, that The Sun has firm evidence Debbie is a great dog lover and has done some very impressive unseen work with these charming animals. So let's hear it for Debbie McGee - a woman that will go to any end for mans' (sic) best friend." (Sun, 8/5/99) Like Paphides, I had a look too as son as I was internet literate. Guess what I found: "**POPULAR MAGIC.** There's this photo that's been doing the rounds in media circles for years now. It's a photo of Debbie McGee, relatively attractive young wife of conjuring abomination Paul Daniels. Specifically, it's a photograph - a

Polaroid photograph - of McGee engaging in a certain explicit sex act." (bubblegun.com)

**HANGOVER.** "Never again? Hardly. People who dread hangovers the most are more likely to overindulge again, says a study of 300 people in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology. U.S. researchers found that the people who most fear raging post-session headaches are least able to resist another drink once they are tipsy. Wisconsin-Madison University psychologists think their results may show that people who are more frightened by the possibility of bad outcomes are more likely to drink. Or it might just be due to the fact that they did their experiments on students. (The Times body&soul, 30/4/05)

**TARGET - POPE!** Polish mayor Tadeusz Pawlowski was facing pressure to step down after he used a picture of the late Pope Paul II for target practice. The image of the former Holy Father was pinned up on a target at a shooting range by the mayor, who defended its use, saying that he had always shot at portraits of holy people and Polish heroes, and that no one had complained in the past. (Faith News compiled by Dan Frank, The Times, 18/6/05)

**GRISLY ATTACK.** When a grizzly bear, four, was put in the same five-acre enclosure as four grey wolves, each about the size of a large alsatian, at the Grouse Mountain Refuge for Endangered Wildlife in Vancouver, it was supposed to "provide wildlife with the most natuaral setting possible." Rather too natural for the dozen or so tourists who watched in horror when the alpha-male wolf went nose-to-nose with the bear over a cow bone. With a single swipe of its paw the 500lb bear took the wolf's head off. In the wild the two species seldom meet. The three remaining wolves are now in a separate enclosure. (D. Telegraph, 28/5/05) **Q:** What do you call a bear without a paw? **A:** A bastard.

**CONTRACEPTION.** After tales girls believe such as you can't get pregnant on a first date or by standing up for sex, an Indian birth control expert no less, Mekhai Viavidja, claims lemon juice kills sperm within 30 seconds. He explained: "People in India can't get hold of condoms, so they should place the lemon inside the vagina before sex," But health chiefs have warned that lemon juice is only 60% effective as a contraceptive. (D. Sport, 27/9/04)

# UPDATE

**DRINKING URINE (FF43:4-5).** Epilepsy sufferer Ron Moorhouse left This Morning presenters Phillip Schofield and Lorraine Kelly agog as he gulped back a glass of his own urine, which he claims has stopped his persistent fits. He said he has not had a seizure since he went on the piss eight years ago. "Don't knock it until you have tried it. It works for me," he said. "The body is a natural purifier and urine is referred to in the Bible as the water of life." When Schofield asked him what it tasted like, he replied: "It tastes exactly like what you've eaten." But Dr Chris Steele, the show's resident medic, warned people against recycling their own body fluids. "Do not do this at home," he cautioned. "I do not think it can be good for you. Your kidneys are filters. Urine, uric acid, salts, etc., -- it is meant to be excreted." But he could not explain how it had stopped Mr Moorhouse's fits. (D. Sport, 9/6/05)

While on tour together in Florida in 1984, Ozzy Osbourne and Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx stage a drunken contest to see who is the more outrageous. They both snort a huge line of cocaine. Ozzy decides that he wants more, but there is no coke left. Luckily he spies a line of ants -- so he snorts them. Then he urinates on the floor and proceeds to rehydrate himself by licking it up. Sixx attempts to follow suit, but Ozzy is licking up his urine as well. Believability? Sixx relates the tale in the group's memoir, *From the Dirt*, while Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee says he, too, saw it happen. (The Eye (The Times) March 12-18, 2005)

**LOCAL OUTRAGE (FF47:11; FF48:11).**

Chavs are the 21st century's new underclass -- young, white, jobless or working in Burgerking and wearing naff clothes (or designer label Burberry -- whose boss tolerated interest because of the spending power -- D. Telegraph, 1/1/05), cheap gold jewellery and scraped-back hair. The Urban Dictionary defines chavs as: "Easily spotted. Look for fake gold, the word 'Nike' on clothing. They are of another race, mainly scum. Derived from Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, in full it means Cheltenham Average." But the Mayor of Cheltenham, Tory councillor Rob Gamham, leapt to the town's defence. "I am a Cheltenham Mr Average and I'm definitely not scum," he protested. "We feel insulted by the term." (D. Sport, 13/12/04) This is quoted from an old Gloucester newspaper: The town

council of Cheltenham Spa voted to replace the words "men" and "Women" on some of the public lavatories to "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" -- in order to attract a better class of people. (Privies Galore by Mollie Harris, Alan Sutton, 1990)

**GLOBAL WARMING (FF46:3, passim).**

Apparently as one of those dissenting commentators who remain sceptical of claims that humans are causing potential catastrophic temperature alteration, I am a "climate change denier." Scientists in such a position are vilified as being everything from lackeys of the oil industry to just plain stupid. However, Prof. Philip Stott, of the University of London, found times of historical prosperity have often coincided with unusually warm periods, such as the so-called Medieval Warm Period between 1100 and 1300. In contrast, the Little Ice Age between 1450 and 1890, was characterised by famines, pandemics and social upheaval. "We should be glad we've left that behind," he said. (The Sunday Telegraph, 12/6/05)

**TOM CRUISE'S 'TOP GUN' (FF19:28)**

Always good for contemporary legend, Nigel Farndale claimed that while on a trip to California a few years ago, he saw two doorframes in a back-lot at Paramount Studios in Hollywood. "They were identical, except that one was a smaller version of the other. I asked a passing stagehand what they were for. They had been used in the film 'Top Gun', he explained, the smaller one was for Tom Cruise to walk through, the taller one for his co-star, Kelly McGillis. Haunting story, isn't it? (The Sunday Telegraph, 26/6/05)

**MASTURBATION (FF46:8, passim).**

*Claim.* Looking at pornography increases the quality of men's sperm. Experiments by an evolutionary biologist, Professor Leigh Simmons, have found that it makes the little wrigglers more vigorous and plentiful.

*What you should know.* This is not a marketing ploy from Playboy, but research from the University of Australia published in the journal 'Biology Letters'. The effect doesn't extend to any old smutty pictures, mind. It has to be a man making love to a woman -- all-girl action won't do it. Simmons puts this down to an evolutionary process called 'sperm competition' -- the sperm get more competitive when the man sees another man in action who might impregnate a woman more successfully.

Verdict: So how was the research conducted? Let's just say single-handed. (The Times body&soul, 18/6/05) @ Margaret Reynolds recalls days when the British Library in Bloomsbury had a "closed" cabinet and anyone wishing to consult reading items from it knew that the "dirty desk" was directly under the eye of the librarian. The story went that readers were required to keep both hands visible at all times. (The Times, 16/4/05)

CATHERINE THE GREAT (FF47:16). I referred previously to the Russian empress supposedly suffering horrific injuries when the horse with which she was having sexual congress bolted. Not so, claims Martin Samuel: "Popular myth says that Catherine, Empress of Russia, died attempting sexual intercourse with a horse; but people still call her Great." Odd "intro" for a piece on the romance between Princess Margaret and Peter Townsend. Culminating a brief overview of the royal Fag Ash Lil's life, Samuel sums up: "Hers was no great tragedy and no great love. When she died of a stroke - which was what actually killed Catherine the Great, too - there was little to cling to of significance. If she did what she did out of duty, she was misled; but probably she didn't. The modern message for royalty everywhere is the same. Go mount a horse. See if we care." (The Times, 19/3/05) The Thomas Sheraton pub literary angel directed me to the book "Catherine the Great" by Henri Troyat (Aidan Ellis, 1979). On page 337 we learn: "They knocked on the door of the water closet. No reply. With almost religious respect they pushed open the door. Horror! The Empress was there, inert, half slumped on the carpet against the closet. ... Her eyes were closed, her face dark red, her mouth was foaming and her throat rattled feebly. ... She had had a stroke. ... Although they considered that the Empress was dying they nonetheless persisted in trying out 'all the methods known to the art of medicine'." She died shortly afterwards. @ The subject was covered in the Mythconceptions of Fortean Times (No.162, 2002) \* (The book is in good condition but without dustcover and for sale at £7 inc p&p from me)

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN (FF49:5). Last issue I suggested the passage -- "You mustn't take no notice of my Bill ... is bark's worse'n 'is bite. Some of the kids down Farley way is fair terrors. It was them put 'is back up calling out about who ate the puppy-pie under

Marlowe bridge" -- was a blason populaire, where one community mocks another. FF subscriber Mick Brown, of York, proved me right. He sent a photocopied extract from "Folklore Myths and Legends of Great Britain (Reader's Digest, 1973): "Marlow, Bucks 'Who ate puppy pie under Marlow Bridge?' was a favourite insult hurled by Eton schoolboys at Windsor bargees who passed them on the river. The story goes that some time during the last century (19th - Ed), a cook in an Eton household noticed that food was constantly disappearing from her larder. The cook planned to pay out the thief and so, when a litter of unwanted puppies had been drowned in the house, he put them all into a large pie dish, covered them with a golden crust and put them on the larder wall. Sure enough, it was gone two hours later, and next day the remains of the pie were discovered beneath Marlow Bridge. It was assumed that the bargees had stolen it and, finding the contents far less pleasant than their usual plunder, had abandoned it on their journey."

GUITAR DUEL (FF22:8-16). Mick Goss wrote of how Eric Clapton won the wife of fellow rock superstar George Harrison in a prolonged guitar duel. Pattie Harrison being the trophy that went with winning the impromptu contest. Now 60, Pattie has launched a photography course, taking would-be students to Tuscany. As the Mandrake column notes: "Sadly for single male guests of a certain age, Pattie -- for whom Eric Clapton wrote his song Layla, to implore her to leave George Harrison -- is spoken for. She and the property developer Rod Weston have been 'an item' for more than 12 years." (The Sunday Telegraph, 24/7/05) @ Incidentally, my wife and I were going to call our second child Leyla Marie until a boy arrived.

SPEED RECORD (FF46:13). Shedding doubt upon loco City of Truro's final speed, D.H. Landau's estimate of the power output required would pit the puny 4-4-0 with modern giants such as King, Duchess and even Deltic locos. On the last quarter mile, the acceleration horsepower alone would have been 3,250. The editor adds: "Bearing in mind that several eminent train-timers doubt whether No. 3440 ever achieved 100mph, let alone 104, these latest calculations would seem to lay to rest some of the more preposterous claims that have been made over the years about its performance." (The Railway Magazine, July 2004)



## TROLLEY HOAX ROCKS GALLERY

BRITISH Museum staff were left red-faced yesterday after displaying an early cave painting – of primitive man pushing a **SHOPPING TROLLEY**.

Staff at the London attraction only spotted the 10in by 6in rock after a serial hoaxer, Banksy, admitted sticking it up. The painting, Early Man Goes To Market, showed a spear-wielding caveman pushing a trolley, and a pig.



Banksy's previous targets include New York galleries, where he placed paintings of a can of Tesco tomato soup and a woman in a gas mask.

**TOP. TROLLEYS**  
(FF21:4-6). Art spoof (D. Mirror, 20/5/05). **RIGHT. RUDE PLACE NAME** (FF48:11). Springclean has produced this (Priva Eye, 21/12/79)



**BIZARRE SKINCARE.** Singer Kym Marsh told how she rubbed her piss on her zits and it worked. (FF48:10). Commenting in the film *Inside Deep Throat*, Catherine Shoard informs us that 'one woman witters on about the skincare benefits of sperm' (The Sunday Telegraph, 12/6/05) while at the London premiere of *Miss Congeniality 2*, Sandra Bullock 'revived an old modelling myth by declaring that haemorrhoid cream does wonders for faces: "Bottom cream really does help against wrinkles." Is it Botox for buttox then? And where's she going to suggest that women start putting their lipstick?' (The Times, 12/3/05)

@ Meanwhile, 33-year-old Playboy model Nikki Ziering (pictured) dragged in to add glamour to *Celebrity Love Island*, revealed she'd had a special moisturiser made out of human foreskins. Offering a fellow contestant some to try, she said: "I wanted to give you one of these. Use it on dry skin and it warms. It's the most amazing stuff. It's got, like, human foreskins in it." (D. Mirror, 11/6/05)

**RUMOURS OF NAMES** (FF40:4-6, passim). Former Tinsley favourite 47358, after having received a repaint into Fragonset livery at Barrow Hill, was pictured on March 20, 2004, at Derby. "A renaming ceremony as Tinsley Traction Depot is believed to be on the cards" went the caption (Forty Seven Forum, ? ). It wasn't.

@ Another outbreak of platform end rumour sullied *Inter City* magazine, which reported:

Class 37. The denaming of 37069, 37275 and 37712 losing one of its Cardiff Rod Mill plates heralds the start of the proposed metals sector renaming programme, details of which are as follows: 37501 Teesside Steelmaster (correct); 37508 Thornaby TMD (erroneous); 37510 British Steel Workington (erroneous); 37714 British Steel Shelton (actually Thornaby TMD); 37715 British Steel Teesside (correct); 37716 British Steel Corby (correct); 37717 Stainless Pioneer (correct); 37718 Hartlepool Pipe Mill (correct); 37883 Dalzell (erroneous); 37903 Appleby Frodingham (never named). Class 56. More proposed namings: 56046 Tremorfa Steel Works (never named); 56048 The Cardiff Rod Mill (never named); 56064 British Steel Llanwern (never named). (*Inter City*, Vo. 20 No. 7, 1992)

@ Plates naming Freightliner's Class 86/5 No. 86501 as *Crewe Basford Hall* following its regearing at Adtranz, Crewe, were fitted for the works open days in 2003, but the cord was never pulled and they were removed a day later it is believed.

666 (FF45:3, *passim*). The mark of the Antichrist is 616 rather than 666 say scholars studying 3rd century fragments of Revelation. The Rev Professor David Parker, Professor of New Testament Textual Criticism and Palaeography at the University of Birmingham, said: "This is an example of gematria, where numbers are based on the numerical values of letters in people's names. Early Christians would use numbers to hide the identity of people they were attacking: 616 refers to the Emperor Caligula. This adds weight to those who believe that it is a reference to Caligula's attempt to desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem. (Faith News edited by Twiston Davies, The Times, 7/5/05)

**SAINT GEORGE'S DAY** (FF49:15). The suggested abandonment of St George as patron saint of England was discussed in the letters pages of The Times. Defending him, the Rev Rex Hurrell (21/6/05) calling St George "an obscure Palestinian soldier of the 4th century", Gerry Hanson responded that St George of Lydda "has been described as a high-ranking officer in the time of Diocletian and is said to have served in Britain. His saintly deeds are well documented, as is his standing form for the Christian faith -- a stand which resulted in his martyr's death." (25/6/05)

@ Meanwhile, Wetherspoon pubs celebrate St George's Day with Bombardier ale, whose brewery is campaigning to have St George's Day declared a national holiday (add your name at [www.bombardier.co.uk](http://www.bombardier.co.uk))

**THE HUM** (FF49:12). I have been uneasy with any attachment of the "hummadruz" to modern inventions and machinery for it was heard long before the Industrial Revolution. Robert Matthews's questions and answers column suggested a medical origin which would be consistent with the tormenting manifestation's antiquity. He writes: "The accounts of several readers lead me to suspect at least part of the explanation lies much closer to home. Malcolm Mourant, of Bromley, Kent, described how he heard The Hum for several years, until he was diagnosed with high blood pressure and was prescribed pills to control it. 'From then on, The Hum disappeared,' he said. Dave Thacker, of Bognor Regis, Sussex, has had a similar experience. 'I noticed that The Hum had a regular rhythm, like a heartbeat. Next time I heard the sound I was listening to was of the blood circulating round my body.' A

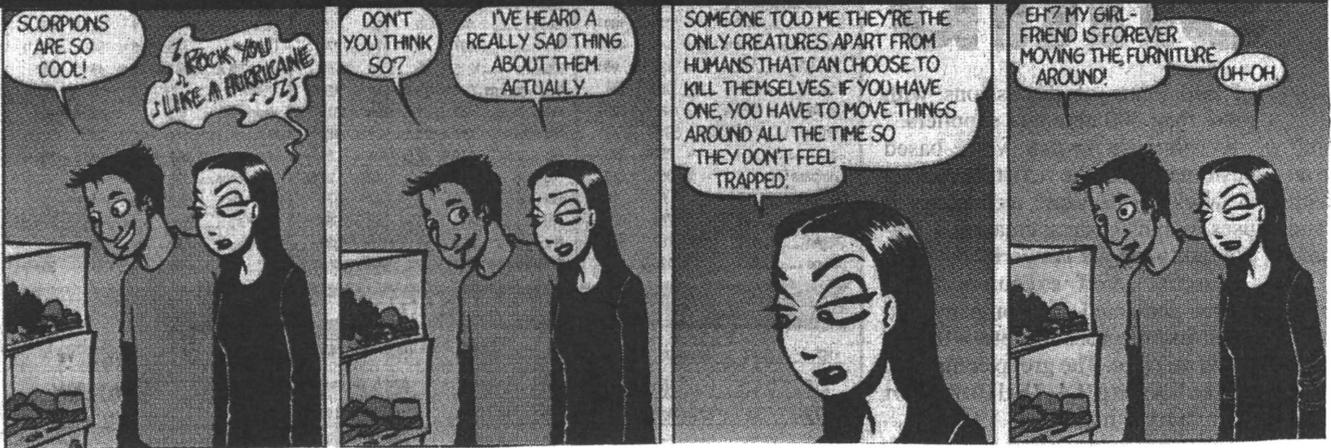
quick check of the medical literature reveals the existence of a phenomenon called 'velous hum.' There are many causes, ranging from high blood pressure to disorders of the Eustachian tube or middle ear, which amplify the sound of the circulation system. Metabolic disorders such as anaemia or thyroid problems, which affect the flow of blood, can also be involved. I am beginning to believe that The Hum has a variety of causes. Even so, those afflicted should consider seeing a GP to rule out a medical origin for their experience of this distressing phenomenon." (The Sunday Telegraph, 19/6/05)

**BRITART** (FF42:3-8, *passim*). Barmy grants time. Choccolic Prudence Staite, 25, has won £5,000 from the Prince's Trust to make chocolate casts of her breasts and bum. Visitors to her exhibition in Parmington, Gloucs., can then eat them. "I'm very inspired by the story of Hansel and Gretel," she said. "I wanted to create an adult version of this." (Metro, 27/6/05)

**LOCAL OUTRAGE** (FF47:11). Food giant Heinz could be forced to scrap an advert for salad cream after it sparked complaints. In the commercial a woman says: "If salad cream's not just for salad, are bird baths just for birds? Like ... shoe racks just for shoes or could they rack up Swindon's most wanted into an orderly queue of shame?" But furious residents say it implies the town is overrun with criminals -- and want it taken off-air. Council leader Mike Bawden fumed: "It's a load of cobblers." Heinz chief Scott Garret said: "We are sorry if it has caused offence." (D. Mirror, ?)

**MISCHIEF** (FF49:11). More than 1,000 callers, including a man of 83, phoned Eva Becker when an advert in her local paper said she was "the best lay in town." It also said she wanted lots of men for sex and age and appearance was not important. Eva, 33, had a nervous breakdown. Her ex-boyfriend, Jochen Holzmann, who placed the advert for revenge after she threw him out, was jailed for six months in Stuttgart, Germany. (D. Sport, 10/6/05)

**HUNTING LEY MISUSES** (FF49:1). A character in the detective drama series *New Tricks* who found a body in a forest blurted out spuriously "there was a ley-line, from before Roman times." (B.B.C.1, 27/6/05)



(ENGLISH SCORPIONS (FF46:3). That scorpion colony in Sheerness Docks since the late 1880s got a mention; there have also been 14 fatal viper bites since 1876, the last in 1975; "and all of our spiders (don't be shocked) are venomous. They paralyse their prey by injecting venom into them through their fangs. The amounts are so small that we'd hardly feel it, but a species caled the false widow, now common in sheds on south-east England, can inflict a painful bite and cause delusions." (The Times body&soul, 30/4/05)

The reader's letter (right) suggests the rail traveller saw snakes and a scorpion from a train window -- or had he been bitten by a false widow!? (Sunday Telegraph, 1/5/05)

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY (FF47: 5-7). Alzheimer's is so tragic in one so young. Keira has told how co-star Adrien Brody gave her brandy and vodka to calm her nerves before filming her first sex scene. But the 19-year-old was referring to the thriller *The Jacket*, not *The Hole*, where she bared her so-called boobs aged 16. Of her latest eric, Keira said of the alcohol cocktail: "It helped, but doing these scenes feels completely unreal. You get on with someone and all of a sudden you're naked and away at it." (Sun, 14/3/05)

BEOWULF (FF27:3-7). Long-time readers will recall Mick Goss and I have very different locations for the action in *Beowulf* -- Hart, near Hartlepool IS the Hrothgar Anglo-Saxon Wetherspoon's. It is to be the subject of two new film productions (a first release in 1999 starring Christopher Lambert, received a critical mauling). The literary magazine *PN Review* says that one future version, a £12m Briish-Canadian-Icelandic co-production adds several characters, but remains true to "the horror, beauty and the doom" of the original story. The second *Beowulf* will be a £70m Hollywood epic, directed by Robert Zemeckis. The script is co-written by Roger Avary, a compadre of Tarantino's, and we are promised "a sort of Dark Ages *Trainspotting*, filled with mead and blood and madness." (The Times weekendreview, 21/5/05)

## A wallaby seen from a train

I fear that Jeremy Clarke was merely unfortunate in not spotting more wildlife from the train when he tried the new railway nature trails (Focus, April 24). As a frequent train user I can assure him that over the years I have seen a wallaby, several adders, grass snakes, herons and a scorpion (I don't know how it got to Ashdown Forest).

Perhaps Mr Clarke should travel on one of the slow trains as they do not appear to startle the wildlife. It is to be regretted that he new guide does not mention that the last dragon in England was spotted at Faygate (which is on the railway line to Horsham). Unfortunately this was before the railway.  
Niall Mitchell  
Crawley, West Sussex

NEW CRAZES (FF47:7-9). Scoubidou is an unlikely fad, but has entranced my grandchildren. For those ignorant of its existence, it consists of 3ft plastic cords in garish colours which are knotted into a variety of patterns. The folklore bit is that the phenomemon was supposedly invented by fans of the French singer Sacha Distel, who, following a concert, quickly fashioned a bracelet for their hero out of wire insulators. They named the gift "Scoubidou" after the title of Distel's 1958 hit record. (The Sunday Telegraph, 19/6/05)

APHRODISIAC. Contrary to perceived opinion, ground rhino horn is not used as an aphrodisiac, but is prescribed in Chinese medicine for everything from headache and toothache to infertility and fevers. (The Times, 9/4/05)

### JACK & JILL (FF40:1/7)



# PROTO-LEGENDS

\* We all know someone who believes the characters in TV soaps to be as real as their family and neighbours. A tale which relies for its believability on this premise centres upon two old women who got on a North Yorkshire Moors Railway train at Goathland, intending to travel to Pickering. However, they failed to read the notice which directed them over the footbridge, which resulted in them going in the opposite direction to Grosmont. When asking at Grosmont how they could get to Pickering (the train they had not caught was the last service of the day) they were told that they would have to pay for a taxi to come from Whitby to Grosmont to take them to Pickering. At this point one of the old dears inquired: "Can't we use Vernon Cripps?" (For those readers who are baffled, Vernon Cripps is the taxi owner in the TV series *Heartbeat*, based in Goathland, alias Aidensfield). The two old biddies were told that he was around in 1969 but not nowadays. (Rail Express, December, 2004)

\* The dawn of independence in Africa was a blissful time. In the Congo, Patrice Lumumba told King Baudoin of Belgium, 'We are no longer your monkeys.' Vice-President Richard Nixon was so carried away by the celebrations in Ghana that he slapped one man on the shoulder and asked him how it felt to be free. 'I wouldn't know, sir,' he replied. 'I'm from Alabama.' (The Sunday Telegraph, 12/6/05)

\* Joseph Berkas, an Austrian philatelist who got into a spot of bother following a misunderstanding at his digs, was given an absolute discharge when his case went before a court in Vienna. Asked to explain why he had burst into the bedroom of his landlady's attractive teenage daughter, torn away the towel with which she was drying herself and began a close fingertip search of her backside, Berkas explained that he had left a valuable stamp soaking in the bath and returned to find that it had vanished. (The Encyclopaedia of Sexual Trivia by Dr Robin Smith, Robson Books, 1990)

\* Police chased a van after reports that a young woman had been bundled into the back -- only to find they had intercepted an elaborate sex game. They were told three

men had roughly manhandled the struggling blonde woman -- who was handcuffed, blindfolded, gagged and staggering on high heels in fishnet stockings. The 22 officers, believing they were foiling a kidnap plot, tracked the van for 30km in a helicopter, squad cars and motorbikes. They finally blocked the road in Heerlen, Holland, and forced the half-dressed men to lie face down at gunpoint. But when the woman's gag was removed, she screamed: "You stupid bastards. I've been trying to set this up for months. You've ruined it just when it was getting interesting." The three men, aged 36, 39 and 58, were freed. "We advised her next time to arrange to be kidnapped in her own home," a police spokesman said. (Metro, 9/3/05)

\* The same freebie newspaper that day also told of a Romanian adulterer who lost his wife and mistress on the same day after mixing up their surprise presents. Petru Cioaba, from the eastern town of Focasany, bought identical necklaces for the two women, with their initials and a personal message engraved. But he sent each the wrong necklace and soon received a call from his mistress telling him he was dumped and a message from his wife's lawyer saying she was filing for divorce. (Metro, 9/3/05)

\* Sandi Toksvig recalled how one day Winston Churchill visited a naval base and was taken to an area where there were many submerged wrecks. He watched as the system located a target and a depth-charge was dropped. After a few seconds, there was a huge underwater explosion. Several pieces of wreckage came to the surface, including a door emblazoned with the letters "WC". Churchill quipped: "The navy always knew how to pay proper compliments." (The Sunday Telegraph, 3/7/05)

\* Allegedly the first reported case of death by computer game has been recorded in South Korea, after a man of 28 who played for 50 hours in an internet cafe dropped dead of heart failure. During a three-day marathon he took only short breaks for the loo and to take naps. The victim died from exhaustion minutes after finally logging off. (The Times, 13/8/05)

# JAMES HEWITT

**W**ith a reputation as a ladies' man par excellence, an eyebrow arched in the style of Roger Moore-era Bond and

a champagne flute in hand, Major James Hewitt has become the nation's most notorious, but respected, cad. ZOO met him for a few glasses of Moët to ask about wrestling Victoria Silvstedt, Princess Diana's sexual prowess and his coincidental resemblance to Prince Harry...

**Speaking of dirty girls, you once pulled Jodie Marsh. She said in the papers last year that "James and I are the real thing." Tell all...**

Ah yes, young Jodie. We met on a TV show and went to a few parties together. We certainly hitch up occasionally...

**Hitch up?**

Well, she's wild. I can't keep up with her so that means she's pretty wild. We used to go to some noisy places, that's all I remember.

**What would you give her on a scale of one to 10?**

Well, "I'd give her one" is a bad joke, isn't it - so I'd definitely give her two!

**People have noted a certain physical similarity between you and Prince Harry. Do you think you look alike?**

I'm not going to say anything.

**It's definitely just a coincidence, then?**

I've got absolutely nothing to say to you about that.

**Just noting the resemblance, James, nothing more... What do you imagine Princess Di would have thought about Charles marrying Camilla?**

She'd have said, "Good luck to them." She would have recognised the pressure and press interest because she was so used to unfair press coverage. And for that matter I think the press in this country are despicable.

**Is it true Diana was a bit of a flirt? Was she the Abi Titmuss of her day?**

What a question! Diana could be quite mischievous. Abi's a little different, but no less appealing. But Diana was a beauty.

**What was Diana like in bed? Better than Jodie?**

The situation that Princess Diana and I were in made it exciting and sexy because it was risky. The danger spiced it up a bit, if you know what I mean. Diana was a dashing lady in every sense - she didn't burn out or fade away, did she?

(ZOO, May 10-16, 2005)

## The wit and wisdom of James Hewitt

MARCH 27 2005 *The Sunday Telegraph*

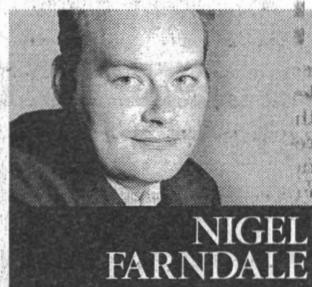
**E**ddie Izzard has a good theory about coolness. You should imagine it as a circle that doesn't quite join, starting with "very cool" at one end and going all the way round to "pretty uncool" at the other - the point being that the difference between the two conditions is slight. The example he gives to illustrate this is of having a single toothpick dangling out of one corner of your mouth. This is cool. But stick a second toothpick in the opposite corner and you've gone all the way round to uncool.

I mention this paradox because the more I contemplate the strange life of James Hewitt, the more I am convinced that the divide between clever and stupid is, like that between cool and uncool, extremely narrow.

It has been announced that "Major" Hewitt is to take part in an ITV programme called *Celebrity Wrestling*. This seems a sensible use of his time, not least because he ought to be good at it, having learned unarmed combat in the Army. And while Hewitt seems an amiable and insouciant man, I imagine that he has hidden depths of aggression. He did, after all, once threaten to kill Piers Morgan, after the *Daily Mirror* editor arranged for his "Princess Diana letters" to be stolen and then handed to Buckingham Palace.

According to Morgan's "diaries" the two former enemies bumped into each other in a bar not long ago and got on famously. When Morgan asked Hewitt how he had managed to persuade the Palace to give him his letters back he replied: "Well, let's just say I put a bit of pressure on."

What possible leverage could Hewitt, who has just updated his autobiography, have left to apply on the Palace? My guess is that he referred in some way to that famous rumour about him. When I asked him about this in 1999 he dismissed it as



NIGEL FARNDALE

nonsense. Yet by making occasional enigmatic references to it, he manages to keep the rumour alive. This must be useful for his career as a minor celebrity. And it makes me suspect that the man might not be as dim as he likes to pretend he is.

Or rather it did until the photographer John Stoddart told me about a shoot he did with Hewitt for *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* recently. Stoddart suggested to Hewitt, as a sick joke, that they should find a car wreck and take a picture of him standing in front of it. Hewitt thought he was being serious and said: "Er, yah, sure, if you like, why not." Stoddart had to explain to him why not. "Crikey," Hewitt said. "Hadn't thought of that."

**I** was abroad for the wedding last week of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles and so watched it on BBC World. I don't know whether they used different camera angles to the terrestrial BBC news team but when Prince Harry was walking down that wide path towards the chapel, just as he was coming into view around a corner, he did a goose-step, presumably to amuse his brother who was walking alongside him.

Everyone I was watching with commented on this in amazement. I expected the papers to be full of the story when I returned but have found no mention of it. Had my eyes deceived me? Am I going mad? Will someone write and tell me they saw it, too. Please. (17/4/05)

**T**hank you to all who wrote to tell me that they too saw Prince Harry goose-stepping at the royal wedding. Interestingly most added: "And good luck to him. It shows he has a sense of humour." This, I guess, is a good illustration of the difference between what members of the public actually think and what tabloids like to think we think. (24/4/05)

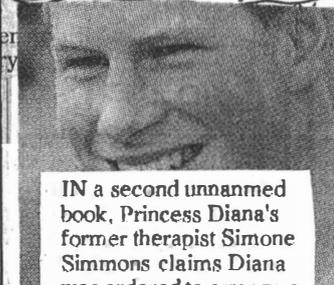
## Ben Thompson

MAY 15 2005

*The Sunday Telegraph*

**I**t's a rare thing, these days, to turn on the television and see something that seems genuinely strange. Of course, in the upside-down world of reality TV, what would once have been unthinkable is now entirely commonplace.

For instance, 10 days ago, a show called *Fool Around*, on Channel 4's digital sister-channel E4, confronted viewers with the less than edifying spectacle of Princess Diana's former paramour Major James Hewitt being (and it's hard to know how else to put this in a respectable newspaper) manually gratified by a woman who was pretending to be single in the hope of winning £10,000, while her boyfriend watched next door on CCTV. And no-one (not even Hewitt himself) seemed to bat an eyelid.



**I**n a second unnamed book, Princess Diana's former therapist Simone Simmons claims Diana was ordered to arrange a blood test for Harry to prove Hewitt was not his father. As did William. She says both tests proved Prince Charles the father and that Diana awarded Chas 1 out of 10 for love-making. Simmons informed Diana of gossip surrounding Harry's paternity and Di told her: "If people worked the dates out properly they would see it is nothing to do with Hewitt. It's pretty obvious he's a Windsor. In colouring he's a Spencer but he has Charles's eyes." (Daily Mail, 30/6/05)

# OLDIES

## BUT GOODIES

XANTHE CLAY writes in her readers' recipes column: There is an urban legend, circulated by e-mail, which turns up in my inbox every few months. If you haven't heard it yet, you will soon. It tells the story of a woman who asks a cafe for the recipe for its fabulous chocolate-chip cookies. The recipe is given to her, but her credit card is charged \$250. Incensed, she takes revenge by sending the recipe to everyone she knows, and encouraging them to pass it on. It is not true, of course. Similar stories have been around for decades. In the 1980s, Mrs Fields (of the cookie company) had to publish a disclaimer denying that her recipe had ever been sold. But this much is true: the perfect biscuit recipe is a bit of a holy grail. We're all hunting for that chocolate chip, ginger or lemon, nutty, oaty, buttery nirvana. (The Daily Telegraph weekend, 16/4/05)

PART of the former Yugoslavia is the setting for the best man and his bride stuck for an excuse. The wedding reception of the week took place in Croatia, where, mid-festivities, bride and best man sneaked off to a washroom to make their extremely fond farewells. A friend of the bridegroom then walked in on them, causing the bride to go into muscle spasm. This meant the pair could not be separated even by a bucket of cold water. Word spread, guests came to see, or try to prise them apart, but all to no avail. Medics had to be called, and the bride duly separated from the best man. Minutes later, her husband informed her she was now separated from him, too. (Independent on Sunday, 5/6/05)

DEFINITELY the last item from this prolific book of contemporary legend. A bomb disposal squad was called to the main postal sorting office in the French port of Le Havre after one of the postmen detected a sinister ticking inside a parcel he was handling. The young lady to whom it was addressed was asked if she could account for it and, covered with confusion, gave her explanation and sent the bomb men on their way. Inside the parcel was a battery-operated vibrator that had somehow become switched on during transit. (The Encyclopaedia of Sexual Trivia by Dr Robin Smith, Robson Books, 1990) Bomb specialists rushed to Sittingbourne post office,

Kent, to defuse a vibrating package only to discover it was an electric toothbrush. (D. Mirror, 23/4/05)

MY WIFE-TO-BE, on a visit to the Palace of Westminster, somehow knocked Lord Bob Boothby over. Reading Robert Rhodes James's biography of whom Frank Johnson calls "the first Tory television personality - 50 years before Boris", he relates how as food minister during the Blitz, Boothby would tour the East End after German raids. "They burnt my mother yesterday," a cockney youth told him. Boothby asked whether she would live. "Nah," the youth replied. "They don't fuck about in a crematorium." (The Daily Telegraph, 30/4/05)

ANOTHER columnist, one who should know better, Ben Macintyre, had Lord Nelson wrong-footed. He wrote: 'The slain hero's corpse was pickled in a barrel of brandy for the long voyage back to London: after the body had been removed, the brandy was distributed to Nelson's sailors, who drank to his memory in what must have been a disgusting funeral libation: brandy with tincture of dead admiral.' A cursory visit to internet sites on Nelson's demise would show the drinking brandy was pure fiction. Macintyre also noted how "relics of Nelson were seized on like fragments of the true Cross: locks of his hair, the 48 pieces of his flag, even the musket ball removed from his spine, which was presented to the king and remains in Windsor." (The Times, 26/6/05)

A TV girl, Inka Blumensaat of German station NDR, was sent to report on an orphan squirrel being raised by a pet cat. Inka had hoped to film the heartwarming tale of the unlikely animal pals, but as the squirrel climbed up her leg she panicked. Cat owner Heike Reher, 45, of Luebeck, said: "She leapt about like a mad woman and squashed it. Everyone looked in horror where the squirrel lay in a pool of blood. I was in tears." NDR chiefs apologised. (Sun, 28/5/05)

John Jenkins, 35, suffered bad burns when his ciggie ignited methane gas in a portable loo at Blacksville, West Virginia. (Sun, 4/6/05)

Former Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee confessed to crapping in an air-conditioning duct to exact revenge on moaning hotel staff. He took a dump on a tray before hiding it in the vents. (D. Sport, 26/11/04)

## LUNCHTIME LEGENDS



Have you noticed how every food seems to have its own website these days? Now we have [www.lovecelery.co.uk](http://www.lovecelery.co.uk) and [www.lovebeetroot.co.uk](http://www.lovebeetroot.co.uk). There it all is: recipes, history, nutrition. But the bit I always find most entertaining on these sites is the trivia. For example, it transpires that the stick of celery considered *de rigueur* in a Bloody Mary only dates back to the Sixties,

when a guest had nothing to stir his cocktail with and picked up a stick of celery from the buffet.

That got me thinking about some of the other stories of improvisations that have led to classic recipes and everyday foods – some true, some apocryphal, some a mixture of the two. For example, apparently we owe chocolate-chip cookies to one Ruth Wakefield who, in 1930, was making chocolate cookies at the Toll House Inn in Massachusetts when she ran out of baking chocolate. So she broke up some semi-sweet chocolate and added the pieces to the dough – but instead of melting, they stayed in little chips.

We have crisps because a chef called George Crum at the Moon Lake Lodge in Saratoga Springs lost his cool when a customer kept sending his chips back because they weren't thin and crispy enough. Crum sliced some potatoes paper-thin, fried them until they were brown – and sent them out to the customer, who loved them. So "Saratoga Chips" were born.

### MY FAVOURITE STORY HAS IT THAT HOT DOGS WERE BORN IN 1901 IN NEW YORK ON A COLD DAY DURING A BASEBALL GAME

Depending on which story you believe, Eggs Benedict either came about when Lemuel Benedict called for a version of it as a hangover cure at the Waldorf Hotel, New York, or when Mr and Mrs LeGrand Benedict, bored with the unchanging menu at Delmonico's, also in New York, asked for something new, and got eggs and ham on a muffin, covered with hollandaise sauce.

The most colourful version of the origin of tarte tatin is that it was invented by the Tatin sisters at their restaurant in Lamotte-Beuvron, when they forgot to make the apple tart, so improvised by covering caramelised apples in pastry, baking the result and turning it upside down to serve. Beef carpaccio dates back to Harry's Bar in Venice in 1950, when a regular customer came in on a special diet which prohibited cooked meat. The answer? Raw beef cut wafer-thin, decorated with a mayonnaise-based sauce which they named after the Italian painter, Vittore Carpaccio.

One version of the origin of doughnuts is that a 19th-century sea captain used to give his crew pieces of fried dough to eat, and to keep them from flying around while the boat pitched about, he jammed them on to the spokes of the ship's wheel. Eventually the cook started making them with holes in.

My favourite story of all is undoubtedly apocryphal. Legend has it that hot dogs were born in 1901 in New York on a cold day during a baseball game, when ice-cream and soda weren't selling. The caterers bought up a load of dachshund sausages, put them in rolls and shouted: "Get them while they're red-hot." A cartoonist portrayed the scene with barking sausages inside the rolls, but he couldn't spell dachshund, so he captioned his cartoon "hot dog". ■

THE  TIMES 9.07.05

RIGHT: Ignition by mobile returns (FF46:1) This is a "First person" article by Melissa Kite (The Sunday Telegraph, 24/4/05). In fact just such an incident proved to be the solution to a crime in the excellent first series of *New Tricks*.

# Stand up and fight, Mr Cabbie!

**B**eing yelled at by a black-cab driver is not a comfortable experience at the best of times, but it's downright humiliating when he's accusing you of attempted mass murder.

Earlier this week, my mobile phone rang as I pulled up at a petrol station to buy a sandwich, and I was chatting happily into it as I climbed out of the car and began to walk inside.

A bloodcurdling scream from a man at the pumps filling up a hackney cab stopped me in my tracks. "STOP! You can't do that! You're gonna cause an explosion and kill us all!" Instinctively, I looked down. From the expression on his face I could only think that I had mistakenly dressed myself in an explosives belt that morning.

"Turn it off! Quick! Your phone! Look, it's all there!" He waved madly to a sign on the petrol pump.

In panic, I cut off my mother mid-flow and scoured the sign. Sure enough, above the No Smoking warning was an enormous picture of a mobile phone, crossed out.

By now other people were staring at me, some shaking their heads, some smiling gratefully at the heroic cabbie who had nailed a lunatic about to kill a dozen innocent men, women and children. I walked back to my car and drove away shamefacedly.

But I couldn't quite believe what I had been told. How exactly was my phone going to cause an explosion?

I rang Shell, at whose petrol station I had suffered the abuse. A spokesman said he didn't know the reason for the rule, but that someone would call me back. (They didn't.) In the meantime, I quickly found evidence that the mobile-phone warning is an urban myth.

A few weeks ago, Dr Adam Burgess, of the University of Kent, published a study

investigating every story of forecourt explosion "caused" by phones since 1989. All of them, he discovered, were based on bunkum. Mobile phones do not generate sparks.

Richard Coates, BP's fire-safety officer, found that of 243 petrol-station fires most were caused by sparks igniting petrol vapour, but that the sparks had resulted from static electricity created by the contact between driver and car seat (this is why you often get a mild shock when filling up your car). In other words, there was more chance of a spark coming out of that cab driver's bottom and killing us all than of it being created by my mobile phone.

Meanwhile, on the basis of a few hoax internet scares, companies such as Shell have introduced mobile-phone bans on forecourts throughout the world. In the USA, the state of Connecticut has proposed a \$250 penalty for transgressors. It can only be a matter of time before New Labour catches on to this lucrative new stealth tax.

This isn't the only recent instance of health-and-safety regulations gone mad. Last month, a proposal to give elderly people napkins printed with a helpline number was stopped because of fears they might choke on them (the possibility that the pensioners might not eat the napkins but instead use the number in a crisis did not occur to Tewkesbury Council); a shopkeeper was banned from flying Saint George flags by Liverpool Council because they could "fall and hit pedestrians"; and a market town's flower show was cancelled because it was deemed too risky to hold it without licensed stewards.

You'd think that the public would be so heartily sick of such rules by now that they would rebel, rather than accept them blindly. What happened to your argumentative streak, Mr Cabbie? Stand up and fight!

# Books

EXPLORE PHANTOM BLACK DOGS edited by Bob Trubshaw (Explore Books, £12.95)

I hate dogs. Toxicara-carrying, four-legged shit machines. They may aid the blind, the shepherd, Customs officers, Bob Carolgees, but essentially they are one stage above wasps as unnecessary creatures. Having been bitten by an Airedale terrier as a child I am scared of all dogs. Unfortunately my wife had a corgi when we were courting and surprisingly it took to me. Cue the paranormal. Working in Hull, my day off varied for my trips to the West Riding to visit my fiancée, but she assures me that 30 minutes or so before my arrival Sandy would lie with his nose pressed to the kitchen door and would not let me in before I took him for a walk.

I had an ABC experience with a black pan-ther in 1983, but never an equivalent black dog one, yet Jeremy Harte notes interestingly that a number of distinguished scholars have encountered supernatural black dogs - Kathleen Wiltshire, Stephen Jenkins and Ethel Rudkin to name three. However, there are similarities in a narrative collected by Jennifer Westwood where a phantom black dog intervened to save the life of a cyclist, just as I was once saved on a road by a bird sacrificing its life for me in similarly bizarre circumstances. (The Shaman, No. 9:6-7, 1985) Westwood's contribution makes a point between the dual nature of the shuck in Norfolk traditions where the dog can act as a guardian or be to a lesser extent a death portent; where she covers much ground, including the shuck name derivation and descriptions of the many apparitions.

Jeremy Harte makes many salient points, such as the distribution of black dogs reflects more on the presence of investigating folklorists rather than a true statistical analysis or more pertinently the nature of the phenomenon. Yorkshire has its fair share of sightings, but unlike more folkloristically favoured areas lacks a champion to produce a single study of such as the Gytrash of Goathland. Harte also provides a bibliography listing all black dog references county by county, followed by a motif index, plus note on imagery, adding up to one-fifth of the book.

Bob Trubshaw's overview of black dogs in the U.S. is a lesson in how what seems a fallow subject sprouts through interaction with

the internet. A couple of articles put online brought a huge response from Americans who had encountered the phenomenon. As Bob comments, much could be learned from contrasting Old and New World accounts.

As for Simon J. Sherwood's chapter on a psychological approach, I almost gave up through the interruption of bracketed references making up a sizeable proportion of the article. Surely as most were repeated umpteen times they could have been numbered (with small figures) and referenced at the end of the chapter. This may be allowable, even *infra dig* in an academic publication, but is anathema to the general reader and even someone like myself who likes to see a researcher has done his homework. As for the content, it is typically forlorn (or lazy) in parading the possible explanations and coming to no consensus. After my reading rhythm had been buggered, I'm damned if I'm going to feel sympathetic.

Alby Stone is another reference transgressor, but worse a dubious commentator (having previously been bemused by his *ley* comments) who here fails to note that Edinburgh's Greyfriars Bobby (not Bobbie) myth has long been debunked as fiction. I must admit that the only plus I can give Stone is his concluding remark that all dogs are dangerous, and although he does not use the term he denotes their folkloric 'interstitial' state as halfway between domestic and feral.

Back by the top of page 2, I had already sussed a problem. Bob Trubshaw reasonably suggests "phantom black dogs are essentially culturally-specific spontaneous psychological responses that might arise in any society familiar with large dogs." What I wonder were the breeds around when black dog spectres were in their heyday? I never read of them in modern times, not even during the rabid social panic which labelled all German species (dachshunds excepted) as 'devil dogs' and painted every sink estate as a breeding ground for canine killing machines. Yet I never heard of spectral pit bulls or 'Staffies.' Of course there were those commentators who believed the alien big cat population had eliminated phantom dogs, but Harte writes that sightings of black dogs "continued through the 80s and 90s at much the usual rate, regardless of the existence (or otherwise) of British big cats." (Continued in Page 18)

## Magazines

**FORTEAN TIMES.** Newsstand. Now £3.60.

No. 193. Timely explorations of material in 'The Da Vinci Code', history of the Templars and an original probe into the still used Templar tunnels of Hertford; "curse" of Superman; new rules for sainthood; Rasputin. No. 194. The Dictionary of the Damned explains foafales; electronic voice phenomena; disappearing people stories; unhygienic hair-dryers; Illusion of giraffe-necked women; the theory that eels ceased to be a newspaper obsession when wider exotic vistas provided by our empire, steamships and telegraphy eclipsed them from 1850 onwards, could I believe be better explained when their mysterious appearance in ponds and pipes was easily explained by their witnessed migrations from rivers across land; tsuanami weirdness and gruesome pre-tsunami Phuket self-immolation. No. 195. Remarkable life and thoughts of polymath Alfred Lawson; Saving Private Jessica; eating before swimming danger myth; actor Bruce Campbell; separately Sawney Bean and East Anglian black dog terrors examined. No. 196. Excellent piece on the sceptics of Skeptics; Nazi occultism; Turin shroud; 1896-97 airship scares. No. 197. Excellent interview with open-minded science writer Bryan Appleyard; black dogs postbag; man who proposed aircraft carriers made of ice; Sydenham ABC; Caspian Sea merman; Friday the 13th; Carlisle's "cursing stone"; novel childbirth inducement - "The Welch are so remarkably fond of cheese that in case of difficulty their midwives apply a piece of toasted cheese to the 'ianua vitae' to entice the young Taffy, who on smelling it makes most vigorous efforts to come forth" from a 1785 book; killer ornamental garden gnomes of Wastwater. No. 198. TLE invoked to explain Cornish legend of Anne Jefferies and pixies; Rat Scabies and Da Vinci; later airships; typewriter myth. No. 199. Urban legends familiar to FF readers here are Harvey Nichols stores rumour, urban foxes dumped rurally, lethal threats to removers of prostitute cards, Craig Shergold; "Piano Man"; David Langford most interesting on H G Wells, with other "War of the Worlds" pieces; Stockholm syndrome; unsurprisingly Skeptical Inquirer managing editor Benjamin Radford is allowed to make a complete arse of himself not understanding that a "jenny haniver" is a composite of skate and monkey; 9/11 conspiracy; mystery Texas and Aussie animals.

**NORTHERN EARTH.** New rate £7.50 for 4. Q. Cheques to Northern Earth Mysteries Group. Address 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks, HX7 5NP. No. 101. Robin Heath lucidly explores the solar hero myth in context of the numerical content of precision astronomy with awesome implications for understanding prehistory; David Sivier explains how ancient burial mounds associated with faery were claimed for human purposes; North York Moors rock art; interesting legend of Seven Sisters trees at Seacroft and mention of Cricketer's Arms (which I visited circa 1968). No. 102. Paul Screeton reprises his folklore of the Settle & Carlisle line article; first of three pieces by John Billingsley on the current status of leys, taking the story up to the mid-80s (Tony Wedd's booklet was 'Skyways and Landmarks' not 'Skyways and Markpoints'); marital lore of Ponden Kirk rock outcrop; Carlisle's 'cursing stone'; Romano-British carving in Leeds woods; gendered landscapes.

**TOUCHSTONE.** Newsletter of Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Q. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to J. Goddard.

New address: Fostercourt Lodge, 192 Stroude Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9UT. No. 68. Reprint of Paul Screeton's geomancy and railways article (FF48:5); editor Jimmy Goddard provides what he believes to be fresh evidence for direct connection between Roman roads and leys, includith Seething Wells (inspiration perhaps for excellent Bradford poet Seething Welles of 'Tetley Bittermen' fame); Jimmy also writes of leys expanding in width at sunrise and sunset (reminiscent of Frank Lockwood's 'tides of the day' concept as expounded during my editorship of *The Ley Hunter*). No. 69. After FF flaunts boobs on the covers, Jimmy depicts female genitalia!!! Is this a contest as to whose cover is most salacious? Calm down, Touchstone hasa sheila-na-gig at Royston, from where Jimmy reports on the Society of Ley Hunters' spring convention and leys in the vicinity. Essex case of witness warned of 'monster' in advance by ouija board. No. 70. Seeming confirmation of leys and their energy streams on revisiting the Horsell ley; field trip to Camelot in north Middlesex and another trip in Surrey.

**AMSKAYA.** Same price and address as Touchstone. No. 61. Paul Screeton on British Rail flying saucer patent, raiiside graffiti, ticket collector dressed as spaceman and daylightdisc above 1962 steam train; Titan moon photo resembles Brighton; Daniel Ross supports Adamski; declassified UFO files. No. 62. Account of Carbondale case in 1975 U.S. newspaper, the question being was it a hoax using a railroad lantern found by a scuba diver or UFO or Russian missile. Also three Brazilian cases discovered in the 1965 mags in Jimmy's attic. Plus Adamski and extraterrestrial visits a possibility published in science mag Focus (copies I've seen are impressive and fair - if you can find it). No. 63. Andy Roberts tracks down Sixties UFO scene stalwart and singer-songwriter Mollie Thompson; Mexican mass sighting earlier this year.

**MAGONIA.** £9.50 for 6. Cheques payable to John Rimmer. Address 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB. No. 87. Andy Roberts looks back to the Swinging Sixties of hippies and UFOs, John Michell and English Underground, Keith Richards and David Bowie, Flying Saucer Oz and Midsummer's Night's Dream Listener issue (spoiled by consistently-irritating mis-spelling 'Michel'). Gareth Medway on life and death of Da Vinci Code player Pierre Plantard. No. 88. David Sivier on early humanity and the inadequacies of Stan Gooch's theory of Christ's Passion as central ritual of a prehistoric lunar cult; Curtis Peebles demolishes the story that the pilot Gene May of an experimental X-15 aircraft had been abducted in flight. *MAGONIA Supplement.* Issues available on website [magonia.demon.co.uk](http://magonia.demon.co.uk) or printed copies for a select few. Edited by John Hamey. No. 55. Investigator M.J. Graeber, reflecting on the 30th anniversary of the Carbondale, Pennsylvania case, writes at great length and brings in a huge amount of folkloric material including a confession from a boy saying he threw a railroad lantern in the pond as a joke, circus-like atmosphere of policemen and others willing the situation to have a crashed UFO. Graeber suggests it was 'ufological' and may be a more significant case than Roswell, but only from a sociological point of view. No. 56. Nigel Watson reassesses Betty and Barney Hill's 1963 'abduction' by UFO and puts this early case into perspective, noting inconsistencies and main evidence based on the percipients' nightmares and hypnotic regression. He mentions their 'psychological stresses' rather than note they were of mixed race (Cont. Page 18)

(Continued from Page 16)

Perhaps the Bungay and Blythburgh murderous phantom dog accounts could have been represented fully, but otherwise this is a comprehensive introduction to an area of folklore previously neglected since Theo Brown's work. Recommended to folklorists, fortune tellers and dog-haters.

**STORIES THAT CRAFTED THE WORLD** by ADRIAN BECKINGHAM (Gothic Image, £12.99)

For all the author's introductory doom-mongering this is a positive book. It also, for all the variety of tales within, emphasises the coherence of humanity. For all our national borders and identities we have a common ancestry and the author - The Man from Story Mountain - retells the stories here as they were first told to him. These are the creation myths of indigenous peoples from around the world. Many of the stories may seem fanciful and naive, but they echo the works of that monumental catastrophist Immanuel Velikovsky, who has been so shamefully derided. Stories such as the Book of Genesis need not be taken literally but for all their surface absurdities they pack a punch; they have true meaning. Cosmic concepts such as black holes, red dwarfs and so on are the stuff of science and need to be reduced to simple terms before we can grasp the awesomeness of the universe, and so it is with universal truths. There can be no better way to present the numinous than to reduce it to its key parts by way of a story.

In the context of this review, Mary Wakefield recalled talking to astronomer Sir Bernard Lovell and finding all the cosmology people take for granted is pure supposition. "The Big Bang? Well it is of course conventional wisdom that there was one, but I'm not sure. There is a tendency to talk about it as if it happened, but we really do not know." And what about black holes? "Everyone now believes in black holes but they forget that the evidence is just circumstantial. One infers a black hole from plotting in detail the structure of a distant galaxy but no one really knows." (The Sunday Telegraph, 7/8/05)

In the tale of the Princesses of Albion, interesting though it is, the author is in error to claim the Trojan Brutus landed in Plymouth (this was an Egyptian outpost, hence the Rising Sun pub in the Laira - pronounced Lara - district, well known to railfans. He did make landfall in Devon to claim Britain, but he first

set foot on our soil at Totnes (for what it's worth, here's another tale, It was in the bar of the Seven Stars Hotel, a short distance from the Brutus Stone, that I proposed to my wife as Bob Dylan sang 'Positively 4th Street' on the jukebox).

The stories here come from such disparate lands and cultures as ancient Britain, North America, Australia, the Amazon Basin, Scandinavia, Bali and Tibet, covering the origin of each world; sun, moon and stars; the first people; world family; clans and languages; cereals and animals; ice ages; death and rebirth.

This book will appeal to those who care for our planet's welfare, have an interest in indigenous peoples and the art of storytelling. Refreshing, educative and uplifting.

Back with Sir Bernard, Wakefield asked why everyone presumed all was now proven scientifically and fine in the world of cosmology? "Young people get enthusiastic," replied the sage. "And I suppose they just think it makes a better story." Well, does it?

(CONTINUED from Page 17)

and involved in the civil rights movement. (After reading about radioactive disks often used by clandestine services to act as a silent cancer-inducing killer, I'm getting rid of my stash of unsolicited internet trial disks delivered by post). No. 57. Nigel Watson on illegal and 'ghost' aircraft activity interpreted as terrorists or UFOs; Martin Kottmeyer on lack of evidence to suggest UFO films stimulate flap reports; Otto Binder biography. No. 58. Hillary Evans seems to imply he is presenting the definitive investigation into the Hills' abduction. Increasingly I felt Evans was cherry picking cases over many decades to illuminate a single 40+ years case and unsuccessfully at that. Weather, diet, Marian visions, SF-writing ambition and so on. Evans may be highly regarded and this touted as a special issue, but anyway if the Hills' experience were illusory, it is not certain whether Betty transmitted it to Barney or vice versa. Or - which is not considered - neither. Admit it Hilary, we'll never know, and this was a weak piece of fragmented guesswork.

**AND FINALLY A PROTO-LEGEND ...** A stranger who asked householders if he could borrow their phones to get help with his broken-down car was actually ringing sex lines. At least four women complained in Bad Urach, Germany, after the man called premium rate lines for up to 20 minutes. One who pressed redial said, "someone called Jasmine answered and I found he'd run up almost £40 on the call." (Metro, 11/8/05)

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