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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol 6, # 2, September 2002)



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THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

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"I'm basically a chilled-out entertainer"

THE VIEW FROM BRITAIN

THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

(Originally published in The MUFON JOURNAL, May 2001)

(Editor's note :Please bear in mind the original date of publication. YUFOS extends its thanks to Jenny & to Dwight Connely, editor of The MUFON Journal, for permission to reproduce this work.)

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

One of the most acute differences between UFOlogy in Britain and the US comes with the attitude towards regression hypnosis. The stance adopted in the UK - where in many places regression is simply banned altogether - is one of the most controversial aspects to this issue and I thought I would take some time to explain why we do things this way. It is no mere whim.

Reasons to be fearful:

Firstly, I should emphasise that hypnosis has been quite widely used in the researching of British close encounters and in some quarters still is. This is no blanket ban. I, personally, have had quite a lot of involvement with cases that have used regression - although none as an investigator for many years because I now support the ban.

My reasons are similar to those more generally behind the attitude of British UFOlogy and are based on three primary factors.

Firstly, many witnesses have told me that the use of regression has not made them feel better - but, if anything worse. Secondly, my observations of cases in the field and my own personal experience of being regressed (both to an alleged past life and to a LITS UFO sighting) leaves me well aware of the serious pitfalls of the technique. But, thirdly, I have seen genuine risk to witnesses and signs of misinterpretation of the evidence that stems from the use of regression.

These may be my personal reasons for not supporting its use but I have, from time to time, sat in on even fairly recent cases where regression has been used (under careful medical supervision). This is still done by groups and researchers in the UK who do not adhere to the ban. I should add that these experiences have not altered my view that it is right to be concerned over the widespread use of regression in the UFO field.

A BRIEF HISTORY:

The first use of regression hypnosis in a British case dates to the 1960s, during the follow up of a famous incident - the sighting by the crew of a BOAC stratocruiser whilst flying over Goose Bay, Labrador nearly 40 years ago. This case puzzled the Condon report and also intrigued the British government of the day.

During interviews that we did for the TV show *Strange But True?* (with which I was very closely involved throughout) we secured frank recollections by several of the air crew which indicated both the extent of the Air Ministry interest and of how regression hypnosis was used during later efforts to bring out fresh recall of the matter. It does not seem to have significantly added to the story - but it is important to realise that this method was used in a British UFO case about the same time as it first was employed in the US as Betty and Barney Hill were regressed by Dr Benjamin Simon. So we are not latecomers to the possibility of its use.

The first time it formed part of the investigation of a possible British abduction was in 1977 when the two adult members of a family that had lost time after driving into a bank of green mist at Aveley, Essex were regressed. I sat in one of the early sessions and had chance to interrogate the mother of the young children (they were not regressed) whilst she was under hypnosis. This first direct experience provided me with an important warning.

After 1978 the use of regression became widespread in the UK as it did in the US. Any case that hinted at missing time was subject to the suggestion of regression and this often did follow. Quite a few major abductions emerged from otherwise inconclusive conscious testimony. The best known is probably the abduction from his patrol car of police officer Alan Godfrey amidst one of the most active

UFO window area in Britain - at Todmorden, West Yorkshire.

Whilst the Godfrey case and a few others were conducted by well-qualified medical doctors with experience in hypnosis, this was far from always true. In fact, many regressions were of the self-taught / cut price / do it yourself method - employed by UFOlogists and groups because they could not afford to pay the often hefty fees to employ professional doctors.

UFOlogy in Britain lacks the scientific support that groups like MUFON have. In the early days in particular it was often a case of do it yourself or don't do it at all.

The potential value of regression sessions operated by less than qualified people began to concern some of us - not to mention the risks they posed to the witness. Often people were literally allowing unqualified UFO buffs who had watched someone else do hypnosis and 'picked it up' mess with their heads with who knows what long term repercussions?

THE TURNING POINT:

There was a growing concern amongst the fairly moderate and cautious British UFO community. After a few of us had conducted research into the scientific controversy and reported back that hypnosis was known to stimulate fantasy almost as much as it facilitated the release of subconscious memory, the extent of the problem was already being debated.

Were we diluting the value of the consciously recalled evidence - it was asked? Did we have a desire to find more dramatic and commercial alien contact cases that were flooding out of the US within sightings that were strange but otherwise not recalled as being alien contacts?

Some of us began to fear that in this mad rush to get 'better' evidence we were potentially compromising the reality status of the data (since the abduction part of the story - being so exciting - tended to get over-emphasised whereas it relied on at best contentious methods rather than the under-emphasised - but probably more trustworthy - conscious recall).

This provoked the writing of a clause about regression hypnosis into the Code of Practice that was defined in the UK in 1982 by a series of meetings across the country. In these local

and national groups came together on this common project to create a self-regulatory code of ethics. One of the many clauses insisted that regression hypnosis should only be conducted under proper medical supervision - ie an end to the UFO buff doing their own hypnosis after reading a couple of 'how to do it' books.

This code was ratified by several (but by no means all) major UK groups. Some local groups signed up to it also. Others declined. Of national organisations - BUFORA - the British equivalent of MUFON as a nationwide and long-standing membership group - fully approved it. Indeed they went further than most, making the code mandatory to all members if they wished to join the society. Ironically the only investigator who declined to sign (and thus had to leave the team) is today best known as a skeptic!

Then something happened. During a hypnosis session with a witness who was taken back to the day he had been 'zapped' by a light-beam when a young child, the witness had a form of epileptic seizure. Although this was not a BUFORA investigation the incident sent a shockwave through that groups investigation team. We discussed whether we really needed to do more than merely regulate against hypnosis. We decided that we should send a message to UFOlogy. That positive action was required.

THE MORATORIUM:

In 1988 BUFORA's investigation team got together and on a free vote of all its investigators decided on a five year moratorium to stop using regression in any form - even with medical supervision. We wanted to make clear that we were fearing what might happen - that some witness could be left with either physical or mental scars as a result of being subjected to hypnosis. We also believed that by making this voluntary decision to quit this kind of work we might make others think twice about what had become a virtual automatic step to take with any close encounter case.

By now my personal views on the matter had hardened as well. I had seen, for example, how under hypnosis witnesses could be led (often innocently) by the slightest use of some word that took them off into a trail of fantasy. In one particular incident a complex story about a UFO having escalators on board followed on from a curious remark by an inexperienced

regressionist who was puzzled because the witness had reported the aliens merely switching levels without any obvious transport. I recall sitting gobsmacked as the regression therapist, clearly of the opinion that some means to get from floor to floor was essential, unintentionally led the witness into describing the inside of the UFO as it if was Macy's department store!

How often, I began to wonder, does this happen without being spotted? I started to look at transcript from hypnosis sessions and realised it was not that rare.

Of course, you could never prove that any image offered up 'was' fantasy. Maybe UFOs really do have escalators on them! Yet if someone regresses to last week and says they went to the supermarket dressed as a clown you can actively prove whether such a forgotten recall is true or not - by doing onsite investigation. People will have either seen that 'clown' or not. If not then you are likely to conclude that the event never happened.

But if someone says they were floated through their bedroom into a spaceship past experience shows there is virtually no chance you will be able to get evidence to verify that this really happened. Since hypnosis can and does generate fantasy and memory together then how do you know what you are getting out of a case?

CONCERNS GROW DEEPER:

To test this I had conducted an experiment (reported in detail in one of my papers to the MIT symposium in 1992). For this I was regressed by a clinical psychologist to a genuine LITS sighting in August 1978. I saw this vividly under hypnosis and even more so in subsequent dreams. I added lots of things that my conscious recall does not include as part of the event. I was (and am) properly skeptical of these 'new' tales but I know that it would be easy to assume that these additional images 'were' memories rather than fantasies.

And, just like many witnesses I have met who have undergone regression, I might then be persuaded to accept the reality of something that in truth I have virtually no basis to accept as real. After I had quizzed a few witnesses who had undergone regression armed with the above personal insight I found a few willing to admit that they didn't know if their hypnotic recall had any basis in truth but that they kept this concern to themselves for fear of

offending the UFOlogists and doctors who had put so much effort into their case.

So here came the rub. In the regression experiment I was also regressed to events around the time of my LITS sighting that were factual every day incidents 'and' also checkable. I had long since consciously forgotten them but they were presumably somewhere in my head merely not recalled and - unlike the UFO incident - I could investigate my hypnotic description of these incidents to establish if what I said under hypnosis was true, or not true.

What happened? In many instances I gave completely false information under hypnosis - for checkable things like the calendar or time of day. I did come up with some correct and surprising recall. But there was so much misinformation from this checkable data that realistically I had to accept that probably at least 50% of any of data on my UFO sighting was probably wrong too. Maybe even more.

So I saw the real danger of hypnosis first hand. It is not that it cannot work and may not provide some real hidden memories. Very likely it sometimes does. But it was that these memories are at best heavily contaminated with false information. Since we cannot easily differentiate which is which in what are unverifiable UFO stories then UFOlogy is forming opinions about its primary cases through data that is far from reliable. And in the process (as I saw) potentially causing witnesses to accept as a true recall events that may be no such thing.

To me, that is sacrificing the welfare of the witness for our own selfish desire to learn more or to create an exciting tale and I believed then (and still believe now) that it was a step too far.

A COMPLETE BAN:

The BUFORA moratorium was ratified and extended and eventually the investigation team voted on it to become an official ban. The code of practice used by BUFORA was modified accordingly and 13 years later the group still does not allow regression during its cases. There has been some discussion amongst members who would prefer it otherwise. I know that some American researchers have also commented that BUFORA is letting British witnesses down in adopting this stance. But I respectfully disagree. The ban on regression that I helped steer through

BUFORA is in my view one of the groups finest moments.

BUFORA is not alone. In the UK the net-based investigation team - UFOIN - has an even stricter version of the code of practice and also has a total ban on the use of regression. I also believe that similar restrictions apply in other European countries amongst some of the leading groups. So this may be a view in which the consensus is changing.

There are, of course, well known researchers in the UK who support regression. My co-author in many books - Peter Hough - is one who does. He has written a book on his alien contact case work (via regression) with the therapist that he works alongside (Dr Moyshe Kalman) and I have sat in on several of the sessions taking place in this psychologists offices. I do that so that I can keep up to date with the position in this field of research rather than base my opinions on what I saw many years ago.

But whenever I have a twinge of doubt I think back over all the experience of hypnotic regression that has made me aware of its less than trustworthy nature. This starts with that very first session 23 years ago when I watched as a UFOlogist regressed a witness to their UFO sighting and I was able as a result to talk to the alien they now claimed that they had met. The alien had 'taken over' the body of the witness and was answering my questions instead of the witness doing so!

I sat on the long train journey home from that session trying to work out what had just happened. Had I really spoken with an alien?

Well, perhaps. I knew it was not impossible.

But did I believe that I had? Frankly, no. I was convinced then (and am even more persuaded now) that I was talking not to an alien but to part of the subconscious of the witness who was (quite innocently and likely without their knowledge) pretending to be an alien.

Once I had digested that implication and realised that if I didn't know for sure what was going on in this case - then how could I expect the witness to do so - the real dangers were fast hammered home.

Hypnosis here instils into the mind - long term, perhaps forever - information that to us is the source of excited debate and potentially useful (although also potentially misleading)

background to a close encounter case. But we can move on to the next case. The witness has no such luxury. We have altered their perception of the universe by way of our brief sojourn in their affairs and in some way changed their lives.

Just think it through this way. If an incident has occurred and there is missing time (of which of course even in the UK such examples still get reported) there are two basic possible reasons.

Reason one for the time lapse is that it is an illusion (the witness may mis-recall the flow of time, or they may have been unconscious or asleep - or in fact there could be several other reasons why the time lapse was illusionary). Reason two is that a period of memory really is missing. In that case it is being blocked from conscious recall by one of two forces - the witnesses own mind (as in amnesia of a trauma that it is healthy not to recall) or some outside force such as an alien deliberately seeking to block memory.

I have always had a problem with the idea that these aliens are so marvellous that they readily block a witness from having recall, but in such an inept way that a young UFO buff with no training in hypnosis whatsoever can say a few words and almost magically release these barriers. There is surely a massive contradiction here that at least begs the question - are we kidding ourselves that is what really happens?

But even on the assumption that aliens could block a witnesses memory in this haphazard and next to useless fashion - that is just one out of the three possible explanations for the time lapse as just indicated. By assuming that it is the truth and performing a dubious technique like hypnosis to act upon that assumption we are not playing the odds very wisely here. For two thirds of the potential explanations make the search for a mind blocking alien presence at the very least rather misguided.

Besides which - if there is a hidden memory and it is at least as likely that this has been blocked from recall by the witness themselves then their own subconscious has chosen this - perhaps due to its traumatic nature. If so then do we have the right to even contemplate uncorking the genie?

After all it is not your mind that must live with the consequences.

MESSAGE FROM THE MERE

BY JON DOWNES (CFZ)

Last issue PRB printed a follow-up to an earlier story concerning the so-called "Monster of the Mere" and the fact that cryptozoologist Jon Downes of the Centre for Fortean Zoology (CFZ) was investigating this case.

The story appeared on a number of sites and newsgroups and Jon dispatched the following update to the story so far...

Hi Folks,

Thank you very much to everyone (especially Dave McMann) who posted stories about our exploits both to the list and to me personally. Be secure in the fact that this simple act of kindness will ensure your immortality within the pages of my book on the trip which we will be putting out in a few months time.

For the record, although we would LOVE to be able to announce that we have caught the monster we have done no such thing. Richard had three sightings and John Fuller had four sonar contacts.

What Richard saw APPEARS to be a wels catfish of approximately the same size and weight as me. (6'7" and 20 something stone) The claims that it is the size of a car, which were attributed both to me and to Pat Wisniewski the Centre Manager, are complete nonsense. Neither of us said anything of the sort.

The wels is, as far as I am aware, the largest species of purely freshwater fish in the world. Sturgeon, for example, spend much of their life in the sea, although the records of 16 footers are very ancient indeed. All the quotes about size and diet that I have to the press were taken verbatim from Sir Christopher Lever's 1975 book *Naturalised Animals of the British Isles*. This is also where I got the idea of the Acclimatisation Society having introduced these fish into the area years ago.

The report of the Russian wels reaching an age of 300+ years is something I read somewhere years ago and have not been able to substantiate. However, it does seem likely that a fish of this size would be of a considerable age.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last few weeks. The CFZ has a whole string of other expeditions in the pipeline and as always gifts of money, time and equipment

would be gratefully received. We are now a registered non-profit making trust and hope to be a charity within a few months.

If any of you have bits and bobs of camping equipment, binoculars and all that sort of stuff floating around that you no longer need and that you think we might find a use for, please get in touch...

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The Weird Weekend
www.stormpages.com/weirdweekend

Jon Downes and the Amphibians from Outer Space www.stormpages.com/amphibians

FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!!!

UFOs, conspiracies, fortune and paranormal events compiled by Dave Baker

EXPLORERS CLOSE TO PROVING YETI EXISTS

(BBC News, 4 September, 2002)

A group of British explorers is on the verge of proving the existence of a "Yeti-like" creature.

The three-man team has given hair samples found in Western Sumatra to an expert in Australia to test.

"If our discovery continues to bear up to scientific scrutiny, it would be a world-first find," - Explorer Adam Davies

Andrew Sanderson, Adam Davies and Keith Towley spent three weeks in the rainforests of Sumatra tracking the mythological creature.

Hans Brunner, an associate of Deakin University in Melbourne, offered to analyse two hairs found by the team.

Mr Brunner has previously provided testimony which helped prove the innocence of Lindy Chamberlain - the mother wrongly convicted of killing her baby in the 1980s.

The team members are crypto-zoologists, who take time off from their jobs to investigate the existence of such creatures.

No match could be found when the samples were tested against orang-utan, chimpanzee, gorilla, sun bear, red leaf monkey, pigtail macaque, Malaysian tapir and human hair.

Mr Sanderson, of Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, said the involvement of Mr Brunner had given their search credibility.

"The fact he has struggled to find a match for the hair is equally significant as it means this creature could exist," he said.

Dr Brunner has yet to check the hair samples against other native species from Western Sumatra but is confident they will not resemble hairs found by the explorers.

"So far I have found that the two hairs which I have are different from any species which I have compared them with.

"If nothing comes which looks like the same I would have to say there could be an animal that we do not yet know about."

A digital re-print of the footprint found on the expedition is being analysed by Dr Colin Groves, professor of primatology at University of Canberra, Australia.

He will not make his findings public until Mr Brunner releases a scientific paper on the hair analysis.

Explorer Mr Davies, from Manchester, said: "If our discovery continues to bear up to scientific scrutiny, it would be a world-first find. All eye witness reports are that it walks like a man.

"This has all sorts of anthropological ramifications because there is great speculation about how man has developed.

"This could be living proof of how man evolved."

Next year, the trio plan a trip to the Gobi Desert in search of the Mongolian Death Worm, a 7ft snake which is reputed among natives to cut a person dead with one look.

HOLLYWOOD FALLS UNDER CROP CIRCLES' SPELL

British circle-makers will see a special screening of the latest blockbuster as farmers await an outbreak of copycat raids

(Robin McKie, The Observer, August 25, 2002)

One of Hollywood's oddest acts of veneration will take place in a tiny London cinema on Tuesday when Disney hosts a private screening of its latest blockbuster for an obscure landscape gardener and his friends.

The party will watch *Signs*, one of America's biggest summer attractions, ahead of its release in Britain on 13 September. The film, made by Sixth Sense director M. Night Shyamalan, tells the story of a disillusioned minister, played by Mel Gibson, who discovers that aliens are carving pictures on his back

lawn.

The subject should bring a warm glow to its guest of honour, Douglas Bower, the gardener who first invented that peculiarly British art form, the crop circle.

"There would be no *Signs* had it not been for Doug Bower flattening patterns in fields, and for the rest of us who have followed up his work," said John Lundberg, of Circlemakers, the creators of Britain's best circles. "That is why Disney agreed to this special showing."

In short, crop circles are back with a bang. Having faded from view during last year's foot-and-mouth epidemic, those strange spirals and patterns that have peppered our fields every summer for the past two decades are flourishing again.

Last week one of the most complex yet created - a 100-yard-long image of an alien carrying a disc - appeared at Vale Farm in Sparsholt, Hampshire. Cerealogists, that is 'experts' who claim circles may have mysterious, possibly extraterrestrial origins, say the disc carries messages from another world.

Circlemakers' Rob Irving believes otherwise. "It's a classic late-season crop circle. As the nights get longer, we have more time to work unseen in the dark, so we can create increasingly complicated designs. That is why crop circles are always best in late August. It's the height of the season."

And from the Vale Farm example, it is clear these creations have reached new heights. "We have certainly got this down to a fine art," added Irving. "Effectively, we are creating half-tone blocks in fields. Some people think this complexity proves aliens are responsible. If so, you have to wonder why they should do so using an artifact that went out with print unions."

Not that this matters to the American visitors who are flocking to Britain in the wake of the success of *Signs*. Thousands have booked bus trips, particularly in Wiltshire and Hampshire, over the past few weeks.

As one excited visitor told the BBC after seeing her first circle in the Vale of Pewsey: "It's pretty trippy."

Crop circles have clearly come a long way since 1978, when Bower and his mate David Chorley, who died in 1997, dreamed up the

idea of fashioning enigmatic patches of flattened crops after a night at the Percy Hobbs pub in Winchester. Using a 5ft iron bar and a length of rope they marked out their first circle, and continued - with added refinements - for years.

By the early 1990s, with experts postulating that the circles were caused by twisting wind vortexes or 'mind energy fields', the pair were at the height of their powers. Farmers, originally enraged about crop damage, made thousands of pounds by charging entrance fees to their fields.

"It was just pure enjoyment," Bower once recalled. "Those beautiful summer nights for two artistic people under the stars amid all those cornfields."

Their antics came to an end when Bower's wife Ilene grew suspicious of the mileage he ran up on Friday nights, and he was forced to confess to her and later to the media. But this had little effect on the fanatics, who remain convinced that crop circles have alien origins.

"It does seem odd that some people still think crop circles are made by aliens," admitted David Sutton, of the *Fortean Times*. "It was originally done as a prank, but now has become a valid form of land art, like white horses carved in chalk downs. It is a very British type of artistic expression. We should be proud of it - and of Doug Bower."

BRIGHT LIGHTS SEEN IN SKY OVER CORNWALL, ENGLAND

(*Western Morning News*, August 4, 2002)

Strange lights in the sky above Cornwall which were seen by a number of people prompted a flurry of calls to a local radio station yesterday.

BBC Radio Cornwall dealt with the inquiries after a woman from the south-east of the county rang the station to report seeing lights coming down in a field.

The station's Laurence Reed said the call had attracted more than its fair share of interest as it fired the imagination of more listeners.

He said: "We had a call from a woman from the Camelford area who said that she had seen a UFO."

"We had another man on who suggested that it might have been the International Space Station which was orbiting through the night sky.

"But what it really was I'm not quite sure.

"We have had plenty of calls about it and we had one man on air. It certainly seems to be a subject close to people's hearts."

It is not the first time that the radio station has been called with reports of UFOs.

In the past, many such sightings have been solved with more terrestrial explanations. Mr Reed said: "The last time we had one of these discussions it was decided that what people had seen and thought to be an unidentified flying object was actually the searchlights from a Newquay nightclub reflecting off some low-level clouds.

"But what was seen in the Camelford area this time is still a mystery.

"I live in that area, and I will be out on the weekend with a torch making my own investigations."

Colin Stewart, who is a member of a project group which is hoping to build an observatory for Cornwall near Truro, said: "I work on the basis that if anybody had bothered to come all that way from another planet to Earth they would make it known that they were here.

"Unless, of course, they were not very intelligent - but then they are unlikely to have been able to get here if that were the case. It is summer and we do get showers of meteorites which can just look like bright lights flashing quickly across the sky."

Dr Robert Massey, of the Greenwich Observatory in London, said he could not think of an astronomical explanation for the lights.

"There's nothing really that I can think of at the moment which would produce such a thing - but there are many, many different things that it could be," he said.

"The planet Venus is visible at the moment quite low in the sky just after sunset. That is often the cause of some of these sightings.

"It's not likely to be the International Space Station - that only looks like a fairly slow-

moving light which takes about three or four minutes to go right across the sky.

"It really is difficult to say what this person has seen."

DOCTORS CREATE OUT-OF-BODY SENSATIONS

(18 September, 2002 BBC News Online)

Doctors say they have triggered out-of-body experiences in a female patient by stimulating her brain. They believe their work may help to explain mysterious incidents when people report experiences of 'leaving' their body and watching it from above.

The doctors did not set out to achieve the effect - they were actually treating the women for epilepsy.

Professor Olaf Blanke and colleagues at Geneva University Hospital in Switzerland were using electrodes to stimulate the brain. They found that stimulating one spot - the angular gyrus in the right cortex - repeatedly caused out-of-body experiences (OBEs).

Initially, the stimulations caused the woman to feel she was "sinking" into the bed, or falling from a height. When the current amplitude was increased, she reported leaving her body.

She told the doctors: "I see myself lying in bed, from above, but I only see my legs and lower trunk."

Further stimulations led to a feeling of lightness and "floating" close to the ceiling.

The patient was then asked to watch her real legs as current was passed through the electrodes attached to her head. This time she reported her legs "becoming shorter". If bent, her legs appeared to be moving quickly towards her face, causing her to take evasive action.

A similar effect happened when she was asked to look at her outstretched arms. The left arm appeared shortened, but the right arm was unaffected. If both arms were bent by 90 degrees at the elbow, the woman felt her left lower arm and hand were moving towards her face.

The doctors believe the angular gyrus plays an important role in matching up visual information and the brain's touch and balance

representation of the body. When the two become dissociated, an out-body-experience may result.

Writing in the journal *Nature*, the Swiss team said out-of-body experiences tended to be short-lived, and to disappear when a person attempts to inspect the illusory body or body part.

Professor Blanke told BBC News Online that out of body sensations may be caused by an overactive angular gyrus. Alternatively, the electrical stimulation might actually have depressed activity in the area.

He said it was impossible to rule out possibility that other areas of the brain were also involved.

He said there was no evidence to suggest that out-of-body experiences were linked to epilepsy.

"OBEs have been reported in neurological patients with epilepsy, migraine and after cerebral strokes, but they also appear in healthy subjects.

"Awareness of a biological basis of OBEs might allow some patients who suffer frequently from OBEs to talk about them more openly.

"In addition, physicians might take the phenomenon more seriously and carry out necessary investigations such as an EEG, MRI, and neurological examinations."

The research is published in the journal *Nature*.

EDITOR'S NOTE

An uncle of mine, sadly now deceased, had two Out-of-the-Body Experiences a few years before he died. One afternoon, he suffered a heart-attack while driving his car, but had somehow managed to pull up to the side of the road before climbing out and collapsing on to the grass verge. He said that everything went black as he lost consciousness, but then suddenly he felt himself "floating" above his body, and he watched emotionlessly as paramedics desperately worked on him. Moments later he felt himself being "tugged" back towards his body, and once again everything went black. He was later informed that he had actually died for a few moments before the paramedics had brought him back.

At the hospital he suffered another heart-attack, and again "died" until doctors used a defibrillator to restart his heart. During this procedure, my uncle experienced his second OBE. This time he appeared to be floating high in a corner of the emergency room and was later able to repeat most of what the doctors had said to each other.

Some time after this traumatic event, I remember reading (though I cannot remember where) of an experiment researchers into OBE were eager to try.

They suggested that small pieces of card printed with simple pictures, such as an apple, a car, a dog etc, be placed atop tall items of furniture, or high up on walls in emergency rooms and operating theatres in participating hospitals. Only the researchers would know where the cards were placed and what was actually on them, but they would be placed so that only someone "floating" in archetypical OBE fashion would be able to view them. Any patient reporting an OBE could then be questioned and if the experience was literally true, they would surely have seen the test cards.

I never heard of this experiment taking place anywhere and am unaware of if it was even seriously considered. Does anyone out there (readers, not spirits!) have any further details?

NEXT MONTH...

HE'S BACK!!!

"The USA's most
paranomalist
investigator of
unexplained mysteries of
the unknown"

TOM BOLLOXINSKI

"Makes Graham Birdsall
look like Andy Roberts" - *UFO Fab*

"Our biggest selling author" *Bargain
Bucket Books*

"Tom who?" - *UFO Magazine*

A BIG CAT-TASTIC SUMMER!

BY DAVE BAKER

The United Kingdom appears to have gone Big Cat crazy throughout the summer, as reports, sightings and news-stories of Out-of-Place Felines flooded the internet and papers.

Examples from August and September alone include the following examples:

WELL-FED FELINE STRIKES AGAIN

Christine Dodgson, a farmer in Natland, Cumbria, is the eleventh person to have reported seeing a large black cat in the area. She told the *Westmorland Gazette* she had been drying her hair in a bathroom when she looked out of the window and noticed something strange in a silage field.

"I couldn't take my eyes off it," she said. "To me it was like a big cat." She watched it for ten minutes as it leapt onto a barn roof before it strolling off towards Sedgwick. Unfortunately, she was too mesmerised by the sight of the beast to get her camera and take a photograph of it.

Terry Hooper, who compiles the exotic animal register, said Cumbria was very good territory for these cats. "There are lots of deer, a lot of rabbits and they have fresh water," he said. "I started logging sightings in 1975 - I was pretty unconvinced, but by the time it got round to 1979, so many people had seen so many things there was no real doubt they were out there."

PUMA PANIC IN CEMETARY

Tuesday 27th August 2002

A community farm has been put on alert after sightings of a big cat in an adjacent cemetery.

Woodlands Farm Trust, which is on the Shooters Hill-Welling border, was alerted by a Bexley Council ranger following reports of a huge black cat in Hillview cemetery.

There have been at least two sightings of the cat reported to grounds staff at the cemetery. was seen from a distance and ran off into woodland which adjoins the farm.

One was made by Edward Cain, 75, of Lawrence Road, Erith. He visits his wife's

grave regularly and was with another visitor when they spotted the cat several weeks ago.

He told the *News Shopper*: "It was just after the cemetery opened at 9am. We were about 100 yards away when we spotted it. It was huge. We watched it run off into the woods.

"We reported to the staff but everyone was laughing and I felt I was talking silly. But we did see it."

Bexley Council confirmed at least two sightings of the cat have been reported but a spokeswoman suggested it could be a very large domestic cat.

A cat lover, who has lived in the area all her life, said: "Some domestic cats can grow to the size of a dog.

"Even when I was a girl, there were always stories of large cats being seen in Oxleas Wood."

A spokesman for Woodlands Farm Trust said although the farm was taking extra care, especially with children's tours, since it received the warning, staff have seen nothing and there has been no problem with the livestock.

"The only cats we have seen are our farm cats, Ariel and Tompkin," he added.

But the cat was to return...

THIRD SIGHTING OF BEXLEY BIG CAT

The big cat seen roaming around Bexley has been spotted again this time near Plumstead Common.

The large black cat, thought to be a panther, was seen last Thursday near to Upton Road, between Plumstead Common and Shrewsbury Park.

Father-of-three Dave Loson, 33, saw the cat from a window in the flats on Upton Road.

The mini-cab controller, from John Wilson Street, Woolwich, said: "It was standing 75-100 yards away on a dirt track for about five minutes so I got a really good look at it."

AIR AND LAND SEARCH FOR 'BIG CATS'

(BBC News Wales 3 September, 2002)

The police officers were sceptical until they saw the cat.

A major search was carried out on Tuesday after two large unidentified 'cat like' animals were spotted by police in south east Wales. Two helicopters fitted with thermal imaging cameras scoured the area above farmland at Goldcliff on the edge of Newport.

Peter Beese has seen the big cat about 10 times. Police marksman searched the Gwent levels and experts from Bristol Zoo were alerted.

Despite the detailed search of the area, no further sightings of the cats were reported and the search was scaled down.

The cats were first spotted by Peter Beese, from his house on Tuesday, while he was bird watching.

"I scanned the field with my binoculars and saw the first one. It was walking across the field before it disappeared into a dip - the size of it, made my Alsatian dog look small.

"In the meantime, the police arrived - they were looking at me like I was a nut.

"Then, I gave one of them the binoculars and one of them spotted its head and they were both shocked.

"Shortly after, we spotted the other one. We watched them for about 20 minutes.

"I've seen it about ten times in the three years we've been here," said Mr Beese.

The two officers who went to investigate confirmed the sighting before the animals disappeared from sight.

Pc Jodie Warren and Pc Mark Jones admitted they were cynical about the reported sighting of the big cat.

"We both went to the call and were very sceptical about it," said Pc Warren. "But when we saw the animal we couldn't believe what we were seeing.

"At first we saw what we thought was the head of a domestic cat. Then we got the binoculars and we could see it was a lot bigger than that.

"We saw a black feline animal about 300 yards in front of us," she added.

Colleague Pc Mark Jones said it was only as one of the animals stood next to a tractor could they see how big they really were.

"It was a big as the front wheel of the tractor," he said.

"The first one was at least two and a half feet tall - the other was half its size.

"The animals were very calm and confident. They seemed to know what they were doing and didn't panic at all," he said.

The latest sighting comes less than a week after a monitoring group said big cats were on the loose in Britain and breeding their way towards record numbers.

The British Big Cats Society said it has received more than 800 reports of animals including pumas, black panthers, leopards and so-called Fen tigers over the past 12 months.

THE ELUSIVE BIG CAT THAT DOES EXIST

It has appeared in fleeting glimpses before people across Derbyshire but has evaded capture for more than a decade.

Some claim that it is a panther, others a puma, but most believe that the county's mystery big cat is simply a figment of the imagination.

Government officials, The Metropolitan Police and leading experts on the unexplained, have all attempted and failed to snare it.

But Derbyshire police has completed an official report into sightings of the creature - and the officer responsible claims there can be no doubt that it does exist.

PC Tony Umney, of the force wildlife unit, who logs every recorded appearance of the beast, said: "I have no doubts whatsoever. I have spoken to several people who have seen it and they have often been able to describe it well.

"One told me 'I'm not daft. I know the difference between a big cat and a Labrador dog'."

Since 1992, the animal - dubbed Igor in 1996 - has been spotted in Sinfin, Pear Tree, Crich, Belper, Ambergate, Riber and around Carsington Water.

Last week, a group of people camping in Birchover became the latest to report a sighting of the beast to police.

They said that the creature was caught in a torch beam and that it stood still for several seconds before rushing off into the darkness.

The group told police the animal was 4ft long and 2ft tall, with a 2ft long tail.

Detectives themselves also claim to have spotted the panther - one said he saw a black cat while walking near Carsington Water. A traffic officer told PC Umney that he saw a black beast on the A38 at Coxbench early one morning.

Damian Bell (25), a Derby City Council waste management worker, said he believes that he saw the creature while driving through Lower Hartshay in 1996.

Mr Bell, of Wilmorton, Derby, said: "It was a dark and wintry night and I had my headlights on as I drove through the village.

"I saw something that looked like a big cat. It seemed to bounce once in front of the car and then on again into a field.

"Instinctively I slammed my brakes on, but couldn't spot it."

He gave a description to police and officers who were called out to investigate also reported seeing the creature.

In April, a woman driver saw what she thought was a black panther run across a country lane near Two Dales.

Police recovered hairs for analysis from a dry stone wall, but later discovered they were from a badger.

PC Umney said that he believes the animal would not pose any threat to humans, unless it was cornered.

He said: "From the work we have done, we believe that it has excellent vision and can climb trees easily, taking its prey up there to eat.

"I would love to see it and perhaps one day I will be lucky enough - but it is very elusive."

He said that wildlife experts believe that the animal is likely to be a leopard, with spots visible under a black coat.

He said: "It could live for up to 20 years and there is a possibility that there are more than one of these animals out there."

Police believe that the creature may have escaped from the home of an exotic pet owner, who has not dared to report its loss.

The experts duly came out in force in a bid to spread the word that the felines were out there, and that the public shouldn't be afraid to report them if they saw them.

Phil Crosby, of *Scottish Big Cats* thought that sightings of Big Cats in Scotland would reach 1000 before summer's end, after a record period of reports.

Crosby said in a local newspaper, "The Borders has certainly become a hot spot for sightings this year, but that's because there is a growing acceptance that these animals exist in the wild.

"People are prepared to come forward and describe what they have seen without expecting to be ridiculed."

He added: "It's clear from the large number of recorded sightings in Scotland that big cats are established members of Scottish fauna.

"The government must give the animals full protection from abuse as they do not constitute a danger to the public and are unlikely to attack livestock."

He also answered a common criticism by doubting naturalists that the amount of food in the wild is simply not enough to support a single animal of such size and appetite, let alone the number of animals suggested by the SBC database.

According to Crosby, the Borders and many other rural areas of Scotland now have an abundance of deer, hares, rabbits and game birds, more than enough to allow such creatures to thrive, and new areas of forestry

provide ideal cover for an increasing number of the non-native species.

Scottish Big Cats has logged over 900 incidents dating back to 1926, and are so certain of the existence of big cats that they are calling for a serious research project to back up their own findings.

Using "a limited amount of DNA-based testing", SBC are attempting to properly identify differing species (many people are easily confused over animal types), establish populations in certain areas, and determine whether the animals are breeding or even inter-breeding with other species.

The British Big Cats Society (BBCS) logged more than 800 reports of animals such as pumas, black panthers, leopards and the so-called "Fen tiger" over the past 12 months, from all over the country.

"This weekend alone I have had sightings from Wales, the Scottish borders, Kent, the West Midlands, Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire," Daniel Bamping, the society's founder told *BBC News Online*.

Most sightings of Big Cats can be put down to misidentifications of common or garden housecats, particularly when the "Big Cat" image is fresh in the public consciousness.

Bamping is well aware of this fact, and admits that he did in fact start off as a sceptic.

"I thought it was in the same realm as the Loch Ness monster. But it's not, they are really out there."

He claims however that the society has "firm evidence" that such creatures are real, in the form of photographs, paw prints, sheep kills and hair samples.

As most people are aware, photographic evidence is actually less that convincing, usually consisting of shaky camcorder footage of a vaguely feline form slinking half-out-of-sight behind a bush, and could be anything from a local moggie to a lazy Labrador, but Bamping is putting a lot of faith in a proposed "Trigger Camera" project.

Mr Bamping said: "The idea is that the cat will walk past the camera and take a picture of itself."

Presumably, this would mean setting up automatic cameras in 'known' big cat stomping grounds, although web-cams would also - in my opinion - be a worthy alternative.

So where do these big cats - if they exist at all - actually come from?

Earlier this year, pro blood-sport activists threatened to release lynxes into the Borders countryside if foxhunting were banned in Scotland. "A number of sightings" soon followed, and it has been suggested that this may be the cause of some big cat reports, and an explanation for the "mysterious deaths" of turkeys, ducks, and the disappearance of domestic cats.

The British Big Cat Society believes many of the sightings are of pets released into the wild, or their descendants.

Its spokesman Danny Nineham said: "In the 1960s and 1970s, people had big cats like leopards as pets and they used to walk them like dogs.

"But in 1976 when the Dangerous Wild Animals Act came into force, people released their cats because they did not want to pay for a licence, put them down, or take them to a zoo."

Now, some of these big cats are breeding with domestic animals, although others, particularly lynx and puma, probably exist in sufficient numbers to breed among themselves.

"We have had sightings of cats with cubs," he added.

But could there be a more paranormal explanation for some of these reports? There have been a number of cases in which big cats appear to vanish into thin air, and it is a fact that no matter how many police, soldiers and hunters attempt to track these creatures down, they always manage to evade their pursuers.

Jenny Randles devotes a section of her latest book *Supernatural Pennines* to big cat sightings, and offers a number of explanations for these creatures, including the possibility that some of these sightings occupy the same reality as ghosts, or even time-slips.

Whatever the answer or answers, big cat sightings seem to be as lodged in our reality as UFOs, crop circles and ghosts.

FICTION

TO CONTACT ETHEL

WRITTEN BY PHILIP J PARKIN (YUFOS)

In something of a departure from our usual fare, we present in this issue a piece of supernatural fiction written by YUFOS member Philip Parkin. Although fiction will not be a regular feature in *Project Red Book*, the subject matter is consistent with our sphere of interests. Hope you all enjoy it!

Knightsbridge, London, 1925. How did Ethel come to pass away? Why was she no longer physically alive? This is how it happened. On the twenty fifth of October 1925, Ethel, with her bag of luxury apples and pears was resting, sitting alone in her husband Albert's prized motorcar. It was parked by the side of the road, at the bottom of the hill and she awaited the rendezvous with her husband and daughter Kate, who had continued shopping.

The motor sound became loud and the incoming car crashed explosively into Albert's parked motorcar-overwhelming ears and eyes. Senses reeling. Ethel and the driver of the incoming motorcar were both killed. Its brakes must have failed. Kate and Patrickman and wife, each in their early or mid thirties, and Albert who had all been in the department store went outside, to see the cause of the jarring explosive sound outside. They made their way towards the small crowd of nervous, timidly assembled people. Horror. A terrible sinking sensation in their stomachs. *I love you Kate and Albert.* Body- horribly, hopelessly, mangled. Albert and Kate in particular were in great emotional turmoil as they recognised the dead Ethel's body. Twisted metal, blood. *Still alive. How? I know you are horrified: your despair is preoccupying me.*

So many were killed on the Western Front in the Great War of 1914- 18. How brutal a reality is our reality if dead people are just dead bodies. Was there no extra significance to life? Or to the moon, guardian of the night, companion of our terraqueous globe-earth with its many discernible patterns, like 'the crab,' pincer as ready for battle as in any terrestrial sea. These days, there was a generalised renewed interest in the possibility of the continued existence of deceased loved ones in the form of their souls -some would say a widespread hysteria about such matters. Even though Kate and Patrick were truly in love-despite their tragic inability to produce a child-prone to hold hands and look in each others

eyes- Ethel's death still deeply upset them, particularly Kate. For days, for weeks, for months- Albert, Kate and Patrick mourned for Ethel even though everyday life was busy for each of them. At length, prompted by the first anniversary of her death, they had all come to want to attempt to contact her from beyond the grave. To this end they decided to hire a medium. Of course, they knew of the renowned medium, Constance Porter.

As ever, of course, some religious people said that you shouldn't dabble with the spirit world, that no good will come of it. Such individuals mentioned stark disadvantages, some grievous, including expectable, predictable but nonetheless noxious criticisms. Many and varied they said was the harm done to impressionable minds by the evil and misleading falsity of Lucifer. Yes, there *had* been fraudulent mediums. You get dishonesty in all walks of life. Those that produced fake promotional photographs of ectoplasm -to cover the bad days when the 'gift'-if they had it at all-left them. For Albert, Kate and Patrick, the criticisms of some mediums just led to a measure of fearfulness accompanying their yearning and hope.

A fake: not Constance Porter when she thought of her mediumship. In fact, Constance was on a mission of truth. How could Constance be a fake-play with peoples' most sacred emotions? No- when she thought of her mediumship, she was *not* a fake. Indeed, how could she so rob people knowing that she herself had surely contacted a treasured loved one that had passed away. She had, she was sure, contacted her husband George who had fallen in the Great War at the third battle of Ypres in 1917. George was just one of so many brave fighting men, married men, fathers, tender lovers lost to the war effort.

She was not, though, a materialisation medium. Nor was she even one who directly spoke the words of the dead for sitters to hear. She was, however, one who could focus the

powers of her brain, find spiritual communication and, despite shortfalls, retain enough knowledge thus gained to be useful to even the most prying of sitters. Unfortunately, though, Constance, although still regularly holding séances, who had recently moved house to bigger premises, had been having trouble –even including with her ability of mediumship.

Somewhat mistake-prone now, jittery, yet cautious, Constance's self-confidence was not strong, despite the fact that Kate and Patrick clearly displayed that they had some belief in her powers as a medium. She arrived that evening at their house. Kate and Patrick greeted the celebrated medium. Words, though few and somewhat lacking in 'bounce' were exchanged, as is the way of things. Constance spoke-earnest, sincere, serious, addressing Albert, Kate and Patrick regarding safety during the sitting.

"Please don't ever try to rouse me suddenly-when I am communicating with the other side-spiritual communication requires sustained attention and is not without its attendant challenges and dangers."

They agreed not to. Windows, letting light in, such as light from passing motorcars, were promptly closed, and curtains pulled, at least as far as the curtain rings permitted, leaving the room only faintly enlightened through the thin fabric of the curtains by the remaining daylight. The séance was commenced. Gathered at the table, all joined hands. "Is there anybody there? We want to contact Ethel Ward," uttered Constance. Nothing - just time elapsing.

Constance now started to experience presences - these will be detailed later. Then, suddenly, to her horror, Kate distinctly saw a small black 'shadow snake' move on the wall and disappear under the wall-mounted picture of Ethel.

Kate knew that under *no* circumstances could the medium, Constance be disturbed, so by an act of immense will she cast all thoughts of the 'shadow snake' out of her mind. She did this partly by promising herself that she would talk of the matter fully with Constance when she could. However, she was now trembling slightly with fear and looking pale.

Constance experienced the following things. At first there was nothingness, no feelings, no attitudes could she detect, nothing. Time

passed. A change! Ominous signs, evil intent, danger is here. An army of snakes approaching from many directions- pythons, adders, rattlesnakes, mambas, boa constrictors including anacondas, all harmful. Danger...but... Christ! New problem...this is overwhelming, what great evil approaches? I sense its approach. A silent explosion. Movement outwards. Something strange about time. Jesus and almighty God! - the scale of the thing, moving steadily into view from below, vast in size, dwarfing the snakes around. No army of God sent this.

Hooded Mancrow by the wheatfield. The strong presence of a malevolent ego with aspirations and energy to use. Uniformity of expression-yet the embodiment of evil, seeking observation.

Wearing a long robe, hood over where the head should be on a man's form. Dark face easily offering no easy point of reference beyond the hood, what eyes did strain to see was hideous. A good wheat field turning bad and inedible at the liberal sweep of its long scythe. And the hunger this would cause-including the hunger of children. Working. An evil perfectionist, sickle to one side for it to use at it's wish, destructive, eye- contact seeking ill will, fastidiously addressing its unethical task.

Moving to the edge of the field, working its way there. Whimsically using the scycle at times. Changes now, an intensification. A building climax of energy-this is how it used it: the image of the Hooded Mancrow before a range of fields of corn -stereotype like in its nature-giving an all- inclusive gesture with the raised scythe in its right hand and the raised sickle in the other together with a prolonged, strange lopsided smile: many fields before it, many fields will it wreck!

In this communication it now seemed to believe it was triumphant, and it simultaneously looked maniacally deranged. Then Hooded Mancrow's raucous voice, full of emphasis: "You - Constance Porter and all your sitters would starve children to their deaths!"

"Lights! Lights please," said Constance, unfortunately disturbed somewhat in her spirit, but nevertheless trying to sound in control.

"Yes, yes of course", said Patrick. Patrick lit a gas lamp. From thence shone a welcome, comforting light. Constance felt utterly

obliged to defuse the evil power of the man demon, having suffered its presence and learnt of its evil long enough, to now make her stand against evil, so she searched her mind for relevant wisdom. She thought of the saying "the bigger they are, the harder they fall," and that good is more powerful than any evil, then the word amen. Then, she saw the man demon's idea of her and all the sitters having real potential to starve children to their deaths for the malicious rubbish of an evil demon that it was, and resolved to try her very best not to let it cause upset, believing this to be part of an ideal response to the situation. This accusation, - though doubtlessly meant to be taken literally - was not, after all, made by anything ethical. Had the accusation been instead motivated by a highly unethical approach to competitiveness, she thought she would again have made every effort to minimise its harmful effects.

Having thus collected herself, she was ready to talk to the sitters. "What's wrong?", said Kate, to Constance, concerned, "Let's try to minimise the problem", said Constance rather evasively, despite her upset feelings.

"Sorry", said Constance to Kate and Patrick, revealing the remaining strength of character that she still brought to mediumship, "I contacted only demons, not Ethel - this rarely happens. Whenever such events do transpire, upsetting, always, though by no means of necessity dire, are the consequences. Nevertheless, such upset can and must be overcome. If you would be so good as to put the kettle on Kate, I'll bless the room. There will, of course, be no charge for tonight's sitting".

Kate mentioned to Constance about the 'shadow snake' she had seen by Ethel's picture. "I'll bless the picture individually as I bless the room", said Constance, unsurprised by this news and eager to play-down the significance of this added concern which she had not detected troubling any of the other sitters during the séance. However, Constance helped Kate further with regard to Kate's bad experience before she left.

A month passed. Constance came into the bakery shop and Kate, who had been busy serving customers, took a chance to speak to her by inviting her to a cup of tea in the cake decorating room, while Patrick took over serving customers in the shop. Kate mentioned that no ill affects had resulted since the last attempt had been made to contact

Ethel, and mentioned a continued yearning to contact her. Constance stressed the effectiveness of blessing rooms. They arranged with good reason, to try once more to contact Ethel. Also, she mentioned how she had bought a new cross necklace to wear at séances and also a small wooden cross to bring.

Saturday evening, after dinner, Patrick lovingly poured out Kate's favourite French white wine into two glasses. Then, although not usually humourless-serious to the point of being sombre, he gently put his hands around Kate's right hand, and looked into her eyes and said: "I love you Kate, princess."

Some time, Kate, asleep in bed with Patrick, had dreamt of the time that she and her mother, Ethel, had been to Brighton in summer 1920, had walked on the sands, had fed the hungry sea gulls which had performed aerial acrobatics to get the bread. Her thoughts passed to the issue of how people, including those who love each other can affect *certain* things in life-outcomes etc-be they important or trivial- but not others. Kate herself had an intense yearning for the love and approval of her friends and relatives, not least, that from Patrick, her soul mate! Not infrequently had her father, Albert in his tactless directness, spoken of her in unflattering terms-as one who has an impetuosity of spirit, 'not least after wine, unbecoming your class and these sedate and respectable districts of town' were the very words he had often scolded her with.

Presently, having thought it all out, she chose to focus her thoughts onto one subject. Some things you simply can't talk about in public, but are right in the marital home, and very specific to you and your husband she reached for her husband Patrick, who was snoring gently beside her in bed. Pushing gently at one of his shoulders, waking him, "Love you Patrick", she said, kissing him on his chin before lying back and giggling.

Being aware now that Patrick was wide awake and that she had his full attention, she sat up in bed, lowered her head and stared with a rare intensity at him over her right shoulder. Reading his attracted response to this from his brown eyes, she kissed him again this time very directly and blatantly on his mouth. Then gently, in a premeditated fashion, she put her foot over his crotch, looked at him intently and sweetly before removing her foot and once again lying back-though, apparently calmer now, more subdued, yet still, she laughed.

He kissed her full on the mouth, her tongue eagerly meeting his. Tongues together, he soon began to make love to her as she lay surrendered on the bed, her legs wide apart. She relished his slow, determined, steady resolve. Kate found the sheer physicality of the experience between Patrick and herself-its here and now nature- to be a welcome comfort.

Ethel did, surely, have an out of body experience that started when she died at the scene of the crash. This became clear to Constance at the second attempt by seance to contact Ethel, when her spirit had been contacted.

Again, Constance arrived there was talk-including of a nice cup of tea prior to the commencement of the séance-an offer which was declined. Once more, the curtains were closed. And again everyone joined hands at the table. Concentration. A striving to communicate, to connect. The searching, the will to find, as yet unfound. Change: a sense of engagement with Ethel, an affirmative, a now open door. Constance had fallen now into a deep state of concentration her mind, her unspoken words, interaction.

"You've died", explained Constance. "Your daughter Kate's here. You don't have a physical body anymore, you've died".

'Can't understand. The crash. What about Kate and Albert?'

"They're getting over your death, but are concerned that you are ok." Every cloud has a silver lining. Slow realisation. The large image was clearly one of Ethel's face. Slow grin spreading. Emotions made clear. Lingered.

Then, the image disappeared. "God bless you, Amen" said Constance, making the sign of the cross in the air with her right hand. She's moved on, thought Constance to herself, emotions turbulent in her brain.

In due course, Constance came out of her highly focused and would go on to reveal all that she had found out from it to her sitters.

First, though she simply said: "She's ok, she had to move on from our physical dimension".

"MONKEY-MAN" OUT, MUHNOCHWA IN!

BY DAVE BAKER

Over the years, there have been a number of classic cases of mass-hysteria monsters; England's Spring-heel'd Jack of the 19th Century, America's Mad Gasser of Mattoon in 1944, Chinese "Penis stealers" from last year, and a menagerie of slashers, stalkers and biters.

In most cases these panics are short-lived but intense, involving ordinary, and otherwise level-headed members of the public succumbing to increasing rumours and scare stories, which under normal conditions they would not entertain for a minute.

Earlier this year, many parts of India were the social stalking grounds of the feared 'Monkey-man', a fearsome creature that was "seen" by hundreds, and which scaled high walls, scurried over roofs, leapt great distances in a single bound, and entered houses to "attack" it's helpless and terrified victims.

After a few frenzied weeks, Monkey-man fever dissipated, and apart from a brief comeback a few weeks ago, the monster appears to have slunk away to the dusty lair of retired monsters.

However, by August and well into September, Monkey-man had been replaced by a new terror: the mucnochwa, or "face-scratcher" This latest bogey-man of India has, for the last couple of months, been terrorising villages on the continent in much the same way as his predecessor.

Initially, there did not seem to be an actual visible creature to describe. In Hajipur village Rajkumari (22), her husband Nand Lal and brother-in-law Prem Kumar (12) were fast asleep in their house when Nand Lal felt that someone was strangulating him. There was no sign of an attacker, but "strangulation marks"

were visible on his neck, and "a scar was found on his lip."

Soon after, police in Bakshi Ka Talab were reporting that that if people did actually see their assailant, they could describe nothing more unusual than "cat-like or other four-legged creatures".

In Raitha village, a family was sleeping out on the terrace when two "cat-like animals" attacked a man called Shakeel, and his wife Umar Jahan. Shakeel later displayed scratches on his back which, according to police reports, appeared to have been "made by a claw".

As the word and the fear spread from village to village and province to province, police, still smarting from Monkey-man Mania –began posting plain-clothed officers in cafes and restaurants to quell rumours at their source. They even considered that criminal charges should be brought against those spreading such rumours.

Within a few days, though, the creatures appearance and modus operandi had warped into something altogether more frightening.

Witnesses began to describe the muhnochwa as "a red (or blue) light", others as a seemingly Lovecraftian creature like "a flying octopus" that attacked the face and flew away, leaving scars and burns on it's hapless victims.

The State Government were reported to have asked the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) for help in identifying what was behind the attacks.

A Home Department spokesman said, "Experts from the Institute would be asked to send in teams to understand the various descriptions of the mysterious creature."

He suggested that someone was using "an electronic device" of some type to attack the villagers, although why and how someone could achieve this on so many people in so many districts was left unsaid.

"The mysterious object also flies and emits light while attacking the target" he further said. The object attacks only during nights. "In Mirzapur districts all so called attacks occurred during power cut in late hours."

For example, a 53 –year old woman called Kalawati, described how she was attacked and burned by "a big soccer ball with sparkling

lights", and was able to show 'blisters on her blackened forearms.'

By the time the story made the U.S. media, Muhnochwa had –it seemed – become a killer. 'At least seven people have died of unexplained injuries in the past week in Uttar Pradesh state.', *The New York Times* reported on 11 August.

Raghuraj Pal, from Shanwa, said "A mysterious flying object attacked (my neighbour) in the night. His stomach was ripped open. He died two days later."

As in the months of the monkey-man, villagers in various regions formed their own protection patrols - in many cases actually little more than vigilante squads - who pounded drums, "shouting slogans", and in extreme cases, attacked anyone they considered even vaguely suspicious, whether they looked like a flying octopus or not...

"People just block the roads and attack the police for inaction each time there's a death or injury," said Amrit Abhijat, Mirzapur's district magistrate, who –incidentally - claims he has captured the UFO on film.

Whether muhnochwa is in fact directly responsible for any deaths has yet to be proved, but the accompanying panic certainly has led to at least one death. During a protest march of 10,000 people in Sitapur, police fired shots to disperse the crowd and shot a protestor dead.

Not everyone has fallen under muhnochwa's spell though.

One police explanation was that muhnochwa is in reality "a three-and-a-half-inch-long winged insect" that leaves rashes and superficial wounds. Superintendent Kavindra P. Singh, a told the Press Trust of India news agency that unknown bugs had been found in one village and that these were surely to blame.

Other experts have even suggested ball-lightning as the cause of the burns and the source of the globes of light, but considering that the phenomenon is extremely rare, so many cases in such a short time may well be as fanciful, if more scientifically based, than a flying octopus.

My own feeling echoes that of many medical doctors in the India.

Narrotam Lal, a doctor at King George's Medical College in Lucknow, said, "More often than not the victims have unconsciously inflicted the symptoms (upon) themselves,"

For students of urban legends, folklore, sociology and psychology, Monkey-man and his successor the muhnochwa are manna from heaven. In the instant, fast-food world of the internet and satellite news channels, we can actually witness such cases of social panic as

they unfold, rather than attempt to piece together the information weeks later. We can watch as the panic gathers momentum, snowballing from a small, otherwise insignificant incident into mass hysteria, all of it with little or no real evidence.

(sources: *Times of India*, 5 Aug 2002, *Daily Pioneer [India]* 7 Aug 2002, *New York Times* 11 Aug 2002)

ANOTHER FINE NESS...

By Dave Baker

A "spectacular" new series of photographs has sparked a media news-frenzy and re-kindled interest in the decades-old legend of The Loch Ness Monster.

The photos were taken just before 9:00 am on August 21, near Inchnacardoch, Scotland, by retired printer Roy Johnston from Loughton, Essex.

Roy and his wife Janet were driving home along the A82 after a holiday in Scotland when the sighting occurred. Stopping the car in a lay-by to take a look at the beautiful view, Roy left his wife in the car while he walked down a well-trodden path through the trees to the water's edge.

"A die-hard sceptic", Roy was carrying his faithful Nikon camera, expecting to see and photograph nothing more unusual than the stunning view.

But Roy caught a lot more instead...allegedly.

He told reporters that as he gazed across the loch, he saw the shape of a long neck rise gracefully from the still waters for "several metres" before splashing back and disappearing from view.

"I thought I was going mad", Mr Johnston told *The Scotsman* "The first thought that sprang to my mind was 'It's an elephant'. I know it sounds silly but it looked like a trunk. I had my camera hanging round my neck and I just started clicking.

"I thought maybe it was a conger eel but I realised it was way too big. It was about seven

or eight feet out of the water and it was obvious there was more of it underneath the surface. It was a black, greyish colour but I couldn't see a head. It didn't make any noise. After a few minutes it disappeared with a splash that was audible."

The last photo even shows a great big splash in the loch, which could have indeed been made by a diving cryptid, or perhaps even a big stone thrown into the water.

After a few moments shock, Mr. Johnston hurried back to his wife to excitedly relate his story. Of course at first, Mrs. Johnston thought her husband was pulling her leg. "It wasn't until we got home and had the pictures developed that she finally believed me." Mr. Johnston said.



The honest-to-goodness, not computer-generated at all, hands on heart — picture of the "Ness-ter" Yikes!

The photos first appeared in *The Daily Mail* on September 6th. Lawrence Sear managing editor of *The Daily Mail*, vouched for their authenticity.

and they were absolutely genuine. They have not been manipulated at any stage," he said. "Who knows whether the images are of the Loch Ness monster or not?" Mr. Sears said from his position astride a near-by legal fence.

"All we can say is that those pictures are genuine and have not been doctored."

However, in the first round of what could be a battle of the Media Monsters, Kayt Turner, picture editor of *Scotland on Sunday*, was more than sceptical.

She suggests that the photos were not taken in sequence, as the third picture, showing the splash of water as Nessie returned to the depths, was appreciably lighter in colour than the previous two images.

She suggested - much as members of YUFOS did on watching a *Channel 5* news broadcast on the story - that there was nothing in the images that could not be reproduced using computer imaging software and a digital scanner. And a brick thrown in the water.

Kayt, a picture editor for 15 years, said, "Looking at this image it is impossible to tell if there has been any manipulation. It would be very simple to take a picture of an object and

"We collected the negatives from Mr Johnston place it in the loch. The only way you could be sure they are genuine would be to see the original negatives."

Never a slow one to get in on the act, that bastion of the British media *The News of the World* has apparently signed up Nessie expert Adrian Shine to analyse the pictures.

Whatever the outcome, tourism in the area is expected to flourish as a result of the photos and the publicity.

Malaina Krott-Thiarry, of the loch's tourist information centre said: "I have no idea what to make of these pictures, but I think they're good news for the area. This might lead to a boost for business later this year or next year."

One amusing aspect of all media coverage of the story was their focus on the Lady of the Loch's size. With such witticisms as "A lot less Nessie", and 'a slimmed-down monster', reporters focused on the 'fact' that Nessie seemed smaller and thinner on the most recent photos compared to those of the past.

Considering that they also mentioned that most, if not all of these other photos were fakes, what were they comparing her against?

EARTH HAS "NEW MOON"

(*Alexandra Witze, Science Editor, The Dallas Morning News 30 September 2002*)

A piece of space junk has become the only object known to begin circling Earth after having orbited the sun.

Astronomers have identified the mystery object J002E3 as the third stage of a Saturn rocket from the Apollo 12 mission. Astronauts jettisoned the 60-foot-long stage on the way to the moon in 1969, but the junk didn't immediately orbit the sun as planned.

Instead, the stage orbited Earth chaotically for 15 months, then changed position to orbit the sun. It came back to Earth in April of this

year; an amateur astronomer spotted it on September 3.

Astronomers determined that the object's brightness and reflectivity matched those expected for a rocket stage and that it could have come only from Apollo 12.

The errant stage will escape Earth orbit again next June, scientists say.

For more information, visit

<http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/>