

THE RESEARCHER

A publication of the Merseyside Anomalies Research Association

“Interpretation is free, experience is sacred.”

Issue #1 Autumn 1997



UFOs over Anglican Cathedral
A Pilgrim's Progress
Fighting the Secrecy War
An Urban Myth
The Story So Far...some recent hauntings

£1

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About MARA

The Merseyside Anomalies Research Association was founded in February 1996. It is a non-profit making organisation which is aimed to encourage, promote and conduct unbiased scientific investigation and research into UFO/paranormal phenomena. MARA provides support for college, university undergraduate and post graduate research. MARA also has a functioning Witness Support Group which helps those who have experienced close encounter/ paranormal experiences.

MARA is an informal group of people of all backgrounds and a variety of ages over 18. The group is limited to a small number of people, composed of individuals with mixed backgrounds who want to actively investigate and research UFO/paranormal phenomena within Merseyside. MARA does not give public lectures at its regular meetings but often presents lectures for other groups and societies.

Membership application to MARA is free and open to all members of the public. Places are limited and there is a waiting list. The Association is run jointly by its group co-ordinators who are amateur investigators and researchers in their spare time, and are members of well known national organisations. They are responsible for major decisions involving the group. The organisers are also responsible for the Association's membership, activities, functions and research.

It is a policy of MARA not to have any fixed beliefs. MARA is not responsible for the opinion's expressed, or implied, by guest speakers, The Researcher or the by any of the Association's members.

MARA is affiliated to the British UFO Research Association, Northern Anomalies Research Organisation, NUFON, the Incorporated Society for Psychological Research, Halton FM UFO Factor, Merseyside Area Paranormal Society and works with the Association for Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, Wirral Paranormal Investigations and the Wirral Saucer Group.

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About The Researcher

This publication is a voice for MARA members to write about their research and interests in the phenomenon. We will also print letters from those who wish to have a say and there will also be a section at the end for articles and advertisements belonging to those people who are not a part of MARA but would like to contribute their research to this small publication. It will not involve payment for the articles but it will mean that your article will be read by a large number of people in the UFO/ paranormal community. Please send your letters and articles to Anthony Eccles at the address above. Keep it clean and objective, know what I mean? MARA reserves the right to edit all articles.

The Voice

This is my chance as editor to say a few words about the publication. It is basically a voice for the Merseyside Anomalies Research Association. Of course, the magazine is not just for MARA members but for those who have never heard of us as a group and are interested in what is being reported from within Merseyside. MARA has become successful as a group, unlike some unfortunate groups, and we have been able to become involved in some very interesting cases. Also we are not a politically orientated group, and that is an important thing to stress. This year has a number of significant events happening such as the fiftieth year of modern ufology. We have become witness to an era where the subjects of the paranormal have become part of our culture, being found fashionable by youngsters, and great story making by the media. It has always been difficult to make the public aware of the complexities of such a subject, especially when you cannot fit the answers of the paranormal debate into small tidy boxes. Just so long as we, the researchers, do not get lost along the way (and some have, especially when enticed by the seduction of money) then we will have the opportunity to present our findings to the public, academic and scientific circles.

It is unfortunate that a lot of the public will accept almost anything being written in the glossy "paranormal" magazines and expensive videos instead of reading genuine research, mostly available in book form. Yes, the business minded have found the new niche of the nineties, the selling stalls of paranormal paraphernalia. But I often ask myself, does possessing empty pockets actually buy you the knowledge needed to learn about such a subject matter? With the multitude of monthly literature and videos I am certain that people just cannot afford to buy everything that comes out just to keep up to date. By judging the contents of these, most of it seems to have very weak foundations when it comes to supportive evidence or is made up, very little of it is actually written by genuine researchers. Where there's a market, there's a way of telling a story that sells. To be honest such business ideas has its good and bad points.

The UFO/ paranormal phenomenon has served the media by the production of "good" stories to print or the background to television productions which have so far failed to give an objective representation of anomalous phenomena. One example is the "Strange But True" Live Debate, a cheap and comical event that was the product of commercial television and not one concerned about the serious research that goes on. A commercialism that has become successful where making money is concerned. The effects of this can be seen in the types of letters MARA receives from the public where the majority of letters reflect the American science fiction culture that is loosely based on true UFO/ paranormal incidents and that can easily appeal to, and influence, the public's perception of such phenomenon. The effects of this, I feel, can be reflected in the numbers of conferences organised this year. This has been the Year of the Conference, and although it may have provided an excellent opportunity to present a special event it has not happened to my knowledge. Once people get too much of good thing then they get tired of it. This year has seen a number of badly attended events. It is not necessarily the fault of the organisers but the fault, it appears, of an over exploited phenomenon. You buy the books, the magazines, the videos, car stickers, alien model kits, alien dolls and, oops, you've no money left to buy an expensive ticket to go a conference. It's such a shame because the idea of the conference is to listen to and meet the real researchers who, at most times, do a lot of good work.

Conference details and reviews

The 5th BUFORA Merseyside UFO Conference, organised and ran by BUFORA and MARA members, was quite fortunate to have an average number of people turn up. We had around a hundred and fifty people there on Father's Day! A success for us. We had moved venue from a small room that encouraged people to sweat to a large historic hall that encouraged people to freeze (we'll get it right eventually). Speakers included Margaret Fry, Stan Conway, Tim Matthews and Roger Ellison. An experimental change of scene that was immersed in a background of structural refurbishment, that was why there was no heating, and that was why no one could fall asleep. All in all a good day was had by all, even if you did not possess a physics degree!

The BUFORA International Conference held at Sheffield in August is an event I normally enjoy going to. Lots of people, lots of stalls, lots of speakers and lots of long lost friends. However, this one came with lots of trouble. Unfortunately certain people became embroiled in a conflict turned personal because of unfortunate politics. Take it from me, as someone who shared the organising of that event I was disappointed because of what happened behind the scenes, and as a result the conference failed to turn out the way it was originally planned the year before. The conference itself consisted mainly of British speakers despite it being an International Conference, the whys of which are not relevant to this publication but it is matter needed to be seriously addressed by those responsible people within BUFORA, if future conferences are to go ahead and become successful for the promotion of UFO research and BUFORA. There were some good speakers there such as Paul Devereux, Nik Redfern, Don & Vicky Ecker, Larry Warren, Peter Robbins and Debbie Jordan, and new ones such as Brian Clarke the editor of Enigma magazine and 'Man in Black' from "Funky Bunker". The atmosphere was lacking and empty, not a typical event for BUFORA but typical of a situation that involved ego struggles and a subject badly done to death by the media. To be fair all of the organisers had a tough time and did a splendid job, it is a shame that the in-fighting, the exploited subject and the finances went against them. Hopefully next year will prove differently, I have confidence in BUFORA to do just that.

20th September

The NARO Files 2. A one day conference which was organised by the Northern Anomalies Research Organisation and held at the Friend's Meeting House, Mount Street, in Manchester. However, this one has suffered the fate of other conferences. Very few people turned up, Eric Morris, Elaine Hannah(MARA Secretary) and myself were part of the audience. It was a shame too because the speakers were very good and had some valid points to make. Lecturers included John Hall (MARA/ NARO), who gave a really interesting insight into paranormal events from the Isle of Man, a place steeped in mythology and anomalous incidents, and also Jenny Randles who provided a lecture regarding time, its strange properties and how it closely ties in with the UFO and paranormal phenomena.

15-16th November

A UFO Conference has been organised by the Lancashire Aerial Phenomena Investigation Society and is held at the Lowther Pavillion, Lytham near. Blackpool. I was present at last year's and recall good memories at some of the scenes there and the speakers present, well worth going to. Speakers include Dr. Brian O'Leary, David Percy, Simon Lewis, Matthew Williams and Dea Martin (I'm sure there should be an 'n' there somewhere), Bill Holden and Peter Paget. The event takes

place on the Saturday and Sunday and tickets cost £24 for both days or £12 per day. There are workshops too, and if you wish to attend the price goes up as well by £2 per workshop. For details of this weekend conference contact Sam 01253 691301 or Paulette 01253 391704 or lapis@wavenet.co.uk.

British UFO Research Association VIDEO & AUDIO CASSETTES

2nd Merseyside Mini Conference November 1995

Peter Hough "UFO cases from the North - West"
Steven Gamble "UFO cases from Northamptonshire"
Ken Philips "The Witness Support Group"

3rd Merseyside Mini Conference May 1996

Anthony Eccles/ Mark Glover "UFOs in Merseyside"
Jenny Randles "Government Cover Ups"
John Spencer "Discussing the origins of UFOs"

4th Merseyside Mini Conference November 1996

Gloria Dixon "Close Encounters / Military Aircraft"
Philip Mantle "British Abduction cases"
Matthew Williams "The British Cover Up"

5th Merseyside Mini Conference June 1997

Margaret Fry "UFO Crash on Berwyn Mountain"
Tim Matthews "The Flying Triangle"
Stan Conway "A lesson of UFO physics"
Larry Warren & Peter Robbins "UFO crash in Rendlesham"

VHS video cassettes £7 each
Audio cassettes of individual lectures £4 each

To purchase a copy contact Paul Rogers on 01695 729410
or e-mail at PaulRogers3@CompuServe.com

Skywatch Weekend

Since the beginning, MARA has always been involved with at least one skywatch a year. The intention was to practise our observations of astronomical, meteorological and mundane events such as aircraft and to better our understanding of people's perception of the UFO phenomenon. Last year we went as two groups, the first to Ashurst Beacon in Skelmersdale and the second to Hale lighthouse. The results of that watch revealed an observation of a flash of light, similar to that of a very large camera flash, over the River Mersey, at the exact spot where a fault line exists.

This year we had planned to do our skywatch on the 21st June, in collaboration with BUFORA. Everything had been planned, and then it rained all weekend. We thus decided to join in another national skywatch, this time in collaboration with UFO Magazine, as we had done the previous year. Again we had two groups, the first at Ashurst Beacon which has a splendid commanding view to the west. The second at Thurstaston Common on the Wirral. MARA was not alone, Wirral Paranormal Investigations, the Wirral Saucer Group and other individuals were there too.

Thurstaston Common lies on the western side of the Wirral peninsula, not very far from West Kirby. It is very suitable for a skywatch because of its geographical and geological positioning. It sits at a height of between sixty to seventy metres above sea level and has a commanding view in all directions. It was a somewhat cloudy night but not enough to block out the fantastic view of the stars and planets. Jupiter was in full view to the south, sporadic cometary dust (shooting star), satellites and aircraft were visible for the whole duration of the watch. However, my eyes were focused more to the north and north west of the peninsula due to the layout of the fault lines there, in particular the ones placed beneath Hilbre Island. Throughout the night nothing unusual had been seen, but to be watching in the company of around twenty people was a comfortable feeling. Either I was not the only lunatic there who would do such an event on a weekend, or I was not the only one who had a passion for a field of study that was ridiculed by the mainstream of society and obscured by its own existence and little understood behaviour.

Most people left by two o'clock. It looked like it was going to rain and it was getting colder, even for the majority who took warm clothing. We would not have been good observers if we were tired. Upon our return home it began to rain. When we arrived to the warmth of our homes to hear about the tragic accident involving Princess Diana.

Next year, we hope to do the same thing, a little earlier in the year such as Spring and Summer when the nights are warmer and the sky is clearer. However, it will be our aim to remain in two locations at one time. This will enable members of the group to observe separate areas of Merseyside over a period of time, in a way attempting to get know the location and record any unusual but natural processes that may occur there. Earthlights and faultline related processes, I believe, have an important part to play in causing UFO and other paranormal phenomena. I disagree with Paul Devereux's argument that all unidentified sightings are stimulated by geological processes, however, I firmly believe that they do play an important role with these events. We may be able to show that perhaps natural but as yet unexplained phenomena might be connected with other observed anomalies.

To Bear Witness

by Mark Glover (Sept. 1997)

The justification for the Witness Support Group concerns how anomalous phenomena affect the witness psychologically. Fundamentally it is a question of necessity being the mother of invention, as it were. Due to the fact that some anomalous experiences involve traumatic events such as occur in the so called "alien abduction" type experience, and include what would basically constitute physical assault or abuse if performed by human beings, it has become valuable for both witnesses and research/investigators as a facility for understanding and coming to terms with the phenomenon and its effects.

Of course not all aspects of the anomalous or Extraordinary Human Experience [EHE] (White, 1996) are necessarily negatively traumatic, nor need they be so in order to justify their inclusion beneath the umbrella of a witness support group. There are emotions and potentially physiological components of the EHE which may be considered as being "positively traumatic". How can something be positively traumatic, one might hear people say? Well, this may involve for instance physical and psychological stimuli (which can and do occur in the mundane daily lives of individuals) having an invigorating effect on the individual as a whole. They may call upon the individual to think more deeply about life and the significance of the direction in which their lives are moving.

Some witnesses to frightening UFO experiences will say that the events of their experiences have made them more courageous or confident in daily life. For instance by encouraging them to increase their social circle or find work. The very fact that EHEs initiate the need for some individuals who experience them to seek out help and support in coming to terms with their experience, in itself represents a widening or expansion of an individual's life. One member of the MARA WSG who has undergone a close encounter of the fourth kind (CEIV) said that in life she had always considered herself a coward, but going through her ordeal of an experience has helped her become stronger as a person. As a married mother, she has had the courage for instance to get a small part-time job and having to defend her children from what she considers is an intrusion (since they have also been effected by these experiences) has taught her to respect herself as a valuable parent to those children.

The author here is not saying that the experiences, which the above and her family have had, are to be just accepted therefore and not challenged because they have produced this effect. Nor that the causal agent should hence be considered as necessarily non-malevolent, non-violating or non-abusive. What is being said is that the effects of EHEs can be to induce "healing" within the individual if they are dealt with in the correct way. It is all a question of perspective and attitude and the battle to understand - "why me?" This latter question has a lot to do with taking responsibility. Again the author is not implying resignation to the phenomenon but rather a sense of an individual rising to the occasion as it were and girding themselves up for a fight for their own self respect. It can therefore (because of this) be seen as a process of inner development or growth. Witnesses to these events often express a profound sense of powerlessness. "I can't control it (they), it (they) just comes and takes me over. I don't like that!" or words to that effect are frequently voiced by witnesses and clearly demonstrate the need they have for some

sort of vehicle in which to voice their fear or sense of outrage at what has may be still happening to them. They also need regular reassurance that they are not going insane. The witness support group enables them to express themselves fully in an arena where they will not be judged. In such an atmosphere they feel confident also in expressing their beliefs as to what they have and may be still undergoing; to explore them naturally and without restriction.

Finally, it is important to reassure the objective individual that the witness support group is not about establishing a belief system, as there is a danger that it could become, or be seen as, a cult. However, trust in the form of a balance of subjective and objective consideration as to what witnesses report has happened to them is required. That is, their experiences must be respected and we should really try to believe the story of a witness if they have demonstrated sincerity and genuineness. The motto we have adopted for the MARA witness support group is therefore - "interpretation is free, but experience is sacred". We might also do well to remember another proverb, especially when answering to cynical sceptics, which goes - "for those who believe no proof is necessary and for those who do not, no proof is possible".

Mark Glover - He has already obtained his BA Combined Honours in Psychology and Biology and is presently finishing his MSc in Evolutionary Psychology. Mark also works as a nurse in a department of neurology. He is one of those responsible for running of MARA's Witness Support Group. Mark is a member and accredited investigator for the British UFO Research Association and Northern Anomalies Research Organisation, based in Manchester. Mark is also one of the Founders and Joint Co-ordinators of MARA.

Witness Support Group

This group was based upon the original London based Witness Support Group which began some five years ago under the guidance of the late Ken Philips. The function of this group is to enable witnesses to freely express their experiences regarding paranormal phenomena (varying from UFO close encounters to extreme poltergeist activity). These experiences can sometimes be upsetting, or even traumatic, for an individual. The group meets in private and protects the witnesses from fear of ridicule. Witnesses may express themselves literally or artistically, depending on how they feel about their approach to their experiences. It may be decided to publish, in the future, the expressions of the witnesses with full anonymity.

Anyone who participates in the Witness Support Group shall remain totally anonymous, along with any work they do, and remains separate to MARA activities and functions. The group is co-ordinated by Mark Glover and Paul Rogers who ensures that any balance is maintained, this avoids the construction of any religious or cult group, and prevents any individual from dominating the group.

It must be stressed that this group is not a counselling group, nor is it in any way medically analytical. It is merely there to allow people to talk freely about their experiences, and share them with other witnesses who may have had similar encounters, all in total confidence. The Witness Support Group is available to all members of the public who have had paranormal experiences. For further information please contact:

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A Pilgrim's Progress

by Anthony Eccles

I received a case in 1994 from a local government officer who had experienced a car crash. His injuries included a redamaged knee, shock and depression. I mention this because, in my opinion, there is a paranormal link connected with this incident. Up until that incident, the witness had always been a sensitive person (I have known him for fifteen years), artistic (creative is a better word) and one who had suffered some abuse as a minor. He had, on occasion, a number of strange experiences prior to a UFO sighting he was to have sometime after the crash.

Late one night, the witness was in bed with his back touching the wall behind him. He felt something from behind and then felt movement upon the bed. The witness describes the movement as a soft padding similar in nature to the movements of a small cat. The hair on the back of his neck stood up and he instinctively felt that it was a cat that he could feel. Sleep followed and he cannot recall any unusual dreams.

Later, approximately one and a half years ago (c.1992) the witness had a more frightening experience. Lying in bed on his back the witness observed something like a whitish streak pass by his face, the witness heard laughter and believed that 'it' was trying to scare him. The witness shouted in reply "Oh f*** off!" Immediately, the witness could not move and felt something press onto his face, he felt suffocated. He managed to get his hands to his face to push that 'something' off, however, this happened again eight or nine times, the witness was still resisting. The witness could not breathe and started to panic, he felt very frightened. Closing his eyes he could see the image of an old woman's face and it had the likeness of a varnished puppet face next to her. No body was seen with it. Opening his eyes, he saw the woman and the puppet face but they slowly disappeared. The witness started doubting whether he was asleep or awake his nose also began to feel as if it had something shoved up against it. The witness was hot and sweaty, and when the 'presence' first appeared he felt that "it was there to test him". Earlier in the day, the witness remembers talking about Chingle Hall (a haunted hall near Goosnargh, nr. Preston) and mentioned that if he saw something very unusual he would have been extremely curious about it.

A couple of weeks later, the same experience occurred for a second time. Again the witness was in bed and lying on his side. It was late at night and he felt paralysed, something similar to fists seemed to be hammering at his body. The witness could not speak and managed to shout "get off!" the experience then stopped. This experience was not as frightening as the previous one, he was unable to determine what was happening and also if the 'presence' was going to harm him. Witness very much believed that the 'entity' experienced on both occasions was the same one. The witness remembers thinking "not again!"

So what do I make of these experiences. Well I do not believe that he was abducted, that, I am certain of. It resembles more sleep paralysis. His encounters with the white 'entity' appears very similar to the Old Hag Syndrome experienced by people in Scandinavia. People have seen a figure resembling an old witch who cackles and laughs at them and often screams curses. This may be a hallucinogenic part of sleep paralysis. Firstly, the witness is always lying down in bed. At a time when the body

is in a more relaxed and receptive state for sleep. The witness experiences paralysis which is a protective occurrence for those who are half asleep and half awake, preventing the body from sleep walking and endangering itself. The witness struggles and finds it difficult to breathe, again attempting to fight the body's natural actions can be quite impossible and very exhausting. It may also reflect the fact that the witness was almost strangled at birth by his own umbilical cord which was tightly wrapped around his throat at birth. Therefore, early experiences, defensive experiences might be present and overworking themselves to protect the mind and body for survival.

So here we have the beginnings of some kind of instinctive mind heal and the forthcoming account of a signal, a stimulated signal, one that encourages the mind to survive and heal itself. An idea I had shared with the late Ken Philips and one which he liked the idea of. So what brings me to this conclusion? And what of the paranormal element to the case? Well, what is demonstrated is the receptive conditioning already illustrated by the witness, from birth trauma to a reaction to childhood and growing up which has made the witness an increasingly sensitive person, something common to the majority of Close Encounter witnesses.

The car crash occurs in the early part of 1994. Two of them were in the car when another driver carelessly drove the witness's car spinning into the other side of the road. Both were not seriously hurt, the driver was fine but the witness sustained a knee injury (the same knee that needed serious surgery some months before), shock and the forthcoming depression. The incident made the witness go through what Mark Glover and I call "The Pilgrim's Progress" Evolutionary Process from the time of the experienced crash to the stimulated signal of the sighting and the witness's full recovery. Furthermore, the witness could not get back into the car and drive, he had developed a fear of driving in case he was going to crash again. Not only that, but he was unable to go back to work, a place which was busy with individuals who were not as educated as the witness. The witness did not feel like he fitted in, he was isolated in his working environment (he had lots of friends) but he was not happy at work, it just did not feel right even though he had been there for a number of years, he possessed status inconsistency (a common sign amongst receptive individuals Ken Philips had discovered from the results of the Anamnesis Project).

The process of self healing begins immediately proceeding the car crash when the trauma affects the witness with new fears and depression. The witness sees a doctor and receives two types of treatment, physio-therapy for his knee and prozac for his depression, the witness does not receive counselling. During this treatment, the witness remained off work and refused to do any driving. Once his knee began to improve he started Tai-chi which not only helped him physically but also improved his confidence and probably regained him a sense of self worth (being a very sensitive person the accident may have questioned his own confidence).

Then on the 3rd August 1994 something happened which marked a complete change to the witness's life. Just after midnight, the witness took his dog for a walk, something which was done on a regular basis on a regular route twice a day. The route led out of the witnesses road and finally onto the corner of Mostyn Avenue and Ramsey Road in Allerton. The witness just happened to instinctually look up (even though the witness did that every night as he enjoyed looking at the night sky) and there somewhat low above the roof of a house (about 30 - 40') was a stationary pulsating red ball of light. He had not seen anything like it before and it had made no noise. He noticed that the ball had pulsed from right to left of its sphere. It was observed for approximately half a minute when the witness was

distracted by the sound of the dog moving in someone else's garden. He briefly glanced downwards and when he looked back at the object it was gone. The witness continued walking with his dog looking out for the object but it did not reappear.

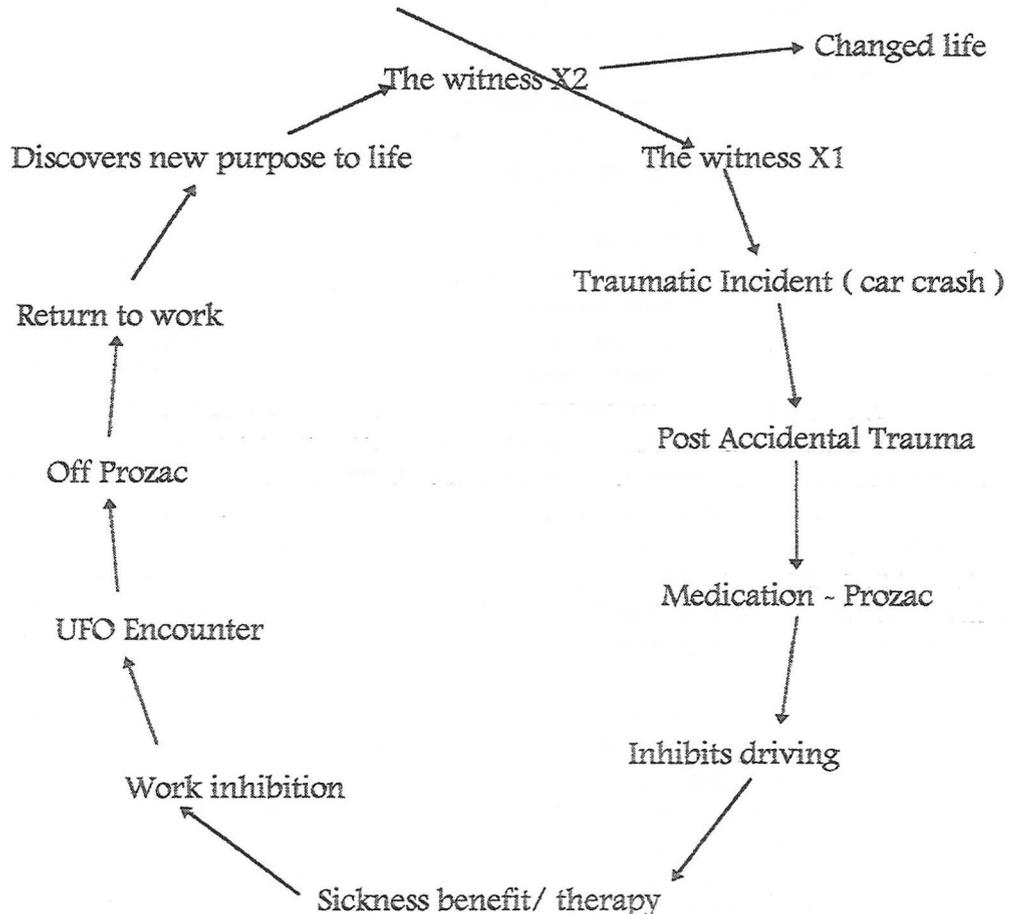
So what does the sighting tell us? Hallucinations? Mundane phenomena? ET craft? Or something else. My conclusion to the case is that it is something else. The investigation revealed that no military or civilian aircraft was present at the time and place specified, plus no meteorological and astronomical explanation could be found to explain such a sighting. With the object appearing close (bigger than the size of the full moon at arm's length) and the sky being very clear and mild, it could be suggested that it was a mirage or some other weather effect but this was not the case as confirmed by meteorologist Dr. Terence Meaden.

The important part about this case is not the object seen itself, but the profound effect it had on the witness. This needs to be studied more. The object could not be identified which leads me to believe that the object was either an Earthlight (the faultline being 600m to the west of where the witness was standing) or a signal created by the subconscious to stimulate a process of healing. Firstly, a natural process of elimination might help us understand the situation. There were no physical causes found for the origin of the UFO, so we have an object seen only by a single witness that I know of (no other has come forward) and thus it might be possible to rule out known mundane phenomena. Next, hallucination. The UFO sighting occurs some time after the witness begins taking prozac. Prozac has different effects on people. Its true name is Fluoxetine Hydrochloride and is used in the treatment of depression, however, one of its properties is the prevention of hallucinations. The witness was not taking any other medicine. So what about the object? Is it an ET craft? Despite my own belief with the ETH I do not believe that the object seen had anything to do with alien craft of any form. I believe that it maybe a signal sent by the subconscious to the optical nerves where the signal would be received by the brain and a physical and mental transition would begin depending on whether the witness would act or be receptive to the signal or not? If this is a biological event, then the witness would be responding to a natural process of healing. By all accounts of the Budden 1994 Witness Environmental Health Census completed by the witness, it does strongly suggest that the witness is of a type receptive to a variety of brain signals and, thus, paranormal phenomena. In this case brain signals, as the witness had experienced a number of sleep paralysis events and had experienced a traumatised birth (near strangulation of the umbilical cord). Even if the object was an Earthlight it still affected the witness's life, and can still be seen as a stimulated signal.

"The Pilgrim's Progress" now continues. Since the sighting, the witness begins to feel differently about himself, somewhat feeling 'special' about himself. "The Pilgrim's Progress" cycle now continues. The witness starts asking questions about himself and his place within the cosmos, something he has always done. He completes a cycle of Tai chi and soon he returns to work but in a different department. There, he does a different type of administration and works with different staff and not those he used to work with. The pressure is also off him to deal with public enquiries (enquiries mainly from those who do not understand their rights and aggressive individuals who do not understand how to follow regulations and those who are trying to cheat 'the system'). He now realises the implications of the stress gained from working in such a 'system', and decides to look for other work. After a while he starts driving in the car again and he stops taking prozac, his body no longer requiring such help. The witness wants to be a travel representative and decides to go for a number of interviews with several companies. He not only receives an interview from each of them but is offered a

position by each of them. The only difficulty the witness faced was the choice in which company to work for. The job as a travel rep pays him less money than he was receiving but he gets other benefits (perks) and decides to make this choice for his future. Immediately he is propelled into another career but one which makes him happier. He still works for a successful travel agency which provides work all around the world. The witness is presently working on a holiday resort. The transition becomes complete and "The Pilgrim's Progress" ends. I evaluated the case basically as an Unidentified Psychological Object, which relates more to biological healing than any other explanation for this case. The paranormal link here is the subconsciousness connection to the conscious as a response to the damage caused by the shock of the accident.

The model below illustrates the type of experience that may have a strong impact on a witness's life. Witness X1 represents a person before their experience, X2 represents the same witness but after their experience. This type of witness may not have any more experiences as the affective 'signal' has had its effect. This type of "enlightenment" may be considered to be part of an evolutionary process that belongs to the stimulus of paranormal phenomena. A factor that may be more of a part of our subconscious than our conscious reality.



The Story So Far....

By Colin John Veacock

Since this is the first issue of MARA's magazine, I thought it would be a good idea to briefly go over some of the paranormal cases that we have investigated. By far the most interesting and rewarding investigation undertaken by the group was the case of the 'talking poltergeist' of Hopwood Street in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool. It is situated a stones throw away from the busy Scotland Road. This case was brought to our attention by John Stiles, a member of the Incorporated Society for Psychical Research's 'Spontaneous Cases Committee'. Among the more unusual phenomena reported by the family concerned were disembodied threatening voices, the 'ghost' of a young girl wearing a cotton night-dress, maniacal laughter coming from empty rooms and instances of physical violence.

John L. Hall and myself conducted the initial interview with the mother and the daughter who were absolutely horrified by what was taking place in their home. During these tape recorded interviews taken in the living room, noises were recorded which some have compared to the sound of a horse walking on cobblestones. Later, whilst taking photographs in the mother's bedroom, John had left the tape recorder running in the daughter's empty bedroom, the room where most of the activity seemed to have focused. On playing back that portion of the recording the sound of a zipper being fastened can be clearly heard. A photograph of that bedroom, taken from the doorway while the tape recorder was left running on the bed, also seems to have captured an anomaly which cannot be explained yet. The photograph apparently shows hovering above the bed a large transparent pinkish pyramid of light. This could easily be a trick of the light, or perhaps a genuine manifestation of the alleged haunting. The photograph needs to be looked at more closely. However, if it is a genuine manifestation it may be apart of what the two priests from nearby St. Silvester's and St. Anthony's had picked up when they had visited the family to bless their house.

A very rewarding controlled overnight stay was undertaken on the 7th June when Anthony Eccles, Stephanie Hignett and myself decided to set up some equipment with the possibility of recording an aspect of any present phenomena. Video monitoring equipment was installed in the corner of the focus bedroom, along with separate audio equipment. Temperature readings taken between the bedroom door and the window (a distance of roughly ten feet or three meters) naturally varied slightly, showing a difference of between four and six degrees. Certainly nothing to get excited about. The witness was asked to lie on the bed in full view of the camera and pretend to be asleep (when the phenomena tended to be active). Stephanie had announced later that prior to the experiment she could feel an atmosphere as she entered the bedroom. This is interesting as Stephanie was not given the details of the case before she had arrived at the house to prevent pre-existing subjective influences. Furthermore, John Hall experienced a similar effect (Ed: impossible to tell if both experiences were identical due to personal interpretations). In John's case the strange feelings were so strong that it gave him a nasty headache which took several days to clear completely.

At 12:20am, the video picked up seven clearly audible and loud dragging noises which appear to have entered the room through the door. Other noises we were

able to recognise as they were caused by mundane and naturally occurring events. On the film, the principle witness (the focus of the phenomenon) can actually be seen turning to acknowledge the presence of something apparently unseen in the room. However, at that point the video and audio equipment picked up a series of strange solid thumps or popping sounds. The witnesses response to this shows that the noises were not caused by the internal mechanisms of the equipment used. Those noises appeared in a controlled environment, one where the witness is observed and no one can leave or enter the room without opening the door and being heard and seen. Other sounds were recorded on the audio equipment and the video which, to date, has no present logical explanation. At 4:30am, after Stephanie had volunteered to take the main witness's place lying on top of the bed in the room on her own, she felt that something had tugged on her ear ring several times.

The family have been seriously scared by this, the incidents apparent seriously affecting the health of one member and upsetting the others, especially the main witness. The phenomenon appears to be tied with her as it appeared to have a tendency to follow her. This may reveal that the phenomena, perhaps was manifested by the witness's mind, unknowingly to them. However the case needs more work. The unfortunate side to this was that the main witness has left home and has not responded to our replies. I can only assume that either happenings have ceased completely or our intervention was enough to set the family's mind at rest.

There have been other cases which we have looked at where no overnight stay was carried out due to the personal wishes of the families concerned. A case initiated in Gateacre, where the family began to experience an apparition which they named (tongue in cheek) Mr. Pumpkin Head, due to his overly large head, was extensively investigated by John Hall, Elaine Hannah and myself. The apparition was thought to be, by the family, a deformed farmer because the 'ghost' wore overalls, boots, etc. Not only were we able to bring this case to complete halt within two months of it starting the investigation, something that we were obliged to attempt since the young boy's health was suffering, but we were also able clearly show that a farm named "Throstles Nest Farm" had existed on that exact site at the turn of the century.

The same thing happens with a case in the Anfield area where an elderly man had approached MARA. He had complained that there were three entities in his home who had began to converse with him after he had made some structural changes to the house! Two of whom were threatening him with violence! Our initial response, after the witness refused point blank to visit his doctor, was that he was perhaps schizophrenic. However, we were unqualified to make such an evaluation. An interview was conducted by Mark Glover, a psychology post graduate and a nurse working in the Neurology Department at a Merseyside hospital, who was 99% convinced that the witness was not suffering from mental illness. The three of us then investigated the area in the house where the phenomenon began, the attic. There the study lead to mixed and confusing experiences. At one time or another, we had all felt a type of physical effect such as being touched by something unseen to us. Once the witness was satisfied that he was not going mad he never contacted the group again, and we can only hope that he has been able to come to terms with his experiences, be they paranormal or not!

However, we were fortunate enough to conduct a single overnight stay in the Coach and Horses pub on the corner of Princess Street and Northgate Street in Chester! This case was primarily dealt with by Anthony Eccles who was already excavating the Nave within Chester Cathedral as part of a Chester Archaeology

Service project. A friend of his was drinking in The Shropshire Arms and he knew the owner of the Coach and Horses pub, who discussed with him a recent event that had been witnessed by several people in the pub. An ashtray had been seen to move by itself over the surface length of a table. Anthony Eccles was informed about this the following day at work and he in turn had arranged to meet the owner. At short notice Anthony called me and asked if I could come down for an overnight stay, which I obviously agreed to. MARA does not necessarily work outside the Merseyside area unless invited to do so, and a case report will be provided (once it is ready for the archives) for any groups researching in the Cheshire area and specifically in Chester itself.

Experiences there also included a spanner for the compressed gas canisters for the pumps mysteriously disappearing from the cellar and reappearing in the attic! An apparition of a 'ghost' with a description resembling that of a clown or a person from the Tudor period due to the large ruff the apparition had worn, which had been observed in the owner's private living quarters. Light phenomena was also seen such as balls of light. Blue balls of light had appeared on the third floor and witnessed by, would you believe, an electrician who was constantly returning to the pub to fix the electrical system of the pub which had regularly blown a fuse. The added problem was that the eventually spooked electrician could not find anything wrong with the electrics at all! The blue lights appeared to be spinning and had emanated from one wall and vanished into another!

Perhaps the most startling incident was described to us by the owner himself at the bar where the event had taken place. An elderly man, dressed in tweeds, had entered the pub late one evening. He ordered a drink and sat down at a table quite near to the bar. On ordering his second drink he had enquired whether it would be possible to have a room for the night as his wife and he did not want to go back home to his empty house in Birkenhead town centre. The man paid in cash and was given the key to his room, after which he immediately went to check if it was suitable. Minutes later, at roughly 11pm, he passed his key to the barmaid and told her that he was going for a brisk walk around the city walls before retiring to his room. He had not returned by midnight and both the barmaid and the owner began to get worried. When it approached two o'clock there was still no sign of him and the owner decided to call the police and informed them about what had happened. The police took down some details such as his the old man's name and address, and when they could find no sign of him in the city, they decided to contact the police at Birkenhead to pay a visit at his home address to see if he had, by chance, returned there, perhaps in a confused state of mind. The following day the owner received a phone call from the police and he was told that the old man had lived in Birkenhead, and that his wife had indeed died but eight years ago. A death certificate also showed that her husband had died shortly after her death, eight years ago!

An overnight stay was carried out by Anthony and myself, however, it remains inconclusive as the building could not be adequately controlled. We had access to most of the third floor where the available rooms were situated, although two of them were actually being used, and the corridor on the second floor where the owner's private lodgings and spare room was situated. The bar and cellar were off limits for security reasons. Most of the active areas were not available for us and our equipment. A few mysterious loud knocks were recorded on both audio and video equipment, along with a loud unaccounted thunderous crash which no one within the building said they could hear. One of the tape recorders had mysteriously turned itself off during a period of activity during the early part of the watch, none of us had touched it, Anthony Eccles suggested that the cassette or the

recorder contained some dirt which may have prevented the recording to continue. In the early hours of the morning, when Anthony was asleep due to the energy he needed for his work in the hours that followed, I actually heard a sneeze coming from beside me.

It is an on-going case and we'll keep you informed as to what has happened since this piece was written. The Coach and Horses has been experiencing periods of activity, and well worth keeping an eye on. Any pub that can attract clientele, even when their dead must have something going for it, is worth a visit unlike my local drinking hole where the customers are well and truly alive and only look dead!

Thanks to:

Anthony Eccles
Mark Glover
John Hall
Elaine Hannah
Stephanie Hignett

Colin John Veacock - is an author and long term researcher of paranormal phenomena. His new book "The Dawning of a New Age" examines the evolutionary aspects of paranormal research and is released in late October. He was once a member of the Ghost Club and is a member of the Incorporated Society for Psychical Research. He is also a joint co-ordinator for MARA.

UFO / paranormal experiences

If you are experiencing any unusual phenomena within the Merseyside area and you would like us to help you then please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or by mail, especially if you are worried or frightened by what you have experienced.

We are here to help you

Total confidentiality assured

Write to: 52 Hawthorne Avenue, Halewood, Liverpool
L26 9XD

or call us, phone numbers and e-mail located on page 3

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Fighting the Secrecy War

by William Bimson (Sept. 1997)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is two fold. Firstly to inform people of the power of information withdrawal and secondly to prevent the powers that be from using this technique to keep us in the dark about information which is important to us all but which they arrogantly believe we have no right to know about.

SECRECY TECHNIQUES

Information withdrawal

Information withdrawal is simply the withholding of information or secret classification of information by authorities in order to keep that information from the general public. This can be done by a number of means. When the information has not entered the public domain, it can be withheld under the official secrets act in the UK. You may believe that this act only covers military personnel but in fact it covers a great number of government employees including all civil servants. Therefore, somebody who works in the department of social security who's job is mainly giving out milk vouchers to the needy, could be forced to keep silent about the 20 foot diameter glowing disk which landed in their back garden the previous evening. Threats of loss of job with no future prospect of being employed by any government department would be perfectly legal. This would be an obvious abuse of power as the official secrets act in this case is designed to protect the anonymity of people who claim welfare benefits.

There may be good military reasons why the Ministry of Defence (MoD) would not want the general public to know if UK air space was penetrated by a potential enemy. For example the MoD may not want the potential enemy to know that they were detected by radar or other means and if the general public were alerted, then the enemy would also acquire this knowledge. Hence all radar operators are quite rightly covered by the official secrets act. However, if the detected phenomenon is obviously something which can fly at speeds which are way beyond the means of any conventional aircraft, it is probably safe to assume that its military capabilities (if any) are far in excess of our own. The phenomenon is therefore not a threat at all, or so great a threat that we should be given the chance to say our last prayers to what ever gods we worship. I believe phenomena which fall into this class should not be covered by the official secrets act.

Information withdrawal after exposure to the public domain.

There are a number of methods which can be used to withdraw information from the public domain even after it has been shown in mainstream media. The methods used fall into the categories of absolute denial, persuasion by government agents that the information would compromise national security, personal threats, bribes and misinformation.

Absolute denial

Government agencies and the military use this technique to throw Ufologists of the scent of an incident. They can get away with it because most people do not believe that responsible people would lie about such a major event. Their strong credibility is pitted against that of the "cranky" Ufologist who is perceived as a sort of cosmic train spotter with a vivid imagination. In the general public's eye, the government will always win unless absolute proof is retained by the Ufologist or witness. Absolute denial in its most extreme case has been taken to the point where by the government of the USA did not acknowledge that one of its own citizens had served in the USAF despite the fact that he was stationed in England for a large part of his service guarding top secret installations (1).

Persuasion

After a witness has gone public with a UFO sighting, the witness is often harassed by the so called Men in Black (MIB). These are people who call at a witness's home to try and persuade them that it is in either the witness's own best interest or their country's best interest if they withdraw their statement about the sighting or claim that it was a hoax. They are called Men in Black because they usually wear dark suits and often arrive in a black car. They will sometimes show identification cards with Ministry of Defence or some other agency written on them, but when the MoD are contacted about them they deny that they ever sent any one to the witness. Some witnesses have stated that the MIB have almost supernatural powers of hypnosis and the ability to move very quickly from place to place without being seen or heard. Some have suggested that the MIB are actually aliens who are trying to hide information on operations which were not meant to be seen by human eyes. Their manner of persuasion will often take a threatening tone and has been known to have terrified witnesses into agreement with their demands. Other witnesses claim to have been physically assaulted by people they believe to be MIB (2).

Bribes

It has been stated by some witnesses in other countries that they have been offered bribes of money and property to keep quiet about UFO sightings. This works best on witnesses who are short of money. The bribe is used in conjunction with other techniques such as personal threats or ridicule from the general public because no one would believe them any way.

Misinformation

This is indeed a potent weapon in the armoury of secrecy and one which is surprisingly easy to implement. Probably the best example of this is in the Roswell incident of 1947 when a crashed UFO from which wreckage and possibly alien bodies had been recovered was reported to the general public by the media. The next day the USAF showed the public what they said was the wreckage and that it was simply a crashed weather balloon with an aluminium radar target. The official story from the military constantly changed to hide further evidence and indeed changed again quite recently when they claimed that the supposed alien bodies were probably dummies used on test parachutes which were used in that area at that time (3). However, the information about the dummies was not available at the time of the crash, and has probably been thrown in recently as further misinformation because of the renewed interest in the incident due to the recent fiftieth anniversary of the crash.

Theft of evidence

All of the above secrecy techniques are easy to implement when the only evidence is simply an eye witness account. When other evidence is available such as video or photographic evidence, it becomes more difficult for the various agencies whoever they may be to perform a cover up. Their main priority then switches to one of destruction or theft of evidence. This is usually accomplished by someone asking the witness if they can borrow the evidence to authenticate it, i.e. make sure it is not a hoax. The witness is usually glad to comply with the request because they believe that they will finally have the evidence validated by an official agency. Unfortunately, this does not happen. The evidence usually goes missing with some or all of the usual secrecy techniques employed to discredit the witness. Occasionally, a copy of the evidence is returned to the witness which is of such poor quality that it is useless. Crystal clear photographs of aerial phenomena come back as fuzzy blobs.

FIGHTING THE SECRECY WAR

It is obvious from the thousands of publications and eye witness accounts that a secrecy war is being waged upon those who seek the truth, and the powers that be are winning this war. The winners should come as no surprise when you consider that on one side you have highly efficient, well trained and well funded government agencies and on the other side we have an ill informed patchwork of part time volunteers with little equipment and practically no funding. For any Monty Python fans out there, the various UFO groups remind me of the Peoples front of Judea, the Judean Peoples front and the Judean Popular Peoples Front. Great news for the Romans. In order to have an effective policy which will at least win some of the battles, we must recognise the secrecy techniques and implement preventative measures to stop them being used. I have outlined some ideas for preventative measures below.

Prevention of theft or loss of evidence.

Whenever a witness is contacted about a sighting they should be immediately warned of the danger of theft. They should then be asked to keep any original photographs negatives or video footage with them at all times until 10 good quality copies have been made. Since this is unlikely to occur frequently, the research group should agree to fund the reproduction of the copies. These should then be quickly distributed to other members of the group and other research groups (forget the in-fighting). From this point on it would be almost impossible for any agency to retrieve all of the copies. After initial analysis by the research groups to make sure that the sighting is not something mundane or a hoax, the footage should be released to as wide an audience as possible via all forms of media including newspapers, TV and the Internet whilst taking care to keep the identity of the witness anonymous if they have requested this.

The policy towards witnesses by research groups after a sighting is usually to send a form to be filled in by the witness. Sometimes a stamped addressed envelope is sent with the form. However a recent book (4) has suggested that less than 25% of witnesses return the forms and the figure barely rises to one in three when a stamped addressed envelope is sent with the form. This indicates that research groups are losing two thirds of their data at the first hurdle. If research groups immediately sent out an investigator to help fill in the form, much of this data would be retained. Travel costs to and from the witness could be kept to a minimum

by networking of research groups to ensure that the nearest research group carries out the initial investigation with a promise of sharing the data with the group who were first contacted by the witness. Most witnesses probably can not be bothered to fill in a form and this is probably the main reason for them not being returned. However it has been known for completed forms to go missing in suspicious circumstances (5).

Prevention of misinformation.

We have little control over misinformation by agencies outside the research network but careful forethought by the investigator followed by precise questioning and recording of answers may prevent some of the most blatant misinformation being used. For example, no one would expect an investigator to have asked the USAF if they were using test dummies on parachutes near the crash site of the Roswell incident. However, a careful investigator might ask if the reports of alien bodies could have been mistaken for any other military operation or equipment. In the case of absolute denial, the answer would certainly be no and if this question was well documented it would make the credibility of a statement about test dummies fifty years later sound even more farcical.

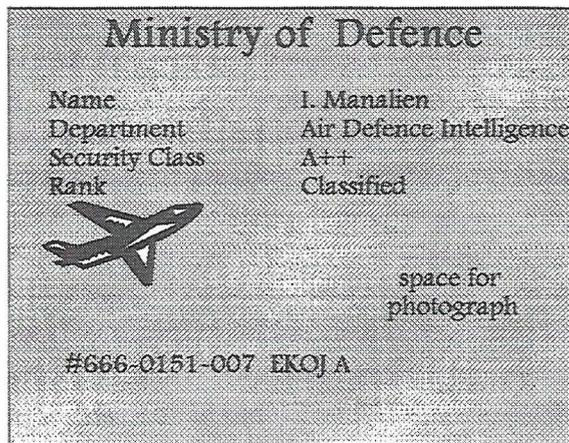
Prevention of bribery

This is almost impossible to stop. How would you convince someone who is short of money that they should not take the equivalent of two years salary to keep quiet about an incident? However, just as the mists of time fog the specific details of an investigation, time also reduces the potency of a bribe. If a witness who was known to be bribed was approached by a research group ten years after the incident when all the money had been spent they would probably be more inclined to talk about the incident. One should therefore never totally give up on a witness who has been bribed.

Prevention of persuasion by MIB

MIB are reported to use harassment, threats and a form of hypnosis on witnesses to persuade them to meet their demands. It is impossible to say how persuasive MIB are without actually meeting them but I have not heard of any MIB who have been sent packing by an angry witness before they got some sort of concession from the witness. They nearly always question the witness on their own even if these means sending other family members to a different part of the household by hypnotic suggestion. Therein lies their Achilles heel, there is safety in numbers. If a witness knows that MIB will be calling to have a friendly chat, they should contact the local research group who should muster as many volunteers as possible to be with the witness during questioning and then pursue their own line of questioning of the MIB. Wherever possible, photographs and video footage should be taken of the MIB, their identification and their mode of transport including license number, vehicle tax and any other badges on the windscreen. If at all possible the MIB should be discretely followed when they leave to find out where they go after an investigation. No volunteer should give details about themselves to the MIB unless it is in itself misinformation. How about telling them that you are from a government agency with a higher security clearance than theirs and hence you would like details of their unit and commanding officer. A simple photograph of a MIB would be a great prize in itself as I have never seen one. Of course witnesses are not likely to help you spring this trap if they do not know the intended procedure before hand and hence it must be explained to them at the earliest opportunity.

Witnesses should be warned of MIB bearing official looking identity cards. Do not be fooled by them. The one I have produced below took me about ten minutes to make and I am no computer whiz kid.



Prevention of absolute denial

Hard evidence and publication are the main keys to this. We need as much good quality photographic, video and hardware evidence as possible. The latter is very difficult to come by but there is some already available such as alien implants and parts of spacecraft wreckage with isotopic ratios which prove they are of non earthly origin (6). We need a professional approach which takes our credibility out of the realms of the crank and into the realms of mainstream science. This requires publication of data not just in UFO magazines but in learned science journals, the ultimate goal would be a paper in Nature giving scientific evidence for extra-terrestrial intelligence many orders of magnitude beyond our own (assuming this is the case).

One day, we will make the body guards of lies eat their words, but if it is to be in our lifetime, it will require a greater co-ordination of effort than has been forthcoming.

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William Bimson - has an MPhil which examined magnetic resonance probes. He is currently a Senior Experimental Officer in the Magnetics Resonance and Image Analysis Research Centre at Liverpool University.

Mystery of April UFOs sighted over Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral

by Anthony Eccles and Susan McAllister

This case was a joint investigation conducted by MARA and the British UFO Research Association. It came to the attention of the investigators at the beginning of May. The event took place during the Wednesday afternoon of the 30th April and consisted of the sighting of two different objects. The first appeared at 12:55GMT and the second one at 13:05GMT respectively.

A family of three had decided to go for a day out, as Wednesday was a beautiful sunny day. They had decided to relax in the large sunken grounds of St. James's cemetery, situated to the east of the Gothic style sandstone Anglican Cathedral. The area is filled with grass, bushes, trees and few surviving mausoleums and burial stones. The family were facing the awesome towering cathedral, behind them was a stone carved wall that rises to Hope Street.

At approximately 12:55 a black oval object appeared from behind the cathedral. It seemed to be moving in a straight line from the north to the south until it had reached a point behind the cathedral when its course had changed and it headed off to the east. However, its reported motion was strange enough indeed, it appeared to be "flipping over on itself" very slowly like a coin if tossed into the air. The object passed directly over the heads of the witnesses who state that they had seen no wings, it did not produce any sound and it left no trail. The sighting lasted for only a five minutes.

Fifteen minutes later, another object came into view, apparently moving in the same direction as the first object. However, this object appeared to be a very brightly lit cigar shaped object. Seen clearly as it passed above them and disappearing out of view to the east. Again the object first appeared from the north going south and suddenly turned to the east. It was observed for about six minutes. The witnesses had contacted Liverpool Airport and were asked to report their sighting to RAF West Drayton. The investigation found the witnesses to be sincere but it was also discovered that they had both experienced other paranormal phenomenon on previous occasions. The investigators feel that the witnesses are both receptive to various phenomena.

Enquiries to Liverpool Airport resulted with being advised to contact AIS (military) LATCC in accordance with current ATC regulations. The airport was able to confirm that they had not have any records regarding unusual aerial phenomena for that day. The Company Secretary of the National Air Traffic Services, due to an enquiry sent to the CAA, informed the investigators that although cargo aircraft were in the skies throughout the day none matched any specific radar track with the information provided to them. This further rules out a dirigible of any kind. RAF Valley confirmed that no military aircraft were in the area on that day. Weather details concluded that it was a hot and dry day. It is not possible to ascertain whether meteorological conditions could have caused an inversion or mirage. It is possible that a large helium balloon may have been responsible for the first sighting and that the two incidences are not connected. The case is presently unidentified due only to insufficient data.

Black oval object rises out of River Mersey.

By Anthony Eccles

This is a British UFO Research Association investigation. The sighting took place on Monday 8th July 1996 at 21:45BST. The three witnesses concerned were in two different locations at the time of the incident, on promenade properties that are very close to the river in Wallasey.

The principal witness to the case is a proprietor in upholstery and ex-military. He is a very credible witness. Both he and a tenant were relaxing in their living room, the main witness was talking to a friend on the phone. Whilst talking he was facing the bay windows that looked out onto the river. After a while he had noticed a very black shape just above the surface of the river's water. About a quarter to half a mile away from him. A distance estimated by the fact that the tide was out and the object appeared to be beyond the furthest sand bar.

Unable to identify it he was surprised to see that the object had risen out of the water and slowly rose into the air, its size compared to say a moth on the window. The object appeared as a fuzzy matt black oval shape, it rose silently from the right side of the sky to the left at a steep ascent. He notified the tenant who was with him, the object was now being watched by both men.

The main witness rushed to get his binoculars as the other witness continued to watch it. The object continued to rise slowly. The main witness returned and the object was now just a black dot in the sky, and could still be viewed as it began to pass through thin high altitude cloud. The sky that evening contained three quarter cloud quarter with no wind. It was mild and dry outside. The third witness, not very far away, had been watching this object too, totally unaware that other people were watching the object at the same time.

The investigation had involved approaching the Harbourmaster who said that if the Mersey was being used by the military he would have been informed. He had no knowledge of any military activity for that day. RAF Valley noted nothing unusual stating that their aircraft use the River as a means for visual navigation.

There had been some mini-submarine activity spotted off Moreton and Rock Ferry. Especially as HMS Triumph had been passing, and mini-sub activity had been seen near to Hilbre Island. No aircraft were present at the time of the sighting that could have been the cause of the sighting.

Although other avenues of investigation have opened up the case remains presently unidentified.

Anthony Eccles is an archaeologist by profession and possesses a BA (Hons) degree from the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, in London. He is Regional Investigations Co-ordinator and Accredited Investigator for Merseyside and Lancashire for the British UFO Research Association and a member of the Northern Anomalies Research Organisation. He is also the Joint Founder and Co-ordinator for MARA.

Susan McAllister used to work for a well known pharmaceutical company. She is presently training as a therapist counsellor.

Merseyside Curiosities

No. 1 St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Rodney Street.

For the first issue we are going to present a location that has been written about many times by a variety of researchers. The church is being presently renovated by John Moores University, rather than remaining a deteriorated ruin it is now being given a new welcome leash of life as a fully functional academic building.

The church is called St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and it is situated on Rodney Street. It was built in 1823-4 to the design of John Foster Jr. The body of the church is a simple two storey design with arched windows and stuccoed walls, but the stone facade is composed of massive Ionic columns flanked by the corner towers, which are individually crowned with smaller Corinthian columns and domes. In the churchyard to the north is the smaller Sunday School of 1872, its round arched windows and classical details echoing the style of the church.

Within the cemetery stands an odd looking monument, known as McKenzie's Tomb. He was Scottish and a wealthy promoter of the early railways, and a supporter of science, but he was also an inept poker and a compulsive gambler. He had left instructions for his burial. A large pyramidal tomb was built and his body was embalmed and entombed within the structure seated at a poker table clutching a winning hand of cards. The site is renowned for a number of hauntings, whether they are caused by the restless spirit of McKenzie it is uncertain, but Rodney Street has been the focus for a number of unusual sightings.



Photo 1: McKenzie's Tomb, view from Rodney Street

One well recorded incident occurred in the autumn of 1970 when a middle aged woman was working as a kitchen assistant at the YMCA in Mount Pleasant nearby. She got a bus to work everyday. The woman got off at Leece Street and walked via Rodney Street to get to work. As she approached the ruins of the church she was suddenly confronted by a solid looking man with a top hat and cape who came out of one of the walls that surround the cemetery. The person approached her, then hesitated in its steps, turned around and walked back through the brick wall! At work she was informed that she had witnessed the Rodney Street spectre. Later that month, a policeman saw the same figure lurking around the graves in the cemetery late one evening. Shining his torch upon the figure, the policeman could see that the torchlight was passing straight through the form! The phantom then fled towards the pyramidal tomb.

More recently, two girls this year were returning from a night-club one Sunday morning at 2:30am. As they had passed by the derelict church, they saw a dark person standing near the railings of the churchyard on Maryland Street, just off Rodney Street. The figure appeared to be watching them, then it walked through the wall and it appeared to glide along near the gravestones! A product of an alcoholic influenced mind, or one of a relaxed mind that is receptive to the conditions of an incomprehensible phenomenon? But a security guard had also seen a figure at Rodney Street recently, which darted through the gravestones.

Liverpool Heritage Bureau 1978 Buildings of Liverpool
Eaton Press Ltd.

Slimen, Tom 1996 Haunted Liverpool
Pharoah Press

Article in Merseymart Thursday 5th June 1997 " Card playing spook haunts city streets."

Help us highlight the mysterious places within Merseyside

Write to "The Researcher" care of the address below and let us know the places that you know of that are considered to be mysterious such as strange buildings, ancient sites and oddities. If we feel that your contribution is suitable we shall print it and credit you for helping us identify those perhaps rarely known and little understood places within the area of Merseyside.

Write to Anthony Eccles at the address shown on page 3.

An Urban Myth

by Anthony Eccles

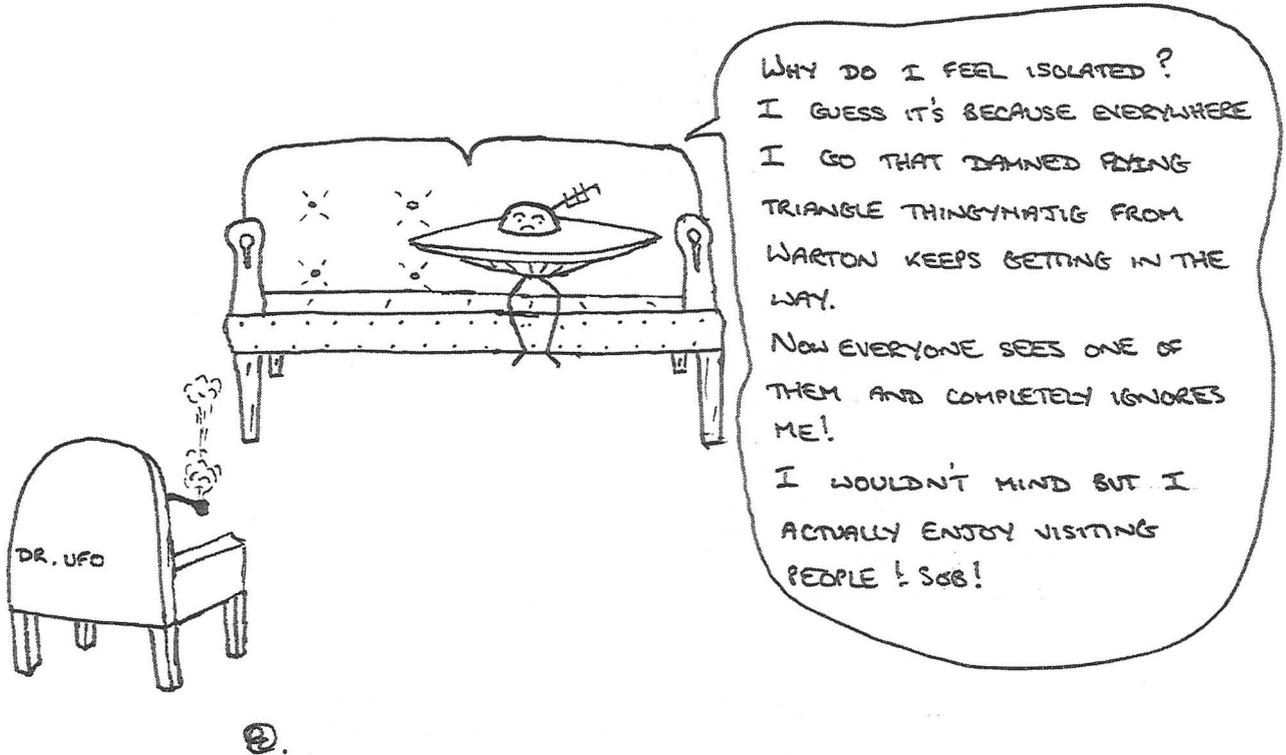
The following tale is based upon an actual police case of a disappearing person. The people involved have to remain confidential due to the delicate nature of this amazing incident. The house they lived in was on Higher Road, Halewood, a place the surviving witness no longer lives in. Although the tale is of a tale, the actual event the tale is based on is displayed in a file at Leather's Lane police station. It merely reminds us that there is more to our three dimensional world than we may actually realise.

A young couple, Pat and Mike, had moved into their new house in Halewood, three years ago, both had steady jobs, the young man had just started his new job in a bank. He had got himself involved with his mates from work by playing indoor football, which he played once a week on Friday evenings. On one occasion, during the autumn and football season, Mike was getting ready to play football, he was getting his kit together. Pat was sitting comfortably downstairs watching a video she had rented. Mike came downstairs and said goodbye to Pat stating that he would not be too late getting back tonight. He had closed the door behind him as he left. Pat was just about to relax when there was a knock on the door. It was Mike, he had just forgotten the keys to the house and he did not want to be late for the bus. Closing the door he went upstairs to get the keys. Pat sat down and watched the film but she did not hear him go out again. She went into the hall and called out his name but got no reply. She thought that he must have left without saying goodbye again, obviously in a rush for the bus.

Two hours later there was a phone call from one of Mike's friends who wanted to know where Mike was. He hadn't turned up and the others wanted to know where he was. Pat explained that he had left ages ago and should have been there, but she was informed that he had not made an appearance. Feeling uneasy at the sound of this she put down the phone and goes upstairs. Perhaps something had happened to him as she could not recall hearing him leave the house. Upstairs she searched for him, but he was nowhere to be found. She decided to wait, and in the early hours of the morning she decided to go to the police. She drove down and gave them the details of her husband but they were unable to immediately help her, they would do some enquiries. Meanwhile she went home. Pat opens the door and suddenly sees Mike coming down the stairs. Worried sick she asks him where he has been. He appeared to be very confused because he told her that he had just gone upstairs to get his kit. Sure enough he was holding a stuffed sports bag and he looked ready to go out. Pat then asks if he knew what time it is. Mike looked at his watch and said that it was half past six and just in time to get the bus. Imagine the surprised look on his face when Pat told him that it was twenty past three in the morning! Looking at his watch Pat realised that his watch was faulty for it had stopped working. But if that was the case where had he been all that time as she had searched the house for him? After some time the couple forgot about the incident. It was easy to forget things that are beyond comprehension. Mike could not explain himself to his friends at work who believed that he may have been up to mischief.

A month later Mike was going to play football. Pat was on the telephone to one of her friends whilst Mike was getting ready. At half past six, Mike comes down the stairs saying goodbye to his wife and closing the door behind him. There is a knock on the door and Pat opens it. Mike explained that he was going to take the car instead of the bus and it would save him a lot of hassle, especially as he did not feel like drinking that evening. Mike went upstairs and Pat went back to her friend on the phone. When she had finished her chat, she went to see where Mike had gone to. She had not heard him go. And she remembered the last time! She ran up the stairs and into their bedroom where Mike's sports bag was still sitting on top of the bed, she ran into their bathroom and the spare room, she even went up into the loft, a space which was converted into a study room. Mike was nowhere. She called his name but received no reply. She went down stairs and opened the front door, only to see their car still on the drive. She did not know what to do, even the room downstairs were empty. All she could do

was wait. Later that evening Pat receives a phone call from one of Mike's friends who wanted to know where Mike was. Unable to give an answer she put down the phone and called the police who came to their house to take down the necessary details. She gave them as much information as they wanted, the police did some initial enquiries but were unable to give her good news that evening. For Mike could not be found. The police could find no motive for his disappearance and for three years since then, he has still been on a police list of those who have vanished in mysterious circumstances.



Contributors

“The Researcher” would like to thank the following for their contributions of articles, magazine design and layout for the first edition:

Anthony Eccles
 William Bimson
 Sue McAllister
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 Colin John Veacock

Special thanks to John L. Hall for the printing of this publication.



Amendments to "The Researcher" issue #1 Autumn 1997

Producing a journal like "The Researcher" is a learning experience for all those who are involved with the publication. One thing that has been learnt from this is that the editing of such a journal should never be done in the very early hours of the morning. A number of grammatical errors have occurred and we would like to include the amendments for the reader. It is our intention to ensure that such errors will not occur in future issues.

Page 5 Para. 1 Line 8 "in a background of structural refurbishment, which was why there was no heating."

Page 7 Para. 4 Line 32 "When we had arrived into the warmth of our homes, we became aware of the sudden and tragic accident which involved Princess Diana."

Page 12 Para. 3 Line 35 "and had experienced a traumatised birth (by being strangled by his own umbilical cord)."

Page 14 Para. 2 Line 24 " it may be a part of"

Page 16 Para. 3 Line 26 "On ordering his second drink he had enquired whether it would be possible to have a room for the night as his wife had just died, and he did not want to go back to an empty house in Birkenhead town centre."

Page 28 Para. 1 Line 2 "The people involved in this case shall remain anonymous due to the delicate nature of this amazing incident."

Despite the errors made in this issue, the MARA team hope that you, the reader, will still enjoy the contents of our publication. We welcome all forms of positive criticism from you.

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Issue 2 Winter 1998 available in January 1998.

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Issue 4 Summer 1998 available in July 1998.

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