

THE SHAMAN



(Incorporating ANCIENT SKILLS & WISDOM REVIEW)

Published March 1985.

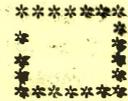
An independent, non-profitmaking magazine published by Paul Screeton, 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25 2AT.

Subscription rates: U.K. £2 for 4 issues.

U.S. surface 6 dollars; airmail 12 dollars.

Please make all cheques, P.O.s, money orders out to P. SCREETON.

If your subscription expires with this issue an "X" will appear in the box on the right:



LEAD-IN. Briefly, to keep you in the picture, I had hoped to be able to make a special announcement in length this issue regarding my publishing plans. I am in a situation where I have been working as a non-union "executive" with a newspaper whose majority of journalists have been on strike for two months. Working six days a week, I have been unable to formulate my plans, but this IS the last issue of "The Shaman."

Subjects covered include fallen shaman Bob Dylan, exorcists, a personal black panther sighting and the wacky world of UFOs and pop stars. Another feature is on the threat to publications and books of VAT by the Chancellor on March 19. Hopefully subscribers will receive this issue in advance of that date.

Subscribers will receive an "Ancient Skills & Wisdom Review" issue shortly which will explain the changes being made and the new direction. The relaunch is planned for June or July and the magazine will focus on urban belief tales. The emphasis on modern folklore will also have the regular books and magazines reviews. I look forward to your continued support -- particularly in clippings readers believe to be of modern folklore or rumours, and hope to go some way towards utilising them in the manner Bob Rackard collects material for Fortean Times.

(In using Ms Coulson's picture in the article here, I wish it to be made quite clear she is not a topleless model. A bit of a dumb belle actually).

.....

A PERSONAL BLACK PANTHER SIGHTING IN NORTHUMBERLAND, 1983

By PAUL SCREETON

I have written hundreds of articles during the past 20 years. This one has given me the least pleasure. If it had not been for the fact that its contents may be useful to help others, I would have declined Andy Collins' request of what you are about to read (written originally for "Earthquest". This may sound melodramatic, but I have reason to feel this way.

A lengthier "colourful" article has appeared elsewhere covering the events in a wider context of that day's happenings, (1) but I want here to concentrate on a personal big cat sighting. I think that by revealing something of myself -- not always a pretty sight -- I may induce others to share similar feelings. What I will reveal may be crucial to our understanding of such Fortean events.

As for the sighting, it was May 8, 1983, a damp, foggy, inhospitable day. I was front seat passenger with John Watson. There was no one else. We were driving from Rosden standing stone in Northumberland when an all-black cat of panther form crossed the road 100 or so yards ahead of us from right to left and disappeared into the undergrowth. There was fencing with openings and it would have been easy for it to vanish into vegetation, but I do not recall it passing through the fencing -- only its presence on the road. It appeared as high as an adult Doberman pinscher, twice the length and lower slung, moving with a powerful, quick feline gait. Afterwards John felt it moved slower and was greyish. Why I blurted out after the sighting "Was that a deer?" is a mystery also, as it in no way resembled such an animal.

2.

Despite the high strangeness, John neither braked nor stopped. I had a loaded camera in my pocket and it never crossed my mind to attempt to take a photograph. In fact, our whole lack of real co-ordination and inability to have a common perception of the event is odd. John has since told me that he cannot but wonder why he did not stop. It is all as embarrassing to him as me, he having been a Northern UFO Investigations Network officer.

Of course, May 1983 was the height of the Devon operation to find a marauding big cat. Three days before May 8 a large cat had been sighted at Wendover, Bucks. As for Northumberland, a paragraph with the headline PUMA HUNT recorded that "Armed police and farmers in Bettyhill, North Sunderland, Northumberland, were hunting yesterday for a sheepkiller believed to be a puma." But there were no details of the sighting to explain the instigation of such a search. (2) But we were about 20 miles away.

So what did we see? Was it real? It is, perhaps, not widely recognised that the black panther (*panthera pardus*) is nothing but a melanistic leopard. Melanism is found frequently in some species of wild cats, where individuals have almost uniformly dark fur. Hence the so-called black panther.

According to one author: "Melanistic types are by no means rare in Asia, these animals having dark coats with barely distinguishable rosette-like markings. In other words they are the famous black panthers, which are found in some numbers on many of the islands of Indonesia." (3)

As for the significance of the event. Well, it happened at NU 084204 on the map below Harhope Hill. Ley hunters may find some significance.

Without being drawn into the argument of whether such creatures are as Di Francis argues a true physical but secretive species or animals on "the outer edge" and parapsychical, I will make a few comments. Previous to this encounter, during what might be called anxiety dreams, I had a dread of being attacked by dogs. I was once bitten by an Airedale terrier. I have always liked cats but a few years ago I picked up a black one infected with ringworm and it bit me -- causing my hand to blow up like a football and requiring tetanus jab treatment. Immediately after the "panther" sighting the dog dreams ceased and occasional big cat ones started. On May 3, 1984, it praked with a leopard gently biting me and when I urded it to stop it talked to me! Shaded of the leopard men of the Mau-Mau. This was a dream, of course.

Since writing this piece a couple of strange items have come to my notice. The tatty "National Revue" of March 7 this year had a pices entitled "Zodiac Guide to a Perfect Pet". For Sagittarius it stated: "Sagittarians tend to get to the point quickly and are often religious or good writers. People under this sign make good friends but bad enemies. Favourite animals: wolfhounds, alsatians, horses and brightly coloured chirpy birds." Well, my guru had a smashing wolfhound called Avalon but I loathe alsatians.

Also, "The Sun" of March 5 proclaimed that its Page 3 bird "Sue's a jungle belle!" "Super Sue Ashton has a driving ambition -- to roar along in a sports car with a black panther perched in the passenger seat. They'd be going full pelt, natutally. And daring driver Sue, 19, from Liverpool, will surely have earned a paws for applause!"

I was asked for some extra information on my sighting and experience -- make of it what you will. Do other readers dream of big cats and so forth? I really think there could be a psychic dimension to these sightings which cause certain people only to see the strange animals.

References:

- (1) Screeton, Paul, "Wild in the Country (Northumberland Deliverance)", Northern Earth Mysteries, No. 24, 1983.
- (2) The Sun, December 15, 1977.
- (3) Badino, Guido, "Big Cats of the World", Orbis, 1975..

.....%.....

MAIL, HARTLEPOOL, Wednesday, January 30, 1985.

Topless girls,

bingo, news values and the Chancellor

CULT FIGURES

DON'T GET ME WRONG. There's nothing wrong with girls appearing topless in national newspapers. The rest of the paper will probably be full of doom and gloom.

than a smile is a tonic among stories about the sterling crisis, miners' strike, rail and air crashes, the starving in Africa and sectarian violence in Ireland, Princess Diana's tantrums and stabbed policemen.

But has it gone too far with these luscious lovelies finding their way away from The Sun's page 3 and Daily Star's page 7? A glamour picture in the right place is uplifting.

The Mail's back page is the place where on a Saturday a pretty girl can be seen posing with an item of sporting equipment. The same girl can be seen in larger size adding the gentle touch to pages full of pictures of beefy rugby players and macho footballers. In fact, our sports staff had a clandestine "topless before Christmas" plot but failed to carry it out.

Having established that glamour in its proper place is harmless, cheering and undoubtedly helps the adrenalin flow and also any newspaper's own circulation, a more serious issue arises.



Corrinne Russell — A Page

BY PAUL SCREETON

Recently we have seen The Sun trivializing news values by leading its front page with ludicrous stories featuring topless models. They had Linda Lusardi and other girls saying Samantha Fox was too big for her — no, not boobs — boobs. Then it had a piece about Samantha's "knockers"—these being the pop group bananarama—one of whom said she'd like to slap Samantha's face. These three girls said they would never pose topless, and looking at pictures of them in their clothes which look as if they were found on a corporation tip and hair looking as if it was last combed and washed ten years ago, who would be foolish enough to make them an offer.

Aged actor

This week's Sunday Mirror devoted its centre spread to Joanne Latham's advice to topless modelling newcomer Samantha Fox. The News of the World even led its front page with a tale about 17-year-old Debee Ashby visiting aged actor Tony Curtis in the United States.

In the Fifties people were bombarded with all the latest gossip about film stars, in the Sixties it was The Beatles, in the Seventies the latest outrage by Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious, and in the Eighties the gossip phenomenon is topless models.

Real dilemma

In the last couple of weeks the "Me and My Mum" feature in The News of the World was on Linda Lusardi and her mother. That paper also had a feature on what clothes she buys; also those of Samantha Fox and what seems to be the token coloured topless model, Gillian Turville. The Sun featured last week expurgated information on what Linda and builder boyfriend Terry get up to in a sex feature.

Then this past week-end four of these nubile were hired to meet the winners in a newspaper bingo contest as they arrived at a plush hotel. One of those lucky



SUZY COULSON — a sizzling Hartlepool beauty who has graced our Sports Special pages. The Mail/Stag Swag beauty contest is still open to girls who would like to be featured and all you have to do is ring us on Hartlepool 74441.

take away a cool million pounds.

And this brings us to the real dilemma facing newspaper proprietors.

Boobs and bingo seem to be the main sales pitches of newspapers. It would not seem to be journalistic excellence which sells newspapers. It is not exclusive articles, it is not serious investigative journalism the misdemeanours of top people or misuse of public funds, it is not revelations of cover-ups. There appears to be an obsession among newspaper executives that the marketing of newspapers relies on bingo and associated games, racing tipsters' acumen, and the dis-

They are probably right.

Yet this policy taken too far looks like a very dangerous bet. Your Mail has contests of a modest kind and they are enormously popular. Rightly, too, we have beauty queen pictures and the Saturday glamour girl. What we also have is a balanced content of news and features. Bingo and beauties do not intrude. They do not push news out.

Certain national newspapers are a disgrace with their pursuit of Mammon. No wonder there is serious worry in high quarters that the Chancellor may slap VAT on newspapers and books. When Mr Nigel Lawson sees

make some Tom, Dick or Harriet an instant millionaire, he must wonder why the Treasury is not sharing in this cash bonanza.

It would be very wrong to burden the provincial press with VAT. It would be a tax on learning and a contradiction of freedom of information. It is the "big boys" of Fleet Street who have drawn the Chancellor's attention and it is they who should set an example by calling a truce in their "bingo wars." Also the policy of putting topless girls on pedestals does not help.

Glamour and games are all right — so long as they do not threaten the news

DISAPPOINTING DYLAN

DON'T LOOK BACK.

A Bob Dylan film had the title and it is a well-known aphorism.

I deliberately did not go to see him last year on Tyneside. I didn't want to look back. I saw him in the mid-Sixties at Newcastle City Hall and wanted to retain the poignancy of that occasion and memory.

Dylan has been a fallen idol since his conversion to Christianity. Spokesman for a generation and the conscience of the Western World, this shaman of hippie culture suddenly threw it all away.

Nothing can ever take away the positive acts he committed — and negativity won't pull us through the gap he has left. Since Dylan's demise, the counterculture has not had so outspoken and charismatic leader. His generation — my generation — are the people who thought we would change the world. There again, if we feel Dylan abandoned us, have we lived up to the responsibilities and possibilities he offered us? Perhaps not.

As a recording artist and performer he is a shadow of his former self. So too are the revolutionaries he inspired. Crushed almost to a man by a tide of apathy or the constraints of convention. Anyway, less of the polemic. What's the album all about?

It is called "Real Live." That doesn't offer much hope. It begins with a reasonable version of "Highway 61 Revisited" but without the incisiveness of the version on the studio album of the same name.

There's a rousing "Maggie's Farm" but Dylan doesn't quite capitalize on the new meaning this song has for the disenchanted and unemployed in Britain, who hardly appreciate Tory policies.

In fact, it is not until "I and I" that the old Dylan spirit shines through. Here solos by Mick Taylor and the brilliant organ by ex-Faces Ian McLagen recall the mid-Sixties Dylan touring with The Band. This is some way towards the infamous Royal

Albert Hall performance and the live version of "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" from Liverpool (see "B" side of single "I Want You").

"License to Kill" is a weak song and he has produced better, even among his recent creations. It is almost a complete flop.

Audience reaction is more favourable to "It Ain't Me Babe," where concertgoers join in on the title line. Dylan takes it through acoustically at speed with harmonica breaks.

"Tangled Up In Blue" is a more modern classic and this version is a reasonable one, with changes to the lyrics.

However, "Masters of War" becomes a rambling mish-mash. Jimi Hendrix took "All Along The Watchtower" by the scruff of the neck and made it a masterpiece. Dylan seems to be trying the same process here, but the alchemy is all wrong.

"Ballad of a Thin Man" sticks closely to the spirit

and sound of the original. However, "Girl From the North Country" really has a strong audience reaction — and rightly so. It's the old Dylan they all want to see. This poignant bittersweet song is one of his all-time classics and he does it justice.

The album closes with the rip-roaring "Tombstone Blues" from his psychedelic Sixties electric revolution phase and is a power-fuelled rocker close to the original.

Yes, all in all, Dylan was a real original. These are the old songs, some good some bad, none borrowed and one tangled up in blue. A disappointment.

If his company had not released it there would be even more bootlegs. Reason enough, perhaps.

In the canon of his work this album deserves a low ranking, yet any state of art piece by a master craftsman must be taken seriously. I am sure true Dylan fans will want this album. Want it for one reason. Want it for the reason I do actually like it. Right or wrong. For nostalgia (C.B.S.).



in the seventies an album by a band of unknowns called Klaatu—whose LP had the inspired title "Klaatu"—sold a huge number of copies.

This was not on the strength of any musical merit but because an American disc-jockey started the rumour that it was a secret Beatles' set.

These guys, whoever they were, wrote "Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft", the Carpenters had a hit with the song, and all this led John Squire to study the hieroglyphics on their next album, "Hope", and conclude from 26 pages of his data that the band were extra-terrestrials.

Another investigator, Steve Burgess, reckoned he had tracked Klaatu down to a group formerly called The Stampede. But if Klaatu



A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS . . . were driving through a lonely forest near Southport when a UFO swept overhead and glowed brightly for a few moments before disappearing. "Apparently it happens quite often in that region," says band member Ari. "A friend of ours who's into UFOs says they see them all the time up there. They fly in from the coast and go there because it's a forested area and there aren't many people." The group still scour the skies looking for more UFOs.

was an anagram it could be Aakult and that is like occult, and . . .

The pop world's fascination with matters occult or regarded as fringe or pseudoscience is open to conjecture. Opposing viewpoints are that it would represent a retreat into a state of ephemerality equal to that of the transience of pop itself

or on the other hand a seeking for realities higher spiritually than the mundanities of rock music.

Of all professions, it would seem the rock business has the greatest proportion of persons interested in flying saucer phenomena. A sociologist would probably offer an erudite explanation for this fact. I won't — all I shall do is present a selection of examples. Neither do I think it necessary to offer an explanation. Are unidentified flying objects from other planets, a psychosociological crisis in people's minds, or misidentification of familiar objects? Your guess is as good as mine. Just let's see what our whacky pop stars make of the jigsaw!

Arguably the most emotive song associated with flying saucers is "After the Gold-rush." It is my favourite composition by Neil Young and is best known in this country through the version by Gatehead trio Prelude, who have twice taken it up the charts.

It is a strange song which shifts its timescale from medieval knights in armour to lying in a burned-out basement and then to a futuristic vision of silver spaceships. Young's fellow C.S.N. & Y. compatriot Dave Crosby had already dealt with the subject in "Wooden Ships" and Young extended this idea to taking selected people from the earth to form a perfect civilization on another planet.

The final image is an elitist and apocalyptic vision of carrying the seeds of the hippie generation to "a new home in the sun."

In an interview with New Musical Express he stated: "If anyone wants to take me to space I'm ready to go. I'd like to take my family too. We have to go somewhere else eventually."

And: "I think we'll be rock 'n' roll on other planets. Maybe there is now."

Plenty of records have been about flying saucers from Cat

Stevens' "Moon Shadow" and Simon & Garfunkel's "Under The Eye" and Johnny Rivers' "U.F.O." Wishbone Ash's LP, "Argus" had a sleeve designed by Hippnosis of a shining holy grail, George Adamaki sighting-style UFO on the back.

Mick Jagger had an electric flying saucer warning instrument in his house but it always went off while he was out. Fellow one-time Rolling Stone Mick Taylor went sky watching at Warminster, the one-time Clapton Junction of UFO flight paths.

Yet on a more serious level there are those with suspicions that there are aliens among us from the stars, and stars who think they just might be them.

Multi-talented Lene Lovitch, for instance, has voiced her anxieties thus: "I've never felt at ease in this world; when I was a little kid I was from another planet. When I was seven or eight I was obsessed with space stories. I thought I was an experiment, a visitor sent from another planet to try living on earth. This experiment wasn't working too well.

"I'd hang out of the window every night, searching the sky, looking for the aliens to come down and take me back home . . ."

A similar bizarre tag has been put on Blondie's Debbie Harry by her lover and colleague Chris Stein.

"Chris thinks I'm definitely an alien because I fit the description of a race of females who were pht on this planet from space."

Stein, knowing Debbie was adopted when she was three months old and has not found out who her real parents are, chose this theory, whereas Debbie has a little less exotic explanation: "Personally I always thought I was Marilyn Monroe's kid."

And on the same theme, guitar hero Jimi Hendrix told film director Chuck Wein, creator of his "Rainbow Bridge", of "being from an asteroid belt off the coast of Mars." Chuck said the film was about removing "the mass paranoia against the arrival of the Space Brothers." Incidentally, only hours before dying in Monika Danneman's flat wrote a poem with the words: "Angels of heaven, flying saucers to some, made Easter Sunday the name of the Rising Sun."

However, the band most deeply steeped in UFO lore are The Stranglers. It was Jet Black who first developed the interest which saw its fullest expression on the album "Them or Us". The Men in Black in question being mysterious persons who threaten UFO witnesses with dire consequences. Whether they are from government agencies or supernatural realms provides a happy hunting ground of speculation for conspiracy theorists.

Strangely, after the group first became interested in the M.I.B. during 1979 a tormenting sequence of misfortunes befell the group. Jean Jacques Burnel has written an article on the subject, "A Strange Chain of Events", in the band's admirable "enthuzine" Strangled.

Having created a state of paranoia and, perhaps, a wish to investigate further the subject of the Men in Black, the reader is warned not to purchase a book with the title "Men in Black" Why? The subtitle should suffice — "75 Years of New Zealand Rugby."

Rock discs and flying discs

COSMIC ROCK

by PAUL SCREETON

Mail, Hartlepool, January 25, 1985.



DAVID BOWIE . . . played the role of an extraterrestrial in the excellent science fiction film "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (as seen above). In real life he was also involved in the subject. He told a magazine writer: "I used to work for two guys who put out a UFO magazine in England about six years ago (1969), and I made sightings six, seven times a night for about a year when I was in the observatory. We had regular cruises that came over. We knew the 615 was coming in and would meet up with another one. And they would be stationary for about half-an-hour, and then after verifying what they had done that day, they'd shoot off."

POLY STYRENE . . . found spiritual matters dominating her mind. "I got into it when I saw a UFO in Doncaster after a gig on our last tour. I just had to go searching for more knowledge. Inevitably it's going to lead to religion in the end." It also broke up X-Ray Spex. And what happened to Ms Styrene?

