

# The Wild Places



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The Journal of Strange  
and Dangerous Beliefs

# The Wild Places

7

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I don't expect the following article to make me popular in certain quarters, but there are times when you have to deal with a subject head-on, whoever may be offended. If anyone in a position of intellectual authority within the field had made a determined stand against the crop circle nonsense in 1990, we mightn't have wasted all this time in establishing that there was nothing paranormal going on at all. Instead, even the most respectable researchers attached themselves to untested and unconvincing theories whose only quality was that they were different from both the non-believers, and the writers of expensive picture-books. The priority was to come up with something new and, I guess, something saleable. Here, I hope I might be able to challenge some of the theories that seem set to replace cerealogy in the minds of those who want to believe something, however ill-evidenced that something may be.

## Shaman Disgrace

by Kevin McClure

Unwritten history is a safe refuge. From the early Christians to the modern Rosicrucians, from Erich von Daniken to the Mormons, the 'lost knowledge' hypothesis has been hugely popular and successful. The claim that some mysterious wisdom has been rediscovered is a hard one to disprove.

Traditionally, the 'lost knowledge' hypothesis has been bolstered by claims of contact with - or at least understanding of - a supportive non-human intelligence. This establishes a continuity between ancient and modern, and creates fertile ground for the development of a belief system.

Relatively recent is the introduction of a human archetype to provide a continuity between ancient and modern. This archetype has become known as the shaman, a witch doctor/wise-person/magician/medium/dropout/priest figure about whom much has been written in the past decade. Indeed, the concept of 'shamanic experience' riddles all sorts of new age and pagan publications, in both text and adverts. If you want to charge £200 for a weekend spent in a hovel, circle dancing, banging drums, taking your clothes off and sweating, you call it 'shamanic experience' and the punters come running

The thought process here would seem to be that . . .  
- ancient shamen possessed knowledge and wisdom that has since been lost

- ancient shamen banged drums, danced, took their clothes off, sweated (took hallucinogenic drugs) and so on  
- therefore, if modern punter does the things the ancient shamen did, modern punter will rediscover lost knowledge!

Great logic it isn't, but as commerce and marketing, it works well enough. No doubt the status of instant priesthood has its appeal, too.

To date, the understanding of the role and achievements of the ancient shamen has been pretty vague. By their nature, societies that afford respect to the shamanic role are those unlikely to maintain a written social history. While systems like voodoo may be seen as preserving elements of the role, it is from modern study of contemporary 'primitive' tribes that most specific knowledge of the shamanic role derives.

So, who are the shamen now? What do they do? What can they do? Do they have powers that could be objectively assessed as psychic? Can they heal by non-physical means? Can they obtain specific knowledge by non-conventional routes? Particularly, if these powers and abilities are actual, can they be shared, achieved, learned by others? And if not, why not?

There has been much written about the shamanic role, but most of it is either framed as social anthropology, or shrouded in mysticism. The essential questions of what is actually done, and of who is able to do it have hardly been asked. It is safest to write about the subject at arms length: let the punters define shamanic experience for themselves, so long as they keep paying.

In this context, Paul Devereux's work in *Shamanism and the Mystery Lines* (Quantum 1992) is a brave and daring exploration of a vast amount of research. It links what ancient shamanism supposedly did and knew with what modern shamen claim to do and know. The whole is overlaid with a dramatic re-interpretation of the straight-line/ley-line theories of the past 80 years, including all those put forward by Paul in his earlier books.

Many of you will by now be familiar with the 'Spirit Line' theory: it has aroused substantial interest. To quote, "All ancient landscape lines are in essence spirit lines. Underlying this concept of spirit and straightness is a deep, universal experience held by our central nervous system: that of shamanic magical flight, or out-of-body experience." To put it as I understand it, societies have constructed straight lines, or the objects and points that delineate those lines because the shamen of those societies - it is a pretty specific job, it seems - enter altered

states in which some portion of them, actually or experientially, travels those straight lines 'above' the landscape. The construction of the lines is a consequence of the travelling.

I'm not arguing against the apparent existence of landscape lines. I can remember when Bob Forrest filled the pages of *The Ley Hunter* with straight lines of all sorts, many computer-generated. Nor am I denying the shamanic role, ancient or modern: every society has its priesthood. What really intrigues me are the experiences of those who fulfil that role: the reality of their reported abilities: and the methods they are said to employ in achieving what they do. For me, establishing the element of other-worldliness is crucial. If the 'shamanic' experience is purely internal, then surely the lines have no more significance than the construction of a Kingdom Hall for the Jehovah's Witnesses, a branch of Sainsbury's, or a Police station. They are merely reflections of the desires of various elements of society: whatever skill and effort may be entailed, they are products of need, not of otherworldly experience. That they are associated in many cultures with death and burial rituals, or with religious sites and practices is no surprise. And those associations contribute no evidence to the case for objective otherworldliness.

So, how do we assess 'shamanic experience'? It is claimed that it persists outside of the protection of the primitive. If so, who are the shamen, and what are they doing?

Paul Devereux provides some clear pointers to how shamanic experience may be achieved, and a specific parallel with western 'otherworldly' experience is established. Amid a wide-ranging survey of the shamanic in world history it becomes apparent that an altered state of consciousness (ASC) is the stock-in-trade of the shaman. And the ASC can be induced by a variety of means - dancing, drumming, chanting, sensory deprivation or hallucinogenic drugs. The chapter 'Trance, Dance and Magic Plants' has a lengthy section on the use of various forms of hallucinogens and narcotics. I must admit that my personal experience of friends suffering from the effects of hallucinogens - including one paralysed for life from the neck down - leaves me with severe reservations about the enthusiastic way in which this section is presented. But, more to the point, if the shamanic experience is so dependent on chemical falsehood, on deceiving brain and body, the objective reality of any reported journey or revelation is left profoundly in doubt. How significant is a landscape line constructed only in consequence of an acid trip?

It is to the 'out-of-body-experience' that Paul turns for his 'Western' parallel to shamanic experience. He comments that "The out-of-body state, the catalyst of the shamanic

experience, needs to be brought back from its cultural exile and given much greater attention." He links the OOB to lucid dreaming, too, quoting an exotic one of his own. Here again, he states that drugs are one route to an OOB: the second route is via spontaneous experience, and the third via UFO abduction. This implies that drugs are the only access to the experience over which the experient can have control: a dangerous implication, in my opinion. Then, having built towards a conclusion that gives a high value to the OOB, Paul seems to realise how sparse is the evidence for the objective reality of the experience. The only case he mentions specifically is that of Sue Blackmore's famous OOB at Oxford. Yet she herself denies that anything left the body. I was there, and while I can confirm the context of an ASC, and the classic 'astral projection' form that the experience took, I can also guarantee that it was not otherworldly, and that none of Sue's social circle were smitten with any desire to set out lines on the landscape where she told me she had been. Any theory based on the objective, verifiable reality of OOBs is likely to be very short-lived.

Paul ends his book with an Epilogue in which he talks of the 'inner ley hunting', a "practical way for us to get back inside our psyches again . . . visiting the Spirit Earth, repeatedly, consciously, and in culturally recognised and approved ways . . ." For "achieving the ecsomatic state" he is "personally trying to evolve a means that will be effective for most people." The overall aim is that, "We could make the whole earth a shamanic landscape."

Actually, there are those who seem to see it pretty much that way already, and I suspect that Andy Collins, author of *The Circle Makers* (ABC Books, 1992), organiser of the Psychic Questing Conferences, and editor of *Earthquest* magazine, is at the forefront of that group. Indeed, when Paul Devereux writes of shamanism in contemporary, Western society, I suspect that it is people like Andy Collins and his friends to whom he must be referring, though he would be unlikely to admit it!

Andy and his psychic questers - some psychic, some questing, some both, so far as I can tell - appear to live their lives as if the whole earth is a shamanic landscape, an all-encompassing occult experience of mysterious sites and artefacts to which only they hold the key. They see evil where we see nothing, masonic and magical sites and centres of which we are unaware, wicked magicians who must be challenged and defeated. They tell of young, remarkable psychics whose key ability appears to be the finding of tinsplate and tawdry. Indeed, the finding of items that nobody knew were lost: always the easiest to find. They enter the shamanic altered states, and perform quests and ceremonies. They communicate with unseen entities and

sources of information, which lead them on their quests. On the other hand, they involve themselves in no testing or investigation, and there is no validation of their remarkable claims. In all these respects, they seem to fall within what I understand to be the shamanic tradition.

Of course Andy, like Paul, is among the most influential figures in our field, and there is much original material in *The Circlemakers*. It seeks to be no less than iconoclastic, looking for a coherent solution to a wide range of mysteries, including crop circles, and UFO experiences of all kinds. It finds that solution in, of all things, a mix of Wilhelm Reich's Orgone Theory, and the bioforms of Trevor James Constable. I have mentioned elsewhere that Andy has not accepted the explanation for the crop circle phenomenon now widely held as true - that the great majority have been consciously hoaxed, and that a small number of simple circles result from unusual, but conventional meteorological events. Instead, he sees the hand of mysterious forces - the Greys, Gaia, or whatever - working the 'hoaxers', who are not really hoaxers at all, but agents of some divinity. And orgone - a mysterious force-come-substance that Andy and his friends can, it seems, control at will - can cause not only the circles, but dramatic changes in the weather, and who knows what else. Apparently, it explains encounters with aliens, "Each time we come into contact with one of these dense orgone masses through close encounters, we give it identity . . . the orgone bioforms are the alien intelligences and the fairy folk of old, and both are generated, programmed and updated by us . . . To John Avis and his family . . . they are the Watchers. To others they are the Cherubim or the Nephilim, and to still others they are the Elder race."

In Andy's *Earthquest* magazine for Winter 1992 are a number of photos - including one of the famous 'Mandelbrot Set' - featuring what appear to be grubby marks and odd shapes near crop circles and other 'landscape features'. The caption to one of them, showing Andy with arms outspread, reads, "The Editor in a crop formation at Sompting, Sussex, in July 1992 attempting to draw down bioforms using a form of the Star Exercise. Note the anomalous blob above my head." The text above reads, "I am left with the distinct possibility that what I caught on film was an orgone bioform drawn to the circle, due to my rendition of the Star Exercise and the presence of the crop formation."

Paul Devereux works from a sound and impressive research base, and concludes that the remarkable mystery of landscape lines around the world derives from the straight-line flight over the landscape of numerous shamanic consciousnesses, who have encouraged their tribes and societies to create the lines on the landscape to match that flight.

Andy Collins, on the other hand, works from the information provided to him by psychics, by coincidence, by serendipity, and concludes that he can control forces invisible to conventional human sight, which can shape the landscape to the very forms that have intrigued and mystified investigators for so many years.

And me? Always involved in my search for the truly otherworldly, I work from a sense of desperation, wanting an opportunity to meet some of Paul's shamen, and to ask them to tell me what is written on a postcard on the wall of the next room. Or to ask Andy to find me a psychic who can do the same, a magician so powerful he can boil me an egg, or an orgone bioform that will descend on an ammeter, and give a reading. Till then, I will remain unconvinced by these attempts to find solutions for mysteries less mysterious than the solutions themselves. And when Paul Devereux or anyone else writes about shamanic experience, I will think of Andy and his chums, standing in hoaxed crop circles, not proving any of their claims, and not caring about it. Lost knowledge? Ancient Wisdom? Shamen? Orgone?

(Sing, if you wish . . .)

The bear went over the mountain  
The bear went over the mountain  
The bear went over the mountain  
To see what he could see.  
And all that he could see  
Yes all that he could see  
Was the other side of the mountain  
The other side of the mountain  
The other side of the mountain  
Was all that he could see.

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## Talking to Strangers



I suspect that I am the talk of St. Austell sorting office. My post has always been rich and varied - a mixture of final demands and packages from UFO organisations world wide. But lately, things have got worse.

Since I started gathering material for the first issue of *Alien Scripture* hardly a morning has gone by when I haven't been woken by the thud of one or more packages containing volumes of material sent from the USA, but previously channelled from some far-flung outpost of the universe, before being transcribed, generally in California. The generosity of the senders is remarkable - airmail postage costing several dollars is the norm - as is their desire to decorate their envelopes with pictures, stickers, holograms and personal messages, together making clear the exact nature of the contents. I guess that the Customs don't have to make much effort, but in sleepy St. Austell my correspondence sticks out like a sore thumb!

Reading the contents of the packages is a new experience. As many of you will know, I've been writing about strange beliefs - and UFO cults in particular - for a good many years now. But as a general rule, UFO material derives from specific, allegedly physical encounters with craft and/or their occupants. Spiritualist material, on the other hand, relates to communications from specific, surviving individuals in most cases. With channelling, I find myself trying to make objective assessments of messages said to be deriving from individual consciousnesses far more distant and non-human than that of any Spiritualist guide, with no claim of any physical presence or contact, no possibility of specific, historical identification. It is beginning to look like the 'up' side of the processes that are bringing us innumerable allegations of UFO/alien abductions, inter-breeding and baby-farming, but there is a lot of work to be done even to establish a way of organising the research. If you have any comments, please let me know.

*The Wild Places* is, as it turns out, largely concerned with paranormal and anomalous phenomena. At least, it is on the surface. What I hope it is really investigating is the way in which accounts of such phenomena affect people and the way they live, and this is where Robin Ramsay and the *Conspiracies* column fit in. He, too, works, writes, and investigates in a world where truth, rumour, belief and falsehood are often indistinguishable. Sometimes because someone in a position of influence wishes they should be that way. We have a lot in common, and I'm delighted that Robin has offered to write for us. Details of his amazing journal *Lobster* can be found in *News From The Front*.

## Conspiracies

A New Column by Robin Ramsay

I've been publishing and editing a little magazine called *Lobster* for 10 years. Its main focus has been the covert activities of nation states - spooks, agents, plots and conspiracies. Part of the intellectual appeal of this field is the difficulty of establishing what is going on. Historical research is hard enough but the post-war era is unique in having among its actors groups of people, professional disinformers, state employees, whose job has been to muddle things up.

Take the example of the story that AIDS is actually a U.S. germ warfare experiment gone wrong, a virus which escaped from the lab. This has now been floating around the world since the mid 1980s, and eventually became quite a solid looking story. (1) But if you listen to the propaganda voices of the U.S. intelligence agencies, the whole story is a fake, a piece of disinformation by the former USSR. These outlets have another version, complete with different sources and documentation, which traces it back to certain Third World media sources known (it is said) to be outlets for Soviet disinformation. (2) In a variant on this, it has been claimed that the AIDS story was concocted in retaliation for the very successful U.S. disinformation campaign which sought to attribute the shooting of the Pope to the KGB (via the Bulgarians, using Ali Mehmet Agca).

So far, so clear. But then I received a photocopy of a document (reproduced) which shows that there was, within the US military, the idea of trying to develop something which, at this very scanty level of description, sounds like AIDS. But is the document genuine? I don't know. It wouldn't be too difficult with modern technology to fabricate a page of the Hearings before a Subcommittee on Appropriations of the

House of Representatives, 1970. My guess is that it is genuine. But even if it is, what does this prove? The most immediately plausible synthesis of the two positions would be that the document is genuine, and had been spotted by some sharp-eyed Soviet intelligence officer who saw that on the back of it could be mounted a most convincing disinformation campaign.

All of which is by way of saying: it sure is complicated out there sometimes.

While this has been my main area of interest I have always kept half an eye on other fields - Fortean, psi, UFOs, alternative this and alternative that. I even once had a part-time share in an orgone box - and no, it didn't seem to work. What I mean is: show me a book about UFOs costing 50p or less and I'll probably buy it, flick through it and put it on the shelf. What we might call deviant knowledge appeals to me though it isn't clear if it appeals because it is deviant, or if it is deviant because of some other property which I find attractive. At any rate it is difficult to decide what is considered the more disreputable by the main intellectual currents of this society - JFK's assassination, UFOs, or Uri Geller - and I'm interested in all three.

In recent years these apparently discrete areas have started to run together. We know have state disinformers working in the UFO field. The researcher Armen Victorian, the subject of many wonderful rumours, has revealed that a group of scientists, intelligence and military personnel in the US, known apparently as the Aviary, has been spreading disinformation in the US UFO world. (3) This is really pretty odd. My scanty acquaintance with the US UFO world suggests it hardly needs assistance to factionise, fragment, self-destruct and believe stupid things. One of this group, the scientist Harold Puthoff, is one of those American scientists who worked with Uri Geller in the 1970s. Some of the personnel of this group are serving or former intelligence officers. One of them, a soldier called John Alexander, was writing about the US military 'psi gap' with the Soviets as far back as 1980 [4]

In my case, the connecting tissue between plots and conspiracies - what I prefer to call parapolitics, after Peter Dale Scott - turned out to be real and alleged mind control experiments by the governments on their citizens.

Nearly ten years ago a man called Martin Koski began circulating a pamphlet alleging that he had electronic devices forcibly planted in his head by - of all people, I seem to remember - a branch of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. When I received Koski's pamphlet I had already read

Walter Bowart's seminal *Operation Mind Control*, and having learned that the CIA had 'spiked' unwitting subjects with LSD and sprayed various germs and viruses around the subways of the United States, the idea that a state would implant devices in the heads of unwilling citizens wasn't *a priori* that outrageous. But I didn't know what to do with the claim and bunged Mr Koski's pamphlet in a pile of miscellaneous weirdness, where it was forgotten.

Koski's pamphlet came to mind in 1989 when I was visited by an American called Harlan Girard. Harlan had been traipsing round the British metropolitan media trying to find someone who would take him seriously. This was proving difficult because he was claiming that a team from the Central Intelligence Agency, using electromagnetic waves [something like that?], was monitoring his behaviour and "talking" to him. Harlan sat in my room and told me that he, literally, heard voices. I couldn't immediately tell if he was nuts or not - but it didn't matter. He had a suitcase with him stuffed full of scientific material about the use of microwaves and electromagnetic waves. "Thanks very much," I said, taking a copy of each one, "I'll have a look at the evidence." [Naive empiricism].

Since 1989 Harlan has done a tremendous amount of basic academic research and has found scientific experiments which suggest that what he claims has happened to him could be done. For example, there is scientific research which showed that you could transmit speech [inaudible to anyone else] to someone using "pulsed microwaves". [This is all beyond my scientific understanding.]

Very cautiously I published some fragments of the material Harlan was sending me - and became a focus for other victims of this technology [or people claiming to be . . .] Along with other people claiming to be attacked by microwave and electromagnetic technology, there appeared to be more people claiming to have had things put in their heads. Oh boy. An international campaigning group appeared, the International Network Against Mind Control [INMC], campaigning about . . . putting things in peoples' heads without their permission, among other things. They began writing to the British government about one of these alleged victims of implants. I have a copy of the letter from the Home Secretary, Kenneth Clark [signed in his name at any rate] denying that MI5 were persecuting this individual. This victim has now been sectioned and placed in a mental hospital. [Is this connected to the letter from the Swedish group to the Home Secretary? Or is he just nuts?] INMC circulate long documents, containing harrowing first-hand accounts of microwave and implant persecution, and what purports to be copies of X-rays of the heads of implant victims, complete with black objects . . .

This group gave me the same problem I had with Harlan Girard's claims to hear voices: I didn't know of scientific research to support the claims. I should have had more faith. A month ago, as the result of a Freedom of Information request, a British researcher received a copy of a 1970 report from NASA on Implantable Biotelemetry Systems [cover illustrated]. Yep, the technology exists and over 20 years ago they were trying it out. Even then they had the implants down to the size of a half dollar.

All of which just goes to prove: it's getting really hard these days to work out who's crazy. Even "voices in the head" no longer automatically qualifies

As far as I can see, there is now little question that sections of the state apparatuses of the US, UK, Sweden and the Soviet Union that we know of, have been engaged in what we might as well call "mind control" experiments. This all began in the early 50s with the search for the "truth drug" and the testing of LSD and many other psychoactive chemicals. As the American writer Martin Cannon pointed out in a long piece on this subject in *Lobster 23*, we have only been allowed a peep into the whole US military and intelligence mind control programmes. Projects like MK Ultra and Delta, the stories of the indiscriminate use of LSD etc., are merely one part of the whole, many of which are still classified.

All of which is bad enough, but worse is coming. The US journal *Defense News* of January 11 - 17, reported that former Soviet mind control researchers are going to team up with their US counterparts. With the unconscious irony that seems to exist only in the United States, the US end of this Orwellian US-Russian collaboration is being sponsored by a company called Healthline Corp.

#### Notes

[1] See for example 'Origin and Spread of AIDS: is the West Responsible?' by Robert Lederer in *Covert Action Information Bulletin* Number 28, Summer 1987.

[2] See for example *Counterpoint: a monthly report on Soviet Active Measures*, Volume 3, No.6. November 1987, and the report issued by the US Information Service, 'Soviet Active Measures No.10, AIDS Campaign.' no date but 1989.

[3] The first instalment of this story appeared in *UFO Magazine* [Leeds, UK] Vol.11 No.3.

[4] *The Military Review*, December 1980. Alexander's was the cover story, illustrated by so-called Kirlian 'photographs'.

# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1970

## HEARINGS

BEFORE A

### SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

#### PART 6

Budget and Financial Management  
Budget for Secretarial Activities  
Chemical and Biological Warfare

(The information follows:)

The dramatic progress being made in the field of molecular biology led us to investigate the relevance of this field of science to biological warfare. A small group of experts considered this matter and provided the following observations:

1. All biological agents up to the present time are representatives of naturally occurring disease, and are thus known by scientists throughout the world. They are easily available to qualified scientists for research, either for offensive or defensive purposes.
2. Within the next 5 to 10 years, it would probably be possible to make a new infective microorganism which could differ in certain important aspects from any known disease-causing organisms. Most important of these is that it might be refractory to the immunological and therapeutic processes upon which we depend to maintain our relative freedom from infectious disease.
3. A research program to explore the feasibility of this could be completed in approximately 5 years at a total cost of \$10 million.
4. It would be very difficult to establish such a program. Molecular biology is a relatively new science. There are not many highly competent scientists in the field, almost all are in university laboratories, and they are generally adequately supported from sources other than DOD. However, it was considered possible to initiate an adequate program through the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council (NAS-NRC).

The matter was discussed with the NAS-NRC, and tentative plans were made to initiate the program. However, decreasing funds in CB, growing criticism of the CB program, and our reluctance to involve the NAS-NRC in such a controversial endeavor have led us to postpone it for the past 2 years.

It is a highly controversial issue, and there are many who believe such research should not be undertaken lest it lead to yet another method of massive killing of large populations. On the other hand, without the sure scientific knowledge that such a weapon is possible, and an understanding of the ways it could be done, there is little that can be done to devise defensive measures. Should an enemy develop it there is little doubt that this is an important area of potential military technological inferiority in which there is no adequate research program.

Our perception of the paranormal is dramatically affected by the way in which the media deals with the subject. Any historical study of phenomena considers the effect of the contemporary publicity, and psycho-social theorising more or less springs from the role of these factors. Mervyn Gale sets the media agenda for recent coverage of life after death: in twenty years' time we can look back and see what effect these interpretations have had . . .

## Through A Glass, Darkly

by Mervyn Gale

The screen fills with a carefully composed sunset: an autumnal gleam pervades the graveyard, which is picturesquely cluttered with pale obelisks and doleful stone angels, arms raised in frozen lamentation. It may sound like one of John Martin's Victorian paintings of the hereafter, but it's actually the valedictory scene of a film, Blake Edwards' glossy *Switch*.

This film, concerned with the death of a roue, who must atone for his breezy life of sexism by reincarnating as a woman, is one of many recent screen explorations of the idea of post-mortem survival. It is a knowing blend of carnal comedy and pop-feminism, neatly encapsulating the appeal of feisty star Ellen Barkin: the supernatural overtones probably appear to be a mere plot device, and to a degree they probably are. But one remembers the rueful, yearning tone of that cemetery scene all the same . . .

Other films have maintained this feeling over their entire running length, and it is to these that I now turn. All of them have been released within the last three years or so, and most of them have been expensive productions, made with a paying audience in mind. For the first time since the immediate post-war years, the camera's gaze is upon the great taboo.

Sometimes that gaze has been towards simple romantic fantasy like *Ghost*, about which the best that can be said is that the scenes wherein phantoms are seen arguing over who haunts where aboard the New York subway are oddly convincing.

Joel Schumaker's modish *Flatliners* at least does us the service of demonstrating that a near death experience may be no more impressive than the average MTV video, with the Summerland viewed operatically from swooping helicopter shots. However, it has to be conceded that its 'go-on-I-dare-you-to-stay-brain-dead-longer-than-me' brinkmanship is bound to provoke indulgent laughter in the most jaded

audience. (the copycat deaths I half-expected to read about in *Fortean Times* never materialised, though. There were no reports of bodies found with plastic bags tied round their heads, with car batteries and jump-leads lying alongside!

Far richer is Adrian Lynes' *Jacob's Ladder*. This film concerns the plight of a postal worker who is gradually submerged into a world of nameless horror. At first he thinks that the bald, whey-faced demons that leer at him from a passing car are symptoms of an incipient psychosis (he is a Vietnam veteran). However, his weird phantasmagoria are merely beginning; soon he sees all manner of obscene waking dreams. A trip to a night club turns into something out of Bosch, when his girlfriend transmogrifies into something horned, red-eyed and horrible; a hospital admission ends with an eyeless doctor impassively torturing him. Despite immersing himself in tomes about medieval demonology, and visiting a therapist who quotes Eckhardt, our hero cannot save himself - he can only alleviate his agony by confiding in erstwhile army buddies, who are themselves suffering similar horrors. Of course, the truth is that they are all dead, and will not accept it. Directed with ghoulish relish, the film is full of subtlety. The lighting is calculated to suggest a ruddy, millennial glow that leaves us fearful of what lies outside the periphery of our vision, and the acting has integrity. Deftly combining several genres, and including the trendy device of the traumatised vet, the overall result is a popular work of art of real power, with a similar appeal to Roy Baker's *Quatermass and the Pit*, where science, religion, and the occult are also shackled together with protesting screams.

Interestingly, the script evokes an old idea, one that comes from inter-war spirit communications. The hero, and the rest of his butchered platoon, seem to inhabit a post-mortem realm of their own designing, the 'ideoplastic' sphere that precedes true spiritual development, wherein one's surrounds are tailored to one's expectations and emotions. Having died so violently, and having resisted that death so doggedly, the men are consequently in a hell of their own making. Only a dawning of humility allows the hero to move on, guided by his small deceased son. Surely there are shades of all those Tommies who seem so confused in Twenties seances, as if unsure of whether or not they are still wandering the trenches of Loos or Ypres.

The notion of the ideoplastic post-mortem phase is taken to delightful extremes in Albert Brooks' film *Defending Your Life*. This work, modestly-produced, assured, and replete with expert actors of the calibre of Lee Grant, Rip Torn, La Streep, and Brooks himself, does not deserve the hasty slide into video-rental limbo that it has suffered. I saw it in a virtually empty multiplex studio in the daytime. Watching

sly and intelligent movies in otherwise abandoned auditoria is, of course, part of the lot of the serious filmgoer. When I 'flatline' I might expect myself to be catapulted into a Deco dreamhouse screening a Carol Lombard season (Summerland); alternatively, I might have to sit in a draughty barn watching a Kubrick retrospective (definitely the Winterland!)

Anyway, our hero, killed in a car accident, finds himself somewhere resembling a kind of cosmic Ramada Inn with perfect humidity control and courteous room service. He can eat all he wants without getting fat; he can romance Meryl Streep; he can stroll on endless white esplanades decked out with majestic fountains. Unfortunately, this consumerist, Gold-card paradise has its downside; he discovers that his previous incarnations on Earth were as uniformly cowardly as his girlfriend's were selfless and exemplary. He must also suffer to watch a hologram of Shirley MacLaine explaining the ropes to him in her usual New Age terms - an idea of excruciating brilliance. (One can imagine her waiting to sign her endless autobiographies in the lobby, elbowing Gurdjieff or Blavatsky out of the way.)

The main dynamic at work here is not, however, the shiny blandness of this Californian idea of Heaven, but the trial at which the hero and heroine must review their lives, with suitably embarrassing visual accompaniment culled, no doubt, from the Akashic Records, and justify their wish to 'go forward' to another realm of being as a couple, rather than be sent back to Earth in new incarnations, to atone and to learn. Wittily conducted as an L.A. Law style adversarial contest between genial defender Rip Torn and incisive prosecutor Lee Grant, the sequence is funny and alarming, presaging a satisfying and mature denouement. The film displays a detailed and coherent view of death that repays analysis. The trial process is neither over-indulgent nor zealously judgemental; nor, one suspects, does it promote mere conformity. This universe, to use a famous phrase, really might be a 'great thought' after all: the worst of us can clearly expect a vigorous defence, and a prosecutor prepared to concede gracefully for the general good. If we're successful, we might end up like our two heroes, boarding gleaming white airport buses bound for who knows where, two fragments of a Myers-like 'Group Soul' heading to infinity with pounding hearts.

This optimism contrasts interestingly with the tone of Mike Figgis' cerebral and unsettling *Liebestraum*. This dreamlike piece, ostensibly about an architect's love for an old building, contains many synchronistic incidents - such as the hero becoming obsessed with the preservation of a place that, unbeknownst to him, has had a horrific part to play in the life of his own mother - but it is more concerned with

illustrating a state of anomie, a creeping spiritual dread. Sexual misbehaviour and violence cast a long, chilly shadow here: they imbue the very bricks and mortar. In a key scene, suspense is mounted carefully until the hero, who is exploring the building (under threat of demolition) sees a shop mannequin, eerily backlit, and panics wildly. The meaning is clear. This place, like the people in and around it, is haunted - by guilt as much as past bloodshed.

Two main strands have been identified in this recent group of films. There are comic films, wherein death is a plot motif intended to heighten and resolve existing tensions in relationships between characters. Secondly, there are dense, serious, psychodramas: here, death is still a writing device, but it's intended to throw light on a wider, spiritual malaise.

It would be too simple to claim that these films merely show a desire to return to old certainties in the face of modern urban chaos; after all, there are precious few certainties on offer in *Liebestraum*. The films are re-tapping a streak of mystical exploration in the cinema that may be traced back to Powell and Pressburger in England, and even further in the USA. The angels descending on to the battlefields of France at the end of Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) were perhaps a Victorian embellishment to the screen's first great masterpiece, but it is worth ending with a little-known fact. The first use of celluloid as a purely storytelling medium was by Alice Guy Blanche, a Frenchwoman, in 1896. Her short film, *La Fee Aux Choux*, concerns a fairy who lives in a cabbage patch. The cinema has obviously been haunted since birth. So why stop now?



Druid.

Now and then, I come across some thinking that really takes me aback, makes me wonder why I never thought of that approach to some research, or to an idea. That was precisely my response when Frank Dineen sent in *What Does Happen?* I'd been so taken by the 'happy ending' theme of *The Way Home* in TWP 6 that I never pondered the elements of unfairness in what the child went through, or the implications for the nature of life after death. I'll try harder in future, but I hope readers will continue to send in comments as good as

## What Really Happens?

by Frank Dineen

*The Way Home* by Tom Harrison (TWP 6) was a delightful little story. My first reaction was enjoyment, but as I read it part of me was thinking, in my role as a post-retirement novice short-story writer, how well it was put together. Analysing how I might have written it I soon began to ask myself questions about its meaning, and to wonder how true it was. Obviously a cloak of protective anonymity must surround the central figures, but how far should we trust people who are promoting their own particular cause? When compared with the usual output from Spiritualist circles the story is unusually factual, which does raise suspicions,

But suppose it is true. What a lot of questions it raises about life after death. For over six and a half years the boy James had been hanging around trying to get back to his home, but is stopped by a mist. All he wanted was to see his parents again. What was the harm in that? It was a formidable punishment for a boy whose life had been cruelly cut short at 12 years old. Had he done something to deserve it? Who created the mist and why? What kind of logic was operating?

Was the mist caused by his own, or his parents' Catholicism and their rejection of contact with the spirit world? Are we to believe that if it had not been for Minnie Harrison's circle, James could have gone on for an even longer time trying to get home? Are there no spirits on the other side who could help? What a helpless lot they are! And, of course, there is the promotional aspect. How important it is to have more and more Spiritualist circles able to sort out the problems of the next world.

Contained within the story is the contention between Spiritualism and Catholicism about what happens after death. For the Spiritualists there seems to be an area of the next world inhabited by poor 'lost' souls who cannot be helped

except by special intervention of gifted people raised up by their church. For Catholics there is a vast army of sinners condemned to purgatory for specific periods, who must not be contacted, but whose release may be brought forward by constant prayer, Masses, personal sacrifices, and intercession by the faithful on earth. Both emphasise the necessity for the existence of their churches and the power they have over the next world.

What about all the recent knowledge we have acquired from near death experiences? How does the story fit in with that? We are supposed to be met by relations and friends who have already passed over. Did James have none? He must have had grandparents, maybe aunts and uncles, or at the very least some great-grandparents who had passed on. Were they not interested? Could they not help?

And the being of light radiating love and drawing all spirits to it? Did it have no effect on James? NDE people are so impressed and uplifted by the sheer beauty and peace of the encounter with the other world that they have to be strongly persuaded and pushed against their will to return. The effect of the experience even lingers on into their subsequent lives. Is it possible that James went through all that and could still only think of returning to his home? Or do some not have this encounter with bliss? If not, why not?

Not everybody has an NDE, and that does allow for the possibility that there is an alternative. Kenneth Ring's research shows only 60% of those resuscitated have an NDE. What happens to the other 40%. Was James one of those? Is there something about the lives of those who do not have NDEs that might indicate a reason for their absence? Is there something deserving about the lives of those who have them? Would Hitler and Stalin be capable of having NDEs? We are now awash with research into the content of NDEs, but it is not enough. We need to know why some have them and others do not.

If NDEs have a judgmental element in their determination there could be one way of proving it. Children, especially the very young, surely, can have done little to merit punishment. If there is a judgmental factor an analysis of the statistics for children should reveal increasing numbers of NDEs following their resuscitation until, in the very young, provided they are capable of expressing themselves, there should be 100%. Has any work been done along those lines?

I wrote up the following listings a couple of weeks ago, and on checking this morning I'm horrified to find that I already have another 29 titles for listing in No. 2, including 11 that I've never seen before! Even so, this is the longest listings feature yet, and hopefully it will lead many of you to editors and writers whose work you find interesting. Please mention *Wild Places* when you write.

## News From The Front

**Ancient Skies** May-June 1993 Neat items on the Tunguska Explosion, discovering Atlantis, and an ancient hovercraft, plus an interesting overview of the Ancient Astronaut field and its problems. Send for details to the Ancient Astronaut Society, 1921 St. Johns Ave, Highland Park, Illinois 60035-3105, USA.

**Annals of the Enquiring** Vol.4. No.1 Still improving, with a smart cover, this Fortean/paranormal miscellany is well worth having; original, bright and informative, £1.50 an issue from Gerry Lovell, 8, St. John Street, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1SW.

**Anomaly** - Journal of Research into the Paranormal No.12. There are few titles dealing with active research into phenomena, so *Anomaly*, ASSAP's journal - is always a welcome change. Here, Maurice Townsend looks at how to maintain a scientific approach in investigation, there's reports of the Larkshill Poltergeists, personal accounts of seeing auras, and a report on monitoring equipment. Also, there's another report on Street Lamp Interference - that remarkable 'phenomenon from nowhere'. Non-members of ASSAP send £2 an issue to Hugh Pincott, ASSAP Secretary, Saint Aldhelm, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

**Artifex** Winter 1993 The Journal of the Archaeus Project, edited by the perceptive Dennis Stillings. Every issue is beautifully produced and intellectually challenging, though some of the thinking - particularly that of the Editor - runs a tad beyond me. The reviews are particularly good - leading me to *Millennium News* - and this issue includes a fine, original piece by Martin Kottmeyer; 'Flat Earth: Columbus and Magellan'. Try \$8 for an issue to Archaeus Project, 2402, University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55114, USA.

**The Azrael Project Newsletter** Spring/Summer 1993 Now this is different. 20 pages, smartly produced, based in a shop in New Orleans, and deriving from some close run-ins with death, and some intelligent attempts to deal with both the fact and the experiences, personified by the figure of Azrael. This isn't done in some dumb, psychic-questing fashion, but with respect for intellect, emotion, and the demands of reality. Well worth a look - try \$3 to Westgate Press, 5219, Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70115, USA.

**Bulletin of Anomalous Experience** April 1993 This has been around for a while on a limited-circulation basis, mostly to medical and mental-health professionals in the USA and Canada. E.g. these are the psychiatrists and psychologists who, in one way or another, are giving credence to the wildest of claims of abduction, implant and interbreeding. However, I won't decry the quality of the content of BAE, or its value to research. The article about 'False Memory Syndrome' that we're running this issue is the editorial from BAE.

It is typical of its analytical standards. Other features are stranger, or sometimes more scientific, ranging from self-protection against the abductors to, in this issue, extensive comments on Dennis Stacy's 'Abductions and Abortions' theory. The reviews and abstracts are simply first rate. Now BAE is available to anyone who wants to read it, I strongly advise you to subscribe at \$25 a year to David Gotlib, BAE, 2, St. Clair Avenue, Suite 607, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4V 1L5.

**Borderlands** The Crossroads of Science and Spirit. 1st quarter 1993. In its 49th year. A revamped journal from the Borderland Sciences Research Foundation, and smart it is too. Some fascinating material here, from the technological - Find Acu-Points with your Computer and A Possible Alternative to Battery-Powered Vehicles - to the esoteric - Recording Telluric Signals, The Kolisko Approach, Radionics, Psychotronics and more. \$6 from the BSRF, PO Box 429, Garberville, CA 95542, USA.

**Cambridge UFO Research Group Newsletter** No.43. Another huge, original volume, with chunks on the Crystal Skull, Budd Hopkins, Crop Circles, the Great Pyramid, Avebury, UFOs and loads more. About \$10 from Bonnie Wheeler, 170, Strathcona Street, Cambridge, Ontario, N3C 1R4, Canada.

**The Cerealogist** No.8. I suppose this might possess a charming eccentricity if it weren't so damned misleading: a superbly produced journal, wasting the time and talent of its team on trying to revive crop-circles, Lazarus-like, from a deserved and far from premature grave. I guess that the award for the stupidest article I've seen this year so far goes to Andrew Collins' 'The Templemakers'. Finally realising that 'hoaxing has been widespread' for years, he redefines hoaxing in a burst of reasoning of which Pol Pot would have been proud. He concludes that if the humans making the circles haven't been controlled by "non-human intelligences . . . likely to be seen in terms of the black-eyed entities . . . the so-called Greys," then they do it because, "they will . . . be inspired to construct a formation in the same way that automatic writing is achieved on paper," or, perhaps, "to create an environment conducive to the manifestation of etheric forces and intelligences." Please see my piece *Shaman Disgrace* for more about Mr Collins' ramblings. Apart from the occasional, welcome intrusion of humour and common-sense, the whole thing is on much the same level. As indispensable as a street map of the major towns on Zeta Reticuli. £2.50 an issue from SKS, Saint Aldhelm, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

**Christian - New Age Quarterly** March 1993 Edited by Catherine Groves, this continues to look at faith in the context of experience - rather than the other way round - linking the two areas of the title. The psychic experiences of one Father John W. Groff are intriguing as, of course, is Catherine's look at the source and possible inerrancy of scripture. Excellent - sample copy \$5 from PO Box 276, Clifton, NJ 07011-0276, USA.

**The Christian Parapsychologist** March 1993 An unusually Christian issue, in a way. The lead article, 'The Christian hope and parapsychological research', is a provocative one, seeming to interpret the post-resurrection appearances of Christ as more telepathic than objective, and salvation as more a sharing of that experience than a mechanistic consequence of a physical resurrection. To me, once an ardent Anglican, this looks like a weak compromise by an individual unable to accept the key element of his religion, but unwilling to let go the mystery and the promise. There is, however, no doubting the trance-like quality of those appearances, and the points here are well made. As ever, the news and review sections of CP are tremendously useful. A 4-issue sub. is £6.00 from CPSS, The Rural Workshop, South Road, North Somercotes, Louth, Lincs, LN11 7PT.

**Connecting Link** Issue 19 I'm not sure how I found this big, glossy, US magazine - I think I'm on some of the world's zaniest mailing lists - but it offers some of the best source material, and most exciting New Age articles I've seen in a long time. Substantial chunks are channelled from various areas of the sky, a new chakra has been discovered, Anna, on Earth, and Zilla on a spaceship, change places, Nostradamus reveals new horrors from old, mostly secondhand quatrains (just how many times can any one quatrain reasonably be

used?). An interview with Al Bielek, an influential figure in some circles with his Montauk Project and Philadelphia Experiment commentaries, reveals himself as deceived or deceiving. Or maybe his brother did get a Ph.D. in Physics from the 'University of Edinburgh' in 1939, at the age of 22. But I bet he didn't. Nonetheless, *Connecting Link* is inspiring, positive, challenging stuff. Try \$9 to 9392 Whitneyville Road, Alto, MI 49302-9989, USA.

*Contamination Chronicle* No.9. One of my favourites, this, published by Students for Freedom in Alaska. Intelligent, provocative, counter-culture mixed with common sense. Not much paranormal stuff this time, but some wonderfully weird contact/review material, drugs, *Northern Exposure*, Political Correctness and much more. Anyone who liked *International Times* should enjoy this one. Great value for \$5 from Nathaniel-M. Naske, PO Box 80721, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708, USA. *Cosmic Current News* April 1993 Smartly produced New Age 'ology + news and reviews. \$4 an issue from PO Box 38037, Hollywood, CA 38037-0037, USA.

*The Crop Watcher* Jan/Feb 1993 I don't think I've got a later copy than this - bit it's very good, as usual. Actually, much of this issue reads a little like someone's diary, or their love letters, or something. Rather private, and written in such a dense and intense style that it takes some getting used to. There's a long interview with Dave Power, which is very informative, and plenty of insights into hoaxing and hoaxers. Unfortunately, Andy Collins' 'Orgone '93' flyer is printed as an article, full of wild claims and self-congratulation, but the odd bit is the touch of moralising about the 'criminal' (orchid-smuggling) past of the many-named Armen Victorian. Ours is a subject full of renegades, inadequates, converts and believers. That's half the fun of it. If the man's a bloody nuisance, say so, but let's not ignore worthwhile research on such spurious grounds. £1.50 an issue from Paul Fuller, 3, Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 7TY.

*Dark Lily* 15 An upfront LHP magazine, packed with a wide range of appropriate ads and contacts, and main articles titled 'Cultural Supremacism and its Effect on Satanic Belief', and 'Impetus Niger' (from a leader in Estonia). Different, certainly. £1.50 an issue from BCM 3406, London, WC1N 3XX.

Dear Mr Thoms No.30. Another fine issue of this folklore/foaftale miscellany. Editor Gillian Bennett takes a canny look at the UK Horse Rippers, Brunvand on serial cat killers, photocopylore, the latest foaftales and more.

4 issues for £7.50 from Gillian at 28, Brownsville Road, Stockport, SK4 4PF.

*Delve* No.8. A super cover drawn by Editor Gene Duplantier, and the usual lively mix of UFOs, ETs, Fortean and so on, rooted in a knowledge of real astronomy. Nice to see the 'Lizard People Under LA' again! \$3 from 17, Shetland Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, M2M 1X5.

*Elsewhen* No.14. Journal of SUPRA. A good one, too, with a great, teasing article, 'The Ghosts of Scotland's Montrose Aerodrome', Mystery Hill, Japanese Monsters, The Great Lakes Triangle and more. 4-issue sub. \$11 from SUPRA, PO Box 20173, Keizer, OR 97307, USA.

*Enigmas* Feb/March 1993 Editor Malcolm Robinson has the art of publicity sewn up - I find ads for this one in magazines from all over the world, and his energy is reflected in the magazine, a broad mix of all kinds of phenomena, much of it actively investigated. Includes the recent Scottish wave, the EVP, and NDEs, inter alia. £2 from Malcolm at 41, The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 2PT. *Evidence* The Magazine in support of Psychic Science. No.3. There is a sea-change in British Spiritualism, and it derives from standards of mediumship. There seems to be no working medium who c.

consistently provide convincing evidence of survival. Consequently, the movement and its publications are moving towards spiritual philosophy from guides - Red Indians, Chinese etc - and to an absurd, supposedly quantum-physics based conviction that because some molecules or whatever might survive death, then so does human intelligence. This latter concept is validated by accusations of 'persecution' and 'conspiracy' against the scientific and religious establishment. Let's get something straight: proof of survival takes one form, and one form only. Someone comes back to say who they are, where they've been, and where they are now. If we've reached a stage where that sort of evidence isn't forthcoming, let's not mess about. Spiritualism was, I thought, supposed to be evidence-based.

Recently, there isn't any. The absurdity of this particular magazine is rendered quite unpleasant by the attacks on psychiatry and, of all things, on cancer treatment and the charities which support it. Apparently Michael Roll, from whom much of this thinking derives, used to be an estate agent. Now, he would appear to be a danger to a movement of which I have been very fond. *Evidence* is £1 an issue from Michael Roll, 28, Westerleigh Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 6AH. *Fate* March 1993 The latest issue to hand, this features 'The Fairy Realm', and appears to have been set up to publicise a book about the 'Faerie Realm' the magazine is publishing (Have you seen flashes of light or movement out of the corner of your eye? Do your dreams often and consistently involve outdoor environments? Oh heck!) Fortunately, this tripe is leavened by fine columns from Mark Chorvinsky, John Keel, and Jerome Clark. And Brad Steiger - always a mine of commonsense - tells us how to prevent demon possession! Available from Enigma, 15, Rydal Street, Burnley, Lancs, BB10 1HS, price £2.50 an issue, *Flying Saucer Digest* Winter 1993 A grand cover and not too many pages, but there's some unusual sighting research here, always well-illustrated. \$3 from UAPA, PO Box 347032, Cleveland, Ohio 44134, USA.

*Folklore Frontiers* No.18. I live in Cornwall. Paul Screeton, FF's editor, lives in Cleveland. A couple of weeks ago I was travelling home from Truro on the train when Paul, having recognised me from my photo in *Fortean Times*, tapped me on the shoulder from the seat behind. Nice to meet a legend at last! Another lovely mix of foaftales and odd news here, + an article by Nigel Watson about the Sheffield UFO Conference. £1.25 an issue from Paul at 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25 2AT.

*Foresight* No.115 Slight, old-fashioned UK magazine, mostly cuttings of UFO/supernatural/New Age items. £1 from John & Judy Barklam, 44, Brockhurst Road, Hodge Hill, Birmingham, B36 8JB.

*Fortean Times* No.68 Aside of the meaningless *Prediction*, FT is the only news-stand magazine representing our field. As such, I think it has responsibilities, though this may place an unfair load on the editors. But, thrilled as I am by the presentation of my 'Angels of Mons' piece, I'm pretty dubious about the Cattle Mutilation cover and feature, and features on Horse Ripping and Siamese Twins. The first of those might just be Fortean/anomalous, though I very much doubt it. The other two certainly are not, and I am of the opinion that saleable as such material may be, it should be avoided. Most of FT is brilliant and essential: commercial pressures should not be allowed to lower its tone. A 6-issue sub. is fine value at £12 from John Brown Publishing, Freepost, SW6096, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1YA. *The Gate* April 1993 Tastefully produced, and always a pleasure to read: this issue features 'The Odyssey of George Hunt Williamson' by Ian Blake, The Gnostics, Animal Ghosts, Crop Circles, and excellent review and news sections. 4-issue sub. \$10 from PO Box 43516, Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143, USA.

Gates of Annwn Spring 1993 Much more than just a pagan journal and contact source - though it's fine at those roles - there's some real, intelligent, radical thinking here, and some bright angles on the news, too. Give it a try at £5 for 5 issues from Gates of Annwn, London, WC1N 3XX.

Ghost Trackers Newsletter June 1993 Ghosts on Wheels, A Scottish Ghost, A Ghost Photo, Summerland Ghosts, The Mary Celeste and more. Excellent. \$6 an issue from Dale D.Kaczmarek, PO Box 205, Oak Lawn, IL 60454-0205, USA.

Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries No.15 New A4 format - very smart and professional, though co-editor Danny Sullivan is a little 'lost knowledge' for my liking. If the ancients were that wise, why didn't they invent flush toilets? Seems to me that the first sign of real progress in any society is when it gives up undertaking long, demanding building projects designed to impress invisible deities. That said, though, this is a wide-ranging and thought-provoking magazine. £5.75 for three issues from GEM, PO Box 258, Cheltenham, GL53 0HR

International UFO Library Magazine No.4 This impressive-looking, large-format glossy seems to be a regular on news-stands now - even down here in Cornwall. Unfortunately, the content is mercilessly awful. Titling an article about Billy Meier 'The Search for Truth' is bad enough, but add to this Bob Oeschler on Gulf Breeze, Colin Andrews on 'Musical Tones and Diatonic Ratio', and Michael Hesseman's pathetic 'Pictogram and the Plate' nonsense, + half a magazine of ads, and you really wonder how much worse things can get. Try \$7 to 11684, Ventura Blvd, #708 Studio City, CA 91604, USA.

Lobster No.24 This is the remarkable magazine edited by our Conspiracies columnist, Robin Ramsay. Every packed issue features a wide range of extraordinary, disturbing and often hitherto secret information, presented in an intelligent and comprehensible manner. Here we have a dazzling article on the JFK assassination and the occult, a feature on the US radical left in the late Sixties, British Fascism 1974-92, excellent reviews and lots of oddments, hints and mysteries. £2 an issue from Robin at 214, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, HU5 3JB.

Magonia March 1993 Oddly enough, it was editor John Rimmer who bought me my first issue of *Lobster*! I guess we're all still trying to winnow out the truth from the chaff of deceit, and this issue is a classic mix of the facets of that quest. John looks hard at Budd Hopkins' crumbling 'Napolitano' case, Martin Kottmeyer tackles Sixties UFO paranoia, Peter Rogerson examines David Jacobs' moneyspinning *Secret Life*, and Christopher Allan reads the entrails of the Roswell debris, finding little of significance. A bargain at £4 for 4 issues from John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB.

Mercian Mysteries No.15 Alternative Studies of Past and Place in the Midlands. Another super issue of this classy, commonsense-based EM journal. Bob Trubshaw contributes a particularly incisive piece about 'Earth Energy' dowsing. Sample copy £1.75 from MM at 2, Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leics, LE12.

Meyn Mamvro Summer 1993 Ancient Stones and Sacred Sites in Cornwall. Nice pieces on the Healing Properties of Holy Wells, a Guide to Inscribed Stones, and Strange Phenomena at Ancient Sites, together with news of local events make this another good issue. £1.70 from 51, Carn Bosavern, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7QX.

Millennial Times May 1993 Published 10 times a year by the Millennium Watch Institute, this is an invaluable resource - picking up input from all kinds of strange groups and publications - and a great read, tackling the US side of what we're doing in ETB. Actually, the long editorial about Waco here is perceptive, and quite

moving. Try \$3 for an issue from the MWI at PO Box 34021, Philadelphia, PA 19101-4021, USA.

The Missing Link March/April 1993 Now bi-monthly (shame!) this US 'alien experience' magazine is gradually becoming more experiential and less investigative. No harm in that, 'cos it's done in such a genuine way. ML is, for me, a great barometer of the changes in attitude to aliens. You know what I mean - from the fear and degradation of early Streiber to the hope and need for transformation, salvation through the intervention of our Space Brothers and Sisters. Sort of 'From Fear to Fraternity'. This is, as ever, a charming issue. \$6 from UFOCCI, 3001 S.228th, #304, Federal Way, WA 98003, USA.

New Worlds of Mind and Spirit Jan/Feb 1993 Llewellyn, who publish this title, is one of the biggest traders in New Age material in the world, and to an extent this is a presentation of its voluminous catalogue. However, it runs to 122 pages, and there's plenty of good and worthwhile material among the ads, strong on astrology, paganism and magic, as well as new age features. New Worlds is available from Enigma, 15, Rydal Street, Burnley, Lancs, BB10 1HS.

Nexus New Times April-May 1993 Now this is pretty impressive. I guess I'm still a hippy at heart, raised on the *International Times*, and with a distinct sympathy with thinking that's 'underground' or 'counter-culture'. So, this professionally produced Australian journal, mixing those facets with reports of paranormal events, eschatology, alternative technology and medicine, and hints of conspiracy and a secret state really appeals. I can't accept more than 60% of it as objectively true, but in these dour days, 60% thought-provoking is more than acceptable. Marvellous ads, too. Try this one if you can at \$8 (US) from Nexus Magazine, PO Box 30, Mapleton, Queensland 4560, Australia.

Noah's Ark Society Newsletter May 1993 Devoted to physical (materialisation/direct voice) mediumship, but now bringing us more of historical material than any current evidence of worth. I'm beginning to think hard about about twirling luminous trumpets, the moving of small objects, the rattling of tambourines and so on. If we accept that such events occur from time to time - and I'll go with that for now - then why do we need to give the dead a role in the events? Survival proof of quality rarely accompanies them, and if we accept that there is anything to *psi* - and psychokinesis in particular - then I guess that trumpets, tambourines and ornaments could be moved. If *psi* functions on a group level, then an expectation of movement would more readily be fulfilled by the group effect. The NAS is coming close to worshipping Spirit, mystifying the processes regarded as necessary for physical mediumship, waiting for advice and approval from Above, and spreading that approach to Spiritualism as a whole. I think it's time to stop and look more closely at claims of post-mortal intervention. Does anyone agree? For details of NAS membership, write to Mr Alf Winchester, NAS, Treetops, Hall Road, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9JQ.

Northern UFO News Spring 1993 A very good editorial about the problems of 'scepticism' - as a specific approach to reports of phenomena, rather than just a conclusion drawn from examination of evidence. Jenny isn't dismissive, but balanced and perceptive. This is more than can be said for Robert France, in what is apparently the last part of some articles that never deserved a first. Very good. £7 for six essential issues from Jenny Randles, 37, Heathbank Road. Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP.

The Occult Observer Winter 1992/93 This is very posh, very smart, very occult in a middle-class, thirties sort of way. No LHP, no paranormal phenomena, but a world of systems and groups, myths and goddesses. Beautifully presented and illustrated, this will appeal

to many of you, and it's nice to see G.S. Dearn writing again, here an obit. for William Gray. If memory serves, Geoff Dearn edited *Sangreal* magazine, of fond memory. Excellent value at £3.00 from 2, Tavistock Chambers, Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 2SE. Ocular The Journal of Occult, Paganism and Holistics. No.5 Definitely becoming the place for quality 'pagan' writers to foregather - here, Bob Trubshaw, Mike Howard and Anthony North among others. This is another very good, incisive issue, with fine graphics. I particularly admire an article about parents surrounding their kids in their despair over the state of Gaia, or whatever else motivates their desire for radical change. Too right: kids need knowledge, but they don't need pressure. A definite eye-opener at £2.25 from Lesley Wilkinson, Rosewood Cottage, Langtoft, Drifffield, E.Yorks, YO25 0TQ.

Orbiter No.37 I don't know how many of you have persuaded Jim Melesiuc to send you this 'exchange only' gem, but this issue is excellent, a special dealing with some of the absurdities of the Linda Napolitano 'abduction', including the vituperative correspondence between leading US ufologists. As always, 'leading edge' information from a fine commentator at PO Box 652, Reading, MA 01867, USA.

OVNI March 1993 Newsletter of the Phenomenon Research Association. An interesting mix of reports local to this growing group, and wider issues - here, Pat Delgado on formats for possible earth changes, and Leonard Stringfield's crash & retrieval reports. £1 from Omar Fowler, 12, Tilton Grove, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbys, DE7 4GR. Pegasus Spring 1993 Journal of SIGAP An intriguing North Surrey event investigated, Zecharia Sitchin on ancient astronauts, Woking Mosque as a Ley Centre(?!), conspiracies and Betty Luca. A good, thoughtful magazine. £1 from Gordon Millington, 126, Grange Road, Guildford, Surrey.

Pendragon Spring 1993 The last - bigger than usual - issue of this fine Arthurian magazine to be edited by the legendary Eddie Tooke, a challenging role now to be taken on by Fred Stedman-Jones. I'm sure that if he retains the life, wisdom, and humour that characterise *Pendragon*, its success will continue. £6.00 for 4 issues from Smithy House, Newton-by-Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 6SX.

Perceptions Issue 5 This light-hearted, broad-minded US psychic/transformation/new age magazine continues to develop, with more pages and even more typefaces! \$4 from D & K Publishing, PO Box 9019, Mail Station # 114, Lewisville, TX 75067, USA.

The Psi Researcher No.7 This is the 'popular' publication of the Society for Psychical Research. Consequently, it's superbly produced, intelligent, informative and very British. There's a good deal of debate about NDEs and Sue Blackmore's 'Dying Brain' hypothesis, SLIDE and plenty more - including, oddly enough, Gerald Suster. My only quibble is that it is all a little timeless, safe, and a long way off the 'leading edge'. There's a lot going on at present that would benefit from the skills of the SPR - but you'd never know it from reading their publications. Recommended nonetheless, and reasonably priced at £1.95 an issue from SKS, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.

Psi Review Winter 1993 I really like this one: a quiet, intelligent, individual approach to anomalies and mysteries, with quality book, magazine and lecture reviews, ghosts, UFOs, and even more. This issue has some intriguing ghost accounts (something I'd like to feature here, actually), a fascinating Indian reincarnation case, and some really good material on revelations from the Dead Sea Scrolls. \$7 an issue from Florence A. Trouche Enterprises, PO Box 4123, Santa Barbara, CA 93140, USA.

Psychic World - Supporting the Voice of Spiritualism.

Issue 1 May 1993. There have been rumours for some time about a new Spiritualist publication, and this is it. A monthly, very similar in appearance to *Psychic News*, it makes a promising and attractive start, though the content only confirms that there is little new among the dead. On whom, after all, papers like this depend. The lead item is a pre-mortem interview with the controversial Spiritualist figurehead Gordon Higginson, there's a long interview with Leslie Flint, purveyor of famous names to believers, and a too-large dose of Michael Roll and Ron Pearson, waging their little war against science and religion, presumably in the misguided belief that this will in some way help the Spiritualist case. However, there are also some thoughtful articles and promising regular features, and the content is more demanding and satisfying than *PN* of late. In the UK a 12-month subscription is only £6.50, and a sample issue is yours in return for a couple of stamps from Psychic World, Circulation Dept, Premier House, 22, Deansgate, Manchester, M3 1PH.

Rainbow Ark No.10 Regular readers will know how I feel about glossy, new age magazines - I purposely haven't reviewed *Kindred Spirit* this time, 'cos I could think of nothing but ill to say about it. *Rainbow Ark* is a worthy exception to my prejudices, because while it has the usual melange of shamen, goddesses and therapeutic chanting, it also has excellent, unbiased events listings, and a sense of humour! And it's non-profit making: not someone's sales catalogue. I especially like the informed and witty 'Guru Gossip', looking at the individuals rather than at the charisma. There's also a feature on the Global Deception aspects of AIDS, and some good sense on dietary supplements. £1 an issue from Rainbow Publications, PO Box 486, London, SW1 1AZ.

Saucer Smear - various issues of this offbeat UFO newsletter have kept me up to speed on the silliness of the 'Napolitano' case, the strange behaviour of Jerome Clark in protecting ufology from reality, and the great success of MUFON in increasing its membership dramatically by accepting as true what is patently false, and removing administrators and investigators from its ranks if they don't comply with the change in attitude. All this and jokes as well! Vital information, accessible by sending unspecified, though not huge amounts of dollars to editor James W. Moseley at PO Box 1709, Key West, FL 33041, USA.

SCAN Spring 1993 First time I've seen this smart, intelligent, primarily cryptozoological magazine, and I'm impressed. Here be Sea Serpents, Mystery Cats, Zooform Phenomena and more besides. £1.50 from Jan Williams, 72, Leek Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 3HU.

The Scientific and Medical Network Newsletter No.51 Getting bigger and more ambitious all the time, and now expanded into a smart Review Supplement as well, while the magazine itself runs to 49 pages, with nine major articles. Send for details of the Network to David Lorimer, Lesser Halings, Tilehouse Lane, Donham, Nr.Uxbridge, Middx, UB9 5DG

The Skeptic March/April 1993 Firstly, a brief correction. The Skeptic has no direct links with the CSICOP organisation in the USA, and is not influenced by CSICOP. Fair enough - The Skeptic is far more sensible than the Skeptical Inquirer, and it has a sense of humour, too. The issue leads with 'The Myths of Meditation', which is very useful. All that Glisters is not Gold reports the transformation of silver into gold in rosary chains at Medjugorje in Yugoslavia, and there is much more of worth. £2 from PO Box 475, Manchester, M60 2TH.

Skull Briefing No.2 A stunning journal from Tennessee, concentrating on Operation Save The Great Pyramid! The lead article is 'Draconians Hurl Fireballs at the Earth' and, as you can imagine,

this is one of the potential dangers for the Pyramid wherein, of course, is a full-station Confederation Star Base. You will be relieved to hear that involved in saving the Great Pyramid are 14 Aldebaran Special Forces Starcraft, 19 Pleiadean Beamships, and a special task force of 12 Sirian Star Ships. All this is closely associated with the Crystal Skull phenomenon, and beautifully illustrated and printed, thanks to the commitment of a few individuals. A remarkable item, price \$7 (by air) from Aquarian Perspectives Inter-Planetary Mission, Route 1, Box 25, Lansing, TN 37770, USA.

**Skylink No.4** The Journal of London UFO Studies. A great cover of a car entering a UFO introduces a lively, bright and enthusiastic magazine with plenty of original UFO material and reports. Alan Hilton's 'UFO Power Cell or Hoax? The Case of the Abductee who brought back Physical Evidence' is intriguing indeed. A good addition to the pantheon of British UFO magazines, and well-edited, too. I'll look forward to future issues. Only £1 each from Roy Lake, 10a, Tudor Road, Barking, Essex, IG11 9RX  
**Spirit Voices No.13** I feel quite honoured to have this - apparently only 65 copies were printed. Edited by Bill Weisensale, this is an intelligent magazine, devoted to the Electronic Voice Phenomenon in various forms, including technical guidance and instruction. Looks very useful. Sample issue \$6 from Bill at PO Box #B.Q., Sarstow, CA 92312-3030, USA.

**The Star Beacon - Earth Star's Monthly Newsletter April 1993.** This gets livelier. Here we have an extraordinary story from Thokol of Saturn, involving a time when Thokol was living in Roumania disguised as a human, and was arrested by the secret police. Fortunately, his Chief Golespekon was able to rescue him. There's also 'Human Ufonauts: an Alien Fifth Column?' and 'Alien Teachings: The Meaning and the Message'. \$2 from Earth Star Publications, PO Box 117, Paoula, CO 81428, USA.

**Star Love Network - 'A Journal serving a unique family of extra-terrestrial origins'.** No.16 Remarkable, 40-page newspaper-style journal, with front cover/main feature devoted to the Star Fleet Landing in 2012. There's a column for Star Children, a feature on Starlight Elixirs, Letters to the Aquarian Star Elders, and loads of brilliant and original ads. \$8 from Aquarian Perspectives Interplanetary Mission, 311, Lower Burningtown Road, Franklin, NC 28734, USA.

**Strange Magazine No.11** Mark Chorvinsky has developed a superb magazine over the years, and he has the knack of marketing, too. Here, that knack involves features about the writer HP Lovecraft, some first-rate, ground-level cryptozoology, South American Humancids, The Winsted Wild Man, Craters Holes and Crop Circles in Western Europe, a Man-In-Black, and lots of excellent investigation and research, all beautifully presented. You can send a UK cheque for £13.95 (a bargain) for 4 issues to Strange, PO Box 2246, Rockville, Maryland 20847, USA.

**UFO Brigantia No.52** For various reasons, Brigantia has slipped way behind schedule, but I understand that they now have whizzy new equipment, and a double issue is on the way. I hope so, because editor Andy Roberts represents the best of thinking in British ufology. This issue has an interview with folklorist Eddie Bullard, the Spitsbergen UFO Crash of 1952, and Pt.2 of A Social History of Psychic Questing. Good stuff at £2 an issue from Stuart Smith, Enigma Design & Publishing, 15, Rydal Street, Burnley, Lancs, BB10 1HS.

**UFO Magazine Jan/Feb 1993** Apparently, Budd Hopkins 'Delivers Another Powerful Report' about the Napolitano/Cortile case in this issue, but it looks to me like he's still performing his own cover-up

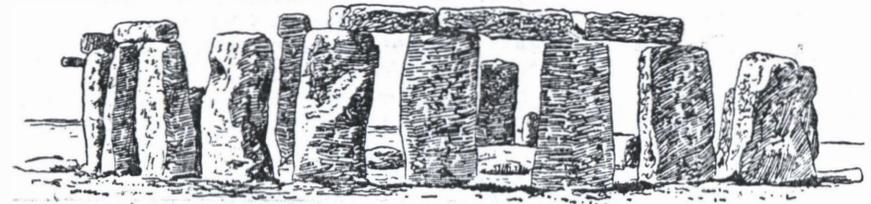
of a moneyspinning wild goose chase that lacks both evidence and reality. Other features are better, like a report on UFO and paranormal events in Canada, and some more revelations from Armen Victorian. A Pat Delgado interview in which he explains what changes will happen in the evolution of the earth makes my mind boggle! Still, as smart a production as ever at £2.25 from 18, Hardy Meadows, Grassington, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 5LR.  
**UFO Universe Spring 1993** Here we are, out of left field, out of our trees, laughing dementedly all the way to the bank. Certainly the worst mass-market UFO magazine, featuring supposedly documented alien implants, abducted children, a UFO crash in Central Park, and more and worse. Still, it's all part of the zany, challenging UFO experience. It should appear some time in your local newsagents, at around £2.25.

**Voices From Spirit May 1993** One of the real originals in its own, slender way, the interview here with the Spirit of Mary Magdalene is quite remarkable in its sexual and emotional openness. Next issue, the interview will be with the Spirit of Babe Ruth. A little sad is the note that although Abbott & Costello "spent a lot of time with us preparing a list of 64 movies they have produced in The Spirit World from 1960 to the present", there are insufficient funds to publish this. If any reader would like to help . . . The magazine costs around \$3 for 2 issues from Voices, PO Box 5104, Ellsworth, ME 04605, USA.

**Wood and Water Spring Equinox 1993** Like many other magazines, this features items by Monica Sjojo, but it's the real-life stuff that I find makes this title worthwhile. Once again, it produces a sane and considered response to the difficult issue of ritual abuse, acknowledging realities and seeking ways forward: so very different from what Chris Bray has been coming out with recently. Worth having for that item alone. £1 an issue from Daniel Cohen, 77, Parliament Hill, London, NW3 2TH.

**World UFO Journal No.3** Making strides in production and content, this issue includes features on crashed UFOs, the Scottish Wave, a piece by Brenda Butler (of Rendlesham fame) and more. £1 from 16, Newton Green, Great Dunmow, Essex.

**Would You Believe? The Controversial Phenomenon Magazine No.44** Excellent research and reprints. Mostly UFOs this time, inc. Gray Barker 'Chasing the Flying Saucers', and M.K.Jessup's 'Is the Moon Already Occupied?' Also a modern Arkansas case. 4 issues \$18 from Armand Laprade, HC80, Box 156, Marshall, Arkansas 72650, USA.



The author of this article is the Editor of the *Bulletin of Anomalous Experience*. You will find full details in the listing in *News From The Front*.

The article itself tackles a challenge to our understanding of memory, and of human responses to what is unpleasant and unacceptable. It is essential reading.

## False Memory Syndrome

by David Gotlib M.D.

There are changes coming in the scientific and social climate that will profoundly affect everyone with a personal or professional interest in anomalous experiences. The vanguard of this change goes by the name of False Memory Syndrome (FMS). FMS refers to the recovery of long-repressed memories of childhood abuse that have no basis in fact. In FMS an individual (most often a female) goes to a therapist with a problem (marriage, children, or an eating disorder, for example). During therapy, memories of childhood sexual abuse that were not present before therapy surface. The therapist accepts these memories as substantially factual, and encourages the patient to do the same. The client emerges from therapy with the belief that all or most of her problems are related to this history of abuse. The client accuses her abuser, frequently a father or close relative. The family is split apart. Sometimes the patient sues the family or abuser.

The problem is that the rest of the family genuinely cannot remember these incidents; moreover, they are sure the incidents did not happen. They are devastated by the accusations, bitterly resentful of their family biography being rewritten and their family rent asunder, by what they perceive as a zealous therapist planting ideas in their child's mind.

Some families, especially those being sued by survivors with newly-awakened memories of abuse, go to the trouble of collecting information that demonstrates that the memories could not possibly be accurate - for instance, that Uncle Jimmy could not possibly have molested Sally at the age of 6 because Uncle Jimmy did not even live in town or visit at that time.

Individuals who have come to believe that their memories of abuse are in fact false, the families who have lived through this nightmare, and mental health professionals concerned about the problem, have come together to form the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF). They produce an impressive information kit, consisting of a collection of reprints of scientific articles discussing the fallibility

of memory, and newspaper articles about FMS. FMS Foundation also produces a regular newsletter. A book about this phenomenon was published in 1992: *Confabulations: Creating False Memories - Destroying Families* by Eleanor Goldstein (SIRS Books, Boca Raton, Florida).

The scientific premise of FMS is that memory is not as infallible as we would like to think. Researchers who study memory and the brain are discovering the brain's capacity to construct and invent reality from the information it processes. Their studies support what poets and novelists have always known: that memory is not a fixed thing, with its own special place or file drawer in the brain. It is a process that is constantly being reinvented. A 'memory' consists of fragments of the event, subsequent discussions and reading, other people's recollections and suggestions, and, perhaps most of all, present beliefs about the past. FMSF advocates do not dispute the ability of the mind to repress memories; they do, however, challenge the unquestioning acceptance of all memories, especially those without factual corroboration. Similarly, they do not question the fact "that in the past there was a bias not to believe a person who said that he or she had been abused. That bias was not right. But neither is it right to convince people to think they were abused or to destroy families

In an excellent article on this subject in the *New York Times Book Review*, social psychologist Carol Tavris describes FMS's concern about therapists:

"Of course, all clients in therapy are influenced by the therapist's theoretical framework. This is why people in psychoanalysis have Freudian dreams, people in primal scream therapy remember being born and people in past-lives therapy remember being Julius Caesar (or whoever). Yet there is a sensitive line between any therapist's normal probing for evidence of certain psychological problems and literally creating them by the force of suggestion. Wendy Maltz and Beverley Holman, therapists in Eugene, Oregon, make the process explicit in *Incest and Sexuality*. "It may take considerable digging on the part of the therapist," they say, "to discover incest as the cause of the symptoms being experienced by the client." When does "considerable digging" become undue persuasion? On this subtle matter, the [self-help] books are silent."

Self-help books for incest survivors are also cited as contributing to the production of false memories and victims. Ellen Bass and Laura Davis are quoted in *The Courage To Heal* as saying, "If you are unable to remember any specific instances . . . but still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did . . . If

you think you were abused and your life shows the symptoms, then you were." Many of these books, including *The Courage To Heal*, provide detailed 'incest-survivors after-effects checklists' of symptoms that are broad enough to cover most complaints that females present to therapists with. As Tavriss says:

" Women abused as children are indeed more likely than others to be depressed and to have low self-esteem as adults, although there is no good evidence from longitudinal studies showing that such abuse invariably causes the entire litany of women's problems. Nor does it follow that all women who are depressed, are sexually afflicted or wear baggy clothes were abused as children. Yet many are being encouraged to rifle their memories for clues that they were."

FMSF opponents say that there are no cases reported in the scientific literature of iatrogenic abuse memories. They argue that FMS advocates ignore research showing that accuracy of recall increases with personal and emotional involvement in the event. But the strongest and most passionate argument made by FMSF critics is that the FMS movement is really a well-funded, well-organised group of people who have been accused of violence against women, out to destroy the credibility of those who speak out against violence against women. FMSF critics say that this movement is motivated by fear - fear that a group (sexually abused women), long suppressed but now becoming empowered, will become spiteful vicious, and will do to their abusers what has been done to them.

What does this have to do with anomalous experiences, and with abduction experiences in particular? The FMS literature attacks research and (especially) therapeutic efforts in anomalies: ". . . 'remembered' past lives, space alien abuse, satanic ritual conspiracies or after-death experiences are generally viewed by mainstream professionals as evidence that the 'disease of the month' is alive and well. Such practices are splinter notions, nontraditional practices so silly that they do not dignify a response."

A FMSF newsletter from late 1992 carried the passage above in an article calling for "prudent therapy." Outraged parents, they say, "ask how the representatives of the professional organisations can remain silent about the age regression therapy as exemplified by Dr. John Mack, Harvard University psychiatrist, in which people recover memories of space alien abduction. Parents ask, "Isn't this encouraging delusions? Is this prudent practice?" That issue also carried a pair of cartoons ridiculing the abduction phenomenon.

Tavriss makes a similar comment in her *New York Times Book Review* article . . .

" . . . And if a woman suspects that she has been abducted by UFOs, that the FBI is bugging her socks, or that a satanic cult forced her to bear a child that was half human and half dog, must she (and we) likewise assume that "it probably really happened"?

FMSF is true to its assertion that serious consideration of these phenomena "does not dignify a response." There is no serious discussion of the knowledge we have acquired so far about the abduction experience, or about anomalous experiences in general. All such experiences are summarily dismissed as artefacts of the mind, unworthy of study. Their position on anomalies is in sharp contrast to their frequent reassurances that some, but certainly not all, cases of reported childhood sexual abuse are false.

This offhand dismissal of anomalous experiences is particularly regrettable because some of the concerns expressed above regarding false memories of child abuse are worthy of consideration in the field of abduction research and therapy. The all-encompassing symptoms checklist for sexual abuse survivors has its parallels in the abduction field. The admonition from *The Courage To Heal* that, "if you are unable to remember any specific instances . . . but still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did," is paralleled by the use of hypnotic regression, where few or no conscious memories exist, to explore suspected abduction experiences, and the expectation on the part of possible experiencers that they will be regressed by the therapist or investigator.

The question that concerns us here is not whether the abduction experience is simply more than false memories. The FMS people do not argue that sexual abuse does not exist, or that it exists but no one is traumatized as a result. Their concern is with iatrogenic abuse memories. In the same way, while some in the abduction field continue to focus their attention on proving the existence of UFOs and aliens, they may find themselves shut down by a social and scientific backlash that argues a different point: how many abductees has the field created in its efforts to explore the phenomenon (however well-meaning those efforts might be)? This backlash might be directed specifically against ufology, or it might be part of a general movement against therapy based on uncovering of long-repressed memories - especially those predicated on fringe theories (the abduction phenomenon, whether you subscribe to an Intruders, Imaginal or Space Brothers hypothesis, is still fringe).

I described an imaginary worst-case scenario based on such a

backlash in a paper I presented at the Abduction Study Conference at M.I.T. in June 1992:

" During or after an investigation, an abductee suffers an emotional breakdown, perhaps even commits suicide. A member of the family, who is not an experiencer and who is not sympathetic to the idea of abductions as legitimate experiences feels, rightly or wrongly, that the intervention of the investigator is in some way responsible for the breakdown.

Such an angry relative might then bring a civil suit against the investigator and others involved in the study of the case, claiming negligence. Negligence involves the violation of what the court might find to be the duty of care owed by the investigator to the experiencer. If the court did find that such a duty of care exists, then the following question would be asked: did the person who owed that duty (the investigator) conduct himself or herself to the standard of care as required of him or her by professional colleagues? If there are no professional colleagues, and if no such professional standards exist, then did the investigator show the standards a reasonable person would expect? If the answer to this question is 'no', then the court could find the investigator negligent, and thereby responsible for damages caused by such negligence.

In this scenario, the specific charge would be that the investigator ought to have known the abductee was subject to great emotional strain because of the experience. Through the investigation, he or she had opened a 'Pandora's Box' without knowing how to close or control it, thus putting the experiencer at risk.

The paper argued, among other things, for a set of standards for abduction research and therapy - one which a court could consider because a large group of professionals had been concerned enough to examine the question. (The court would, however, not be obliged to accept these standards.)

The debate propelled by the FMS Foundation is going to change the focus of the argument in abduction circles from the nature of the abduction phenomenon to the scientific and social responsibility of abduction researchers and therapists as they explore the question and try to identify and help experiencers. FMS raises legitimate concerns, with serious moral and ethical implications for the field of abductions. The concerns are worthy of study, even if we do not care for the way they are presented.

FMS, and the issues it represents, is like a locomotive coming down the track, straight at us. The professionals on

the advisory board of the FMS Foundation - professors of psychiatry, psychology and sociology, including acknowledged experts in hypnosis and dissociative disorders - are prestigious, articulate and knowledgeable. Furthermore, the considerable force of consensus reality is behind them. We can use the knowledge and insight provided by this group to encourage a constructive dialogue and improve our work, or we can fall into the trap of opposing FMS on the grounds that it is another 'debunking' group. If we choose the latter course, we risk a backlash that could isolate experiencers even more than at present.

*Editor's note.* Since preparing the above article, I've received a 'packet of information' from the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. This is a substantial and impressive compilation of background and reprints, together with a number of copies of their Newsletter. While some of the reading is not for the faint-hearted - its primary concern is with memories of child abuse - for anyone with a serious interest in the way in which abduction recollections are elicited, it will be invaluable. The FMSF were good enough to send all this without charge, but I would certainly suggest sending a minimum of \$5 towards postage. The FMSF is based at 3401 Market Street - suite 130, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

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## End Times Bulletin

I guess that the jury is still out on the way the Waco siege ended. We may never know how the conflagration began that brought a swift and fiery end to the followers of David Koresh in their community in Texas. Whether from within or without, it must have been a terrifying experience. Maybe, for some, it was a fulfilling one, too. Fire is the favourite purgative of most religions, and its source may not have been the first consideration of many of its victims.

The lessons of this tragedy are less religious than personal. The message was not that unusual, and I have seen schismatic Seventh-Day Adventist material published since the siege began which is as vividly eschatological, without appearing fatal. No, I don't think it was what Koresh said that led, inexorably, to the death of his followers. It was who he was, and who his followers were, too.

The symbiotic relationship between dominant and submissive, while not exactly making the world go round, keeps both the Police and the imagination well-occupied. I have commented previously that while I know of no evidence for organised, Satanic, ritual child abuse, I can think of few better pretences for dominating and exploiting a child than that of

an agent of Satan. Perhaps one that is better is pretending to be an agent of God! Koresh, by using his supposed understanding of the plans and preferences of the Almighty, led his followers to the common conclusion that he and the deity were one and the same. He used this status, it would seem, to exploit adults and children alike within his community, and to excuse his actions, or even make them seem consistent with his supposed divinity. Charles Manson, of course, was caught much earlier in his evil career. Other, and more established religious organisations than that of Koresh continue to make their own excuses, and similar abuses persist unchallenged by their various hierarchies. Of all the various human weaknesses, the need to be approved of by God is still one of the strongest, and one which renders individuals, communities, nations and faiths vulnerable to the most appalling manipulation.

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## Cross Talk

I'm pleased with the response to my 'Endless Encounter' piece in TWP 6. A number of you related similar experiences, and drew similar conclusions, too. So when I read the Christian magazine *Renewal* for May 1993, I was intrigued by an account of a new method of, effectively, securing religious conversions - setting up situations where people can feel safe in believing that they have made contact with Jesus, and that a two-way communication is taking place.

The method is called Alpha, and its courses were developed at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, though they are also being delivered elsewhere. They are targeted at those already sympathetic to accepting a formal Christianity, or at least those with open minds. They appear to consist of a series of open weekly discussions on various themes, in comfortable surroundings with 'excellent food'. After ten weeks, those attending go on a choice of one of three weekends away on 'the Holy Spirit'. You will not be surprised that "it is there that most people suddenly accept the Christian faith for the first time."

Much effort is put into the ambience of the courses, "the lighting, the lamps, the way the curtains look . . . the food, the seating, the car parking, the security, the sound, the flowers, the screens - every single detail . . ." It seems that there is some demonstration of healing, and an extraordinary attitude to the role of women, who attend a special daytime course; "By the women coming on fire for God - learning how to love their husbands in a new way, perhaps behaving differently in the home - the men would be so attracted that they would then come and want to do an evening Alpha." Also, there is a talk on 'spiritual

warfare', stating that, "there is a very large, evil influence in the world as is evidenced by ouija boards, child abuse, tarot cards, palmistry, witchcraft . . ."

It rather looks as though this calculated, middle-class brainwashing is going to characterise a new type of evangelism in this country. The thought horrifies me: all it is, is manipulation, one group of humans dominating and deluding another. But then, I rather suspect that certain of the 'alien abduction support groups' function in a very similar way. And that is no better.

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## Review

The SLI Effect - Street Lamp Interference: a Provisional Assessment compiled by Hilary Evans with ASSAP. Published by ASSAP, and available for £3.35 (inc.postage) from ASSAP, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX.  
Reviewed by Kevin McClure.

If SLI is a real phenomenon, it is quite the dullest one that I can imagine. People who sometimes 'cause' street lamps to go out for a bit somehow fail to stir the blood, or stiffen the sinews. Consequently, I have the greatest admiration for Hilary Evans in compiling such a fine piece of work as this booklet, almost a classic of the reporting of anomalous phenomena. Every convention of research is followed, there is background, presentation and analysis of data, definitions and suppositions, investigations and tentative conclusions, a questionnaire and so on. Of course, from Hilary we would expect no less.

But is it a real phenomenon? And if it isn't, why is so much trouble being taken with it? This booklet readily admits that the data is largely received by post, and that there has been little active investigation, as such. The 'repeater' nature of the 'phenomenon' argues against coincidence being a satisfactory explanation for what the SLIers apparently perceive to have occurred, but then, look how many individuals, at the slightest encouragement, claim a Marian vision, or an alien abduction.

While Hilary raises some interesting historical parallels - people affecting electrical equipment, and so on, electric street lights have been around for a very long time. Can anyone out there recall an SLI case reported to them before this project began? If not, why not? What is being fished for? The data? Or us?

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