



DEAD OF NIGHT



MAGAZINE

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THE HANCIER OF THE WILDWOOD



*Merseyside's Only Publication Dealing With All
Paranormal Phenomena !!*

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Dead of Night Magazine does not subscribe to any one belief system.
All contributions should be sent to the above address.

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EDITORIAL

Oh dear. I'm thinking perhaps of changing the title of this column from 'EDITORIAL' to 'The Lee-Walker-Lame-Arse-Apology-Section', 'cos it seems like all I ever do is spend these few lines attempting to seek our readers forgiveness for failing to get the magazine out on time...Yet again.

I guess, like the cynical schoolteacher or the long-suffering boss at work, you're not really interested in hearing the reasons why we're so late, but for the record...It wasn't anything at all to do with laziness, or lack of inspiration. It was entirely down to the fact that our computer went down, and short of penning the mag in feathered quill and ink, we had no choice but to wait for it to be fixed.

If you're reading this, then thanks for sticking with us. We hope you'll agree it was worth the wait.

Right. That's the unashamed, slice of abject creeping outta the way. Let's get down to the wondrous delights contained in this, and future issues

I don't know about you, but it's mighty hard to shake the notion that 'Paranormal Phenomena' has become rather hip'n'trendy these past few months, what with the prime time success of the fictional TV series 'THE X-FILES' and the 'factual' 'STRANGE BUT TRUE?' coupled with the furore surrounding the official investigation into 'THE BEAST OF BODMIN', the continuing well of controversy concerning 'The Surgeon's Photo/hoax?' of the Loch Ness Monster, and of course the even more recent explosion of interest in THE ROSWELL CRASHED SAUCER RETRIEVAL ignited by Ray Santilli's now in-famous 'ALIEN AUTOPSY FILM' (a *comprehensive* review of which will appear in the next issue of *DEAD OF NIGHT*).

Even disregarding this upsurge in interest, we have literally been innundated with articles/letters and ideas for future features...So much so, that we've had to hold back on enough input to keep us going for several issues. However, in order to ensure that the magazine never again falls so far behind, we are going to have to reduce the number of pages to a maximum of fifty, starting with # 7 - another 'Hallowe'en Special'.

This will not mean that we'll be skimping on the contents in any way. We'll simply reduce the size of the print of certain articles and cram in roughly the same amount of information, rest assured.

We *will*, from time to time, be running 'special bumper' editions when the occasion (and thetime limit) warrants it. We are still planning on publishing our first 'Yearbook', hopefully sometime around Christmas (although precisely *which* Christmas, remains to be seen).

Forthcoming attractions include; *GHOSTS AND DEVILS OVER MERSEYSIDE; PART TWO*, an updated-reprint of your humble Editor's (ahem) 'masterpiece' featuring '*SPRING-HEELED JACK*', *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ALEISTER CROWLEY*, more '*TALES FROM THE LOCH-SIDE*', *HALLOWE'EN HORRORS*, an *exclusive interview with 'Nessie-hunter' STEVE FELTHAM*, *A RETURN TO THE PENDLE WITCH COUNTRY*, *STRANGE PHENOMENA OF THE 20th CENTURY: 1906*, *LIVERPOOL LEPRACHAUNS*, *THE X-FILES EPISODE GUIDE*, *THE A-Z OF SUPERSTITIONS*, *SCI-FI AND HORROR FILM IMAGERY IN THE FORTEAN WORLD...Ooooh*, and more *Monsters, Ghosts, Witches, Aliens*, and general weirdness than you can shake a claw at...

You know what they say, keep watching this space!!!

In the meantime, happy reading,



CHASING THE UNKNOWN
A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST WEIRD AND WONDERFUL PRESS
CLIPPINGS



Featuring Ghostly Window Cleaners, **Jurassic Park Phenomena**, **BLACK MAGIC TRIALS**, **MODERN-DAY VAMPIRES**, **Strange Days In The Animal Kingdom**, The Curse Of Lewis, *PLUS LOTS MORE!!!*

A NEW AGE OF MIRACLE AND WONDER

The Healing Hand



Did relic
save the
life of
a dying
priest?

By NICK HOPKINS

WHEN doctors gloomily predicted that only 'the hand of God' could save Father Christopher Jenkins, it seemed just a figure of speech.

But to the faithful at St Francis Xavier's church, the diagnosis made perfect sense.

As the 63-year-old priest lay grievously ill after a stroke, they took to his bedside a 300-year-old relic believed to have miraculous powers.

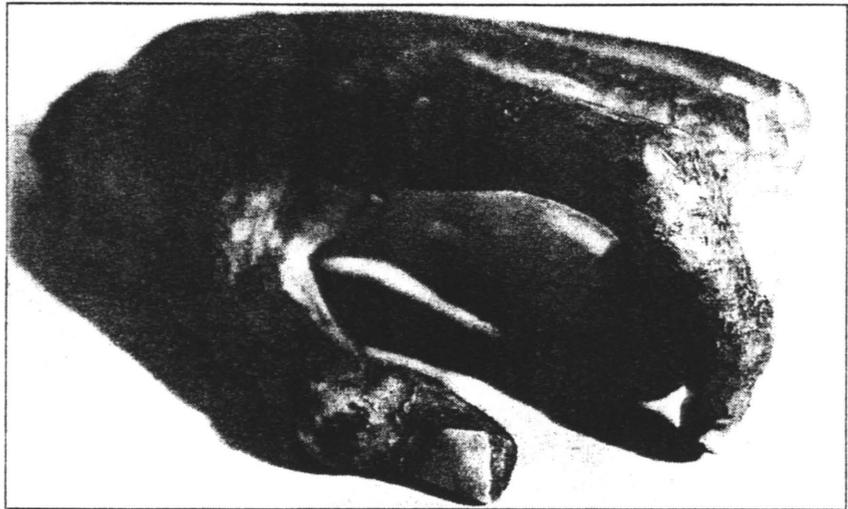
And within hours he was making an astonishing recovery.

The artefact — the shrivelled left-hand of the 17th century martyr John Kemble — was being hailed yesterday as the saviour of Father Jenkins.

'The doctors told us he'd die,' said Father Anthony Tumelty, an assistant at the church in Hereford.

'But after we blessed him with the hand he got well again.'

John Kemble, a Roman Catholic priest, was hanged, drawn



The severed hand of St John Kemble, who was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1679

and quartered in Hereford in 1679 at the age of 80 in the aftermath of the Titus Oates plot implicating Roman Catholics in a conspiracy to kill Charles II.

After his execution a woman picked up his severed hand and for the last 200 years the relic has been in St Francis Xavier's church.

In 1970 he was canonised by Pope Paul VI.

It was Father Tumelty who struck upon the idea of putting the Kemble Hand to good use.

He had found his colleague and friend unconscious in the

presbytery next to the church. 'It was such a shock,' said Father Tumelty. 'He'd had a stroke while he was asleep there and I called the ambulance.'

Father Jenkins subsequently fell into a deep coma and doctors at Hereford's County Hospital ruled out his chances of pulling through.

But Father Tumelty — with the support of the congregation which prayed for the sick priest — took matters, quite literally, in hand.

He took the relic from the church altar to the hospital.

removed it from its oak casket and placed it on Father Jenkins's forehead. Shortly afterwards the priest came out of his coma. He can now sit up in his hospital bed, talk, eat and walk.

Hospital staff, though delighted at his enormous improvement, remain sceptical. A spokesman said only: 'He is making progress and is stable and comfortable.'

When he was told of the amazing circumstances of his cure, Father Jenkins was said to be 'quietly pleased'.

22nd June 1995. Hereford. 'DAILY MAIL'.

THE EXORCIST

Perhaps not too surprisingly, many Japanese thought the recent Tokyo subway gassings and the Kobe earthquake had inured their countrymen to horror. But the discovery of six decomposing bodies in the home of a local Faith Healer has residents of the town of Sukagawa reeling. Police found the corpses of two men and four women neatly tucked into futons in the living room of Sachiko Ero, 47. The authorities had arrived to investigate complaints from the family of a woman who had said she was assaulted at the house in May and that her husband had vanished after a visit their in June. He was among the dead. Eto reportedly said she beat her clients and encouraged them to beat each other to exorcise Evil Spirits. Neighbours recalled that they had sometimes heard screams and drizzling sounds and had lately noticed a foul odour emanating from Eto's home. Otherwise, she had apparently seemed to be an ordinary housewife.

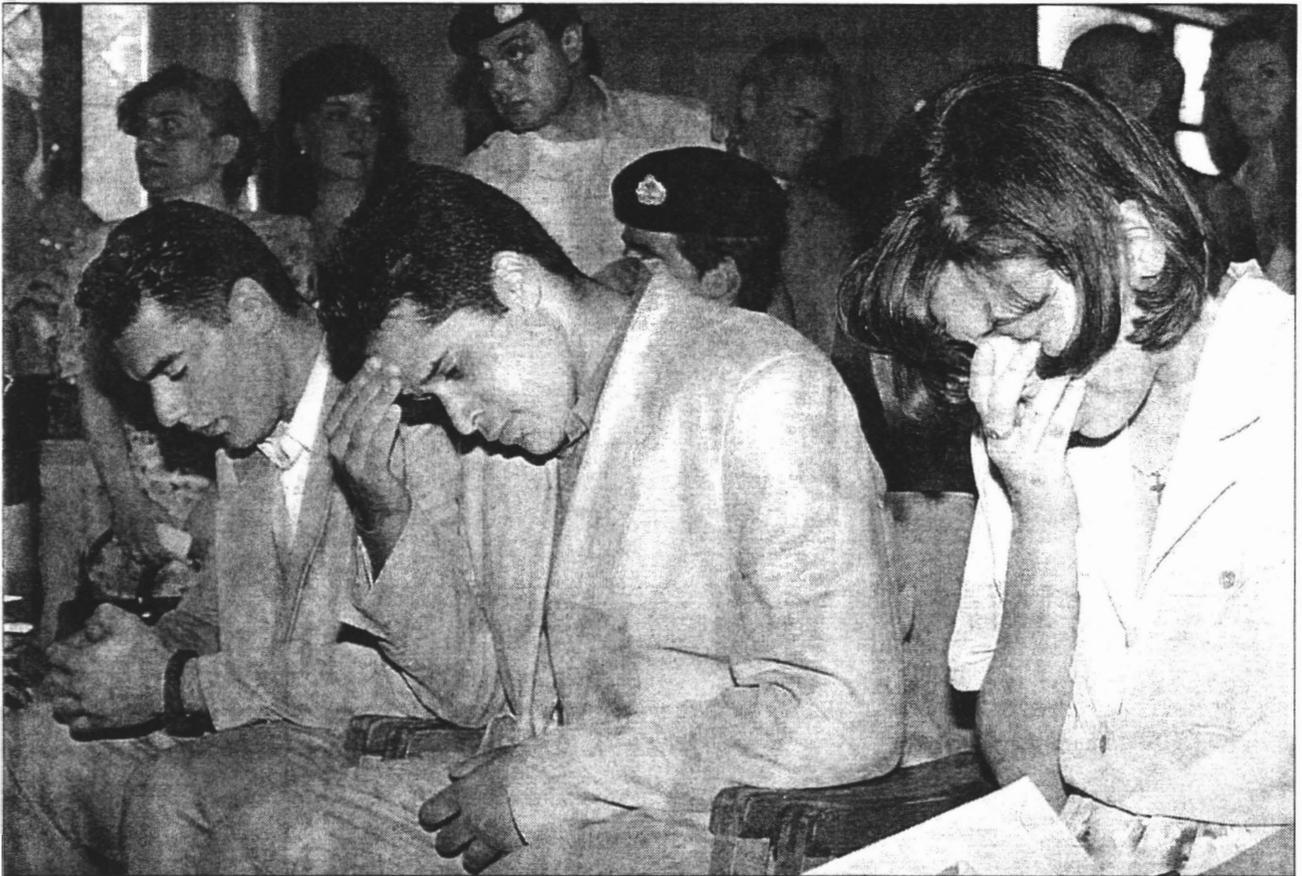
17th July, 1995. Sukagawa, Japan. 'TIME MAGAZINE'.

DENIS TURNS TO WITCH-DOCTOR

Sir Dennis Thatcher is apparently looking to cure his arthritis by seeing a mystic healer, according to the tabloid press. The ex-premier's 79 year-old husband has turned to the decidedly unorthodox after being forced to give up golf. He was quoted as saying; 'Physiotherapy didn't work. So now I'm trying a bloody Witch-Doctor!!!'.

15th June, 1995. 'DAILY SLUR'.

WITCHCRAFT IN THE WORLD TODAY.



Assimakis Katsoulas, 23, left, Emmanuel Dimitrokalis, 21, and Dimitra Margeti, 20, in court in Athens yesterday, accused with five other people of taking part in black magic rituals that

'Black magic' trial begins

led to the deaths of several women. The two men are accused of raping and murdering two women and a 15-

year-old girl. They each face three life sentences if found guilty. Mr Katsoulas yesterday admitted taking part in

one murder, but denied involvement in the others. Mr Dimitrokalis denied all the charges. Miss Margeti has confessed to being involved, which led to the gang's arrest. (AFP)

8th June, 1995. Athens, Greece. 'DAILY TELEGRAPH'.

'SATANIC FANTASIES OF THE WOOLWORTHS MAN'

A jury was given an alarming insight into the mind of killer Ian Kay. Psychologist Dr Philip Joseph told the Old Bailey that Kay had admitted having Satanic fantasies and tried to invoke the Devil, believing him to be more powerful than God.

He also admitted killing trainee assistant manager John Penfold during a botched robbery at the Woolworth's store in Teddington, London, but claimed manslaughter through diminished responsibility. He used to fantasise about going to the house where his ex-wife and her boyfriend were sleeping and knocking them both out with chloroform. He then dreamed of tying her to a chair and showing her a faked video of someone killing her boyfriend with an axe. He believed this would 'really freak her out, terrify her and that this would be a form of psychological torture. He also loved to watch horror movies (ooh, I just bet those self-righteous censors will make the very most of this little revelation...Ban ALL horror films, right now!!!), such as 'THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE', 'THE EXORCIST', and 'THE SHINING.'

17th July, 1995. Teddington, South London. 'DAILY MAIL'.

GHOSTLY TALES

Ghostly ways of window cleaners

SIR, Steve Parsons claims he met up with a ghost when he was prowling around former Hooton Park aerodrome whilst researching for a future book.

'He was solid and three-dimensional,' said Steve (*Pioneer* June 14).

Possessing such superb perceptual powers I wonder if Steve could perceive a solid, three-dimensional window cleaner within the borough who might deign to clean my house windows?

In my experience window cleaners possess ghost-like qualities. They appear for a while, look life-like, but then disappear after a few visits.

Why, especially in view of high unemployment levels, is it so difficult to obtain the services of a window cleaner on a regular basis?

Is it considered to be a demeaning occupation or - dare I say it - can a more lucrative living be gained from unemployment and social security handouts?

Whatever the reason the dearth of window cleaners remains a mystery to me but should a window cleaner spy this letter my telephone number is 0151 355 9481 and, as the sales person says: 'I'll be pleased to hear from them.'

W B ROSS
Rossmore Road West,
Ellesmere Port



FLASHBACK: As we revealed last week, there are spooky goings-on at Hooton Park aerodrome. But, asks our correspondent, is there the ghost of a chance of finding a window cleaner? 3670V8

HOTEL'S GHOSTBUSTING GUEST

The one and only John Inman (editor of the excellent 'PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS NEWSLETTER' and no relation whatsoever to the effeminate gag-man whose sole contribution to the annals of comedic mirth seems to be screaming 'I'm Free' at every available opportunity), personally invesrigated a haunting at Ragdale Hall, at Whitby. Some of the phenomena reported included lights being switched on in empty rooms, cleaners hearing whispering, a stranne shape gliding down the staircase, and a child crying in an unoccupied room. Further information may well be provided courtesy of Mr. Inman in the near future.

22nd May, 1995. Whitby, Scarborough. 'SCARBOROUGH EVENING NEWS'.

'FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK'.

A teenage worker by the name of Samuel Hill, was killed aged just 18, by a falling load of coal in 1899. His restless spirit is said to haunt the 'Ellesmere Port Boat Museum', and thanks to a local paper on the look-out for their readers ghost stories, we have the following report from the museum's education officer Annette Cavelle. A report that may well be connected with the ghost of Samuel Hill. Her story is best told in her own words;

'There had been a dance night at the museum, and I was just letting the musicians out the back door. For some reason, I glanced towards the stage and saw a black figure crouched down on one knee, looking at me. I was on the platform above the stage, and peering under the wooden beams which come down from the ceiling. It was a solid silhouette with no face and wearing a cap. I got out of there as quick as I could'

According to the paper, Annette isn't the only person to have encountered supernatural phenomena in the area. Ghostly footsteps are frequently heard late at night in another part of the building. The invisible entity, (if such it is), is said to run across the top floor of the main exhibition centre, a former warehouse, and down a flight of steps which nowadays lead to nowhere. Annette, who heard the footsteps on several occasions, recalled that about 11 years ago, 'I used to have an office in the centre which backed onto the lecture theatre. I was in there with my dog one night when I heard someone running in the main hall. It sounded like whoever it was had clogs or hob-nailed boots on. I thought someone had come out of the lecture and was messing around, so I went to look. I checked everywhere, and saw nobody, and all the doors were locked. The dog wouldn't leave my office. In the end I had to drag her out.

7th July, 1995. Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. 'SOUTH WIRRAL HERALD AND POST'.

'HE....HE....HE WENT STRAIGHT THROUGH THE WALL'

An unnamed woman reported in the same paper, that 60 odd years ago she was pushing a pram towards the Eastham Ferry Hotel, when she heard the sound of hooves. Once we'll sit back and let her take up the story;

'It was about 6:30 pm, very dark and very lonely. There was a wood with a high brick wall to one side, and not another soul around. I heard a clip, clop, clip sound and thought maybe it was an escaped horse. All of a sudden, I saw a white horse with someone on his back. At first I thought it was a man, because the person had a grey cloak and a tall hat on - very old-fashioned. The rider had his back to me, and was walking in front, and I was going to get past. For some reason though, I decided to follow the horse and keep my eyes on it and the rider, all the time. The rider took the horse closer and closer to the wall. I thought he or she was going to get off, because there was no way the horse could jump over. Then they just disappeared!!! I was so startled, I ran all the way home, and told my mother-in-law what I'd seen. She told me it was the ghost of the Stanley family, killed in a riding accident'. 7th July, 1995. Eastham Ferry. 'SOUTH WIRRAL HERALD AND POST'

'JURASSIC PARK' PHENOMENA 'HOLD ONTO YA BUTTS!!!'

CUT-PRICE DINO EGG

A hundred million year old Dinosaur egg fetched an incredible £13,000 at a New York auction. Even more astounding however, is the fact that the egg was expected to be sold for twice as much. It was found in China, in 1989, and was bought by a private collector in Dallas, Texas, who chose to remain anonymous.

6th July, 1995. New York. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

'LIFE IS REBORN FROM 40m YEARS BEE C'

Under tight security in a laboratory in California, ancient micro-organisms were extracted from the intestines of fossilised insects, some up to 130 million years old. Within days, they were multiplying into a special nutrient jelly, giving scientists a living example of a life-form long extinct. The science fantasy of 'JURASSIC PARK' pales in comparison with this breakthrough. In the movie, prehistoric insects merely yielded DNA, but in the latest development, actual living organisms have been revived. The micro-biologist behind the discovery, Dr. Rhaul Cano, made the breakthrough in matter extracted from a single bee which lived between 25 million and 40 million years ago. Like the other insects, this bee was found embedded in amber. It belongs to a stingless extinct species called *PROPLEBEIA DOMINICANA*, because it

was lived in the area now known as the Dominican Republic.

Similar to those that still exist there today, it was only 4mm long, its plump black body splashed with yellow and red dish patches. It was caught in the amber when it was collecting resin to make its nest. The bee was perfectly preserved.



Dr. Cano, extracted the bee from the amber, dissected its abdomen, and isolated spores-a dormant form of bacteria. The spores were placed in a nutrient solution, and within a fortnight living bacteria were flourishing. All possible precautions were taken to ensure the samples were not contaminated, including filtering the air into the laboratory. But what proved that they really were

intestines of fossilised insects, some up to 130 ancient bacteria, and not a result of modern contamination, was Dr. Cano's analysis of the genetic material. He found a different genetic coding in the ancient bacteria. They also produced enzymes that were not present in the modern equivalent.

Dr. Cano has isolated up to 1,500 different species of micro-organism. They have been extracted from insects encased in amber for between 2 million and 135 million years. Using DNA analysis, he hopes to develop a genetic tag to classify each one, and to study the possible uses they may have in the modern world.

'We have discovered a brand new source of organisms that could produce life-saving pharmaceuticals, or be used in valuable industrial processes,' he said, adding that there was little risk of the bacteria becoming dangerous to humans.

'These bacteria are different enough to give us new substances, but not different enough that he can't recognise them', he said. 'There's no more danger with these bacteria than there is with any newly discovered modern micro-organism'.

June, 1995. California. 'DAILY MAIL'.

WHEN FATE TURNS ITS BACK

Animal rights protestors were left with bright red faces when they very nobly tried to disrupt a pigeon shoot. Posters advertising the event had missed out the word 'clay'.

8th May, 1995. Canterbury, Kent. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Austrian Hans Hempell, spent over three years constructing a matchstick model of the Eiffel Tower...But burnt it to ashes when he lit his pipe and dozed off before a modellers contest.

22nd June, 1995. Austria. 'DAILY MANC'.

Also in Austria, jailed drug smugler Rudi Schmitt, 32, kissed his sister who had come to visit him in jail, and took a heroin packet from her mouth which burst, killing him with an overdose. At true kiss of death if ever there was one.

7th June, 1995. Austria. 'DAILY SLUR'.

....And to round off this section, if you're feeling a mite down in the dumps at the moment, this tale might serve to put your troubles into some kind of perspective...A man had his sight restored when he accidentally smashed his head on a door. He was just about to punch the air in celebration, when he realised that unfortunately, he had lost his hearing in the process, and was now stone deaf.

Someone, somewhere, has a cruel sense of humour...

5th April, 1995. Ajmar, India. 'DAILY MANC'.

COINCIDENCE CORNER

Susan Langley, who now lives in Wales, was originally brought up in Dovecourt, Essex. She was on a visit to Conwy, when she popped into an antiques shop. The female proprietor recognised Susan's accent and asked 'Are you from Essex?'

Susan takes up the story;

'I told her I was from Dovecourt, and the woman told me she was from there too. And I discovered she lived in the same road. More remarkably, her parents had sold my mum and dad the house where my widowed mum still lives. I'd travelled 340 miles to bump into someone who had lived in my childhood home!!!'

May, 1995. Llandudno, Wales.

Kathleen Hyde, also had an amazing coincidence....Although my daughter Tracey gave birth to her son in Paris, the baby was to be christened in her husband Tom's hometown in Germany. I set off with my eldest daughter, Sandra, by road and hovercraft to Boulogne. We were lining up at the toll gate when Sandra remarked; 'The people in that car are from England. They've got a bottle of 'Johnson's Baby Lotion'. It was our Tracey and Tom! They'd left from Paris, we from Essex, and we bumped into each other at the same road toll.'

May, 1995. Manningtree, England. Both clippings from 'BEST MAGAZINE'.

The audience for lecture on 'How To Cope With A Crisis', was told the speaker couldn't make it...cos his house had caught fire!!!

5th June, 1995. Plymouth. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Bridgegroom John Brown, and his best man, also called John Brown, thought that the wedding vicar was winding them up when he told them he was also called....You guessed it, John Brown.

'It's an amazing coincidence' said all three Brown's at the church.

....'Oh dear...The long winter evenings must just fly by.

8th April, 1995. East London. 'TODAY'.

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

An unnamed gambler had an incredible slice of fortune when he requested change so that he could play the 25 cents slot machine in Las Vegas. He was mistakenly given change for the 50 cent machine, he inserted the money, and promptly FFPoped £900,000!!!

20th June, 1995. Las Vegas, USA. 'DAILY SLUR'

THE CURSE OF LENIN

Lenin's embalmed body is giving out invisible Satanic energy which turns visitors to his Red Square mausoleum into spiritual cripples, according to the Russian newspaper 'Argumenty I Fakty'. 'Christian rules for fighting Satanism would suggest the corpse and all his works should be burned. Perhaps our country would then be free of suffering'.

16th January, 1995. Moscow, Russia. 'DAILY MAIL'.

REVENGE OF THE GYPSIES.

Gypsy leader Jasper Smith, 74, claims that a road bridge on the A41 is in danger of collapse because it stands on the land cursed by his grandmother a century ago. He went on to say that his sister 'Minty' could lift the curse...If her palm was crossed with silver, of course.

1st May, 1995. Guildford, Surrey. 'DAILY MANC'.

A couple of thieves are unaware that a deadly curse hangs over their heads for stealing £8,000 worth of items from Romany King Gordon Boswell of Lincolnshire. The angry ruler has placed a curse upon the raiders.

5th April, 1995. Spalding, Lincolnshire. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

...And burglars who stole £2,000 of goods from 'Mystical Place' in Cornwall have also been warned that they are cursed for their sins. The items stolen include models of Wizards and Dragons. Owner Paul Broadhurst said, 'They will only bring bad luck to the people who took them. I wouldn't want to be in their shoes'.

1st June 1995. Roscastle, Cornwall. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE

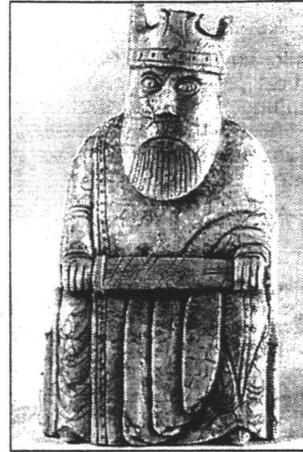
Curse recalled as Lewis seeks return of chessmen

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH

ISLANDERS on Lewis are mounting a campaign to have the celebrated Lewis Chessmen returned permanently to the Western Isles. The call comes as the chessmen are due to return to the island for the first time since they were discovered there 164 years ago.

The British Museum, which has 67 of the pieces, is lending some of them to the island to mark the opening of its new museum. They will be on display until October 7, along with the 11 pieces held by the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

The chessmen, carved from walrus ivory, date from about 1150 and are the finest surviving examples of medieval chess pieces. They are believed to have been made in Scandinavia. The pieces were exposed after the great storms of 1831, when sand dunes were washed away. So demonic



A Lewis Chessman

were the expressions on the pieces that the farmer who found them fled, believing he had freed evil spirits.

Now Alasdair Macleod, a lecturer who runs the Lewis Chess Club, has mounted a campaign for their permanent return. He has the backing of his MP, Calum Macdonald,

and the Western Isles Tourist Board.

"We have a solid argument," Mr Macleod said. "They are our own pieces anyway and I think that nowadays things should be displayed for economic reasons. The pieces could be making money and they would make a lot more money here on Lewis than they do down in London."

The British Museum said last week that, while it was happy to lend the pieces temporarily, it could not dismantle the collection and there was no question of it returning permanently.

Legend has it that a sailor who stole the pieces was killed by a cowherd. The cowherd was later hanged for another crime and confessed to the sailor's murder. "It must be made clear to the director of British Museum that people have died horribly in the seizure of these pieces," Mr Macleod said.

19th June, 1995. Lewis, Western Isles. 'THE TIMES'.

David Eaton, 14, was impaled on a railing when he leapt up to a branch to touch wood for good luck. He was speared in the stomach, a mere inch from certain death. David, a keen gymnast, had been about to leave for an international in Portugal when he jumped up to wish for good luck and landed on a metal spike.

13th June, 1995. Hinckley, Leicestershire. 'DAILY SLUR'

WHEN FATE SMILES DOWN.

An angler by the name of Lewis Slight had the good fortune to find a valuable silver ring within the stomach of a 5lb Sea Bass he landed whilst fishing. He was moved to comment later; 'Bass will eat anything'.

23rd June, 1995. Netley Abbey, Southampton. 'TODAY'

WEIRD HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

A REAL-LIFE MR. BEAN'

Police in America have arrested a man who was attempting to rob a shop stark naked and armed only with a can of baked beans!!!

17th July 1995. Miami, USA. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

Indian authorities have found the skeleton of a policeman who's wife kept his body wrapped in a quilt on their balcony for nearly two years because she thought he might return to life.

16th January, 1995. Delhi, India. 'THE GUARDIAN'.

Heinrich Gembach was so fed up of being served the same food for breakfast for ten years that he choked his wife to death by shoving a

'Shredded Wheat' right down her throat. I guess you could say ol' Heinrich was a literal cereal killer, eh?

11th August, 1995. Munich, Germany. 'DAILY SLUR'.

And here's a couple of classic cases of over-reaction...

A man was doused with paraffin and burned alive after an argument over a lousy penny loan. He was mercilessly killed by the family of the girl to whom he had lent 50 paisas - worth the princely sum of 1p, which would just about buy a chapati - after he asked for repayment.

8th June, 1995. Maharashtra, India. 'DAILY MANC'.

Hedwig Buhr, 72, was seated in St. Marlen Church, when she was suddenly struck on the head by an axe...She died instantly. The motive for the murder? A woman by the name of Margit M, 42, had been fueding with her victim for over eight years over their favourite pew seat....The end seat of row 43. The vicar said that Hedwig used to arrive at dawn to make sure she could baggsy the seat....Margit M said as she was handcuffed; I feel a great sense of relief'.

May 1995. Hamburg, Germany. 'DAILY MANC'.

Karl Watkins, 23, is a very strange man indeed. He has served a jail sentence for making love to pavements, and is now back before the courts for simulating sex with bin-liners.

He apparently went out at night hunting black dustbin bags left out for collection. He was spotted climbing inside giant wheelie bins and was even caught in the back of a dust-cart. His favourite fantasy was being in the back of a bin lorry when the bags were being crushed. He was put on probation for three years with the condition that he seeks medical help.

Two years ago, he was jailed for 18 months after he was found with his trousers down lying on top of pavements and footpaths.

27th April, 1995. Wolverhampton. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Jean Cellise, 33, cut himself open to check that doctors had removed his appendix properly.

10th October, 1994. Toulon, France. 'DAILY MANC'.

BUNGLING BURGLARS.

A suspected burglar being chased by police tried to evade capture by pretending to be a lamp!!!

He was cornered in a garden shed and found with a lampshade on his head. 'Presumably he thought it would stop us seeing him,' chuckled an officer.

23rd April, 1995. Hove, East Sussex. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD'.

A suspected thief leapt over a wall to escape chasing police officers only to find himself smack in the middle of a police station's backyard. An officer stated somewhat wryly, 'He obviously didn't know where he was until he found himself surrounded by police cars and being grabbed by a 6ft, 6in copper'.

27th April, 1995. Margate, Kent. 'DAILY MAIL'.

Another would-be burglar, Klaus Schmidt, was arrested whilst he was merrily ransacking a house...He was caught red-handed due to the fact that he was stone deaf, and therefore failed to hear the alarms going off. Police found him calmly stuffing valuables into a sack. 'The alarms had woken the whole neighbourhood' but Klaus remained perfectly oblivious.

He is now serving a 4 year jail sentence/

Wouldn't you have thought he'd have invested in a hearing aid before going out on the rob?

1st July, 1995. Berlin, Germany. 'DAILY MANC'.

THE MEDITERRANEAN CAVE-WOMAN.

Police have finally managed to identify a woman found naked and malnourished in a remote cave. She has been named as Mary Louise Birgitta Henriz from Sweden, after he brother read a newspaper story about her. Henriz, in her forties, had refused to speak to the authorities after local farmers had found her semi-conscious and dehydrated body in her cliff hideaway back in April.



When she was found she had no identity documents and just to add to the mystery, a man's

body was discovered with all his limbs hacked off on a beach a few miles away at about the same time that Henriz took up residence in the cave.

A fortnight after she was found she was discharged from a psychiatric clinic and moved into a Greek Orthodox Convent which doubles as a sanctuary for cats. The woman's brother recognised Marie by a tattoo and the scars from a suicide attempt, both of which were pictured in a Swedish newspaper.

The same article also carried a child-like drawing of a woman with Angel's wings, which Henriz described as a self-portrait. Henriz has subsequently written notes in good English, identifying herself at various times as a Polish Jew, a gypsy, and a runaway patient from an institution in Israel.

12th June, 1995. Akamas Peninsula. 'TODAY'.

'THE MANIAC HARDRESSER'

A Dutchman who has dubbed himself (because he gets a kick out of cutting hair badly, has been arrested by police in Holland. However, attempts are now underway to ascertain whether or not the loon has actually committed any crime.

I wonder if he counts Bobby Charlton, Gazza, Johnny Lydon, Bob Greaves, Ron Atkinson, Elton Welsby, Lionel Blair, and Pennywise The Dancing Clown among his clientele?

7th July 1995. Emmem, Holland. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

'AND PIGS MIGHT FLY'

A motorist claimed he had nightmares about flying pigs after he crashed into a real porker. The unnamed driver from Northern Ireland, also says that he dreams that sausages are driving his vehicle...

7th August, 1995. Northern Ireland. 'DAILY MANC'.

Yasuo Tomoyuki has reportedly designed earrings which he claims help the wearer lose weight. He has utilised his knowledge of Acupuncture to make sure the gold and pearl rings sit on the pressure points at the front and back of the ear which are said to stifle hunger. They sell for £225 a pair.

29th July 1995. Tokyo, Japan. 'DAILY MAIL'.

Grieving husband Andan Kazir was so distraught that his wife died that he had her skinned so that he could wear her pelt as a coat. Andan said; 'It makes me feel that she's still close to me'. His wife was a hefty 27 stone so there was plenty of skin for the tailor to work with.

19th March, 1995. Dhaka, Bangladesh. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS'.

Andrew Hewitt, 25, called into a shoe shop before an attempted bank robbery...To ask for help writing

out his cash demand. He didn't know how to spell 'please'. He then went on to bungle three hold-ups at different banks.

17th May, 1995. Northampton. 'DAILY MANC'.

A BITTER END

A 43 year old man who wanted to make a good impression at a job interview gargled with a special mouthwash to make his teeth whiter...Unfortunately, he mistakenly used chlorine bleach and died in agony.

19th May, 1995. Los Angeles, USA. 'DAILY SLUR'.

Michael Colangleo, whose hobby is killing ants, has become a TV celebrity after being elected America's Most Boring Husband in a magazine contest, much to the delight of his wife.

19th July, 1995. USA. 'DAILY MANC'.

CHINESE CANNIBALS.

China has been accused of what the (ahem) ever-reliable SUNDAY PEOPLE' refers to as 'a grisly new scandal'. According to the report, hospital workers are actually eating human foetuses....

They are allegedly regarded as a dietary supplement or tonic, and are made into soup. The scandal was uncovered by a Hong Kong magazine reporter who entered the Shenzhen Health Centre north of Kowloon, pretending to be ill. He asked a doctor for a foetus and was given a fist-sized glass bottle stuffed with ten thumb-sized foetuses all aborted that morning. China's draconian family planning laws have apparently led to widespread abortions, to ensure families stick to their one-child quota.

A woman doctor named Yang at the Sin Hua Clinic told the reporter; 'Foetuses are even better than placentas. They can make your skin smoother, your body stronger, and are good for your kidneys. I often brought foetuses home. They were pink, like little mice, with hands and feet. Normally I mix them with pork and make soup.'

A Hong Kong businessman said he brought foetuses back from Shenzhen and made them into broth with ginger, orange peel and pork.

18th June, 1995. Shenzhen, China. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

Locked-out Gunther Burpus got stuck when he tried to get into his college through a cat-flap. Fellow students then took off his trousers, painted his bottom blue and put up a sign saying 'Street Art'. People thought his screams were part of the 'exhibition' and it was two days before he was freed.

2nd Apeil, 1995. Bremen, Germany. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

STRANGE DAYS IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM PART 2

THE BEAST OF BODMIN

Well, surprise, surprise. It had to happen. The Government sponsored inquiry into the legendary 'Beast Of Bodmin' turned out to be an exercise in dismissing the evidence as at best ambiguous and at worst outright erroneous. Much to the very understandable dismay of local farmers, the Ministry Of Agriculture could offer no firm proof positive that an Alien Big Cat (or cats) were stalking the English Countryside. They did not rule out the possibility that such creatures may indeed exist, but their failure to produce any hard evidence, despite at least 29 alleged sightings, the concept was rendered all but untenable in the eyes of the British media.

The 'experts' went to great lengths to rubbish the photographic, video and footprint evidence gathered over the years and by anxious locals.

Junior Agriculture Minister Angela Browning's attitude was typical of the skepticism with which the subject was/is regarded. Together with Simon Barker and Charles Wilson had investigated four suspicious deaths of sheep and lambs around the moors since last January. 'None of these provided evidence of big cats being involved,' she said. 'I'm satisfied that there is no threat to livestock in that area from a big cat. But we have certainly not ruled out the fact that it COULD be there.' Mr. Baker, a wildlife biologist, went step by step through his findings, entitled 'THE EVIDENCE FOR THE PRESENCE OF LARGE EXOTIC CATS IN THE BODMIN AREA AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT ON LIVESTOCK', and encapsulated in a 16 page pamphlet.

First, the corpses...None of them showed any signs that a wild animal other than a fox or badger had been feeding on the remains. One had been attacked by a dog, and another had died from emaciation.

Then, the footprints...Analysis of three plaster casts taken from farm tracks, showed two had been made by domestic cats. The third, which was more puma-sized, was only big because a dog had plonked one muddy paw-print on top of another.

Thirdly...The newspaper photograph which was taken by the Bristol Agency photographer, Colin Shepherd appeared in 'THE SCUM' in 1993, seems to show two large cats sitting on top of a wall. Mr. Shepherd allegedly alerted to the scene by a blood-curdling scream, had added the commentary 'It was very frightening, there is no way you could confuse it with any kind of domestic cat.'



A visit to the selfsame scene by Messrs Baker and Wilson, armed with nothing more protective than a measuring stick (oooh, what a bunch of heroes), discovered that the proportions had been exaggerated by the photo. In fact, the animal would only have been about a foot tall.

finally, the videos...The first shot by local landowner, Rosemary Rhodes, was broadcast on BBC TV regional bulletins, in August, 1993, appeared to show a large black animal with a long, panther like tail, prowling through a field and disappearing into bushes. More use of the famous ol' Baker/Wilson measuring stick, 'proved' once again that the camera had lied, and the black shape was no more than a black cat. A second video, shot in the dark, proved inconclusive. All that could be seen was the silvery reflection of a pair of eyes. A third video shot by

Mrs Rhodes, last summer, showed a black animal jumping over a wall and pounding off. The ever-resourceful Mr. Baker, took a photo of Mr. Wilson standing at the same spot to show that it could only have been a domestic black cat. The fourth video, again taken by Mrs Rhodes at night, produced the biggest self-indulgent snigger amongst the serried ranks of the British press. Zooming in on a black face and a pair of shining eyes, it looked more like a cuddly kitten than a puma or black leopard.

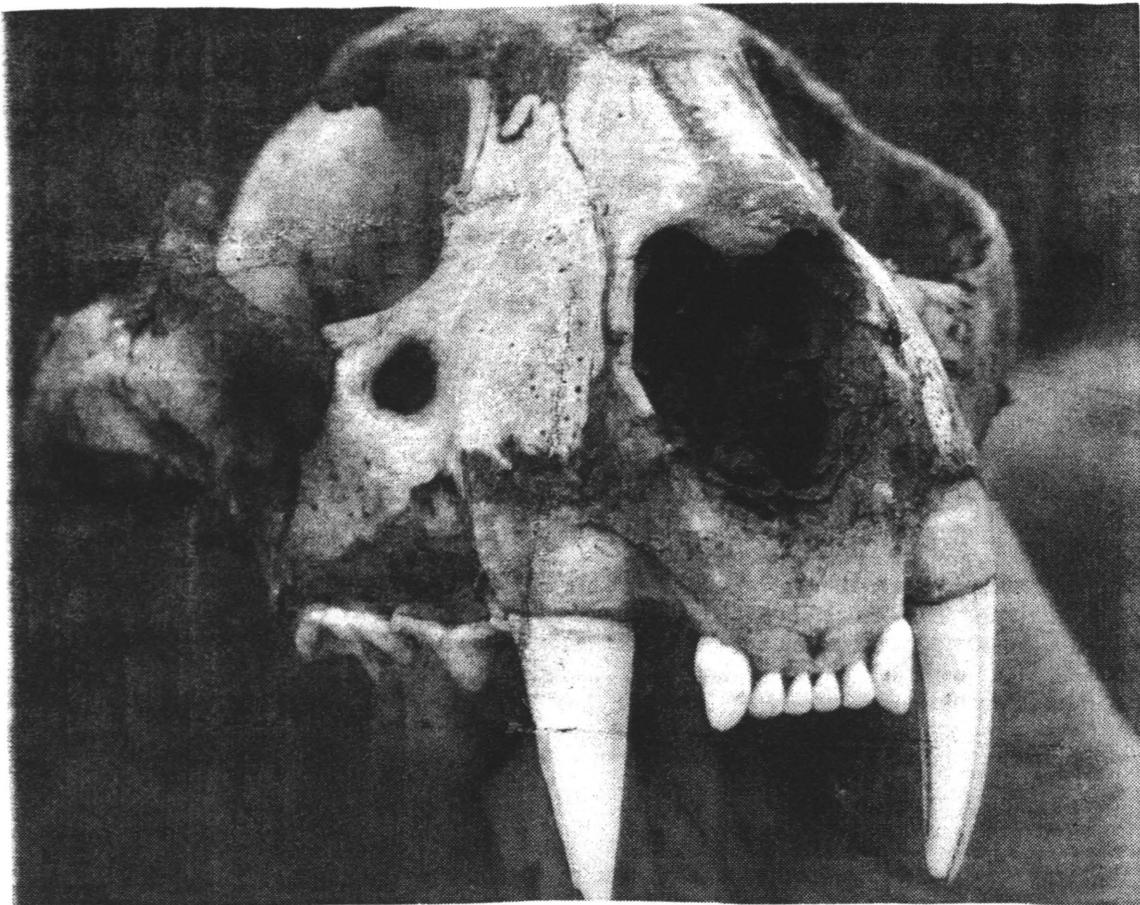
The conclusion on the photographic evidence is that none shows anything other than a domestic cat, according to the (ahem) 'experts'. Mr. Baker concludes that 'the evidence showed nothing more than dogs, cats or native animals. We can show no evidence for a big cat on Bodmin Moor.' He failed to convince Mrs Rhodes and her neighbours that a big cat is on the prowl.

Mrs Rhodes, 56, who sold her flock of 50 sheep, at Ninestones Farm, Bolventor, after four breeding ewes were savaged in ten weeks last year said, 'They have said my video is a domestic cat. It is absolutely hilarious. Everybody in the country will think we have been suffering from mass hallucination in this part of Cornwall. But one day, there is an outside chance somebody is going to get hurt'.

Her neighbours, Richard and John Goodenough, who have farmed at Bodmin Moor for the last 30 years and have lost 14 sheep to mystery killings, accused the ministry of a cover-up. Mr. Goodenough said 'I have seen it four times. There were two sightings of a black leopard and two of a black puma. We have had to spend a lot of money making sure we bring the cows in at night. We used to just leave them to graze on the moor, but then a calf just disappeared in January. We searched all over the moor and found nothing. We wouldn't spend all that time and money for nothing. We know the difference between dogs, domestic cats and these big cats'.

22nd July, 1995. Bodmin, Cornwall. 'DAILY MAIL'.

WAS THIS THE BEAST OF BODMIN?



An 'expert' from London Zoo is to examine the skull pictured above in a bid to solve the mystery of the Beast Of Bodmin Moor, blamed for the deaths of scores of animals. Schoolboy Barney Lanyon Jones, 14, unearthed the skull while out on the Cornish moor with his brother Toby, 16. They compared the two front fangs with the canine teeth on their own Golden Retriever and decided the skull did not belong to a dog. Now London Zoo's assistant curator of mammals, Doug Richardson, hopes to examine the skull, and Barney said: 'I would like to think it is the Beast.'

2nd August, 1995. Bodmin. 'DAILY SLUR'.

'NEW FILM OF THE BEAST'

The controversy about The Beast Of Bodmin, took a new twist with the release of new video footage. Shown on most national news networks, it appears to show a large, cat-like creature, estimated to be 6ft long, including a sweeping tail, and 3ft high, prowling through a field.

Wayne Broad, 33, a sales engineer, shot several minutes of film of the animal. To prove the size of the beast, Mr. Broad later shot film of a cat at the same place. It barely showed up above the fields rubble. 9th August, 1995. Pawlett, (Cosmic Joke?), Somerset. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

PANTHER IS SPOTTED IN TOWN FOR FIRST TIME

A MYSTERY PANTHER LIKE BEAST WAS ALLEGEDLY SPOTTED SMACK IN THE CENTRE OF SCARBOROUGH BY RON ELLA, A LOCAL SECURITY GUARD. HE WAS SO UNNERVED BY THE SIGHTING THAT HE WAS MOVED TO FLAG DOWN A PASSING POLICE PATROL CAR JUST BEFORE 5 AM. IN TYPICALLY CRYPTOZOOLOGICAL FASHION, RON REPORTED THAT THE CREATURE RESEMBLED A COMBINATION OF TWO VERY DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIG CAT..A CROSS BETWEEN A LEOPARD AND A PANTHER THAT WAS 'UNLIKE ANYTHING I HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE.'

HE FURTHER DESCRIBED IT AS BEING DARK IN COLOUR, AND WITH A PARTICULARLY STRIKING TAIL. IT WAS LONG AND CURLED AT THE END. AS IS ALSO TYPICAL OF SIGHTINGS OF ALIEN BIG CATS, A SUBSEQUENT SEARCH OF THE AREA BY POLICE FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY EVIDENCE OF PAW-PRINTS OR UNUSUAL MARKINGS ON THE GROUND.

17TH MAY, 1995. COLUMBUS RAVINE, SCARBOROUGH. 'SCARBOROUGH EVENING NEWS'.

UPDATE ON THE BEAST OF BALA

When Welsh farmer Gwynfor Williams saw a strange long tailed creature worrying his sheep, he had no idea what it was. On police advice, he shot it dead. According to its owner however, the animal, dubbed 'The Beast Of Bala', was in fact a gentle, fruit-eating pet Lemur. It could not have been more harmless. Mrs Sue Drummond stated at the local wildlife sanctuary her husband Peter runs outside Isallt, Wales. 'It didn't have claws like the police so dramatically said. It had fingernails which it chewed and its teeth were small. As for being a threat to sheep, it lived on fruit. It escaped through a window earlier this week.' Police had not been informed of the creatures (a native of Madagascar), escape.

Mr Williams spotted the animal baring its teeth and leaping about amongst his flock of sheep at Llanuwchllyn, near Bala. He states that his sheep were terrified and he felt he had no option but to shoot the creature. 'I didn't know it was harmless, and a field in fading light is hardly the place to start finding out.

North Wales police made clear that Mr. Williams was perfectly within his rights to shoot any animal be it a dog or a ruffed Lemur, which was worrying his sheep.

7th April, 1995. Isallt, Wales. 'DAILY MAIL'



KILLER ANIMALS

KILLER COWS.

Anne Potter, 85, was trampled to death by cattle as she was walking her dog. Her body was found in woods near her home. Her dog too was badly injured and had to be put down. A police spokesman said; 'It appears Mrs Potter was trampled by the cattle. She had terrible injuries.' No-one was able to explain exactly what had caused the normally docile animals to attack the pair in the first place.

20th June, 1995. Bromyard, Herefordshire. 'DAILY SLUR'.

...And just three days later, the brother of former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was fighting for his life after being trampled by a cow. Stephen Hurd (Cosmic Joke Name Game?) suffered horrific head and chest injuries. Stephen, 62, was tending dairy cattle at his farm and approach

ed a sickly calf which wasn't suckling properly. Suddenly, the animal's protective mother rushed at the farmer, knocked him to the ground, and then trampled over him. Stephen managed to crawl to his house where he collapsed after raising the alarm.

23rd June, 1995. Marlborough, Wiltshire. 'TODAY'.

THE SCALES OF JUSTICE.

A poacher cruelly electrocuting fish in a lake fell in and suffered the same fate as his quarry.

5th May, 1995. Northern Poland 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

Riddle of savage seals

ROGUE grey seals have started killing other sea mammals in a spate of attacks which has left experts baffled.

Such behaviour — totally at odds with the seals' cuddly image as a children's favourite — has never been reported before.

Porpoises have become the seals' victims in the waters off Northumberland and the Isle of Man.

Fishing crews have seen the 600lb animals mauling and devouring baby porpoises.

Worried mothers are now warning their children to stay away from the shores where the attacks took place.

The Sea Watch Foundation, a dolphin and whale conservation group, said it was very concerned.

Bloodlust or hunger turns rogue greys into porpoise killers

Spokesman Paul Vodder said. 'This is a phenomenon that has never been heard of before. The attacks are quite unprecedented.'

'We are taking the reports very seriously. They have all come from very reliable sources.'

'The first happened off the Isle of Man when a porpoise calf was taken by a fully-grown seal as it swam with one of its parents.'

'In the past seals have only ever been known as fish eaters but it seems there are some which have

turned on cetaceans such as porpoises and dolphins.'

Mr Vodder said a few rogue seals might have started savaging porpoises by accident in their hunt for salmon and became accustomed to killing them.

It is also possible that fish stocks in the seas around Britain have become so depleted that seals have turned to eating mammals out of sheer hunger.

Mr Vodder added: 'People sometimes tend to have a view that

seals are completely harmless but, like dolphins, they are predators and sometimes have to be aggressive to survive.'

Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee has repeatedly called for a cull of grey seals in the area to protect fish stocks.

The crews of two fishing boats off Newbiggin were shocked when a porpoise following their boat was caught by an adult seal which ripped it to pieces and ate the carcass. Carol Dawson, 37, of

Newbiggin, said: 'I have told my four young daughters not to go down to the rocks where the seals sometimes come ashore.'

'If they can attack a porpoise then they can attack a child and I don't want to put my girls at risk.'

'Other mothers in the area are just as concerned as I am.'

'One of the fishermen brought what was left of the porpoise ashore — it looked as though it had been butchered with a knife.'



21st April, 1995. Northumberland. 'DAILY MAIL'.

FROM THE OCEAN/ THEY CAME

THE JELLYFISH INVASION

Thousands of Jellyfish the size of dustbin lids are landing upon the popular holiday beach of Cefn Sidan Sands in Wales. The jellyfish have floated ashore in vast numbers.

9th AUGUST, 1995. Cefn Sidan Sands, Wales. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

REVENGE OF THE CONGER EEL

Trawler man Chris Lowe had just dumped a giant conger eel on the floor of his boat after catching it nine miles off Cornwall, when the understandably enraged creature suddenly slithered along the deck and bit off one of Charlie's toes.

He managed to shake the Eel off and radio for help. The toe was packed in ice by lifeboatmen and Chris was rushed to hospital. A coastguard spokesman said; 'These eels are extremely dangerous and difficult to kill. They can be up to 7ft long and once they open their mouths they just start chomping away'.

May, 1995. Cornwall. 'LIVERPOOL DAILY POST'.

THE CUDDLY CREATURES STRIKE BACK: 2

MY SAVAGE LITTLE PONY

A girl aged two had part of her ear sewn back on after it was bitten off by a Shetland Pony. The attack happened at a place called 'Cuddling Corner' at the 'Milky Way Amusement Park', where children are allowed to stroke the animals.

A REAL RAM-RAID

A runaway ram smashed through a plate-glass window at a police station after charging at its own reflection. The raging creature thought it was taking on a rival but smashed into a chief inspector's office where surprised officers 'arrested' the intruder. The rampaging ram has been sent home to a nearby farm. 9th June, 1995. Bamfurlong, Glouce. 'TODAY'.

A camel got its revenge upon its brutal owner when he put the beast up for sale on a market. The animal, which for years had patiently endured blows and kicks, turned on the man and bit his head until he died.

20th July, 1995. Saudi Arabia. 'SUNDAY EXPRESS'.

YET ANOTHER KAMIKAZIE STAG NIGHT.

Dennis Barton, 49, is back in plaster after being sent flying over the handlebars of his motorcycle by a stag...The third time this type of accident has occurred to him.

As he sat in his Loch Ness-side home, with his ankle in plaster and suffering from three damaged ribs, Dennis spoke of his hat-trick of deer hits. 'Each time the deer was killed but I never once saw a bit of venison. The beasts mysteriously vanished. I spent 20 years in Leicester going up on the motorways on big bikes without a single accident'.

9th May, Loch Ness, Scotland. 'DAILY MANC'.

OUR FEATHERED FIENDS

The Space Shuttle 'Discovery's' next launch may be delayed...By two woodpeckers. The birds have punched 71 holes in the giant external fuel tank. Technicians found the gaping holes after seeing the birds on the tank as the Shuttle was being prepared for a June launch.

6th June, 1995. Cape Canaveral, Florida. 'DAILY SLUR'.

A monster chicken had to be put down after terrorising a village. The 15lb American Cob Cockbird called St. James is now in the owner's deep freeze after attacking Ernest Blyth, 82. It went for the pensioner and his dog Lisa after strutting into their garden. Ernest fled through his back door and waited until the police arrived. 'It really was vicious. It tried to bite Lisa and chased me,' said Ernest recovering later at his home.

2nd July, 1995. West Wallow, Hants. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'.

INSECTS BACK ON THE MARCH AGAIN.

AN ANTI-GAMBLING SPIDER

A bookie shop's TV monitor was blacked out when a spider weaved a web across its satellite receiver. Panicking punters fled the bookies when all the screens went dead.

5th May, 1995. Eastfield, Scarborough. 'DAILY SLUR'.

TV reporter Mychal Limric was stung over 30 times on his head when a swarm of bees were attracted to his hair gel.

23rd June, 1995. Kennewick, Washington. 'DAILY MANC'.

Thousands of ladybirds have sent people running for cover all over Britain. In a chilling echo of the Summer of '76, the tiny creatures have gathered in ever-increasing swarms. Professor Harold Townson, an expert at Liverpool's School Of Tropical medicine however, describes them as the gardener's friend. But he also answered the question on many people's minds...Ladybirds DO bite. He said, 'They can give you a nip with their stout jaws but the pain is only momentary. The explosion in numbers has been brought about by a combination of the prolonged hot spell and the a massive increase in the number oh greenfly-the ladybirds favourite diet.

There are so many greenfly and blackfly that it has led in turn to more ladybirds, particularly the familiar seven-spot ladybird.

August 1995. Britain. 'LIVERPOOL ECHO'.

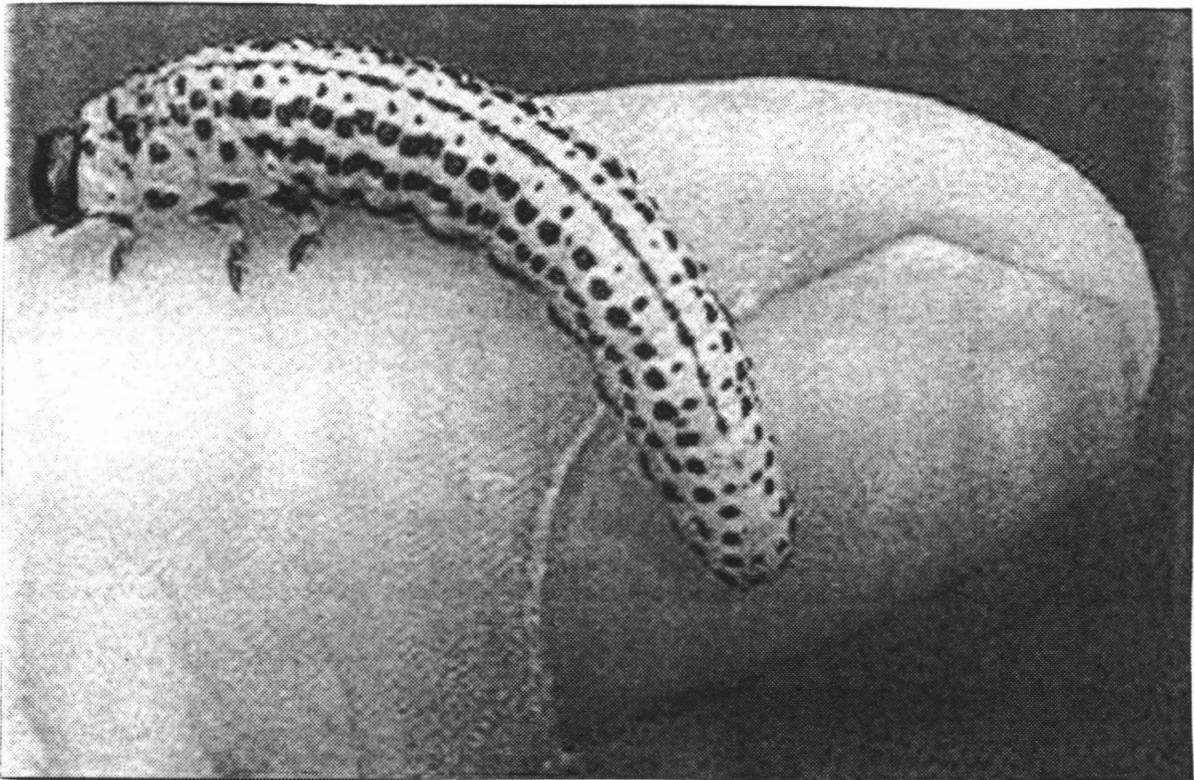
APHID PLAGUE ON THE WAY

Scientists are warning that Britain is about to endure The Day Of The Aphids. As reported earlier in this round-up, so many greenfly and blackfly have prospered in the mild winter and humid summer, that Government officials are predicting a plague 'of Biblical proportions'.

Billions of the little bugs are swarming over the country in search of vital juices to suck from a variety of plants. Numbers of at least two species - the Peach Potato and the Cabbage aphid - are up to four times higher than totals recorded for previous years. The devastation they cause is expected to cost millions of pounds in agriculture revenue, and hours of anguish for gardeners.

And further bad news....The aphids not only feed on plants, but carry disease and damaging viruses to them. There are probably 15 million aphids for every man, woman and child in Britain, and most of them are single mothers, producing living young without fertilisation....And here's a frightening thought to go to sleep on...If aphid reproduction went unchecked, they could cover the entire globe in a swamp several kilometres deep in a year.
24th July, 1995. Britain. 'DAILY MAIL'.

INVASION OF THE MEGAMUNCHERS



Millions of caterpillars are making life a misery for residents on a West Midland Estate. The invading hordes have dropped from the trees, inched along washing lines and made their way into houses. There are so many they can be clearly heard munching through leaves. Residents have had to keep their windows closed and can no longer sit in their gardens. 'It's like a scene from a horror film,' said June Watkins. 'I spend all day trying to get rid of them and all night having nightmares about them.' Neighbour Rosemary Allen said: 'You can hear them all around you and piles of caterpillar droppings are everywhere. They are feeding in trees in the walkway at the back of our houses. They seem to be unstoppable.'

Wolverhampton Council has identified the caterpillars as fly larvae
20th July, 1995. Gunard Closs, Wolverhampton. 'DAILY MAIL'.

ANIMALS TO THE RESCUE

An alsation dog by the name of 'RAJ', saved his unconscious owner's life by lying over him to keep him warm. David Gill, 57, who lives alone, would undoubtedly have died from cold after he'd fallen into a diabetic coma. However, 'RAJ' wasn't about to let that happen. The faithful hound cuddled up close beside his master's prostrate body so providing him with life-giving warmth. Not only that, but he managed to alert David's home help when it arrived next morning. 'RAJ' has now been shortlisted for a £3,000 'Wonder Dog' award run by 'Spillers'.

David was moved to say; 'I owe my life to him. So he's getting a lot of pampering now'.
20th June, 1995. Wellington, Somerset. 'DAILY MANC'.



from certain death minutes before their house collapsed. The three year old moggie howled for all it was worth and even tried to open a window in the early hours just before dawn. and succeeded in rousing the whole family in time for them to see the walls were moving. They fled with seconds to spare.

30th July, 1995. Fuling, South-west China. 'DAILY SLUR'

THE NIGHTMARE CAT

Nomad Gomaa Salama murdered three of his children because he said a black cat had told him to do it in a dream. He strangled his 13-year-old son and his seven-year old daughter and killed another son, Salem, with a spear. His wife said he had hallucinations for years and abused his children.

23rd April, 1995. Cairo, Egypt. 'NEWS OF THE WORLD'

VAMPIRES STILL RIFE IN ROMANIA

a 49-year old man decided to dig up his brother's body and drive the traditional stake through his heart, so convinced was he that his (un)dead kin was a Vampire. He later told police that 'I HAD to do it' He had to be laid to rest'.



...AND THRIVING TOO IN BRISTOL

A 26-year-old student from Bristol University, suffers from an unidentified disease which apparently causes extreme sensitivity to sunlight and acute skin problems. 'Daylight exhausts me,' she stated. 'It just runs me down and I pick up any bug that's going'.

Ms Buchan has therefore elected to dress in black and wear blood-red lipstick and is apparently saving up for a coffin to sleep in. She also plans to exchange her car for a hearse. She has given herself the 'vampire name' Carlotta and has to wear sunglasses to look at her computer screen because the brightness irritated her. She had her canine teeth extended a few years ago to look like vampire fangs and had them lengthened still more last summer at the cost of £250. 'I flash them at kids to give them a scare. I love my steak really rare and dripping with blood...I've asked my local supermarket if they will let me buy animal blood'.

21st February, 1995. 'FORTEAN TIMES'

NIGHTMARE FOR PURVEYORS OF DREAMS

Mexico's Witchcraft industry has found no magic solution to the countries recession. 'In February and March, sales were down 50% on last year', says Josefina, a storeholder at the Mercado Sonora Witchcraft market. 'Since then, it's been a bit better - one or two days a week are good, but the rest of the time it's poor.'

The stalls are piled high with everything from Coyote tails to Tarot cards, but business is slack. Customers are buying cheaper products - and the emphasis has shifted. 'Before it was love and money', said one stallholder. 'Now it's mostly money'.

The biggest selling items are 'Spiritual Waters' to bring luck and prosperity. An anxious man, perhaps a victim of cuts that this year have put 1 million more Mexicans out of work wants two bottles of 'Seven Potencies'. He hands over 10 pesos (about a £1) and huriresoff. On 'Stall 185', 'la jefecita' ('the little boss') complains that the wholesalers of monkey parts, puma heads, and rattlesnake tails are now supplying markets direct.

19th June, 1995. Mecado, Mexico. 'THE GUARDIAN'

DEAD WEIRD

Fleets of ambulances were reportedly put on stand-by, and pathologists wore astronaut suits for protection in America, when they performed an autopsy on a woman whose body had given off toxic fumes. This anomaly sparked fears that an unknown Sci-Fi type of disease was on the loose in the community.

The report we have on file states that the scientests were awaiting test results...We haven't heard anything since!!! All together now, 'LET'S HEAD FOR THEM THAR HILLS'!!!

30th October, 1994. Riverside, California. 'SUNDAY PEOPLE'

STRANGE DEATH

Donald Tollett, 60, died from suffocation after a freak weather phenomenon called a stythe caused a drop in air pressure, sucking carbon dioxide from a disused coal mine. He was walking through a woodcrafts factory unit on his way to feed his niece's horse, accompanied by a family friend, David Wind, 8, and a pet dog when he and the collie were overcome.

13th February. Northumberland. THE GUARDIAN

HOPPING MAD - A LOOK AT MYSTERY KANGEROOS

BY JOHNATHAN DOWNES (EDITOR OF 'ANIMALS AND MEN')



In 1980, Janet and Colin Bord published an excellent book called '*ALIEN ANIMALS*'. In this book they described five categories of what they termed '*Animals That Aren't*' - in other words, creatures which *appear* to be ordinary flesh and blood animals but which, for a number of reasons obviously do not exist in a physical form, at least within the laws of physics which are usually considered to govern the universe in which we live.

These five categories were:

- 1: **Mystery Big Cats.**
- 2: **Mystery Black Dogs.**
- 3: **BHM's (Big Hairy Monsters...Bigfoot-type creatures.**
- 4: **Lake Monsters.**
- 5: **Mysterious Winged Creatures.**

In a 1993 paper written for the now (sadly) defunct '*SCAN NEWS*', I coined the term '*Zoo-Form Phenomena*', to describe these animal-like apparitions. I also pointed out that one of the weirdest things about '*Zoo-Form Phenomena*' is that they often co-existed in the same geographical area as superficially similar 'Mystery' flesh and blood animals. The most obvious example of this being the way that the Mystery Big Cats of Bodmin and Exmoor, which are undoubtedly (to my mind at least) descendents of animals release, either deliberately or otherwise, from private collections, are living in the same countryside which for centuries has been haunted by cat-like apparitions.

I also proposed a *sixth* category of '*Zoo-Form Phenomena*': **Mystery Kangaroos**. I added the sixth category because Wallabies and Kangaroos are too important a part of both the cryptic zoofauna and the '*Zoo-Form Phenomena*' worldwide to be treated as a separate category. They are also '*different*' enough from the animals and '*Animals That Aren't*' in the other five, more generally accepted categories, to warrant separate categorisation of their own.

The unidentified Kangaroos and Wallabies, (dubbed '*UHO's* - or '*Unidentified Hopping objects*' by some forgotten (ahem) 'Crypto-wit'), which have been described all over the world (except, surprisingly, in their native Australia) have some of the characteristics of each of the other five types of '*Zoo-Form Phenomena*', but it is still distinct from them all.

i: Like Mystery Cats, the appearances of '*UHO's*' are sometimes in conjunction with unexplained outbreaks of animal mutilation. Despite the fact that all known species of Kangaroo and Wallaby are harmless vegetarians, some of the Mystery 'Hoppers' are described as being not only carnivorous, but sometimes terribly unpleasantly so...In '*MYSTERIOUS AMERICA*', Loren Coleman describes an animal as a Kangaroo which spread terror amongst Kentucky Hill farmers in mid-January, 1934. The extremely atypical 'roo was reported to have killed and partially devoured several German police dogs, geese and ducks. The Reverend W.J. Hancock saw the animal and described it as looking like a giant Kangaroo as it ran and leapt

across a field. Another witness, Frank Cobb, came across more evidence of the Kangaroo's activities. The head and shoulders of a large police dog were all that remained of one its victims. A search party tracked the 'roo to a mountainous cave but the prints disappeared.

I would not like to suggest that there is any serious possibility of pockets of Thylacines living outside Australia or Papua New Guinea, despite a report from Dorset some years ago, but in a spirit of mischief and deliberately confusing the issue, I would point out that the Thylacine is the only marsupial, indeed the only known creature that is both a voracious carnivore and sometimes hops on its hind legs like a Kangaroo!!!

ii: The Mystery Kangaroos/Wallabies also have many comparisons with 'Mystery Black Dogs'. The creatures often have glowing eyes and appear and disappear suddenly. They are also often taken for *living* creatures until they suddenly do something completely 'off the wall'. I would also point out that certain living species of Wallaby and Kangaroo, including the Bennet's Wallaby that is the most widely reported species to have become established in the UK, at least as a feral inhabitant, look very much like dogs - that is, until they begin to hop!!!

iii: The main reason why there are few parallels between 'Mystery Kangaroos' sightings and 'Lake Monster' sightings is obvious...Lake Monsters and Sea Serpents are aquatic and Kangaroos *aren't*. But even so, there are a few parallels of significance. Both types of 'Zoo-Form Phenomena' are often described as having a head of either a typical herbivore or sometimes, even a typical dog, but set on a long neck, and perhaps most significantly of all, both the 'Mystery Kangaroos' and 'The Lake Monsters' above all of the other types of 'Zoo-Form Phenomena' have a tendency to be what are popularly described as 'Shape-Shifters', but which I prefer to refer to as 'Transmorphic Phenomena'.

The popular term describes them perfectly. An Animal may have one set appearance, but in *front* of witnesses, it may appear to transmogrify into another form. In this they differ from other forms of 'Zoo-Form Phenomena' during which, although episodes within the same 'flap', and which it may be assumed are of similar origin, may present different visual characteristics, the individual episodes usually concern a phenomenon which keeps the same basic shape.

Other types of 'Zoo-Form Phenomena' may however, retain the same form within a single episode but can sometimes change size significantly. There is a well known description of 'The Black Dog Of Uplyme' on the Devon/Dorset border, when the witness described the dog expanding from the size of an ordinary dog to enormous proportions before it disappeared.

iv; Like 'BHM' apparitions, 'Mystery Kangaroos' are also bipedal, in that most of the time at least they perambulate only upon their hind legs. The literature on the subject does, however have references to quadrupedal Kangaroos, Mystery Beasts, that although they still hop, do so on four legs rather than two. Loren Coleman described an animal from Grove City, Ohio, in 1949;



'It's about five and a half feet high, hairy and brownish in colour. It has a long pointed head. It leaped a barbed wire fence and disappeared. It resembled a kangaroo, but it appeared to jump on all fours. I'm certain it wasn't a deer.'

There was a large and important series of mystery 'roo sightings in Wisconsin, USA, during the late 1970's, and I think that it is significant that although two of these creatures were shot, they both turned out to be a local Cervid: The White Tailed Deer.

v: There are even parallels between 'Mystery Kangaroos' and the weirdest of all the **ZOO-FORM PHENOMENA**; **'THE WINGED THINGS'**. Sometimes, the quasi-marsupials will make leaps so vast, that the word 'hop' is no longer appropriate, and that they really have significant parallels with the only grouping of **'ZOO-FORM PHENOMENON'** which habitually is seen to fly.

The greatest interface between the 'Mystery Kangaroos' and the 'Mystery Flying Creatures, (and one which incidentally has so many parallels with the other type of **ZOO-FORM PHENOMENON**, that even within the field of **'ZOO-FORM PHENOMENA'**, it is seen as atypical), is the case of 'The Jersey Devil'.

'The Jersey Devil' is probably is the ultimate shape-shifting **'ZOO-FORM PHENOMENON'**, it is also, together with the Loch Ness Creatures, The Beasts Of Exmoor and Bodmin, and to a certain extent, with The Yeti and Bigfoot, one of the only **ZOO-FORM PHENOMENA** or Cryptids who have actually entered the popular consciousness of a truly trans-cultural level.

There is even a bootleg LP by New Jersey's other great cultural icon, the massively over-rated Bruce Springsteen, called *'THE JERSEY DEVIL'*. It has also been the subject of an episode of at least one popular TV series (*'THE X-FILES - Smart Arse Ed'*), And I have no doubt that it has served as the basis of a thriving tourist industry.

Variouly described as Kangaroo-like, as a Flying Creature, as an Undefined Mystery Carnivore, and even as a 'Bigfoot-type' creature, there is little doubt that something out of the ordinary has happened on occasions in the vast pine forests of New Jersey.

Loren Coleman described it as having been the States official Demon, since the 1930's. Long before that however, stories have been circulating about the strange happenings in the area.

It is one of the basic tenets of Cryptozoology, that the presence of a Cryptid can often be suspected from its presence in the local folklore. The native Americans or Red Indians, were the first people to notice the presence of a strange animal in the area. According to Indian folklore, the animals first appeared in what is now Bucks County, where many alleged sightings of the Jersey Devil have been made in recent years. The Indians were so in awe of the place that they named the creek near what is now the boundary line with Philadelphia, *Popuessing*, which means; 'The Place Of The Dragon'. It is also perhaps significant that Swedish explorers, who reached the same place in 1677, noted strange footprints and renamed the site; 'Drake Kill', which also refers to the dragon.

In almost complete contradiction of the preceding evidence, the most commonly told story to explain the anomalous phenomena in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, reads as follows;

'In 1735, a Mrs. Leeds of Estellville, NJ, upon finding that she was pregnant for the 13th time, and less than exhilarated about it, snorted that if she was going to have another child, it might just as well be a Devil....And it was.

It was born with an animals head, a birds body, and cloven-hooves instead of feet. Cursing its mother, (it could speak at birth), it promptly flew up the chimney, and took up residence in the swamps and pine barrens of Southern New Jersey, where it has lived ever since'.

Folklore across America, and indeed across the world as a whole, is full of stories like this, whereby a person, (usually a womans) rash words rebound upon them, but it is seldom that the results of those rash words are seen flapping and screeching their way through deserted woodland for the next 250 years.

I feel that it is certain that the above story, entertaining though it undoubtedly is, is simply a piece of conveniently invented folk-history designed to provide a neat explanation for a puzzling **'ZOO-FORM PHENOMENON'**, that has been seen in the area since time immemorial.

IF YOU HAVE ANY SIGHTINGS OF UNUSUAL CREATURES, OR IF YOU WANT INFORMATION ON CRYPTOZOOLOGY OR ITS ALLIED DISCIPLINES, PLEASE WRITE TO THE AUTHOR:

***JON DOWNES,
THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY,
15 HOLNE COURT,
EXWICK
EXTER,
DEVON'***

THE TURIN SHROUD

PART 2

Steve Griffiths

THE SHROUD PUT TO THE TEST

In 1973, permission was granted to remove small samples of the Turin Shroud by King Umberto II, providing the pieces were later restored back to the reliquary. Dr. Max Frei, a forensic scientist, was only given three days in which to appoint a team and carry out the necessary investigations. One of the team's members included Professor Gilbert Raes of the institute of the textile technology in Ghent, he looked at the samples and discovered small traces of cotton, a variety known as *Gossypium Herbaceum*, showing that at some time the shroud had been around the middle-east and weaved on equipment also used for cotton, possibly in the first century Palestine.

Using criminological techniques, Max Frei was able to obtain samples of dust particles using a simple method of dabbing pieces of sticky tape onto the surface of the cloth in a hope of picking up exines, grains of pollen which have a hard outer shell that can last for thousands of years and determine the type of surroundings in which a subject originated. Out of forty nine different species of plant pollen found on the cloth, eleven could not have been picked up in central Europe, some of these would only live in areas of rich soil with a high salt content, suggesting the shroud may have originated in the middle-east, possibly the area of the Dead Sea.

In 1978, Dr. John Jackson, a U.S. Air Force captain, teamed up with Dr. Eric Jumper to form one of the leading organizations in sindonology called the Shroud of Turin Research Project, (STURP) using all the latest available scientific equipment, they set out to solve the possible 2,000 year old riddle of the Turin Shroud.

A few years previously Eric Jumper had met with an industrial Radiographer Bill Mottern to try to produce the image of the man on the shroud using a relatively new piece of equipment known as a V.P-8 image analyzer. By using photographs taken from the front and dorsal view of the shroud, the computer was able to produce a convincing three dimensional image onto a television monitor, a view of the figure which could not be obtained using single photographs. This was a major breakthrough in sindonology, with Eric Jumper comparing the image produced on the television monitor to Secondo Pia's first ever photograph of the Turin shroud back in 1898. It was because of these perfect images that many "Shroudies" accused the two men of touching up and adding some of their own dimensions in order to produce a perfect shroud image.

It was the four-hundredth anniversary of the shroud's arrival to Turin and the authorities had decided it was time to let the Jumper and Jackson team carry out the necessary tests needed to provide proof of the shroud's authenticity. With only five days to work on the cloth, the 24 scientific members of the STURP first got permission to remove part of the Holland backing sheet which had been sewn on for protection by the poor Clare nuns after the fire in 1534, (see part one).

The Sisters of St. Joseph carefully removed the Holland cloth giving the team a chance to view the back of the cloth to see if the image had penetrated through to the other side. This was the first time in more than 400 years anyone had seen the cloth's underside and the team could clearly see that although the bloodstains had soaked right through the shroud the image had not penetrated at all.



The STURP team examine the underside of the cloth for the first time in over four centuries.

The bloodstained areas were the main concern of the teams work so they invited Dr. Walter McCrone, a Microanalyst to examine tiny fibers taken from the bloodstained patches, he took them back to his Chicago institute for microscopic analysis. He claimed that the particles were in fact made from red ocher proving that even if the image was real the blood areas were painted on, possibly at some later date. Dr. McCrone worked on his theory right through Christmas day of 1978 using the conventional light microscope he remarked that the bloodstains were too red, he had never seen dried blood look like that. He also found traces of Mercuric sulphide, a vermilion paint used by Artists which backed up his theory that at some time in the shrouds history it had been inside an artists studio.

The STURP team were outraged with the way he had handled the situation, accusing him of jumping to the wrong conclusions, causing the public to lose interest in the shroud as more and more people were becoming sceptical about the burial cloth of Christ. The team decided that the only way to nail this ghost to the coffin was by a process known as radio-carbon 14 dating, unfortunately this wasn't allowed until 1988.

It was an American chemist, Willard F. Libby, who discovered a way in which to measure the decaying amount of carbon 14 in organic material. The discovery was that, once something dies, it stops taking in carbon 14, the C-14 then begins to decay and every 5730 years, (+ or - 40 years) one half of the remaining total is lost. The original element can then be measured using a Geiger counter, then an object's age can be determined. There was one drawback to this method of dating, the sample or object used would then be destroyed. For this reason permission was not granted for C-14 to be performed on the shroud. In order to test the shroud, a sample would have been cut from the side of the cloth the size of a large handkerchief, it wasn't until 1977 that a new method Carbon dating was introduced. The size of the sample now reduced the weight from a few grams to only a few milligrams, this meant that the sample size only needed to be the size of a postage stamp.

It was ten years later, the Vatican ordered seven samples to be removed from the shroud and distributed to three different laboratories. These were, the University of Arizona in Tucson, the Oxford research laboratory and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. The spokesman was Professor Teddy Hall of Oxford. The results concluded a 99.9 per cent certainty that the cloth originated between 1,000 to 1,500 A.D. with 95 per cent certainty of the date being between 1260 and 1390.

A VATICAN TIMEBOMB

Now that the shroud had been dated and proven to be a medieval fake, the whole affair could be swept under the carpet and discredited of all its mystery. For many though, this wasn't the end but merely a beginning of something so dangerous that it could bring down the whole of Christianity in a single blow, this was the claim of a fraud within the church, a conspiracy by the Vatican itself.

Two people who attempted to expose this fraud were Kersten and Gruber. In their book, 'The Jesus Conspiracy', they claim that the samples had not been cut from the same cloth as the shroud, the original pieces being switched at the last minute.

Kersten and Gruber followed up this idea with investigations that lead them to believe that Michael Tite, head of the carbon-14 operation and leader of the British Museum research laboratory, switched the samples for parts of a late thirteenth century cope before handing them over to representatives of the three laboratories. Although video cameras were present throughout the operation, Dr. Tite was alone when the samples were sealed in their containers, plenty of time to secretly make the switch. The two authors believe the cover-up was a deliberate attempt to hide the truth which would inevitably result in the complete abolition of the Christian faith.

If we are to believe that Jesus was kept alive on the cross and in some sort of cataleptic state, then we must examine the clues which hide between the lines of the gospels, mainly the Gospel of St. John, as his testimony appears to be the only eye-witness account and contradict the synoptics (the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke).

One example of this is the burial of Jesus. As in the tradition of the Jewish burial rites, he was placed in a tomb with a rock sealed entrance. If we look at the Gospel of St. John we find a reference to the burial rites given to Lazarus, a man Jesus resurrected from the dead. In

John 11, 44, Lazarus is described as being bound hand and foot in gravecloths, and his face being bound about by a napkin. This appears to be a deliberate attempt to make a distinction between the manner in which the two men were buried. It looks as if St. John was suggesting that the disciples knew Jesus would soon rise from his comatose state and return to the land of the Jews.

A suggestion has been made that the disciples had administered the necessary drugs to keep Jesus alive while he hung on the cross. The drugs could have been the Opium poppy, which was widespread in Palestine, or Ergot, a fungus that produces Lysergic acid, more commonly known as L.S.D. Both these drugs would give the pretence of death. They may have been lifted up to him on the end of a sponge which according to St. John was put up to Jesus on the end of a Hyssop, (this plant had a very weak stem so it was conceivable that the word was confused with Hyssos, meaning a short spear).

According to Hans Naber, a German Sindonologist, the Vatican cover up started after an under cover group of top scientists carried out secret examinations back in June 1969. Naber decided to go public with this information allegedly provided by an unnamed Vatican official who claimed that the secret examinations had found that the blood stains on the shroud proved that Jesus was still alive when he was taken down from the cross and placed in his burial tomb. He claimed that the church were attempting to falsify or even trying to destroy the cloth before the truth leaked out and corrupt the Christian faith.

Naber, who also used names such as Kurt Berna and John Reban turned up at the Vatican gates on the 28th of June with documents concerning the Vatican conspiracy, and was photographed handing them to a Vatican official, but they declined from making any comment on the subject of Jesus surviving the crucifixion and of trying to destroy the Shroud. For Hans Naber, the belief in a false resurrection came in 1947 when he claimed to have had a vision of the passion on the wall of his bedroom. Scenes of the trial, crucifixion and burial of Christ were re-enacted for him over a six day period. On the seventh day Jesus appeared with a message which Naber wrote down;- "I did not die on the cross, the wounds on my hands and feet took away my strength, the pain burned in my body, the beast opened up my side, its lance was thrust from below into my chest, but it did not hit my heart. My side bled, my body was lifeless, but not dead. The heart still beat, my wounds were annointed with balm, Joseph of Arimathea laid me in a grave of rocks, my body grew crucified, you Hans, have seen that I did not die on the cross, you must render testimony to this fact."

Naber insists that at the time of the vision he had no knowledge of the Shroud of Turin and he took this as final proof of the survival of Jesus after the crucifixion. In 1954, he wrote a book called, "The fifth Gospel", by 1964 he had founded the International foundation for the Holy Shroud.

Dmitri Kouznetsov, a Russian scientist for the E.A. Sedov Biopolymer research laboratory in Moscow, was concerned that the carbon-14 test's had produced incorrect readings. He carried out his own experiments using pieces of cloth which had originated from the time of Christ. He exposed his cloth to high temperatures which had been contaminated with silver. He found out that the silver acts as a catalyst for carbonoylation of cellulose, and the cloth becomes enriched with carbon. Amazingly enough his first century samples now dated to around the fourteenth century, proving that contamination of the Turin Shroud could also of occurred in 1532 when the Holy relic was subjected to high degrees of molten silver burns which subsequently damaged the cloth during the fire at Chambery.

AN ARTISTS IMPRESSION

Most of the evidence looked at so far deals with the authenticity of the Shroud, however there are some with strong evidence to suggest that the Shroud is a painting or a projected image although very few people have been able to reconstruct a convincing replica. The only thing that all the experts can agree on is that whoever performed this task must have had a substantial amount of knowledge in painting, chemistry, photography and to some degree, anatomy.



Poster from 1894 showing Leonardo da Vinci as the first Grandmaster of the Grail, and Hugh de Payens, the first Master of the Templars, representing Joseph of Arimathea.

Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince might have provided us with the answer in their excellent research into the secret life of Leonardo da Vinci.

Their book, 'The Turin Shroud, In Whose Image?' deals with the possibility of the shroud not only being painted by him but also using his own image. The resemblance between the face on the shroud and the self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci is remarkably similar, if any one could have faked it around the 14th century he would be an ideal choice, not only was he an outstanding artist he was also an inventor and a physicist with a great interest in anatomy, often dissecting corpses to study and sketch.



The only self-portrait of Leonardo de Vinci. Notice the similarity with the head of the Turin Shroud.

In an article from the magazine 'Inside The Vatican'. Emanuela Marinelli dismisses these theories as truly absurd, pointing out how the shroud was given to the Savoy family on March 22nd 1453, a time when Leonardo da Vinci would still be in his cradle. Unfortunately this article fails to acknowledge the fact that the book stresses how Leonardo would have been commissioned to re-produce a replacement for an earlier Shroud, which may have been damaged or worn away.

If we look into the life of Leonardo da Vinci, we find that his diaries show sketches of many inventions, one of which was the box obscura camera, a clue to his advanced knowledge of photography. He often experimented with optics and light, with many of his illustrations showing how the eye acts in the same way as a camera lens.

Leonardo da Vinci may have gained his wisdom from a secret society such as the Rosicrucians, an order which dealt in alchemy , an organization that probably developed into the modern freemasons. The idea of Leonardo da Vinci being mixed up in alchemical clandestine societies was first proposed in the book, 'The Holy Blood And The Holy Grail', by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, (director of the B.A.F.T.A. award winning film on the Turin Shroud, 'The Silent Witness'). They had discovered a list known as the Dossiers Secrets which contain the names of 26 Grandmasters dating from 1188 to 1918. This French based organization was known as the Priory of Sion and included members such as Sir Issac Newton, Victor Hugo, Sandro Fillipepi, (better known as Botticelli), and listed as a Grandmaster between 1510 until his death in 1519 was Leonardo da Vinci.

The belief is that the Priory of Sion were of a religious order who venerated John the Baptist, believing him to be the true Messiah. It was suggested that Leonardo was commissioned to fake the Shroud in order to corrupt Christianity from inside the Church. Whatever his motives were, the organization he was involved in were definitely anti-Christian, believing that Christ was married to Mary Magdalene and survived the crucifixion.

The two authors interest in Leonardo da Vinci came when an anonymous letter arrived from a person calling himself Giovanni. He wrote to them eleven times telling how the artist had faked the Shroud in 1492, when Leonardo would have been in his forties. He claimed Leonardo had mastered the art of photography and somehow projected the image onto the cloth using light and chemicals, describing it as a sort of alchemical imprinting.

Giovanni wrote about a secret order which could be the link to a long line of ancient wisdoms dating back to the Old Testament. A knowledge that may have carried through to the fourth Crusade were we have evidence of the Shroud being taken from Constantinople by a military order of warrior monks known as the Knight's Templar, an organization that may have smuggled the Holy relic over to France.

THE KEEPER'S OF THE SHROUD

Like the Cathars before them, the Poor Knight's of Christ and the Temple of Solomon, or Knight's Templars, were a secret organisation completely suppressed by the Catholic Church on the grounds of so called pagan worship.

The society was set up by Hugues de Payen, a nobleman from Champagne who later became the first Grandmaster of the order. At first the templars only numbered nine and they took the same vows as Monks, those of poverty, chastity and obedience, which earned them the title of "the Warrior Monks". According to Historian Guillaume de Tyre, they were formed to protect pilgrims enroute to Jerusalem which was now free from Turkish rule.

The tradition tells us that their headquarters was the al- Aqsa Mosque, built by the Arabs, on the foundations of the Temple of Solomon, although they were driven out of the area by Saladin in 1187, they had returned in 1229.

No new recruits were added to the order for nine years. This led to the suspicion that the society were involved in some secret activity that was possibly passed on by the Cathars who escaped the suppression. As the Templars became a stronger force in various countries their interest in wealth grew. The society was vastly becoming a financial success, more like a bank and protection racket. It was this success that led Philippe IV of France to begin the brutal dissolution of the order by having them arrested and tried on charges of heresy and Devil worshipping.

It is clear that this esoteric society had adopted many pagan activities, one included the veneration of the Black Maddona, which they often carried into battle on banners and standards, crying out her name as they plunged into war.

Identified in the cathedral of Chartres, in France as the Queen of the underworld, the Black Madonna, unlike the orthodox Virgin Mary, was associated with sexuality, fertility and procreation and is often shown to be carrying an Infant. This is probably a representation of the Egyptian Goddess, Isis, who is mostly seen holding her son Horus. The Templars had strong connections with Egyptian religion, with Pagan instead of Christian beliefs.

For these sins alone, in France, 54 Templars were burned at the stake, with hundreds more imprisoned for life with their wealth and estates taken from them. The majority of the Templars' booty was never found, many believe that most of it was buried in the Razes region of Southern France, possibly the Golden treasure of Rennes-le-Chateau, treasure smuggled from the Temple of Solomon by the Cathars, including the Ark of the Covenant, the Menorah, (the seven branched candlestick), and even the burial shroud of Christ.

During the arrest of the Knight's Templars, they, under extreme torture, were forced to confess to sins of sodomy and witchcraft, some to the worship of a demon referred to as *Figura Baffometi* or *Baffomet*. It is worth noting that above the doorway to Rennes-le-Chateau, the head of Asmodeus is contained within a pentagram, (closely resembling the Demon Baffomet). Asmodeus, is said to be the guardian of buried treasure, put above the doorway in 1891 by, Saunier, the priest of Rennes-le-Chateau, after the discovery of four coded Biblical scrolls found hidden inside a hollow column at the church of St. Mary Magdalene.

The Head worshipped by the Templars may have been John the Baptist. He was thought to be held in a higher esteem than Jesus, the Templars believed he was the true Messiah. Not a lot was known the worship of this head idol until the lid of a chest was discovered in Somerset in 1945 in Templecombe, a known settlement of the Knight's Templars. The chest cover displayed a panel painting of what appeared to be the head of Jesus.

The wood was dated late thirteenth to early fourteenth century and bears a remarkable resemblance to the landscape image of the Mandylion, (see part one), or the Turin shroud folded to only reveal the head area. This, it has been suggested, might have been the actual chest that transported the shroud out of Constantinople during the fourth crusade, to bring it into the possession of Geoffrey de Chaney in the small church in Lirey where its known history began.



The Knights Templars took strict oaths of poverty, chastity and obedience.

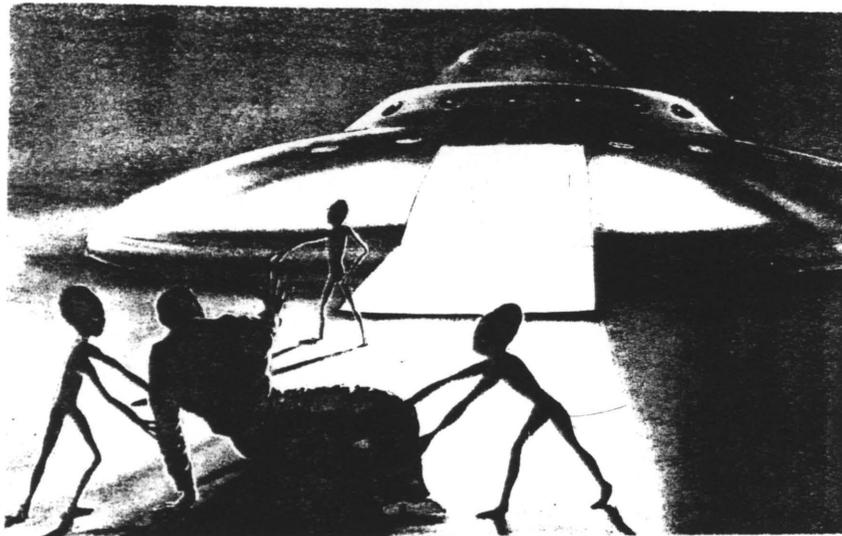
CAN THE SHROUD WORK MIRACLES?

The Shroud has only once been known to work any kind of miracle, this was when King Agbar V was cured of his disease following the arrival of the Veronica cloth, (that is only if we are to believe the shroud and the Mandylion to be one and the same),but "shroudies" may argue that the cloth has very rarely been exhibited to be able to perform any such miraculous feats.

There was one occasion however in 1955 when a ten year old girl's dream of touching the Turin shroud came true. The girl's name was Josephine Wollam and she suffered from Osteomyelitis, with internal haemorrhaging, abscesses on her skin And a twisted leg. She told her parents how she was suffering in the same way as Jesus, if she could visit the Shroud in Turin, she was sure her illness would be cured. With the help of a man who was touring around England in a Bus full of Sindonalia, they sought permission from King Umberto to visit the Shroud Although the press soon found out about this private exposition they could not find out the date in which the event would take place. This invitation was for the girl, her parents the Cardinal, the shroud's guardian and a couple of nuns and priest's, no one else was allowed into the chapel. The little girl changed into her new white dress, made by her Mother, and kneeled in front of the altar of the shroud, and prayed to God.

After her prayers, the two priest's took down the casket and began to open the three devices of the safe door. The casket was then placed into Josie's lap and she asked the Cardinal if it was possible for her to touch the shroud. The cardinal agreed and the shroud was taken from its casket and placed onto the girl's twisted leg. The girl placed her hand upon the cloth and once again prayed. She thanked the Cardinal and told him how much better she now felt having been able to touch the Holy Shroud of Turin. For a few years the girl's health remained the same, it wasn't until later in life that her health suddenly started to improve. She is now married and has her own family, her illness completely cured. For Josie, the shroud, whether a true image of Christ of a medieval fake, did not matter, in the end the real cure came from within herself , the cloth only acted as a platform, something to believe in, in her case the shroud gave hope and that hope gave new life. In this case, how can the shroud possibly be called a fake?

KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES!!!



UFO UPDATE

THE LATEST ON THE FLYINGDALES UFO CRASH 1993

Although just about every UFO/Forcean publication is, quite rightly devoting virtually all of its coverage on the well of controversy surrounding Roswell and THAT autopsy film, as I've already been at pains to state in this issues Editorial, we at 'DEAD OF NIGHT' aim to bring you the fullest coverage possible in #7 of our magazine...When the furore has died down somewhat and just about everybody else has had THEIR say...

As 'Spooky Mulder' is so fond of saying every week in 'THE X-FILES'; 'The truth is out there!!!'

Maybe it'll be a little easier to find when all the dust has settled.

One thing is certain, however.

The story that's built up around Britain's OWN UFO-Crash-Retrieval (and no, I'm not referring here to 'The Rendlesham Forest Affair') seems set to run and run...

The latest information we have on record has been kindly provided by our very own Johnathan Dillon (the head of Burnley UFO Group). We'll leave it to Johnathan then to take up this story and the majority of the articles contained in this section.

During 1993, the east coast of Britain sustained what can only be termed as a deluge of animal mutilations. Cows, sheep, horses, foxes, badgers and even deer were being discovered with small puncture holes 1cm in width in their skulls, and their brains and spinal cords had been removed...Even more horribly, their rectums had been cored out and their ears excised. The mutilations seemed to be centered upon one field in particular, and so a group of local farmers decided to man an all night vigil. They even invited an electronic surveillance specialist to rig up the field with infra-red sensors and cameras.

At 3:30 am, the cameras triggered. The farmers remained seated while the strobes flashed but they couldn't see what it was that had set them off. A faint humming sound was heard, but again, nothing was seen to account for it. As dawn broke however, the farmers found a group of lambs mutilated roughly 20ft away in the same pasture they had been sitting in.

The corpse of one of the dead animals was sent for analysis to a leading veterinary university. A 40 page report was sent back aying that the lamb was showing traces of radiation, sections of its genetic structure had somehow been adjusted and the 'experts' were at a complete loss to explain how this had come about. A catalogue of the animal mutilations in general illustrated with photographs was also produced. Metallic debris was reportedly found by an investigator and was analysed by his acquaintances in metallurgy labs. The metal was found to be ordinary titanium.

A few days later, the incident investigator was reading out excerpts of the report over the phone to Tony Dodd, 'Quest International's Director Of Research', when he heard a bang at the door. He opened the curtains and saw two police vehicles parked outside, and five plainly dressed men on his doorstep shouting to be let in. Tony refused, but when they suddenly produced crow-bars and sledge-hammers, he decided he had no choice and promptly let them in.

They rummaged through his private belongings and took everything connected with the animal mutilation investigation, claiming that Mr. Dodd was holding material ruled by Section (2) of The Official Secrets Act.

News then surfaced about two civilian women, members of the Animal Liberation Front, who were responding to the stories about animal mutilations in the area (See 'DEAD OF NIGHT'#3). Whilst on Ministry Of Defence property, near the 'Eyes Of The West' R.A.F./U.S. 'ELINT' station post at Flyingdales, on the barren moors of North Yorkshire, they witnessed three UFO's coming in low near their position. There were reportedly two disc-shaped craft, and one colossal cigar-shaped craft. Abruptly, and without warning, the gigantic UFO lost altitude and came down in a forest (shades of Rendlesham). It's line of impact however, could quite clearly be seen across a mile or so of open land. It wasn't so much a crash as a crash-landing.

The two airborne UFO's then began flying towards the girls. Their attention was still fixed upon the downed craft however, and although they didn't see where they came from they were suddenly aware that 'a child' was running towards them across the field. They turned and ran off screaming as soon as they became aware of this entity.

Later on, other witnesses reported seeing 'kiddies' in grey tracksuits scampering away from the downed object. These same witnesses complained that they were subsequently harassed by 'Government Agents' cautioning them to remain silent...Or else!!!

The local press were also warned off the story in no uncertain terms.

The clear-up operation commenced with the confiscation of hundreds of acres of farmland by the military. Farmers were escorted from their houses and fire crews in hazard suits were observed hosing down the craft. It is not known whether this process was to ensure the 'craft' was cooling down, or if it was in some way connected with decontaminating the object of radiation. Earth workers moved in to help create a smoke-screen story. The 'craft' was covered with a gigantic breeze-block shed as air-lifting the wreckage was out of the question. An exclusion zone was then set up and local residents were moved out of the area. To this day, military helicopters are reported to be still flying over the 'crash-area' to maintain the security exclusion zone.

One of the two animal rights activists suddenly, and unaccountably disappeared. Her friend feared for her safety and began to move about the country, increasingly convinced that a terrible fate would befall her if 'the authorities' got hold of her. One day, she had attended a Animal Rights demonstration in York, and was leaving York railway station on her way home when suddenly, a car pulled up with black, opaque windows. Two men got out of the vehicle and tried to abduct her but her friends saw what was going on and rushed over to help her. She managed to escape on this occasion.

Eventually however, she too was reported as missing. Nothing was heard of her for some weeks until news was received that she had turned up in France, suffering from memory loss. Her friends crossed the Channel and collected her. She was in a terrible state and so they had no choice but to put her into a clinic to enable her to recover. It was later decided that she should undergo hypnosis to see if her memories could be recovered.

A retired ex-R.A.F. military intelligence officer, who was now a professor of hypnosis, was called in to carry out a series of memory relapse sessions with the girl. By the third exercise he stated that he was doomed to failure. He said the information that was forthcoming was too dangerous and he didn't want to get into trouble. Nevertheless, it was revealed that the girl had announced under hypnosis that she had been abducted by a security agency, possibly MI5, and they had taken her to an establishment in Southern England. There she had what she called 'a hair-dryer' placed over her head and the next thing she knew she was in France.

One of my contacts on the case had an anonymous phone call saying the rumours of a UFO crash on M.O.D. land in Yorkshire were designed to deflect attention away from a number of prototype aircraft crashes at Boscombe Down during the 1993/4 period. Last year there was an unusual crash at Boscombe Down involving a 'Black Manta' aircraft.

But if the 'crash' was of a R.A.F./U.S.A.F test flight, how would that account for the reports of 'little grey men' seen by the locals and what of the attendant animal mutilations???

One farm that borders the Flyingdales Moor, allegedly lost over 900 sheep and lambs!!!

Johnathan Dillon.



MYSTERY UFO LIGHT OVER SCARBOROUGH

Reported sightings of a UFO have been lodged by at least six people right across the Scarborough area. It has been described as an intense mass of light moving rapidly across the sky. R.A.F. Staxton Wold says that it had no aircraft in the area and that there have been no reports of unusual craft from any of their staff. Nonetheless, accounts have come flooding in from various witnesses, amongst them taxi-driver, Andrew Whittaker who stated; 'I saw what I thought was an aircraft light, but I realised it was too bright. Then the way the thing started to move, I knew it wasn't a plane or helicopter. It's the first time I've ever seen anything like this. I'm interested in aircraft, but there is no way any aircraft that I know could have moved like this.'

Paul Gill, a security guard was working at Atlantis, in the North Bay, on Monday night. I heard this strange noise first and then I saw this light flying overhead. I was on my own so it was a little bit scary'.

Civil servant Dale Hepples, 19, had just returned home when he saw a mystery light over the Castle. He stated; 'I was talking to my parents when my dad noticed this really intense white light. I went outside to look, and this light seemed to fly straight at the house. There was definitely something there and it was something more mysterious than a plane...'
17th May, 1995. Scarborough, Yorkshire. 'SCARBOROUGH EVENING NEWS'.



'ET LIVES, SAYS THE MAN FROM THE MINISTRY'

Nick Pope, the man who once headed the Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a office, with a brief to deal with enquiries about UFO's and other unexplained phenomena, has just performed probably the most embarrassing turn-around in Ministry Of Defence history. To the horror of his employers, the 29-year-old civil servant who now works in another part of the Ministry, has become a 'convert'.

'I think it is fair to say that in my three years as the Government expert on UFO's, I was regarded as a bit of a maverick,' said Mr. Pope. 'I came into that job as an open-minded sceptic and I came out as a believer.' As if that were not enough, Nick now intends to publish a book based on his experiences. Provisionally titled 'OPEN SKIES, CLOSED MINDS: OFFICIAL REACTIONS TO THE UFO PHENOMENON', the book is unlikely to win him many friends at the ministry. In fact, his bosses have already expressed their displeasure at his manuscript, for which he must get permission before publication. The book will examine all the available records in the Whitehall archives, and talks about a number of new cases. But Mr. Pope offers little comfort for UFO buffs seeking proof of a Government cover-up.

'We don't throw open our files en-bloc, but eventually most of them filter down to the Public Record Office'.

Nick believes that he was convinced there is something in the mystery by the details of a small number of British cases which have so far defied conventional explanation.

Graham Birdsall, editor of 'UFO MAGAZINE', said: 'I welcome the bravery of a man who must have experienced tremendous pressure from his superiors, but who stuck to his views'.

2nd July, 1995.

Whitehall, London. 'THE MAIL ON SUNDAY'.



UFO OVER THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Stunned 'Flying Eye' traffic reporter Russ Kane told listeners to London's Capital Radio from his Cougar aircraft; 'I have just seen a UFO over the Houses Of Parliament. I am not joking - it was really spooky'.

There are unfortunately, no further details...

2nd June, 1995. London. 'DAILY SLUR'.

THE BELGIAN UFO BLITZ

Since November, 1989, an amazing UFO wave, historically unequalled, is taking place right across the European Continent. Sightings of 'huge flying platforms' scanning the landscape with three enormous searchlights have baffled the public and authorities alike. The Belgian Airforce is continually studying reports as are the French National Space Agency and the Fre-

-ench Service For The Investigation Of Re-entry Phenomena (SEPPA).

Thousands of witnesses, including dozens of gendarmes and officers of the Belgian Airforce have described triangular shaped vehicles soaring over rooftops, firing searchlights and executing impossible manoeuvres. Nearly 25 video films have been made of the UFO's, as well as dozens of snapshots. The most incredible are the military land and airborne radar films that seem to feature phenomenal 'cat and mouse' radar locks. Gathering the evidence has been the task of the Brussels based Belgian Society For The Study Of Space Phenomena. SOBEPs collected a record amount of documentation to verify the sightings.

And then, for the first time anywhere in the world, the Belgian Minister Of Defence, Guy Coeme, elected to authorise the Air Force to fully affiliate with the SOBEPs team and placed a Hawker Sideley aircraft at their disposal ready with infra-red cameras and complex instruments to help the investigation. Certain SOBEPs members are highly credible, qualified specialists, including Leon Brenig, a non-linear dynamics scholar at the Free University in Brussels, and professor August Meessen, a physicist from the catholic university at Louvain. Among the SOBEPs witnesses were Lucien Clerebaut, Secretary General of the society, Patrick Ferryn, a film producer, and founding member, and Jose Fernandez.

The earliest sightings happened on the night of November 7th, 1989, when two gendarmes from Esneux viewed a noiseless, huge craft 'with two very powerful white lights aimed downwards, and a sort of green and red garland'. The UFO flap reached a crescendo on the evening of 29th November, when 41 witnesses observed a huge triangle in Eupen, Verviers, and various other locations in Wallonia, close to the German border. The press speculated that AWACS and 'Stealth' aircraft were responsible, but the Defense Minister rejected this theory declaring; 'All hypotheses involving military aircraft in our airspace are definitely to be ruled out'. On two occasions the BAF scrambled F16's during the evening hours to track UFO's. In the first incident the F16 arrived one hour after the initial visual sighting and, not, surprisingly, nothing was observed. On the second occasion, the pilots spotted a laser beam projector on the ground. As a result, the BAF stated they would only authorise further scrambles if the following conditions were met...A visual observation was made that was confirmed by the local police and detection by radar.

On the night of March 30/31st, 1990, foreign targets were tracked by two radar bases, Glons and Semmerzake. The one at Glons, positioned southeast of Brussels, belongs to NATO, while that at Semmerzake, west of Brussels, controls all military traffic throughout the country. The master controller at Glons commanded the scramble of two F16 interceptors to identify the trespassers. At 22:50 hrs, the master controller received a phone call from gendarme Renquin. He had watched from his house in Ramillies, 'three unusual lights forming an equilateral triangle changing colours of red, green and yellow'.

At 23:05 hrs, the gendarmerie at Wavre sent a scout party and confirmed the aforementioned sighting. At 23:15 hrs, Renquin called once more informing that he'd spotted an extra set of lights. The radar screens at Glons also tracked this 'unidentified contact moving at a speed of around 25 knots'.

During the next two and a half hours, an increasing number of police officers observed the peculiar manoeuvres of three sets of triangular lights on the outskirts of Brussels. By 23:49 hrs, the radar screens at Semmerzake detected the targets and another two F16's were scrambled from Beauvechain Airbase. The aircraft were airborne at 00:05 hrs on March 31st, and had brief radar contacts with unidentified targets on several occasions. But the pilots could not get a lock on the UFO's which immediately took evasive action. The F16's were never more than 2 NM apart, and they did manage to lock on one of the objects at 00:13 hrs, but the acceleration of the target changed from 150 to 970 knots in one second and from 9,000 to 5,000 feet, returning then to 11,000 ft, in order to shift again to near ground level; this ended in a break of contact in a few seconds and the pilots lost their lock on. At 00:30 hrs, another lock on was achieved, but a jamming signal presumably came from the UFO and again the radar lock was broken.

Major General Wilfried de Barouwer, the Chief Of Operations of the BAF, and co-ordinator of the UFO hunt, made a statement to the 'PARIS MATCH' writer Marie-Therese de Brosses; 'that the change in velocity from 280kph to 1,800kph while dipping some 3,000 metres to 1,000 metres in one second was a fantastic dash equivalent to 40 G's'. This would obviously rule out the possibility that any human pilot could have been flying the UFO. The major continued; 'When the UFO approached the ground, it was hopeless for the F16's to intercept at this low height because the density of the air confines the speed to 1,300kph.' Above that speed, the temperature in the compressors of the jet would induce an engine explosion. 'There was an intellect behind the motions of the object'.

At 01:00hrs, the F16's were ordered to return to their base and the aircraft duly landed at 01:10hrs. People on the ground however, continued to watch 'four white luminous spots forming a square', until about 1:30 am, when the objects lost their luminosity and seemed to disappear in four different directions.

Major P. Lambrechts arranged 'The report concerning the observation of UFO's during the night of March 30th/31st, 1990,' which contains a full chronology of the events, as well as a dossier crammed with documents including eyewitness descriptions from several gendarmes and maps of where the sightings took place. Their conclusions; The Belgian Airforce was unable to identify neither the nature nor the origin of the phenomena.

However, the report had sufficient data to exclude any of the following; Ballons, conventional aircraft, laser beams, cloud mirages and hallucinations. The acceleration measured at the shift of altitude dismisses the hypothesis that the UFO's were any kind of military aircraft...At least, none that we are aware of. It is a fact that velocity above the speed of sound were measured, yet there was no shock wave heard by any of the witnesses. The French physicist Jean Pierre Petit agrees that 'there is no man-made machine that can perform this way. Especially flying at the speed of sound without making a sonic boom.'

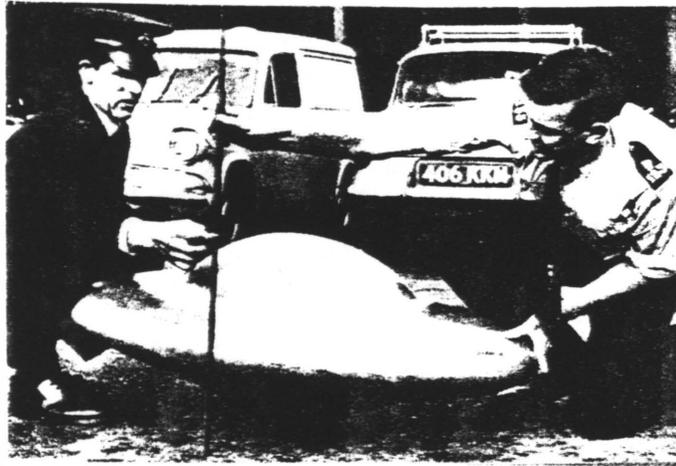
The Belgian authorities are at great pains to point out that no clandestine top secret aircraft are responsible for the UFO wave, and yet there are striking similarities between the triangular-shaped craft seen in Belgium and the 'boomerang' shaped UFO's reported in the area around New York, USA, in particular, the Hudson Valley and Western Connecticut...Not to mention other objects reported from Virginia, Fayette, Alabama, Wytheville and Puerto Rico.

Amongst the proponents of the secret weapons hypothesis is one Tony Gonzalez, a researcher from East Province, Rhode Island, USA. He served as a jet mechanic and plane Captain for the US navy on three aircraft carriers between 1959-1963. He says the boomerangs of Westchester and Dutchess counties in the US as well as the triangular UFO's of Puerto Rico, Virginia AND Belgium are an altered, covert version of the B-2 Stealth Bomber. He believes the aircraft have been fully operational since the early 1980's, while the official B-2 Bomber is a decoy to fool the world. He also speculates that this classified aircraft combines Alien and human technology.

Gonzalez's theory seemed to be given a degree of credence when the popular magazine 'AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY' reported in its October 1st, 1990 issue, that 'huge, triangular-wing shaped aircraft are being tested out of the Tehachapi Mountains near Edwards AFB in California. The noted journal revealed sightings by engineers of aircraft, possibly prototypes for the defunct General Dynamics/McDonnell Douglas A-12 Naval Stealth Attack Plane. The magazine's 'leak' also cites Air Force sources who acknowledged that 'diamond and triangular-shaped vehicles are the trend now, some are even able to handle speeds around Mach 10 and above.

Whatever the truth behind these stories and rumours, the fact remains that SOMETHING incredible seems to be taking place and refusing to go away. The sightings continue and police phone lines are constantly being swamped with talk of 'triangular objects with three lights, flying slowly and soundlessly'.

Johnathan Dillon.



THE BOYS IN BLUE HUNT WHITE UFO

A police helicopter was sent out on a mission to hunt a brightly-lit UFO. Scores of witnesses, including six police officers, saw the shuttlecock-shaped craft. They said it moved very slowly and hovered for 30 minutes.

It was reported to be glowing white with coloured bands and sparks coming from the back. But the airborne police found no trace of the object in a lam sweep of Westcliff-on-Sea, in Essex.

Air-traffic controllers at nearby Southend Airport said there had been no aircraft in the area. And traffic officer Geoff Howell said; 'It was too big to be an aircraft or star'.

21st August, 1995. Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. 'TODAY'.

UFO'S CALL UPON BARNOLDSWICK

A Report by Johanthan Dillion

It was the strangest sight ever to grace the night skies over Barnoldswick, situated smack in the middle of Lancashire's Hill Country...A land of myths, legends, superstitions, Ghosts, Witches....And now, UFO's.

In the late hours of Monday, December 19th, 1994, Melvin Ford happened to look out into the darkness of the night. He suddenly noticed a strange glowing object and he called his wife to come and have a look. Just as suddenly as it had appeared, the object vanished only to be substituted by another one. Meanwhile, their son and his girlfriend had joined the couple and watched as the second light moved downwards and along in a 90 degree pattern. Abruptly, two more lights became visible. Now all three lights were equally aligned and formed a triangle arrangement in the gloomy sky. Mrs Ford rushed to get a camera and photographed the set of lights. The lights began to fade again, re-illuminated, and moved to form one complete light which withdrew in a few moments.

Some days later, the photos were returned from the developers. The pictures of the lights were not discernible and the family were somewhat frustrated at the lack of photographic evidence. Not to be outdone, they sent the pictures back to the photographic laboratory. Eventually, the analyst was persuaded to run the negatives through the processor again, and this time there results were more succesful....Four faint balls of light could be seen. But that was not all. The lights were affixed to a much larger structure which was triangular in shape, with a lighth positioned on each apex.

The photographs appear to be authentic and when I met the witnesses their veracity was immediately apparent. They are clearly not interested in publicity and are simply determined to seek futher analysis of the photos...

This incident however, proved to be only the beginning of the strange affair.

The Pennines have a reputation for being something of a mecca for UFO and paranormal phenomena. In her excellent book, 'THE PENNINE MYSTERY', devoted Ufologist Jenny Randles refers to dozens of cases involving witnesses from the Pendle region. The district has been termed a 'Window Area' because of the frequency of paranormal phenomena.

Barnoldswick and nearby Earby are no new-comersto UFO activity either. But the bizzare thing is, the Ford family are once again amongst the chief witnesses...

Their house is situated in the rustic countryside and faces the village of Earby. On many occasions, it has been 'blitzed by spheres of blue and white lights which dim and glow as they pass through walls and windows. One globe seemed to emerge from the floor and grew to a colossal size bathing the room with a strong bright blue radiance. On another occasion, a ball of light came through the window, travelled through the closed door, and floated down the stairs. Melvin Ford also recalls looking out of his window one evening and noticing a ball of light rising from the ground outside. Suddenly, an RAF Tornado thundered across the night sky, and he remembers the light 'slowly oozed back into the land'.

Mr. Ford seems to have had more than his fair share of unusual occurrences. Some years ago, he told me he was in the garden of his previous home when a gigantic UFO floated over his head. He said; 'It was so broad you couldn't see its front or back...It was as big as, if not bigger than two aircraft carriers coupled together'.

Another incident took place in the Ford's bedroom of their present house. One night Melvin awoke to a noise in the room, and after sitting up in bed he remembers seeing a pair of sinister red eyes at the foot of the bed. They were 3 to 4ft off the ground and appeared to glow in the dark. He nudged his wife but she was too afraid to look.

Strange things have occurred in the neighbourhood recently. There have been dozens of military aircraft training missions taking place above the area which has produced the inevitable complaints from the residents. Local councillors have challenged the M.O.D. about this disturbance of the peace. On several occasions, the mysterious balls of light have been seen to follow the aircraft and visa-versa.

There have been some peculiar animal mutilations in the area too. Mrs. Ford recollects; 'I was taking some rubbish out to the dustbin and I found 5 or 6 dead field mice laid out in a horizontal line. They had a hole in their heads and their brains and organs had been detached'. Mr. Ford also told of large numbers of dead sheep that he discovered collected in black bags and left anonymously on his land. They were judged to be radioactive.

Sightings of UFO's and other strange incidents continue to be reported from the region to this day. Many witnesses see odd lights performing aerobatics and have been nicknamed; 'Flying Oranges'. Even the super-sensitive NSA Menwith Hill facility on the Yorkshire Dales has been reportedly visited by globes of blue light.

The Ford's have not gone public with their photographic evidence simply because they are waiting to see if the detailed study is successful. If it is, then they could be some of the finest UFO photographs to emanate from Great Britain in many years...More on this case as and when we get it.

AREA 51 NEVADA: PROJECT GALILEO

Update by Johnathan Dillon

Civilian; What happens out at Groom Lake, Nevada?

Employee; 'I could tell you, but then I would have to kill you...'

The US Air Force, determined to improve its successor to the SR-71 Lockheed Stealth Bomber in total and absolute secrecy, has taken over command of nearly 4,000 acres of craggy upland in the Nevada Desert to conceal from prying eyes one of the world's most sensitive military pilot proving sites.

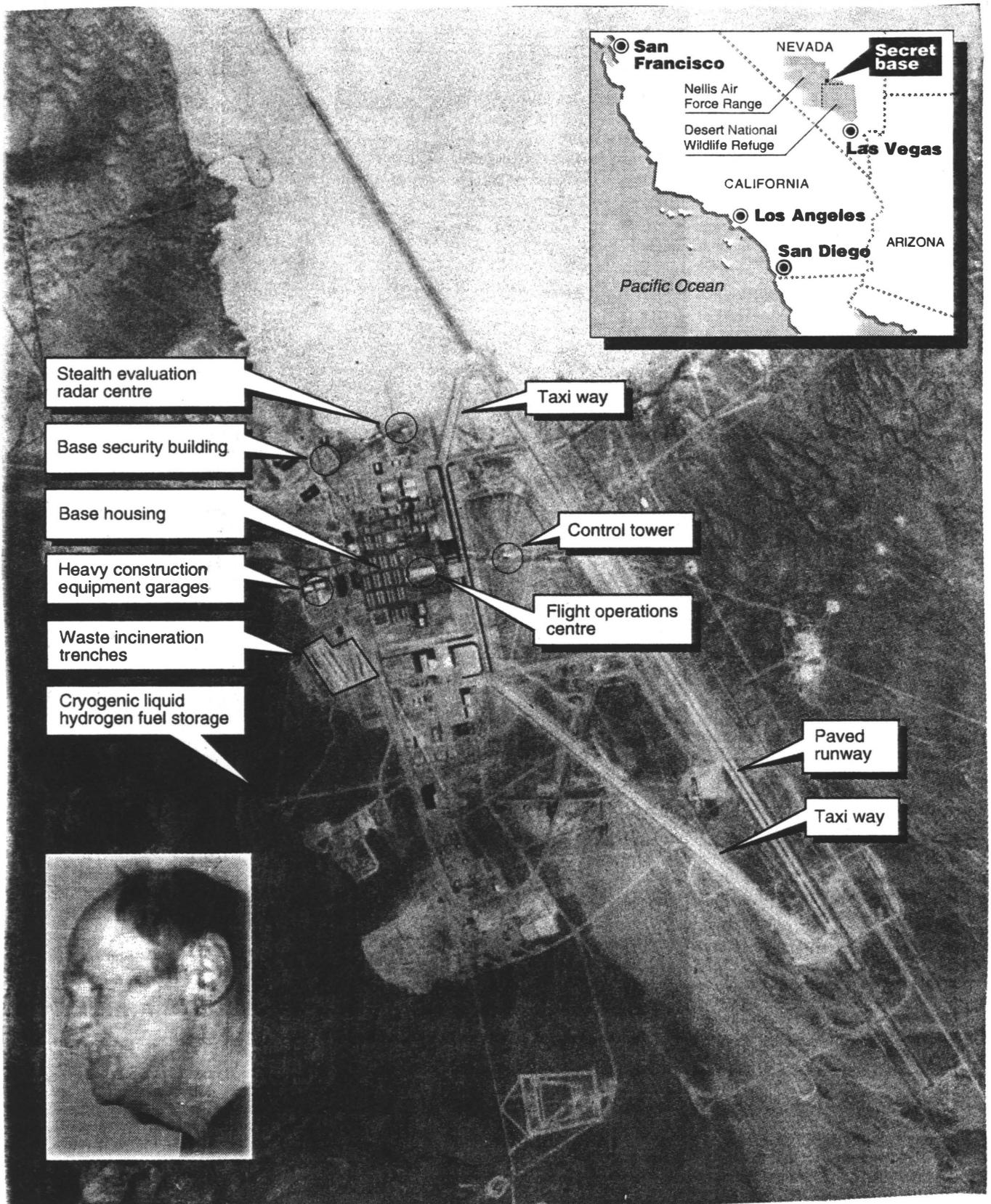
Known variously as Area 51, Groom Lake, Dreamland, The Ranch, Red Square and Munchkinville, the slightest reference to this location can raise the neck hairs of Generals and Chiefs Of Staff. The Pentagon refuses to acknowledge such a place even exists...Not least because, it hides not only the wonders of modern military technology, but also the human price being paid for such technology; men now revealed as badly sick and even dying from toxic waste being burned within the base.

Although very little is actually known about the site or its new aircraft, it is strongly suspected that a craft referred to as 'Aurora' has long been test-flying in the area. The veil of secrecy that has descended upon Area 51, has led to hundreds of would-be Sherlock Holmes, ranging from serious minded investigators to conspiracy theorists and End Of The World fundamentalists, setting up camp outside the base that doesn't officially exist. One man leading the quest for the truth is Glen Campbell, self-appointed Director of 'The Area 51 Research Centre' in Rachel, Nevada.

'The existence of the base was not acknowledged by the Pentagon in its request to the Federal Bureau of Land Management', Campbell says. Instead, its application for control of the popular vantage points was said to be; 'for the public safety and the safe and secure operation of activities in the Nellis Range Complex', a reference to Nevada's well-known nuclear testing site. From now on, civilians who used to scramble with infra-red night sights, telephoto lenses and powerful binoculars to White Sands and Freedom Ridge, two peaks that are about 13 miles from the main body of the site, will not be able to get closer than 25 miles away. Tikaboo Peak remains open, but because of its rocky terrain it won't exactly encourage visitors.

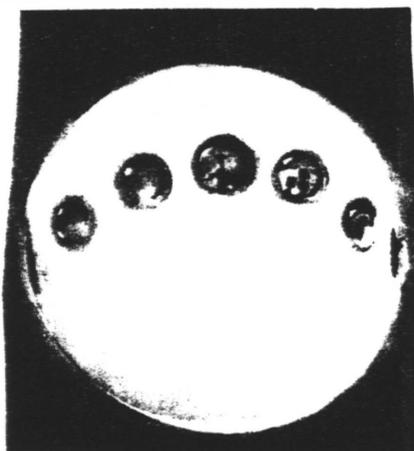
Thanks to the work of many dedicated investigators and researchers, a feeling of common agreement has been established that this airfield could well be hiding crashed UFO's and sinister Government plots to check out their propulsion systems, methods of flight, etc.

UFO researchers first became interested in Area 51 after Robert Lazar, a maverick scientist and independent businessman, alleged that he had worked as a back-engineer on one of nine retrieved Alien Spacecraft being test-flown on the Nellis Air Range.



(Above: A Russian spy photograph of the American Airbase that doesn't exist... 'AREA 51', Nevada. Insert: Robert Frost, just one of several employees said to have died under mysterious circumstances at the site...

No-one has been able to verify Lazar's academic or professional credentials. He says the crafts are powered by 'Element 115', a stable heavy element not found here on Earth (physicists have made elements with atomic numbers up to 109, but they decompose quickly). It is transformed into 'Element 115' which decays into anti-matter, which powers nuclear reactors. The reactors then produce gravity 'A' waves which allow the saucers to carry out sharp manoeuvres without crushing their pilots.



LATEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Information has recently been forthcoming about a UFO/human mutilation in the USA. According to the American police force, a body has been discovered and subsequently photographed with its reproductive organs missing, tongue excised and skull quartered. This extremely disturbing finding is disconcertingly similar to another body found in Zimbabwe a few months earlier.

An unmanned remote-controlled aircraft was rolled off the production line at Palmdale, USA, recently. It's called the 'TR3 DARK STAR' (its inventor must be a big John Carpenter fan- Film Buff Ed) and it is built in the classical Flying Saucer shape. It can supposedly photograph a basketball at 40,000ft (which is extremely useful if you're a basketball fan and can't get yourself a ticket for the big game).

UFO-RELATED MOVIE RUMOURS

Tommy Lee Jones has been approached to star in a film tentatively titled; 'M.I.B.' (the initials stand for; 'MEN IN BLACK', for those of you who aren't aware of this). The plot is apparently centered upon two F.B.I. agents who investigate UFO's and other weird and wonderful phenomena...It could well be a spin off of the 'X-FILES' series...

...And another big star, Jodie Foster, will reportedly be starring in a movie entitled; 'FIRST CONTACT'. Apparently the film is all about SETI scientists who finally discover what we've all suspected all along....There IS life in outer space.

AND YET MORE ON BARNOLDSWICK AND FLYINGDALES

Starting with Barnoldswick, our ever-dependable Mr. Dillon reports that a few days ago (sometime in August, 1995), the Fords saw two balls of light rising from nearby trees on a hill. Paul Pearson had the photos analysed at 'BOOTS' in Burnley, and he concluded that the triangular image was a developing fault caused by a damaged processor. Still, with or without the photos, the area still is a hot-bed of UFO activity. Very recently Johnathan was told that about 5 fighter aircraft were seen chasing a UFO over the Pendle Moors. They had apparently travelled all the way from Bruggen in Germany. Pendle MP Gordon Prentice is investigating the matter.

And the latest from Flyingdales, is that sometime in late May, 1995, 17 sheep and 5 badgers were discovered mutilated bearing the same injuries of a hole in the head and vital organs detached.

AND FINALLY...

AN APPEAL FOR INFORMATION!!!

Our very own Johnathan Dillon, diligent researcher that he is, has requested that we appeal to our reader(s) for any information concerning any or all of the following...

UFO crash retrievals (especially The Blackheath UFO CRASH) and details of military interaction with UFO's.

Also, any info on 'THE X-FILES' more than welcome. Anyone out there heard of 'THE GEMSTONE FILE'?

Write to Johnathan Dillon, 176, Clough Lane, Burnley, Lancashire. BB11 4NJ. Tel: 01282 338258.



TALES FROM THE LOCH-SIDE:

I

The Haunter Of The Wildwood



'Suddenly I stop, but I know it's too late,
Lost in a forest...
All alone.
THE CURE: 'A FOREST'

Someone, (most probably one of those nameless wino's who, with the instinctive pride of a wounded animal, crawls to some place private to nurse their hangover - the litter-strewn basement of a derelict building when the weather turns bad - the cool shade beneath 'The Penny Farthing' on Lime Street, in high summer) once said; 'Drink is the root of all Evil'.

Me, I'm not so sure about that. I think perhaps Evil has many, equally corrupt points of origin. A craving for money, green-eyed jealousy, and an insane lust for power, to name but three.

But one thing I am definitely convinced of is that alcohol, like just about every other pleasurable thing in life, is all very well in moderation. Abuse it, or to use the colloquial phrase; 'have more than a good skinfull', and suddenly, your conception of the defining boundaries between good and bad, right and wrong, becomes dramatically altered. Just to add to the fun, the result of this blurring of the borders is more often than not so dreadful, it makes you want to run for cover and maybe join those godforsaken wino's in the sanctuary of their rat-infested cellars.

I guess maybe you know the kind of thing I'm talking about here.

The all-too frequent occasions when, after a particularly heavy stint at 'The Ritzy', you wake up naked in a stranger's bed, sharing the pillow with a person you could have sworn before God and all the Saints was the Birkenhead equivalent of Pamela Andersson/Keanu Reeves (depending on your sexuality, of course), only to find that in the dawn's early light, they're actually a dead ringer for Bella Stromberg/Freddy Kruegar.

The time you thought splashing out your last £20 on a 'MIRACLE LOVE POTION - ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED TO SET YOU UP WITH THE DATE OF YOUR DREAMS!!!' seemed like the bargain of the century. Especially seeing as how the Grinning Black Pedlar who sold it you looked SOOOOOO sincere about its efficacy.

The night you were talked into going to see a band/comedian/play/movie you didn't even like, at a venue you positively hated, in a city that to your mind, was every bit as bleak a prospect as downtown Sarajevo.

The time you got it into your head that the person casting furtive glances at your latest flame, was trying their damndest to eye them up, and your so incensed you race up and smack them in the chops hard enough to knock out three front teeth, only to discover you've just assaulted the local vicar who'd baptised your partner, and was merely wondering why he hadn't seen them at church recently.

Or the time you thought it might be a hell of a good idea to traipse on down to the banks of Loch Ness, on the wrong side of midnight, not as any half-way sensible person would do, by using the perfectly safe main road that snaked around the northern shore of the Loch, but by fighting your way through a couple of acres of thick, all but impenetrable woodland, devoid of all paths and without even the benefit of a single flashlight to help you forge your own trail.

Well okay. I concede that this last example may not strike a familiar chord with you, Dear Reader (although it's a pretty safe bet that most of, if not all of the others certainly WILL)

But the sad and indisputable fact is that, during our first ever trip to the Highlands Of Scotland in the late summer of 1992, after a spell of propping up the bar in a hotel on the edge of the wonderfully named village of Drumnadrochit, my younger brother Grant, good friend Richie White, and I had decided to embark upon just such a venture with scarcely undisguised relish. Looking back now, it seems an entirely pointless, not to say dangerous exercise...At the time however, it had seemed like a wheeze of Einstein-ian proportions.

The account you are about to read is every bit as truthful and accurate as it's possible to make it, allowing for the inevitable errors of memory (seeing as how the events described here occurred almost three whole years ago now) coupled with the fact that we were all half-'bladdered'.

Whatever your doubts and preconceptions though, I would only ask that you grant me the favour of reserving your judgement until after you have finished reading the piece. I think it's vitally important that you do so. And not simply because a suspension of disbelief helps the story become more effective and gains innumerable 'Brownie Points' for the teller of the tale...

There's a reason far more important than even that consideration.

Remember what I said at the outset regarding; 'The Roots Of All Evil'?

Well, whilst I am most certainly not going to make any grandiose claims that our party stumbled upon anything THAT incredible, I think it is fair to say that we DID at least encounter something that can only be termed; 'Malefic Offshoots', deep within those dark, sinister-looking woods. Offshoots. Tendrils that were every bit as wispy and insubstantial as a morning mist...But which like the grey, swirling fog that descends with frightening suddenness and causes the unwary traveller to wander helplessly onto the marshes, or lures ships to their doom on treacherous shorelines, they were nonetheless DEADLY!!!

I want, if I may to make one more thing clear before we get to the nub of what actually happened. It's true to say we live in essentially faithless times, and I'm not at all sure whether I care to place my trust in The Will of God, The Fates, or something as mundane as an eternally-smiling game-show host replete with his Ever-Turning-Wheel-Of-Fortune, but the fact remains that I honestly believe SOMETHING chose to smile down on us that night in the midst of The Scottish Highlands

I'm SURE it did, because if it hadn't...

If it hadn't...The plain and simple truth of the matter is that my younger brother, best friend and I very probably wouldn't be alive to relate to you any of the following...Those damned 'Malefic Offshoots' would have wrapped their writhing tentacles around us, slowly crushing the spirit from our bodies. And although our crumpled forms may eventually have been discovered by would-be rescuers out hunting for us with their sniffer-dogs, our immortal souls would have remained trapped in the silent depths of the wildwood, beneath a carpet of decaying leaves and rotted branches... for all eternity.

1

In the weeks and months leading up to our trip to Scotland, my father, (himself a veteran of countless Scottish expeditions) had persistently warned us that the summer weather in the Highlands could be as unpredictable as the moods of someone afflicted with Multiple Personality Disorder, (a fact with which we were to become more than a tad familiar with during the course of this and subsequent trips). But as it turned out, almost from the moment we'd hit Glasgow, the day had been blessed with bright sunshine and clear, blue skies. The full story of how Grant, Richie, Steve and Your's Truly arrived at Loch Ness has already been documented in the last issue of this magazine, so I won't seek to bore you with further mention of it here. Suffice to say, that after briefly traversing the Loch from Abriachan right down to Fort Augustus, we'd eventually found a suitable spot to pitch our tents. We chose as our base one of several large fields that backed onto a horse-riding centre and the rustic, homely-looking splendour of Borlum Farm.

After a late supper, we decided, not unnaturally, to set off in search of what passed for the Loch Ness equivalent of 'town'. Getting ready to go out and make ourselves appear half-way presentable (or 'gettin'tarted-up' to use the phrase most commonly alluded to by the good citizens of Merseyside) proved to be something of a major problem however. The camp site was only equipped with the most basic of home comforts...One of those dreaded, foul-smelling communal toilets that always seem to be occupied by a person with terminal diarrhea, a shower that spurted ice cold water - the type that would freeze the balls off an Eskimo, and a row of rusted sinks coupled with a set of mirrors so obscured with grime it was well-nigh impossible to check if your hair was a mess, whether you were clean-shaven or if your face resembled Lon Chaney Jr's on the Night Of The Full Moon....Or even if (gulp) the humungous, fevered-looking spot that with a typically impeccable sense of timing had sprung up on the side of your neck the very morning you were due to set off on holiday, was just about ripe for the picking or was likely to retain its custard-coloured poison for a day or two yet...

Still, displaying a damn-near heroic refusal to be deterred from our plan of action, we defiantly donned our favourite t-shirts, cleaned our teeth until they positively gleamed in the dying rays of sunlight and splashed on enough after-shave/talcum powder/deoderant to announce our arrival in 'town' a good ten minutes (or maybe even twenty, if the wind was blowing in the right direction) before we actually arrived there in person.

It was a perfect summer evening. The kind that gives you cause to remember with total clarity, long after a thousand other memories, the type you should have very little difficulty recalling (the majority of your childhood birthdays, your first day at school, your debut appearance for your local football team, the first time you told someone; 'I love you', your first stolen kiss, the day you received an honest wage for your week-long labours, the time you cried tears that seemed endless over the loss of a much-loved relative or friend...) have long since been consigned...Banished, not to put too fine a point on it, to the dark, distant corner of your mind labelled; 'Forgotten Somebodies And Lost Reasons'.

I want you to understand however, that my vivid recollections are not based solely upon the idyllic weather conditions, the fact that it was pleasantly warm without being muggy, the temperatures checked by a gentle breeze that carried with it the unmistakable countryside fragrance of cattle manure, freshly cut grass and the various species of wildflowers that grew in riotous abandon beneath the hedgerows and at the edges of the nearby woods,

Nor was it entirely focused upon material (though nonetheless beautiful) things such as the majesty of the surrounding mountains, the awesome breadth of the glen or even the trickling river that served as a web for sunbright lances. They were all a part of it, of course.

But there was something else too. Something that's kind of hard to explain...To put into words that would make some degree of sense to a person who wasn't present that early evening in mid-August.

I can only say that I don't think there has ever been a time, either before or since, when I was filled with such a profound sense of inner peace or felt so comfortable in the presence of friends whom you knew beyond doubting were loyal and true. We were each of us instinctively aware of our place in the World...And although it may sound incredibly corny....that doesn't serve to alter the fact that in some vague, spiritual sense it felt an awful lot like coming home.

2

It was a good couple of miles walk up to the nearest 'Watering Hole' in Drumnadrochit, and to get there we had to pass through the village of Lewiston. Thinking about it now though, perhaps the word 'village' is a slight exaggeration when referring to what amounted to little more than a tiny collection of thatched cottages, a deserted timber yard, a petrol station that didn't appear to be doing a roaring trade, and the chief landmark; a closed down cafe, one of those American diner-type establishments that must have looked resplendent in its heyday, but was now fallen into a sorry state of disrepair.

As we passed the derelict building, I was struck by a sudden and totally unexpected bout of sorrow, gazing across at the shuttered windows, the boarded-up doorways, the cracked and faded paintwork, the stairway leading up to what was once the cafe's main entrance, now overgrown with rank weeds and tall grass...And saddest of all, a weathered sign that read 'WELCOME TO THE RAINBOW BAR AND GRILL'. Suspended from a single rusted chain, it was rocking back and forth in the breeze issuing a dry, screeching sound that grated on the nerves and seemed to give voice to the buildings despair as it pondered upon happier times...When blades of welcoming light slanted across the front parking lot. When the interior rocked to the sound of carefree conversation, raucous laughter and the jukebox blasting out the latest hits over in the corner. When the air was filled with the tantalising odours of food cooking and beer being served..

It took a conscious effort of will to avert my eyes from the place, and it wasn't until we turned a corner and the building was out of sight that I was able to shake my melancholy mood.

A few yards further down the road though, and my spirits were soaring once more as the sign away to our left informed us that we'd at last entered Drumnadrochit. The village, we were delighted to discover, was a place of real beauty. It had so moved a woman by the name of Shirly Brookes, that she'd felt compelled to pen a letter to 'PUNCH' magazine in which she said; *'If there were many places like Drumnadrochit, persons would be in fearful danger of forgetting that they ought to be miserable'*.

The briefest of glances about the 'town' were all it took to convince us her words were indeed a fitting tribute.

This was just as well. 'The briefest of glances' was about all we were willing to afford. Our throats were so parched that everything else, even the few moments it takes to appreciate one's surroundings, ceased to be of any great importance.

Time enough to explore later..

The restaurant, the name of which escapes me, exuded a warm and friendly atmosphere, even though it was a little on the quiet side, due no doubt to the fact that the only patrons consisted of a couple of elderly tourists and several equally aged locals. After slaking our thirst with a pint or two (or three!!!) of 'McKewan's 80 Shillings', we decided to move on in search of somewhere a shade more lively.

We made some enquiries of the chief bar-tender, an Australian who looked like he'd just stepped off the set of 'HOME AND AWAY', and he duly pointed us in the direction of "Drumnadrochit's Number One Night Spot...The Ben Leva Hotel"

"It's no more than ten minutes walk away", he assured us with a gleaming smile. "You'll find it no problem".

With the benefit of hindsight, I think perhaps he'd simply wanted to be rid of us as quickly and as painlessly as possible. A premises occupied by four young(ish) lads from Merseyside with loud voices (a necessity when attempting to hold a conversation above the throbbing, mind-numbing beat of the sounds at 'The Ritz' or 'The 5th Avenue', back home), and excitable personalities is not exactly regarded as being in any way 'tourist friendly'.

It wasn't until half an hour or so later (over thirty minutes of traipsing through fields of waist-high corn, wandering down dark, twisting lanes that appeared to lead nowhere, and crossing meadows populated with herds of aggressive-looking cattle) that we arrived, hot and decidedly bothered, at the entrance to the hotel.

Good ol' Richie volunteered to go around to the public bar and get the drinks in whilst the rest of us, our bodies sheened with sweat, collapsed at the base of an incredibly ancient oak tree that dominated the front lawns of the hotel. Its leafy green branches afforded the blessed relief of cool shade and seemed to be largely free of the bloodsucking midges that had begun to gather in madly-dancing swarms as dusk fell.

I'm not at all certain how long we sat there, hardly speaking, content to do nothing more than mentally and physically recharge the batteries. I do know however, that by the time Grant made the suggestion that we go inside into the bar, the air had turned noticeably colder and it was almost pitch dark.

The bar turned out to be spartan and unassuming, The only features being a battred old jukebox (a quick glance at its playlist revealed that its most recent record was 'CAMEO'S' (ahem) dance classic; 'WORD UP'), a pool table that he definitely seen better days, and a colour TV screen that jumped and flickered so much it hurt your eyes to look at it for more than a few seconds.

Even the bar-maids were indescribably plain. Just about the only way you could tell them apart from their burly, muscle-bound male counterparts was that the girls only had a *couple* of days beard growth.

We stayed there until the manager called Last Orders however, mostly because we were way too tired to seek out any alternative pub in the vicinity at that late hour.

When at last we had to make the long trek back to Borlum Farm, where you'll recall we'd set up camp, I guess it's fair to say we were all more than three parts drunk. The alcohol combined with the previous nights car journey had us not so much *walking* out of the bar, as *rocking* unsteadily, like a small flotilla of medieval galleons cast adrift upon turbulent seas.

The clean, crisp Highland air however, soon helped slap some degree of sense into our foggy brains, and from the moment we arrived back at the camp-site, we felt somehow invigorated and probably more awake than at anytime since we'd set foot in Scotland.

Suddenly, the night seemed impossibly young. Excitement and adventure lay all around us, hidden for now by the velvet cloak of darkness that enshrouded the ancient hills and mountains, the glens and surrounding woodland...And the black, brooding waters of the Loch beyond. Hidden. But as easily discovered as the cannibal faces, exotic animals or treasure chests cunningly camouflaged within a cartoon jungle or a desert island...The kind they used to run every week on the 'Puzzle Page' of 'WHIZZER 'N' CHIPS'.

You just had to know where to look or simply stare long enough so that they leapt right out and hit you. Either way, you *knew* they were there *somewhere* because the caption beneath the illustration told you it was so.

Standing there, outside the two sheets of weathered tarpaulin that doubled as our tents, on the wrong side of midnight, there was no such irrefutable confirmation...And yet, we couldn't have been more positive that enchantment was concealed within the confines of the ordinary if some Angelic Epiphany had showed up amidst whirling clouds and suns that emblazoned 'S̄r̄ek̄ Ānd̄ Ƴ̄r̄ S̄h̄all̄ F̄ind̄!!!' across the sky in letters of fire...

We just simply had to stare long enough, or know where to look...

3

I can't remember *who's* idea it was to head down to the Loch via the woods, so I think perhaps I'll lay the blame equally with each of us (with ther notable exception of Stevie Gee, who alone in our group announced he was dead on his feet, and wanted to cath up on some sleep). Whats undeniably true is that not one of raised a voice in protest, and before we knew exactly what we were doing, we'd charged off down the hill out into the heart of midnight...And what ever awaited us Beyond..



The dark, foreboding woodland that loomed before us was lit by no gleam but moonlight and a smattering of stars that peeked between gaps in the high, ragged clouds.

But even given that weak source of illumination, it was immediately clear that there was no obvious entrance into the woods...I'd half-expected there to be some fairy-tale pathway winding its way into the distance, but instead, a thick, seemingly impenetrable wall of trees stretched right across our line of vision. There was a virtual silence, what a horror-story writer would doubtless term 'graveyard quiet', and which was all the more unnerving for people like ourselves, brought up on the noise polluted streets of the big city. The only sounds reaching our ears were the soft, whispering breeze that caused late Summer leaves to flutter to the dew-drenched earth, and from somewhere far-off, a dog howling mournfully - an impossibly lonely sound that hung in the air like a note of long-lost hope.

I can't speak for the other two, but it was round about this point that I began to question the wisdom of us taking this route down to the Loch. I glanced back over my shoulder and found myself gazing longingly at the welcoming glow spilling from the windows of farms and cottages - in reality, only half-a-mile or so away from where I was stood - and yet, right then, that half-a-mile or so seemed to be the distance between worlds.

I was just about to suggest that we leave it until the following morning when the words died, half-formed on my lips - as we noticed a pair of almond-shaped eyes, glittering in the pale moonlight several feet away. They belonged to a small black cat - little more than a kitten - that seemed to have appeared from nowhere, and as we approached it, immediately began purring and rubbing itself up against our legs demanding our attention, although curiously, it wouldn't allow itself to be picked up. Every time one of us attempted to reach out and touch the animal it would race away, just out of reach, and it was as Richie was bending down trying to coax it that I noticed that directly behind the cat, there was now a gap between the trees that we'd presumably somehow missed before, and beyond that there appeared to be a path of sorts leading deep into the woods. The moment we noticed this, the cat began backing into the trees until, almost lost in shadow, it sat back on its haunches,

watching us intently and looking for all the world like it wanted us to follow it.

'You might think I'm going soft in the head,' Richie whispered softly, 'but I do believe that little ol' Putty Tat is gonna stay right there until we take up after it'. He must have immediately caught our expressions of unspoken skepticism because he quickly added, half-jokingly, 'Well...I mean, if Lassie can do it, why can't some lucky black cat?'

Grant pointed out that that kind of stuff only happened in the movies or in corny kids TV shows like '*CHAMPION - THE WONDER HORSE*', but still, as crazy as it sounds, (and not least because we were faced with no real alternative), we decided to take a chance and play Richie's hunch.

'Okay, I nodded my agreement and then grinned, knowing that they'd assume I'd watched *PLATOON*' one time too many, when I couldn't resist adding; 'you two walk on ahead. I'll take point'

I stood for a moment, watching my companions, first Richie, then Grant, take a few steps forward until they were swallowed up by the darkness beneath the trees, and I felt the smile freeze on my face, till it became devoid of all humour. The rictus grin of a *Mr. Sardonicus*. Try as I might, I couldn't shake the disconcerting notion that they'd walked straight into the gaping maw of some giant sleeping beast that had suddenly awakened and discovered it was hungry....

5

Upon entering the woods, the first thing I discovered was that the darkness, like the silence, wasn't *absolute*. The 'trail' before us was lit from time to time by oases of dappled greylight, and although at first, I had trouble just keeping my balance (once or twice I nearly tripped over a twisted root or a moss-covered stone, and it was a constant battle to avoid being whipped in the face by gnarled, leafless branches), I soon learned that if I ceased trying to tread carefully, as though I were walking the high-wire over Niagara Falls, and instead, strode confidently and kept my eyes fixed firmly upon the top of my brothers' shoulders in front of me, I could get by a lot easier.

I could no longer see the cat. I wasn't even sure if we were still directly or *indirectly* following it. None of us spoke a word. God knows, there was nothing even *remotely* Holy about the place, and yet we all instinctively *knew* that to enter into conversation would be somehow sacreligious. Like whistling in church.

The other thing that struck me, was that time seemed to be stripped of all meaning in those woods. It was almost as though the laws which governed the outside world had been permanently suspended beneath that rich, canopy of trees. After a while, it became impossible to tell if we'd been walking for mere minutes or whole *hours*. I was lulled into a state of near hypnosis, my thoughts had begun to wander aimlessly, and like a person who's been locked in a dark, sound-proofed room and forced to endure total sensory deprivation, my mind desperately sought some internal stimuli upon which it could feed.

All of a sudden, I'd found myself recalling an incident that had given me countless terror-filled nightmares as a child, but which I hadn't thought about in years...

6

I'd been just three months short of my 11th birthday when, midway through the school Autumn break, my dad had decided to get the kids out from under my mothers' feet by taking Grant, Kearry, Dale and I for a walk in the country, more specifically, Storeton Woods, one of my dads' own childhood haunts.

We set off on a grey, windless October morning, weighed down with nothing more burdensome than a packed lunch, an empty 'KWIK SAVE' bag for collecting fallen conkers, and a couple of 'LADYBIRD BOOK' guides to 'Woodland Birds' and 'Animals And Plants Of Britain'.

The journey from our hometown of New Ferry out to the sprawling green countryside of Brimstage and Barnston required a good two to three mile hike, but we unanimously voted to make the trek on foot. Not for us the dubious comforts afforded by a bus or train ride. No way. We were intrepid explorers. My dad was Professor Challenger, and we were his valiant party engaged in a quest to seek out Conan Doyle's 'LOST WORLD', amidst a vast, untamed wilderness that, to a child's eyes, seemed to stretch away into infinity.

After spending the morning walking the footpaths alongside the patchwork quilt of farmers fields - all but barren - the summer harvest long since gathered, we had stopped for a soft drink and a picnic in the beer garden of the appropriately named (to our minds at least) 'Traveller's Rest'.

An hour or so later, fully rested and refreshed, we had crossed the road and entered Storeton Woods.

My father had led the way, taking great delight in showing us the Secret Places and Personal Landmarks he remembered from when he was a kid, as well as pointing out species and traces of wildlife, so that we could each of us make a note in our respective books.

It was the very grandest of times.

The type of day you pray will last forever - but which all too soon draws to an end...And it seems no matter how much you've managed to cram into those few sacred hours, still there are so many things that must remain unseen, untouched and undone.

I'm sure it was partly in an attempt to counter these feelings of imminent regret, that we knew would haunt us like a troublesome spirit during the dark days that preceded our return to school, that Grant and I decided to climb one of the tallest trees in the whole of Storeton Woods - A giant Sycamore, who's highest branches were almost lost to sight in the late afternoon gloom.

'God, imagine the view you'd get from up there', my dad had muttered, as if speaking to himself. 'I'll bet you can see right across the Peninsula, all the way to the peaks of the Welsh Mountains.'

No sooner had the words escaped his lips than Grant had shot up the tree with all the grace and agility of a gawky nine-year-old, but with the self-confident, sure-footedness unique only to Spider Monkeys and pre-teenaged children who haven't yet been fully exposed to life's ironic, often cruel sense of humour.

I followed at a slower, more cautious rate after catching a glance at my father's face, etched with the twin-born expressions of pride at my younger brother's display of fearlessness and a wistful sadness that he **himself** no longer possessed the physical frame to climb up there and see the view firsthand.

Never having been blessed with a great head for heights, I didn't dare look down again until I'd reached a point where the Sycamore's branches began to grow increasingly thin and fragile, and I wasn't at all certain that they would support my body, skinny as it was in those days. Leaning back against the reassuring solidity of the tree-trunk, I lowered my gaze to glance between my battered 'DUNLOP'S'...

And almost immediately wished I hadn't.

Although my arms and legs had begun aching and I was almost out of breath, I'd assumed I was only at **most**, half-way up the tree. I'd steeled myself to accept the inevitable dizziness. Willed myself to fight the unsettling feelings that come with standing suspended on the branch of a tree, high above the ground. But once I'd realised that I was in fact, only ten feet or so from the top, I'd almost screamed aloud. The forest floor looked to be a million miles below me and it was hard not to believe that in my efforts to prove myself to my father, I'd inadvertently climbed onto the roof of the world. I felt too, a sudden stab of jealousy toward my other brother and sister, safe on the ground. Shrunken to the size of 'TOY-TOWN' figures, they'd been scrabbling about looking for pine cones, and I found myself wishing with all my heart that I was down there with them.

I was all set to begin the long climb back to terra firma, when a sudden shout from somewhere just above me served as a reminder that Grant had continued climbing even higher.

'Oh yeeerrrrsss!!!' he yelled. 'You **can** see the mountains from here. Come and have a look, Lee. You won't believe it, honest!!!'

The undisguised excitement in his voice caused me to tear my gaze away from the enticing scene below, and crane my neck to see how far above me my daredevil brother was. And my heart stopped as I saw that he was perched upon a branch that was so flimsy it looked scarcely capable of supporting someone half his size. As he stared out across a landscape that was invisible to me, his face lost in rapture, I could see the branch was bending beneath him like a dowsing rod that's just detected underground water.

I've often heard it said that sometimes, in the wake of a major disaster, a 'gifted' person will come forward and claim to have had a premonition about the tragedy, usually in the shape of a vision or a bad dream. I wouldn't say that I believe in that implicitly, but then neither do I dismiss the possibility entirely. What I do know for sure, is that you didn't have to possess the 'gift' of second sight to predict exactly what was going to happen in a matter of mere seconds to my brother, perched out on that treacherous branch. It was plain to anyone born with eyes to see.

And hot on the heels of that terribly obvious fact, came another, equally chilling....There was absolutely **nothing** either I, nor anyone else could do to prevent the inevitable.

That's not to say I didn't try, of course.

In a voice choked with panic, I tried to call out to Grant, warning him to climb down quickly. He either chose to ignore my pleas out of a sense of stubborn bravery, or else he didn't even hear me; his mind temporarily lost to the wondrous scenery before him. I began shouting down to my dad, for what purpose I can't precisely say, and I'd just made the mental decision to begin hauling myself further up the tree, intent on somehow carrying my brother down to safety, when I heard the sickening sound of wood snapping - A gut-wrenching noise that echoed in the still forest air like a pistol shot or a November firecracker.

And I'd known it was too late.

After that, everything seemed to happen in slow motion.

I've always thought it strange the way your mind manages to record so much information in what amounts to no more than a few fleeting seconds...Storing it for future reference, whether you choose to recall it or not.

I remember Grant fell past me without uttering a single cry. He simply dropped into space as silent as a showroom dummy, his face a mask of almost comic surprise - the amused/shocked expression of someone who has just opened up a gaily-coloured package and been confronted by a springing, cackling 'Jack-In-The-Box'. I remember his eyes were wide open and the pupils impossibly large. I remember his arms flailing wildly like a marionette at the mercy of a demented puppeteer. I remember the way his blonde hair was swept back from his forehead providing me with a vivid flash of how he would look in twenty years time. And most of all, I remember the brief disturbance of the air, the tiniest breeze like the soft whisper of a baby's breath, as Grant's body plummeted to the waiting earth below...

When he hit the floor, I thought he was dead.

More than that, I was **certain** of it.

My dad's anguished cries as he kneeled at the crumpled body of his son, erased any lingering doubts. I was powerless to move. I could only look on, like a spectator in the theatre's back row, unable to tear his eyes from the heartbreaking tragedy taking place on stage. A feeling of unreality washed over me, and it was only when my father screamed at me to go and get help that I was able to snap out of it and get myself moving again.

Although, even as I climbed back down, I was positive Grant was beyond help, I was glad to have something with which to keep my mind occupied. I knew it was only a matter of time before the hot floods of tears came, and once they started, I was sure they would never stop. And so I got moving.

I raced headlong through the woods whilst my dad carried Grant in his arms and Kearry and Dale ran bewildered in his wake. I reached the main road and managed to flag down the first motorist I saw.

Two nightmarish hours later, when I'd finally succumbed to the inevitable outpourings of grief, Grant was sitting up in a hospital bed, grinning like he'd just been told he'd won an all-expenses paid trip to 'DISNEYWORLD'.

The doctors stated that he was probably saved from serious injury or worse by the carpet of fallen leaves, pine needles and damp earth. He was kept in for overnight observation, but aside from a lump the size of a duck-egg on the back of his head, he was perfectly okay.

I couldn't believe it.

None of us could.

It seemed too good to be true, and I was almost afraid to give voice to my heartfelt relief lest it tempt fate and prove false. He was back home the following day, and the incident was soon consigned to Walker Family Folklore, a tale to be dusted down and related around the Christmas Tree, or upon the occasion of somebodys birthday...And not long after that, it was all but forgotten.

But in my dreams...

In my dreams, the memory remained as vivid as ever...And worse, like a wound that's been left untreated, it began to fester and turn bad...

The dream, when it came...

I'm climbing the tree in Storeton Woods. Grant is just above me. It's near dark, and a howling wind dances among the leaves of the Sycamore. It takes all my strength just to cling on to the branches and even as I do so, strips of brittle bark come away in my hand like the dried-out skin of something long-dead. Someone calls my name. I look down. There's nobody there. It's just me and Grant and the darkwood. And the whispering voices of people who aren't there.

So I continue to climb. Grant tells me I won't believe the view from the top. The Welsh mountains marching to the misted horizon. Rivers and streams, sunbright and sparkling. Farmers fields ripe for the harvest.

I hurry to join him on a branch that's impossibly thin and seems to be made of rubber. He smiles as I clamber up. Holds out his arms and points towards the valley below...

And finally, I see...I see the 'Great And Wondrous View' revealed in all its glory:

The peaks of the mountains belching forth flame and thick, poisonous-looking clouds of smoke high into the air, turning the sky black and causing birds to fall in mid-flight.

The rivers and streams, blood red and teeming with silver fish, floating belly-up...

The farmers fields, alive with rotted Jack O' Lanterns and thorny bushes drooping with the weight of their fruit that throbs and pulsates like something inside is trying to get out...and in the centre of each and every pasture stands a single scarecrow that grins obscenely at the dead crows gathered at its feet.

Grant suddenly shrieks wildly and then leaps from the tree, and I try to grab him, but I miss and he lands on the deadfall below with an audible thump.

I peer down into the semi-twilight, and at first I can't see anything, and then I spot his body lying with its limbs hideously askew and I know this time my brother must be dead, there was no way anything could be that shattered and still be alive, and then his eyes flicker open, milky white and pupilless, but glowing with a sickly luminescence. He smiles, revealing a set of jagged black teeth, and reaches out his twisted arms toward me, and although I'm 40 odd feet above him, I can feel the heat of his foetid breath on my face and hear his sibilant whisper as though he were stood right next to me; 'Come down and play with me, Lee. Come and share the view.'

And then I know that it's not really my brother lying down there. It's the Bogeyman. The Night Terror. The Thing That Gibbers And Capers In The Shadow-Filled Corners Of Every Child's Bedroom, and having seen the realisation dawn, He begins to giggle, a sound like water burbling over dangerous rocks. 'I promise you Lee, you'll never want to leave. Never EVER!!! It really IS a view to DIE for!!!'

And then I'm falling,

falling...

falling towards that moon-white upturned face

falling..

into the out-stretched arms of the malevolent dead

falling...

falling...



...Falling straight into the back of my brother as I literally stumbled back into reality. It took me a few seconds to regain my bearings and shake off the remnants of that nightmare memory, but I soon discovered that the reason I'd nearly fallen flat on my face was that Grant and Richie had come to a shuddering halt. The reason for that was pretty soon obvious too. They'd lost sight of both the trail and the black cat, and now in the middle of the wildwood, we were completely and utterly lost.

Up ahead we could see nothing but a mass of low bushes and straggly trees that seemed to be fighting each other for breathing space. There were no landmarks we could use to guide us whatsoever, and although I was fairly certain we couldn't be that far away from the Loch shore, there was no way of knowing precisely which route to take. For all we knew we could be walking round and round in circles.

'Oh great. Now what are we going to do?' I enquired of my two companions.

'Maybe we should try and turn back' Richie suggested, and the way he said it begged no real argument.

When we turned around however, we were in for another shock.

The 'path' we had taken to get this far had seemingly disappeared. There was no obvious way back.

'Maybe we should have made like "Hansel And Gretel" and put down a trail of 'breadcrumbs', I said seeking to lighten the dark mood that had predictably descended like a pre-dawn mist. Grant and Richie regarded me with an expression of disgust. I think we all began to feel afraid at this point.

The effects of the alcohol we'd consumed had long since worn off, and with it had gone a healthy slice of our courage and sense of adventure. It had turned bitterly cold and although no-one spoke their thoughts aloud, I'm sure we were all wishing for the same thing; to be tucked up safe and snug in our sleeping bags like Stevie Gee.

It was Grant, ever the practical member of our party, who broke the depressing silence. 'I think we'd be better off trying to find our way back the way we came', he said, and whilst there were no signs of any break in the underbrush as far as we could see, we told ourselves that if we attempted to re-trace our steps, sooner or later, we would come across the 'trail'. 'I mean,' Grant spoke again, 'the trees couldn't have shifted their roots to cover the track, could they? We all laughed nervously, although to this day, I rather suspect we each of us, at that moment believed that was exactly what *had* happened. We prepared to get moving.

And that was when Richie spotted the cat again.

'Hang on a minute, there it is' he yelled suddenly, nearly causing Grant and I to experience heart failure. 'It looks like it's been waiting for us'.

It seems faintly ridiculous writing this now, but I have to say, as we strained to see where Richie was pointing, the cat, revealed by a shaft of silver moonlight to be sitting upon a rotted piece of deadfall, did indeed appear to be watching us with an air of practised patience. It licked its paw nonchalantly and then fixed us with its shining, marble-like eyes, and once again, by unspoken agreement, we approached the animal, all thoughts of heading back through the woods forgotten. It was almost as though we were disciples humbly seeking guidance from some learned guru in the shape of a black cat, barely out of kitten-hood.

When we were only a couple of feet or so away, it leaped down off the fallen log and repeated its ritual of rubbing up against our legs and then sprinting out of reach, simply refusing to be picked up, but maintaining a position directly in front of us so that, snigger if you will, it appeared to be leading us to somewhere it wanted us to be. Once more, the cat's presence had a calming, almost hypnotic effect upon the three of us, and before too long, we'd lapsed into our former state so that we were pretty much near-sleepwalking.

I was desperately trying to concentrate on something good. I didn't want my mind to tune into another episode of the 'Screamin' Meemies'....and I had just about succeeded in conjuring up a long-neglected memory of the time I'd managed to get a date with Claire Drews, the former girl of my dreams...when without warning, the air was rent with the a godawful screeching and I felt rather than saw, a thin black shape dart between my feet and melt away into the darkness behind me. I was about to raise my voice to alert the others but it turned out I didn't need to, because that's when the earth beneath us began to crumble and the three of us were very nearly sent tumbling over a cliff and onto the dry, rock-strewn river-bed thirty feet or so below.

We held on to each other in blind panic and backed away as fast as we could, slipping and sliding like we were skating on ice, and we didn't dare let go until we stood on solid ground once more. Quite how we all survived unscathed I'll never know. Another couple of steps, maybe just the *one*, and we'd have been walking on nothing but thin air...It was a straight drop, and it didn't take a great leap of imagination to picture our broken bodies, lying at the bottom, the jagged, white rocks stained with our lifeblood that would appear ink-black in the moonlight.

I'll never know either, quite how we'd failed to see the 'cliff', in reality the bank of twenty foot wide river. Even though it was surrounded by trees, the chasm was wide enough to render it visible from a considerable distance away. Or so you would have thought. But of course, we'd been in a near-somnambulistic-state. I believe it quite likely that we could have walked right past 'THE RAINBOW BAR AND GRILL' brightly lit, newly refurbished, and open for business in the centre of those woods and not even raised so much as an eyebrow.

Does that sound crazy?

Then allow me to sink a little further into *total* lunacy.

As we stood there, on the edge of the precipice, trying to control an attack of the shakes, the notion that we'd nearly been led to our doom by following that damned black cat hadn't yet surfaced. We were only thankful and relieved that we'd escaped with our bodies and minds intact, and we took several minutes to get a hold of ourselves. It was only when we heard that unholy screeching sound again emanating from somewhere back in the woods behind us that the penny dropped. We looked at each other, and I swear you could almost see the fear rolling off us in waves. It may have been my imagination, but I now recalled that when the cat had shot past me on the cliff edge, it had sounded triumphant, as if by luring us this far, it had achieved its aims. Now, the screeching sounded as though it were tinged with bitter disappointment. That, and a determination that it would not fail a second time.

'Oh my God', I spoke unsteadily like a man with a bad case of the d.t.'s. 'It was the cat. That friggin' black cat led us here. It wants us dead!!!'

I only had to look at Grant and Richies faces to know that I'd simply given voice to their own fears. And you better believe we ran then. With no clear idea of where we were going, we charged through the underbrush, paying no heed to the flailing branches, or the treacherous deadfall. You've heard of the saying 'fear gave us wings'. Well, I guess that is one of the few overused metaphors that actually rings true, because it seemed we'd hardly started our headlong dash out if the woods before we broke out from beneath the canopy of trees, and found ourselves back in the field where we'd stood, it seemed like whole centuries earlier, searching for an entrance to the wildwood. We didn't stop to rest there though. We kept on running and only Grant had the nerve to glance back to see that the cat was sitting at the wood's edge, watching us with ill-

disguised malevolence. It licked its lips and though of course it might have been no more than a trick of the light, he said later he could have sworn it was smiling...

Oh. I know what you're thinking.

You're thinking nothing happened here that couldn't be explained in purely rational terms.

And you know what. You're right. I couldn't agree more. A combination of alcohol, tiredness and over-active imaginations fuelled by an undeniably frightening experience (there was nothing imaginary about us almost breaking our necks by falling over a cliff), had resulted in us, perhaps not surprisingly, given the location, latching onto a supernatural explanation for a perfectly mundane set of circumstances.

Anyone who goes traipsing through the woods without even a torch in the middle of the night, on the banks of Loch Ness, off all places, is bound to encounter major difficulties.

And as for the The cat... Well I'm sure it is correct to say its 'involvement' was entirely coincidental. A cat is just a cat, right? No-one seriously believes they are endowed with strange powers, do they?

Maybe in the time of the Ancient Egyptians, when such creatures were regarded with superstitious awe, and were worshipped as Gods.

Or maybe in the 17th Century, when they were universally assumed to be Witches' Familiars, and incarnations of The Devil.

But not anymore. Not in *this* day and age.

And yet, more than three years on, the fact is, I often find myself waking bolt upright from a nightmare, my body drenched in a cold sweat, my hands shaking uncontrollably. The dreams are bad enough. But I guess I can learn to live with them. After all, I spend a lot of my time writing this magazine, and pondering upon things that should inspire greater degrees of terror than some mere case of the 'Night-Fear's'.

I should be able to let the whole incident die a natural death, and I *would* if it wasn't for one thing that continues to plague my mind. The one thing that serves to beg me question either my sanity, or else the normality of the events that took place in those woods on the banks of Loch Ness...

I've never spoken of this before to *anyone*, and I'm not at all certain that to do so now is either wise or even necessary. But, what the hell... If writing about it helps me sleep a little easier at night, by getting it out of my system...

The terrible thing happened, (if it wasn't just in my mind), as we were running from the edge of the cliff in blind terror... It began with me thinking I'd heard a soft shuffling directly behind me...

I remember telling myself as I pumped my arms and legs for all they were worth, whatever you do, don't look behind you. Just keep your eyes faced front and you'll get out of this. Don't look behind. Good advice. Sound advice. To do so would be pointless. To do so might result in you losing your balance. To do so might help you break your neck as easily as if you'd fallen over the precipice. I'm not going to turn around. No way. Not me. Eyes front. Best foot forward.

And so obviously, a few seconds later, I found myself turning my head to the left a little. Just to take a little peek. Make sure nothing's behind me. Not that there will be. Nothing but more trees. That's all. Just a little peek and then we can get on with getting the hell out if here...

And I turned to look... And saw, or *thought* I saw, something back there amongst the trees.

Something that had no business being in a wood this side of a Sam Raimi movie.

Something that resembled a bodiless face hanging, suspended in the air.

A hideously familiar face, its skin the colour of a white candle in a dark room, grave-pale. Its eyes were blank, like the eyes of a stone statue, though they seemed to swim in some kind of milky fluid, and they glowed brightly. It was gnashing its long and pointed teeth, and they clicked together like a pair of castanets. Its hair was blonde and swept away from its forehead... There was no doubt about it. It was the ghost of my nine-year-old brother, who'd once fallen from a tree but didn't die.

And when it opened its mouth to speak I thought I might go completely mad.

'Don't run away, Lee' it implored my rapidly retreating form. 'Stay here with me. We can play here forever. There are lots of trees to climb. SSSOOOO many trees from which to see The View. You remember the View don't you? STAY HERE WITH ME!!!'

I'm sure I must have screamed then. I'm sure I did, though I don't suppose anyone would have heard me above the cries of fear issuing from my terrified companions; Richie and Grant

I carried on running pell mell through the woods. I don't think I ever broke my stride

And I never looked back again.

I'm certain now, I imagined the whole thing.

I just wish the nightmares would stop, and I could sleep nights.

In the meantime, I'll console myself with the thought that whatever happens, nothing will ever succeed in getting me back into that godforsaken wildwood. As long as I steer well clear of that place I'll be just fine. Just fine. And so what if I sometimes think I hear a gentle scratching at my bedroom window, like something wants to come in. That's only the branches of next door neighbours tree, and there's nobody perched there, grinning at the moon and whispering about how great the view is....

Lee Walker

New Ferry, Merseyside. 18th September, 1995.

MYSTERY CATS OF THE WEST

"There are three species of wild big cat to be found in Cornwall - the Lynx, the Puma and the Black Panther."

The above sentence, which now sounds extraordinary, will probably appear quite commonplace to readers of natural history books in the early years of the twenty first century. Nowadays, the statement could serve as a memo at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Last week, widow Rosemary Rhodes drove me up to her farm, Ninestones, high on Bodmin Moor in remotest inland Cornwall. As her blue Landrover swung up the drive towards the house, a young black bullock charged madly out towards us, then veered away and smashed through a neighbour's fence. Mrs Rhodes jumped out and tried to head it off, shouting apologies to her neighbour whose horses were galloping round and round their field in evident panic. Near the farmhouse, a beautiful Palomino whinnied in alarm, pacing up and down.

"I've never seen the animals behave like this"! Mrs Rhodes called out. Another neighbour, Don Rogers, a burly countryman, ran up to lend a hand.

"It's the big cat, back again" he cried in alarm.

No cat appeared, and soon everything was calm once more.

"I daresay it's retreated along that hedge", Mrs Rhodes told me, pointing to a line of thorns at the field's end. "There are all kind of gulleys and hollow ways along which they can travel".

In the farmyard, chickens of every kind, fat geese and upright Khaki Campbell ducks greeted us with a variety of cries. Inside the house a pack of dogs surged around me, some belonging to Rosemary, some to Don. Cross-bred bloodhounds had been bought as potential cat trackers, but to no avail.

Emotionally, Mrs Rhodes told me of repeated attacks by big cats on her sheep, attacks which eventually forced her to give up sheep rearing altogether. Some animals had survived, in a shaken condition, but most of them had perished horribly. Their ribs had been rasped clean of flesh by a big cat's barbed tongue, their necks ripped open and their ears ripped off. Blows from strong paws had broken their necks. One sheep had been found near death with its lungs full of blood. A puma may have been surprised before finishing its kill and subsequent meal. Like a vampire bat, a puma loves to drink hot blood.

The story is now a familiar one - wild animal pets turned loose in moorland districts and now roaming unrestricted and unrecognised by any authority. Faced with innumerable complaints from farmers, the Exeter branch of the Ministry of Agriculture have only recently made an attempt to assess the damage done to livestock by big cats.

"There may be pumas and other big cats around, but on one's ever seen one kill a sheep", a spokesman told me, over the 'phone. "Nevertheless, we have made a report, but it's an internal report, not to be released to press or public for a while".

This is a start, at least, and compares favourably with the attitude of jocular scepticism at the London Min. of Ag. H.Q whenever the subject of big cats crops up. Perhaps the authorities fear that the tourist trade might suffer if the public grew aware of the menace of big cats in the West Country. Certainly, Rosemary Rhodes regarded it as a small triumph when a vet's post mortem on one of her sheep openly declared the cause of death to have been a broken neck, thus implying that someone or some thing had done the breaking. Some farmers, I learned, pretend that cat-attacks are the work of dogs, so as to claim insurance without any trouble.

Over a mug of coffee, my back to a chattering parrot in its cage, I listened as Mrs

Rhodes and Don told me of the three varieties of Cornish big cats. Mrs Rhodes spoke in the loud, cheerful confident tones of a gentlewoman farmer, while Don Rogers conversed in the quiet, gentle West Country voice of a man of action, fond of "foxing and rabbiting", every "they" a "they'm", and every "we" a "we'm". The countryside in which Don feels so much at home is a wild one. Open hills sweep from horizon to horizon, their flanks prickly with gorse, their crowns of mesa-like stone. Streams search their way between oddly protruding boulders, down to the swift-moving River Fowey below. For hundreds of years, this has been grazing country for hardy breeds of sheep and cattle. Since the nineteen fifties, however, many of the hills have been given over to forestry plantations. Alas for the progressive dreamers of the post-war years! What nightmares they have inflicted on us all! Architects happily designed tower block estates innocent of the fact that within a generation some of these would have become abodes of crime and terror, whose tenants rush in and out, speaking to no one and chaining their doors against marauding youths. Forestry plantations are the tower blocks of our moorlands and wild places. Who would think, as foresters purchased land and invested in pine cones, that these dark satanic woods would one day provide cover for fearsome beasts of prey? Wild panthers and muggers did not exist in Britain when our Brave New World was planned.

A private forestry plantation looms above Ninestones Farm, and here dwell, each in a separate part of the wood, the black panther, the puma and the lynx. While "lamping" in these woods at night, searching for rabbits by torchlight, Don Rogers had been alarmed by shining eyes, like bluish cats' eyes, only much larger. He had heard growls, screams and other panther-like sounds. Adept at imitating animals, Don demonstrated to me his way of calling up a fox by imitating the squeal of a rabbit in distress. This was done by extending thumb and forefinger and sucking the gap between as if playing a harmonica. One night, as he did this, a fox came running up, and then kept on running. A black panther leapt from the gloom after the fox, giving Don the fright of his life. This was his first real sighting of a big cat. Later he found that any fox killed and left for half an hour would be gone on his return. Both leopards and pumas are fond of dog-meat, and foxes are apparently part of their menu.

Safe in the farmhouse, Mrs Rhodes showed me videos she had made of eyes shining in the dark and collie-size black panthers, with long tails, racing through her fields. She had also made plaster-casts of paw prints and had become an expert tracker.

"People think it's strange that I see so many big cats, but it's because they're breeding in the woods", she told me. "A Master of Fox Hounds saw a lynx running across the road last year, and I've seen what I think are lynx tracks. Don has seen Lynxes - he's seen all three sorts of big cat. Of course, a lynx is small and harmless compared to the brown pumas and the big black panthers. Last autumn, I saw a dear little black animal, a panther cub, playing on a bank in the forest. It was there in the same place, day after day, until finally it stopped coming. Don approached it on foot one day, but he heard an awful growling from the Mother, up in the undergrowth, so he retreated to the Landrover. I've had black panthers running through the actual farmyard, behind the house! One took shelter in my Dutch barn for a while, when streaked away over the fields. Another time, I heard a noise outside, and I went out with a torch, the dog with me. I saw a big pair of bluish eyes in the dark, and these eyes began moving towards me at a terrific pace! I flew back to the house and slammed the door! I think the panther was after my dog".

I hoped that the black panthers of Bodmin Moor might prove to be dark-coloured pumas, but Mrs Rhodes is convinced that they are black leopards. Although the black panther is a colour-variety of the spotted leopard, it usually does not "breed true" in its tropical homelands of South East Asia and Africa. Spotted cubs and black cubs are often seen together in the jungle. But in Bodmin Moor, and everywhere in Britain where big cats live wild, only black animals and brown animals are seen - panthers and pumas.

Some naturalists, such as big cat expert Nigel Brierly, believe that a black variety of puma is at large in Britain. In his book, "They Stalk by Night" (Yeo Valley Productions), he argues this case so convincingly as to make the presence of black pumas on Exmoor seem beyond doubt. Yet on the cover is a photo taken on Bodmin Moor that shows a most leopard-like panther sitting on a flat boulder surveying the valley below.

Di Francis, another writer of Big Cat books, believes that the British Black Panther is an undiscovered indigenous wild beast, and identifies it with the Ghost Black Dogs of folklore, such as Old Shuck, Shrieker or Trash. (Lovers of Geoffrey Williams' "Molesworth" stories will remember that "Trash is a disreputable lion"). But Rosemary Rhodes and Don Rogers are convinced that the Bodmin panthers are indeed black leopards.

If true, as seems likely, this is disturbing news, since the leopard is far more likely to turn man-eater than is the puma. I too am convinced that the Bodmin panther is a leopard. Don Rogers has had no experience of zoo leopards, yet when asked to imitate the beast he heard, he gave a cough followed by a grunt exactly like recordings of leopards familiar to me. He has also heard pumas screaming, on separate occasions, and has never seen black and brown cats together. Bluish eyes are a characteristic of the melanistic or black variety of leopard, and not of a puma.

The controversial "Sun" photograph of two cat-like animals on a wall was taken on Mrs Rhodes' farm.

"Reporters from the 'Sun' were absolute gentlemen". She said. "But I had less time for the chap from the 'Mirror'. He asked me if I had any trouble with skunks here!"

Many English people, reared on a diet of Walt Disney cartoons believe that American animals such as skunks, gophers and chipmunks live wild in England. However, as so many American animals (mink, pumas, grey squirrels and bullfrogs) now do live in England, thanks to escapes and introductions, I think that the man from the "Mirror" can be pardoned for his mistake.

Introductions of foreign wild animals have followed social trends. Eighteenth and nineteenth century aristocrats released exotic wildfowl and rare pheasants to beautify their estates. Such men gave the Mandarin Duck, Golden Pheasant, Canada Goose and Little Owl to Britain. Fifty-odd years ago, would-be businessmen set up fur farms and inadvertently saddled Britain with pestilential escapees such as the mink, muskrat (now wiped out) and the coypu rat. In the nineteen seventies, tough working men, scrap-dealers and self-made builders were in the ascendancy. These heroes imported savage animals to suit their temperaments, and it is thanks to them that ferocious predators are roaming England for the first time in four hundred years. When laws were passed to safeguard the public from dangerous pets, these men simply turned their animals loose.

Unlike the wolf of historic times, the puma and panther may prove impossible to exterminate. Moving stealthily by night, these animals attack livestock even in comparatively settled parts of their native lands. Leopards forage on the outskirts of Capetown, and a hillbilly in Kentucky recently visited the "little shack out back", opened the door and a puma sprang out!

"Now these animals are breeding and being born in the wild, they've become like mink - impossible to get rid of", Mrs Rhodes confirmed my fears. "They can only be controlled. I wonder if anyone in England could train puma-hunting dogs like the ones in America were imported, they'd have to spend ages in quarantine.

"Having said all this, you'll probably think I'm mad, but I'd never shoot one of the big cats. I'd be furious if someone shot one on my land! They're beautiful to look at, but they're changing the way people live in the countryside. Stock has to be kept near the house, and whenever you go out, you're looking around all the time. At one time, people would have family picnics up on the moors, and the children would run around, pick berries or dam the stream. Well, those days are gone! The big cats seem extra alert when children are around. One day, there'll be a tragedy, and only then will the government sit up and take notice.

Other farmers on Bodmin Moor looked on the big cats with decidedly unsentimental eyes.

"I'd need a good rifle", one said wistfully. "Shotguns are no good. If you wounded a big cat, you'd have trouble. I'd want a clear shot for the shoulder part of it, rib cage sort of thing. Shoot it in the back part, and you're only gonna wound it. Don't quote me on this. One farmer spoke out like me, and the Animal Liberation people wrote him a threatening letter, dinnum? Called him a 'scumbag' and all kind o'names. Ah, they'm might curse the farmer, but what'd they'm do if'n un woke up one day and there was no food to eat"?

Everybody seemed annoyed at the ribald attitude of the Min. of Ag. people in London.

"If I catch one o' they pumas I'll let it go in Whitehall"!

P.C Peter Keen, dog handler at the police station in Bodmin, has over the years become an expert on wild big cats in Cornwall. He has seen pumas, with their young, three times on Bodmin Moor. One night, last November, beside a forestry plantation, he surprised a puma cub in the light of his torch. The he saw the mother approach, and hurried back to his car.

"I'm nervous walking on the Moor now in twilight", he confessed. "The pumas I saw were mostly dark brown in colour. I've also seen a black panther with its cub, and I'm very much afraid that, yes, the black panthers here are leopards. One day there's bound to be a tragedy" he echoed Mrs Rhodes' words.

Last year, Peter Keen spent his holiday time on a fact-finding mission to the puma country of America's Far West. There he spoke to farmers, foresters and Department of Agriculture wild animal control officers. He saw no wild pumas in America, however, now has compiled a report on his puma findings, and my write a book on the subject.

To look at, Peter Keen is tall, somewhat gaunt and grey-haired, his face solemn, his dark eyes shining with practical intelligence. If there are no big cats in the West Country, then he and hundreds of other practical men must be suffering from mass hallucinations of a kind unknown to England since the mass-dancing frenzies of peasants in the Middle Ages. While in the grip of hallucinations, farmers must be killing their own stock and re-creating the feeding styles of big cats upon the carcasses. This must be the case, if there are no wild big cats in the West Country.

"I can give evidence in court that can put a man behind bars, but nothing I say can convince the Min. of Ar that wild big cats live here". Peter Keen remarked. "If a farmer does shoot one, the Min of Ag is sure to say 'Oh good, the Beast of Bodmin is dead, so your troubles are over"! They don't realise we have a breeding population of big cats here".

Peter Keen has now discovered traces of big cat habitation in the semi-deserted grounds of St Lawrence's Hospital in the town of Bodmin. A big cat has been seen there, and trees bear fresh scratch marks daily. He took shook his head sadly, and spoke of impending tragedies.

Before leaving Bodmin Moor, I called on one more farmer, John Goodenough, whose hillside farm, Goodaven, is reached by a narrow home-made wooden bridge over the River Fowey. Nearby, where the Fowey, narrow in this place, runs beside the road, the farmer's son Robert has erected a notice on a gate: "DANGER - BIG WILD CATS - KEEP OFF".

That beats "BEWARD OF THE BULL" by a long mark, although there is a bull on the farm.

John Goodenough is a picture book farmer of the good old days, with grey bushy sidewhiskers - a regular John Bull with a West Country accent. He came to Bodmin Moor from Somerset, and married a Cornish girl. Goodaven farmhouse, where no cream tea tourist guzzler has yet set foot, is a cosy old fashioned place of low beamed ceilings, steep stairs and wood fires. A huge old family Bible reposes on the cluttered drawer top. Over a Sunday dinner of roast beef, potatoes and Yorkshire Pudding, the Goodenoughs, father and son, explained their big cat

problems.

"The cats have destroyed over a thousand pounds worth of stock on this farm", I was told. "This year, they got a dozen sheep and three calves. Take a look at these pictures"!

I was amazed to see the photographs of the calves. In life they had been sturdy rough-coated black Aberdeen Angus - Galloway crossbreeds, ideal hardy cattle for moorland. By the time a big cat had finished with them, only their heads remained untouched, lolling piteously from skeleton bodies with cleanly polished rib cages. Their hides had been rolled back like blankets, their bodily flesh cleaned away as if by a skilled butcher. An immensely powerful animal must have done this. Farmer Goodenough agreed with me when I pointed out that no bones had been chewed or cracked as if by a dog - all had been rasped by the scouring tongue of a big cat.

"What's more, the cat took a calf that size in its mouth, an' jumped over a stone wall! Another one did the same with a full-grown sheep. And when a neighbour's turkey got took, he found the bones hanging in the branches of a tree! I told the Min of Ag. people, 'Come here and see for yourselves', but no, they'm prefer their coffee and central heating."

Mrs Goodenough broke in to say that she had seen a half-grown black panther "tip toeing along the top of a wall. They'm very elusive, innum?" Her husband took up the tale once more.

"A young man I know walked down over the fields and nearly stumbled over the cat as it lay in a hollow, after just having killed a sheep. It'd had a bellyfull and gone to sleep, and when he came in on it, jumped up with a snarl and made off, give the boy an awful shock! When I say 'boy' he's twenty or thirty year old, but everyone is a boy here! We call 'em boys till they're eighty, my dear.

"Another feller I know went out with a torch at night to look at 'is sheep, and he shone the torch on a rabbit. In a second, a big puma leapt in front of him, picked up the rabbit and bounded away! Terrible fright, 'e had. At first, when I'd go into town to the market, the other farmers woud all joke with me, 'How's your big cats gettin' on?', they say. 'I just three sheep myself'. It's no laughing matter now. Something or t'other's bound to happen.

"One night, we heard a terrible screaming. Us'd never heard nothing like it before. I thought, 'It's some young woman from the Jamaica Inn has gone out at night and a man is murdering her"! But then the scream stopped, an' came back three times. I realised it was a cat's scream. It made my hair stand on end"!

With a shudder, he tried, not very successfully, to imitate the cry of a female puma calling to her mate. In America, a puma's scream is very often mistaken for the cry of a woman being attacked. As at Ninestones, pumas and black panthers evidently stalked his land. He had never seen brown and black cats together. Bones found in a tree suggests a leopard. African leopards normally pull their prey up into the branches, sometimes leaving them dangling aloft for future meals.

Our own meal concluded, Farmer Goodenough put on a coat and led me out to his fields to show me the sites of the various kills and the places where big cats had been seen. I followed him up a tussocky hillside scarred with Landrover tracks and dotted with gorse bushes. Black cattle grazed peacefully.

"See all these gulleys and ditches - that's where the cats go, and no once can see 'em. This is my fault - I planted these trees here, for a windbreak, and now the cats use it for cover. You'd never see 'em, down in there. Now look across that valley - you couldn't see a house cat on that hill, could you? Yet the farmer there could see the big cat from there, in this very field here, and he 'phoned me up. I goes over and there's a big black cat playing and jumping around, within a gunshot of us"!

Hopping over tracts of mud, and dodging prickly gorse bushes, I followed the doughty farmer as best I was able. The land continued to rise, and soon I could see the forestry plantation beyond Mrs Rhodes' farm, Ninestones. John Goodenough

"You must never get between a cat and its young one, or between a cat and its kill. Always stand upright and don't turn your back on a big cat. One of these days, a farmer's going to find a sheep killed, he'll bend over it, not realising the cat is nearby, and there'll be a tragedy. The big cats seem to have little fear of man - perhaps it's because they're descended from tame animals. Come on in the Landrover, and I'll show you some of the places where I've seen the cats".

For nearly an hour, we drove around. Gazing into the dark, menacing canyons made by rows of pine trees, I felt that anything could happen here. I'd rather walk through all the tower-block estates of London, including both Stonebridges (Hackney and Harlesden) rather than venture between those trees. As a contrast to the black woods, logs and boulders beside the many trackways wore mossy coats of brightest green.

Mrs Rhodes reminded me of a Red Indian, as she half-leaned out of the window, driving yet scanning the mud for footprints. Once she stopped to show me the slots made by a big red deer. She and Don had often seen the big cats stalking the deer. The bank where the black cub used to play was pointed out to me. It was in a cleared, tussocky, stumpy piece of ground where deer came to graze. Here and there, the private forestry company had made artificial ponds lined with black plastic, for a water supply in case of fire. A big cat had been seen drinking from one of these ponds, where now large golden orfe, a happier introduction, swam lazily around.

Eventually we returned to the farmhouse for a delicious meal of home-made Cornish pasties and cake.

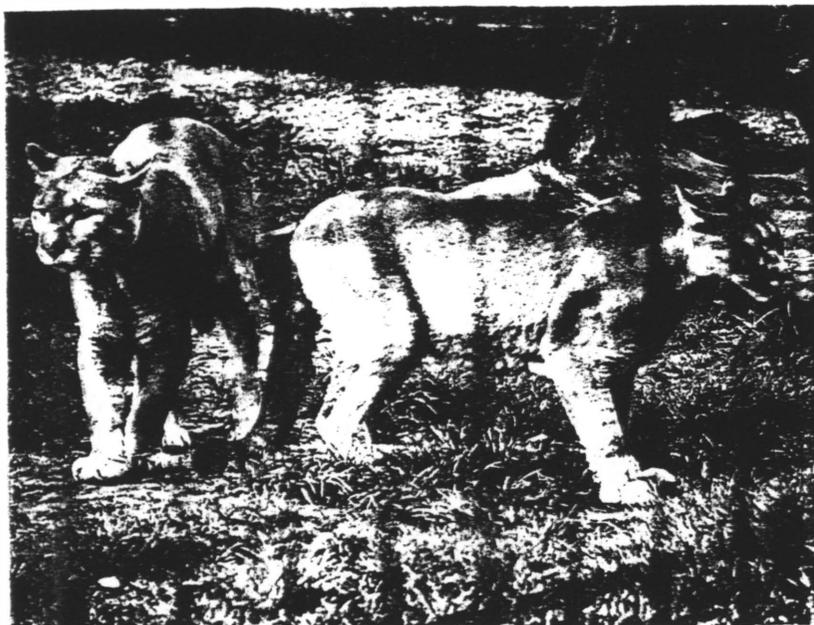
"There's nothing boughten here", Mrs Rhodes said, in the tones of her native Dartmoor.

Don and his wife sat down to food and tea, another neighbour looked in, and we all talked Big Cat. Apparently, Big Cat legends are traditional to Bodmin Moor, and I heard for the first time of Sibbly Back Cat of age-old local fame. Mrs Rhodes and I wondered if it could have been a lynx, for William Cobbett, the angry farmer-writer of Georgian days, had seen a wild lynx in England as a boy. His parents punished him for talking about it.

"I was within ten yards of a cat once", Don told me. "I was looking at a sheep kill on this very farm - 'twas a disembowelled ewe with triplets scattered about, when all at once I looked up, and there was the cat, a black panther, crouched on the stone wall ready to spring. I jumped up and made a noise, and it leaped away in a flash. 'Twas black all over, as far as I could make out, but it was smothered in mud, as it'd been a hard kill".

Mrs Rhodes bemoaned the loss of her sheep.

"Poor Ninestones, will you ever be a farm again"?



showed me scarred land where he said peat had been dug for fuel in the recent past. Then he pointed, "That's where I see the cats go, again that marsh. It's changing all our ways of life here. I keep the sheep close to the house, and take care all the time, looking around. I have to go out and get all the calves into the shed at night. After Christmas, it'll be the lambing season, and with lambs being born out in the fields, the smell of blood is bound to attract the cats. Some farmer will go out to his sheep as usual, before dawn, with his torch and walking stick, and run right into a big cat"!

We completed a circular tour back to Goodaven farmhouse once more, and the kindly farmer drove me to that lonely outpost of civilisation, Jamaica Inn, where I was staying. There the only pumas and leopards are stuffed ones in the hostel museum. Later I walked to the fringe of Goodaven Farm at dusk, as live bait for a puma or panther, but saw none. Perhaps I didn't look delicious enough.

(END)



Papillon Hall: The Shoes And The Haunting Picture.

"Cry and freedom for the woman in the wall! Cry freedom, for she has no voice at all!"

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

somewhere in the county of Leicestershire, usually famed for such sporting sons as Gary Lineker, and Willy Thorne, or the travel agent Thomas Cook, lies the site of Papillon Hall. It is situated on the Market Harborough to Lutterworth Road, about a mile west of Lubbenham, and marks the place where strange stories of hauntings and curses have originated. The Hall itself has since been demolished, but I'm sure that if it still existed, one could more than likely take advantage of the opportunity to participate on a 'Cook's' tour to the Hall to take in the tales of Papillon, mostly concerning the shoes and the haunting picture which have been part of local legend since the 18th Century.

The origins of the story go back to the 17th Century, when the Hall was built between 1622 and 1624, by David Papillon (1581-1659). It remained in the family till 1764, when it was sold to William Stevens by David Papillon III (1729-1809), the great-great grandson of the original David, shortly after the death of his father, who surprisingly (not!) was called David too (i.e. David II, 1691-1762). I know this is confusing, but persevere, and the story will unfold.

Nothing untoward appears to have happened until David II came on the scene. He was supposedly a good-looking man, but was considered to have a dual personality, with psychic and hypnotic powers. Those in the locality were so much in fear of him that they nicknamed him; 'Lord Pamp', 'Old Pamp', or just plain 'Pamp', and called Papillon Hall; 'Pamps', a name that has stuck to this day, despite the fact that it was demolished in 1950.

Pamp was married in 1717, to Mary Keyser, and both lived a long and fruitful life, dying within a year of each other. However, it is rumoured that before his marriage he had a Spanish mistress who was never allowed to leave his the house at Papillon. Apparently, she died in mysterious circumstances about 1715, and Pamp, having no chance to give her a decent funeral, promptly walled her up inside the house. This rumour would seem to have been confirmed when a skeleton of a woman was found walled up when the house was being altered in 1903. It may well be that this woman may be the owner of the shoes upon which, legend has it, *she left the curse that there would be disaster to the owner of the house, if ever the shoes in which she wished to walk, were to leave the house.*

That this curse ever did happen, is of course, open to debate. It does seem however, that examples of disaster befalling certain people are too numerous to be merely dismissed as chance circumstance. Furthermore, when the shoes were taken to the London museum in Kensington, in 1951, Mr. Holmes, the principal there said: 'The latest date would be 1730, and the work in silver thread on red velvet on the "pattern" was probably earlier. An assitant who saw it and was psychic, announced that it was *evil*, and probably of Spanish origin. Such was the extent of the superstition about the shoes, that they were always passed with the title deeds of the house, with the solemn injunction 'on no account to permit them to be removed from the house, or ill-fortune would assuredly befall the owener'. That this warning was not heeded by many, and disaster did often befall those who ignored it, would seem to suggest that there was indeed some influence being exerted by 'the woman in the wall and her shoes'.

For example, in 1866, when the house passed hands to the Lord Hopetoun, his family were disturbed by a series of sounds and knockings all around the house. They were unaware of the Papillon shoes, and therefore payed no heed to the gossip in the village attributing all the goings on to the shoes being out of the house. In a similar incident, the whole family were awoken by what seemed to be the sound of furniture in the drawing room. On entering, they found that everything was in perfect order. After this incident, enquiries were made about the missing shoes, until they were eventually traced to the daughter of the former owner of the Hall, who had been bequeathed them, and was still living in the Leicestershire area. The shoes returned to Papillon, and for a short time, all annoyance temporarily ceased. However, the haunting later returned *despite* the presence of the shoes, so the house was sold by the Hopetouns' after 6 years occupation to Thomas Halford.

During Thomas Halford's 12 year stay, (1872-1884), it appears that the Halford's foolishly sent the shoes to the Paris Exhibition. From that moment, life in the Hall became intolerable. And since the shoes were entered for the 12 month duration of the Exhibition, and could not be retrieved, the Halford's had no option but to vacate the house. The next owner, Mr. C. Walker, (no relation to the Editor!), was so concerned by the necessary presence of the shoes, that he took all precautions as to their safety, and built a permanent secure place for them over the fireplace. The shoes were stored in a fire-proof safe, with a strong metal grille in front and secured by a padlock, so that they could be seen but not touched. Mr Walker lived at Papillon for 19 years until he sold the house in 1903 to a Captain Frank Belville.

Belville didn't treat the matter of the shoes seriously, but kept them at his solicitors on the advice that, because everybody knew about the shoes and the curse that went with them, it would be impossible to sell the property in the future unless the shoes were in the house. During his time of occupation, at Papillon, whilst the shoes were not present, Belville attempted to have the house refurbished. Workers were constantly bombarded by falling bricks, culminating in one man being killed in such a manner. After this, the men refused to work, so that the contract could only be finished by workers from outside the neighbourhood.

It was during these refurbishments that the body of a woman was found. We can only guess that this was the body of the Mistress Of Pamp. At almost exactly the same time that the body was found, the house-owner, Frank Beville, was involved

in a riding accident, when his pony bolted from which he received a broken skull. As a result, the shoes were returned to the house, put in a glass casket, and kept on a side table in the dining room.,

The shoes remained in Papillon until 1908, when they were allegedly stolen. At the second instant, when shoes were not present in the hall, Captain Beville had another fall from his horse while out hunting, He seriously fractured his skull, which necessitated the introduction of a metal plate which he had for the rest of his life.

On the very same night, a thunderstorm struck, killing three ponies and setting part of the hall on fire. Some also say that a groom and a hunter were also killed about this time, although it is not clear this was by the storm, or whilst out hunting. Somehow, the shoes were recovered, and Captain Belville had them returned to the grille, and threw the key in the pond, after which followed a degree of normality to the house.

It was not until Papillon Hall was occupied during the Second World War, that anything further occurred. It is alleged that a member of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division, who played a significant part on the attack of Nijmegen in 1944, took one of the shoes and was promptly killed and the shoes returned to the house. On a second occasion, two men took a shoe away, and both were killed, probably in the Nijmegen Air drop, but again the shoe was returned to the house. Eventually, the house was demolished in 1950, and with it went the curse of The Woman In The Wall, who could hardly be said to have 'no voice at all'. Her influence over the house and those who were involved with it was immense. The story is so surrounded by fact that it can't be dismissed as pure fiction, or the imagination of the mentally weak or the gullible. The shoes now rest in the possession of an ancestor of the Papillon family, who claims them before the hall was demolished.

So far, I've only addressed the part of the story concerning the haunting shoes, when there is in fact a significant part to tell concerning David Papillon II, or Pamp. This mostly focuses on a portrait of Pamp which was painted around the time (c: 1715), that he had a Spanish mistress who was responsible for the shoes curse.

One example of the legends surrounding Pamp is the ability of Pamp to set or fix anybody who offended him. Some men were apparently ploughing a field in a manner that displeased Pamp, so he 'set' them, and they were unable to move until he released them at the end of the day. Another tale relates of how Pamp was riding into Market Harborough to get the money for the weekly wages, and was stopped by a man who demanded the bag of gold that he was carrying. Pamp duly 'fixed' him, the man dropped the bag of money at his feet and continued on his journey home. Having reached home, he told his groom to go down the lane where he'd find a man with a bag at his feet. He told his servant to bring the money back. This he did. The would-be thief was seen to be running away hours after his fumbling attempt. Such was the reputation of David Pamp, that if anyone in the village suffered a misfortune Pamp was to blame.

Even his portrait was said to be cursed.

A servant girl had an experience at Papillon when she was roused from her sleep by sounds of scraping and scratching in the corner of her room. She flung her shoe in the direction of the noise and as she did so the ghost Pamp appeared at the foot of her bed dressed in wig and red coat and gold waistcoat - just as he looked in the portrait.

In 1840, a member of the family, Phillip Papillon, was visiting the hall. He was begged by the owner to take the portrait away with him, such was its sinister influence. He duly took the picture away.

The departure of the picture from the Hall did not end David's evil influence over the place and he continued to haunt it until it was demolished in 1950. It is alleged that he still haunts the nearby stables to this day.

Of course, Pamp still gets the odd amount of blame for things going wrong in and around Leicester, and doubtless, will continue to do so. But surely no amount of blame can be placed on him for Leicester City's poor showing in the Premiership this year!



Papillon Hall shortly before it was demolished in 1950 - The haunt of Pamp - Leicester's most infamous Ghost.

A CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS



BEELEBUB - BLACULA

NAME: BEELZEBUB

DESCRIPTION: A monstrous fly with wings that are decorated with the images of countless human skulls.

CATEGORY: DEMON.

SOURCE: Demonology.

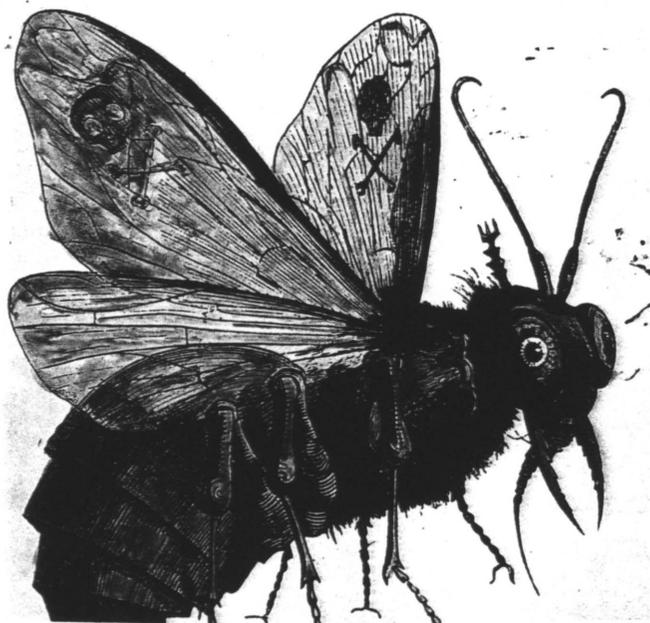
BRIEF HISTORY:

‘The Lord Of The Flies’ was originally a Syrian God, but as we have seen so often in the Beastyary, former Gods are very often transformed into despicable DEMONS after they have fallen from grace.

Beelzebub, loosely translated means; ‘God Of The Dunghill’, thereby ensuring a ready-made incarnation for the Evil Spirit. ..Dunghills and huge black flies go hand in hand together. Pliny has gone on record as stating that; ‘both the Syrians and the Romans worshipped flies.’

In Biblical texts, especially in the works of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Beelzebub is referred to as ‘The Chief Of The Demons’ and ‘Prince Of The Devils’.

In the Cabala, he is the chief of the 9 evil hierarchies of the Underworld and is said to be the tempter of men through pride.



Behemoth, demon of the delights of the belly. From Collin de Plancy, *Dictionnaire infernal* (1863).

NAME: BEHEMOTH

DESCRIPTION: A gargantuan DEMON said to resemble a whale mixed with a plated Hippopotamus and armed with a pair of elephant-like tusks.

CATEGORY: DEMON

SOURCE: Biblical lore and Demonology

BRIEF HISTORY:

References to Behemoth can be found in the Book Of Job 40, and these less than favourable mentions featured a creature which is said to ‘eateth grass as an ox’ whose strength is ‘in his loins’, and whose force is in the ‘navel of his belly’.

According to the Bible, this creature was created on the 5th Day and is closely associated with the female Demon, LEVIATHAN (see future issue for further information on this (ahem) delightful entity). BEHEMOTH is also associated with RAHAB, The Primordial Angel Of The Sea, and with The Angel Of Death him (or her) self.

In European Demonology, BEHEMOTH is considered to be the Demon Of Gluttony in men. Thus we have the medieval grimoires to thank for the wonderful illustration featured on the previous page.

NAME: BEHEMOTH THE SEA MONSTER

DESCRIPTION: A huge, BRONTOSAURUS-type Dinosaur with radioactive breath.

CATEGORY: Cinematic Prehistoric-Monster-On-The-Loose.

SOURCE: 1959 Allied Artists Film.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Although made on something of a shoestring budget, and labelled by some as a poor man's 'BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS' (see issue 5) this film rates high on my list of personal favourite Monster Movies.

The ever brilliant Willis O' Brien helped work on the animation, and despite the fact that the effects were pretty obviously rushed, they are still way above average, and sure beat the ol' fella-in--a-rubber-suit monstrosities hands down.

This time, it's the city of London that gets stomped by the rampaging denizen of the deep (34 years after another BRONTOSAURUS - a refugee from 'THE LOST WORLD', had run amok in a similar fashion).

The most memorable scenes occur early in the film when the first victims of the creature are found on the fog-shrouded beaches with their skin horribly burned and at the climax when the Monster gets to knock down the Houses Of Parliament...And this factor alone should endear it to Monster-lovers EVERYWHERE!!!

NAME: BELIAL

DESCRIPTION: A bald-headed Demon with sinewy limbs and a set of vicious looking teeth and claws.

CATEGORY: Demon.

SOURCE: Demonology.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The Demon Of Lies, BELIAL (aka BELIAR/BELIAS), is often described by theologians as one of the many faces of SATAN. His name means 'The Worthless One' in Hebraic and he has been attributed the various titles of 'Prince Of Deceit', 'The Malicious One', 'The Ruler Of Evil Intentions', 'The Tempter'. and 'The Master Of Hypocrites'.

Modern Demonology however, has painted him in an even darker light and has conjured up an image more befitting of a Miltonesque vision....He is said to have been the second Demon created after LUCIFER Himself!!!

He often appears as an Angel in a fiery chariot, but his intentions are only to deceive all, including those foolish enough to invoke Him.

He is also said to be a Prince Of The Order Of Virtues, and as such tempts men with annoyance. He also tempts 'gentle-women ro prank up themselves with new-fangled attires, to make wantons of their children and to prattle unto them while mass is saying, and so divert them from the dervice of God'.

It may also be noteworthy to mention that BELIAL (along with our old friend BEELZEBUB), were two of the Demons the notorious mass-murderer Gilles de Rais attempted to summon up by making sacrifices. According to no less an authority than Dennis Wheatley, Demons could be pacified by the offerings of a dove, a cock, a pigeon, or a turtle-dove. A simple narration of the following words; 'I conjure you Baron, Sathan, Belial, Belsebut, by the Father, The son, and The Holy Ghost, by The Virgin Mary and all the Saimts, to appear before us and speak to us', would usually suffice to invoke these Evil Spirits across the threshold into OUR world...Not that I would ever encourage or advise anyone to try this at home, of course.

(See illustration overleaf)

(Below left, The Demon BELIAL dancing before King Solomon, reproduced from Grillot, 'PICTURE MUSEUM OF SORCERY'. Below right, A sketch of 'The Electric Horror Of Berkeley Square' reproduced from Elliot O' Donnell's 'GHOSTS' (1959).



NAME: BELPHEGOR

DESCRIPTION: Archetypal Demon.

CATEGORY: Demon

SOURCE: Demonology

BREIF HISTORY:

BELPHEGOR is often ascribed with being the Moabite God of Licentiousness. In the nether regions of Hell however, he is the Demon Of Discoveries And Inventions. His name is derived from the Assyrian God-name; BAAL-PEOR and by the time the classic old grimoires were hitting the streets, BELPHEGOR had become just about one of the most infamous Demons imaginable.

According to contemporary legend, BELPHEGOR was sent from Hell one time to find out if there really was such a thing as wedded bliss on earth.

The Demons had heard tell of this phenomenon, but were more than aware that people were not designed to live in any kind of harmony. BELPHEGOR soon found out that any such fears were entirely groundless however...He saw wnough bitterness and untold strife within the bounds of matrimony to confirm the epithet that mankind was doomed to live in perpetual conflict.

When invoked, BELPHEGOR often appears in the comely shape of a young woman...

NAME: BERKELEY SQUARE HORROR, THE

DESCRIPTION: A malevolent Supernatural being...An entity that could well be described as being totally INDESCRIBABLE!!!

CATEGORY: Creature From The Outer Edge.

SOURCE: Ghostly Lore.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The case of 'The Berkeley Square Horror' is one of those rare accasions were a Ghost, for want of a better term, proves to be capable of inspiring not only abject terror and fear of the Unknown, but also very real, life-threatening danger.

The house were there this decidedly Evil Spirit was said to reside, acheived a great deal of notoriety during the passing of the Nineteenth Century, and the full story of the alleged hauntings will be the subject of a future issue of 'DEAD OF NIGHT'.

For the purpose of this entry, suffice to say that many apocryphal stories (the type of stuff we would nowadays file under Modern Urban Folkore or add to the collection of well-known FOAF-tales), grew up around the house in the centre of affluent Mayfair.

At least two people were said to have been killed by the Spectre, (including a sailor who had the terrible misfortune to seek shelter at 50 Berkeley Square and a maid who was preparing a bedroom for a guest), and several more were driven mad by the mere sight of the entity.

Unfortunately, the illustration featured here hardly does justice to the belief in an unnameable horror, the indescribable terror of some dark, Lovecraftian nightmare...

But seeing as how it's the only one we've got on file, you'll just have to make do with using your own imaginations....

NAME: BIGFOOT (see SASQUATCH)

NAME: BIGFOOT

DESCRIPTION: No, you're not experiencing *deja vu*. We're referring here to the cinematic interpretation of what the Big Hairy Monster (BHM) should look and act like....And unlike the previous entry, you surely won't have to rack your brains or over-use your imagination to work out what the film-makers came up with...

CATEGORY: A Not-So-Classic-Film Monster.

SOURCE: 1969. Ellman Enterprises.

BRIEF HISTORY:

'The Greatest Monster Since KING KONG!!!' the promotional ads for this walking abortion proclaimed.

Never in the history of film-making has such a pathetic attempt at a horror film dared to mention itself in the same breath as an acknowledged classic. It's almost too painful to have to write about...

Almost...

But not quite.

The plot(?) concerns the discovery of The Missing Link (in reality, a decidedly scrawny-looking individual in a torn and tattered gorilla suit) who races about the countryside kidnapping beautiful young women so that he can inter-breed with them. BIGFOOT gets to fight a real bear, and the obligatory Sixties' style motor-cycle gang.

Three guesses who comes out on top.

The only horrific thing about this atrocity is that it was ever committed to celluloid.

NAME: BLACK SCORPION, THE

DESCRIPTION: Amazingly enough, a giant Black Scorpion (or rather a whole bunch of giant Black Scorpions) that for once, unlike so many Monsters of the 1950's, WASN'T the by-product of Atomic Mutation.

CATEGORY: Cinematic-Giant-Monster-On-The-Loose.

SOURCE: 1957. Warner Brother's Films.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Good ol' Willis O' Brien (see 'DEAD OF NIGHT#5) is once more the genius responsible for the animation and creation of this excellent movie menace.

A volcanic eruption in the badlands of Mexico frees a whole colony of Giant Scorpions from a series of caverns deep beneath the earth. These fearsome creatures, along with similarly sized trapdoor spiders and worms equipped with pincers, are encountered by a couple of geologists (including the films compulsory hero; played by Richard Denning), investigating the cause of the volcanic activity. The Mother Of All Scorpions eventually takes centre-stage, killing and eating all of its companions before embarking upon a reign of terror ABOVE ground.

There is a very impressive and memorable scene were the humungous Arachnid attacks a train filled with helpless passengers before heading off to run riot in Mexico City. After terrorising the population and causing untold damage, it is finally lured to its death by the ever-resourceful Mr Denning, who hits upon the swell idea of tempting the beast with a truck-load of beef, and as the Scorpion tries to both get stuck into the feast and at the same time swipe at an overflying helicopter, a stinger is fired into the creature's one vulnerable spot; its throat.

A seldom seen movie, well worth catching for its above-average special effects.

(Below left, *THE BLACK SCORPION* on the rampage in Mexico City. Warner Brother's Films 1959. Below right, *BLACK SHUCK*, the Demon Dog of East Anglia.



NAME: BLACK SHUCK

DESCRIPTION: A Demon Dog, usually calf-sized and with red, saucer-like eyes.

CATEGORY: Creature Of Folklore/Alien Animal

SOURCE: East Anglian Folklore.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Legends abound of mysterious Black Dogs right across the length and breadth of Britain, (see Dave William's articles in 'DEAD OF NIGHT' #4 and 5), and BLACK SHUCK is merely the localised name for such creatures. SHUCK displays all of the oft-reporte characteristics of his kind....Large in size and girth, a pair of flaming red eyes, a hot breath of 'noxious odour', the ability to disappear at will, and above all, a strange phantasmal quality that leaves its percipient in no doubt that they have witnessed/encountered something entirely Supernatural...

NAME: BLACKENSTEIN

DESCRIPTION: A beefy, black FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER complete with an afro hairstyle...Boris Karloff (RIP) was doubtless spinning in his grave.

CATEGORY: Absolutely-Godawful-Not-Even-Funny-Accidently-Monster

SOURCE: 1973 Exclusive International Films.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Sheer, unadulterated crap!!! I can't even bring myself to report or write about this walking abortion of a movie...So I won't. Next up, please.

NAME: BLACULA

DESCRIPTION: And can you possibly handle this? A negroid version of COUNT DRACULA???
A former African Prince transformed into a hip and trendy (for the early 1970's, anyway), Vampire...
The stills below will tell you all you need to know about this character.

CATEGORY: Cinematic Vampire.

SOURCE: 1972. A.I.P. Films

BRIEF HISTORY:

One of the first of the so-called 'Blaxploitation movies, BLACULA is basically the time-worn story of Manuwalde, the aforementioned African Prince, who after being bitten by the original COUNT DRACULA, is duly transformed into a Vampire.

For some reason, he decides to emigrate across to the States, and wings his way into modern-day Los Angeles. Not surprisingly, he is appaled at the corrupt and decadent society he encounters....Even Vampiric Servants Of Satan have feelings too, you know. #

Not only is this 'brother' cool and trendy, he even has a set of morals Mary Whitehouse would kill for .

In a bid to try and single-handedly clean up the streets of downtown LA, he sets about embarking upon a crusade which involves him taking great big healthy bites out of drug dealers, criminals and...Well, hush my mouth, gays of both (ahem) sexes . BLACULA may well not be politically correct, but don't forget, this was made in the midst of the homophobic '70's.

He's eventually stopped in his self righteous tracks by another even 'meaner mutha'....One Professor Van Helsing...Also black, of course, and played by Thalmus Rasulala...

The film was so successful, it spawned an equally corny sequel, 'SCREAM, BLACULA SCREAM' released a year later.

Mind boggling stuff, eh?



KENNETH RIVE and BEN FISZ present for INTERNATIONAL FILM THEATRES LTD. *Starring* WILLIAM MARSHALL • DON MITCHELL
SCREAM BLACULA SCREAM (X)
PAM GRIER
An AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE Released by GALA FILMS COLOUR

(Above; The poster art for 'SCREAM BLACULA SCREAM' the sequel to the not-so-classic, but relatively succssesful original 'Blaxploitation movie; 'BLACULA'

Although seldom screened (even the cheesiest satellite station's late night programme slots refuse to run this movie) on British TV, It's well worth catching on the rare occasions when it DOES show up - If only because it has a certain dated charm and inarguably provides a good few laughs...So what if most of them are completely unintentional...

The fact is, the very concept of a black DRACULA, is original if nothing else.

MAGAZINE REVIEWS

MAGONIA: 53



Only one word can describe this ultra-professional publication; *Indispensable!!!*

Expert, thought-provoking articles abound. All of them, consistently excellent, but special mention must go to Peter Rogerson's compelling article; 'Blood, Vision, And Brimstone'; an in-depth look at how the modern-day Alien Abduction Mythos, real-life child abuse and the apocalyptic imagination may be inter-related..In more ways than one.

Essential reading for the novice and the serious scholar alike...Highly recommended!!!

Available from; John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB. Sample issue; £1:25, Subs: £5 for 4 issues.

ANNALS 2

..And this magazine just gets better and better. I can't believe just how much *ANNALS* has improved in every way, shape and form. UFO-dominated (including excellent pieces on *Roswell*, *Thomas Townsend And His Flying Discs*, and *The Monuments Of The Moon*), but with equally absorbing features on *N.D.E.'s*, *Cryptozoology*, *Ball Lightning* and the hilarious 'Column Of Crazyness'.

Rapidly becoming one of fave reads...Do yourself a favour and grab a copy for yourself!!!

Available from: **NEW ADDRESS**; Gerry Lovell, Apt 4G, Preston Manor, Wick Hollow, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA 8JQ. Sample issue: £1:75. Subs: £7 for 4 issues.

ANIMALS AND MEN

As regular readers will doubtless be aware, *this* fine mag is my current favourite Fortean publication, primarily because it deals with Cryptozoological matters (a subject particularly dear to your humble editor's heart), but not least because it's very entertainingly written. Issue 6 features 'Big Cat Sightings', *BHM'S in Africa*, *Surviving Sabre-Toothed Tigers*, *The British Nandi Bear Lake Monsters* - and an exclusive up-date on the infamous *OWLMAN OF MAWNAN* (the *first* up-date on this

terrifying apparition since I last read of it in 'THE UNEXPLAINED', 15 years or so ago.

A *must-read*, it is available from: Jonathan Downes, 15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, Devon, EX4 2NA Sample issue £1:75. Subs: £7 for 4 issues.

Animals & Men

The Journal of The Centre for Fortean Zoology



Lake Monsters-Loch Ness and Lake Dakotana; Mystery Cats; The Hairy Hands of Darunoor; and much more....

Issue Five £1.75

Mercian Mysteries

Issue 24 of 'The Alternative Studies Of Past And Place In The Midlands', is a 48-Page Special!, and is once again packed with information and fascinating articles, covering such diverse topics as *Cosmic Mills*, *Anglo-Saxon Church Alignments*, *Toot Hills* and *Archaic Heads - Guardians Of The Boundaries* (my personal fave piece). Illuminating stuff!!!

Available from: Bob Trubshaw, 2, Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, LE12 6UJ. Sample issue: £2 Subs: £7 for 4 issues.

ENIGMAS

ENIGMAS

THE JOURNAL OF STRANGE PHENOMENA INVESTIGATIONS



Malcolm Robinson's superb mouthpiece for the *SPI* (of which he is the founder) is as compelling as ever. This edition features an in-depth look at *The Roswell Autopsy Film*, *Bedroom Visitations*, *Man-made Flying Saucers*, *The latest from Bonnybridge*, and *lots more*.

Malcolm continues to find time not only to produce one of the best paranormal 'zines on the market, but *personally* investigates many of the cases he writes about *first-hand*. For what it's worth, he has more than earned *this* editor's undying admiration for excelling in both ventures.

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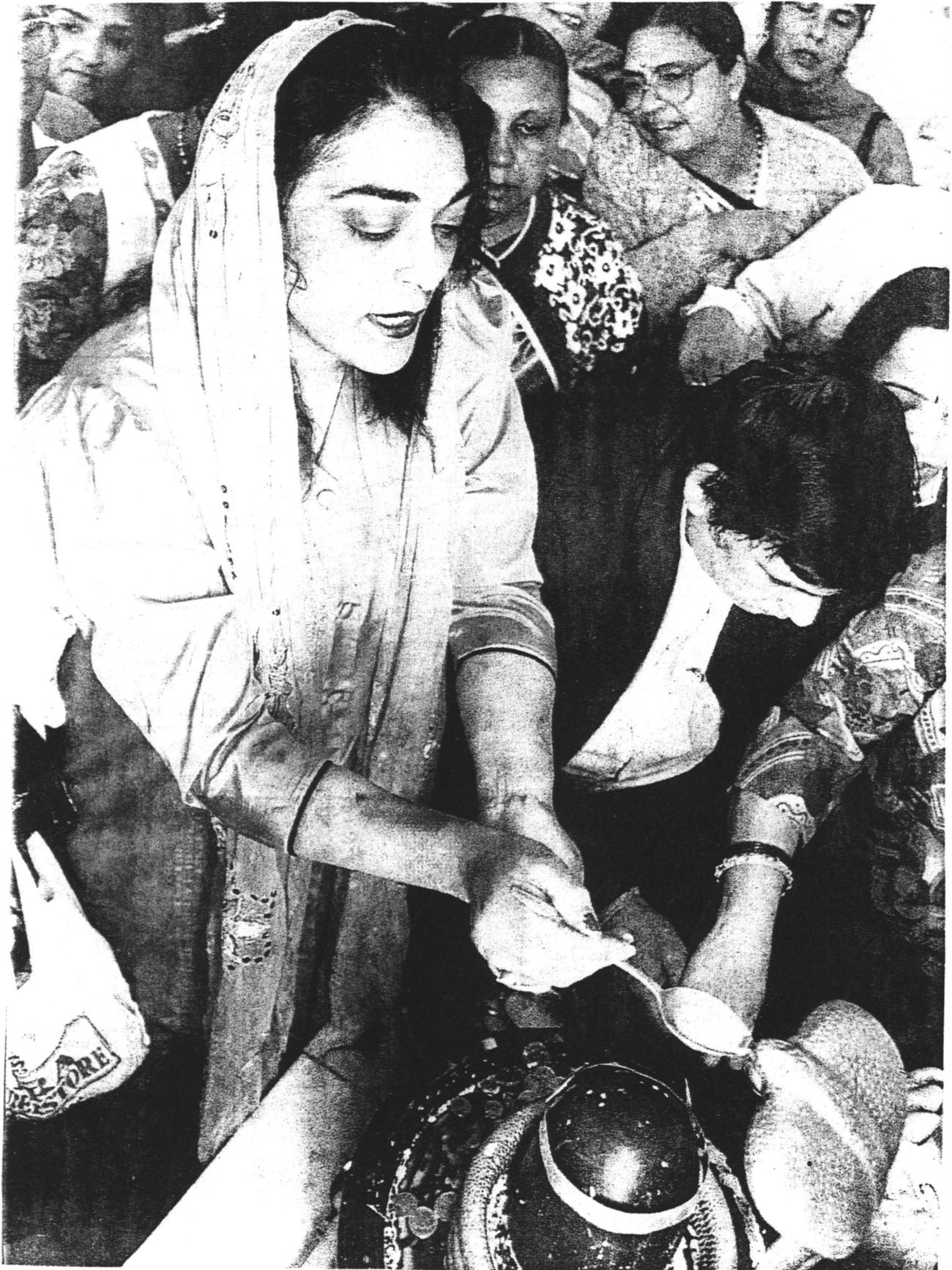


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Full report on the amazing phenomenon sweeping the globe in our next issue. Picture credit: The Guardian 23rd September, 1995.