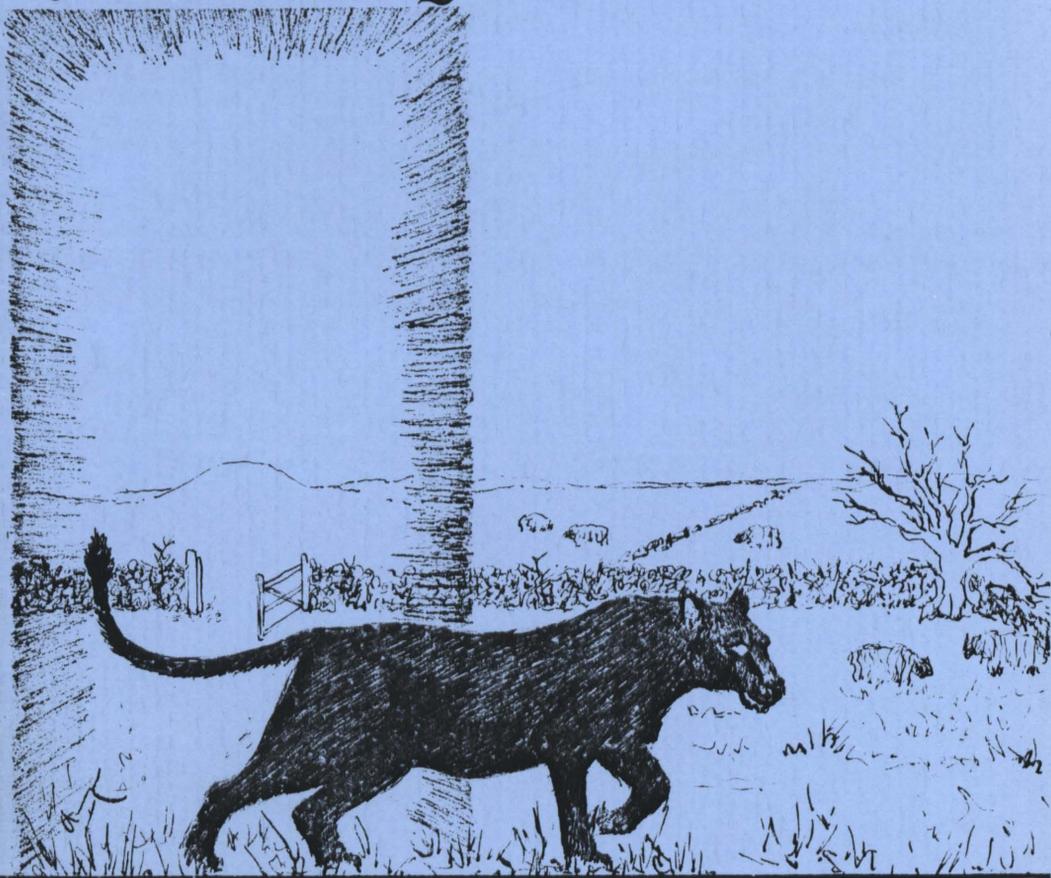


EARTHQUEST NEWS

Nº 9 & 10

Spring 1984

In this issue:~ The Horndon Black Panther~
Parts 1 & 2 • Secret of the White Leafed Cross
• The M.F. strike again! • Readers letters •
Earthquest Round-up • Devil Talk • Book
Reviews • Exchanges scene ~



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EDITORIAL

Perhaps I had better start by apologising for the amount of space that this issue devotes to the Horndon black panther affair, and the theories regarding the nature of "Mystery beasts." This is, however, the complete report on this subject; and part one has been submitted to ASSAP for its case files and also to other prominent Fortean researchers for their own reference. The second and third parts of the report are included as speculative research based upon my own findings as well as Carole Young's psychic work and various other sources concerning the origin of this phenomenon. I feel it is important to present the entire information so that it can be recorded for posterity.

I want to thank the readers for the tremendous response to the letter sent out with the last issue asking for your continued support for this little journal. It is very heartening to know that people do care. The past year has been a very trying period for Earthquest News and this year will be as bad. However, I'm sure we will survive.

As you can see this is a double issue comprising of Earthquest News 9 and 10. The cover price is £1.50 for retail purposes, and it constitutes two issues in your subscription. This was not the original plan although for several reasons I thought it best to push it out in this way. For those of you whose subscription ends with E.N. 9, then I hope you will renew it to commence with E.N. 10, which you have now received.

With this issue you will find the four page handout on the London Moot programmed for May. I really hope you can attend, as again, I need all the support I can get. I promise you it will be worth it. I am producing a special edition of Earthquest News which will be given away as a programme on the day of the Moot, to everyone in attendance. This issue will include details of the speakers and their lectures, along with articles on each of the sites we intend visiting on the Sunday. Some intriguing new psychic work on the Temple Church concerning its symbolism and geometry, will be included in this 30 page publication, and only two hundred will be printed. Those issues remaining will be sold to subscribers unable to attend. A warning though: there are two hundred seats at the conference. Okay?

One last little matter; keep sending in the cuttings on anything even vaguely connected with our subject; anything at all, including coincidences, UFO sightings, ghosts, poltergeist, folklore, Fortean phenomena, curiosities, freak weather conditions, mysterious deaths, secret societies, witchcraft, Christianity, things that make you smile, absolutely everything. Also, articles. I would like to hear from anyone who may have an article they feel may be suitable for this "belief orientated research" journal.

Happy reading. Andrew Collins,
Imbolc 1983.

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Earthquest.

Earthquest is an Essex based group studying and promoting the multi-disciplinary subject of the Earth Mysteries. Among the topics covered by the group and this publication are psychical research, paranormal phenomena, esoteric knowledge, prehistoric and mystical sites, religious history and mysteries, folklore and geomancy.

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Credits: Production and editorial - Andy Collins. Calligraphy - Dave Hunt. Typing - Carole Young. Front page illustration - Chesca Potter.

Editorial Address

Andy Collins, 19 St Davids Way, Wickford, Essex SS11 8EA.

NEXT ISSUE: Well, whatever I say seems to change so I won't bother. No, seriously, the next issue E. N. No. 11 will be the give-a-way copy being produced especially for the London Moot. Those wishing to secure a copy should let me know.



SEE
NEXT
ISSUE!

On second thoughts I think I had better set down my plans for Earthquest News No. 12. We take a look at the extraordinary affair of the "Pickled Knight" of Danbury Church in Essex, along with the synchronicities surrounding its recent publicity and earth mysteries interest.

I shall be investigating the case of "The Old Maids," three ancient elm trees at Paglesham, on the Essex coast.

There is a feature on superstitious customs associated with animal guardians to buildings, centring upon a gruesome discovery beneath the floorboards of an Essex pub.

We shall also take an in depth look at the high ratio of researchers and Fortean exponents who themselves become witnesses to mystery beast sightings.

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DEVIL TALK!

THE ART OF AIRCRAFT DIVINING: I recently came across an amusing news item from the archives of the Evening Echo newspaper from the issue of 25th January 1974. It concerned a rather peculiar form of dowsing. The apparent dowzers were divining not for water, nor for gold or buried treasure - they were looking for crashed second world war aircraft - and were having remarkable success!

The Essex Aviation Group somehow realised that by using L-shaped dowsing rods they possessed an extraordinary means of discovering the exact whereabouts of the many crashed relics which must litter the British landscape.

The group began by divining a crashed fighter known to have "come down" in a field at Hullbridge in South East Essex.

Alan Jasper, the group's press officer, explained how they found the plane after one of their members suggested dowsing: "We all laughed, but apparently this method had been used successfully before, so we gave it a try."

"We walked up and down this field with these two copper rods and suddenly they crossed and we started digging," he continued.

Next the group tried their hand at a crashed American Air Force Thunderbolt which had crashed at nearby Hockley. Once again the old L-rods crossed over the exact site of the wreck.

Despite their achievements Alan was still puzzled at the group's newfound means of aircraft recovery. As he explained: "I don't really know how these rods work. I suppose it must be some kind of magnetic force."

Something like that, Alan. Something like that. . .

The Horndon Black Panther ~ Part 1 - The Cases & Synchronicities

The Monday, 7th November issue of the Southend & Basildon Evening Echo, South East Essex' evening newspaper, ran a front page lead story headlined under TERROR OF THE BLACK PHANTOM. It stated that on Friday, 4th November there were two sightings of a large, black panther-like beast at Horndon-on-the-Hill. It said that police from nearby Corringham had instigated a search using marksmen later that day and during the Saturday morning, but had found no trace of the animal's presence and called off the search when no further sightings were made. The report also linked the killing of a goat at nearby Langdon Hills, which was said had its throat cut and stomach ripped out.

The first sighting was made at around 2pm on the Friday by Mrs Anne Cheale and her aunt Mrs. Doris Barker who saw the beast from their home at Great Malgraves farm, Horndon-on-the-Hill. The second sighting had taken place, according to the Echo, later that afternoon in a field near the Plough Motel, at nearby Bulphan and had been witnessed by a man whose identity was not disclosed.

Sufficiently intrigued by the Echo report I decided to follow up the sightings. I spoke to Mrs Cheale who confirmed her sighting. We arranged to meet at the farm the following evening, Tuesday, 8th November. On enquiring about the second sighting she said it had been made by one of their farmhands at about 3.30 pm. He had been in the fields owned by the farm, when he spotted the beast at some distance in a field containing cattle owned by a neighbouring farmer.

CORRINGHAM POLICE

It was apparent that the police station handling the sighting was Corringham. They confirmed their involvement and said a search of the area had revealed nothing of significance and that no large cat had been reported missing which could account for the sightings.

Corringham also stated that the goat killing mentioned in the Echo story was totally unconnected with the black panther sightings, as it had been carried out by human hands. Although they refused to give any details concerning this killing I later discovered that the goat had been owned by a Mr. Gordon of Grays Thurrock. He told me by telephone that it had been killed during the night of 1st/2nd November and that it had probably been the target of a Halloween prank. It was apparently cut loose from its tether, bled completely of blood, and then a patch of skin some eight inches square had been cut away from its stomach. It was thus firmly concluded that this incident was not in any way connected with the black panther sightings at nearby Horndon-on-the-Hill.

TERROR OF THE BLACK PHANTOM

Monday, November 7, 1983
EVENING CHRONICLE

A LARGE, black, panther-like animal is feared to be prowling around South East Essex.

by DONNA ADEY

Three people have reported spotting the frightening beast in Horndon-on-the-Hill and Bulphan.

And police are linking the sightings with the killing of a goat in the Langdon Hills area. The goat had its throat and stomach ripped open.

Corringham police, who say they are taking the reports seriously, sent out a search team with a gun. But the hunt was called off when no more sightings were made.

One woman has told of her terror at seeing the beast 100 yards from her home.

Mrs Anne Cheale and her aunt Mrs Doris Baker were first to spot the animal at Great Malgraves Farm, Laindon Road, Horndon, at about 2 pm Friday.

Horrible feeling

Mrs Cheale said: "My aunt was looking out the window and saw the animal lying in the grass.

"It looked like a Doberman dog. All our Dobermanns were in, so I got field glasses to have a proper look.

"I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a wild cat.

"I handed the glasses to my aunt and she saw it too.

"We're both positive and believe me it shook me up. If I had been out walking the dog I would have almost certainly been killed.

"It was there some time for us to get a good look, then it slunk away."

Mother-of-two Mrs Cheale said she was worried the wild cat would attack animals on the farm.

She said: "It gives me a horrible feeling to think it might come back, especially if it breeds animals are here.

"I often go for walks over the fields, but I won't now and I'm frightened to let the children wander out of sight."

Later Friday, the beast was seen by a man in a field near the Plough Motel, Bulphan.

Beast

A Corringham police spokesman said the goat was found only about a mile from Great Malgraves Farm.

Searches went on Friday until dark and continued on Saturday morning, but there were no further sightings at the weekend.

Police say they have no reports of animals escaping, but they say someone may have been illegally keeping a dangerous beast and would not report an escape.

In August last year there were several sightings of a sandy-coloured beast, thought to be a puma, in the Folking and Stanford areas.

Tracks were examined by a zoo owner who said they were of a large dog, not a cat.

Panther alert

A BLACK panther could be on the loose in Thurrock. A large, ferocious-looking black cat was sighted three times between Bulphan and Horndon-on-the-Hill, on Friday afternoon.

A police squad, armed with a shotgun, used dogs to search for the animal, but could find no sign of it. All three sightings were less than a mile from the Langdon Hills farm where a goat was found mysteriously slaughtered last week.

Headresser Mrs Anne Cheale watched the beast through binoculars from her home at Great Malgraves Farm, in Laindon Road, Horndon, after her aunt, Mrs Doris Baker, spotted it through the kitchen window.

Mrs Cheale said: "It was about 100 yards away I focused the field glasses on the animal, and as I focused the head turned towards me. It was the head of a big black cat."

"It came towards my chicken house, turned towards the barn and then slunk away. I was really rattled. From what I saw, I would take it to be a plover."

The beast was later spotted stalking cattle in fields off Doregate Lane, Bulphan, about a mile from Mrs Cheale's farm.

But Inspector Ted Howell, of Corringham police, said the sighting had "faded out."

PRESS CUTTINGS from the three newspapers which covered the black panther cases. No subsequent reports have appeared in any of them.

Goat slaughtered

VICIOUS thugs slaughtered a nanny goat while it was grazing in a field off Old Church Hill, Langdon Hills, last week. The animal, worth £15, belonged to Geoffrey Gordon, of Corringham Road, Stanford-le-Hope.

THURROCK GAZETTE 11/11/83

Armed police in 'panther hunt'

SIGHTINGS of a phantom panther-like beast were reported in farmland around Bulphan and Horndon-on-the-Hill at the weekend.

Three reports of a black animal prowling around sheep and cattle were received by Corringham and Grays police stations.

The reports were taken so seriously that a search team armed with a gun was sent out to the areas. It was feared at one point that the animal might have been responsible for the killing of a goat at Langdon Hills.

Police hunted the animal until dusk on Friday and again on Saturday. The search was called off when no more reports were made of sightings.

At 2pm on Friday the first sighting was reported at Great Malgraves Farm, Laindon Road, Horndon. Later the beast was reported to be stalking cattle near the Plough Motel at Bulphan.

THURROCK GAZETTE Friday, November 11, 1983

Page 3

YELLOW ADVERTISER 52 Friday, November 11, 1983

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. CHEALE AND MRS. DORIS BARKER

During the evening of Tuesday, 8th November I visited Great Malgraves Farm and was made most welcome by Mr. and Mrs. Cheale, the owners. Once we had settled in the lounge Mrs. Cheale and her aunt, Mrs Barker gave a vivid account of their sighting.

It began around 2pm when Mrs. Barker was washing up some dishes at the kitchen sink. She looked out of the window upon the farmyard, behind which is a sloped field. In this field, about 140 yards away, laying down on the grass was a large black animal, which she first thought was one of the farm's goats. Realising this was not the case and her curiosity aroused, she called Mrs Cheale who immediately joined her. She checked to see if both of the family's Dobermann dogs were indoors and seeing that they were she became intrigued to find out what this animal was, so quickly found a pair of field glasses. These revealed that the animal was a large black cat, described as possibly a black panther.

Both ladies could see the cat was lying down with its hind legs tucked beneath its body and its front legs outstretched. Its head was obscured at first, but then, while Mrs Cheale had the field glasses trained on to it, the cat raised its head and looked in her direction. It was then the realisation of what she was viewing dawned upon her. She was both shocked and frightened, and described the scene as incredible.

The beast was laying facing towards a chicken house some thirty yards away. It also contained guinea fowl, some of which may well have been outside, in its line of sight. After looking in the direction of the house for several seconds, the beast got up, walked around in a complete U-turn, and moved off behind a barn where it was lost from view. Both women were convinced it was a large cat due to its movement which was described as "slinking" as if after prey, its front legs raised and its back legs closer to the ground.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Mrs Barker was only able to describe the beast as a large, black cat, whereas Mrs Cheale, because she viewed it through field glasses, could describe it in detail.

The head was cat-like, large, square, flat nosed with "cat-like" ears. Its expression was one of "alertness" as if watching for something. The body was thick set, with heavy shoulders and a shabby, out of condition coat. The tail was "fluffy" and quite long. The length was estimated at about four feet with a height of around three feet. The legs were thick, short and heavy boned.

The oddest feature of the sighting according to Mrs Cheale was the way the beast looked in her direction, almost as if it had seen movement in the kitchen window or sensed it was being watched. Both ladies feel it was "after a meal." Yet as someone was working in the chicken house at the time of the sighting it was strange that it should venture so close to the farm.



View from the kitchen window at Great Malgraves. It was in this direction that Mrs Doris Barker and Mrs Anne Cheale saw the beast.

AFTER THE SIGHTING

Following the sighting, which was estimated at about 10-12 minutes in duration, Mrs Cheale, in an agitated and excited state, telephoned her husband and told him the news. He advised that she contact the police, which she did. They informed her that other sightings had apparently been made and that they would send squad cars from nearby Corringham to investigate, along with marksmen from police headquarters at Chelmsford. Within minutes four police cars turned up at Great Malgraves and a group of policemen made a search of the area around the farm. When nothing was found they gave up and left.

Later that afternoon Essex Radio broadcast news of the sightings across the airwaves. Assumingly, details had been given to them by the police at Chelmsford in one of their press releases that day. If this was the case, then how come they made no reference to any other sighting? I have taken up the matter with the police headquarters and will report on their reply in due course. (Editors note - A return letter from Chelmsford police H.Q. confirmed its involvement in the sightings, but refused to give details of any other reports made to them).

Anne Cheale is a local hairdresser. She is a very receptive and honest lady who, I feel, would certainly have no reason to elaborate on the facts. It is my belief, therefore, that both she and Mrs Barker did witness a black panther-like cat at the farm as they stated.

Mr Cheale, who was present during the interview, gave the name of the farmhand who had seen the beast later that day as Mr Richard Polley. His address and telephone number was also given.

I arranged to return to Great Malgraves on Saturday, 12th November to take pictures and to look at the area in the hope of finding some trace of the animal's presence.

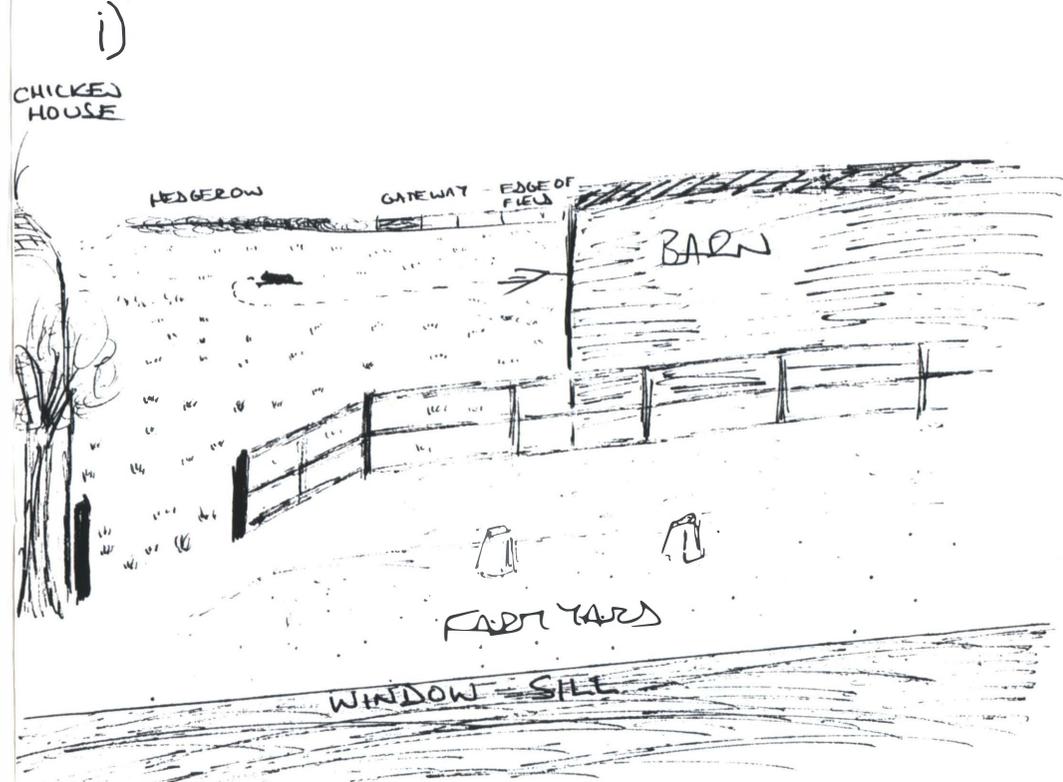
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH MR POLLEY

On Wednesday, 10th November I spoke to Richard Polley by telephone and he felt that as he had not seen much, perhaps it was best I conduct an interview over the telephone. I agreed, and what follows is an account of that chat.

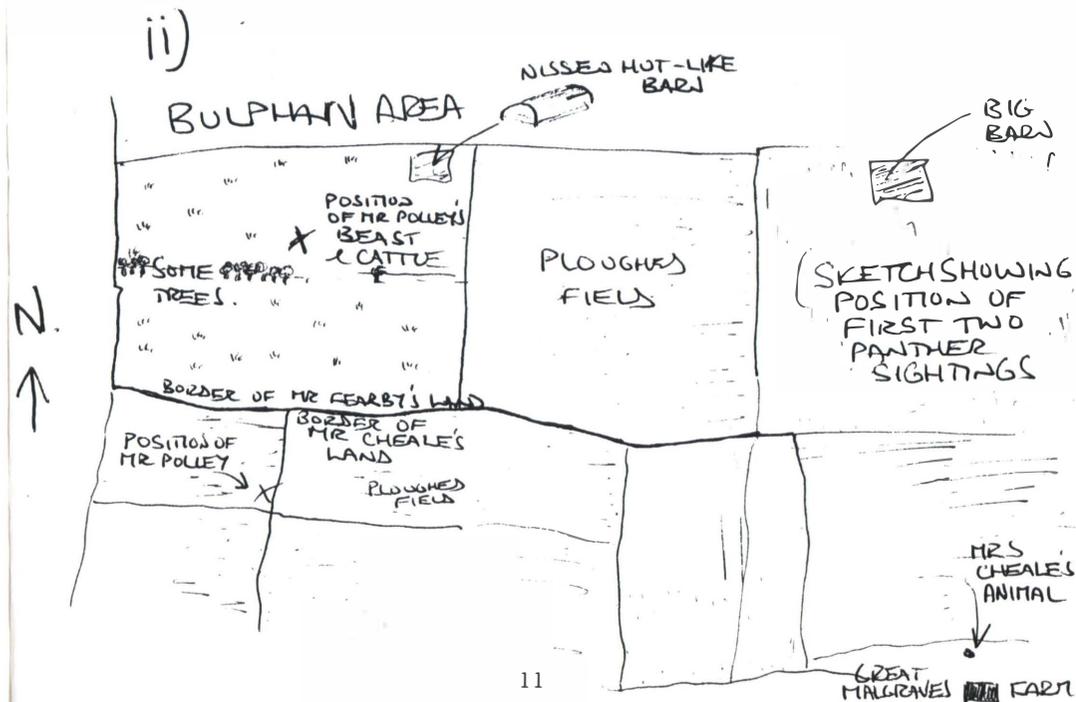
Mr Polley is a farmhand and slaughterer at Great Malgraves, although he also works for other farms in the area. He has worked the land around Horndon for four years, although he had never seen anything like what he saw that afternoon.

Richard Polley returned to Great Malgraves about 3pm after having worked in the fields, and soon found out about Mrs Cheale and Mrs Barker's black panther sighting. He said he light-heartedly thought of himself working in the fields, on his own with a black panther on the loose! Despite this he had not taken the sighting too seriously and eventually returned to the fields about 3.30 pm.

In a field called West Hills, about a mile west of Great Malgraves, and one which is out of sight of the farmhouse, Mr Polley began carrying out some repairs on a tractor which had broken down the previous day. There the land slips away towards the north where there are grazing fields owned by a Mr R. F. Fearby of Manor House, Bulphan. It was in



View from the kitchen window of Great Malgraves showing movement of the panther.



this direction that Mr Polley's curiosity was drawn to the noise of cows running as if in an agitated state.

In Mr Fearby's field, about 300-400 yards from where Mr Polley was standing, he could see a herd of about 40-50 cattle swirling around. Moments later he saw what was causing the commotion, it was a large, black cat which was running through the herd.

Although Mr Polley could not obtain a precise description of the beast he was certain he was viewing a large cat due to its "cat-like" movement. It passed through the herd and made for the hedgerow to Mr Polley's right, with the cattle in close pursuit. It appeared that they were chasing the beast! Very soon the animal was lost from view as the cattle obscured its path as it headed off in a diagonal course towards the undergrowth. To Mr Polley it was just "passing through" although he decided to investigate. When he reached the cows they were still out of breath and slightly agitated, but there was no sign of the beast. That had gone.

Out of interest, the field in which the beast was seen has a nissen hut-like barn which can be seen in the diagram included with this report.

Mr Polley reported his sighting to Mrs Cheale who once again contacted the police. They returned but found nothing. If anything had been present then in their minds it was already out of the area.

The Evening Echo reported vaguely on Mr Polley's sighting without even speaking to him. It was because of this that they made the error of claiming the incident had taken place in Bulphan, since most of Mr Fearby's land is actually in Bulphan. However, the field in question is actually in Horndon-on-the-Hill.

MR FEARBY

I felt it important to speak to Mr Fearby to see what he had to say about black panthers being seen on his land. He showed a total disinterest in the matter and did not even know where the sighting had taken place. He said he had found no unusual tracks in the area and that no animals had been reported missing or found dead. In fact, Mr Fearby could not help me in any matter relating to the sightings.

It might also be mentioned that Mr Cheale, similarly, has been unable to find any evidence of the beast's presence on his land. No animals have been found dead, mutilated or missing, and no tracks have been discovered.

RETURN TO GREAT MALGRAVES

During the afternoon of Saturday, 12th November I returned to Great Malgraves. Both Mrs Cheale and Mrs Barker again recounted their sighting and showed me where the animal had been seen.

After taking several photographs I walked across the fields in search of tracks or any evidence of the beast's presence. I found none, but I did find where Mr Polley saw the beast. He said the animal was perhaps 300-400 yards away and I would agree with this. When I was there only sheep grazed on this field. Mr. Fearby's cattle could be seen in

another field off in the distance.

FURTHER NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

Following the Evening Echo's coverage of the black panther sightings on Monday, 7th November, two further local papers picked up on the story. The Basildon and Thurrock editions of the Yellow Advertiser, dated 11th November, ran a piece headlined "Armed Police in Panther Hunt." The Thurrock Gazette of the same date ran a column headlined "Panther Alert." Neither report offered any further information and only the Gazette spoke to Mrs Cheale in person. To my knowledge none of the newspaper reports generated any further sightings.

SIGHTING NUMBER THREE

I had been telling those who were interested that the scenario surrounding out-of-place large cat sightings is that after being seen about twice in, say, one day, they will go underground for about a week before rearing their head, once more for one last token sighting before vanishing without trace. Well, this is exactly what did happen. Exactly one week later the beast of Horndon-on-the-Hill was seen again. This time under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

Whilst at Great Malgraves on Saturday, 12th November I heard rumour of another sighting of the beast. I once again contacted Corringham police and after a fashion they gave me details of one further sighting which had taken place during the evening of Friday, 11th November. The report had been made by a Mr Whiting of Orsett Road, Horndon-on-the-Hill who I made contact with on Sunday, 13th November. He informed me that it was his son who had seen the beast and that he had been with two other lads at the time. I arranged to meet all concerned later that day.

INTERVIEW WITH THE BOYS

Three boys, Jeff Whiting, aged 15, his brother Richard, aged 17, and a friend, Graham Caton, aged 16, left the Whiting's home along the Orsett Road, around 8.30pm to go to a local grocery shop. They were in high spirits, laughing, joking and messing about.

The Orsett Road has rows of houses along both its north and south sides which must class this part as a fairly populated area. Many roads lead off the north side off Orsett Road, while a pig farm called Marshal Lodge lays behind the south side.

The boys passed Victoria Road on their left as they continued along the road in the direction of Horndon village. Then, some twenty yards further on, Jeff, the youngest of the three, saw a large, black cat emerge out onto the pavement from behind a concealed wall to one of the houses. It had, he felt, been walking along, hugging the wall and had been forced to move out into view when it reached the wall of the next house which had a garden wall jutting out some feet further than the one by its side.

The beast was coming towards the boys and immediately it stopped in its tracks. Jeff saw it then look up, straight towards him which made him freeze on the spot. The other two boys, just behind, were still engaged in conversation and apparently did not see the beast.

Jeff then became noticeably very frightened and slowly began to walk backwards. In his own words he was "scared stiff" and was "shaking like jelly all over." The other two boys saw Jeff's fear and wondered what was happening. He said "Come on boys, let's get out of here" and turned and ran back towards his home. The others followed without explanation, believing that Jeff had seen some boys who were after them. They too were "scared stiff."

As the boys reached Victoria Road, Jeff looked back and saw the beast still motionless on the same spot. Thinking that it might give chase he led them round into Victoria Road where they came to a halt. There Jeff explained what he had seen. They remained there for about ten minutes before going back onto the Orsett Road. By then the beast had gone. The sighting had taken place about 8.40pm and had lasted for about ten seconds.

THE BEAST'S DESCRIPTION

Jeff described the beast as very large, about three feet in height and four to five feet in length. It was definitely a cat, not a dog, as it was too long. It was jet black, with a thick body, a small head, a snout, and thick legs with "big paws." It was said to be "shabby," indicating an out-of-condition coat with coarse hair. It had a long "fluffy" tail which gradually curved towards the ground. Jeff cannot remember anything about the ears.

The boy kept emphasising how, when he realised the beast was staring at him, he became petrified and began "shaking like jelly." This must have been very apparent since it was enough to get the other boys running without even questioning why he was frightened. One recalls the similar situation in the case of Mrs Cheale's sighting at Great Malgraves.

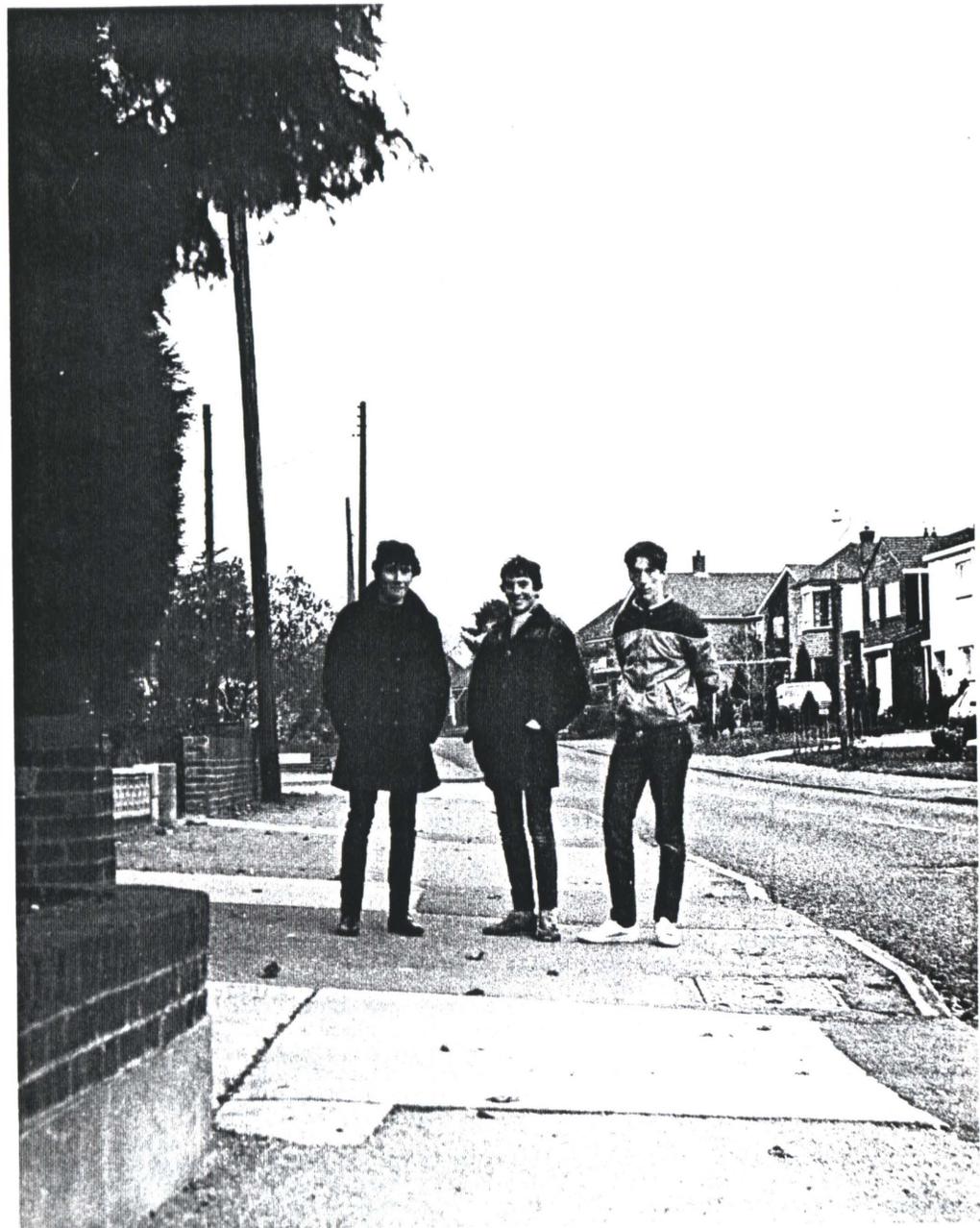
BACK AT THE HOUSE

The three boys ran back home and immediately told Mr Whiting, Jeff and Richard's father, what had happened. He stressed how he had never seen Jeff so distressed and nervous. He was convinced his son was telling the truth and so telephoned the police to report the sighting. They notified PC. Wakefield of Orsett village police house who went to the scene to investigate. Not unnaturally he found nothing.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

This concludes the basis information known about each of the three cases although I would like to make reference to several incidental points possibly relevant to the investigations.

No odour, sound, or subsequent physiological or psychological effects were recorded in any of the three cases. No escaped large cat was reported to Corringham police, although it is not beyond possibility that one from another area was reported to police headquarters at Chelmsford or was recorded in some other part of the country. Talk of a travelling circus at nearby Billericay at the time of the first two sightings has not been confirmed.



Jeff Whiting (centre), aged 15, stands with his brother Richard (left) and their friend Graham Caton (right) at the position where Jeff had seen the cat. The wall of the house named "Portlet" is on the bottom left of the photo.

Up until Sunday, 20th November no further sightings of the mystery beast have been reported to Corringham police station.

SYNCHRONICITIES

Synchronicities are an aspect of mystery beast sightings which occur often, and there are a few in connection with these. The first took place when I visited Leigh library on Wednesday, 9th November to find out what I could on black panthers. I asked the librarian to find me any books on large cats. She came back with just two. I checked the indexed references to black panthers in each and found that all relevant pages had been deliberately torn out. Only those, I might add, on the black panther. It could have been that the Evening Echo report of 7th November had led someone to find out what they could on these large cats resulting in the damaged books, although it was coincidental that my investigations should lead me to this act.

The second synchronicity concerns the third sighting of the black panther by Jeff Whiting. Whilst investigating the scene of the sighting I looked for place names which may have some connection with Fortean lore. Low and behold, the road leading off from the Orsett Road, not twenty yards from the position of the animal, was a Francis Close. Di Francis' book "Cat Country," a study of out-of-place large cats, started the flow of publicity for such sightings at the beginning of 1983 when it was first published. Undoubtedly, 1983 was an incredible year for such sightings, (the last of which were the Horndon black panther sightings), leading some researchers to name it the "year of the cat."

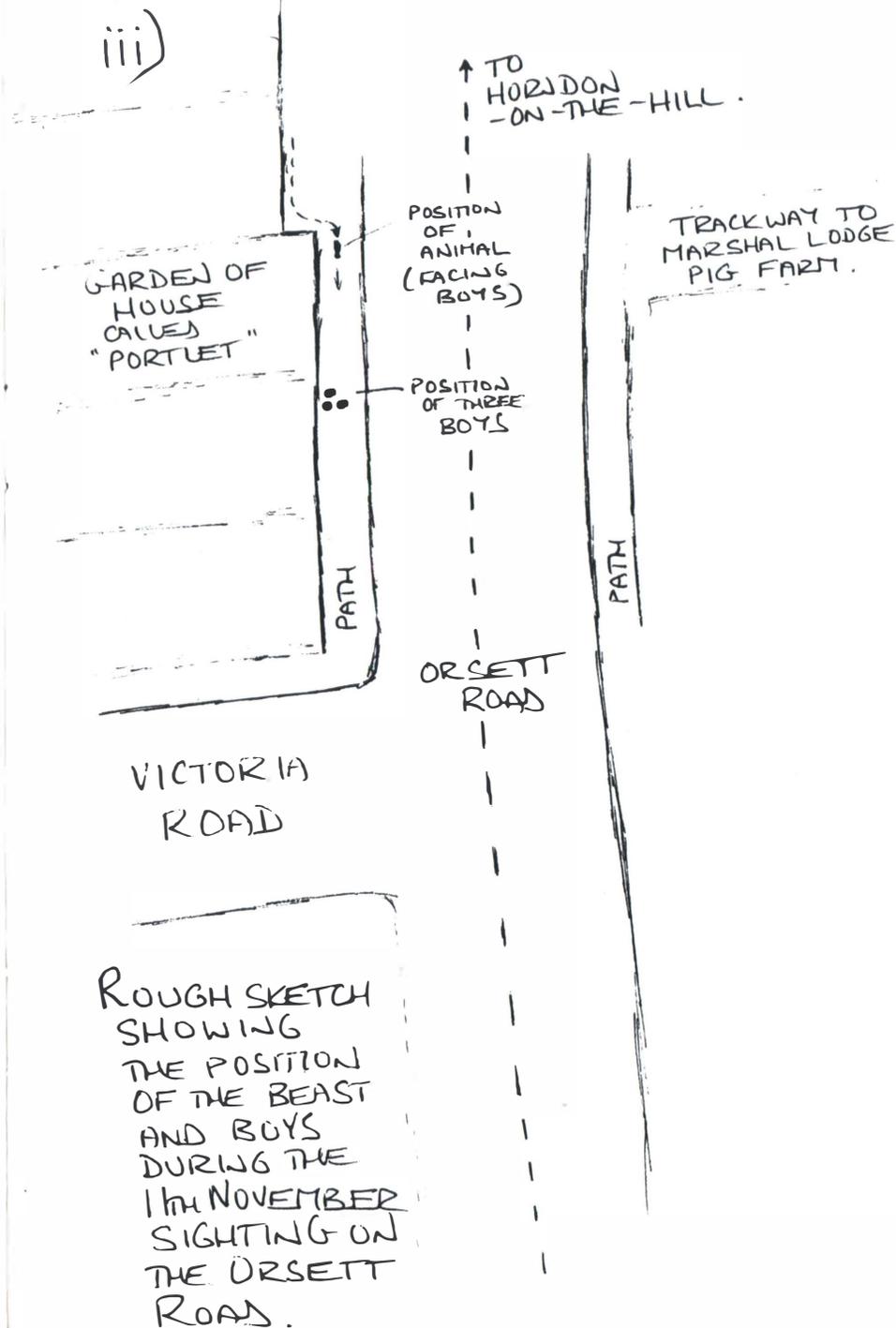
The third synchronicity concerns the pattern often found in OOP large cat cases which I mentioned earlier. After having told various people, including the Cheale family, that the usual pattern of such sightings was a couple of token appearances on one day before the cat vanishes without trace, save for one further sighting "about a week later." Well, the third and last sighting did take place exactly one week later. Coincidence?

PAST MYSTERY BEAST SIGHTINGS IN THE AREA

It is perhaps worthy to mention that the area around Horndon-on-the-Hill is noted for mystery beast sightings.

During August 1983 a puma-like animal was seen from a train upon Mucking Marshes, near Stanford-le-Hope, less than two miles from Horndon-on-the-Hill. This report was made by Carole Young, an Earthquest member, as she was returning from London Fenchurch Street station to Leigh. Details were given to both Corringham police and the Thurrock Gazette newspaper. However, no further sightings transpired.

In August 1982 two independent sightings of a puma-like beast were made at Fobbing,¹ just three miles from Horndon-on-the-Hill. Corringham police were also involved with these sightings. It appeared through investigations that a similar beast had been seen at fobbing eighteen months earlier, around the beginning of 1981, although no details were ever forthcoming. Talk of another Fobbing puma sighting circulated during the recent Horndon black panther sightings, but again, no details ever came to light on this matter.



The only known case of a black panther-like beast being seen in South East Essex before the sightings at Horndon took place at Pitsea during 1976. Pitsea is about five miles from Horndon-on-the-Hill.

Perhaps unconnected, although worth a mention, is that one of the half dozen dragon traditions of Essex stems from Bulphan Fen, just three and a half miles from Horndon-on-the-Hill.

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

I feel certain that Mrs Cheale and Mrs Barker witnessed an animal which, due to their precise description, could only have been a black panther-like cat. Mr Polley's sighting is a lot more difficult to assess and there must always remain an outside possibility that he witnessed a large dog. I do not believe this is the case though.

The third sighting, made by Jeff Whiting, a fifteen year old, is more peculiar. Various points of objection could be raised in connection with this case. What was a black panther doing at 9pm on a main road in a relatively built up area? Why didn't the other two boys see the beast? How much did the earlier reports influence the boys (each had read of the other sightings earlier that same day)?

Despite these objections I consider that the curious details of this case are sufficient to lend weight to the evidence. The two other boys and Jeff's father were insistent that they had never seen him so frightened. So strong was this that it made the other two boys run away without even questioning his reaction.

I do not suspect the perpetuation of a hoax as, if this was so, then surely it would involve all three boys, not just one. I am also confident of the boy's integrity and sincerity to be certain of this.

There are also various similarities between the Cheale beast and the one seen by Jeff Whiting. Both described its size and proportions similarly, except for the head which Anne Cheale said was "large and flat," while Jeff said it was "small" with a snout. Both mentioned its "shabby, out of condition" coat and its "shaggy" tail, points which were not included in the newspaper accounts.

So, at the end of the day we are left with three independent reports of a black panther-like beast which stand up as far as witness testimony goes, although there is no actual physical evidence for the beast's existence. Where it came from or where it went is a mystery. Was it an escaped animal from a zoo or a private collection? Has it now returned to its home and been firmly locked in its cage? Or could the answer lie in para-physical realms?

Notes

1. Collins, A. "The Fobbing Puma and Other Essex Felines," Earthquest News No.5 Winter 1982. pp.2-8.
2. -do- P.6, also Basildon Recorder 28/5/76

Horndon's Black Panther ~ Part 2 - The Paraphysical Solution

If it is eventually discovered that the Horndon black panther was just an escaped animal from a zoo or a private collection then certain psychic information given by Carole Young regarding the sightings will have been proved incorrect. Anyway, I feel it worth mentioning as it does suggest a quite fantastic theory for the paraphysical origin of out of place felines, and one which falls in line with ideas suggested by many Fortean authorities in the past.

During the height of my investigations into the sightings I visited Carole at her home on Tuesday, 15th November. She told me that during the night of Saturday, the 12th, she had dreamt about the black panther. The contents of the dream suggested that the beast was not a normal physical animal but some unworldly phantom. Interestingly enough, the Evening Echo described it as a "black phantom."

Spurred on by this possibility I asked Carole to accompany me to Horndon-on-the-Hill that very morning to see if she might "pick up" anything psychically. She agreed.

We first visited the site of Jeff Whiting's sighting on the Orsett Road. Here she "picked up" the word "gateway," implying a portal between two worlds. I said this was coincidental as the name of the house next to where the sighting took place was "Portlet," suggesting a gateway. Intrigued by this Carole remarked: "Were any of the other sightings near gates or gateways?" I said yes, the first sighting at Great Malgraves occurred just in front of a field gate and that one of the two Fobbing puma sightings the previous year took place next to a gate across the railway. She said that the coincidence of mystery cats being seen near gateways should be investigated. (See separate article in this issue).

Carole then had the distinct impression that the beast was paraphysical in nature, and felt that it "blinked in and out of manifestation."

From here we travelled on to Great Malgraves. Carole met Anne Cheale, after which we moved into the field where the animal had been seen. Here she picked up the word "hunger" and saw the black panther in her mind's eye. She said it was telling her it was "hungry" and needed "blood to stay manifest." She felt this made it almost demonic or vampiric in nature, or as she put it herself - "a freak of reality." She also had the impression of mystery lights around the beast.

With this we left, Carole undoubtedly having concluded that the black panther was a paraphysical phenomenon, a subject about which she knew very little.

On the way back to Carole's home in Leigh we chatted over her psychic impressions and speculated upon their possible interpretation. When she had mentioned the hunger, blood and vampiric connection, I considered this a new and very interesting idea. However, as we were going along I recalled the work of one of America's greatest writers on the supernatural - John Keel.

Keel, in his controversial book "The Cosmic Question (published first in the United States under the title "The Eighth Tower")" studied the phenomenon of mystery beasts and "big hairy monsters," or BHMs for short. He had come to the eventual conclusion that they were parapsychical in origin, and were formed out of a matrix of pure atomic energy. To him they were elementals of the superspectrum, which transformed into temporarily physical form for a limited duration. The process involved Keel has termed transmogrification. Yet because these wretched beasts were formed outside the laws of nature they begin to decompose immediately and eventually, simply melted away into oblivion.²

Recalling Keel's theory I postulated the idea that perhaps, when manifested, these beasts are intelligent and know that to survive they must find and eat flesh and blood to sustain their physical form, hence the hunger, blood and vampiric impressions picked up by Carole.³ Maybe, Carole and I decided, the ancient concept of a vampire or werewolf needing flesh and blood to sustain physical form is a degenerate memory of the parapsychical beast syndrome. One is also drawn to the superstitious lore surrounding the appearance of medieval dragons who were believed to need the flesh and blood of young female virgins to survive.

BLOOD SYNCHRONICITIES

This idea brought to mind some interesting new synchronicities in connection with the Horndon black panther sightings involving flesh and blood. Firstly, we have the coincidence of Mr Richard Polley being not just a farmhand, but also the local slaughterer. Secondly, when Carole and I were in Horndon-on-the-Hill we stopped in the village to take a look at the church and a markstone. Often you will find that when visiting ancient and mystical sites a guardian-like character, usually an elderly person, will curiously be on hand to give you the information you require, either directly or cryptically through omens or synchronicities. At Horndon we were directed to an old man, a Mr Hills, who had lived in the village all his life and knew about its history. He had been for many years the village slaughterer...

Then there was the strange connection of the goat killing linked by the police and the local media with the panther sightings. Although this assumption was erroneous, the link nevertheless existed, and it is curious to see that this goat, undoubtedly the victim of a sick black magic practice, should have had its blood drained.⁴

If the parapsychical solution is to be seriously considered then perhaps connecting the goat killing with the sightings is not so strange. In black magic ritual the power to conjure the force or demon involved is achieved by a sacrificial killing. This is particularly so in the art of necromancy, the raising of the dead through ritual invocation. Goats are often used as ritual sacrifices and their skin is taken as parchment on which to scribe protection symbols, or the magic "sigil" of the entity being invoked. This would account for the eight inch square of skin taken from the goat at Langdon Hills.

Rumour throughout the area around Horndon-on-the-Hill suggested that the goat killing was just one of a number of incidents connected with "black magic" which have taken place recently. On the night of Halloween 1983 evidence of some ritual was discovered in Orsett churchyard, just a few miles from Horndon-on-the-Hill. Could it be that the effect of these practices around Halloween disturbed the earth energies of the area resulting, some days later, in the appearances of the black panther?

So is there a link between black magic practices and mystery cat sightings? The colour black may be a significant clue. Black cats in superstitious lore were generally believed to be connected with witches and demons. They were witch familiars, manifestations of Hell, omens of death. In some places it was believed that if a black cat crossed your path it foretold an epidemic in the village. All these beliefs were also associated with the black dogs of Britain who seem to have been "blood brothers" to their feline counterparts.

Today sightings of a black panther in the British countryside are taken as little more than curiosity items, reported in the local media and then forgotten about. Yet in the past they would have been taken as superstitious omens, possibly foretelling death and disease. John Keel found a disturbing high rate of witnesses dying within six months to two years of their BHM or UFO sightings, usually through natural death such as heart attacks, accidents and prolonged illnesses. He also found that a high rate of marriage break ups, nervous breakdowns and general "bad luck" associated with witnesses following sightings of mystery animals. (See editors note at end of article). All this indicates imbalanced energies, like those known as "black streams" in dowsing and earth mysteries lore, which are often associated with sacred and magical sites. These cause similar negative effects, or so sensitives and dowers believe. Could the "black" or negative version of the parapsychical beast be a byproduct of creating and stirring up imbalanced energy fields of the earth? Can this happen through black magic practices?

Keel suggests various theories as to the purpose and reasons for these freaks of reality. Some of it is a bit over the top, but essentially the book is remarkable. I have included some quotes from "The Cosmic Question" in the notes which accompany this article.

RESERVOIRS

This leaves just a couple of points I want to set down in writing concerning out of place felines in South East Essex. Firstly, in an article on the Fobbing puma sightings in Earthquest News No. 5 I commented upon the coincidence of reservoirs being connected with both the Fobbing puma and some of the Surrey variants.⁵ Well, John Keel also found that one important characteristic of monster sightings was their close proximity to expanses of water - lakes, streams, swamps and reservoirs.⁶

The other interesting point here is that it is not only mystery beasts that have been associated with expanses of water. Apparitions, ghosts and mystery lights are often connected with a close proximity of water, either streams, rivers, lakes or wells. And one must not forget the relationship between underground water and "blind springs" with earth energies and "black streams" as mentioned earlier.

FORTEAN PLACE-NAME

One Fortean place-name connection which, if nothing else, is another amusing synchronicity, concerns the scene of the first Horndon black panther sighting, Great Malgraves.

In Ancient Egypt, where the cat was worshipped in the form of the goddess Bast or Pasht, the word for cat was "mau," which is also close to the word "miaow." Does this then imply "cat" graves? Maybe not, however, the etymological interpretation of "Malgraves" is obscure. There is both a Great and Little Malgraves in Horndon and P.H. Reaney in his "Place-names of Essex" cites Malgraves as being Margraves in 1486, Malgraves in 1508 and Mulgraves in 1529. He suggests it "probably" derives from the family name of Malegreff, recorded in 1198. Still the emphasis is on the root "mal" (Editors note - it has also been pointed out to me that in Latin, the root "Mal" means evil or bad, as in Malleus or Malice.)

FINAL WORD

I do not think we will ever have the full answer to all outbreaks of out of place feline sightings, although if we study each one we will begin to see quite specific similarities and patterns begin to emerge. Yet to do this every case must be studied in great depth and all avenues - whether they be zoological, Fortean, supernatural or earth mysteries orientated - must be dealt with. It is also important to make sure we get our facts right as newspaper stories have a tendency of being full of inaccuracies and sensational assumptions - like the goat killing connection, for instance.

Yet even with this approach researchers must still keep the actual sightings on two separate levels. Firstly, a straight forward investigation to establish the facts, which includes interviewing all witnesses involved and substantiating claims. Logical solutions for the sightings should also be sought, whilst keeping contact with local media and authorities such as the police who might well receive further sightings. Once this has been carried out and an objective case report compiled, part two should begin. On this level, if no solution to the sightings have been found, parapsychical solutions can be explored using psychics, folklore and earth mysteries field and archive work.

Perhaps then, we will one day come somewhere nearer to the truth.

Notes

1. Keel, John. "The Cosmic Question" Granada Publishing Ltd, 1978. First published in 1975 under the title "The Eighth Tower" by D.P. Dutton & Co Inc.
2. - ibid - Page 107: "Where does a dinosaur hide? Or a ninety-foot sea serpent? Or an eighteen-foot tall hairy humanoid? Do they creep into a hidden network of deep caverns, as some of the believers claim?"

"It is more probable that these are not actual animals but are distortions of our reality, inserted into our space-time continuum by the mischievous forces of the superspectrum. The reported density of some of these creatures indicates they are not flesh and blood but are

composed of highly condensed atoms comparable with plutonium. And like plutonium, a man-made radioactive metal, they deteriorate at a very rapid rate."

Page 108: "Some of our funny monsters remain in an area for several days and are seen by many people before they finally disappear. Token attacks on domestic animals occur throughout the period, because the monster is somehow replenishing its diminishing energies with earthly animal matter. But it is a losing battle, and the monster must ultimately melt away ..."

3. -ibid- It certainly appears that Keel had come to a similar conclusion: Page 100: "There is an ancient religious theory that contends that deemons and gods need physical matter from this world to aid their own materializations. And once they have materialized in a physical form, they must replenish themselves frequently to retain that form. This, of course, is found in numerous variations in the vampire lore of middle Europe. The deaths and disappearances of animals and people during these mysterious invasions has always been carefully explained by some kind of phenomenon acceptable to the people of the period."
4. The underside of the goat was cut with a knife and hardly any trace of blood was found near the body, leading one to assume that the blood had been drained and taken away. The tether was cut about one quarter of an inch away from the animals collar and the animal was found about ten yards from its usual position. No indication of black magic ritual was found except for a pink piece of rag found nearby.
5. Collins, A. "The Fobbing Puma and other Essex Felines." Earthquest News No.5 Winter 1982. P.6
6. Keel, John. "The Cosmic Question" P. 109: "Another important characteristic of our monsters is that they nearly always appear close to water - lakes, streams, reservoirs, swamps."
7. Pond, Grace. "Purnell's Pictorial Encyclopedia of Cats," Purnell 1980. P.7

Editors Note:-

Since parts one and two of the Horndon black panther cases were completed in late November of last year some interesting developments have come to light, which tend to support the notion that the answer does lay in the parapsychical realms.

The first point concerns the appearances of mystery beasts by gates and gateways. Carole Young strongly "picked up" psychically that there was a definite link between the two and that we should carry out some research into this subject. Well, as you will see in part three, Carole (once again) was absolutely correct.

The second point relates to the connections between the appearance of mystery beasts and subsequent "bad luck" which befalls those who witness them, a point Keel continually found in such cases.

Well, it would seem that over the weekend of 3rd/4th December 1983 one of the barns at Great Malgraves was burnt to the ground under curious

circumstances. No evidence of arson, or any explanation for the fire was ever found (as far as I am aware).

I spoke to Mrs Cheale the week afterwards and she was noticeably concerned over the affair and curtailed our telephone call without further detail.

Mystery fires is a very common phenomenon noted in cases of poltergeist situations and on a wider scale in areas of high intensity paranormal events - window areas, ufocals or emanic fields. Spontaneous combustion of this nature, if genuinely paraphysical in origin, may well be a byproduct of intense electro-magnetic disturbances thought to be associated with imbalanced earth energies. In part two I speculated on the connection between mystery beasts and imbalanced energies of this type.

It could be that the fire at Great Malgraves has a mundane explanation. However, in many ways I was waiting for something like that to happen. It usually does.

* * *

DEVIL TALK?

CHURCH SERVICES SECTION: It has recently come to my attention that a new branch of the Liberal Catholic Church has been started at Leigh-on-Sea in Essex by Earthquest News correspondent John Selby.

The Liberal Catholic Church was originally founded in 1918 as a "theosophical section of the church" preaching a rich and remarkable form of Christian mysticism under the guidance of such Theosophists as C.W. Leadbeater and Mrs Annie Besant. Many of its early members were a part of "Episcopi Vagantes" organisations like the Old Roman Catholic Church and were also a part of Mrs Besant's own Order of the Star of the East.

The L.C.C. quickly spread its wings throughout the world using Leadbeater's very enlightened view of Christian mysticism. This included the knowledge of how to channel and enhance energies of sacred buildings and oratories through ritual and ceremony.

The L.C.C. is still alive today and I feel that you could certainly do worse in finding out a little more about C.W. Leadbeater's work and the ideals of this surviving branch of "Episcopi Vagantes."

John Selby, in co-operation with the Oratory of our Lady at Grays, organised two initial L.C.C. celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at his home during last November and December. Short talks on the history of the L.C.C. followed and the attendance and interest of these two meetings has prompted John to continue the Holy Eucharist fixtures through until July 1984. They will take place on the third Sunday of each month (except May, when it's on the fourth Sunday) at 10.30 a.m. His address is 50 Medway Crescent, Leigh-on-Sea. The Rev. David Sandercock will officiate, and refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the service. Everyone is welcome.

Gateway to Reality ~ Further Discussion on the Paraphysical answer to Mystery Beasts

When Carole Young stood at the position where the Horndon black panther had appeared on the third and last occasion, she received the impression of a gateway - a "gateway to reality." She suggested that the beast was paraphysical in origin and that there was a link between the proximity of physical gateways and the appearance of these mystery animals.

Carole's suggestion was interesting as the name of the house next to where we stood was "Portlet," suggestive of a gateway. This was just one of the many peculiar synchronicities I had found associated with the Horndon sightings. On hearing this Carole then asked if any of the other sightings had occurred by gateways. I said that the first sighting, made by Mrs Cheale and her aunt, Mrs Barker, had taken place in front of a field gate. I also recalled that one of the two Fobbing puma sightings from the previous year had occurred in front of a gate which led across a railway line. Carole felt this was very significant and that I should investigate the apparent link between mystery beasts and gateways.

The matter was left open in part two of the Horndon black panther report, although I happened to mention Carole's psychic information to certain earth mysteries researchers. I am therefore indebted to Chesca Potter who, whilst reading some old copies of The Ley Hunter magazine, chanced upon an article entitled "The Wandering Turf: or the Psychography of Leys" by Dan Butcher (TLH Feb' 1971, No.1).

This fascinating article deals initially with the appearance of UFO phenomenon by hedges, crossroads and unsuspected leys. However, it goes on to show the apparent link between the appearance of mystery animals and ancient stones, gates and gaps in hedgerows.

Butcher mentions various cases, both in tradition of European folklore and within contemporary records of actual paranormal experiences. First on the list is the case of a farmer from Aylesbury, Bucks., who was in the habit of crossing a field at night on his way to milk cows. His journey would take him through a gap in a hedge, and one night he found this gap occupied by a large, black, fierce-looking dog, with fiery eyes, that grew larger as he watched. Apparently, he just turned away and walked through a gate elsewhere in the field. For some nights the dog appeared, always in the same position, until eventually the farmer decided to attack the dog. This he did, striking at it with the yoke of his milk pails. The dog disappeared, but the farmer fell senseless to the ground and remained speechless and paralysed to the end of his days.

The author then shows the link between gateways and the Wild Hunt. He said that Woden, the leader of the Wild Hunt, rode through the air with his hounds, producing apparitions and strange sounds. It was said that wherever he went hedges crashed down and roads opened up before him. In Denmark gates were opened for him on St John's Day, which were

heard slamming as he passed by.

Also, according to Butcher, the fetch, an astral body often associated with omens of death in Scotland and Ireland, is said to disappear across fields or through a gap in a hedge.

Another link with folklore are reports of apparitions seen sitting on gates. Butcher says: "Elliott O'Donnell (in "Animal Ghosts") tells the story of a white cat observed on a gate post in a country lane; while the Barguest, a demon which frequently appears in the form of a black cat, is said to sit on gates."

Dan Butcher sees many reasons for the appearance of apparitions and mystery beasts by gateways or gaps in hedges. He suggests that as gates are prominent markers noted along the courses of leys then it may be that the witness is observing some form of exteriorization of earth energies, including "astral" travellers out on out-of-the-body experiences. He believes that the "mobile centre of consciousness" of such travellers is projected "from point to point along lines of force corresponding to the leys."

However, what I feel is more important to our own research into the nature of mystery beasts, is Butcher's idea of a psychic experience using a type of archetypal symbolism based upon what he calls "an enchanted circle." This is what he has to say about the relationship between the human consciousness and the manifestation of phantoms and apparitions:-

"All the symbolic paraphernalia are there ready to engage with the hidden vibrations in his (the percipient's) psyche: the (magic) field and its hedge (or circle); the straight way; the narrow gate; and the guardian guide and guard; the hidden phantom within himself. If the wayfarer has not made an inner situation clear to himself, here are the symbols for triggering off a waking-dream experience, and the situation is projected onto the surrounding landscape outside him. . . . on coming to the field with all its symbols, the opportunity arises for the hidden mechanisms to start turning, and the reflection of the inner state to be flashed upon the screen of nature in terms of fields, hedges, gaps and gates."

If we accept the parapsychical nature of mystery beasts, then their manifestation must be reliant upon a great many factors. Some of these will perhaps be related to physical conditions within the environment, like the time of day, the weather, geophysical events and features, etc. However, other factors are perhaps reliant upon archetypal symbolism of the human psyche, as Dan Butcher suggests, and I believe the collective unconscious of the area involved.

First let us take the individual unconscious mind of a person. We know that paranormal manifestations very often reflect the personalised belief system of the percipient, whether it be religious, emotional or based purely upon environmental conditions. It would also appear that these experiences rely heavily on archetypal symbolism from deep within the unconscious, which can be drawn from the person's own experiences in life, or from religious traditions associated with their particular culture. Various magical and mythological traditions utilise archetypal symbolism in mental development and occult ritual (two good examples being the imagery of the Hebrew system of the Cabbala and the Tarot pack). Those who participate in astral travelling are in many ways journeying



Mrs Anne Cheale stands where the black panther-like beast was first seen on 4th November 1983. The gate is some twenty yards behind her.

through the dark recesses of their own archetypal symbolism, spoken of as the astral realms.

Is it not strange then to find that in standard "astral" symbolism the guardians to gates and gateways in such domains are often large cats, and in many cases black panthers. This is particularly so in travels associated with the Ancient Egyptian tradition. I have personally conducted a number of astral visions with mediums where these guardian cats are encountered.

Indeed, the only reference to black panthers in Ancient Egyptian tradition which I have found, refer to them as guardians of the underworld. In other early religions from across the world, large cats, especially lions, acted as guardians to the other world. Could this be one of the factors involved with the appearance of large cats by gates and gateways - the human mind triggers off the manifestation after witnessing a physical gate or gateway?

This is one example of how the archetypal symbolism of the human mind might be reflected in the appearance of mystery animals. However, the idea that a collective consciousness may be involved with the manifestation of these animals is a little more difficult to comprehend. As we know, a great many synchronicities are often connected with such sightings, concerning where the animal manifests; when it appears, and to whom. This information may stem from the name of the percipient, the place-name of the site, local events, even national incidents and situations. All this would be information which could form a part of the collective unconscious of a particular area.

Take, for example, the first Great Malgraves sighting. Not only did the beast appear in front of a gateway, but it also appeared on land with a place-name associated with cats (ie. Malgraves: cat-graves) and on a day that a travelling circus just happened to be passing through a neighbouring village. The second sighting was witnessed by a man who just happened to be the local slaughterer, and we connected blood and sacrifice with these sightings. The third sighting took place outside a house named "Portlet," a name suggestive of a gateway, and by a road called Francis Close, a name we can associate with mystery animals and their prevalence during 1983, through Di Francis' book "Cat Country." Can all of these factors be pure coincidence?

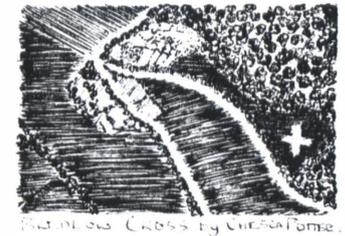
DEVIL TALK . . .

UFO FILES TO BE RELEASED: News in the national papers on Monday, 5th March indicates that the Ministry of Defence are to finally make public their great mass of UFO files collected and studied for over thirty five years.

Ever since the late forties Department S4f (Air) at Whitehall has been responsible for collecting together case reports of UFO sightings made by the general public and reported to such authorities as the police, airports, weather stations and the armed forces. Every sighting is logged on a comprehensive form and sent through to this small administration department.

Now that these files have been released perhaps we might discover the true interest the M.O.D. had for UFO's. We eagerly await further news on this subject.

The Secret Of The White Leaf Cross - By Alan Cleaver



The strange case of "The Sword and Stone" mystery must be one of the greatest challenges psychical researchers have faced for many years. The phenomena claimed, was on a scale hitherto unknown and must force researchers into a new paradigm to even begin to understand what happened in the Midlands from 1979 onwards.

Andrew Collins was one of the central characters involved but has been able to take a step back and ask himself: "What is really going on?" From his observations he formed theories and ideas which he has started to test; primarily with the Earthquest group as expanded in The Running Well Mystery (1) but also in other situations.

I wanted to repeat his experiments and further test the theories by enlisting the aid of other groups around Britain. Project Albion, adopted by ASSAP is the result. It is a project in which groups investigate the mysteries in their own area in such a way as to "activate" the countryside, tempting it to unleash its secrets.(2)

When I moved to the Chilterns it was apparent that the area was rich in local legends and I soon set to work on my own Project Albion. After the Secret of the Runwell Cross it was perhaps synchronicity which set me off in search of the Secret of the Whiteleaf Cross.

The Western end of the Chilterns drops dramatically down onto the Aylesbury Vale and carved into the side of the Chilterns are two crosses. Cut into the chalk, they shine out white across the valley. Or did. The cross at the village of Whiteleaf can still be seen for miles around, but the one at Bledlow now lies hidden in undergrowth. Nobody knows for sure when or why they were cut but most authorities believe them to be Saxon in origin and used either as markers for people crossing Aylesbury vale or to commemorate a battle.

I first visited Whiteleaf cross and from the cross you look exactly West across the Vale. In fact it is said you can see seven different counties from the cross. Not surprisingly it is a favourite beauty spot always receiving a steady stream of visitors. Bledlow cross however is now almost hidden in the undergrowth and so has very few visitors. Many, like me, must have searched for it for sometime.

Eventually, with little daylight left, I mentally called upon the guardian of the site to help me find it. The guardian came round the corner.

He was a local man who knew the area well and he offered to take me to the cross. As we walked there he incessantly talked about his hunting exploits, talking of all the animals he had shot in the area. I found this annoying at the time, wishing he would talk instead about the local legends. But later I thought this may be an indication

that 'hunting' is an important aspect of the site. He did tell me of one legend: apparently human sacrifices used to be held on top of Bledlow hill and the heads of the victims cut off; the heads then being rolled down the side of the hill.

I became intrigued about this repeated emphasis of blood in connection with Bledlow and decided to investigate further. At the library I discovered the name "bledlow" meant either the 'tome of Bledda' (and authors suggesting Bledda was a Saxon chief or prince) or 'the bloody hill.' Blood once again, but a few days later came the most astonishing synchronicity.

Police had found a headless body in Devon, dumped in a ditch. It was the body of a woman and she was wearing an unusual and distinct T-Shirt which, after the design was flashed on TV, identified the woman within hours. Residents at Bledlow recognised it as that worn by a local resident. When Police visited the home they found her head stored in the freezer. The husband has been charged with her murder. So here was a modern event mirroring the legend I had been told a few days earlier: a human sacrifice and the head severed. It seemed the legend of 'bloody Bledlow' was still breathing.

I researched further. My next surprise came upon reading a local parish magazine. It revealed the name of the footpath I had met the Guardian on is known locally as "The Bloody footpath." Perhaps not too surprising since it is on Bledlow hill/the bloody hill but the author did not seem to realise this and wondered if it was called the Bloody footpath because Chinnor (the village underneath the Bledlow cross) was destroyed during the civil war in 1643. I think this is unlikely as the footpath doesn't go to Chinnor.

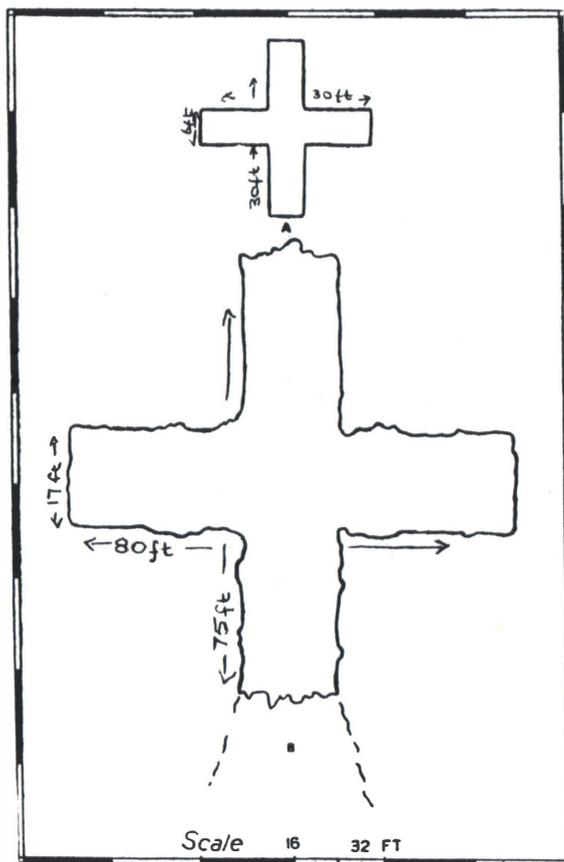


Fig. 16. The Bledlow Cross.
A. 1827, *Gentleman's Magazine*.
B. 1936, *G. Marples*.

The pamphlets you find in churches are often a wonderful source of information. The central church for the area is St Peter and St Paul at Aston Rowant. It only includes one legend - but it's once again connected with blood; it reads: "There is a local saying that Juniper only grows where blood has been spilt and there is plenty of Juniper around here."

But all my investigations at the libraries had failed to find another reference to the human sacrifices and I began to wonder if the man had made it up. Then I found it. A small pamphlet written in 1921 called "The Secret of Whiteleaf Cross." The author told how archaeologists had found numerous skulls at the bottom of Bledlow hill. He suggested it was an indication Bledlow was the site of a battle. But I would suggest you don't just find heads at the scene of a battle - unless the dead bodies then walked off somewhere else! For the moment I'll stay with the sacrifice legend.

My work will obviously continue; I'm now following up rumours of a secret society who hold the secret of the crosses! And strange ghosts with a 'V' shaped mark on their forehead or chest. I'm also awaiting with interest the trial of the man who, it is claimed, cut off his wife's head. I suspect some will say he is mad and heard voices in his head telling him to do it.

And so it goes on. Only after I had been investigating it for some weeks did the landlord at my lodgings point out to me how appropriate it was that I was investigating this mystery - my name is A. Cleaver and a cleaver is a butcher's knife! (The man who murdered his wife at Bledlow is a cousin of the owner of Dewhurst's butcher chain.)

I am yet to discover why blood should be so important to this site but the main point of this article is to show how it is possible to investigate the mysteries in an area, taking lessons from the Earthquest group.

Historical research in the library is important but actually visiting the sites and talking to the locals is a must. Particular note should be paid to legends, mysteries and customs associated with the area. Names of pubs, roads and buildings may provide vital hints. I believe psychics can provide some of the most useful data and put the researcher on vital lines of enquiry. The work Earthquest has done in this manner is exemplary.

I don't believe there is a 'secret' hidden away in the landscape of every county but there is a lot of information which may provide vital clues to a better understanding of the area. It is vital this is recorded before it is lost under new towns and motorways but it may also allow you to answer some of the modern day mysteries: why are alien animals often seen in Surrey, or why was Borley the most haunted house, or why are so many suicides committed in a certain spot.

Perhaps one day I'll even find out why a Bledlow resident murdered his wife and chopped off her head.

NOTES

1. The Running Well Mystery by Andrew Collins, price £2.00 from A Collins, 19 St Davids Way, Wickford, Essex. SS11 8EX.
2. Project Albion manual available from A Cleaver, Flat 3, 65 Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.

MARKSTONE LIBERATION FRONT Strike Again!



MASKED two members of a mysterious group calling themselves the Markstone Liberation Front.

Further to the report in Earthquest News No.6 about the clandestine activities of the Markstone Liberation Front we now bring you further news of their quest to liberate the old stones of Essex! The group have struck again, and this time it was the re-erection of the huge triangular markstone in the churchyard of St. Botolph's, Beauchamp Roding, probably one of the most significant megaliths in the county.

The M.L.F.'s press release fell on the Earthquest News newsdesk just days after their liberation of the stone, which by virtue of its re-erection, is now one of the only standing stones in Essex.

The press release, which was circulated to local newspapers covering the area of Beauchamp Roding, read as follows:-

"During the evening of Saturday, 14th January 1984 the Markstone Liberation Front re-erected a sizeable markstone which lay in the churchyard of St Botolph's church, Beauchamp Roding, deep in the Essex countryside."

"This huge, triangular stone, five feet across and weighing over two tons, has marked a sacred hilltop for many thousands of years. At the time of the church's construction this stone stood erect, as a standing stone. Legend says that when Christianity came to Beauchamp Roding a site for a church was chosen next to the village. The standing stone was dragged down to the site so it could be incorporated into the building of the Christian edifice. However, that same night the stone mysteriously found its way back to its original position up on the hilltop. Not to be outdone, the villagers once again dragged the stone back down the hill, but once more it mysteriously returned to its original position on the old sacred hill. The villagers took this to be a sign that the church should be built on the hilltop, next to the ancient stone."

"Since then the Beauchamp Roding stone has laid in the churchyard, totally forgotten. That was until 14th January this year when the Markstone Liberation Front - an action group dedicated to restoring and liberating neglected monuments by subversive means - acted swiftly to liberate this small, but significant part of our lost heritage."

"A party of some twenty activists dug out this markstone, re-erecting it to its original standing position. An ingenious method utilising a heavy rope and a wooden pulley system was used to accomplish this task."

PS Wt. ESSEX CHRONICLE 20-1-84

Churchyard rock shifted by night

IN DARKNESS on Saturday night, masked men entered the churchyard at St Botolph's, Beauchamp Roding, near Chelmsford, and liberated an ancient Saxon stone.

The men were members of a new undercover group which has sprung up in Essex.

The Markstone Liberation Front dug up a huge triangular stone five feet across and weighing more than two tons. They believe the stone has marked the sacred hilltop for thousands of years.

A spokesman for the Front said: "At the time of the church's construction this stone stood erect, as a standing stone. Legend says that Christianity came to Beauchamp Roding, a site for a church was chosen next to the village.

The standing stone was dragged down to the site so it could be incorporated into the building of the Christian edifice. However, that same night the stone mysteriously found its way back to its original position up on the hilltop.

PULLEY

But, not to be outdone, the villagers dragged it back down the hill, but once more it mysteriously



The Beauchamp Roding stone half buried in the ground before it was "liberated" by the MLF.

returned to its original position.

The villagers are supposed to have taken this to be a sign that the church should be built on the hilltop, next to the ancient stone.

Since then, the Beauchamp Roding stone has lain in the churchyard totally forgotten.

That was, until Saturday night when the Liberation Front took a hand.

"We acted swiftly to liberate this small, but significant part of our lost heritage," said the spokesman.

Twenty activists dug out the stone and re-erected it in its original standing position by using a heavy rope and pulley system.

CAMPAGN

This act was carried out as part of the MLF's publicity campaign to bring our neglected heritage to the attention of the general public," said the spokesman.

The Beauchamp Roding mission is the second for the MLF. They liberated a markstone from ground outside a church in Thundersley in December 1982.

"The MLF will strive to keep alive the last remnants of our rich and magical landscape," said the spokesman. "Our next target has already been chosen."

Press cutting from Essex detailing the markstone group's activities in January.

GUARDIAN & GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS, JANUARY 20, 1984



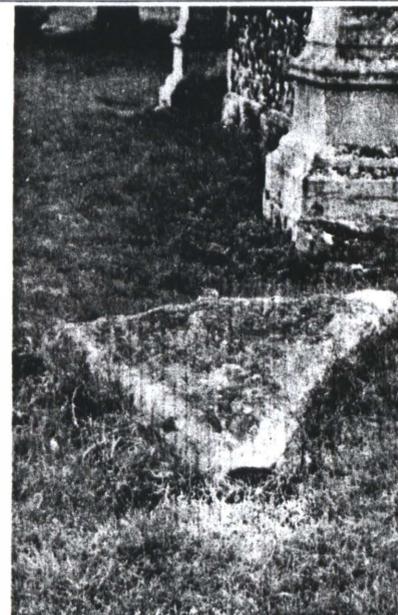
Activist group 'liberates' a piece of our 'neglected heritage'

A MYSTERIOUS new liberation group supposedly dedicated to "restoring and liberating neglected monuments by subversive means" has been in action in Beauchamp Roding.

The Markstone Liberation Front claims to have re-erected a markstone in the churchyard of St Botolph's Church on Saturday evening.

A press release from the group states: "A party of some 20 activists dug out this markstone, re-erecting it to its original standing position."

It described the stone as a "small but significant part of our lost heritage"



and says its "liberation" was part of the Front's publicity campaign to bring "our neglected heritage to the attention of the general public."

And it warns: "Our next target has already been chosen."

● The caption on this contributed picture says: "The ancient markstone in St Botolph's churchyard before its liberation by the Markstone Liberation Front. It now stands erect, four feet out of the ground". (270).

"This act was carried out as part of the M.L.F.'s publicity campaign to bring our neglected heritage to the attention of the general public."

"The Beauchamp Roding mission is the second time the M.L.F. have struck. On 27th December 1982 the group rescued a markstone from the ground outside the church hall, near St Peter's church, Thundersley, Essex (see enclosed cuttings)."

"The M.L.F. will strive to keep alive the last semblances of our rich and magical landscape."

"Our next target has already been chosen!"

"Thank you. M.L.F. 15th January 1984."

There is little doubt that the Beauchamp Roding stone is a true pagan stone due to the legend which is common among church sitings in the British Isles. Christianity actually came quite late to this village as the church only has a recorded history dating to the fourteenth century. Certainly, the stone has been here for much longer and its placing on the highest point in the area suggests that it did once mark a site of pre-Christian religious importance. Versions of the legend definitely indicate that it was once standing, so the M.L.F. seem correct in their actions to re-erect this ancient stone.

From both a topographical and visual viewpoint the idea of the stone having once stood makes good sense. If we consider that if the church was not present, and that the trees surrounding the churchyard are of a relatively recent date, then a four foot standing stone would have been seen for miles around. One is reminded of Jonatham Mullard's lecture on Shropshire standing stones at last year's Northern Earth Mysteries Moot in York. He said that many of the stones he had studied made visual sense as they could often be seen for miles around, even though some were only a few feet tall. It would seem that only stones of a size necessary for them to be seen at a great distance were used and that they were never any bigger than they needed to be. This is certainly true of the Beauchamp Roding stone.

PRESS COVERAGE

Not unnaturally, a certain amount of press coverage followed the M.L.F.'s activities at Beauchamp Roding, on 14th January. On the back page of the Epping and Ongar edition of the West Essex Gazette, dated 20th January, a piece appeared entitled "Activist group 'liberates' a piece of our 'neglected heritage'". They used a photograph of the stone as it appeared before its re-erection and quoted from the press release. Page five of the Essex Chronicle, based at Chelmsford, from the same week, carried a story headlined "Churchyard rock shifted by night". They too used a picture of the stone before its liberation and quoted word verbatim from the release. However, this news item also included a few words from the Vicar of St. Botolph's, the Rev. Ernest Exell. He was quoted as saying: "It would have been better if they had informed me of what they wanted to do rather than doing it under the cover of darkness.

"These stones have a fascinating history. It would be a shame if

any were to be damaged." he concluded. However, I am sure the Vicar would have been a little hesitant about allowing some strange activist group to dig up an old pagan stone if the group had asked, and I doubt very much if there was much chance of damaging this immensely hard piece of glacial sandstone.



Two little girls show the size of the Beauchamp Roding stone re-erected to its original standing position.

On Saturday, 28th January I visited St Botolph's Church, Beauchamp Roding, and saw the recently re-erected stone. It stands three and a half foot out of the ground and is orientated north-south. As I was photographing the stone two little girls came up to me and said it had been moved, and enquired, quite innocently: "I wonder how they moved such a big stone." I said I did not know, they then said: "They wore masks, you know."

The girls mother was busy in the porch cutting flowers for the church. I asked her what she knew about the stone's movement and she replied that she had only seen the press reports. She also mentioned the masks and said that surely they would not have needed to wear them as they were on their own and it would have been dark anyway. I said that the reference to the group wearing masks mentioned in one press report was probably a little bit of artistic licence.

The press release never mentioned masks although it did include a photocopy of cuttings from the groups "Liberation" of the Thundersley stone the previous year. One of these mentioned masks, whilst another showed a picture of two of the group in masks.

The lady said that the Rector had not said much about the stone's movement. Her husband had apparently seen it the day after it was moved. She also added that someone had tried to move the stone during last summer as marks were found near its base.

The sight of the erect standing stone is most exhilarating.

According to the group's press release their next target has already been chosen. Those same words ended the M.L.F.'s press release after their liberation of the stone outside the church hall in Thundersley at the end of 1982, so we must assume they had been planning this megalithic mission for over a year. Judging by their average to date, can we expect to hear from them again about Christmas 1984? And their next target? Well, it could be any one of several stones scattered around the county, some as large and as forgotten as the Beauchamp Roding stone. Still, we will have to wait and see what they get up to next.

* * *

Readers' Letters

From: Valerie Martin, 17 Underdown Road, Herne Bay CT6 5BP.

I thought John Merron's article on the circle of perpetual choirs most intriguing. With a line passing through Dover Castle, I wonder if the place is the church of St Mary de Castro, which is in a hollow but viewed from a distance on a distinct mound.

I was surprised to see my accident mentioned as I didn't realise the spot had any significance though thought the lane was probably a ley. It wasn't the only weird experience that day. In all I looked at about 7 churches, not all inside, one of them being Canewden. I had read that the village is famous for witches but didn't actually go into the village. I looked round the inside of the church and thought it interesting but no particular atmosphere. Then walked round the outside (widdershins) and took one photo with both slide and print cameras from the north east corner. When I came to take one from the north west corner, of the tower, I felt very dizzy looking through the viewfinder and I am not given to fits of vertigo, headaches or anything like that. In fact I am fortunate never to have fainted in my life.

I quickly took the photo and didn't think anymore about it until I got the prints. When I looked at the one with the tower I had the same feeling of dizziness. I had promised to take my younger son swimming at Canterbury and he was so disappointed when I said I felt too ill to go that I forced myself to drive there. While he was in the pool I had intended looking round the city but couldn't get out of the car. After a couple of hours fortunately the feeling had worn off and we got home alright. Now, whenever I look at that photo I can feel that same effect coming on, but whether it's really the place or remembrance of the initial dizziness I don't know. I looked up in Reader's Digest Myths and Folklore about Canewden and see that there is a legend of a witch whirling people in the air.

The enclosed card of a painting by William Drew may be of interest, in the light of the article on synchronicity in a cathedral (and how about that for a weird experience). The artist was an Australian in his early 50's who settled in Canterbury with his wife also Aussie and family some 4 years ago. Their house is very near the cathedral and is run as a gallery. I usually go in there to see the art exhibitions. Drew (what a name for an artist but has another significant meaning I'll write about another time) was very fascinated with medieval towns and felt drawn (no pun intended) to come to England. Many of his paintings were in the style of stained glass windows, as you can see. He also had a house in Conques, SW France, a small village with a large cathedral as it was on a pilgrim route to Compostela. He ran a painting school there and spent a large part of each year painting and teaching there. I'd hoped to go there sometime. It was while driving to Conques that he was involved in a fatal accident, but it's not known what exactly happened as there were no witnesses. His car ran off the road for no apparent reason. It happened on the afternoon of Sunday, 17th July! (The day of the synchronicity in a Cathedral, see last issue - ed).

From: Mrs E Godbolt, 19 Commonwood Rise, Crowborough, Sussex.

I write to you about a prophecy I was given that supposedly originates from a gravestone in an Essex churchyard which is dated 1641. I have had a copy of this prophecy for almost 50 years and have often wondered who I might contact - and if it would be possible for someone to find which churchyard it might be in - you must excuse the writing and mistakes - as I am now 87.

When I first had it I was told it was of Old Mother Shipton's prophecies of which she made 18. 17 of them have come true. Maybe you will be able to find this prophecy:-

"When pictures speak and look alive within their frame.
When men like fish do swim beneath the sea.
When men like birds do scan the sky.
Then all the world in blood shall lie."

* * *

I have certainly never come across this prophecy before and do not know of any prophecy on an Essex churchyard gravestone. The style is undoubtedly that of Old Mother Shipton, although not having a book of her writings it is difficult for me to really say where it comes from. Perhaps one of our readers can help here? - ed.

From: Mark Valentine, 35 Grafton Way, New Dunston, Northampton NN5 6NG.

I was very interested by John Merron's article on "The Circle of Perpetual Choirs" and the geometric figures which extend from it. When you are next in touch with him, could you mention that I would be grateful if he wouldn't mind giving me further details of the site near Biggleswade which is discussed in his article. I'd rather like to help research that area, as it is quite close at hand, and Bedfordshire as a whole is a rather neglected county so far as earth mysteries are concerned. Depending how far west of Biggleswade his line strikes, there is the significant village of Ickwell within 3 or 4 miles, which has one of the few surviving (and thriving) maypoles on its green, together with a ruined priory which stands within 2,000 year old earthworks. As this area is poor in ancient remains of any kind, this can hardly be insignificant. The place mentioned by John on his map, Langford, is less notable but does possess burial mounds of uncertain age (I'm checking these) and a thatched tithe barn.

Another significant site, even closer to Langford, must be Old Warden, here, there is a "hill fort" earthwork called Quint's Hill, said to be early Iron Age but never excavated, so this must be conjectural. There is also Warden Abbey, founded 1135 by the Cistercians, very little of which remains. This area is also notable as one end of a long Bronze Age boundary ditch, which originally began at a barrow on Old Warden Hill and ended near Luton. It is described as "probably marking the SW limit of a tribal territorial area." Little is now visible.

Like Northamptonshire, this is an area rarely noted for mystic or historic sites, yet much lies just beneath the surface. Both counties are desperately under-researched. I have just begun looking into the holy wells of Bedfordshire, my main field of interest, but naturally I am apt to be distracted by a host of equally intriguing possibilities, and John's article has added a new dimension to the county.

From: Leila Coon, Bath, Avon.

It was interesting reading the lioness story in Earthquest News No. 8 - after I finished the article an old memory floated into my consciousness - I had written it down years ago, but had totally forgotten about it...

I grew up in Berkeley, California, my home was surrounded by a park called The Rose Garden that grew hundreds of varieties of roses and was wooded with live oaks of enormous size. This was in the Berkeley hills which while very populated with homes and roads had very wooded and wild areas, we had seen deer on rare occasions and there were lots of squirrels, birds and racoons.

I remember one afternoon I was playing on a hill that was wooded very near our house - I must have been about 7 years approximately - I had a swing in a tree and I suddenly saw a great lioness standing near me, I was very confused, I didn't understand what was happening - her presence was very powerful and I had this inner sense of her being some sort of guardian to me - I was sufficiently in the real world though, to be frightened of her and ran in the house to tell my mother, my mother came to the window to see the lioness. I excitedly told her what was outside and we peered out together - I remember saying to her "look, look mommy - there she is, can't you see her?" - my mother saw nothing, but humoured me - for some reason my rational mind then decided that if my mother couldn't see her, it must have just been a cow after all, and I decided what I must have seen was a cow - end of event.

That lioness must really get around. That was California in perhaps the late 50's.

I had thought since that what I had seen must have had some relationship to my personal astrology - I didn't have a chart done until I was about 15 years old, but I then discovered that I had 5 planets in the sign of Leo plus my ascendant and south node - I had thoughts that the lioness I had seen must have been some sort of archtypal vision manifesting to me of my leonian energies - but after reading your article I'm not so sure, it's really baffling what that sort of phenomena could be.

I just thought I'd get this down and send it to you, because, I'd probably have forgotten it had ever happened if I hadn't read your article.

From: Tony "Doc" Shiels, 3 Vale View, Ponsanooth, Truro, Cornwall.

In your review of THE SHAMAN No 3, you 'wonder what Roy Mackal would think' of my work. I can tell you...not much! But then I don't think much of Mackal's, especially in connection with Loch Ness. His theories are highly suspect...for example, he refuses to see any similarity between 'Nessie' and long-necked sea-serpents, simply because that would undermine his notions concerning over-grown newts. He accepts the Rhines photographs even though they fulfil none of the conditions he lays down for Loch Ness photographs in his book. Mackal rejects my photographs because they are 'too good to be true' (!), because I have a reputation as a shamanic showman, because I turn monster-raising into a 'circus act' etc. It all smacks of sour grapes to me.

Having said all that, I wish Mackal all the luck in the world and every success with, for example, his hunt for African dinosaurs (profoundly and expensively disappointing, so far).

* * *

Earthquest Round-up

SAMHAIN MEDITATION AT THE NINE LADIES: For the second year a group from Earthquest journeyed to Derbyshire around Samhain to conduct a meditational observance at a stone circle.

The 1983 venue was, as 1982, the Nine Ladies stone circle on Stanton Moor, near the tiny village of Birchover. The date chosen was the weekend of 5/6th November, a week later than last year.

The purpose of the event was threefold. Firstly, through its symbolic nature, it seals the bondage of the group through meditational observance for another year. Secondly, and from a research point of view, we wanted to attempt to record any possible parapsychical phenomena which might occur. Thirdly, the meditation was carried out to generate the energies of the site for the regeneration of the landscape and ourselves.

Last year, if you recall, from Earthquest News No. 6, the result of the dawn meditation at the Nine Ladies was a freak wind which all present considered parapsychical in nature. This year we hoped for a similar result, although we considered that this would be a by-product of the occasion if this happened.

Prior to the event Earthquest meditation sessions had been devoted over to gaining information on what we would have to do at the Nine Ladies. The result was that we should carry out two separate meditations - one lunar and one solar. This made sense as the previous year we felt the site was finely balanced cosmically, but opted to carry out just the solar orientated observance.

On the Saturday morning we journeyed to Birchover. The party of nine stayed in two cottages, next door but one from each other. We visited Arbor Low stone circle during the afternoon, after which Dave visited the Nine Ladies to prepare the site for our own event the following morning at dawn. In the evening we indulged in a vegetarian

dinner and later the group attended the village's Guy Fawkes bonfire.

We set out early on the Sunday morning and managed to get ourselves hopelessly lost on Stanton Moor looking for the Nine Ladies stone circle! However, we eventually located the circle and Dave conducted the lunar meditation. I continued with the solar variation. Following this the site was closed down and festivity ensued.

No strange parapsychical effects were noted this year. The whole session was recorded on sensitive recording equipment although no odd sounds were found to be present when it was later played back.

After a festive meal back at the cottages the team left, visiting two local stone circles on the way home.

The bond of Earthquest had been sealed for another year. Next year it will be somewhere else in another part of the country.

* * *

SOLSTICE CELEBRATION: The second Earthquest solstice celebration, marking the end of the group's second year, was held at our Malyons headquarters in Basildon on Wednesday, 21st December last.

It was a great success with over thirty people present, including some well known faces from the earth mysteries community. In attendance, among others, was Paul Devereux, Graham Phillips, John Merron, Caroline Wise, Alan Cleaver, John and Sue Day, with family, Jeff & Debbie Seward and the rest of the Earthquest team.

Drink and food was brought along by all and a very festive occasion ensued. Your editor arranged and conducted a psychic quiz to test everyone's clairvoyant, telepathic, psychometric and psycho kinetic abilities.

Alan Cleaver arranged a musical quiz and the evening was completed with a slide show by John Day and John Merron. John D. showed some slides of his inspirational sculpture while John M. showed slides of various mystical sites he had caught on film during the year.

Towards the end of the evening as I recall (things got hazy!) we toasted the coming Earthquest's third year which will include its first major conference. I think everyone enjoyed themselves.

* * *

BOXING DAY WALK TO WELL: As previously reported, your editor, along with a Runwell parish councillor named David De'ath, arranged a walk to the Running Well on Boxing Day for the residents of Wickford and Runwell. Despite the uncertain weather early that morning the event was a huge success with over 200 local people attending.

The walk had attracted enormous local publicity and this ensured a good response. It was an amazing site to see so many people descending upon the Quart Pot car park, the prearranged meeting point for the walk. I noted many well known local characters from the area. Some brought, ivy and mistletoe to dress the well, an idea I suggested through the local newspapers. Although there is no recorded evidence for this ever having

taken place at the well I thought it a meaningful gesture.

The walk, which is now into its tenth year, was originally started by David De'ath to ensure the footpaths of Runwell were walked at least once a year. At that time only a couple of dozen local people took part and these were given winter warmers before the start by the proprietor of the Quart Pot public house. Since then the numbers have increased to 150 in 1981 and then 80 in 1982.

I was very impressed when I heard about the yearly Boxing Day walk as it seemed so similar to the old beating of the bounds ceremony which took place in many parishes around the country. In the past the Runwell walk has visited the well, although only as part of a general trek of the footpaths. I thought it might be a good idea to get the walk to end at the Running Well and to publicise the event in the local media. I think it was well worth it.

On reaching the well the 200 strong crowd, which included John and Sue Day and a couple of Earthquest News subscribers (and my dad!), I gave a brief account of the well's history and folklore.

From a mystical point of view this walk, although relatively modern, somehow shows the ability of the landscape to perpetuate its own existence, by unconsciously making people continue ancient beliefs associated with its heritage. It is my belief, through interpretation of the Runwell legends, psychic information, and Dave Hunt's landscape geometry, that the period around the winter solstice, Yule, Christmas etc., was important to the Runwell area in the past. This has now been revived and hopefully it will continue. The Running Well was left to fall into a state of ruin and decay. Now it is once more alive. Long may it stay that way.



The 200 plus walkers on their way to the Running Well on Boxing Day last year.

* * *

THE RUNNING WELL MYSTERY - SOLD OUT!: Although I am certainly not one to blow my own trumpet, I think it worthy to point out that my book "The Running Well Mystery" has now sold out. Knowing that over one thousand of the fourteen hundred copies sold have gone to folks in and around Wickford and Runwell, it is most gratifying to think that, with a total of 10,000 homes in this area, an average of one in ten households now possess the book. It is also satisfying to know that those who read the book were able to learn about such subjects as psychic communication, folklore, legends, light channeling, landscape geometry, earth energies and Christian mysteries. On more than one occasion I have had people come up to me and speak of finding new markers on the landscape geometry suggested within the book.

I financed and published the book as part of The Supernaturalist series, and although I felt it would be interesting to the earth mysteries/paranormal readership I considered that, if I were to put the story over in the right way it would also have a certain appeal to a local audience.

In 1982 a gentleman named Morris Wakeham produced a sixty-four page book on the history of Wickford entitled "Aspects of Wickford History." He included a large selection of old pictures of Wickford and sold the book through local newsagents and booksellers. It really went very well, with all one thousand copies selling in less than six months.

I had various conversations with Morris about books concerning local areas and decided to produce a similar booklet, complete with some old pictures of Runwell. It seems that there is a good market for home produced local study literature (and that if one were careful this market could be captured.). However, where my book would differ from others would be its content of not only local history, but also folklore and the various earth mysteries subjects. All this I felt would perhaps help educate the readership in these important areas of modern day research.

"The Running Well Mystery" appeared in the shops during March 1983. Many local newsagents and booksellers readily accepted to sell it on a sale or return basis, due to the success of its Wickford counterpart by Morris Wakeham.

The optimism of the shopkeepers was not in vain, as after just six weeks the initial run of five hundred had completely sold out. I immediately made plans to print another one thousand, although decided to use a different printer as I had not been entirely satisfied with the original finished product. This change inevitably led to high production costs on the second impression and due to certain difficulties I only received a total of 860 finished copies. This little problem made sure I was never to make a profit out of this venture.

During May the second impression went into the shops and sales continued unabated. It was then, however, that I discovered that not everyone had received the book in the same enthusiastic way as those who had already purchased a copy. The local Runwell and Wickford Church Council, led by the Rev. David Lloyd, were extremely annoyed that I should have included the various devil traditions that surrounded St Mary's church, Runwell, in a history of the parish. This resulted in me being banned from carrying out any further work inside the church.

This bizarre situation annoyed me greatly and although it was a set back for my own researches, I decided to use it to my own advantage - to gain publicity. I would highlight the church ban in a press release which

would be circulated to all local media outlets such as newspapers and radio stations. I knew this could leave me open to criticism, but that was a risk I had to take. It was a good story and I felt the local newspapers would seize upon it.

I was right. Every local newspaper ran the story, three even featuring it as their front page lead. I appeared on Essex Radio, our local commercial station, for an hour talking about the book and the legends, and the story even made The Times newspaper during July.

Many follow up stories appeared in ensuing weeks and the publicity came to a crescendo during August when the whole extraordinary saga was featured on the ITV's local news programme "Thames at Six."

I used the adverse publicity not only to sell books, but to also promote a series of lectures I had arranged on the Runwell mysteries which took place in The Runwell Parish Hall during August and October, the first of which attracted nearly one hundred and fifty people.

Sporadic publicity continued throughout the rest of 1983 and, in all, the book received no less than eighteen separate mentions in newspapers over a period of nine months.

By the end of 1983 the adverse publicity had vanished and promotion of the Runwell parish Boxing Day walk to the Running Well (featured elsewhere in this issue) worked completely, resulting in over two hundred people turning out on that cold but crisp St Stephen's Day morning.

Now, with all 1400 copies of the book sold, I feel very happy with how the whole thing had gone. I honestly believe that there are very few people in Wickford and Runwell who do not know of the Running Well and the devil folklore associated with St Mary's church. Both have been put back into the collective consciousness of the area for good. The well is once more alive and is a site of interest and meditation to be visited and appreciated.

With the success of "The Running Well Mystery" I have now decided that the next in The Supernaturalist series will be to publish, for the first time, the remarkable history of Runwell parish written by the Rev. J.E. Bazille-Corbin MA, DD. during the 1940s. Before now it has only existed in manuscript form and has been circulated around the parish as photostats for many years.

As this book gave me so much inspiration and ideas for my own work, I felt it only decent that I should give the Rev. Bazille-Corbin the respect and success he deserved in his own lifetime.

The book is a fascinating account of the history, tales and folklore of Runwell which, although primarily of interest to local people, will undoubtedly be of significance to the earth mysteries community due to its high mystical content and the intriguing life of its author. It will also appeal to all Fredk. Bligh-Bond enthusiasts as it was edited, altered and typed at the hands of Bond himself.

I will write a short introduction to the book and will include with it a number of old photographs of Runwell in Victorian and Edwardian times. There will also be various appendixes and notes relating to the text.

I shall hopefully have this together by November of this year.

I really feel there IS a large market for these home produced books on local studies and that they need not be simple picture/caption "pictorial historys" as some publishers seem to think. "The Running Well Mystery" was a complex saga of mystery and imagination which was heavy going in several places.

I also believe that you do not have to leave the writing of such books to so-called local historians who consider they are the "be all or end all" of local knowledge. They are often over academic, dry, boring, trivial and insensitive to the more subtle aspects of our past heritage, be it actual or speculative research. The earth mysteries researcher is very often far more knowledgeable, open, creative and interesting; reflecting the sort of material the general public wants to read. However, there is a pit fall. Earth mysteries researchers often suffer from an inward approach to their work, writing as if they are speaking to a fellow researcher and not to the man in the street.

The approach to home produced books on local studies must be very outward in nature. They must be interesting and in a language and romanticism the man in the street can understand and appreciate. Otherwise such books will fail miserably.

I would very much like to see a few more home produced earth mysteries books aimed at the general public, and I offer my services and experience to anyone who might want information on publishing, marketing, media publicity, accounts and directional approach to contents.

In the meantime I want to thank everyone who has in some way helped contribute to the success of "The Running Well Mystery," for without you it would not have been possible. Thank you.

* * *

A SPIRITFUL EXPERIENCE. (By Lucy Fur): I was lucky enough to join the revellers at ASSAP's Christmas party in London on Dec 17th last. Earthquest members and associates were present, and once the christmas dinner was over we had a very interesting paranormal quiz. The teams were either very telepathic or there was a lot of cheating.

Lionel Beer showed us some slides of large stones and woodwose's, or woodwi. These are dear little hairy men that live in the woods of East Anglia, and are seen to decorate churches and medieval carvings. Next there was nearly a riot as two teams had to guess which date certain newspaper headlines had appeared. Much alcohol was consumed and we were getting rather raucous.

Psychic "hunt the pin" followed, and a telepathy test where Alan Cleaver who is usually as psychic as a brick showed a remarkable accuracy. I think this is a job for ASSAP to investigate: or the fraud squad.

The prize for making the most noise must go to ASSAP membership secretary Caroline Wise.

I would like to thank Geoff Barrass, Dennis Bury, Hugh Pincott and Alan Cleaver for this marvellous excuse for eating, drinking and being merry.

* * *

Devil Talk ~ more idle Chatter From The News Desk

THE ASP ROCK JINX: An interesting story came to my attention recently via Shipbuilding News, the monthly newspaper of the British shipbuilding industry.

In the September '83 issue, I was intrigued to read a piece headlined under "Appledore divers have trouble at Asp Rock." The story, written by freelancer Geoff Staddon of Bideford, North Devon, highlighted the extraordinary problems which befell the Appledore Shipbuilders Sub-Aqua Club at Asp Rock, off the North Devon coast.

Apparently, the club visited the rock for a dive to explore the marine life and got into difficulties when the engine of their inflatable dinghy inexplicably failed - just as a number of fishing and pleasure boats have done at Asp Rock in the past, on the exact same spot. Their engines cut out and fail, only to function properly again a short while later.

With a choppy sea and the light fading on their dive, the sub-aqua club fired a smoke flare and the Appledore lifeboat was launched.

First on the scene though was a party of Royal Marines on exercise who took the divers and their dinghy onboard their landing craft.

It would seem that the Appledore sub-aqua club accident was just the latest of a series of incidents of a similar nature to have occurred off Asp Rock, leading local sailors and fishermen to believe the rock jinxed.

I have attempted to follow up this story without success. Geoff Staddon says the source of the report, the club's Colin Fraser, has now moved to Canada. I wrote to the club but have received no reply. Geoff believes that the jinx story is strong around the Appledore area but could not give me any further details. I have written to one fisherman in Appledore, but again, I have received no reply.

This incident at Asp Rock is potentially a very important case as it surely shows some form of electro-magnetic disturbance resulting in the failure of boat engines. The similarity between this phenomena and that frequently found in connection with motor vehicles in the close proximity of UFOs is obvious. What is significant here is that the incident took place on water. One is also drawn to recall the sort of electro-magnetic disturbances reported in "Bermuda Triangle" phenomena, publicised in recent years by pulp authors of the mysteries.

It would be intriguing to discover whether there is any folklore to support the "jinx" electro-magnetic effects of Asp Rock. I wonder if the place-name "asp", a poisonous snake, has anything to do with it?

I would very much like to take up this matter further, but until I have a chance to visit the North Devon coastline, I ask for comments from my earth mysteries colleagues.

MASONIC BOOK CONSPIRACY: Following the piece in the last issue of Earthquest News regarding Stephen Knight's expose of the freemasons entitled "The Brotherhood" there have been a number of developments including the actual publication of the book amid a blaze of publicity within the national media.

Before the books release in late January, I received correspondence from Geoff Bird in Bristol who informed me that author and psychologist, Bob Gilbert, stated that Knight's book was initially withdrawn due to lawsuits and not sabotage, as previously suggested. Apparently, a number of freemasons in high ranking positions have been implicated in the book and this has prompted many to request scrutiny of the contents before publication, presumably on the advice of solicitors.

Bob added that the "Episcopi Vagantes" book "Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church" by H.R.T. Brandeth (published by S.P.C.K. in 1947 and 1961) was withdrawn due to impending lawsuits issued by outraged ecclesiastics implicated within its pages. I know that a similar fate befell Peter Anson's remarkable book "Bishops at Large."

The release of "The Brotherhood" has sparked off a very angry and bitter resentment from freemasons in this country which has included heated debates on television and in leading national newspapers. The main objection is the book's suggestion that freemasonry is a centre for power, influence and corruption behind closed doors which seriously affects all walks of life from the very highest positions in government to the man in the street.

"The Brotherhood" has been published by Granada, the second company to have been involved in its publication. Apparently, it was originally to have been published by New English Library who had commissioned Stephen Knight to write the book. An elaborate plan had been initiated to make sure that only the right people would be aware of the book's compilation until it was too late. N.E.L. genuinely feared that the freemason contingent of their staff and directors might cause considerable problems should they become aware of the book's existence.

Everything would have gone okay had N.E.L. not been bought out by Hodder and Stoughton. The book was eventually quashed by one of their directors who, although not a mason himself, was very conscious of his father's involvement with freemasonry. For many reasons he decided not to publish the book.

Granada took up the book and despite some problems of their own (highlighted in the last issue) it has now been released.

The blaze of publicity on television and in the national newspapers will ensure that "The Brotherhood" is a bestseller. I tried to secure a review copy but found that the waiting list was immense and that I was better off getting hold of a copy from a bookshop. So, £8.95 was hastily invested in purchasing a copy from the local bookshop. The assistant there told me that they had ordered thirty-five copies due to the demand, all of which went in a couple of days. They too now have a huge waiting list for copies. It would seem that the first impression has already sold out and the publishers are awaiting the second impression from the printers.

I will review the book in the next issue as I have not finished it yet. However, my immediate impression is that a lot of people in high places are not going to be very happy with Mr Knight. He has not painted a very pretty picture of our masonic brethren. In fact, I can see very little in their favour at all.

The book's publicity has certainly made the subject of freemasonry a topic of conversation on a street level. I have had some intriguing conversations with freemasons concerning the book, all of whom have passed it off as utter nonsense. One local shopkeeper I spoke to began to condemn the book as rubbish, comparing the freemason's influence with a rugby or luncheon club. He said they were not so much a secret society, but a society with secrets.

I then argued this point and then became aware that this person had begun to use the context "we". I realised he was a freemason himself. I did feel embarrassed! Oddly enough, I later read in the book that a freemason will often use the statement we are not a secret society, we are a society with secrets, in answer to questions posed about "the Craft's" activities.

There must be a possibility that the leaked press information concerning the printing problems in the production of "The Brotherhood" was just a calculated publicity campaign on behalf of Knight and Granada, though I really do not think so.

All I can say at this time is that I suggest you grab a copy of this book as soon as possible just in case it is withdrawn for whatever reason. And my last word must go to Stephen Knight himself: keep away from Blackfriars Bridge for a while!

AQUARIAN FESTIVAL '84: After some doubts as to whether the Aquarian Fair, London's primary new age event, would continue, we can now announce that it is still on.

In previous years it has been organised by Joan Andrews, a stalwart and devoted exponent of new age thinking. However, after last year's festival at Wandsworth Town Hall she announced that she would be doing no more. So the demise of the Aquarian Festival seemed inevitable. Joan said that she had had enough of all the preparations, sweat and worry, and needed a break.

Now Prediction magazine have stepped in to save the festival and with the help of Mary Caine the event has now been arranged for the weekend of 9-11th March. The venue will be the Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11.

At present no further details are available although all enquiries should be put in writing to Mary Caine, 25 Kingston Hill, Kingston, Surrey.

I look forward to this event immensely as it is undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable weekends in the year. Help make it a success by going along and supporting this worthy cause.

ALTERNATIVE BRITAIN FORUM AND FAYRE: Hot on the heels of the announcement of the Aquarian Fair taking place this year, we discover what Joan Andrews herself is doing.

Joan has organised a day fayre called "Alternative Britain" for Saturday, 28th April 1984 at Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1. She says it will consist of a rally and a shop-window in the surrounding corridors.

The meetings, this is the first of a few, are intended to draw together most aspects of an alternative Britain, everything from "socialists, ecologists, Greens, peace groups, animal welfare groups, quakers, along with certain Christian groups and new age groups. The whole idea is to bring together all the various areas to exchange views and rally under one banner. The first meeting will consist of about five speakers and the theme will be trying to find a common factor between the different groups. It will start at 11am and the rally is at 2pm. Vegetarian and Indian food will be available on the premises. Admission price is £2 with 70p for the unemployed. Among the attractions will be the Groovers Steel Orchestra, Helen John of the Greenham Common women, Jonathan Porrit of the Ecology Party and Angela Warner of the British Union of Anti-Vivisection.

All enquiries should be addressed to Joan Andrews, 16a Franconia Road, London SW4, telephone 01.622.5734.

EARTHQUEST - THE DOCUMENTARY: You've read the journals, attended the meetings, now you (may) have seen the programme - for on Sunday, 12th February BBC1 screened a forty minute documentary called, simply "Earthquest." It purported to investigate pagan and new age beliefs, and featured the mystical centre of Glastonbury.

The use of the name Earthquest appears purely coincidental (is there such a thing?) although one never knows! All through the documentary the narrator referred to those "on the earthquest" or "the earth mysteries," and perhaps it is time to introduce the term "earthquesters" to describe those supporting earth mysteries ideals? What do you think!

I am led to believe that this was the first of two documentaries shot last summer and autumn in and around Glastonbury. Both have already been seen in the south-west. The second apparently highlights the Halloween earth mysteries gathering at Glastonbury and features some well known faces (including several Earthquesters!).

This first programme attempted to show the growing popularity of pagan and new age beliefs in Glastonbury, which the narrator showed were based upon an awareness of the living earth and the mystical significance of ancient and holy sites, where communication with the earth spirit could take place.

It began by talking with a chap named Stephen Jenkins who had been told by spiritual masters in Mongolia that the hidden city of Shamballah was located in Britain, and that his own quest was to discover its whereabouts. Mr Jenkins had come to the conclusion that it was Glastonbury.

Explaining the significance of the Glastonbury sites was Jamie George, proprietor of the Gothic Image bookshop in the High Street. Along with his personal interpretation Jamie was seen showing a party of people around such Glastonbury sites as Wearyall Hill, Chalice Hill, the Tor and Chalice Well, all of which were featured to some degree.

Geoffrey Ashe, the author of books on Christian mysteries and Avalonian tradition, and who lives in the town, explained the concept

of the Tor's so-called maze path. An organiser of the Glastonbury Green Gathering told us about pagan ideals, while a lady gave some rather matriarchal views on the symbolism of Avalon.

On a broader scale, the documentary asked why Glastonbury should have become a great mystical centre in the first place. They sought an answer from Mary Caine who proceeded to explain the nature of the Somerset terrestrial zodiac. Unfortunately, the subject was skipped over too lightly leaving it to appear as a rather non-sensical belief.

Most remarkable of all was an interview with the Rector of St John-the-Baptist church, Glastonbury, who not only acknowledged the growth of new age awareness in his town, but seemed to support it. He said that young people were far more conscious of our relationship with nature and the land these days, something which the teachings of the Church had sadly lost in recent centuries.

In contrast, one of the parishioners of St John-the-Baptist's church, an elderly lady spoke of how these young people were searching in vain and that in the end they could find nothing but God himself. In a "Songs of Praise" style interview the lady's feelings were overlaid onto scenes of her at a church service. These were interspersed with scenes of Jamie George showing around the party of people and explaining the mystical significance of each site. Curiously enough, as the documentary came to an end the woman left the church service and began to walk down Glastonbury High Street in the direction of Gothic Image. Jamie's tour of the sites came to an end and the van parked outside Gothic Image. He shook hands and said goodbye to the newly enlightened party as the woman from the church fast approached; the two not apparently being aware of the other's involvement in the documentary. As Jamie said the final goodbye he turned and accidentally backed into the woman who just happened to pass at that very moment. The timing was exact and surely this must have been planned? The whole incident virtually symbolised how the growth in earth mysteries awareness and new age consciousness could overtake and push out the old fashioned religious dogma of the Church.

From a research viewpoint, the programme was not deep enough and this inevitably made many of the statements about leys, energies, the goddess, the living earth, etc., all sound a little intangible and over the top. Still, hopefully it has generated some interest in these subjects.

THE AGEING HIPPIY CONVOY: Last issue we featured a piece titled "Tribes of Armageddon" in the Devil Talk section. It concerned a report from "The News of the World" detailing the existence of a "menacing new cult" called "the tribe" who, it was said, moved around the country in huge convoys living beyond the law in an orgy of violence, sex and drugs, leaving fear and loathing wherever they go.

So disturbing was this report that I decided to do a piece on the news item. However, it has since been revealed by "The Guardian" newspaper that the NOTW went rather overboard in their story. The Guardian now report that "the Tribe" are in fact just a band of ageing hippies who move around from place to place in old vans and buses. Collectively they are known as the Convoy and they originally came together following various free festivals around the country to which they attend.

It would now seem that they don't carry guns, hand grenades or batons, just knives and machettes to cut down wood. They are not into a heavy drug crazed scene, they just smoke dope. They do not live outside the law, just get busted occasionally along with one or two other minor incidents.

It seems that the notoriety came when the Convoy reached Salisbury

last year and settled down in woods by the race course. Local people were outraged and shopkeepers banned Convoy people. They called for legal action and Tory MP Robert Key launched an attack on the Convoy after having visited their camp. He reported shotguns, being threatened with a knife and various other fictitious statements. The matter was taken up by NOTW and they listened to Mr Key before going to the camp themselves posing as drug dealers. Apparently, they were sent on their bikes by the group who sold them a hand full of "old mushrooms" for an extortionate £80.

Mr Key has now openly retracted his statements, which were read in the House of Commons, and the matter has been dropped. It just shows you what a few distorted statements can do.

LEY HUNTER'S MOOT '84: (A word from Paul Devereux - Editor of 'The Ley Hunter').

The 1984 Ley Hunters Moot is being held in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, July 28th-30th. This, the first Moot to be held in the Welsh Border area looks like being the biggest Moot to date: an optional four day event while still retaining the weekend set-up characteristic of previous Moots.

A problem at previous Moots has been constricted space at the chosen venues. A great deal more attention has been paid to this for Moot 84: The Shrewsbury Music Hall is the main venue of its type in the town and to ensure this year there are no disappointments it has been personally inspected by Jonathan Mullard editor of EARTHLINES magazine and Paul Devereux. The venue comprises a very large, professional conference hall, ample side-rooms and an extremely spacious bar facility so there will be no need for anyone to leave the complex for a drink etc unless they so wish. The Music Hall is situated on the Town Square within immediate reach of all travel (coach/rail) amenities.

Moot '84 is, as with all Moots, the "official" TLH annual conference, but following the precedent adopted last year, it is being hosted by the local regional magazine, in this case EARTHLINES. We are issuing this information/booking leaflet to give everyone adequate notice about the event so the hard details have yet to be confirmed, but you can rest assured that it will, as always, be the best earth mysteries gathering of the year with suitable mind-bending contributions. Leading speakers who are being invited include Robert Anton Wilson (of ILLUMINATUS!!), and Bruce Chatwin (traveller; author of ON BLACK HILL, Booker prize-winner). A host of other excellent speakers are also being invited. However, the Moot this year is to be a little different. It will start on the Friday afternoon for those who can make it for then. This will be an opportunity to look at displays, take part in workshops, hopefully Francis Hitching's EARTH MAGIC film and possibly a folk group. Rounding off the evening with a social. Saturday will be the usual lecture-format typical of previous Moots. On the Sunday morning Moot goers will have the rare opportunity to see the Abbotts Bromley Horn Dancers who are coming specially for the Moot. The site trip will be to the nearby Mitchells Fold stone circle. Monday will consist of an all day field trip to places of interest including, if possible, one of Alfred Watkins' original leys to be walked, finishing in time for people to get home on Monday evening.

Because of the extended nature of this years Moot the ticket arrangements will be as follows:
Friday, Saturday and Sunday : £18.00
Saturday and Sunday only: £12.00/£8.50 for unwaged (weekend only)
Monday: £7 in addition to any of the above combinations.
(Subtract 10% of all prices if ordering two or more tickets)

WE HAVE EXPENSES TO START MEETING NOW SO WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR BOOKING AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE TICK WHICHEVER YOUR CHOSEN COMBINATIONS ARE ABOVE, ENCLOSE CHEQUE TO "MOOT 84", FILL IN NAME AND ADDRESS ON A SEPARATE SHEET AND SEND TO P O BOX 13, WELSHPOOL, POWYS.

Book Reviews

THE WAY OF WYRD by BRIAN BATES (208pp, hardback, Century Publishing, London 1983 £7.95 UK) This book is a fictional story of Anglo-Saxon sorcery, shamanism, earth magic and mystical adventure. It is apparently based upon years of careful research by the author including valuable information obtained from an MS. on Anglo-Saxon sorcery discovered in the British Museum.

I read the book with much enthusiasm and feel it is a major contribution to available literature on these integral subjects which show how we can attain a true relationship with the subtle forces and domains of our magical landscape.

The story centres around a Mercian monk, Brand, who is sent on a mission to learn and study the beliefs of the pagan people. He has been indoctrinated into the ways of Christianity and becomes immediately repulsed at the curious heathen philosophies he encounters, taught to him by his shaman guide, an enlightened character named Wulf.

From the moment that Brand sets foot in the strange land of the pagans he encounters supernatural forces, omens of fate and the domains of the spirits and elves, woven together, so he is told, by the concept of Wyrd, the Norse belief in fate and destiny.

At first, the naive Christian monk interprets all he sees and hears as either coincidence or the work of devils. Gradually though, with the help of his guide, Brand begins to comprehend the way of Wyrd. He learns the subtle relationship between destiny, omens and man, and how the landscape is full of benevolent and malevolent unseen forces, spirits and guardians.

A number of valuable lessons may be gained from this book. I would recommend it to anyone wishing to learn about psychic quest work. Just how much of the contents do stem from forgotten manuscripts from the British Museum I have no idea, however, a lot of the beliefs are often spoken of in mystical lore.

In some ways I would have liked to see the book as a research item rather than a fictional story, but then it may have escaped the man-in-the-street audience this book will surely gain.

One last point is the similarity between the contents of this book and the "The Green Stone" by Messrs. Phillips and Keatman. Even the colour scheme and typefaces of the covers are virtually the same. Obviously the way of Wyrd!

THE SACRED GARDEN by Chesca Potter (16pp, illustrated, £1.00 from Chesca Potter, 18 Caledonian Road, London N1.)

The first impression one gets when reading this booklet is of capturing Miss Potter's own thoughts and ideas at the very moment it was being written. For the most part it is a personal reflection of many varied aspects of mystical and symbolic enigmas of Christianity, such as the concept of the Virgin birth, the New Jerusalem, Revelations and how they link with other areas of study like the Cabbala, gematria, world mythology and the prehistoric sites of Britain.

The booklet is hand written and this adds to the impression that much of its contents are purely personal observations and ideas of the authoress', caught in an instant by her pen and accompanied by her own illustration. A lot of thought has gone into the concept of the Virgin birth and how it might be interpreted using the principles of other, more archaic religious beliefs. It also attempts a detailed breakdown and study of John Michell's geometric groundplan of the New Jerusalem holy city as outlined in his "City of Revelation" book (which was also the subject of John Merron's article in the last issue on the Circle of Perpetual Choirs).

In fact, a "City of Revelation" feel saturates the entire contents of the booklet and as Miss Potter openly points out, John Michell's book heavily influenced her ideas and inspirations in the first place.

As a sixteen page booklet the complexity of the contents are very evident. It needs deep concentration to fully digest, even on a second read. I'm sure that it will go well beyond anyone unfamiliar with the subjects of gematria, the Cabbala and Christian mysteries.

Despite this, it is a fine first publication from Miss Potter. As she not only wrote, but also fully illustrated the booklet herself and published it, it is well worth its place on your earth mysteries bookshelf.

A.B.C.

THE BOY FROM THE HILLS by Cara Louise, 76pp, illustrated (£2.95 from Earth Mysteries Enterprises, 18 Actis Road, Glastonbury, Somerset).

Cara Louise, better known as Cara Trimarco, moved from Southend in Essex to the new age centre of Glastonbury back in 1982. For some years she has been writing novels on the earth mysteries for children and young adults, a market she feels vitally important to get across the concepts of new age awareness for future generations.

Cara began her life in Glastonbury by learning the extensive world of book publishing and marketing, having found only frustration and apathy from established large publishing houses, regarding her books. She decided that the only way to get them out was to become a publisher herself.

"The Boy From the Hills" is her first finished product. It is a short novel, beautifully illustrated by Glastonbury artist Andreé Wilson, about a young boy named Jamie who encounters a strange boy who appears in front of a standing stone during a violent thunderstorm.

The boy has somehow been transported through time from his megalithic family and community who lived by the standing stone in ancient

times. Jamie befriends the child, who speaks an alien language, but whose name turns out to be Kai.

The two boys learn from each other. Kai teaches and shows Jamie the art of megalithic daily life, which obviously incorporates several standard earth mysteries principles, such as the importance of stone circles, living off the land, light channelling, the importance of the seasonal cycles and psychic awareness.

Kai eventually learns English, becomes domesticated and settles down in Jamie's family. He attends school and begins to suffer the consequences of 20th century living. Yet, as can be imagined, Kai yearns to return home.

The story is simple, even a little shallow. Still, it is for children, who will hopefully leave this book with an enthusiasm to find out more about the earth mysteries.

Cara must be applauded for the devotion and sheer perseverance she has put into publishing and marketing this book. Let's hope it is the first of many.

A.B.C.

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EXCHANGES ROUND-UP

JOURNAL FEATURE

Although Earthquest News is prepared to consider exchanging with any publication connected with the wide range of subjects covered within its pages, we have to draw the line somewhere. So for those journals received by your editor with which we cannot exchange we will feature some on a one off basis. So here is one received recently from Australia.

The West Australian UFO Investigation Centre Bulletin is published in an A4, duplicated format and appears very poorly produced. Its attitude towards the UFO phenomenon it covers is one of the so-called "nuts and bolts" approach, i.e. a belief in physical spacemen visiting our planet in flying saucers. In fact, it is almost an eighties version of the fifties american classic "Saucer News" edited by Jim Moseley. In the issue received, November '83, David Medina, this country's representative for the Raelian Movement, gives a weak case for the "spacemen among us" jibberish. Other articles include a research piece on physical trace UFO cases and one on the psychological reactions of UFO witnesses.

A yearly subscription to WAUFOICB is \$5.00 for 12 issues. However, investigators have to pay \$10.00!! From 28 Germain Way, Lockridge, 6054, West Australia.

* * *

EARTHLINES NO. 2 is now available. The area of coverage has increased to incorporate Wales as well as the Border counties, the homeland of editor Jonathan Mullard. Apparently, the journal is doing very well commercially with several bookshops taking very large quantities at a time. This is a healthy sign for the earth mysteries subject and I wish Earthlines every success.

In this issue Chris Fletcher has an interesting piece on the Abbots Bromley horndance which will, of course, be seen at this year's Ley Hunter's Moot in Shrewsbury during July. The survival of this so obvious pagan ceremony is a remarkable phenomenon in itself. It makes you wonder why, like many other horndances around the country, it was not suppressed during the seventeenth century by the Puritans. I certainly look forward to seeing them at the Moot.

Other articles include a further debate on the Mitchell's Fold ley which was featured during the Cambridge ley debate of last September. This includes a letter from Leslie Grinsell, an archaeologist, actually admitting (in writing) the existence of this ley. Quite a breakthrough I would say. Mark Valentine discovers Hereford holy wells and Jonathan Mullard takes a look at the Bradling stone, a significant Shropshire megalith.

THE CAULDRON No. 33 has certainly made me put pen to paper due to its extremely intriguing articles. Part six of Guy Ragland Phillips series "Behind the Church Door" examines the Jack-in-the-green tradition and the green man representations in churches around the country. Of particular interest is the references to Hasle church in Somerset. Here, apparently, are four stone capitals from a nearby Templar chapel. (Which one? Templecombe?). On the first of four is a tree and serpent design. On the second is a figure described as a demiurge, a kind of green man; on the third is the Ain Soph (of the Cabbalistic Tree of Life), and on the fourth is another serpent and demiurge. A demiurge, we are informed, is like a lesser creator of the world, associated with the God of the Old Testament (?) and very possibly a kind of Baphomet of the Templars (might I also suggest the Rex Mundi of the Cathars-ed). All these capitals sound fascinating and I shall be visiting Hasle the next time I venture to Somerset!

The second article in this issue's The Cauldron has really set me thinking. It is a continuation of the series "Gerald Gardner and the Hereditary Witch Tradition" by "Lugh", a character whose anonymous writings on the magical tradition have intrigued me for years.

Lugh claims that a character named Old George Pickingill, who lived in the Essex village of Canewdon during the late nineteenth century, was largely responsible for the establishment of Gardnerian witchcraft in the British Isles. Pickingill was supposed to be a hereditary witch, a cunningman, who possessed tremendous strange powers. He apparently founded, according to Lugh, Nine Covens that spread throughout this country. He is alleged to have initiated Aleister Crowley into the Craft in 1899 and forty years later Gerald Gardner, the father of the

witchcraft revival, also joined one of the Pickingill covens.

Crowley allegedly passed on details of the rites to Gardner, leading Francis King, in his book "Ritual Magic in England" (1970) to suggest that Crowley had compiled the rites of modern witchcraft, the so-called Book of Shadows, from this information.

In his latest article Lugh attempts to show how Gardner composed the Book of Shadows from various different sources, drawing upon different religious traditions including the rites of other hereditary groups, such as the New Forest group mentioned in Gardner's own book "Witchcraft Today."

The article also shows how important the influence of Pickingill's Nine Covens have been since the turn of the century, and how they and other hereditary groups of the magical tradition drew upon classical mythology for their beliefs and rites. He also suggests that some of these groups spring from neo-Rosicrucian groups of the nineteenth century. Most curious, although intriguing, is Lugh's reference to the School of Night, the sixteenth century mystical band of noble characters led by Sir Walter Raleigh. He says that these hereditary groups of witches have past connections with this strange mystical group that included Christopher Marlowe, the playwright, among its ranks.

Most perplexing to me is how an old wizzened character like George Pickingill, a farm labourer, who died at the age of "105" in 1909 could have dominated the pagan life of Britain. I have never come across such information before and unfortunately Lugh gives no references as to his sources. Not that I am a worthy judge of this subject, it must be stressed.

However, seeing that Pickingill lived not a short distance from where I now write, I feel I should attempt to look into this topic with some thoroughness.

Along with Runwell and Borley, the parish of Canewdon is associated with witchcraft, legend, ghosts and strange occurrences more than any other in the county. It is known as "witch country" by local historians and this is something openly accepted by the village's present community, which includes a modern housing estate. Witches on broomsticks may be seen below nameplates on houses, and at Halloween no one ventures out of their houses for two reasons. Firstly, the local belief that the forces of darkness are afoot during this night are very real, and secondly, the police cordon around the whole of the area prevents them going out whether they want to or not. For years Canewdon churchyard has been a target for youths, publicity seekers and so-called "witches" who come from all over the county, and even from Hertfordshire. It is an absolute fiasco which the police consider a major headache. The roads are blocked leading to the church and residents are told not to go out if at all possible, as it would only add to the confusion.

This fiasco has mainly been due to the continual publicity Canewdon has received at the hands of authors of "witchcraft and demonology", (you know, those large glossy colour jobs with lots of pictures of Alex and Maxine Sanders with very little between them and the elements). They descended upon the tiny village and milked it dry of its mediocre traditions, then craved for more when the first batch sold. So, armed with a fistful of pounds they chatted up the old boys of the town by

pumping them full of ale which would always ensure a few new legends and tales previously unrecorded. Local journalists, after a good Halloween story, just rehash the Canewdon saga year after year which inevitably adds to the crowds who turn up for the Samhain festival with the police.

It even came to my attention recently that the "heavy metal" rock group Iron Maiden, whose records have titles such as "The Number of the Beast," showing their trendy use of the pseudo-occult, applied for planning permission to play an open air concert by Canewdon church! Luckily, they were refused permission - Thank God!

One of the most commonly quoted legends of Canewdon is that as long as the church tower continues to stand there will be nine (or six or seven) witches in the village.

Old George Pickingill, according to tradition, was the last "Master of the Witches," as far as anyone is aware. He was feared and held in awe by the local people until his death in 1909. He was a tall, strange looking man with hypnotic eyes, a descendent, so the story goes, from the old witches of Canewdon.

Pickingill was supposed to exert an uncanny power over wild life and particularly upon hares, which would eat out of his hands. He possessed "the evil-eye" and it was claimed that on one occasion he immobilised the horse and cart of a neighbour who inadvertently offended him! He was undoubtedly one of the "cunningmen" of magical tradition and he is said to have rivalled another South East Essex witch - James "Cunning" Murrell of Hadleigh.

Other than this I know very little about Old George Pickingill. It does seem intriguing that this man could have been so influential in the magical tradition of the late nineteenth century, and that he actually initiated Crowley. (Where was this initiation carried out? Canewdon?). Could it be true? I would certainly like to know.

News of further articles by Lugh on this subject will be given in future issues of Earthquest News.



Old George Pickingill, the Canewdon cunning man who died in 1909 aged 105.

COMMON GROUND Nos. 8 & 9. As editor Kevin McClure proclaims: you wait eight months and then get two.

Common Ground, one of the main forums of paranormal/psychical studies is always well produced in an A5, offset-litho finish and contains first class articles by top characters on the scene today.

From the handout that came with the two issues it is apparent that Kevin has decided to disassociate himself and "Common Ground" with ASSAP to which, up until now, has been their "Journal of Record." This move appears to be due to ASSAP's recent move towards the earth mysteries, which Kevin sees as being very belief orientated and not objective enough. The decision is, I now understand mutual, however, I wish C.G. every success for the future.

In issue eight Clive Potter spells out the criticisms and points for and against the reality of ley and alignment phenomena, both in the Neolithic culture and as part of a continuity of sites and beliefs. It is standard material although an important feature for the readers of "Common Ground," who are mostly academically orientated. It assimilates data from many earth mysteries authors such as Barnatt, Michell, Devereux, Pennick etc.

The next piece which caught my eye was the review by Bob Gilbert of "The Sword and the Stone" and "The Green Stone." Entitled "Sword and Sorcerers" this two and a half page article is obviously intended to give both books a sarcastic hammering, highlighting their supposed nonsensical content and lack of corroborative evidence to support any of the various claims. However, I should think that after reading this anyone who has not read the two books will immediately go out and buy them! I shall be replying to Bob's article separately.

Other articles include an assessment of astrological data by Jenny Randles; an assessment of dowsing and earth energies by Chris Ashton, and a good article on the evangelical attitude towards that devilish practice of the ouija board. It fascinates me to read of the crap written about the ouija and the supposed "occult disaster," cases of people who have suffered physically or psychologically through dabbling with this wicked devil's tool.

Issue No. 9 takes a look at the extraordinary mythology of the UFO crash/retrieval syndrome, the idea that a saucer crashes and dead humanoids are carted off to be stored at an American air base. This article probes the bizarre hoaxes and misinterpretations and fabrications which are perpetuated to support the extra-terrestrial hypothesis for UFO phenomenon.

There is a correspondence debate on the book "Earthlights" (again) with some very sour digs at Paul Devereux by Kevin, and some complimentary support for Mr Devereux from Jenny Randles and Caroline Wise. It seems ironic to me that the "Earthlights" debate is still in full swing and that people are still up in arms as to its claims. Why not let the matter drop so that all involved can get on with new research.

Apparently, Paul Devereux is producing a booklet replying to the various criticisms of his "Earthlights" book. This will also include a complete update of his latest research findings, complete with new material. I look forward to that.

THE SYMBOL No. 2, edited by geomantic prince, Nigel Pennick, is now out. Nigel's new group behind the publication of this enigmatic journal, it says, is the Society for Symbolic Studies.

Its contents are a mass of articles, snippets and reviews of everything from tube trains to mythology, paganism and current affairs. Writings which took my interest more than others was Nigel's own piece on the return of Thor's hammer as a sacred relic, which was once in the pagan temple of Uppsala and later in the hands of the Teutonic knights and the Thule Society.

Apparently, it is now in the hands of the Odinist Church of Brittany according to a strange press release Nigel has received recently. They are centred around an old holy site called Menez-Bren in Brittany where a couple of years ago a vision of the Norse god Thor was reported in local newspapers.

I'd love to know more about this affair, Nigel.

Mark Valentine, a name which crops up quite regularly in earth mysteries journals at the moment (see letters page of this issue-ed), writes about his researches into the names of pubs and inns, a subject he studied during the seventies under the name of the Northampton Association of Tavernologists. They are now, sadly, no more, but during their existence they managed to log the names of no less than 10,711 pubs. Apparently, they found that the most popular names were the RED LION, THE CROWN, THE ROYAL OAK, WHITE HART, NEW INN, SWAN, GEORGE, THE PLOUGH, KING'S ARMS, BLACK HORSE, WHEATSHEAF, WHITE LION, FOX AND HOUNDS in that order.

Like so much of the work involved with historic tradition and folklore pub names can be misleading and open to personal interpretation. Still, as Mark points out, when an innkeeper names a pub then surely, in olden times, this would have to comply with the feelings of the local community who would be expected to drink from that place. So why call a place THE GREEN MAN? Mark explains.

Another piece that caught my eye was Pat McFadzean's article on the Astrology-based geomancy of India, which I had certainly never come across before.

At the end of this article Nigel asks for the assistance of astrologers who might be willing to study the astrology of buildings and attempt to predict when their foundation stone was or should have been laid, according to the aspects of that place. Nigel wants an astrologer to try and predict the date when the widely publicised foundation stone of the New British Library, next to St Pancras station, will be laid. Any offers?

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Holiday bungalow to let situated in secluded spot in area listed as of outstanding natural beauty, within walking distance of Luftleigh village. Sleeps 4. Pets Welcome. All mod cons. All dates vacant at present. Write to: R. T. Leeks, 'Highbury', Luftleigh, Newton Abbot, Devon.

EXCHANGE LISTING

All exchange details are true and correct as far as is possible. Any errors, alterations or editorial changes should be notified to the editor in writing. For all overseas charges to these publications, details should be sought from the respective editorial addresses of those listed.

ASSAP NEWS - ed. Alan Cleaver. 4pp, A4, paranormal and earth mysteries forum. Sub. to ASSAP (6 issues) £6, from The Membership Secretary, 56 Telemann Square, Kidbrooke, London SE3.

BUFORA BULLETIN (1) & JOURNAL OF TRANSIENT AERIAL PHENOMENA (2) ed. John Barrett (1), Bob Digby (2). 24pp, A5, objective UFO News (1), 16 pp. A4, scientific UFO research. Sub. to BUFORA £12.50 p.a., 4 issues (1), 2 issues (2). From Membership Secretary, BUFORA, 30 Vermont Road, London SE19 3SR.

CAERDROIA - ed. Jeff & Debbie Saward, 40pp, A5, turf mazes and earth mysteries, £3.50 p.a., 4 issues, from Caerdroia Projects, 53 Thundersley Grove, Thundersley. Benfleet. Essex SS7 3EB.

THE CAULDRON ed. Mike Howard, pagan journal of news and articles. A4 duplicated, 8pp. Sub. £1.60 for 4 issues, £2 for 5 issues (blank P.O.S. and cash only) to Myrddin, c/o Groesffordd, Llwyndrain, Llanfyrnach, Dyfed, Wales SA35 OAS.

COMMOND GROUND - ed. Kevin & Sue McClure, 40pp + A5, psychical research and paranormal forum. £3.75 from Kevin & Sue McClure, 14 Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester.

EARTHLINES - ed. Jonathan Mullard. 40pp, A5, earth mysteries re. Welsh border counties. £4 p.a., 4 issues, from Jonathan Mullard, 7 Brookfield, Stirchley, Telford, Shropshire TF3 1EB.

EARTHGIANT - ed. Jeremy Harte. 30pp, A5, earth mysteries re. S.W. England. £2 p.a. 4 issues, from Jeremy Harte, 35A West St. Abbotsbury, nr. Weymouth, Dorset.

FORTEAN TIMES - ed. Bob Rickard. 70pp, quarto, Forteana, curiosities, paranormal, major forum. £5.00 for 4 issues, from Fortean Times, 96 Mansfield Road, London NW3 2HT.

LANTERN - ed. Ivan Bunn. 16pp, A5, Forteana, paranormal, earth mysteries in Suffolk. £1.50 p.a., 4 issues, from Ivan Bunn, 3 Dunwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

THE LEY HUNTER - ed. Paul Devereux, 40pp, A5, leading earth mysteries forum. £3.75 p.a., 4 issues from The Ley Hunter, P.O. Box 13, Welshpool, Powys.

THE NEW CELTIC REVIEW ed. Colin Murray, quarterly volume of Celtic mysteries. A4, photostated, 44 pp. £2. (uncoloured), £3 (hand coloured) per sample copy from GSO Society, BM Oak Grove, London WC1N 3XX.

NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES - ed. Philip Heselton. 30pp, A4. Northern England earth mysteries. £2 p.a., 6 issues, from Philip Heselton, 170 Victoria Ave., Hull HU5 3DY.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS - ed. Jenny Randles. 16pp, A5, Northern England UFO forum. £4.20 p.a., 6 issues from Jenny Randles, 9 Crosfield Road, Somerville, Wallasey, Wirral L44 9SH.

PENDRAGON - ed. Chris Lovegrove. 34pp, A5, Arthurian tradition, British mythology, earth mysteries. £3 p.a. 4 issues, from Kate Pollard, 27 Roslyn Road, Redland, Bristol.

QUICKSILVER MESSENGER - ed. Chris Ashton. 28pp, A4, gloss. Earth mysteries, emphasis Southern England. £4 p.a., 4 issues, from Chris Ashton, Garden Flat, 46 Vere Road, Brighton, Sussex.

RILKO NEWSLETTER - ed. Bob Cowley. 20pp +, A4, advanced earth mysteries, astro-archaeology. £5 p.a., 3 issues, from Bob Cowley, 8 The Drive, New Southgate, London N11 2DY.

THE SHAMAN - ed. Paul Screeton, 12pp, A4, duplicated, incorporating ASWR. Earth mysteries, Forteana reviews and forum. £2 p.a., 2 issues from Paul Screeton, 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 2AT.

THE SYMBOL - ed. Nigel Pennick, 30pp, A4, duplicated. Symbology, earth mysteries, sacred geometry. £3.50 p.a., 4 issues, from Geomantic Research, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD.

TOUCHSTONE - ed. Jimmy Goodard. 12pp, A4, photostat. Earth mysteries in the Surrey area. £1 p.a., 4 issues, from Jimmy Goodard, 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.

UFO RESEARCH REVIEW - ed. Bob Morrell. 20pp +, A4, duplicated. Critical UFO matter. Sample 25p, from NUFOIS, 443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham.

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EARTHQUEST NEWS BACK COPIES.

NO.5 Winter 82. Fobbing Puma. Mahoney and Arthur's Cross. Stone Tape Reality. Astrology of Jinxs. Earthlights Review. Price 75p + 15pp.

NO. 6. Spring '83. Consciousness, Stones and Energies. More Mahoney and Arthur's Cross. Markstone Group Strike. Runwell Update. Green Stone Review. 95p + 15p pp.

NO. 7. Summer '83. The Old Stones of Essex. The Wandering Bishops. The Bligh Bond Correspondence. The Reality of Psychic Rescues. Price 95p + 15p pp.

NO.8 Before 1984. The Cuffley Lioness. Synchronicity in a Cathedral. The Circle of Perpetual Choirs. Photographic evidence of the Plymouth Hay-Fall. Runwell Up-Date 2. Price 95p + 15p pp.

LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES MOOT

saturday/sunday May 26/27th

1984

This, the first London earth mysteries Moot, arranged by Earthquest and ASSAP will hopefully be one of the major events in the subject this year.

DAY ONE, Saturday, 26th May will consist of formal lectures by some of the top authors and researchers of the earth mysteries/fortean subjects. The venue is The Tufnell Park Hall, Huddleston Road, Tufnell Park, London. N7. There is an excellent bar and food and drink for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians will be on sale throughout the day. Doors open 10 am.

Lectures are from:-

John Merron, Andy Dunn, Alan Cleaver, Andy Collins, Paul Devereux, Graham Phillips, Doc Shiels and Jeff & Debbie Seward.

DAY TWO, Sunday, 27th May is a walkabout through the streets of the City of London, viewing and studying many sites of mystical and earth mysteries significance. Further information contact A. B. Collins, 19 St Davids Way, Wickford, Essex SS11 8EX. Or see you on the day.

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