

# Occult's true believers trade theories

LONDON, Sunday: More than 1000 occultists, parapsychologists and ufologists gathered today to revel in news of the weird, the wacky and the wondrous.

The *Fortean Times*, Britain's journal of strange phenomena, was hosting its second Unconvention at the weekend. Topics for discussion included UFOs and the growing number of people who say they were abducted by aliens.

Now in its 22nd year, the *Fortean Times* is dedicated to the work of Charles Fort, a US philosopher who believed mainstream science simply ignored things it could not explain.

"We provide a forum, a place for people

to go with their strange stories," Bob Rickard, founder-editor of the *Times*, said about the magazine. "There are lots of ways to interpret the world, and some of them are equally valid."

A T-shirt worn at the conference summed up the Fortean attitude to everything from near-death experiences to strange crop circles in corn fields.

"As a Fortean," the shirt proclaims, "I have no opinion."

Items on sale at the conference held at a London university included books about Bigfoot, the mythical, ape-like creature that native people believe inhabit the wilds of North America, and videos on vampirism.

There was a seminar on the hundreds of cases of stigmata, the physical marks of Christ's crucifixion.

In a packed room, a professor re-enacted a Victorian seance — complete with shaking tables and voices from beyond. US and British

**beyond. US and British  
UFO experts exchanged  
theories on govern-  
ment cover-ups of ru-  
moured crashes of  
alien spacecraft.**

— Reuter