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Paranormal

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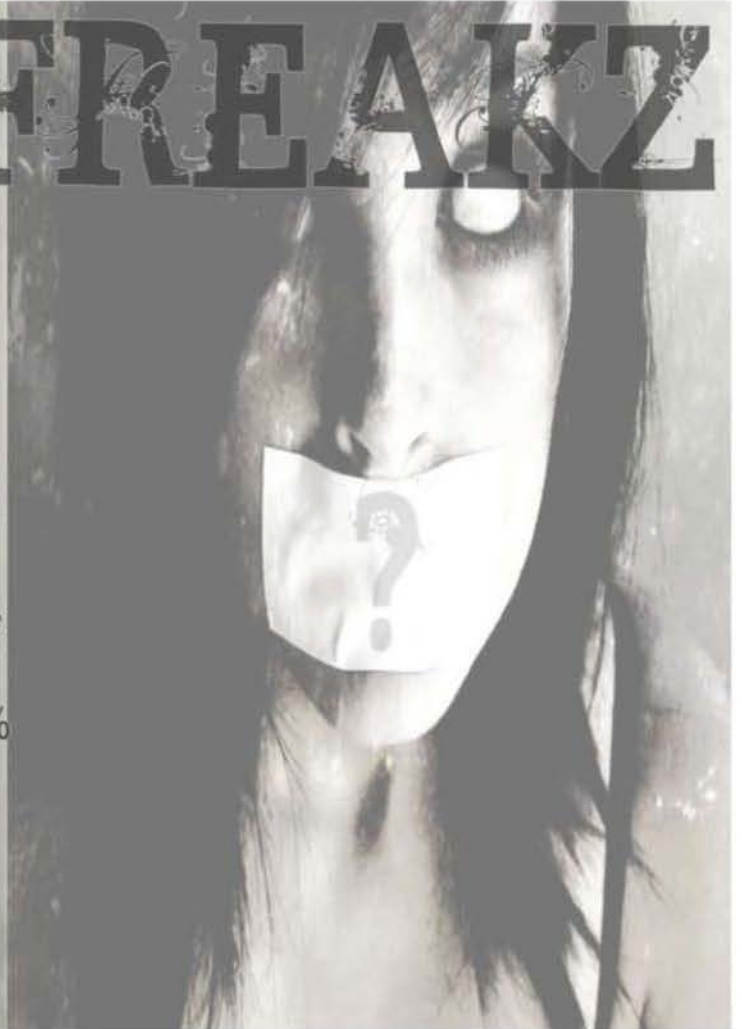
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Exploring the world of the unexplained Paranormal

CONTENTS

Paranormal Magazine // Issue 52



14 The mermaid in the flat

A modern apartment block in Aberdeen is built on the site of an old castle where many bloody deeds took place. Does this explain the many strange events witnessed by residents, including the possible appearance of an elemental?

Written by GRAEME MILNE

18 Furry phantoms

Animal ghosts are always interesting and have been reported from the British countryside for centuries. Perhaps the most unusual examples, certainly the biggest, are spectral bears.

Written by NEIL ARNOLD.

24 Corpses and robbers

For centuries there was an active trade in body parts, usually acquired illegally from graves and gibbets, because it was believed by both sorcerers and traditional healers that they possessed powerful magical properties.

Written by MARK GREENER

30 Panics in the playground

Gnomes, aliens and vampires - oh my! The old school yard can be a focus for weird happenings, often with great gangs of kids witnessing strange entities en masse.

Written by NIGEL WATSON

34 Talk of the Devil - part 2

Continuing the history of the Prince of Evil, the Devil is brought in to the modern age of theological doubts, possession and Satanic cults and murders. The author also describes the night he attended a Black Mass.

Written by Dr LEO RUICKBIE.

42 What's eating you?

Most of the phenomena discussed in this magazine, though scary, are usually harmless but that is not the case when you are dealing with monsters. Monstrous cryptids have been blamed for a surprising number of human deaths.

Written by RICHARD FREEMAN

48 Ghostly guests

Old inns have so much history, have seen so much life and death, it's no wonder so many have haunted reputations. The Percy Arms in Northumberland is no exception, as a team of seasoned investigators found out.

Report by DARREN RITSON

52 Scare-fields

Spectral armies are a well-known phenomenon but what about the warriors of the sky, airmen who risked their lives for their country thousands of feet above the Earth? Not surprisingly, many airfields have their ghosts, especially from the early, perilous days of flying.

Written by JOHN STOKER

60 Psychic vampires

Energy-draining parasites? Victims of a strange biology? Or simply deluded fantasists? What is the truth behind the growing paranormal and social phenomenon of the psychic vampire?

Written by LOUIS PROUD

66 A Phantom Army

For 'Unearthed' we reproduce a letter written by the son of the witness to a vision of troops marching silently through Inveraray, Scotland, in 1746. We believe this letter has not seen print since 1901.

68 Creepy Cambridgeshire

A county famous for its medieval colleges, cosmopolitan but surprisingly isolated, especially when you explore its mysterious Fens, is the setting for a host of spooky stories and strange encounters.

Written by DANIEL CODD



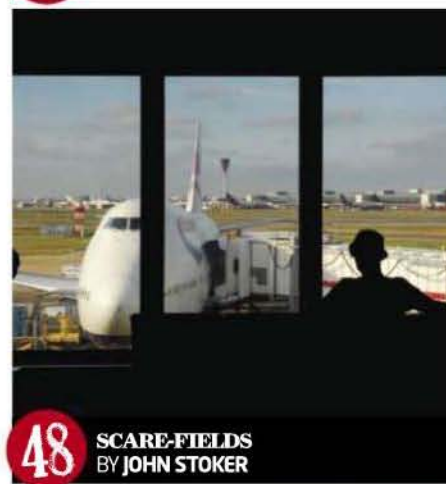
18 FURRY PHANTOMS
BY NEIL ARNOLD



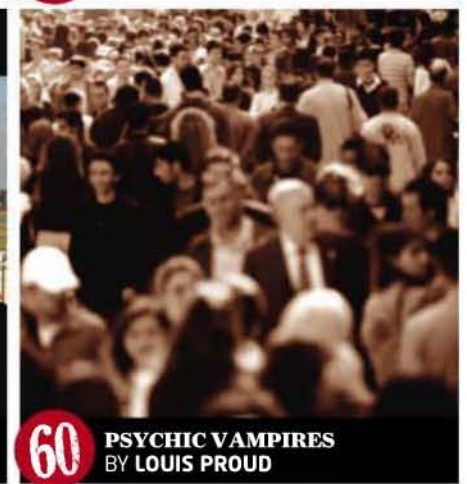
24 CORPSES AND ROBBERS
BY MARK GREENER



34 TALK OF THE DEVIL PART 2
BY LEO RUICKBIE



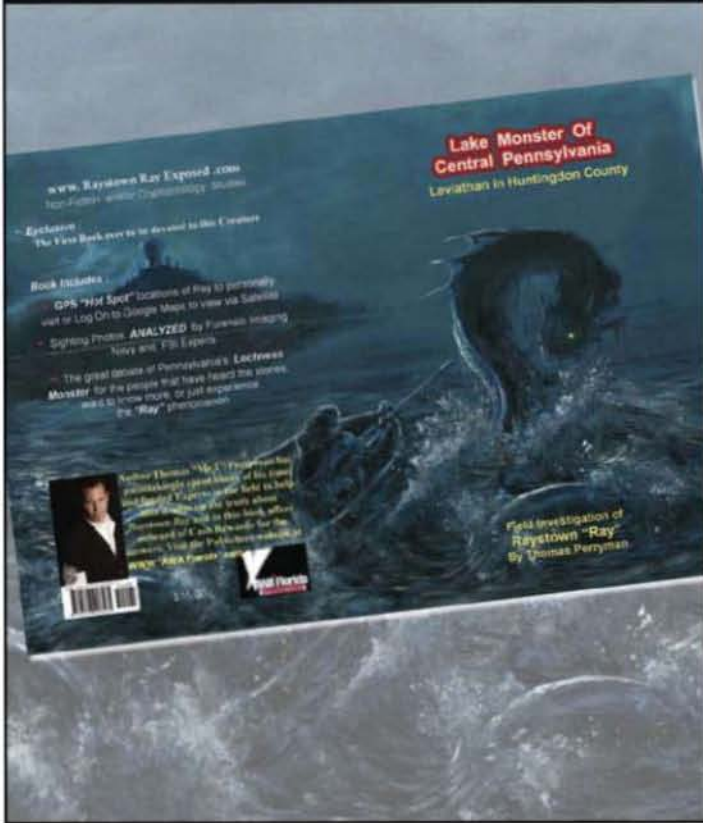
48 SCARE-FIELDS
BY JOHN STOKER



60 PSYCHIC VAMPIRES
BY LOUIS PROUD

REGULARS 5 Editorial // 6 News // 9 Subscriptions // 12 Sightings // 40 My Biggest Fright // 58 Popular Haunts // 74 Experiences & Responses // 78 Reviews // 81 Competitions // 82 Bookend

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GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Jazz Publishing, The Old School,
Higher Kinnerton, Chester, CH4 9AJ, UK.
Tel: 01244 663400 • Fax: 01244 660611
info@jazzpublishing.co.uk

EDITOR

Richard Holland
editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Lindsay Burdekin
lindsay.burdekin@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 226

ART EDITOR

Gareth Evans - gareth@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 204

WEB EDITOR

Fergus McShane
fergus.mcshane@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 232

CONTRIBUTORS

Neil Arnold, David Brandon, Daniel Codd,
Jason Day, Mark Fraser, Richard Freeman,
Mark Greener, Chris Hunter, Graeme Milne,
Louis Proud, Darren Ritson, Dr Matt Smith,
John Stoker, Dr Leo Ruickbie, Nigel Watson.

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Justine Hart - justine@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 235

ACCOUNTS & ADMIN MANAGER

Emma McCrindle - accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 207

ACCOUNTS

Pam Coleman - accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 215

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

Richard Davenport
richard.davenport@paranormalmagazine.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 304

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Shelley Curry - shelley.curry@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 303

ADMINISTRATION

Jan Schofield - jan@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 219
Katie-Marie Challinor - katie@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 224

CIRCULATION & PROMOTIONS

Katy Cuffin - katy@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400 Ext. 237

SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUES

Telephone: 01778 392468
subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

PUBLISHER

David Gamble - david@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Stuart Mears - stuart@jazzpublishing.co.uk
Telephone: 01244 663400

PRINTING

Warners (Midlands) Ltd.

DISTRIBUTION

Susan Saunders - susan.saunders@scymour.co.uk
Telephone: 0207 429 4073

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EDITORIAL Scary-go-round



A couple of weeks ago I was visiting friends when they got a text warning them of possible child abductors patrolling the local schools in a white 4x4. Although it had come from a friend of theirs, I pointed out it was probably a hoax 'doing the rounds'.

'You may be right,

Richard,' said my friend before going outside to warn his son to keep an eye out, 'but you can't be too careful.'

That's the problem with scams involving youngsters: parents are always going to give them the benefit of the doubt to be on the safe side. And that's why they're so successful - and relentless.

In my newsdesk days back in the late 1980s, I came back from my hols to find that one of our papers was sporting a lead story on its front page which I knew to be a myth. The local police had warned that stick-on fake tattoos were being laced with LSD and if a child should find one and stick it on his arm, well, anything could happen.

Probably dating way back to the late 60s/early 70s, when blotting sheets of LSD would often feature images from popular culture such as Mickey Mouse, this scare story was a well-known example of what back in those pre-internet days - yes, there was such a time - we called 'photocopy-lore'.

Once upon a time there were chain mails and other scams sent through the post. Then the photocopier sped things up, and also made the hoaxes seem more official and more urgent. Now we have email and mobile phone texts performing the same dirty deeds even more quickly. One day scare stories will be beamed straight into our heads for instant panic.

Currently we in the UK and USA (but not so much elsewhere) are suffocating under the weight of 'paedonoia', the current bête noir of paedophiles-in-the-community still holding its own, as it were, against its main rival, the terrorist-in-our-midst.

Before paedonoia there were the

Phantom Social Workers, an extraordinary phenomenon which took up hundreds of hours of police time in the early 1990s. In the UK and USA - again - the press went wild with stories of official-looking couples turning up at people's homes and trying to take one of their children 'into care'.

One year in the UK more than 300 reports from all over the country were seriously investigated - but ultimately the police considered that perhaps only three or four cases may have been genuine. The rest were people panicking over door-to-door salesmen or those who simply wanted to get in on the action by pretending it had happened to them.

Intriguingly, the PSWs behaved an awful lot like Men in Black - formal dress, odd behaviour or modes of speech, imperfect knowledge of the people they were visiting. Perhaps more of them were 'real' than the police thought; perhaps all those people weren't deluded; perhaps they were being visited by similar nuisance-entities.

I wouldn't be surprised if the growing belief in psychic vampires becomes increasingly paranoid over the years: Why do I feel tired all the time - who's to blame? Is that person on the Tube draining my energy? Psychic vampires look just like us, you know. They could be anyone. They could be you!

At least the youngsters in Nigel Watson's entertaining article on 'Panics in the Playground' aren't the victims. Parents refuse to believe they're being bothered by weird beings, so they take the matter into their own hands. Great gangs of Glaswegian kids charging through a cemetery in search of a killer vampire with iron teeth - social workers and pedos wouldn't stand a chance!

Richard Holland, Editor

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Tell the editor about your own experience with the paranormal and let him know your views on the magazine.

Email editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or write to Richard Holland, The Editor, Paranormal, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ

Paranormal News

The latest from the world of weird

Who's that knocking?

At last there may be solid scientific evidence for ghostly activity
- or should that be *sound* scientific evidence?

Could there be something more to things that go bump in the night? Paranormal rappings associated with apparent poltergeist activity have been described for many hundreds of years. It is only now that an interesting pattern has been discovered within the fine detail of these strange sounds.

The current edition of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (SPR), a publication dating back to 1882, carries an article by scientist Dr Barrie Colvin showing instrumental evidence for an inexplicable and objective banging sound detected in recordings made during alleged poltergeist activity.

Raps and knocking sounds recorded in poltergeist cases

apparently show a distinctly different acoustic pattern or 'sound signature' to those produced by ordinary means.

Dr Colvin has analysed recordings of paranormal knocking over a 40-year period. The earliest was a recording made by a physician at Sauchie, Scotland, in 1960 and the most recent was obtained from a case at Euston Square, London in 2000. Among the samples submitted for analysis were recordings made in the famous Enfield poltergeist case in north London during 1977-79.

Dr Colvin found that while the normal and poltergeist raps sound similar, they are actually acoustically different. Furthermore, experts have been unable to replicate the pattern of the poltergeist raps.

According to the research, in the case of a normal rap, the sound (which often only lasts a few milliseconds) starts loudly and decays

'Raps and knocking sounds recorded in poltergeist cases show a distinctly different acoustic patterns to those produced by ordinary means.'



Paranormal Shorts



DEMON DEATH

'That was not a willing thing' said Jan David Clark, while admitting to killing his wife. 'As far as I'm concerned it's still a supernatural thing.'

Clark, 63, is in custody in Texas awaiting trial for the murder of his wife Susan whom he believed was possessed by a 'demon'. Prosecutors say he told arresting officers that he 'held his wife's face to the floor of their bathroom when the exorcized spirit from her body entered his', causing her to suffocate. Her body was found on its back with a cross and a sword on top of it.

Clark denies murder because he insists his wife's death was accidental. [SOURCE: QAOOnline, July 28]

SOLO SUNS

A researcher has claimed there are many more solitary stars like our sun in the universe than was previously supposed.

The finding by Deepak Raghavan, of Georgia State University boosts the likelihood that there are other life-friendly solar systems in the universe.

Previous surveys had suggested that most systems containing a star the same mass as our sun have two or more stars orbiting each other, a situation generally believed to dictate against the conditions necessary for life.

However, Raghavan has thrown this hypothesis in doubt—his team looked at 454 sun-like stars, and found that more than half (56%) were single like our sun. [SOURCE: Phenomenica.com, July 17]

A CUTE ACCENT

A New Zealand woman's accent turned into a mix of Welsh, Scottish and north London tones overnight in a rare case of 'foreign accent syndrome'. Bronwyn Fox, 59, of Invercargill, South Island, said that she has never even been to the UK.

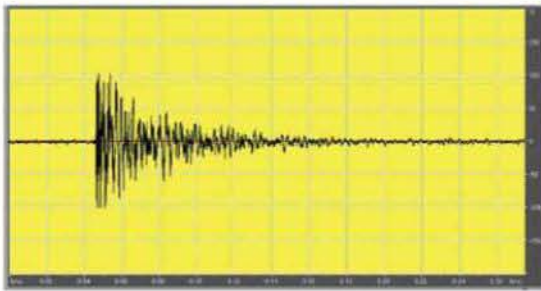
'I am a third-generation New Zealander and my mother and father didn't have a British accent. Nor does anyone I know,' she told the *Telegraph*. She had spoken with a Kiwi accent throughout her life until awakening one morning two years ago.

Earlier this year Sarah Colville, a 35-year-old migraine sufferer from Devon, began speaking with a Chinese accent following a particularly severe headache. [SOURCE: *Telegraph*, July 13]

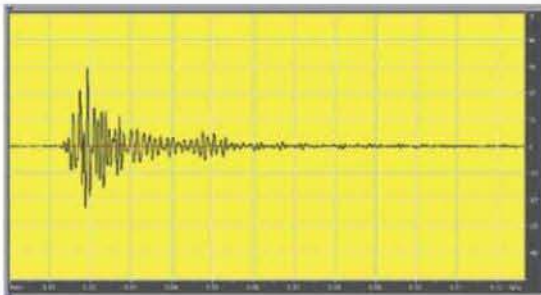
Keen bidding expected for former Crowley retreat

A half-ruined building on the Italian island of Sicily is still expected to sell for £1.2million. Why? Because it was the former 'Abbey of Thelema', run by arch-occultist Aleister Crowley during the most notorious stage of his career. Crowley lived there in the 1920s among rumours of wild orgies, drug-taking and bizarre occult ceremonies, until he was evicted by Mussolini. Erotic frescoes by Crowley still survive on some walls.

[SOURCE: Telegraph, Aug 5]



SOUND SIGNATURES: Recordings made of raps made in a normal way by a child in a recent poltergeist case and (below) of a rap believed to have been made by the poltergeist.



over a period of time. The loudest part of the sound is right at the beginning. In the case of a poltergeist rap, the loudest part is near the beginning of the sound – but not at the very beginning. The rapping sound starts relatively quietly and works up to a maximum before it then starts to decay.

Dr Colvin states: 'Ever since my personal involvement in the investigation of a rapping poltergeist at Andover, Hampshire, in which it was absolutely clear that no normal explanation could account for the observed phenomena, I wondered whether the recorded raps were in any way different to those produced by normal methods. It is now clear that they are indeed different.'

Dr Colvin's research is published as 'The Acoustic Properties of Unexplained Rapping Sounds' in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* [2010] Vol 73,2 Number 899 pp 65-93.



RESEARCHER: Dr Barrie Colvin

LATEST UFO FILES INCLUDE AIR MINISTRY MEMORANDA

The latest batch of files released by The National Archives reveal that UFOs were taken seriously enough at the highest level to be discussed by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) in 1957. Modern reports of UFO sightings reached a peak in 1996.

The files include details of a memorandum on 'aerial phenomena' prepared for a meeting of the Cabinet Office's JIC in April 1957.

According to an Air Ministry note included in the 'Red Book' – the weekly intelligence survey – four incidents involving UFOs tracked by RAF radars remained 'unexplained'.

Dr David Clarke, author of *The UFO Files* and Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Sheffield Hallam University said: 'These papers demonstrate how far official policy towards UFOs changed after the Cold War. In 1957, some officials were so concerned by a spate of incidents involving UFOs the subject was placed on the agenda of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

'But by the 50th anniversary of the "flying saucer" mystery in 1997 the MoD was no longer interested in UFOs as a defence problem but as a purely public relations issue. This inevitably led to the closure of the MoD's public UFO hotline at the end of 2009.'

Among hundreds of reports of sightings, 'UFO crashes' and other close encounters, the files also reveal details of several unusual incidents which landed on the MoD's 'UFO desk' before it was eventually closed last year.

Further highlights from the files include: the inside story of the 14-minutes of 'missing' film relating to the Blue Streak missile test launch in 1964, believed by some to show a 'spaceman'; the attempted break-ins from individuals seeking the truth about RAF Rudloe Manor in Wiltshire, sometimes referred to as Britain's 'Area 51'; and an account of a wartime meeting attended by Winston Churchill in which the Prime Minister allegedly discussed a UFO encounter with RAF bombers.

The files also contain dozens of UFO sightings reported to the Ministry of Defence between 1995 and 2003, including more than 600 reported sightings in 1996 alone.

HEARD THE BUZZ?

If you thought bees were disappearing then you've obviously not been to Lincolnshire of late. Recently a swarm of 30,000 bees surrounded a home in the county 'turning the sky black'.

Phil Sanderson, 34, said the sound of the insects was the equivalent to 'a crowd of people blowing vuvuzelas'.

The swarm initially swirled around the father of three's home so loudly that he couldn't hear his partner Serena Reed, 34, talking. After an hour the bees clumped together into a 2ft long 'grape' on a nearby 10ft high conifer tree before flying away.

[SOURCE: Telegraph, July 16]

'POSSESSED' YOUTH SHACKLED

A Saudi man was chained in a basement apartment for more than six years because his father believed he was possessed by an evil female genie.

According to the father of the man, identified only as Turki: 'When he has fits he has convulsions and his entire body twists and his eyes become completely white. Then the voice of a woman can be heard coming from him.'

When Turki first began behaving strangely, his father took him to local Muslim clerics to recite the Koran over him. But, his father said, most of them became scared when they heard the female voice telling them that she was a royal jinn (genie) and that no-one can exorcise her unless Turki dies.

One cleric advised him to shackle his son's arms and legs in chains and read the Koran to him. 'We did this,' he told Arab News, an English language Saudi daily. 'My son became quiet but is totally unaware of what is happening around him. He does not talk and is now unable to harm anyone.'

[Source: The Mail, July 23]

WHAT A CROC!

After all the excitement of the Oracle Octopus's World Cup predictions, we learn of another precognitive beastie - 'Burt', an enormous saltwater crocodile.

Burt lives at Crocosaurus World in Australia's Northern Territory. He's been accurately predicting match results in sporting events for some time now. Chunks of meat are lowered into Burt's pool on a 'cage of death', each representing a team, a horse's name etc and Burt makes his predictions by snapping off the one he fancies.

He recently tipped the winner of the Darwin Cup, 'Shout Out Loud', in this way. And yes, Burt did correctly predict Spain's 1-0 World Cup victory.

[SOURCE: NTNews.com, Aug 2]



Welsh isle claimed as base for UFOs

A ufology group has announced that a small island off the North Wales coast is a base for alien activity.

Puffin Island is an island to the east of Anglesey, named after the protected colony of birds that live there. However, the Shrewsbury-based UFO Investigations and Research

Unit is convinced puffins aren't the only things inhabiting the rocky outcrop.

Phil Hoyle, who runs the group, told the *Bangor & Anglesey Mail* newspaper: 'Many witnesses, some ex-military and professional people, have witnessed unconventional lights entering or leaving the sea around Puffin Island.'

Mr Hoyle - who was also behind the claims of 'Sheep Slayers from Outer Space' reported in the June 'Paranormal

News' - said that sightings began in January 1974, when a number of people reported seeing large, structured objects leaving the sea near the island. He said similar sightings are continuing to be reported up to the present day.

Not only that but, according to Mr Hoyle, 'victims of abduction' he interviewed near Shrewsbury were told by their humanoid abductors that they came from a base under the sea near Puffin Island.

In January a number of UFO sightings were reported to the *Anglesey Mail*.

Mr Hoyle has taken a boat around Puffin Island but hasn't seen anything himself yet.

MONSTER FEARS OVER MISSING MAN

A weird incident reported in the Finnish press has been picked up by a correspondent to the Phantoms & Monsters website. Apparently, a Thai national working as a berry picker Salla, Lapland, has vanished after telling a friend he was afraid something was stalking him.

The man telephoned a friend and told him he was nervous because 'something strange like a dog or something' was following him. The telephone then went dead and the berry picker hasn't been seen since.

Police and army personnel searched for the missing man and found his clothes and his bucket of berries. Officials admit he could have been attacked by an animal, although no animal tracks were found. An 'official enquiry' has been launched but the search has now been called off. At the time of going to press the man was still missing.

Civilians have been banned from making a search of their own and it is rumoured that further details of the incident have been censored, with references to it being removed from websites.

[SOURCES: Phantoms & Monsters / www.iltalehti.fi/uitiset/2010073012119054_uu.shtml, July 30]

More
weird animal attack
stories in
'What's Eating You?'
starting on
page 42.

METEORITE MAN IS SURE ALIENS HATE HIM

A man whose house has been hit by meteorites six times in the past three years thinks he is being targeted by aliens.

[Source: Telegraph, July 19]

Radivoke Lajic, 50, claims the occurrences are the result of an extraterrestrial grudge.

'I am obviously being targeted by extraterrestrials,' he told the *Telegraph*. 'I don't know what I have done to annoy them but there is no other explanation that makes sense.'

'The chance of being hit by a meteorite is so small that getting hit six times has to be deliberate.'

Mr Lajic, who lives in the village of Gornji Lajici in northern Bosnia, said the meteorites always struck when it is raining. The first meteorite struck his house in November 2007 and scientists at Belgrade University have confirmed that the rocks are all meteorites.

'I have no doubt I am being targeted by aliens,' he said. 'They are playing games with me. I don't know why they are doing this. When it rains I can't sleep for worrying about another strike.'

Mr Lajic has reinforced his roof with steel for fear that a meteor may hit his house. He paid for the steel girder by selling one of the meteorites to a university in the Netherlands.

'But these meteorites have brought happiness to our family as well, as we've met different people from around the world that were interested in it,' he said. 'And I have had so many visitors that I plan to make a small museum in my back garden.'

Mr Lajic first hit the headlines two years ago, when the fifth meteorite struck his house. Scientists are now studying magnetic fields around the property to try to explain the frequency of the strikes.



Paw print found in big cat hunt

Reporter Chris Hunter has got in touch to tell us about the night he stalked a mystery beast on behalf of his paper, the *Kent Messenger*.

After a series of big cat sightings was reported in the *Kent Messenger* newspaper, senior reporter Chris Hunter got permission from his editor to hunt the beast. With his colleague Jez Brind, Chris staked out the animal near one of its main prowling grounds, the aptly named Cat's Mount.

Reports in the paper included 'a sandy-beige, cat-like animal, the size of a Great Dane' seen near Hucking in May and, in June, glimpses of a large black cat unnerving anglers on the Burham Reservoir. Prior to his midsummer stake-out, Chris spoke to local residents who are convinced a big cat is patrolling their neighbourhood.

Farmer Dora Pilkington, of Coldblow Farm, told him: 'There's one up here definitely. It's called the Hucking Beast. We had some campers here a couple of years ago who saw it come out and drink water out of a bucket. I think it's a loner.'

Mrs Pilkington said the animal was described as black and the size of a labrador and her own personal evidence for its existence has come in the gruesome form of mauled lambs and a pony that suddenly fled in panic through an electric fence to escape something unseen in the undergrowth.

But what could it be? Brian Badger, manager of the Wildlife Heritage Fund big cat sanctuary in Kent was sure it couldn't be a leopard or jaguar because livestock attacks would be far more frequent and noticeable if one was around. He confirmed, however, that a puma or lynx could survive perfectly well in Britain.

'There's no reason why a puma or lynx couldn't survive quite well in woodland,' he told Chris. 'They go for small prey. They could quite easily survive without having to go on to farmland, and without bringing down livestock. From the reports I've seen, it's feasible. That's all I can say.'

He added: 'People keep them illegally - it's quite easy for them to escape and they can't report it.'

Brian Badger warned Chris and Jez against attempting



SPOOR: Chris Hunt and Jez Brine found this big cat-like paw print deep in the woods at Hucking. A 10p piece has been used for scale. © Kent Messenger



Left STAKE-OUT: Kent Messenger reporter Chris Hunt keeps a look-out for the Hucking Beast in the company of Jez Brine. © Kent Messenger

to capture the animal - that would be far too dangerous. He urged them to keep low, keep quiet and keep their eyes peeled at dawn and dusk.

So, how did their overnight vigil below Cat's Mount go? Did they see the fabled Hucking Beast? Well maybe. At any rate, Chris feels fairly certain he heard it.

He told *Paranormal Magazine*: 'I saw a black shape near a fence but even with the aid of a pair of powerful German-made binoculars I couldn't quite make out what it was in the murky darkness. But then what else could have been

responsible for the weird double-barrelled howl that rang out across the Downs moments before?'

The next morning, however, Chris and Jez found much more solid evidence.

Next to a puddle on a narrow muddy trail, deep in the woods at Hucking where the 'sandy-beige' beast had been seen, they found a pair of paw prints - prints that lacked the tell-tale claw marks of a dog.

Mark Fraser, of Big Cats in Britain, comments: 'The print unfortunately is a dog. Claw prints can be seen. Claw prints do not automatically rule out cat but the symmetry also suggests dog. But well done to the reporters for doing this. Being out there looking for the evidence is the only way; I have seen these animals on three occasions (definite sightings) and these were all times that we were out on vigils actually looking for them. Also, bear in mind that the black cat mentioned in the article cannot be a puma: there are no black pumas. Perhaps two cats are on the loose.'



SCREENPLAY BID FOR PHILIP'S UFO NOVEL

British UFO expert and regular contributor to *Paranormal Magazine* Philip Mantle (pictured) is to co-write a screenplay based on his novel about alien abduction.

Actor, writer and producer Nabil Shaban was so impressed when he read the manuscript of Philip's unpublished novel *Once Upon A Missing Time* that he has drawn up an agreement with the former BUFORA Director of Investigations to write a screenplay adaptation.

Nabil Shaban said: 'I thought Philip's novel about an alien abduction was a fascinating read. The storyline is realistic and believable and the characters are all people we can identify with.'

'I knew the first time I read it that it would

make for a first-class drama, either for the large screen but probably better as a TV movie.' Shaban is well known for his TV, movie and theatre work and his campaigning for the rights of disabled people (*Doctor Who* fans will remember him as the enjoyably unpleasant villain Sil from the Colin Baker years).

Philip says he is 'extremely excited' about the project. 'I am looking forward a great deal to working with Nabil Shaban on the adaptation, which will be called *Missing Time*,' he said.

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sightings

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GHOSTS



MARY KING'S CLOSE: The infamous Close in Edinburgh has produced more ghostly reports, this time in the form of a photograph taken on a ghost tour in October, which has only just been released. The same blonde-haired woman appeared in two photographs from different tours, alerting tour organisers to something strange. Lisa Robshaw, spokesperson for The Real Mary King's Close, said: "We've had sightings of dark shadowy figures that lurk in the myriad of passageways, rooms and corners of the Closes, and reports of lots of strange noises - these images seem to give us even more evidence. By running tours late in the night with the last one finishing at midnight, we hope that this might make the ghostly image reappear." (Source: *Scottish Television 23rd July*).

LONDON DUNGEONS: The London Paranormal Society is planning an investigation at the London Dungeon in order to discover the source of paranormal activity often reported there. The group is led by medium Ian Shillito, who said: "Beyond the mutilated exhibits, torture equipment and dark corridors, we find multiple reports of ghostly children, silent figures appearing in the mortuary or gliding around the Great Fire exhibit. General poltergeist activity is encountered when doors rattle, open and close whilst knocks and raps are heard, especially in the Jack the Ripper area. Strange mists have been encountered; dragging footsteps and clanking of chains have been experienced." (Source: *news.PinkPaper.com 6th August*).

OLD MORRIE: The figure of what some say to be a ghost was spotted at the Geelong shopping store at Myer, Australia. The figure is believed to be the spirit of Morrie Jacobs who owned the premises in the Gold Rush days. Past activity includes shoppers and staff being tapped on the shoulder, the sound of footsteps, basketballs hovering in mid air, and the "translucent figure of a balding elderly man in a grey waistcoat with baggy grey pants, black armbands and silver fob chain." Old Morrie is also said to be fond of wandering the store humming tunes. (Source: *Geelong Advertiser 30th July*).

SECURITY SCARE: A female security officer in Braila, Romania, took a photograph of what she believes was a ghost. She said: "I was on patrol and approached a window and then I saw a tall feminine shape that seemed wreathed in a white veil. My first reaction was to get back and run away as fast as I can! Fear made me feel sick, but then I thought there's nothing that could possibly happen to me and I could not miss the chance to take pictures. I had to take several pictures because the shape was moving from one place to another." (Source: *Jurnalul National 22nd July*).

SLEEPING AROUND: The Maple Spring Bed & Breakfast along the Walden Road in Abingdon, Washington County, was once a poor house; now it is said to be haunted by several ghosts. Converted in January, construction workers reported water that runs on its own, doors that slam shut of their own accord and other

strange phenomena. Owner Donna Bise called in the Haunt Masters Club, a Tri-Cities area paranormal investigation team, to try and answer the mysteries. Justin Guess, one of the group's founders, said that when they first investigated, they recorded two EVP messages: "I'm over it" and "You shouldn't have slept around." (Source: *Bristol Herald Courier 12th July*).

ORGAN MUSIC: Investigators from Ghost Hunters Inc. have been called into the Riverfront Bar, Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, after several strange occurrences. Owner Katrina Price was writing on her menu board when she heard a man behind her whisper: "What are you doing?" She found no one there when she turned, and fled. Ms Price has also heard organ music coming from the bar area when it was empty and experienced doors opening and closing of their own accord. Staff members have reported hearing inaudible humming and footsteps. Ms Price said: "I do believe, I don't know if I'd call them ghosts, but I believe there's something out there." (Source: *Vork Dispatch 24th July*).

FRIENDLY SPECTRES: Spruce Lane Farmhouse, a sprawling Victorian home nestled in a thicket of century-old maple trees in Oakville's Bronte Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada, is said to be haunted. Activity reported includes: "Taps on the shoulder, the feeling of being followed, doors opening and closing, children laughing, hushed whispers, EVP recordings, and the ghostly figure of a female servant. The present owner is not frightened of the activity and feels the spectres are friendly. He always greets them with a hearty hello whenever he enters the building." (Source: *The Star 2nd August*).

BAYOU COQUILLE: A man was driving down Old Barataria Road in a wildlife refuge named Jean Lafitte National Park, Southern Louisiana, when he saw a woman in his headlights. He reports: "The top half of her body was visible and transparent. I could see the trees through her body. She had a whitish dress with a ruffled collar and ruffles around the wrist. I was 5 feet from her and as I swerved to miss her she teleported right into my car. I immediately smelled burnt hair and got this weird feeling of emotion... like a deep sadness. It freaked me out! I drove off fast and had the cab light on the rest of the way as I felt as if there was someone in the back seat." (Source: *Phantoms & Monsters, August*).

DEADWOOD: Jay Kirschenmann, a reporter for the *Argus Leader* discovered several ghostly tales while researching for a completely different subject in the Black Hill and Deadwood areas of South Dakota. One witness told him that his two-year old daughter was constantly wakened by a woman who would not let her sleep. A bartender at the Old Number Ten saloon told Mr Kirschenmann that one night after closing, he did the rounds, locked up and went to the bathroom. "The moment I went in the stall, got my pants down around my ankles and sat down, someone banged on the door, hard," he said, emphasizing the story with three or four hard raps on the wooden bar surface. (Source: *The Argus Leader 7th August*).



UFOS

SMALL GROUPS: Residents in Greenway Gardens, Greenford, Ealing, watched three or so bright lights moving in small groups across the night sky. Greenway Gardens resident Mike Roberts said: "They looked like the lights from helicopters but they were silent. There were about 30 of them, they must've covered about 200 yards of sky, they looked quite mysterious. There were quite a few of us out looking at them, some wondered if it was aliens. They were moving quite quickly and we watched them until they went out of view. A lot of people must have seen them." (Source: *Ealing Gazette 1st July*).

ON CAMERA: Three UFOs were caught by security CCTV cameras over Saltney, Flintshire, in Wales on the 16th July at 10:23pm. Apparently planes at nearby Broughton airfield don't fly at night, so that was discounted as the source. More UFOs were caught by a Ryan Air flight from Portugal to UK on video. (Source: *Behind the Scenes Blog July*).

DISTANT SPECK: A woman reports that her teenage son was woken by the sound of cats fighting at 4 am in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, and as he looked out he saw bright lights in the sky which he watched for about 10 or 15 minutes. She said: "The light was very bright, like a big star but it was moving about in one area making an 'S' shape. There was no sound at all as he stood and watched. It appeared to waver about a bit, then it started to rise quite quickly till it became a distant speck and disappeared, then it came back down, getting bigger till it was quite bright again." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk 2nd August).

GREY CLOUD: A witness reported seeing an orange light from his bedroom window in Newharthill, Lanarkshire: "As I was watching the orange light a grey ball was in my peripheral vision and I looked away from the orange light to see what that was. The grey ball was following behind it then it darted really quickly in a diagonal position across the sky then hovered, then travelled straight down in vertical line towards land but it went out of my vision behind the rooftops of local houses. I can only describe it as a circular light-grey ball, which looked like a cloud." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk 7th August).

DEFO UFO: "Ah my gosh, I was parked at the Tesco petrol station in Elderslie, Renfrewshire, whilst my partner went in to get some cigs and out of nowhere, appeared the strangest thing that I have ever seen in my life. It was a bright orange light, moving slowly at first in an upwards direction then stopped and moved in a horizontal line then disappeared. A guy slammed on his brakes and got out of his car and started filming it. It was so strange, we were all gobsmacked. It defo was not a plane, helicopter or Chinese lantern. Has defo changed my opinion on UFOS!" (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk 7th August).

ON FIRE: A witness who lives under the Leeds Bradford Airport flight path at first thought

a plane was on fire when he saw an object emitting flames over Horbury in West Yorkshire at 11.15pm. He reports: "When outside the house I could still see the object heading away from me in a SE direction, giving off a very bright orange light that still appeared to be burning. My partner fetched some field glasses and I watched the object disappear behind the rooftops at the end of the street. The object was flying in a controlled manner, and was too low to be space junk or a shooting star." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk 7th August).

SPEEDING: A fast-moving triangular UFO was spotted over Calthorpe Road in Edgbaston, Birmingham, on the 8th of August. The witness is adamant that it was not a Chinese lantern. He said: "It was flying at very fast speeds and stopped and then flew in the opposite direction before flying up into the sky. It was some flying object that I have never seen before in my life." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk 8th August).

WHITE HOUSE ATTACK: What has been described as a "hyper dimensional UFO" which fired "a ray of light or directed energy beam" was caught on camera over the White House in Washington DC on the 20th of July. The pictures were taken by Wilbur Allen, a former White House employee, who now works as a professional photographer for Warner Brothers. Mr Allen said: "I took several stationary images of the stars as I usually do. However, there is one object I thought to be a star, moving and then discharging a beam of light! There is one frame that does not make much sense: A star is either moving or shooting a beam of light that is 'bent'? The motion is not registered with any of the other 'stars' in this sampling." (Source: www.examiner.com 22nd July).

SOUTH AFRICA: Residents in Booyens, Pretoria, watched "astounded" as a UFO consisting of three bright lights cavorted in the sky above them for two consecutive nights in July. Engela van der Spuy said: "I couldn't make out the shape of the object because the three lights were too bright, but it almost had a heart shape because there were two lights on top, a blue light on the left and an emerald green light directly next to it, on the right side, with a big bright white light underneath it which shone straight down." Spokespeople from the Hercules police station, the Johannesburg Planetarium and the South African Air Force had no knowledge of the incident and were unable to explain the phenomenon. (Source: News24 July).

MALAYSIA: A large round blue UFO was spotted by several people over a beach resort in Tuaram, Malaysia, on the 17th of July. Restaurant manager James Dungil said: "I was in the restaurant with some friends and saw some guests pointing up to the sky. We were curious so we went out to see what the commotion was all about and I saw a round, transparent object in the sky. I managed to take one photo before it disappeared out of sight. There was no sound or shining light when the object vanished." Other witnesses claimed that their cell phones "went dead" when the UFO was overhead. Local aviation authorities could not offer any explanation. (Source: The Bourne Post 23rd July).

CHINA: At 8pm a UFO was seen by several witnesses hovering over Chongqing's Shopping Centre for over an hour, described as being the same description as one seen earlier in the month over Xiaoshan Airport. A witness named Chem said: "I stared at it and it did not move. After hovering an hour the thing started to fly higher and finally out of people's sight." Officials say that local radar saw nothing unusual and refuse to hand over radar data at the time of the incident. (Source: Tucson Citizen 16th July).



CREATURES

SEA MONSTER: On the 27th of July Gill Pearce spotted a strange animal in the sea off the coast of Saltern Cove, Paignton, in Devon. Claire Fischer, of the Marine Conversation Society, reports: "It was observed at about 15.30 on 27th July but by the time she had got her camera it had moved further out. She spotted it following a shoal of fish which beached themselves in Saltern Cove. The creature remained in the sea, then went out again and followed the shoal - this indicates it's not a turtle as they only eat jellyfish." (Source: Daily Mail 31st July).

BRITISH BIG CATS: It has been a bumper month for big cat reports coming in from all areas of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Frank Tunbridge has taken five minutes of footage of a large black cat in an undisclosed location in Gloucestershire; it is presently being analysed by the BBC Bristol Wildlife Unit. A spate of sightings in the Irish Republic and the north has left one man terrified of the large black cat that visited his garden, and he now fears for the safety of his children. Joggers have been chased, motorists startled and police called in on several occasions around the country. (Source: <http://britishbigcats.blogspot.com> August).

USA BIG CATS: As with the UK, reports of large black mysterious felines have been coming in from the USA. A large black cat was spotted near Windhaven Parkway, Plano, Texas, in July; the animal was described as "a sleek cat, pitch black, and very large." The incident was reported to the police. In early August a black feline was spotted at Needlerush in South Carolina, casts were made of prints that were found at the scene. "Reports of a large black exotic feline in a neighbourhood" near Deming Park, Keane, Indiana have caused residents to be on their guard. One witness said: "I wish that somebody would come out here and sit all night. You hear dogs go crazy barking and then it gets creepy silent." (Source: <http://texascryptidhunter.blogspot.com> The Tribune Star July/August).

NESSKI: A creature said to resemble Nessie is reportedly dragging anglers to their death on Lake Cheny, a large fresh water lake in Siberia, Russia. The latest victim is Imamentinom Naurusovym who disappeared without trace in July. His friend Vladimir Golishev said: "I was with my friend Imamentinom some 300 yards from the shore. He hooked something huge on his bait and he stood up in the boat to reel it in.

But it pulled with such force that it overturned the boat." The creature is said to be a "snake-like beast with having a Nessie-style long neck and large teeth dotted around a huge jaw." (Source: Daily Mail: 12th July).

OWL, LOON OR BIGFOOT: A loud "screaming noise" is startling residents in the mountains near Goldtown in Kanawha County, West Virginia. Recordings of the animal have been made and sounds something like a coyote or a wolf according to some, others disagree. Joyce Harrison reports: "I called the sheriff's department and the secretary told me she thought it was a ghost ... but no one knows ... It's one of those deals where one opinion gives into another one." The Division of Natural Resources suggested an owl or a loon could be responsible. Others say that the sounds are akin to what Bigfoot makes. (Source: wowktv 31st July).

BIG CROC: A 22ft saltwater crocodile has recently been terrorising locals in a remote Aboriginal community in Australia's Northern Territory. Goats and other livestock were being taken on a regular basis, until it was shot. But it is believed there are two more crocodiles, even bigger than this one in the area. Jeida Francis said: "It was massive. This one was getting nasty and too close. It was attacking our cattle. The crocodile weighed so much it took two powerful Toyota 4x4s to pull it from the Wearyan River. Confusion reigns over a picture of the crocodile that is circulating on the internet. Some say that it is of the croc that was killed in Darwin in 1997." (Source: www.parajournal.info 5th August).

UCUMAR ZUPAI: Ranchers in Cerro El Creston, some 40 kilometres west of San Jose de Metan, Argentina, claim that on the 24th of July they killed a bulging-eyed, fanged humanoid "with unusually large and sharp incisors" rekindling fears that the fabled Ucumar Zupai (Bigfoot) has returned. The creature was shot and photographs of the remains were taken. The ranchers found the creature disturbing their cattle and could not see what it was when they shot it; they said it could have been a puma or a goblin, for all they knew. Veterinary experts confirmed that the creature was "not native to the region." (Source: El Tribuno 6th August).

ON PATROL: Villagers in La Cuadra, Ecuador, have armed themselves with weapons from spades to guns in order to defend themselves against a "mysterious creature" after a series of animal mutilations. Some people suggest that a large black cat is responsible for the attacks, others a more mysterious animal that is stalking the area. Whatever it is it kills by the neck and rips the head from the body. Villagers are making regular patrols armed with pitchforks, spades, machetes and guns in the hope of catching the perpetrator. (Source: www.unexplainable.net 1st August).

Sightings
is compiled
by MARK FRASER
of the research
organization
Big Cats in Britain
(www.bigcatsinbritain.org)



CONTRASTS: The vibrant city of Aberdeen on Scotland's east coast is a place where ancient and modern meet.

The mermaid in the flat

GRAEME MILNE reveals some strange stories he has recorded from two apartment blocks in Aberdeen, including the sudden appearance of a possible elemental.

WHEN I FIRST HEARD the stories circulating about two blocks of flats in my home town of Aberdeen, I was intrigued. Though no more than 50 years old, the flats were built on a site rich with bloody historic incident. Records show they stand on the location of Aberdeen's castle, an English stronghold completely destroyed around the time of William Wallace.

The adjacent 'Heading Hill' only adds to its grim reputation, for this is where the infamous decapitating machine, 'The Maiden', claimed its victims. Not only that, but in 1597, two-dozen 'witches' were burned alive directly behind the tower blocks. In more recent years this has been the scene of some particularly horrific murders – all in all, a formula for at the very least a grim residual energy to be present here.

In the 1960's the then decaying Castlehill barracks, former home to the Gordon Highlanders situated on the site, was deemed a slum despite being used as temporary family accommodation, and was demolished. In its place now stands Marischal and Virginia Court, scene of the following events.

I first met Lynn Fallon through my work. While undertaking a tour of the area, Lynn described how as a child she had stayed with her parents in Virginia Court, the smaller of the two buildings. It transpired that despite the modernity of the building, the family had been subjected to a prolonged series of unexplainable incidents, which started in Lynn's early adulthood and continued after she had left home.

She explained: 'My bedroom was the back one. I painted it and moved in. At some point I started waking in the middle of the night: the room used to feel icy and I had the distinct feeling I was not wanted there. I took my quilt and moved downstairs. This happened on several occasions over a period of weeks.

'Sometimes when I woke it felt as if there was a heavy weight

pressing on my chest and a couple of times I felt as if I was being pulled from the bed by my feet.

'After two weeks of disturbed sleep I rearranged the furniture to kind of claim the bedroom, told the room that I lived there now and it or they were not supposed to be there anymore. For a time that was the end of it. However, when I moved out my parents began to use the room and it started again.' ●

'Two-dozen "witches" were burned alive directly behind the tower blocks. In more recent years this has been the scene of some particularly horrific murders.'

DARK DOINGS: Marischal Court and Virginia Court on a bright day. Despite appearances, many residents have complained of unexplained incidents that have been both frightening and perplexing. © Graeme Milne





“I clearly saw a three-legged stool on the floor. It began to rise slowly through the air vertically and disappeared through the ceiling.”

watched were fairly common. He concluded by saying that when his wife was in the house alone, ‘she became convinced that the living room was full of people, though she was at a loss to explain this, she just felt it to be’.

I was given a possible lead in the shape of a former caretaker but despite making enquiries, the trail had gone cold – that is until I bumped into an old family friend, Dave Hardy. As it transpired Dave had lived in the adjoining Marischal Court during the early 1990’s. The house, a maisonette, had an unusual layout, with the bedrooms situated on the bottom floor. Again icy temperatures were noted as well as whispering, though initially he did not think much of this.

The first incident of note occurred when his three children were staying over for the weekend. Christopher and Fay, being the youngest, were fast asleep downstairs while Dave and his eldest, David, watched a film. Dave went through to the kitchen and began doing the dishes, while his son chatted to him. They heard the sound of footsteps coming along the corridor towards the kitchen door. Dave swung round, dishcloth in hand and said, ‘Will you get back to bed!’

He then described how his ‘jaw dropped’ as he saw what was standing in the corridor – a small figure in a long white gown. David, standing behind the open glass door, could see the silhouette of the figure and was equally transfixed. After what seemed like an age, the figure tuned noiselessly and walked down the corridor.

Dave put down the dishcloth and, grabbing his son, ran downstairs to his children, thinking initially they had manufactured some kind of

GRIM PAST: Marischal Court is situated in an area rich with historic dark deeds and this may have some bearing on the strange tales the author has been told about it. © Graeme Milne

Lynn said that on a number of occasions, when passing the open door of the darkened bedroom, a strange bluish glow appeared to emanate from her parents’ bed. This was witnessed by a number of people. Her father seemed to be particularly plagued by vivid nightmares in the room and would awake abruptly with a feeling of dread.

I was given permission to contact Mr Fallon to clarify this and although they had moved away many years ago, he remembered the following incidents with great clarity.

He explained: ‘I woke up in the middle of the night and on the

left side of the bed I clearly saw a three-legged stool on the floor, I suppose much like a milking stool. It began to rise slowly through the air vertically and disappeared through the ceiling.

‘A minute later a woman wearing an old fashioned crinoline bonnet came through the wall next to the headboard. She was like a silhouette and moved straight past me to the opposite side of the room, where she disappeared through the wall. It was the kind of thing you never forget.’

Mr Fallon said there were other incidents which made their stay uncomfortable: disembodied voices and the feeling of being

prank. Both were sound asleep. He described the figure as that of a small child with short blond hair who looked ill. It was not till years later that he discovered the now demolished 'Sick Kids Hospital' stood nearby.

Months passed and all seemed quiet. It was again late in the evening and Dave was in the bathroom while his son was making tea. Both were startled by the sound of loud thumping coming from the stairs. They immediately went to investigate and saw a book flying off a nearby case.

Dave recalled: 'The bookcase was around four foot from the banister of the staircase and the books were shooting over the top of this rapidly one by one and falling down the stairs. We stood in terror and I remember thinking, what is going on with this house?'

'We crept downstairs to the pile of books, which included books on philosophy, mythology and the occult. We started to pick them up and I noticed that the

one I had used at University had indentations in it: marks made by human adult teeth. That really freaked us out.'

Although nothing else happened that night, they were left with a horrible feeling of anticipation which would not easily go away. Dave began to talk to his neighbours and was in a sense relieved to find out that his flat was not the only one that appeared to be haunted, though their experiences were less dramatic.

The third and least easily explained incident occurred a number of years later.

'It was early evening and I was lying on my three-seater settee. I was resting with my eyes shut but was not asleep. I was clear of mind and not stressed but I began to feel the atmosphere change and felt there was something coming into the room. I thought at first I was being stupid but became wary of opening my eyes. After a while, I slowly opened my eyes and let them glance to the wall behind me.

'Lying along the back of the settee was a female form. She was right next to me. She had large black eyes like a fish and was staring down to me. I felt there was malevolence there. I was frozen with fear but let my eyes travel down her body slowly. The top half was that of a normal woman but the lower half was like the archetypal mermaid with what appeared to be fish scales.

'I willed myself to close my eyes and the atmosphere again slowly changed and returned to normal. I knew then whatever it was had gone. I sprang up and felt the sofa, which was both cold and damp. I still can't explain this nearly 20 years later though I thought about it over and over again. I thankfully never saw it again, I felt it could have been some kind of elemental, but I honestly don't know.'

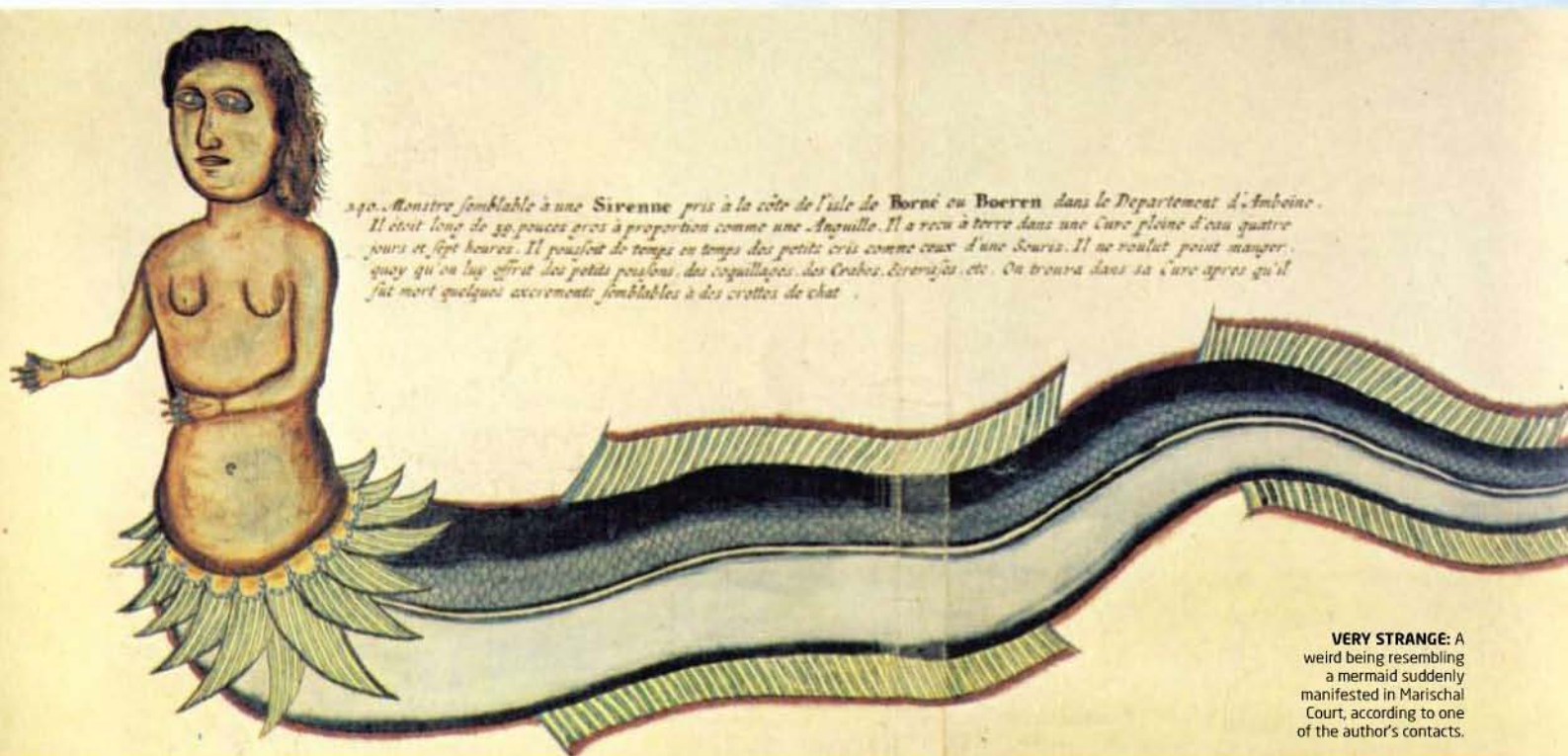
We finished the interview and I left with just as many questions. Was it an elemental Dave had seen, a discarnate spirit wandering the earth? Dave suggested it may have been something connected to his past involvement in the occult, though again that is just a theory.

The answer remains elusive but the wide range of activity, from poltergeist to residual, could well make this building one of the most haunted in Aberdeen. ●



Graeme Milne is a freelance writer and local historian. He is the author of the recently published *The Haunted North: Paranormal tales from Aberdeen and the North East*. He has spent the last two years gathering new stories from the region for inclusion in *The Haunted North 2* and is in the process of setting up a paranormal investigation group in Aberdeen.

“The books were shooting over the top one by one and falling down the stairs. We stood in terror and I remember thinking, what is going on with this house?”



390. Monstre semblable à une Sirene pris à la côte de l'île de Borné ou Boeren dans le Departement d'Amboine. Il étoit long de 30 pouces pres à proportion comme une Anguille. Il a vécu à terre dans une Cure pleine d'eau quatre jours et sept heures. Il pouvoit de temps en temps des petits cris comme ceux d'une Souris. Il ne vouloit point manger, quey qu'on luy offrit des petits poissons, des coquillages, des Crabes, Escorpiôs, etc. On trouva dans sa Cure apres qu'il fut mort quelques excroissances semblables à des crotes de chat.

VERY STRANGE: A weird being resembling a mermaid suddenly manifested in Marischal Court, according to one of the author's contacts.



Furry phantoms

Animal ghosts are always interesting and have been reported from the British countryside for centuries. **NEIL ARNOLD** highlights perhaps the most unusual and certainly the biggest of the breed - spectral bears.

THE BROWN BEAR was wiped from the woods of Britain around the 10th century. The cruel sport of bear-baiting existed in England up until the 19th century and 'bear-gardens' were constructed throughout the country from the 16th century. These pits would be circled by high seats so that spectators could observe the ghastly spectacle of a bear, usually chained to a post in the centre of the mini-arena, which would then have several, well-trained hunting dogs set upon it.

Imagine the ghastly and gory sight as these dogs were gradually killed, the bear also suffering appalling injuries and eventually being set free

from its shackles in the ring to kill any other dogs that had been used to replace those killed.

The Paris Garden at Southwark, in London, was one of the most popular bear-pits. It attracted around 1,000 spectators to each fight, even Queen Elizabeth was in attendance on occasion. It's no wonder that the ghosts of bears have been seen not far from this location, at Cheyne Walk and Glebe Place, Chelsea. It seems these local spectres appear in a variety of colours: black, brown and white.

Spectral bears are not common in the United Kingdom, but reports do exist, sometimes in considerable detail. ♦

CRUELTY: This 17th century print shows captive and muzzled bears, possibly intended for bear-baiting. The agony and terror endured by the animals in this cruel sport may be behind the manifestation of spectral bears.





‘The guard prodded his bayonet at the beast, only to see the blade glide through the apparition as if striking thin air.’

The most famous ghostly bear is said to haunt the Tower Of London where, in 1815 a sentry on guard outside the Jewel Room, was confronted by a monster of a bear which came through the wall and headed straight for him. The guard reacted quickly and prodded his bayonet at the beast, only to see the blade glide through the apparition as if striking thin air. The phantom vanished, but so traumatised by the experience was the sentry that he was reported to have died shortly after the confrontation. Was the ghost the spirit of a bear once kept at the Tower menagerie?

In West Sussex one of the last wild bears in England was hunted and killed. Its ghost is said to roam the grounds of Verdley Castle, which dates back to the 13th century and is situated to the south of the Verdley Estate, known today as Verdley Place. On August 19, 2004, the local *Midhurst & Petworth Observer* followed the adventures of six mediums, two historians and an Australian television crew as they went on the hunt for the phantom bear. None of the psychics picked up any presence of a bear, and strangely, none of the locals had even heard of the legend.

However, in West Sussex, there exists another hazy legend of a spectral bear conjured one dark, stormy night. For several decades Clapham Woods has been the subject of many a dark whisper and wicked rumour [see also ‘If

You Go Down To The Woods Today’ in issue 47]. The creepiest story pertaining to the Woods took place in the autumn of 1975 and even made national radio and television.

At the time the area was caught up in a flap of high strangeness. News crews, journalists, UFO investigators, and paranormal enthusiasts flocked to the area, but rarely after dark. Two dogs had gone missing in the area, and when researchers stumbled across a footprint measuring eight-inches long and almost four-inches wide, but showing four-claw mark indentations, with a fifth claw mark towards the rear of the main pad, it was clear something bizarre was going on. Twelve inches in front of the print, was another, almost identical print.

The investigators were equipped with a Geiger counter, as well as other paraphernalia. Suddenly, the needle of the counter began to act oddly when it was swept over the prints. Then, from the darkness, a grey pillar of mist appeared. With the main A27 road in ear shot, the researchers decided it best to head for home, but then a monster

appeared. The hazy shaft of mist before them took on the form of a great bear-like creature.

The apparition faded within ten seconds but from then on Clapham Woods would become known for its paranormal activity. It was once rumoured a bear cult operated clandestinely in the thickets, and maybe they’d raised some kind of tulpa-like energy forever to haunt the shadows of the ‘birdless grove’.

The equally notorious Rendlesham Forest was also caught up in a bear scare in the spring of 2009, when the *Daily Mail* reported on ‘Bear sighting in Suffolk woods was promotional hoax staged by theatre group’ after there had been several alleged reports of a creature resembling a bear [covered in *Paranormal News* in issue 36].



Above SAD SPECTACLE: An 18th century engraving of a forlorn bear - and a monkey - being led between towns to be put on show. Perhaps some of the ghostly bears seen in Britain are the spirits of these reluctant entertainers.

Right WALKING TALL: Bears are able to rise up on their hind legs and, when trained, are even able to walk for perhaps a dozen paces. An oddity of many of the apparent bear sightings in Britain is that they are seen walking on their hind legs - a clue to their paranormal nature.

On his *MonsterUSA* website researcher Nick Redfern recounted a weird incident from Rendlesham which took place in 1956. The witness was one Sam Holland.

Nick writes: 'Shortly after New Year's Day in 1956, Holland was walking through the woods with his spaniel dog, Harry, when he was horrified to see a bizarre-looking creature come looming out of the trees some forty feet in front of him.

'It walked upon four huge, muscular legs - "like a lion's" - and its thick fur coat was both black and glossy. Incredibly, said Holland, the animal was easily ten feet in length; and so could not be considered anything even remotely resembling a domestic animal, or a known wild beast of the British Isles.

'Likening it to a silver-back gorilla, Holland said that the monstrous creature possessed a huge neck, widely flaring nostrils, and immense, powerful-looking jaws. For a moment or two, the animal looked intently at Holland and his whimpering little dog; then, seemingly losing interest, continued on its way and into the depths of the surrounding undergrowth.

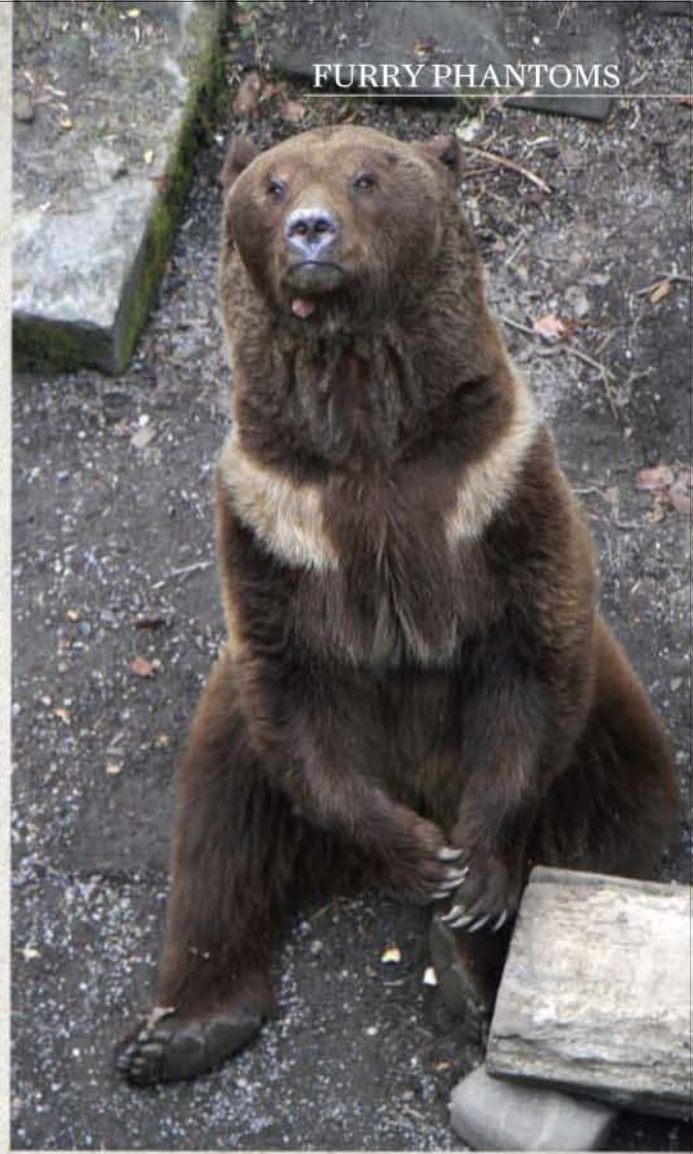
'Holland would later explain that the creature looked like a

strange combination of ape, dog, lion and rhinoceros. Needless to say, the British Isles is not home to any such animal that even remotely resembles the beast that Sam Holland says he stumbled upon. Yet he is adamant that his description of the monstrous entity and his recollections of the day in question are utterly accurate.

'Today Holland believes that whatever it was he had the misfortune to run into half a century ago, it was unquestionably paranormal rather than physical in origin. But from where, precisely, he has no idea.'

There are reports from Rendlesham Forest of a creature known as the Shug Monkey, a strange, spectral abomination which seems to fit the description of Sam's creature.

However, the creature seen on the outskirts of London in 2008 certainly seems to resemble a bear. The press at the time called it 'The Whatsit of Wanstead Woods', although the best headline came from the Centre For Fortean Zoology who dubbed it 'The Wanstead Ewok'. An 18-year old fisherman named Michael Kent claimed to have encountered a bear-like beast whilst angling at Holiday



Ponds, Wanstead. Holiday Ponds sits within the London Borough of Redbridge, which is spliced by the A12, yet harbours grasslands which merge with the vast Epping Forest.

Michael said: 'I looked over and saw this strange, dark figure that resembled a bear. It was hunched over and I could see it had a really hairy back. I think it must have heard me and it scampered off... It was too small to be a human, but not the right shape to be a deer, it didn't have long legs or anything like that.'

Michael, despite the jokes from his brother and father, remained convinced he'd seen a bear, although park officials were quick to dismiss the report, stating matter of factly that only deer and foxes inhabited the area. However, Mr Kent responded: 'I've been fishing in the area since I was five-years old, and I've seen deer, dogs and even a cow before but never anything like this.'

Then, a few days later, pensioner Irene Daintly claimed to have seen a similar creature, commenting: 'It was about 4-ft tall and with really big feet and looked straight at me with animal eyes. Then it leaped straight over the wall with

Above CROWD PLEASER: The famous Bear Pit at Berne, Switzerland, is one of the few remaining in Europe. In the days before more advanced zoological gardens, bear pits were comparatively common and may have been a source of escapes in times past and of their apparitions today.

Left FATAL FRIGHT: A sentry standing on guard at the Jewel House at the Tower of London had a famous encounter with a phantom bear. It is said the shock of it killed him.

'The needle of the Geiger counter began to act oddly when it was swept over the prints. Then, from the darkness, a grey pillar of mist appeared.'





Neil Arnold is a full-time monster hunter, author and lecturer. He writes for magazines and newspapers, has worked with the BBC, ITV, Sky, NBC, Channel 4, and is the author of several books including *Monster! The A-Z of Zoofarm Phenomena*, *Mystery Animals of the British Isles: Kent*, *Paranormal London* and the upcoming *Paranormal Kent*.

no trouble at all and went off into the direction of the Three Jolly Wheelers pub.'

Bears rarely walk for long distances on two legs, and certainly don't leap over walls, so what had these two, seemingly decent, witnesses seen?

On the December 27, 1981, four boys were playing on Hackney Marshes, a 337-acre nature reserve of flood meadows situated in the London Borough of Hackney, when, just after they'd discovered a strange set of paw-prints in the snow, they encountered 'a giant great growling hairy thing' that rose up on its hind legs.

The boys ran away in terror and told their parents about their adventure, who in turn informed the police. Fifty police officers, accompanied by dogs and a helicopter, scoured the marshes looking for the beast. Although they failed to flush out the creature, they did find paw-prints. One set were spotted on an island which had a perimeter fence around it and a

'Just after they'd discovered a strange set of paw-prints in the snow, they encountered "a giant great growling hairy thing" that rose up on its hind legs.'



WANSTEAD PARK: This sheltered spot on the outskirts of east London was the scene of a recent sighting of something bear-like which behaved like no ordinary bear.

locked gate. There were no human tracks nearby to suggest a hoax.

A year before the Hackney encounter, two decapitated bear carcasses were found beside the River Lee, which runs from Luton in Bedfordshire into the River Thames. Where they came from remains a mystery.

In 2007 at Lenham, Kent, the Ghost Connections paranormal team were investigating a case near an old church when they stumbled upon a set of mysterious footprints which looked as if they belonged to a bear.

Researcher Dave Godden told me: 'There were probably about 10-15 in total leading towards the road. The ground became drier as we progressed. Each print can easily fit an adult human hand. The best one has a discernible heel impression and what could be an arch (ie a higher area). There were no discernible claw marks. The track was in a straight line with no other print to indicate a quadruped and the stride was easily more than I could comfortably stride.'

Once again, the bear-like tracks seemed to belong to a bipedal creature, suggesting something other than an ordinary bear.

It's possible that some of the stories above relate to real animals, perhaps escapees or releases from private collections. Others, however, may well be sightings of a ghostly creature, the spirit of an animal that once suffered in the bear pits or inhabited our woods. ❁



STRAW BEARS: Weird bear-like creatures can still be seen every January at Whittlesea in Cambridgeshire, when villagers revive the Straw Bear folk festival. Similar customs would have been carried out throughout England once upon a time.

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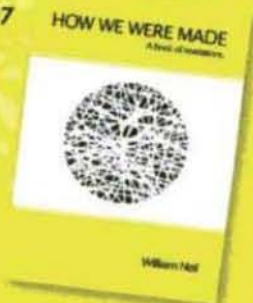
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Corpses & Robbers

MARK GREENER examines the historic trade in body parts believed at one time to have had magical and healing properties.

RIDING HOME LATE ONE NIGHT, Admiral George Delaval (circa: 1667-1723) saw a light coming from Benton Church, near Newcastle. Delaval ordered his servant to discover the source. But, according to an 1887 report in *The Folklore Journal*, the terrified servant refused. Delaval – who fought in the Battle of Vélez-Málaga, the largest naval engagement of the War of the Spanish Succession – was less easily cowed.

Looking through a window, Delaval saw a man and woman ‘busy about a corpse’ – but they hadn’t locked the door. Entering the church, Delaval quickly approached the grave robbers. And caught them slicing the breasts from a female corpse. The man – supposedly the devil – vanished. (I suspect he escaped while the sight of the posthumous mastectomy distracted the Admiral.) Delaval detained the woman.

The servant refused to let the woman sit behind him. So, the Admiral secured the woman to his horse. The ‘proper courts’ tried the woman, who they hanged as a witch.

The Folklore Journal’s account comes from the Reverend John Hodgson (1779-1845), a leading writer and historian. During a visit to London in 1821, Hodgson’s wife’s aunt – a Mrs Burke – recounted the story. Hodgson repeated the tale in a letter to his wife on March 4. Given the reliable sources, we can probably believe that the exhumation happened. The question is, of course, why?

After the notorious crimes of Ed Gein, Francois Bertrand and Viktor Ardisson, it’s tempting to suggest sexual perversion as



‘Delaval approached the grave robbers. And caught them slicing the breasts from a female corpse.’

a motive. Yet, I wonder if the courts were right: the grave robbers wanted the body parts for witchcraft. But was their intention malevolent?

THE CAT, THE KING AND THE SCOTTISH WITCH

Certainly, malefic magic is a possibility. The famous Scottish witch, Agnes Sampson, stood accused of, among other charges, raising a ‘contrary wind’ affecting a ship carrying James IV of Scotland (James I to the Sassenachs) from Denmark. According to the 1592 pamphlet *News From Scotland*, other ships in the king’s fleet had ‘a fair and good wind’. However,

the wind was ‘altogether against his Majesty’. (I’ve modernised the spellings from the Scottish version in *A Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts on Witchcraft*.) Sampson claimed James would never have crossed safely if the King’s ‘faith had not prevailed’ over the witches’ intentions.

Under torture, Sampson said she was part of coven that had christened a cat. The witches attached ‘the chiefest part of a dead man and several joints of his body’ to the cat. (The ‘chiefest part’ is ambiguous. My guess would be the genitals.) They carried the cat out to the middle of the sea, which created the tempest responsible for James’s

STIRRING UP A STORM: Under torture, Agnes Sampson said she and her coven had attached male body parts to a cat and then drowned it at sea as part of a ritual to create a tempest which they hoped would sink the ship of the Scottish king, James IV.



MUMMIA: An error in translation from Persian medical texts may be behind the medieval faith in ground-down Egyptian mummies as a cure-all medicine.

‘Corpse medicine attained considerable respectability among medieval and early modern physicians.’

problems. The storm also sank a boat laden with ‘jewels and rich gifts’ intended for the Queen of Scotland. The court condemned Sampson to death – a sentence performed in January 1591.

Are such confessions reliable? The same month, the Edinburgh executioner strangled and burnt Doctor Fian, alias John Cunningham, for being ‘a notable sorcerer’. Sampson had condemned Fian under torture. In turn, Fian initially confessed to sorcery after torture with the ‘boot’ – an iron or wood casing placed around the victim’s leg and foot, into which wedges were hammered between the casing and the victim’s flesh, creating almost unbearable pain as well as often dislocating or crushing bones.

As the anonymous editor of *A Collection of Rare and*

Curious Tracts on Witchcraft remarked: ‘We have no doubt that the bootes [sic] were a most efficacious engine to procure a confession, and the Doctor would most likely have confessed that he had the moon in his pocket by the same means.’

CORPSES AS MEDICINE
It’s possible that Delaval’s grave robbers had malicious intentions. However, I believe that it’s more likely they intended to use the body parts to heal rather than harm. After all, while there were always sceptics, corpse



Right BODY IN QUESTION: A dramatic scene on the scaffold at Newgate, London. Many executions were open to public view and great crowds would gather to watch notorious criminals breathe their last. Some would also gather at execution sites in the hope of obtaining bits of the criminal’s body or its bodily fluids for medicines.

HANGING IN CHAINS: Once upon a time gibbets were a common, if grisly, sight beside Britain's highways. Sometimes it wasn't just the crows picking away at the body, it was traditional healers and magicians, too. This evocative illustration is by Sidney Sime.



“The alleged virtue of mummy gave place to that of ... the flesh of any dead body, not necessarily that of an Egyptian mummy.”

medicine attained considerable respectability among medieval and early modern physicians. Indeed, corpse medicine remained part of folk medicine until remarkably recently. And in the late 1950s, doctors started treating a common cause of short stature (dwarfism in politically incorrect days) using a protein extracted from corpses.

Ironically, however, one of the best-known examples of corpse medicine might derive from an error in translation. Warren

Dawson – in a paper published in 1927 that remains worth reading – notes that ancient healers created considerable demand for the various types of Middle Eastern bitumen. Ancient Greeks, for example, used Babylonian bitumen to treat cataracts, leprosy and itch, and several other eye and skin diseases. Medicines containing bitumen also, they believed, alleviated gout and, taken with wine, cured coughs, shortness of breath, dysentery, rheumatism and



MODERN CORPSE MEDICINE

Charles Stratton (1838-1883), better known as General Tom Thumb (pictured) and his wife Lavinia Warren Bump (1841-1919) achieved fame, particularly during the 1860s, by exhibiting their short stature, usually in Barnum's circuses. You can see a horse-drawn coach used by the General during one of the four English tours made by Barnum's circus at the National Trust's Arlington Court in Devon.

More commonly than fame, however, short stature potentially causes numerous psychological, physical and emotional problems. Many cases of short stature – probably including Stratton and Warren – arise from a deficiency in the aptly named growth hormone.

A pea-side gland in the middle of your brain, roughly in line with the bridge of your nose, produces growth hormone. So, in 1958, Maurice Raben, a doctor at Tufts University in Boston, USA, started treating people of short stature using growth hormone extracted from the pituitary glands of human corpses and then purified. The approach proved highly effective, but supplies of growth hormone from corpses were limited.

Then in the mid-1980s, doctors realised that 'cadaveric growth hormone' could transmit the abnormal protein (a prion) that causes Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human form of mad cow disease. A synthetic form (somatrophin) now means that most people with growth hormone deficiency attain normal adult height, reduces the risk of the other complications and helps treat several other diseases.

various other ailments.

The Persian word for wax, which encompassed bitumen, is *Mumia*. Arabs adopted the word, which they mistakenly applied to the concoctions of resins Ancient Egyptians used to embalm their dead (see Dr Bridget McDermott's article 'Food of the Gods' in issue 50). We derived the term 'mummy' from *Mumia*. In turn, the medical properties associated with *Mumia* transferred to mummies. Ground-up mummy corpses began to appear on apothecaries' shelves in various formulations, including balsams and treacles.

Consuming powdered Egyptian mummies as treatments for numerous diseases, poisoning, even broken bones, was commonplace across Europe between the 12th and 17th centuries. The tradition persisted in some places for even longer. As Egyptian mummies became scarce, merchants substituted corpses mummified naturally and treated body parts from the more recently dead to resemble the Egyptian prototype. (It's just possible that the Benton two were collecting raw material for this trade.)

Over time, the term 'mummy' referred less to a bituminous or resinous preparation of a mummified Egyptian cadaver and more to a corpse's tissue.

'The alleged virtue of mummy – the original *mumia* – gave place to that of the flesh itself, that is to say to the flesh of any dead body, not necessarily that of an Egyptian' ◉

RESPECTABLE: The great 16th century scientist Paracelsus was also convinced of the efficacy of corpse medicine. In this contemporary woodcut of a hospital scene, Paracelsus is pictured standing at left of a group of three surgeons.



Matteuccia Francisci, tried for witchcraft in 1428. Francisci treated illnesses by telling people to bury a bone from an unbaptised baby at a crossroads, and saying prayers and other formulas over the remains for nine days.

Around the same time, a Parisian midwife called Perrette – who worked for several clients, including the aristocracy – became entangled in a scheme to cure a nobleman's leprosy using an unguent made from the fat of a stillborn baby. Kieckhefer reports that she eventually received a Royal pardon.

Many early examples of medical magic involving corpses come from records of witch trials. So, most cases of using body parts to heal probably went unrecorded. Writing in the *Lancet*, Richard Sugg notes that Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, (1493-1541) said: 'If doctors were aware of the power of this substance, no body would be left on the gibbet for more than three days.'

Nevertheless, around the same time, doctors also treated ill health with human remains.

mummy,' Dawson remarks.

The mistranslation fed into already widespread folk-medical beliefs about corpses' healing properties. For example, The German *Buch der Tugend* ('The Book of Virtue'), published in 1486, shows a woman 'injuring' a hanged thief's remains.

Charles Zika (*The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 2007) suggests she was possibly obtaining body parts, blood or semen, widely used by cunning women to cure epilepsy and by witches in magic,



'Francisci treated illnesses by telling people to bury a bone from an unbaptised baby at a crossroads, and saying prayers over the remains for nine days.'

including spells for invisibility.

Medieval records contain numerous other examples of medical magic involving corpses. For example Kieckhefer, in his *Magic in the Middle Ages* (2000), highlights the case of the Italian

For example, Oswald Croll, also called Crollius (1580-1609) was professor of medicine and alchemy at the University of Marburg, and a leading European intellectual. Croll suggested making a mummy from the corpse

THE HAND OF GLORY

Several years ago, wandering around Whitby's wonderful museum, I was delighted to see a 'Hand of Glory', supposedly cut from the corpse of an executed criminal (a murderer preferred) as it hung from the gibbet. After draining the blood, the magician or witch steeped the hand in a solution of saltpetre, salt, pepper (and according to some books of magic, iron sulphate), usually for two weeks in a buried container. The magician or witch then left the hand to dry.

Hands of glory were popular among criminals because they were supposed to have the power to stop the inhabitants of a house waking up while they burgled it. In some stories, the hand itself was set alight, although biologically this seems unlikely. More probably, the hand held a candle (as in the picture reproduced here), which traditionally would have been made from the fat from a hanged man, wax that has never been used before, and Lapland sesame.

Once lit the household would not awaken. According to some stories, breath would not extinguish the candle; only milk could douse the flame. In certain traditions, the hand could also help locate hidden treasure and protect the owner from evil spirits.

In the 1870s, builders discovered a severed human hand and arm in an attic chimney in the White Hart Inn, Caldmore Green, Walsall. Local legend claimed this was a hand of glory. However, a pathologist who examined the remains in 1965 suggested that the hand probably came from a young child, had been dissected by a surgeon and injected with formalin. A doctor lodged at the White Hart in the 1860s. But how the arm ended up in the chimney remains a mystery.

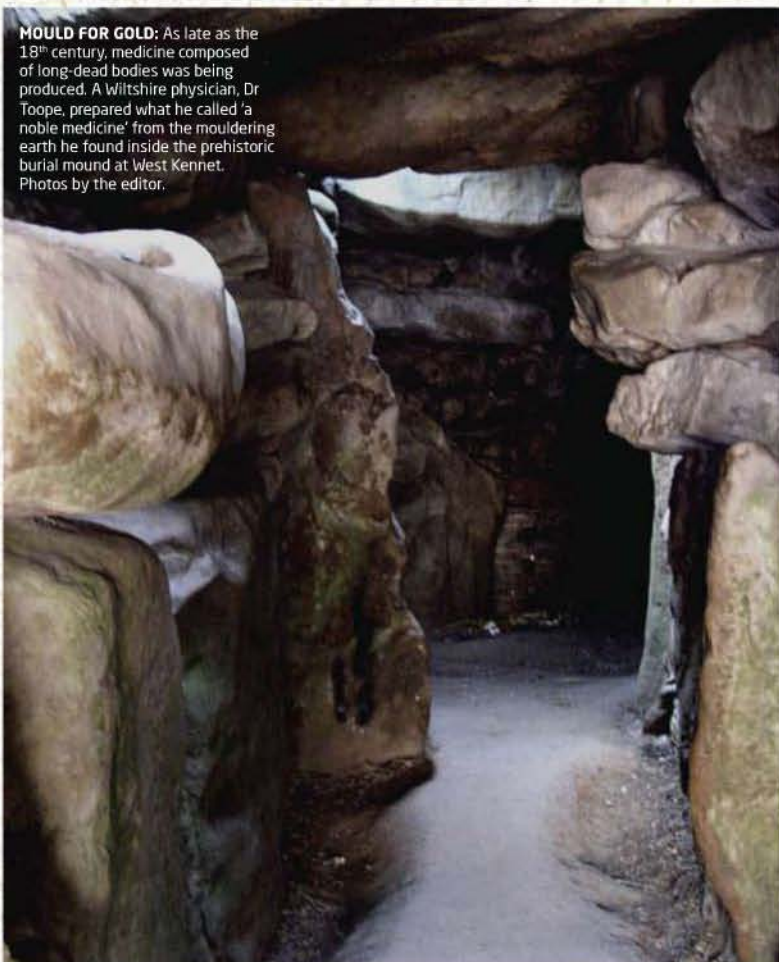
FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.walsall.gov.uk/the_hand_of_glory_and_the_white_hart.pdf; www.whitbymuseum.org.uk/

‘During the 19th century epileptics stood ‘around the scaffold ... cup in hand, ready to quaff the red blood as it flows from the still quivering body’.’



MOULD FOR GOLD: As late as the 18th century, medicine composed of long-dead bodies was being produced. A Wiltshire physician, Dr Toope, prepared what he called ‘a noble medicine’ from the mouldering earth he found inside the prehistoric burial mound at West Kennet. Photos by the editor.



of a hanged criminal. He believed that the remains of a man of ruddy complexion aged about 24 years produced the best results. A ruddy complexion suggested that the flesh would be healthier.

Croll gives directions for the preparing the flesh – after the magician exposed the remains for two days to the influence of the sun and moon. Meanwhile, hands of glory became popular among the medieval criminal classes (see separate panel).

Indeed, the trend for corpse medicine continued until relatively recently. According to Sugg, Dr Toope, a physician working in Marlborough during the late 17th century, collected ‘many bushels’ (a bushel is the dry equivalent of eight gallons) from the ancient burial mound at West Kennet. Toope made ‘a noble medicine’ that he claimed ‘relieved many of my distressed neighbours’.

In *Folklore*, Mavis Peacock comments that in 1830, the execution of three men at Lincoln drew an immense crowd. Two women rubbed the dead men’s hands over their wens – probably goitre – or other diseased parts of their bodies. One brought a child for treatment. Peacock also cites Horace Murray who reported that during the 19th century epileptics in some parts of Denmark ‘stand around the scaffold in crowds, cup in hand, ready to quaff the red blood as it flows from the still quivering body’.

So, did Delaval see a cunning man and woman trying to obtain the raw material to heal rather than harm? Perhaps they aimed to treat breast cancer by sympathetic magic (see Leo Ruickbie’s excellent article in *Paranormal* 49). Of course, we’ll probably never know. Nevertheless, treatments made from corpses are among the most remarkable and most neglected chapters in medical history. ❁



Mark Greener is an award-winning freelance journalist specialising in health and bioscience. Mark is a former research scientist who has written widely on his life-long passion: cryptobiology. He’s the author of nine books and his features have appeared in magazines worldwide. He lives between Cambridge and Ely and keeps a sharp look-out for the Fen Tiger but has sadly never even seen a footprint.

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Panic in the playground

Gnomes, aliens and vampires - oh my! **NIGEL WATSON** reveals that the old school yard can be a focus for weird sightings, often with great gangs of kids witnessing the same entities *en masse*.



PLAYGROUNDS ARE MEANT to be havens where children can play and make friends, but they also have a sinister side. These sanctuaries of childhood seem to attract all manner of strange manifestations and alien visitations. Many are caused by the active imagination of children, rumour and the work of hoaxers and pranksters. Yet, some playground phantoms are not so easily explained.

Even into adulthood, the children who have experienced these phantoms scratch their heads and wonder what really happened to them. Was it just their imagination or something else entirely?

LIVERPUDLIAN LEPRECHAUNS

The Beatles were not the only group to send people wild in Liverpool during the summer of 1964. Leprechauns were seen on the bowling green in Jubilee Park. A 9-year-old boy told a reporter: 'Last night I saw little men in white hats throwing stones and mud at each other on the bowling green. Honest mister, I did.'

Liverpool Parks Police Constable, James Nolan said: 'This all started on Tuesday (June 30). How I just don't know, but the sooner it ends the better. Stones have been thrown on the bowling green and for the second night running no-one has been able to play. The kids just won't go away. Some swear they have seen leprechauns. The story has gone round and now we are being besieged with leprechaun hunters.'

The search for these mud-throwing leprechauns reached such a frenzy that several children suffered from cuts and bruises and a temporary first aid shelter had to be set up to treat them.

In 1982, Brian Jones claimed that he started the Liverpool scare when he was doing some gardening. He was wearing a red waistcoat and bobble hat that made him look like a leprechaun. When some children looked at him, he jumped up and down and threw some grass turfs at them. This started the rumour and he 'entertained' the crowds of children in this manner for a few more nights.

More recently, it has been claimed that the Park



KIDS STUFF: Play areas have an affinity with paranormal visitations - or is it just a case of youthful imaginations running riot?

“Last night I saw little men in white hats throwing stones and mud at each other on the bowling green. Honest mister, I did.”

constable James Nolan made up the story, and things just escalated from that. Another explanation is that some circus people who were living nearby had caused the scare.

None of them sounds very convincing and do not explain sightings like Linda Tahmasebi's, who claims: 'I was one of the school children that saw those leprechauns. I attended Brae Street School and we all saw them popping in and out of a window overlooking the school yard. There were about four of them, all tiny, dressed like a school-book idea of a typical gnome and they sat swinging their legs on the window ledge getting in and out. What they were I don't know, I only know what they looked like. I'd love to know the truth!'

KIRKBY CAPERS

As the leprechaun hunt subsided in Liverpool, a similar one erupted in nearby Kirkby. On Friday, July 10, hundreds of children were convinced there were leprechauns in St Chad's churchyard. There were reports of a UFO that changed from red to silver as it moved across the sky, and descriptions of classic, 8-inch tall leprechauns wearing knee breaches with red and green tunics. These little people spoke in a strong Irish brogue. For two

days, the police had to chase away the children from St Chad's and the grounds of St Marie's Roman Catholic School and Mother of God Church, Northwood, Kirkby.

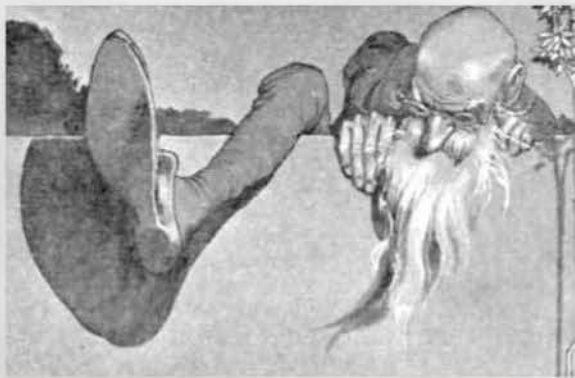
Eddie McArdle provides an excellent insight into this spate of sightings: 'I remember the story well as I have a scar as a constant reminder of the event. We, the kids from St Marie's, Kirkby, went *en masse* into the church and as we hunted the little people some bright spark shouted that they were coming out after us.

'Panic ensued and as we all fled quicker than we entered. A boy who is sadly no longer with us swung the church gate in his haste to escape, and I was hit on the forehead by the metal cross on it. As far as I know I am the only person injured by the little visitors.'

LITTLE GREEN MEN

Also in the summer of 1964, in June, the Leam Lane estate, Felling, Gateshead, was shaken by rumours that egg-shaped UFOs making loud buzzing noises were visiting the area at night. This was linked to the report by 14-year-old David Wilson, who claimed: 'I saw several small green creatures about two feet high running around a haystack on a farm near the estate.'

Mr Coates, headmaster of the ☉



Above left GNOME WORK: Many pupils of Brae Street School in Liverpool saw hordes of gnome-like beings mucking around in the grounds and clambering in and out of the classroom windows.

Above right FIRST CLASS: The edition of the *Flying Saucer Review* detailing the now classic 'Welsh triangle' sighting at Broad Haven Primary School.

local Roman Road junior school, denied holding a special assembly to discuss the sightings. He categorically stated: 'There is no truth at all in these silly rumours.'

NOTTINGHAM NODDY CARS

Sixty or more Noddy-like gnomes were seen riding cars at Wollaton Park, Nottingham, in 1979. Several 8 to 10-year-old schoolchildren said that the gnomes had green wrinkled faces, white beards, brightly coloured clothes and laughed in a strange fashion. Two gnomes rode in each car that soundlessly chased the children.

The day after this sighting, which took place at 8.30pm, the children circulated their story round their school. The headmaster interviewed the children, who all confirmed the event was true. Not long afterwards, I telephoned the



headmaster who dismissed it as a rumour and refused to talk about it anymore.

The Nottingham UFO Investigation Society informed me: 'We do not investigate figments of people's imaginations, only UFO reports.'

SILVER MACHINE

A humanoid figure in a silver suit was seen coming out of a cigar-shaped UFO at 1.30pm, on Friday, February 4, 1977. The observation by 15 schoolchildren at Broad Haven Primary School, Wales, was initially dismissed as fantasy but their teachers eventually took them seriously, and reported the matter to the local police.

'The story that a 7ft tall vampire with iron teeth had kidnapped and eaten two local children spread round school playgrounds.'

The UFO and a man with pointed ears have been explained away as being caused by a sewerage lorry and/or a hoaxer in a fireproof suit, though the witnesses even in adulthood are convinced they saw something otherworldly that day. This area of Wales became a UFO hot spot for several months afterwards, and was called the Broad Haven or Welsh Triangle by the media.

HULL ENCOUNTERS

When I was on a live phone-in programme for Radio Humberwide in 1978, a woman called Barbara rang to report a sighting made by her son. She said that on the morning of Wednesday, January 18, 1978, he was playing in the playground of Anlaby Primary School, when he heard a sharp whistling sound. Peter (pseudonym) looked up to see a round object with small windows around it. It changed colours as it landed on the flat school roof.

Three beings got out this craft and walked across the roof. They looked like armless men in gold suits with wires or tubes trailing from their backs, which were connected to the UFO.

Peter ran to tell three friends who were nearby but at that

CHILD ABDUCTIONS

Rumours of the abduction of children from school playgrounds seems to be a worldwide phenomenon that reflects the genuine deep-rooted fears of parents and guardians.

Such fears drove a mob in the Abobo district of Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, to kill two suspected child kidnapers. For several days in mid-October 2008, these rumours spread via mobile phone messages claiming that children were being kidnapped by people in a four-wheel drive car with tinted windows. The panic forced primary schools to close and culminated in the killing of the two suspects. When trying to calm the crowd, four policemen were injured by machetes.

It was all apparently triggered off by the abduction of a 10-year-old girl, who managed to escape from her unknown captors. The police were not, however, able to substantiate her claims and were puzzled by the panic. Just as the Ivory Coast panic died out, a rumour began in the Westmoreland district of Jamaica that claimed that four men with HIV/Aids were kidnapping children from schools in the area. There was no solid evidence for even one abduction. A few years earlier, when I was holidaying in Jamaica, a rumour was being spread that white men in lab coats were forcing children into their van. Inside the van the children were injected with an unknown substance. Several children said they saw the white van and a few even claimed to have been injected.

In July 2010 a rumour began that there had been an attempted abduction of a baby and two children near the One O'Clock club and playground, Clapham, London. On checking with the police and other authorities in Lambeth it was claimed to be hoax, but on July 8, the Earlsfield Police Station issued a letter detailing a possible abduction attempt involving a young girl sitting alone in a car and a man with an American accent who drove up alongside in a 'red-coloured vehicle'. They assured parents that 'we have had no other reports of this nature' but nevertheless advised 'all parents and guardians not to leave young children in the car unattended'.

A couple of weeks earlier, on June 22, a man was reported as acting strangely in Worcester Park, a few miles southwest of Clapham. This promoted fears of child abduction attempts at schools in the area. Even, earlier on June 9, a boy said he saw a child being bundled into a dark-coloured 4x4 at Walton Green, New Addington. An extensive police search found nothing to back-up this story. Earlier in the year Croydon Police had received two separate reports of an Asian man in a white car trying to abduct young girls.

Since such cases are so emotive it is understandable that a 'real' incident can easily trigger a whole series of rumours that can easily spread and become more elaborate. With the internet and mobile phones this process can easily transcend local and national boundaries.

MOTOR REFLEX:

White cars and SUVs with tinted windows feature in several phoney abductors-on-the-loose panics.



moment the beings quickly returned to their craft. The craft took off slowly, and Peter was able to see the beings getting into some seats through the translucent bottom of the ship. Once it cleared the building it shot off into the sky.

Two months previously, on the November 18, 1977, 20 pupils at Wawne Primary School, near Hull, saw a spinning object like an upside-down dish move swiftly over their school.

GLASGOW'S GORBALS VAMPIRE

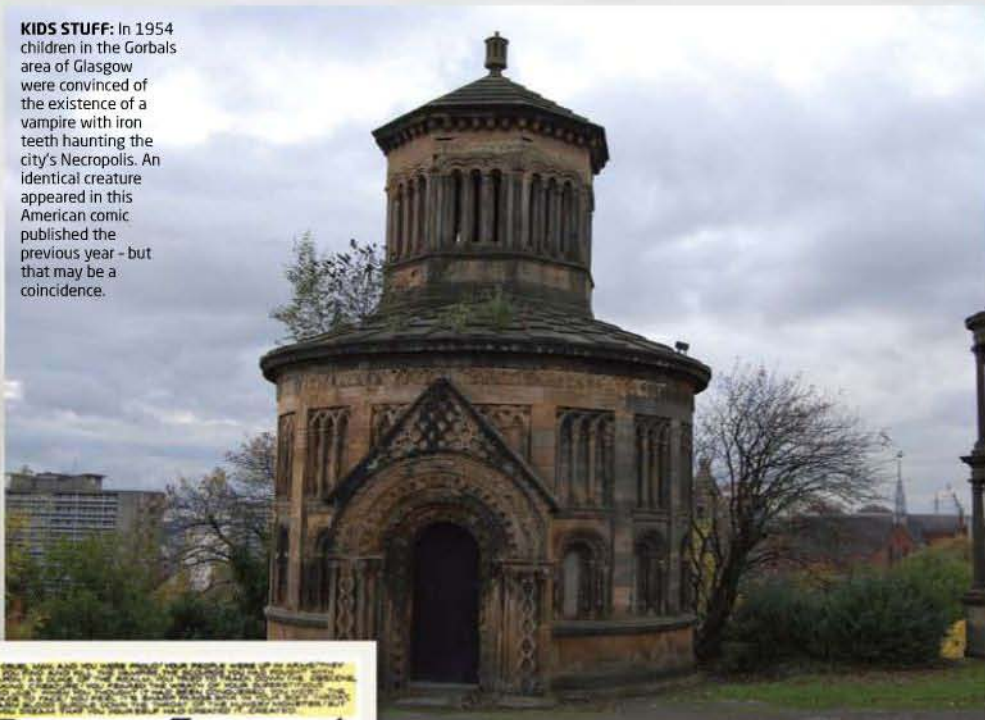
Headmasters are prone to killing off playground rumours. When hundreds of young children besieged Glasgow's Southern Necropolis cemetery looking for vampires, Edward Cusick, headmaster of St Bonaventure's Primary School helped police disperse the crowd by telling them it was all a silly rumour.

The story that a 7ft tall vampire with iron teeth had kidnapped and eaten two local children had spread round school playgrounds and prompted them to search it out after school hours. For several nights at the end of September 1954, the school kids scaled the walls of the cemetery, armed with sticks, stones and penknives. The nearby ironworks added to the drama by casting smoke and an eerie red glow over the scene, where any shadow was the vampire.

The Iron Man, as he became known, hit the headlines in the local and national press. On investigation, not surprisingly, no children had gone missing or been eaten. No firm reason was found for the cause of the rumour, but blame was put on horror films and imported American horror comics. Although this sounds like moral panic, it is certainly true that a story entitled *The Vampire with the Iron Teeth* by Hy Fleishman appeared the previous year in *Dark Mysteries* #15 (December 1953).

Nevertheless, its ironic moral campaigners chose to blame American horror comics for the rumour, since the children of Glasgow are more likely to have

KIDS STUFF: In 1954 children in the Gorbals area of Glasgow were convinced of the existence of a vampire with iron teeth haunting the city's Necropolis. An identical creature appeared in this American comic published the previous year - but that may be a coincidence.



'These exercises ignore the playground panics of the past, and the harmful aspects of using authority figures to trick children.'

is to stimulate the imagination and critical faculties of children.

In their attempts to make the UFO crash seem 'real' teachers have gone to such lengths as having local police cordon off the site and organising press conferences with real journalists in attendance. In their rush for authenticity, many children have been frightened rather than stimulated by these events.

These exercises ignore the playground panics of the past, and the harmful aspects of using authority figures to trick children. Some internet bloggers believe this is all part of a long-term disclosure project, which just shows that even in adulthood we never really know what the 'authorities' are up to or what is caused by our own imaginations, rumours or something beyond our ken. ●



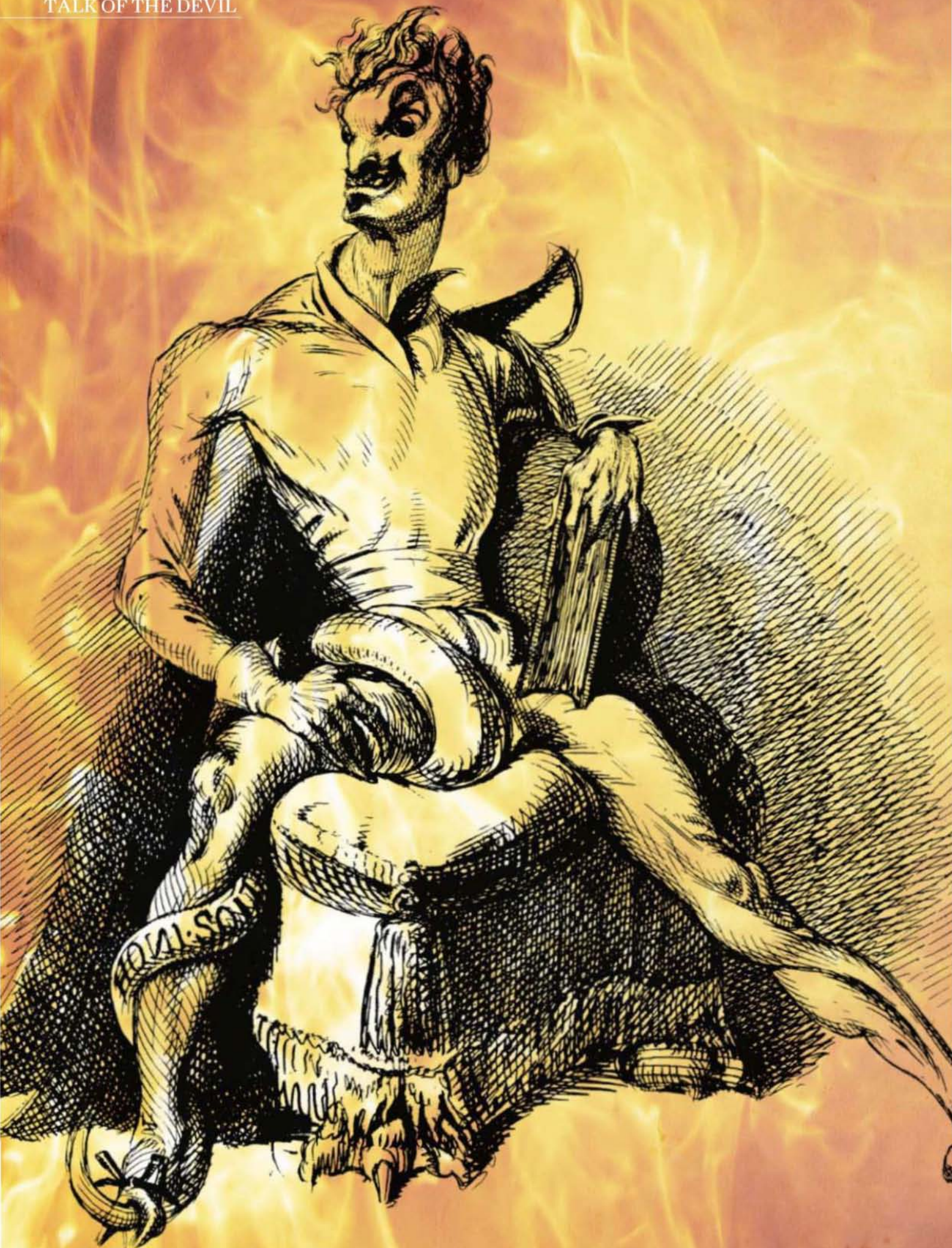
Nigel Watson's books include *The Alien Deception*, *Portraits of Alien Encounters* (1990), and *The Saucer Mystery* (2000). He is a long-time contributor on the subject of UFOs for numerous publications, including *Fortean Times*, *Wired*, *History Today*, *Magonia* and *Flying Saucer Review*. He has degrees in Psychology and Film & Literature and produces the media website Talking Pictures at www.talkingpix.co.uk.

been familiar with the following quotation from the Bible (Daniel, 7/7): 'After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast - terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.'

PLAYING WITH OUR MINDS

Since 2009, several schools throughout Britain have staged fake UFO crashes in their grounds. These are inspired by the Everybody Writes project, run in partnership with the Booktrust and The National Literacy Trust and is funded by the Department for Education (DfE). Their purpose

Do you remember any ghost stories, UFO sightings or other strange events happening in or around your school when you were a child? We'd be very interested to learn about them - please turn to Experiences on page 74 for details on how to contact us.



Talk of the Devil

Continuing his history of the Prince of Evil, **Dr LEO RUICKBIE** brings the Devil into the modern age and recounts the night he spent at a Satanic mass.

Part 2

'TONIGHT WE ARE GOING TO INVOKE SATAN - JUST FOR FUN.'

The High Priest opened a large book and read out a stream of grotesque sounding words. It was Enochian, the Language of the Angels - in this case, the fallen angels. The crowd chanted, 'Hail Satan! Shemhamforash!' Their hands raised in the horned salute - fists clenched, index and pinkie extended.

'Talk of the Devil and he is bound to appear': this saying was first recorded at the beginning of the 16th century (Erasmus, *Adagia*, 1500). It is one which, as I was to find out, still holds good today.

I don't think I've told you about the time I met the Devil. It was when I was still living in London. New Labour were still new and I was still toiling over my PhD thesis on modern witchcraft when the telephone rang.

'Do you want to go to a Black Mass?' the caller - who shall remain nameless - asked.

Somewhat rashly and without due consideration of the possible consequences for my immortal soul - assuming I had one - I said yes. After 2,500 years of tormenting mankind, I was about to find

out if the Devil was still alive and well. And if I lived to tell the tale, who would believe it?

The obvious place to look for

believers is the Catholic Church. However, in a confidential poll of Catholic priests conducted in 1960, 80% said they did not believe in the Devil (M. Scott Peck, *Glimpses of the Devil*, 2005, p. 2). The Church today has moved away from such crude personifications as 'the Devil'. He should not be thought of as the horned and cloven hoofed fiend we are so familiar with, but more as a general force for evil. Likewise, God himself should not

'After 2,500 years of tormenting mankind, I was about to find out if the Devil was still alive and well.'

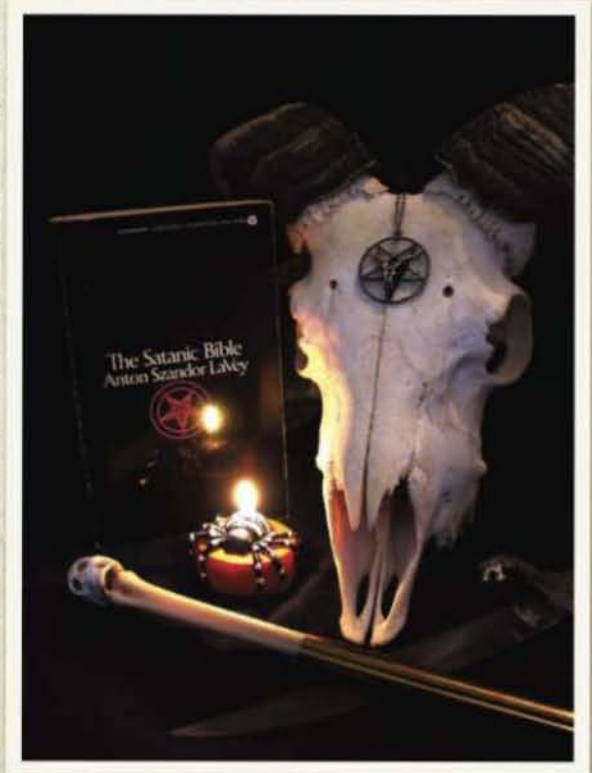
be thought of as a white-bearded old man, but as a nebulous supreme good.

Yet this an example of what an episcopal conference in Italy organised by the Theological Institute of Assisi would warn against: the 'extreme rationalism that denies the existence of the Devil' (ZENIT, 11 May 2000). This development caused the Vatican's chief exorcist, Father

Gabriel Amorth, to express his deep concern. After performing an incredible 70,000 exorcisms, Amorth is convinced that the Devil exists. He even went so far as to claim recently that 'the Devil is at work inside the Vatican' (*The Times*, 11 March 2010).

'We have a clergy and an Episcopate who no longer believe in the Devil,' Amorth said in another interview, adding, ●

UNHOLY: The author's own version of a Satanic altar. A sheep's skull, draped with a Satanic pendant, is accompanied by a skull-topped wand and a first edition of Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*. © Dr Leo Ruickbie



'meanwhile, the Satanic sects prosper' (30 Days, June 2000).

So what of the supposed 'Satanic sects'? Surely they believe in the Devil? It came as a shock to find myself included in that last category when the Jesus-is-Savior.com website 'reviewed' my first book on witchcraft. Under the heading of 'Wicca = Satan', Wicca - a modern witchcraft-inspired religion - was denounced as the 'false religion of the Devil'. It is a common enough charge made by Christian fundamentalists, but it is not the way the Wiccans themselves see it.

Most books on Wicca by Wiccans or sympathizers (myself included) categorically state that Wiccans neither worship nor believe in the Devil. According to Gerald Gardner, the founder of Wicca, 'The Devil' was the medieval honorific for the leader of a coven of witches, now obsolete, or a term of disparagement for the same used by the Church - he argues both ends in *Witchcraft Today* (1954).

The first was an idea he got from Margaret Murray's *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921) - a book that sought to prove that

FIRE BUT NO BRIMSTONE: A fire-eater and a burning pentagram photographed by the author at a Walpurgisnacht festival in the Harz Mountains, Germany, in 2005. Celebrated on the night of April 30, Walpurgisnacht is an ancient European fire festival. Known in the British Isles as Beltane, the festival became demonised as one of the principal 'unholidays' of the Devil. But it is still celebrated today. © Dr Leo Ruickbie



FIGURE OF FUN: The Devil as portrayed in a post card from 1915. Here he is simply seen as a tempter of little vanities and indiscretions.



'After performing an incredible 70,000 exorcisms, the Vatican's chief exorcist, Father Gabriel Amorth, is convinced that the Devil exists.'

witchcraft was an organised pagan religion antecedent to Christianity. Gardner went to great lengths to stress that as a supernatural entity 'The Devil is, or rather was, an invention of the Church'. Of course, the Press immediately denounced him as a 'whitewasher of witchcraft' (*Sunday Pictorial*, June 12, 1955).

It would have surprised Gardner to find himself in agreement with a real Satanist. When Anton Szandor LaVey founded the Church of Satan in 1966 and proclaimed himself the Black Pope he had no intention of actually worshipping Satan.

Even when he wrote an 'Invocation to Satan' - which began, 'In the name of Satan, the Ruler of the earth, the King of the

world, I command the forces of Darkness to bestow their Infernal power upon me!' - he still had no intention of actually invoking the Devil (*The Satanic Bible*, 1969, p. 70).

Like Gardner he turned things on their head by asserting as one of his Nine Satanic Statements that 'Satan has been the best friend the [Christian] church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!'

For LaVey, Satan was symbolic of his rejection of Christian and 1960s counter-culture values and representative of his own philosophy of life rather than an actual entity. In *The Satanic Bible* he made it clear that 'most Satanists do not accept Satan as an anthropomorphic being with cloven hooves, a barbed tail, and horns'.

Forty years on, the current High Priest of the Church of Satan, Peter H. Gilmore, continues this interpretation: 'Satanists do not believe in the supernatural, in neither God nor the Devil... Satan is not a conscious entity to be worshipped' ('Satanism: The Feared Religion', churchofsatan.com).

With the Church, Witches and even Satanists withdrawing from the idea of a supreme personality of evil, just who does believe in the Devil? Quite a lot of people, surprisingly.

Research has shown that around two in three Americans believe in the Devil (Gallup, 2001 and 2007) and that more than one in three believe that they have been tempted by him (Princeton Research Associates, 1995). A certain Gerald Mayo even took him to court in 1971. The Devil was cleared on a technicality. However, the slight majority of Americans also believe in the literal truth of the Bible – a claim that does not stand up to critical analysis.

Yet it is also science that may provide the eleventh hour reprieve for the Devil. After years of working with violent criminals, Rex Beaber, professor of medicine at the University of California, began to wonder if there really was 'an extra force, a dark force, that works through humans and perpetrates terror' ('The Pathology of Evil', *Los Angeles Times*, 6 January 1985).

Certainly this is something some violent criminals themselves believe. Richard Ramirez, the sadistic 'Night Stalker' who was eventually convicted on 13 counts of murder, shouted 'Hail Satan!' during preliminary hearings and reportedly told detectives 'You think I'm crazy? You don't know Satan', blaming his actions on the Devil.

Other murderers have believed that they were actually trying to kill the Devil himself. When police found mixed martial arts fighter Jarrod Wyatt on March 21, 2010, covered in blood and

“Satanists do not believe in the supernatural, in neither God nor the Devil... Satan is not a conscious entity to be worshipped.”

standing over the body of his friend, he told them, 'Satan was in that dude'. He had ripped out his still beating heart and cooked it because he believed that his friend was the Devil. He had also torn off his tongue and most of his face after an experiment with hallucinogenic mushrooms went tragically wrong.

Dealing directly with alleged cases of possession, psychiatrists M. Scott Peck and Richard E. Gallagher both came to the conclusion that the condition was real, with the inevitable implication that there ●

VATICAN CITY: Chief exorcist Father Gabriele Amorth is concerned at what he sees as an insidious complacency regarding 'the Enemy' among Roman Catholic priests and recently claimed that 'the Devil is at work inside the Vatican'.





SECTS APPEAL: The Vatican's Chief Exorcist and the popular press believe in the existence of Satanic cults. But do they really exist? Even members of the Church of Satan say they don't believe in Satan.

'Rex Beaber, professor of medicine at the University of California, began to wonder if there was "an extra force, a dark force, that works through humans and perpetrates terror".'

must be a Devil and/or demons. They documented a range of extraordinary events, including levitation, psychokinesis and clairvoyance.

'Even those who doubt such a phenomenon exists,' said Gallagher, 'may find the following example rather persuasive' (*New Oxford Review*, March 2008). The problem is that both men are Christians and interpreted the phenomena in light of their beliefs.

The best way, clearly, to resolve the problem was to try and arrange a meeting with the Devil himself. Over the centuries the Devil has tended to turn up of his own accord, usually to tempt various ecclesiastics as part of their becoming saints in a manner reminiscent of the Jesus in the wilderness scenario. Not being in the running for a saint myself this obviously wasn't going to be a productive course of action.

A number of invocations have

survived the book-burnings of zealous priests, one of the oldest being found in a manuscript from the 15th century known as 'Codex Latinus Monacensis 849' in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. In other circumstances we find

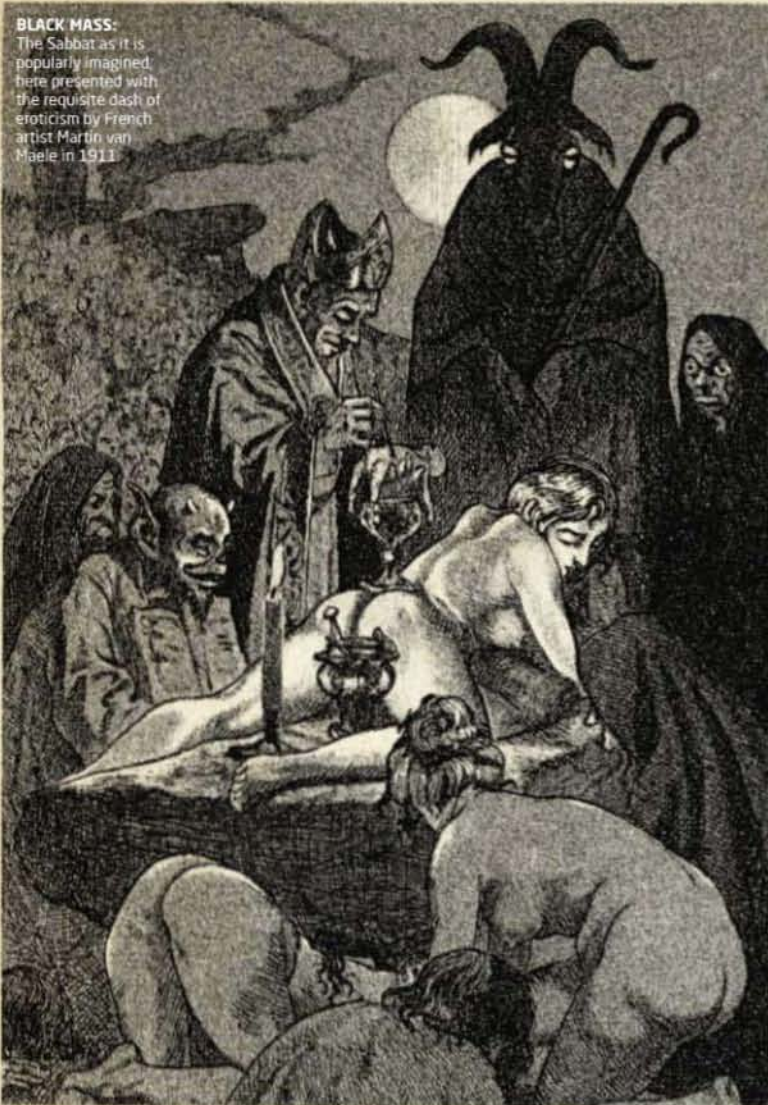
the actual rites of exorcism being used to conjure up demons instead of expel them. With lines such as 'Oh iniquitous devil, ancient serpent, I command you in the name of the most holy God' from Girolamo Menghi's *The Devil's Scourge* (1576), a monk called Zorzi in 1643 invoked evil spirits and consecrated talismans.

Christopher Marlowe came up with a simpler solution in his play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604): 'the shortest cut for conjuring / Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity, / And pray devoutly to the prince of hell'.

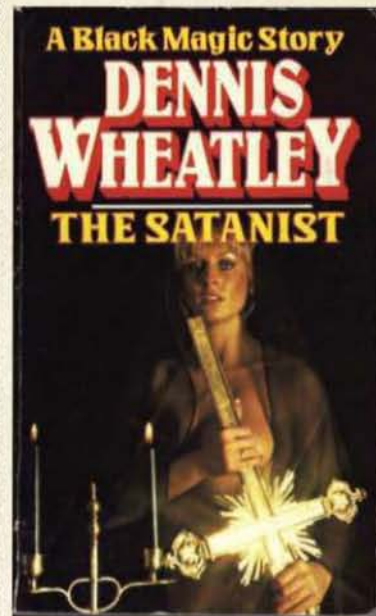


Right BELIEVERS: A woman feels the rapture at an open air prayer meeting conducted by US evangelist Billy Graham. Two thirds of Americans believe in the Devil and at least one third believe they have been tempted by him, according to recent polls.

BLACK MASS:
The Sabbat as it is
popularly imagined,
here presented with
the requisite dash of
eroticism by French
artist Martin van
Maele in 1911.



'At the climax of this pandemonium the back-cloth dropped and there stood the Prince of Darkness: seven foot tall, wreathed in smoke, light glinting from his shiny black body...'



DENNIS WHEATLEY:
Through novels like *The Devil Rides Out*, *To The Devil a Daughter* and *The Satanist*, no other writer did more to propagate the idea of suburban Satanism in the 20th century.

The late occultist Gerald Suster did something like this as a boy. One night when his parents were out he sat in front of a mirror and willed the Devil to appear. As he later told me, 'A figure of such horror confronted me that I fainted dead away. When I came round I spent the rest of the evening in absolute terror, clutching the family dog for comfort!' He rationalised the encounter as having evoked his own primal fears.

But just what could I expect at the Black Mass? The prolific thriller writer Dennis Wheatley almost went to one in Paris and with such slight experience wrote about them incessantly – much of his information coming from or about Aleister Crowley. Whilst Crowley had the reputation as a Satanist – he called himself 'The Great Beast', after all – he wasn't.

Reliable accounts of what actually happens at the Black Mass are few and far between; and outside of Christian legend and the witch

trials we have fewer reports of anyone actually meeting the Devil.

Before cock-crow on the morning of the 24th of April I was to witness such scenes as would make the Marquis de Sade wince, and whose whole point and purpose was the invocation of Satan.

'Satan! Satan! Satan!' roared from the sound system in the basement of a nightclub somewhere in Islington. Driving techno drew the unfaithful to worship at the altar of the false god. The High Priest dripped thick red drops of what looked like blood onto the naked body of the female sacrifice. His acolytes started up a terrible cacophony. A woman in blue body paint played a violin as if the cat gut strings were still connected to the animal's nervous system. A man in black thrashed a gong as if he were giving Leopold von Sacher-Masoch a spanking. A woman in skin-tight red rubber read out incomprehensible words. Over it all, the High Priest screamed

out his insane invocation.

At the climax of this pandemonium the back-cloth dropped and there stood the Prince of Darkness: seven foot tall, wreathed in smoke, light glinting from his shiny black body, bat wings quivering, huge phallus swaying before him. Even 1,500 years later, the Council of Toledo – who first officially described the Devil – would have recognised him.

The effect was dramatic, but nobody was fooled. This was someone in a weird rubber outfit. And that really is the point. The Devil will always be something we create ourselves, whether as an explanation for the misfortunes of life, a projection of our guilt for causing some of those misfortunes, or simply the face our mind gives to our innermost fears.

But then, as the French Decadent poet Charles Baudelaire once wrote, 'the greatest trick of the Devil is to persuade you that he does not exist'. And surely 160 million Americans can't be wrong? ●

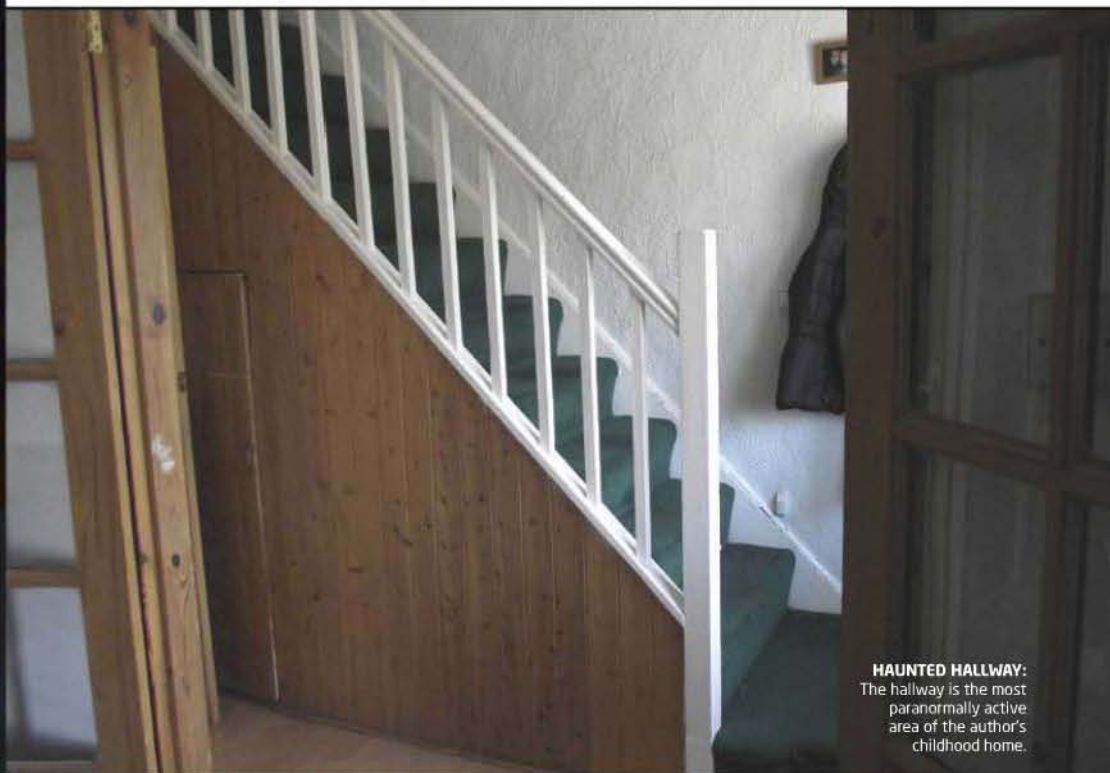


Dr Leo Ruickbie has been investigating, writing about and sometimes experiencing the darker side of life – from Black Masses to haunted houses – for over 15 years. This led to his being awarded a PhD from King's College, London, for his research into modern witchcraft and magic. He is also the author of *Witchcraft Out of the Shadows: A Complete History and Faustus: The Life and Times of a Renaissance Magician*, with a book on the paranormal due out in 2011. He can be found online at his website www.witchology.com.



MY BIGGEST FRIGHT

JASON DAY is an experienced paranormal investigator as well as an author and award-winning broadcaster. One might expect his most frightening moment to occur during one of his many vigils at a notoriously haunted location. But for Jason the supernatural begins at home.



HAUNTED HALLWAY: The hallway is the most paranormally active area of the author's childhood home.

HAUNTS IN THE HOME

Jason Day is one of three founding members of S.P.I.R.I.T (Society for Paranormal Investigation, Research, Information & Truth), based in Essex. Jason currently hosts The White Noise Paranormal Radio Show which won the Best International Paranormal Radio Program prize in the International Paranormal Acknowledgment Awards 2009. Jason was also awarded the Best Host prize. To learn more visit www.whitenoiseparanormalradio.co.uk. Jason is also the author of *It's Only A Movie... Isn't It?* (Phantom Encounters, May 2010), *Haunted Scunthorpe* and *Paranormal Essex* (both shortly to be published by the History Press), as well as countless articles on the paranormal. Jason recently founded paranormal events company Phantom Encounters Ltd, in which the public can join in on ghost hunts, UFO sky watches and monster hunts to gain greater 'hands on' knowledge of investigating the paranormal (visit www.phantomencounters.co.uk). You can find out more about Jason at www.jasonday.co.uk.



THE COMMOTION COMING FROM the adjacent bedroom made me leap from my bed and spring onto the landing. There I was, an 11-year-old boy half asleep and very confused. What I was about to witness would stay with me forever and set me on a journey that continues to this day.

As I stumbled the short distance to my mother's bedroom I could see two of my older brothers were already in the room. My mother was in a state of both shock and panic and they were trying to settle her as she sat bolt upright in her bed. I was quickly ushered back to my room and told everything was fine. Much later I was to learn what had happened that night in 1983.

My mother had gone to bed and fallen asleep. The next thing she remembered was waking suddenly and gasping for breath. She felt as

if a 'pair of hands' were around her throat and tried to call out for help, fearing she was being attacked. Luckily my older brothers heard her faint shouts and were quick to react. They ran into the room and turned on the light but there was nobody else there, only my mother sitting up in bed in a state of distress.

This was the biggest fright of my life at the time and would eventually be connected to the biggest fright of my life ever.

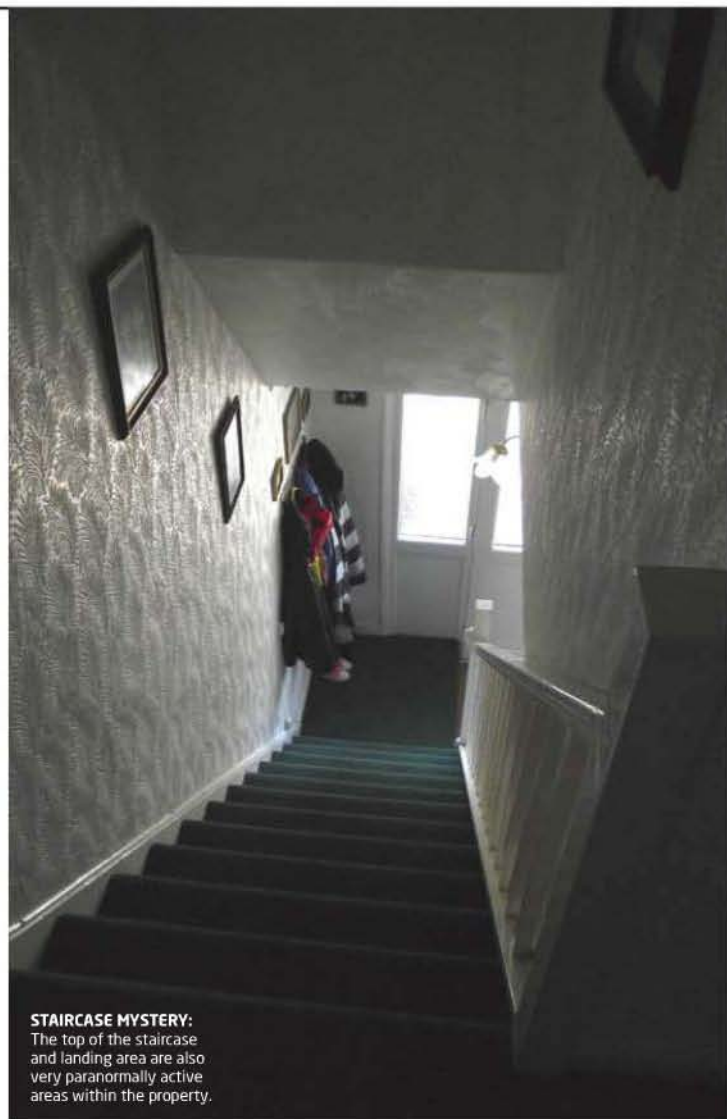
From that night in 1983 to the present day the home I grew up in became very paranormally active. Sometimes activity would occur on a daily basis and sometimes weeks or months would go by in between incidents. It was one such incident in the autumn of 2005 that would give me the biggest fright of my life. By this time both of my parents had passed away and I had long since left the family home. I had returned to the house to visit my sister who, with her family, now resided there.

One evening I was sitting on the sofa in the living room watching television. It was getting late and everybody was in bed apart

'THE NEXT THING SHE REMEMBERED WAS WAKING SUDDENLY AND GASPING FOR BREATH. SHE FELT AS IF A PAIR OF HANDS WERE AROUND HER THROAT.'



THE SIGHTING: The view of the hallway where the author saw the apparition that would give him such a fright - and which proved such a strangely personal encounter.



STAIRCASE MYSTERY: The top of the staircase and landing area are also very paranormally active areas within the property.

from my teenage niece who had fallen asleep in an armchair to my right. The only light in the room was the illumination from the television screen. As I glanced across to check on my niece I thought I saw movement through the open living room doors that looked onto the hallway.

I sat in absolute shock as I observed a figure come from the kitchen and float across the hallway. The figure appeared to be female, though her features were hard to see. I suppose for some reason the way in which the figure moved suggested femininity to me. She was a greyish/white colour and had a translucency to her; as if she was 'not quite solid'. The woman seemed to be looking straight on towards the front door of the house and held her hands up to her chest, almost as if they were clasped in prayer. The apparition continued its journey across the hallway and disappeared through the front door.

Soon afterwards I woke my niece and told her to go to bed. I mentioned nothing of what had occurred and waited until the

'I SAT IN ABSOLUTE SHOCK AS I OBSERVED A FIGURE COME FROM THE KITCHEN AND FLOAT ACROSS THE HALLWAY.'

morning. I spent most of the rest of the night curled up on the sofa wondering if the apparition would return. Even though I had been frightened by what I had seen I didn't feel threatened.

Part of me was kicking myself that I had been rooted to the spot when it occurred. I would have loved to have tried to interact with the apparition and see what had happened. If only I'd reached for the camera on my phone, if only I'd had a video camera set up in the room! I suppose as a paranormal investigator you can try and plan for the unexpected but when it comes to you 'on your day off' you're not quite as well prepared.

The next day I recounted the incident to my sister. She told me she had recently been sorting through some of our father's belongings and what I had described to her had seemed familiar. My sister went into a cupboard and got an old tobacco tin. She opened the tin and showed

me the inside of the lid. The tin had belonged to my father and glued to the inside of the lid was a photo of our mother. The photo had been cut out to the shape of her profile. I looked at the picture totally stunned as I realised the profile of the picture matched exactly that of the figure which I had seen the night before, even to the extent that she had her hands clasped, as if in prayer. I had no previous knowledge of the photograph's existence, let alone the fact that it had been cut out in such a way and put in a tin. This for me is definitely one instance of the paranormal that still remains unexplained and very unnerving.

What of the house itself? Well, with a total of five alleged spirits, 27 years of paranormal activity and three generations of family witnesses, the building still continues to display all the signs of a haunting. Who knows, it may even provide me with my next biggest fright ever. ●



WHAT'S EATING YOU?

Most of the phenomena discussed in this magazine, though scary, are usually harmless. But it's quite a different matter when you're dealing with monsters. **RICHARD FREEMAN** reveals some startling cases of death by cryptid.

ON A SUNNY MORNING IN 1962, a group of children were walking along a beach several miles from Pensacola, Florida. They came upon what they thought was the drowned body of a teenaged boy, but they found he was still alive, barely. He was rushed to Pensacola Naval Base Hospital suffering from shock, exposure and exhaustion, and was identified as Edward Brian McCleary who had been missing since the previous morning along with four friends.

When he was strong enough, Edward spoke to the Director of Search and Rescue Units, E. E. McGoven. His story was truly amazing, like something from a horror novel. McCleary claimed his companions had been killed by a sea serpent.

It may seem incredible, but this is not the only account of unknown creatures killing humans. It may happen only rarely, but these are wild animals whose behaviour we know little about.

The Edward McCleary case began on the morning of March 24, 1962, when Edward, along with Eric

Rule, Warren Sulley, Brad Rice and Larry Bill, set out to go diving at the wreck of the *Massachusetts*, several miles off the coast of Pensacola. As they rowed out on their 7-foot Air-Force life raft, they found the tide was stronger than they had anticipated. Storm clouds began to gather and the boys decided to turn back. Several of them swam behind the raft and pushed it. As the waves grew higher, swamping the raft, they swam to a 20-foot buoy and clambered onto its scaffolding.

In the violent storm that followed, the raft was sucked under and the buoy rocked by lashing winds and icy rain. Finally the tempest passed and fog rolled in as the sea became mill-pool calm. A foul smell akin to dead fish filled the air. A strange whining cry echoed through the dark. Then something as long as a telegraph pole reared up out of the water and plunged back in.

The boys panicked and jumped off the buoy. Behind them they heard hissing and splashing. Suddenly Warren yelled out: 'Help me! It's got Brad, it's got Brad!'

Warren's cries were abruptly cut

'HIS STORY WAS TRULY AMAZING, LIKE SOMETHING FROM A HORROR NOVEL. MCCLEARY CLAIMED HIS COMPANIONS HAD BEEN KILLED BY A SEA SERPENT.'

HUMAN PREY: There are a remarkable number of accounts of people being devoured by unknown creatures, including the huge birds of prey known as Thunderbirds. Artist Simon Wyatt has exaggerated the proportions here for dramatic effect, but if Thunderbirds exist they would certainly be formidable birds of prey, quite capable of killing and eating a child. © Simon Wyatt / swyattart.deviantart.com

short. The three remaining boys huddled together and tried to swim for shore. Then something grabbed Larry from below and dragged him under. Eric was becoming exhausted and Edward tried to help him stay afloat, but the sea, now turning choppy again, pulled them apart. Then a monstrous, reptilian beast reared up from the deep. It had a snake-like neck, gleaming green eyes and a gaping maw that fell down on Eric and dragged him under.

Swimming for his life and expecting to feel the monster's teeth in his flesh at any moment, Edward

off the hull. Two sailors sitting on a plank were lowered down, armed with scraping tools, when suddenly a vast squid surfaced. It snatched the sailors and their cradle, dragging them under the water. The monster shot up another tentacle in pursuit of a third man, who clambered into the rigging to escape.

The crew attacked the beast and managed to hack off the rubbery limb. Four harpoons were flung into the squid's body but it snapped the lines and escaped. The portion of the arm that had been cut off was 25-feet long and as thick as the mizzen-mast

spar. It was only part of the tentacle: Captain Dens reckoned the entire arm would have been 40-feet long.

FRESH HORRORS

Monsters that lurk in freshwater can be just as dangerous as those that dwell in the sea. The oft-repeated 4th century story of Saint Columba taming a monster that had bitten a man to death in the River Ness (not Loch Ness) is probably a tall tale spun to give the missionary more clout in converting Picts. However, there is a much more recent account of a lake monster observed in the act of killing a man.

Llyn-y-Gadair is a small round lake near Snowdon in North Wales. In the 18th century a man decided to swim across it. His

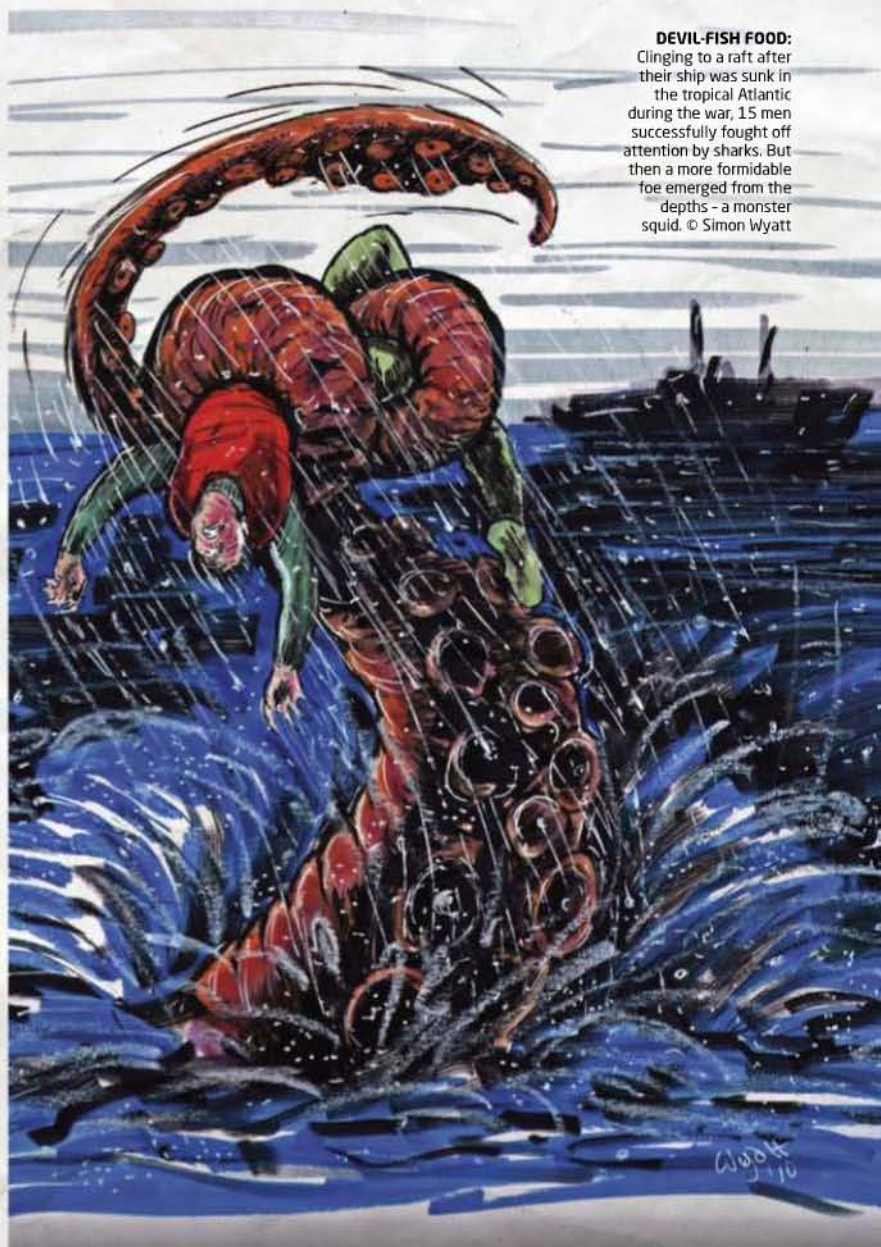
'ONE NIGHT A HUGE FORM SURFACED BESIDE THE RAFT. IT SHOT OUT A TENTACLE AND DRAGGED ONE MAN SCREAMING DOWN BENEATH THE WAVES.'

passed out and recalled nothing further until he was in hospital. Unsurprisingly, he suffered a breakdown afterwards. The police decided it would be better for them all if they kept the sea serpent out of their official report.

Another survivor of a sea monster attack bore the scars till his grave. On March 21, 1941, the ship *Britannia* was sunk in the middle of the tropical Atlantic. Fifteen men survived in a raft so small they had to take turns clinging onto its side. Lieutenant R. E. G. Cox recounted how they floated for days, often circled by sharks. Then one moonlit night a huge form surfaced beside the raft. It shot out a tentacle and dragged one man screaming down beneath the waves.

The next night the monster reappeared and wrapped a tentacle around Cox's leg. With the help of his colleagues, he managed to tear free of the tooth-lined suckers. Thankfully, the monster did not press home its attack and vanished. Two years later Cox was examined by zoologist Dr John. L. Cloudsey-Thompson. He found sucker marks in the Lieutenant's flesh one-and-a-half inches across. He concluded the attacker was a giant squid.

The French polymath Denys de Montfort, while researching his book *Historie naturelle des Moulluseques*, heard a story from Danish Captain Jean-Magnus Dens. Dens told him that some years earlier his ship had been caught in doldrums of the coast of West Africa. With the ship going nowhere, he took the opportunity to have some of the barnacles scraped



DEVIL-FISH FOOD: Clinging to a raft after their ship was sunk in the tropical Atlantic during the war, 15 men successfully fought off attention by sharks. But then a more formidable foe emerged from the depths - a monster squid. © Simon Wyatt



SERPENT DEATH:
A man swimming across Llyn-y-Gadair in Snowdonia in the 18th century was said to have been dragged under by a serpentine creature. © Simon Wyatt

'HIS BODY WAS FOUND UNDER A STALL: IT HAD BEEN RIPPED TO SHREDS. IN THE MAN'S DEAD FIST HE CLUTCHED A HANDFUL OF TABBY-COLOURED HAIR.'

friends, who were waiting for him on the bank, were horrified to see a serpentine creature coiling after him as he swam. As he approached the shore the thing reared up and wound about him like a python. He was dragged back into the lake never to be seen again.

One of the most dramatic lake monster stories was that of a dragon-like creature inhabiting Lake Wembo (sometimes referred to as Membu or Lake Wembu) in Tibet. In June 1980, people living around the lake reported a house-sized creature with a long, scaly neck and large head. It was reputed to have destroyed boats and rafts and to have eaten a fisherman. It also devoured a yak tethered close to the lake that belonged to a communist party official.

Around 1988 farmer come hunter Joao Menezes was fishing with his three-year-old son Daniel near Sao Paulo, Brazil. He turned his back on the boy to store some fish in a wooden shack. Suddenly screams rent the air and Joao turned to

see the horrific sight of a 45-foot anaconda biting into his son's neck. He tried in vain to prise the jaws apart but it was impossible. By the time he had run home for his rifle, the creature had swallowed Daniel.

Recently herpetologist Mark O'Shea travelled to a remote area of Peru and learned of a monster anaconda 40-feet long. He interviewed a woman whose husband had been devoured by the creature. The monster snake had overturned his boat and proceeded to constrict and swallow him. It had also eaten a fisherman that it had snatched from the riverbank.

The most recent case of a lake monster apparently devouring a human took place in the summer of this year in southern Russia – see the separate panel for details.

ON DRY LAND

Land-based monsters have supposedly taken their fair share of humans, as well. The natives in the remote coastal villages of Tanzania go in dread of a bloodthirsty beast

MOST RECENT FATALITIES

One of Russia's largest lakes seems to be the home of a large, powerful and dangerous creature that locals say has killed 19 fishermen. Lake Chany is a vast expanse of water covering 770 square miles, but fairly shallow, no more than 23 feet deep. The lake is in the southern part of the province of Novosibirsk Oblast close to the borders of Kazakhstan.

The creature involved in the attacks is described as serpentine and huge. The beast claimed its latest victim, a 59-year-old fisherman, in July, 2010. Witness Vladimir Golishev told the Press: "I was with my friend some 300 yards from the shore. He hooked something huge on his bait and stood up to reel it in. But it pulled with such force it overturned the boat. I was in shock – I had never seen anything like it in my life. I pulled off my clothes and swam for the shore, not daring hope I would make it. He didn't make it and they have found no remains."

In 2007 special services soldier Mikhail Doronin, 23, was lost in Lake Chany when something capsized his boat. Official figures say that 19 people have vanished in the lake in the past three years. Locals say the figure is actually much higher and that remains have washed ashore with bite marks showing large teeth.

In Kazakhstan there is a tradition of gigantic black snakes 10 metres long. On my almagy expedition in 2008 the Ukrainian archeologist Anatoly Sidorenko told me he had seen such a serpent in Kazakhstan and his father, an experienced hunter in his youth, had also seen one. Snakes, however, swallow their food whole and do not bite it into pieces. The creature could be a gigantic eel or alternatively something unknown to science. The case brings to mind so many legends of lake and mire-dwelling dragons.



WHAT LIES BENEATH?: A brave fisherman alone on Lake Chany near the Russian border with Kazakhstan. Something in the lake killed a fisherman in July this year – the 19th victim it has claimed.

known as the mngwa or nunda. This legendary beast is said to be a grey, brindle-coloured cat that resembles a leopard but is the size of a lion. Its markings recall a domestic tabby.

Englishman Captain William Hichens, magistrate at the village of Lidi, dismissed the stories as nothing but folklore until one fateful night in 1922. Goods were stored overnight in the village market and an askari or village constable set to watch over them. After one askari went missing, a search was organised and his body found under a stall: it had been ripped to shreds. In the man's dead fist he clutched a handful of tabby-coloured hair.

An old native district governor told Hichens the culprit was a mngwa and that he had known the beast to have visited the village several times in his youth. Two ●

eyewitnesses came forward to say they had seen a huge tabby-coloured cat attack the man. A few nights later another askari was killed at the market and he too had a handful of the monster's hair. Over the following month more killings occurred up and down the coast. Then they abruptly stopped.

In the 1930s a new wave of killings began. One man, an experienced hunter, survived despite being badly mauled. He was brought to Hichens on a litter in the village of Mchinga. He had hunted leopard and lion all his life and insisted that his attacker was neither.

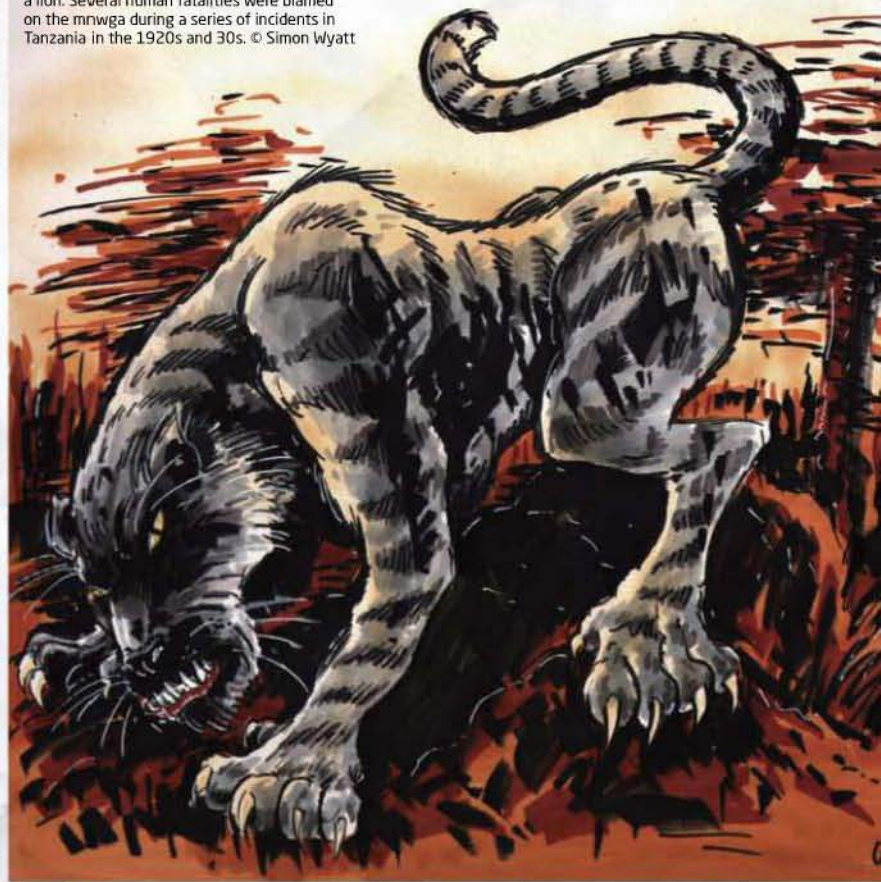
In another case, western hunter Patrick Bowen investigated a case in which a mngwa had carried off a young native boy. He found its brindled fur on thorns and its spoor, which he described as shaped like a leopard's paw print but as large as that of the biggest lion.

GOING APE

Monster apes have supposedly killed humans on four different continents. While searching for giant anaconda in Guyana back in 2006, I was told a remarkable tale by Damon Corrie, an Arawak chief. He said that just three years earlier, two native children, a brother and sister, were walking home from school when a huge hairy 'man' emerged from a stand of trees and seized the girl; she was never seen again. The police did not bother to investigate, as the victim was 'only' a native. These yeti-like beasts are called di-di in South America.

Italian archaeologist Pino Turolla was told a bloody story by an Indian

TERROR TABBY: The mngwa or nunda is a legendary brindle-patterned cat the size of a lion. Several human fatalities were blamed on the mngwa during a series of incidents in Tanzania in the 1920s and 30s. © Simon Wyatt



'THE POLICE SAID THE MAN'S HEAD HAD NOT BEEN CUT OFF BUT HAD BEEN LITERALLY TORN FROM HIS BODY AND WAS FOUND 50 FEET AWAY.'

guide in Venezuela. Antonio, the man in question had gone with his two sons to the Pacaraima Range. As they approached the savannah, three lumbering, ape-like beasts with smallish heads and long arms attacked them with clubs, killing his younger son. Turolla persuaded Antonio to show him the area in question. Here they heard shrill roars and Turolla claimed to have glimpsed an 8-foot, ape-like form.

North of the border, sasquatch is rarely thought of as being a threat to humans. However, in his book *Wilderness Hunter* former US President Theodor Roosevelt recounts a story told to him in 1892 by a grizzled old trapper called Bauman. Fifty years before Bauman and a friend had been trapping in the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho when they returned to find their camp in disarray. They assumed it was the work of a bear.

However, that night an upright-walking, foul-smelling man-beast attacked their shelter. Bauman shot at the monster but it slipped into the shadows. All night it circled the camp making harsh, grating, long-drawn out cries.

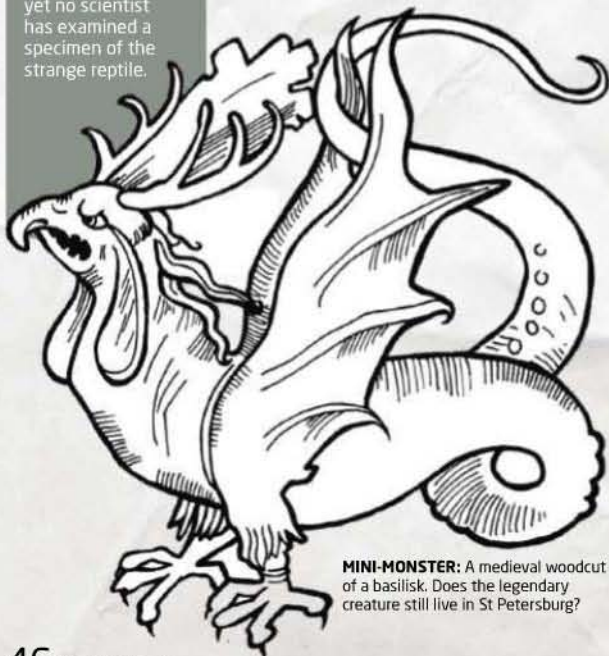
In the morning the scared men decided to head back to civilization. Bauman went to collect the traps while his friend packed up the camp. On returning, Bauman found the camp strangely quiet. He found his friend's body by a spruce log. His neck had been broken and there were fang marks in his throat. The corpse was not eaten but Bauman had the feeling that the creature had thrown the body around like a toy then rolled over and over in it in delight. Bauman fled on horseback, riding through the night. He never returned to the Bitterroot Mountains.

In 1920 one Albert Petka, of

SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING

Not all monsters need to be big. A strange story came out of Russia a few years ago. Dead bodies were being found in and around the woods near St Petersburg. They included forest hikers and mushroom pickers. The victims were often found to have stripped naked and eaten soil before their deaths. A number of bodies like this were found each year.

The local people attribute the deaths to the bite of a venomous snake unknown to science. The male of the species is said to have a crest like a rooster, recalling the ancient basilisk. Its bite is said to cause fever, hallucinations, and madness. As yet no scientist has examined a specimen of the strange reptile.



MINI-MONSTER: A medieval woodcut of a basilisk. Does the legendary creature still live in St Petersburg?

Nulato, Alaska, was supposedly attacked by a 'bushman'. Petka lived alone on his boat with his dogs. The dogs drove the hairy monster away but the man died of internal bleeding.

An almost identical incident occurred 23 years later when John Mire, known as 'The Dutchman', staggered into Ruby, Alaska, and told of how he was attacked by a bushman at his remote cabin. His dogs had driven the beast away but like Petka before him, he died of internal bleeding.

The most famous man-beast, the yeti, is thought by some to be a shy, unaggressive beast but others fear it as a savage mountain demon. In 1949 a Sherpa called Lakmpa Tenzing was said to have been torn to shreds by a yeti at a remote pass in Nanga parbat but there were no witnesses and his attacker may well have been a bear.

In Australia there are hair-raising accounts of violent encounters with the yeti-like yowies. In 1910 two men were walking in the Victoria Falls

area of the Blue Mountains when a ten-foot gorilla-like creature emerged from the bush and attacked them. It hurled a large rock, smashing the skull of one man as his friend fled. When the survivor returned with a party of armed men and dogs, the body was gone, only bloodstains remaining.

Tony Healy and Paul Cropper recount a disturbing tale in their excellent book *The Yowie; In Search of Australia's Bigfoot*. They heard it from fellow yowie investigator Neil Frost. In the 1990s Neil interviewed a Blue Mountains-based lawyer who in the 1970s had discovered a decapitated body in the bush behind the Warrimoo Bush Fire Station. The police said the man's head had not been cut off

**"I PERSONALLY
HAVE KNOWN
SEVEN PEOPLE THE
THUNDERBIRD HAS
CARRIED OFF."**



but had been literally torn from his body and was found 50 feet away! Was the man the victim of a yowie?

HAIRY HORRORS: Hostile ape-men armed with clubs are said to roam Venezuela's remote Pacaraima Range. © Simon Wyatt

DEATH FROM ABOVE

Finally, we have the beasts of the air. In North American Indian lore the wing-beats of the enormous thunderbird were said to sound just like thunder. There are many legends of them preying on humans.

In 1886 in Tippah County Missouri, an eight-year-old boy called Jemie Kenny was snatched by a huge 'eagle' and carried off in plain sight of his friends and a schoolteacher. The bird dropped him but the fall was fatal. The 'eagles' were said to have been preying on lambs and pigs from local farms for some weeks. I should point out here that no known species of eagle or indeed any other bird of prey is capable of lifting an eight-year-old boy off the ground let alone a pig!

In a letter to *Fate* magazine in March 1966, Hiram M Cranmer of Kettle Creek, Pennsylvania wrote: 'I personally have known seven people the thunderbird has carried off. Its victims range in age from 75-year old Barney Pluff, who was devoured in 1941, to a four-year-old girl in McKean County, Pa, who was snatched in 1937 while her family were picking berries.'

As for me, I will not let such tales of man-eating beasts deter me from my cryptozoological adventures. To be honest, I feel less at ease walking through a city centre on a Saturday night than I do in the jungle! I would choose nature, however red in tooth and claw, over mankind any day. ●

ABOMINABLE: In the 1940s it was reported that a yeti had 'torn to shreds' a Sherpa in Tibet. © Simon Wyatt



Richard Freeman is one of only a handful of professional cryptozoologists in the world. He is the zoological director of The Centre for Fortean Zoology, the world's only full-time scientific organization devoted to the study of unknown animals. He has hunted giant snakes in South America and Indo-China, mystery apes in Indonesia, dragons in Africa, relic hominids in Russia and the infamous Mongolian Deathworm.

GHOSTLY GUESTS

Old inns have seen so much history, so much life and death, it's no wonder that so many have haunted reputations. **DARREN RITSON** details the intriguing phenomena he and his team experienced while investigating a roadside hotel in the North-East of England.

GLOOMY: The upper floors of the Percy Arms were criss-crossed with long dark corridors - a place not to let one's imagination get out of hand! © G.H.O.S.T. Photo manipulation by Lindsay Burdekin



STANDING ON THE SIDE

of the Jedburgh Road as you pass through the tiny village of Otterburn, Northumberland, is the old hotel known as the Percy Arms. On a visit there one night fellow ghost hunter Mark Winter and I called into the hotel and had a chat to the staff and asked if the hotel had any ghosts.

The girls I was speaking to replied 'yes, we do'. They went on to explain that strange occurrences are quite often reported by guests. However, if we wanted more information we were advised to speak to the hotel's owner, Clive Emerson.

Meeting Clive a month or two later, the first ghostly tale he told me was a personal tale as opposed to a 'building related ghost'. The story dates back to 1988 when he and his family were celebrating Christmas. Sadly, during this particular festive season, his visiting father had taken ill with a stroke and had passed away on the following January 3. One year later - on the third of January - the family were again at the hotel when the conversation turned to his beloved dad and the sad anniversary of his death.

Suddenly, the family were struck silent as a large plate mounted on the wall made a huge cracking noise and then split in half! Clive is one hundred percent certain that his dad was looking down upon them.

'It was perfect timing,' he said. 'Just as we were discussing dad that plate went! It was as though he was saying, "Hello son, I am here with you all, Merry Christmas!"'

THE HOTEL'S GHOSTS

I then asked Clive about his hotel's resident spectres and asked what he



thought was the most well-known ghost said to reside at the hotel. He said: 'You know, it's odd really because our most famous ghost is the one we know the least about.'

He told me the ghost of a woman had been seen on the roof of the hotel and had been 'doing the rounds' when he bought the hotel back in 1988 and her presence was 'common knowledge'. But that is all he knew about the spectral tile-walker, apart from the fact that she is known locally as the 'Grey Lady'.

I urged Clive to tell me more and he informed me about the spectral visitor in Room Two. A few years back a man and woman booked into the room for a couple of nights and during their last night they experienced something really nerve-racking. The couple were awoken by the distant sound of horse's hooves and a faint neighing. They got up and looked out of the bedroom window thinking they would see the offending horse outside on the road but saw nothing.

They were just about to return to their beds when suddenly they both saw the horse appear through a wall in their room. It entered

their bedroom and galloped loudly to the other side of the room before disappearing into the solid wall. They also claimed the horse was mounted by a fierce looking soldier 'dressed in old-fashioned clothing', although they could not identify what period it was. The couple eventually managed

to get back to sleep after their ordeal and relayed the story to Clive the following morning.

In Room 10, as recently as March 2010, another ghost, this time of another mystery woman was seen by a lady who had booked in with her family. She woke up in the night feeling freezing cold, even though the heating system was on full. She sat up in her bed and then noticed a woman dressed in a long gown bending over her children, who were sleeping on zed-beds, and tending to the bedclothes.

'It was as though she was tucking the children in and keeping them warm,' the witness told him. The figure then stood upright, ●

'THE COUPLE WERE AWOKEN BY THE DISTANT SOUND OF HORSE'S HOOVES. SUDDENLY, THEY BOTH SAW THE HORSE APPEAR THROUGH A WALL IN THEIR ROOM [WHICH] GALLOPED LOUDLY TO THE OTHER SIDE.'

TOP LEFT HAUNTED HOTEL: The Percy Arms in Otterburn already had a host of ghost stories attached to it before Darren and his team began their investigation. © G.H.O.S.T.

TOP RIGHT TEAM MATES: Darren and Mark Winter begin their fruitful vigil at the Percy Arms. © G.H.O.S.T.

INSET MINE HOST: Hotel owner Clive Emerson in reception. Clive has had his own strange experiences in the Percy Arms and several guests have reported ghostly goings-on to his staff. © G.H.O.S.T.



SOUNDED OUT: Footsteps were heard by Darren in this upstairs corridor and were recorded passing by one of the doors on the left. © G.H.O.S.T.



OBSERVATION: A video camera keeps an electronic eye on trigger objects and thermometers in the restaurant. © G.H.O.S.T.



EERIE: near the stairs leading up to the attic, four investigators heard a 'breath' - a sound that occurred more than once during the vigils. © G.H.O.S.T.

turned her back on the woman in bed and walked through the wall. The room's temperature returned to normal soon after.

As you can see, this conversation gave me plenty to go on for an investigation.

THE FIRST VIGIL

It was a beautiful summer night in June 2010 when we made the journey to Otterburn and I was the first to arrive. I was subsequently shown around the building and was once again made aware of the hotel's resident ghosts. A new ghost story came to light but we will delve into that later.

By the time the rest of the team had arrived it was getting dark. Most of the staff had left for the night, leaving just a few punters in the bar with the hotel's bar manager. We carried out our usual baseline tests in the locations that we were to investigate and by the time we had done that, the bar had emptied and the place was ours. The baseline tests yielded no anomalous results but at least we now had basic EMF, temperature and humidity readings along with other baseline information such as knowing where the creaky floorboards were - in this case everywhere - and knowing where any potential natural draughts could come from.

After 45 minutes of an interesting psychic reading (which I have omitted from this report in order to keep it as scientific as possible), I decided it was time for a short break before we headed off into the night with our split-vigils.

into one of the rooms on my own to see how things would pan out. After a minute or so I clearly heard someone walk past the door as though someone was heading down the corridor. I presumed this was Mark on the move and stuck my head out the door just to make sure. I was surprised to see that Mark had not moved at all and was still sitting in his original chair at the other end of the corridor. I was even more surprised to hear that Mark had quietly called out (which is recorded) and asked any spirits present to 'do something that would have an effect on Darren' just prior to me hearing the footfalls and movement outside the room; good timing or what?

Much to my delight, the sounds of someone walking past my EVP machine (which was placed on a window-sill opposite the door in the corridor) was recorded. Now Mark admits to hearing the creaking of the floorboards and of the footsteps from down the dark corridor but he presumed that it was me moving around inside the old bedroom. I was actually standing still at this point. So we both thought the noises were down to each other moving about, but of course, neither of us was.

We carried on with our investigations and almost four minutes later were rewarded with an EVP that sends chills down the spine. Not only was it recorded on both mine and Mark's EVP machines, we actually heard it, too. It occurred when I ventured down the far corridor and round the corner. I was looking into the old bathroom and asking 'the alleged

'AFTER A MINUTE OR SO I CLEARLY HEARD SOMEONE WALK PAST THE DOOR AS THOUGH SOMEONE WAS HEADING DOWN THE CORRIDOR.'

At midnight Mark Winter and I made our way to the attic area while our medium and his co-investigator investigated the few guest rooms that were available to us, and Drew Bartley and Paul Dixon investigated the lower floor area. We settled down after carrying out some temperature and EMF tests and began to wait.

Mark began to call out to the atmosphere in the hope of enticing some paranormal activity but unfortunately his effort proved to no avail. At 12.13am, I ventured

spirits' to speak to us. At 12.47 am on my EVP machine you can hear me cough. I then say, 'For the benefit of the tape, that was me coughing.' Seconds later I heard a loud horrible guttural breath right in my ear!

I jerked to the side and looked around in the dark but no one was near me. An 'f-word' or two came from my mouth before asking Mark, 'Did you hear that?' Of course, he did. It was quite a scary moment, to say the least. The designated vigil time came to an end soon after this, so we ventured downstairs for a



WHO'S THERE?:
At the foot of this stairwell Mark and Darren heard male voices from the next floor up – an area confirmed to have been empty at the time. © G.H.O.S.T.

break and a well-earned cigarette.

Drew and Paul experienced very little during their investigation of the downstairs lounge and snug area. However, they said that when they called out for the spirits to maybe 'move some of the cups and plates' that were stacked up on the table in there, they did hear a 'clinking' noise that could have been the crockery moving.

Our team medium and his companion told me they had heard a few knocks and taps in the bedrooms. I was also informed that he had recorded the sound of a breath, which is most interesting, followed by the sound of someone walking along the corridor outside the room they were investigating: almost identical to what Mark and I experienced the next level up. So, it was not a bad start to the night's investigations.

THE SECOND VIGIL

We then continued the investigation by heading off to our next locations. Mark and I went to the bedrooms, Drew and Paul staked out the attic area, while our medium and his companion stayed on the lower level. Now, on our way to our respective locations at 1.50am, Mark, Paul, Drew and I had to go up the flight of stairs that led from the lounge area to the upper floors. As we reached the foot of the stairwell both Mark and I clearly heard the sound of two men talking at the very top of the stairs. The chattering we heard was crystal clear, although I can't actually remember what was being said! I also know it was none of the

investigators on the stairwell.

When we got to the top of the stairs and on to the first floor no one was around. It only took a second or two to reach the area where the voices came from and the place was deserted. Furthermore, no one was staying in the hotel in this particular area of the building, so this rules out hotel guests – and we would have seen them, if they were there.

During our discussions in the lobby area of the first floor, and at the foot of the stairs that led to the attic, the four of us all then heard movement coming from up the stairwell. This was followed by yet again, a guttural breath. We all looked at each other and froze.

'Did you hear that?' I called out. 'Yes,' was everybody's reply. The thought occurred that there may be some guests pulling fast ones on the team and had maybe scampered up the stairs into the attic area. I asked Drew to go and have a look – there was no one there. This was another unexplained occurrence.

At 2.00am we began the second vigil. Mark and I ventured into the available bedrooms and began our vigil. Drew and Paul investigated the attic space area, and the medium and his companion investigated the ground floor lounge. Room 6 proved to be of no use whatsoever. No EVPs were made nor were any 'odd related phenomena' felt, sensed or experienced. At 2.45am we moved into Room 10 and pretty much the same was attained in this vigil – nothing. At 3.30am the vigil came to an end.

Although nothing at all happened

during this vigil, it still proved to be worth carrying out. Again, Drew and Paul experienced nothing during their vigils but our medium and his companion had this to say: 'We were sitting at opposite ends of the room facing one another and nothing was happening at all, well, not until about 20 minutes into the vigil. At this point, I heard a loud cracking noise followed by this absolutely horrible breath! I jumped a little and then stood up to see what it was and all was quiet. It happened so fast. Even my colleague on the other side of the room heard this... and I recorded it on tape. Brilliant!'

'I HEARD A LOUD HORRIBLE GUTTURAL BREATH RIGHT IN MY EAR. IT WAS RECORDED ON BOTH MINE AND MARK'S EVP MACHINES.'

THE THIRD VIGIL

Our final vigil began at 4.00am. Our medium and his friend experienced lots of taps and bangs that, according to them, had no rational explanation. They also said they heard voices in that area too, which is interesting as it was at the foot of the stairs to the attic area (where they were investigating at this time) where we all heard the anomalous voices. Drew and Paul had nothing to report and neither did Mark and me.

At the end of the investigation we packed up our equipment and headed off home. It had been quite an interesting night. Granted Drew and Paul experienced very little indeed but can verify they heard the anomalous breath at the foot of the stairs to the attic. The rest of us are confident that we experienced a little more paranormal phenomena than we expected, with some of our results actually being recorded on tape.

There is no doubt in my mind that the anomalous breath that reverberated around my ears during my stint in the attic was real. I know it was not Mark or I and furthermore, I have it stored safely away on my files at home. For me, there is no debate. Another night at this fabulous hotel is planned and a lot more investigative work is due to be carried out there.

I wonder what this ancient and romantic old coaching inn will have in store for us next time? I can't wait to find out. ●



Darren W Ritson is a ghost hunter based in North Tyneside and has written seven books on the subject. His books include *Ghost Hunter*, *In Search of Ghosts*, *Haunted Newcastle*, *Paranormal North East* and *Supernatural North*. With Mike Hallowell, he has penned *Ghost Taverns* and *The South Shields Poltergeist*. He founded the North East Ghost Research Team in May 2003, co-founded WraithScape – Paranormal with a Passion in 2007 and currently works with the Ghosts and Hauntings Overnight Surveillance Team. They can be found on line at: www.ghost-team.net / www.mikehallowell.com/wraithscape



SCARE-FIELDS

Recently we reported on a haunted radio and other odd goings-on at Montrose Air Station in Scotland. **JOHN STOKER** discovers that many of Britain's airfields seem to be on a different plane.

ON A SUNNY AUTUMN DAY

Michael Bentine stood on the runway of RAF Hemswell and listened to the familiar sound of a Vickers Wellington MK X twin-engined bomber as it made its way to the runway in preparation for take-off and another raid on enemy territory. But the year was 1976, the airfield was disused and there was no sign of the aircraft, just the sound of the engines and the propellers.

Bentine wasn't surprised by this replay from the past: he told me some of the most haunted sites in Britain were its airfields, since they had been hives of emotional turmoil in both war and peace. He firmly believed that the dramatic events played out at airfields had left lasting memories on the landscape.

At Larkhill, just a few miles from Stonehenge, stands a memorial cross dedicated to Captain B Loraine and Sergeant R Wilson, two members of the Royal Air Corps, who took off one summer's day in 1912 on a training exercise. It was only a few years after the Wright Brothers had made their maiden flight and aircraft were still fragile constructions. Their Nieuport Monoplane began to break up and plunged to the ground.

Wilson was killed and Loraine died later in hospital. After nearly a century the small aircraft is still seen reliving those final fatal moments and people still rush to the crash site in attempts to aid the long dead victims, only to find empty fields.

During those early days of flying a number of pilots lost their lives ●

FREDDY IN THE PHOTO

In 1919 at Cranwell in Lincolnshire, Freddy Jackson died when he fell into the propeller blades of an aircraft. Everyone on the base was shocked by the incident and even more stunned when three days later a group photograph was taken which revealed not only the personnel of the base but also the face of their dead colleague. The Bassano Photographic Company which was responsible for the picture checked the camera and the negative and could find no fault.



through poor repairs by ground crews and inefficient supervision by officers. In 1913 Desmond Arthur, a member of Number 2 Squadron based at Montrose, was killed when the wing of his biplane collapsed, causing the aircraft to plummet to the ground. The Royal Aero Club issued a report which stated that the accident had been caused by an incompetent repair to the wing. But by the time that the government issued an official statement Britain was at war and the nation's ability to keep its aircraft in the sky was not to be questioned, so the blame was laid on the pilot.

Back at the airbase, the ghostly figure of an airman in full flying kit was seen in the mess hall and later the same phantom appeared



PHANTOM FLYER: Dressed as in the uniform of the French air force during the First World War, a pilot poses beside an historic aircraft. Many of the ghosts seen at airfields date from this hazardous period in the history of flying.

'THE GHOSTLY FIGURE OF AN AIRMAN IN FULL FLYING KIT WAS SEEN IN THE BASE COMMANDER'S ROOM THREE TIMES. THE OFFICER WAS SO STARTLED HE ORDERED THE ROOM TO BE LOCKED UP'



GOON BEFORE: Comedian, writer and psychic Michael Bentine told the author he once heard an invisible World War 2 aeroplane landing at an airfield. © John Stoker

SOPWITH CAMEL: This famous biplane appears in several ghost stories attached to airfields, including RAF Fairlop and RAF Scampton.



in the base commander's room three times. The officer was so startled that he ordered the room to be locked up. Other pilots also received visits from their dead comrade. But when the results of the earlier investigation were later upheld the ghostly appearances ceased. Lieutenant Arthur's

reputation had been restored. One of the strangest sightings occurred one November night in 1942 when 603 Squadron was based in RAF Fairlop in Essex. Word was received that an unidentified aircraft was heading for the base and it was assumed that it was a German bomber out to destroy the airfield and its Spitfire fighters. Searchlights raked the sky and finally located not the suspected bomber but an elderly Sopwith Camel, an aircraft which had not been operational for 25 years. Later investigations uncovered the

DEARLY DEPARTED: One of Heathrow's departure lounges is haunted by a mysterious male figure, while other very different ghosts have been seen and felt elsewhere in the complex.



'SEARCHLIGHTS RAKED THE SKY AND FINALLY LOCATED NOT THE SUSPECTED BOMBER BUT AN ELDERLY SOPWITH CAMEL, AN AIRCRAFT WHICH HAD NOT BEEN OPERATIONAL FOR 25 YEARS.'

fact that during the First World War a squadron of Sopwith Camels had been stationed at the airfield and had been responsible for the destruction of many German Zeppelins.

RAF Mildenhall is quite proud of its resident ghost which during the Second World War protected the base in a most unique way. Old Roger had been seen a number of times dressed in a long coat and playing his flute. Local legend claimed he had the power to create a sandstorm and during the Battle of Britain Old Roger seems to have offered proof of this. On one occasion German planes targeted the East Anglian base but as they appeared so did the figure of Old Roger. Suddenly a violent sandstorm reduced visibility, causing the attackers to abandon their target.

Two years later a lone German bomber found its way through the coastal defences and headed for Mildenhall. As the aircraft approached the

base the sound of a flute could be heard followed by a roaring noise as a sheet of sand littered the sky. The bomber turned back and crashed at the coast.

But what had caused it to crash? On examining the wreckage, investigators discovered large amounts of sand which had caused the engines to malfunction. An expert claimed that such sandstorms were unheard of in Britain - but then he didn't know of Old Roger's remarkable abilities.

RAF Scampton is a base which has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the flying service. On December 7, 1918, Lieutenant David McConnell took off from the airfield on a flight to Tadcaster. His Sopwith Camel ran into heavy fog, causing a fatal crash. When McConnell's body was retrieved, it was found that his watch had stopped at 3.25.

At the same time, back at Scampton, Lieutenant Larkin was relaxing by the fire when the door beside him opened to reveal

McConnell in full flying kit. Larkin was surprised that he was back so soon but his friend assured him he had had a good trip. With that, McConnell waved him goodbye and left the room. That night Larkin heard the news that his friend had been killed at the time he saw him.

By 1943 Scampton had become the base of 617 Squadron, which was responsible for the daring attack on the dams of the Ruhr led by Wing-Commander Guy Gibson. During the mission the Lancaster bomber piloted by Lieutenant Henry Maudsley released its bouncing bomb too late. As the aircraft exploded, Gibson was calling to the pilot to ask if he was all right. But as the wreckage littered the valley below, the quiet voice of Lieutenant Maudsley was heard over the radio saying, 'I think so - stand by.'

The crew of the other aircraft were in agreement that when the message was received Maudsley's Lancaster had already been completely destroyed. Just before the mission Guy Gibson's beloved black Labrador had been killed in a road accident. The dog was buried at the base and his grave can still be found there. But the animal himself still prowls Scampton and has been seen on many occasions.

Strange events still occur at ☉

HAUNTED HEATHROW

Most people know that Heathrow is the busiest airport in the world, but few of them realise that it's also the home of the ghost of Dick Turpin. Although Britain's most notorious highwayman is rarely seen riding Black Bess down the runway, he does enjoy annoying people by breathing down the back of their necks, a trick that he evidently performed many times while he was alive.

A more modern ghost dates back to 1948 when a Dakota belonging to Belgian Airlines crashed on one of the runways. Rescue workers rushed to the site to discover a man searching for a briefcase. When the rescuers tried to help him, his image slowly faded away. Later his body was found in the wreckage. The stranger still searches the runway for his missing briefcase.

Another phantom is sometimes seen in the VIP lounge. He's a man in a grey suit and he wears a worried expression. Perhaps Dick Turpin has just breathed down his neck!

SPOOKS ON CELLULOID

In 1968 North Weald airfield in Essex was one of the locations used for the film *Battle of Britain*. The producer, Benjamin Fisz, who was himself a wartime pilot in a Polish squadron, searched around the world for suitable aircraft and found them in such diverse places as Spain and Texas.

During the shooting of one flying sequence featuring six Spitfires, the film crew was astonished to see that a seventh Spitfire had appeared from nowhere. After the director had called 'cut', the film was rushed to a laboratory for processing. The processed film revealed that although the mysterious aircraft had been seen by everyone on the ground, only six Spitfires appeared on the celluloid.

The crew of the James Bond film *Casino Royale* also found they had been joined by a ghostly extra when they used a 747 parked at Dunsfold aerodrome at Cranleigh as a set. While preparing for the shoot, a number of technicians saw lights being turned on and off as well as the spectre of a woman moving down the aisle of the aircraft. Later the film company discovered that a woman had died on board the aircraft a few years earlier.

ROGER THAT: RAF Mildenhall is said to be protected by a mysterious entity known as Old Roger.
© Staff Sgt Christopher Inge USAF



Bircham Newton in Norfolk, an airfield which saw action in both world wars. At night many people have claimed to see a jeep carrying a group of laughing and singing airmen as it speeds towards what used to be their base. The original vehicle was driven a little too recklessly and both driver and passengers were killed.

Much paranormal activity has taken place in two squash courts which were once used by flight crews. A visitor to the airfield decided to use the courts to practice his game and was startled to see an RAF airman watching him. After a few moments the

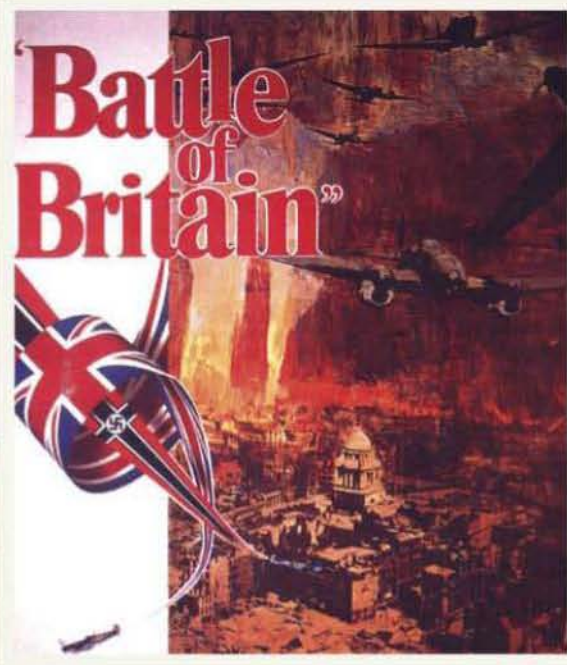
airman vanished and the squash player beat a hasty retreat. The strange figure was believed to be one of three airmen who made a pact with each other to make a ghostly return to the base should they be killed. All three men met their deaths when their aircraft crashed behind the local church.

They were also keen squash players and the sound of a squash ball hitting the court has often been heard. Members of a film crew decided to investigate and left a tape recorder running one night in one of the squash courts. The following morning the recording revealed the sound of voices and the roar

him the disused Drem airfield which Goddard knew well. To his surprise the airfield was now a hive of activity and he counted four aircraft serviced by mechanics dressed in blue overalls instead of the usual brown dungarees. Three of the planes were painted in yellow which Goddard found unusual.

He put the incident to the back of his mind but later, when war broke out, the sight of ground crews dressed in blue overalls, fighter aircraft painted in yellow and the news that Drem airfield was operational again convinced him he had had a vision of the future.

Even when an airfield is closed



'AS THE WRECKAGE LITTERED THE VALLEY BELOW, THE QUIET VOICE OF LT MAUDSLEY WAS HEARD OVER THE RADIO. WHEN THE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED MAUDSLEY'S LANCASTER HAD ALREADY BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED.'

of an aircraft engine as well as the noise of machinery. The tape was later examined by members of the BBC engineering department, who declared that they were completely baffled by the recording.

Ghosts of the past are common but visions of the future are less so. In 1934 Wing Commander Victor Goddard was piloting a Hawker Hart biplane on a flight from Scotland to Hampshire when he ran into bad weather. He dropped through the clouds and saw below

and redeveloped, its ghosts may refuse to move. A World War 2 pilot in full flying kit started to make appearances in a house in Croydon and proceeded to take exception to the owner's hobby of collecting Nazi souvenirs. He hurled a dummy dressed in a German uniform from its regular position in the hall and caused further annoyance by appearing in front of visitors. Later investigations revealed that the house had been built on the site of the old Croydon



airport. Things came to a head when the ghost began hurling the bedclothes around in the middle of the night and the owner decided to call in an exorcist.

Sunderland Airport closed in 1984 to make way for the development of a car factory. But not far from the site stands the North East Airport Museum, which houses an impressive collection of aircraft as well as a few grounded ghosts. In Hangar Three are the remains of a Hurricane fighter which crashed nearby in 1942. It was piloted by Edward Grenville Shaw who was flying a training mission when his aircraft collided with another plane. Shaw was killed but his spirit seems to have remained



FIGHTING ON: A Spitfire flying above Biggin Hill during an aeronautics display. This famous airfield is also the haunt of a lonesome Spitfire seen cruising silently above it.

with the wreckage in the hangar. He has been seen on a number of occasions and has been heard crying out for help.

Another exhibit is a rescue helicopter which saw service in the Falklands during the Argentinean invasion where it helped to lift troops from the stricken vessel Sir Galahad. A figure presumed to be the pilot has been seen and he doesn't seem to like people standing too near the helicopter, for sometimes a visitor will be pushed by an unseen hand.

Hangar One is home to a ghost dog and the sounds of dance music while Hangar Two contains a Navy plane which has been known to vibrate. But the most frequently seen phantom is that of Old George, who fell to his death from the roof of one of the hangars and who seems quite happy to remain in this well-loved museum.

Ghostly memories of the past are many and varied. If you stand at a certain spot on the car park at Thurleigh Airfield you can smell the aroma of a full English breakfast for on that spot over 60 years ago there stood a mess tent. It's a strangely comforting experience, as is the sight of a lone ghostly Spitfire which is often seen in the skies over Biggin Hill.

Perhaps there are times when we need to be reminded of the sacrifices men and women made in the past to ensure the freedom we enjoy today. There are many memorials to the fallen but it may be that sometimes the paranormal opens another window which allows us to view an even greater tribute. ●

'HE DOESN'T SEEM TO LIKE PEOPLE STANDING TOO NEAR THE HELICOPTER, FOR SOMETIMES A VISITOR WILL BE PUSHED BY AN UNSEEN HAND.'



HAUNTED HANGAR: Hangar 3 at the North East Aircraft Museum, formerly Sunderland Airport, is haunted by the spirits of two former airmen. © Keith Davison

TRAGIC REMINDER: Part of the wreckage of a Hurricane fighter that crashed in 1942 and is now on display at the NEAM. The spirit of the pilot of the doomed fighter is said to be attracted to the wreckage and his ghost has been seen here. © Keith Davison



John Stoker has spent 40 years working in radio and television, for such companies as the BBC, Thames, Central and NBC. At Anglia Television he helped to launch *Tales of the Unexpected* for Oscar-winning producer Sir John Woolf. He became a freelance writer and director and his output includes *Flesh and Blood* (the story of Hammer Films), *The Templar Legacy* and *Michael Bentine Asks Is There Anybody There?* He is the author of *The Illustrated Frankenstein* and has contributed to magazines as diverse as *Little Shoppe of Horrors* and *The Oldie*.



Popular Haunts

At the centre of many battles and other bloody deeds, it's no wonder so many of the UK's castles are haunted. A Norman fortress in the east of England later became a notorious prison, providing a further reason for it to become an attractor of negative energy, as DAVID BRANDON explains.



SOUNDED OUT: A former prison, the grounds of Lincoln Castle reverberate on certain nights to the sounds of felons being executed, as well as to the cries and clashing of steel on steel associated with the many historic battles that have been fought here.

Lincoln Castle

LINCOLN

LINCOLN CASTLE WAS ONE of many founded in England by William the Conqueror. The *Domesday Book* informs us that 166 dwellings were removed to make way for the castle.

The castle found itself at the centre of 'the Anarchy', the struggle between King Stephen and Matilda in the 12th century and the castle was in the wars again, literally, during the troubled reign of John, undergoing a prolonged but unsuccessful siege by rebel barons. Lincoln Castle was held for the Royalists during the Civil War in the 17th century, but

Parliamentary forces had little trouble in capturing it.

Eventually the castle was bought by the County of Lincoln in 1831, by which time it had seen many years of use as a prison. The conditions in the prison were notorious even by the standards common at the time and it was by no means uncommon for inmates to be driven mad.

THE PRISON CHAPEL

The chapel is a strongly atmospheric part of the castle. In recent years, dummies representing prisoners have added to the sinister

atmosphere – even more so because some visitors claim to have seen the dummies moving their heads!

To sit in the unlit chapel on a gloomy winter's day when there is no one else about is an experience never to be forgotten, and one which easily allows the imagination to go into overdrive. Perhaps this is what happened to those people over the years who claim to have heard the jangling of great bunches of keys on the chains of unseen phantom warders and the clang as cells doors were slammed shut in cold, cheerless and echoing stone passages. Also reputedly heard have been the despairing cries of the inmates as their cell doors closed.

A female figure described as either 'white' or 'grey' has been glimpsed on many occasions flitting through the chapel. She is thought to be the ghost of a former prisoner who died while serving her sentence.

'A supernatural presence has apparently picked on a small child and attempted with invisible force to push them down the stairs. Thankfully, on each occasion the children's parents were close to hand.'



SERIOUSLY HAUNTED: Within the walls of this impressive Norman fortress, many paranormal phenomena have been reported, including apparitions, mysterious noises and hostile invisible forces.

‘They include the tormented cries of convicted felons being dragged off to be hanged ... and the responding gasp from the massed onlookers as the victim was left kicking in mid-air.’

shadows in parts of the tower or under conditions of light in which shadows would not be expected.

Probably the most disconcerting experience has occasionally been had by people climbing to the top of the tower who claim that an invisible force coming downwards has tried with considerable strength to push them out of the way.

CASTLE GROUNDS

Under the right conditions, Lincoln Castle is a spooky old place. There is an almost tangible feeling that high emotions and tragedies have been played out in this place. Perhaps they have imbued the surroundings with a kind of nervous energy.

Some people can be very suggestible in such places, and it should come as no surprise that other paranormal activities have been experienced around the castle precinct. They include the tormented cries of convicted felons being dragged off to be hanged, the subdued murmur of the crowd around the scaffold waiting for the fatal drop and then the responding gasp from the massed onlookers as the victim was left kicking in mid-air, flaying around in his death agonies.

As with so many places where large-scale fighting has taken place, the clanging sounds of iron on iron, the discharge of artillery and small arms, the screams of injured and terrified horses and men and the rallying calls of officers have been heard, or so it is said.

The ghost of a lurcher dog, thought to belong to a poacher who was executed for his crimes, has been seen from time to time around the west gate of the castle or anointing the many lampposts that illuminate the open area containing lawns and flower beds within the castle walls. ☉

COBB HALL

The tower known as Cobb Hall has been mentioned at least three times as the scene of a bizarre and inexplicable occurrence. Something regarded as a supernatural presence has apparently picked on a small child and attempted with invisible force to push them down the stairs. Thankfully, on each occasion the children’s parents were close to hand and prevented them from falling and possibly receiving serious injuries.

One of those who had this sinister experience saw an old woman dressed in black who vanished before he could recover from his terror.

THE LUCY TOWER

The Lucy Tower is a polygonal keep standing on one of Lincoln Castle’s two mottes, or mounds. It is thought to have been added to the castle sometime in the 12th century. Lines of simple grey stones mark burials which took place at this spot, and it is not surprising that over the years there have been reports of distressed voices, wailing with misery or

imploring mercy. These do not appear to have been accompanied by any visual phenomena.

THE OBSERVATORY TOWER

The Observatory Tower stands in the south-east corner of the castle precinct. It consists of 11th and 14th-century masonry and is topped by a picturesque, but slightly silly, battlemented and machicolated extension built in the Victorian period by a governor who fancied himself as an astronomer.

The tower can be climbed and there is a superb, if rather vertiginous, view from the top. A climb to the top is on the agenda of most family parties who visit the castle, but some of them have reported scary experiences, even at times when there have been many visitors around.

The sensations have included sudden sharp and unpleasant drops in temperature, mysterious figures which have manifested themselves on the stairs only to vanish in the blink of an eye, as well as indistinct





Psychic vampires

Energy-draining parasites? Victims of a strange biology? Or simply deluded fantasists? **LOUIS PROUD** examines a growing paranormal and social phenomenon.

DESPITE THE WIDESPREAD POPULARITY of the vampire – in books, television shows and movies – few truly know what a vampire is. Many assume that if vampires were real they would be similar to the supernatural, blood-drinking creatures portrayed in popular films – indeed Brad Steiger’s article, ‘Are Vampires Real?’ in *Paranormal Magazine* issue 42, implied that such an assumption would not be so far off the mark.

While I remain unconvinced that vampires of this kind exist outside the realm of fiction, there is another type of vampire in whose existence I am ready to believe – the ‘psychic vampire’.

VAMPIRES AMONG US

So what exactly is a psychic vampire? In her book *Vampires in Their Own Words*, American author Michelle Belanger, apparently a psychic vampire herself, defines the term as follows: ‘An individual who regularly and actively needs to take

in human vital energy in order to maintain his or her physical, mental, emotion or spiritual well-being.’

A 2005 survey involving more than 1,000 self-identified vampires living in the United States, Canada, France and England revealed that 17% of vampires drink blood; 31% are exclusively psychic, while the rest are hybrids. Conducted by Suscitatio Enterprises LLC, the research arm of the Atlanta Vampire Alliance, the survey also found that vampires are an average age of 28, and that they suffer from higher rates of asthma, migraines and anaemia than non-vampires.

Belanger, who is one of the most prominent members of the vampire community, noticed as a teenager that she possessed the ability to sense and manipulate

other people’s energy – much like a psychic healer – and, further, that her general health improved when she consumed some of this energy herself.

Born with a major heart-defect, Belanger was constantly ill throughout her childhood and adolescence; she suffered from migraines, dizziness and was always tired. As she got older, Belanger began to feel an intense hunger – not for food, but for the vital energy of others. To deny this hunger caused problems, she says, leading her to feed unconsciously from other people, many of whom exhibited obvious signs of nausea, dizziness and tiredness.

Belanger came to the conclusion that in order to maintain her health, she *had* to feed on human

“An individual who regularly and actively needs to take in human vital energy in order to maintain his or her well-being.”

psychic energy. This, after all, was the only thing that made her feel well. Nowadays, she says, she only takes energy from willing donors.

Fortunately for us non-vampires, most vampires, including Belanger, follow a code of ethics called the Black Veil, which stipulates that 'feeding should occur between consenting adults'.

Belanger's story is not unusual; her experiences match those of many psychic vampires. One such individual is Kris Steaveson, an author and 'ethical witch', and one of the many vampire voices in *Vampires in Their Own Words*. At first, she says, her mental and physical health was extremely poor. Then, one night, 'I felt myself reach out and draw energy from something. The energy cured my ills as nothing else had done in all my life.'

Steaveson found that although she could consume energy from the environment, such as from trees, plants, etc., human energy was easier to obtain and much more satisfying and fulfilling.

'Midnight Childe says that feeding produces a sensation of energy flowing into her body and is sometimes accompanied by the taste of blood in her mouth.'

(Many psychic vampires report the same thing.) She says she finds blood appealing, but not as much as human energy. She prescribes to the occult view that blood is a powerful carrier of vital energy.

For her, feeding 'is not a thrill by any measure'. She likens the sensation 'to inhaling a very deep breath of fresh air'. After absorbing energy, her mind clears up and her vitality improves.

Midnight Childe (not her real name) is a psychic vampire who 'awakened' (became aware of her condition) in her teens. She enjoys 'deep feeding', whereby she uses her hands and mouth to 'breathe in' the energy from the chakra points of her donor. However, since this type of feeding can create 'potent psychic ties between people', she practises it with the utmost care, feeding exclusively from her husband, a willing

PROPOSER:

Michelle Belanger claims to be a psychic vampire herself. Her book *Vampires in Their Own Words* is a major source on the phenomenon. © Michelle Belanger



donor. (Midnight Childe is one of the vampire voices in Belanger's *Vampires in Their Own Words*.)

Midnight Childe says that feeding produces a sensation of energy flowing into her body and is sometimes accompanied by the taste of blood in her mouth. The exchange of energy, moreover, does not go unnoticed by her husband, who can feel it being drained from his body, as though he were bleeding profusely from a deep cut. It's safest, she says, if her husband sits down while she's feeding from him, since it makes him feel dizzy and weak.

Perhaps to put us non-vampires at ease, most psychic vampires insist that even if they're unable to find a consensual host they won't target an unwilling member of the public. Instead they will resort to 'ambient feeding', which consists of absorbing the energy emanating from large

crowds. Vampires state that ambient feeding is comparable to soaking up the warmth from a candle flame, in the sense that this energy no longer belongs to its source, and would go to waste anyway.

DISEASE OR THREAT?

Among members of the vampire community, there are many wild and diverse theories as to the cause of the phenomenon. These range from the pseudoscientific to the spiritual. In Steaveson's view, psychic vampirism is a 'condition of the soul' that is either brought about by 'being spiritually inhuman or by severe and lasting damage to the spiritual bodies'. She refers to the condition as a 'spiritual diabetes that has no cure and can only be managed with the equivalent of spiritual insulin'.

Madame Sedona, a psychic vampire in her mid-twenties who

resides in Dallas, Texas, attributes the condition to a damaged aura, caused as a result of intense physical and emotional shocks like near-death experiences.

In many modern books on psychic vampirism, most of which belong to the new age category, such as Joe H. Slate's *Psychic Vampires*, the phenomenon is seen as something to be avoided and overcome, almost as a kind of sickness. Slate describes psychic vampirism as a harmful spiritual, physical and emotional condition that can either take place between individuals, on a group basis, and also internally.

Slate makes the controversial claim of having conducted research on the 'human energy system' for the US Army Missile Research and Development Command. During a typical vampire attack, he states, 'the psychic vampire taps into the energy system of the host victim for the express purpose of extracting energy', resulting 'in an instant but transient surge of energy for the vampire, and a critical loss of energy for the victim'.

According to Slate, proof of psychic vampire attacks are reflected in the energy field, or aura, of the victim, the aura being an outward manifestation of the internal energy system. With the use of controversial Kirlian (or aura) photography, Slate claims to have found clear signs of damage in the auras of vampire victims.

ASTRAL PARASITES

'Psychic vampire' is a greatly abused term: everyone seems to have a different definition of it. It's common for people to remark,

for example, that their boss is a psychic vampire, because he or she manipulates and exploits them. In this case, the term is being used metaphorically, and indeed it could be said that we're all guilty of vampirism; that the phenomenon is a fact of life. However, regarding literal psychic vampires – such as the kind described in this article – I do know someone who claims to have been 'attacked' by one.

The victim, named Jim, a carpenter in his early-thirties, told me of a disturbing encounter he'd had with a well-known Eastern spiritual teacher who 'drained my energy to the point where I felt physically ill and damaged inside... After the attack, I slept for ages.'

Jim says that the 'guru', whose name he refuses to disclose, stole his vital energy by 'fixing me with a powerful, malevolent stare'. He came to the conclusion that the teacher had been using his many students as a 'source of sustenance' and had 'put them under a spell'.

The British occultist and author Dion Fortune, who belonged to a mysterious magical order named the Alpha et Omega, wrote about the phenomenon of psychic vampirism long before the term existed. Anton LaVey, another famous (and far less benevolent) occultist, claimed to have coined the term. LaVey, of course, founded the Church of Satan, which happens to be affiliated with

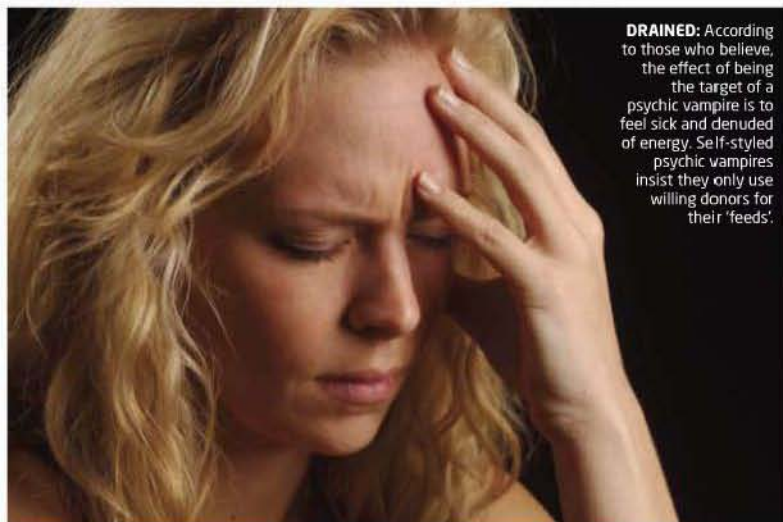
SELF-STYLED: The Goth community seems to contain the most people who claim to be vampires, psychic or otherwise. However, there may be many other genuine psychic vampires who are unaware of their nature.



another occult organisation called The Temple of the Vampire.

In her fascinating book *Psychic Self-Defence* (1930), Fortune sheds light on what she calls 'parasitic vampirism', a partly psychological condition that she distinguishes from true vampirism. She explains that the phenomenon most

'Since the young man had died with his sexual craving for the girl unfulfilled, this "kept him floating in the etheric" and he began harassing the girl.'



DRAINED: According to those who believe, the effect of being the target of a psychic vampire is to feel sick and denuded of energy. Self-styled psychic vampires insist they only use willing donors for their 'feeds'.

commonly occurs between two people who are morbidly attached to each other, such as a mother and her son, one of whom – in this case the mother – is more dominant than the other.

'There is a leaking of vitality going on,' she explains, 'and the dominant partner is more or less consciously lapping it up, if not actually sucking it out.'

True vampirism, says Fortune, can be explained in terms of the astral and etheric bodies, which together form part of a person's aura. Some souls, she explains, are so attached to the physical realm that they attempt to cheat death by attaching themselves to a living



IN THE CROWD:
Members of the psychic vampire community claim to be able to take energy from large groups of people, so as not to affect individual strangers to any great extent.

'The evidence seems to suggest that psychic vampires fall under two main categories: discarnate and incarnate.'

person and feeding off their etheric energy. Thus a vampire is born – a parasitic earth-bound entity that consumes the energy of the living in order to maintain its existence in the etheric realm (while at the same time avoiding the disintegration of its astral body).

According to the occult perspective, then, most vampires are spirits – not physical beings. These entities, says Fortune, are capable of inflicting what look like very severe mosquito bites. In other words, they do in fact drink blood.

In Kyriacos C. Markide's *The*

Magus of Strovolos, which concerns the teachings of the late Christian mystic and spiritual healer Dr Stylianos Atteshlis, known simply as Daskalos, we are told that earth-bound spirits are responsible for some incidents of vampirism.

Daskalos describes how he was asked to treat a girl who'd lost a lot of blood and vitality as a result of being bitten on multiple occasions by a bat that entered her room at night. Prior to this, the girl's fiancée had died from tuberculosis, leaving the two of them unable to consummate their relationship. Since the young man had died with his sexual craving for the girl unfulfilled, this 'kept him floating in the etheric', explains Daskalos, and he began harassing the girl.

Daskalos says that the spirit of the young man had been semi-hypnotizing the girl, so that she'd keep her window open at night.

Then, having entered inside a bat, he'd fly into her room and attack her, draining blood and etheric from her body.

Examining the girl, Daskalos found bite marks on her neck that had been caused by a bat. He says that he ended up capturing and killing the bat, and that he also helped the man's spirit "disentangle himself from the etheric worlds so that he could go higher." Afterwards, the disturbances ceased. Amazingly, Daskalos's perspective on psychic vampirism is almost identical to Fortune's.

DREAMWALKING

Returning to the topic of physical psychic vampires, it's interesting to note that some of them practice a form of feeding that takes place during sleep. Belanger calls this phenomenon 'dreamwalking', and she says it lies somewhere

'A vampiric earth-bound soul can attach itself permanently to a person, turning them into a "psychic vacuum". This person eventually becomes a vampire themselves.'

vampirism, published in *Bizarre Magazine*, is an interview with a 19-year-old cookery student from New York State named Gabrielle, who claims to donate energy to a psychic vampire friend of hers, named Jackie. Jackie, who's 15, lives 3,000 miles away in California. The two of them met online. The donations occur several times a week and usually at night, while Gabrielle is lying down and Jackie is in an OBE state. Gabrielle says that she donates energy to Jackie out of the goodness of her heart, and that the two of them share an intimate, though not sexual, bond.

She explains how the process occurs: 'Her [Jackie's] consciousness goes into her subtle body ... and it travels outside the bounds of her physical body. She can travel to my body and draw energy from me. When she comes to me, I can often feel a sensation like a hand

the other is a person who, in some cases, possesses the ability to feed on others by means of astral projection. The former is discarnate; the latter is incarnate.

In *Psychic Self-Defence*, Fortunes offers a compelling explanation for the cause of psychic vampirism in people. A vampiric earth-bound soul can attach itself permanently to a person, she says, turning them into a 'psychic vacuum'. This person, being constantly depleted of vital energy, is forced to draw energy from those around them, eventually becoming a vampire themselves. Like a virus, vampirism is contagious. Could it be, then, that psychic vampires are unconscious hosts for parasitic earth-bound entities?

It would appear that energy vampirism is alive and flourishing in the world today, which raises the question: Should the practice be frowned upon? In many Eastern spiritual traditions great importance is placed on conserving one's vital energy and making proper use of it. Life energy is seen as a sacred thing – not something to be abused, or, for that matter, stolen.

In my book *Dark Intrusions* (2009), I came to the conclusion that only entities of a very inferior advancement would want to feed on the etheric energy contained in blood – as, for example, when an animal is slaughtered and offered as a sacrifice to some fearsome deity. From a spiritual perspective, this energy is a source of food, as are powerful emotions like fear and pain. If it's true that we are what we eat, perhaps we should watch our diet – psychic vampires in particular. ☛

reaching inside me, pulling at my spine and heart – a very physical yanking. After donating, my back often gets cold.'

CONCLUSIONS?

The evidence seems to suggest that psychic vampires fall under two main categories. One is a parasitic earth-bound spirit;

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ETHERIC CREATURE: The bat is a clichéd symbol of the movie vampire but in one remarkable case described by Greek mystic Daskalos, the spirit of a youth returned in the form of a bat to drain psychic energy from his former girlfriend.

between lucid dreaming and astral projection. Before Belanger learnt how to harness this ability, she occasionally found herself involuntarily reaching out to people she knew in dreams and feeding upon their energy from a distance.

What Belanger is referring to sounds a lot like sleep paralysis (SP), a phenomenon that occurs when, either prior or subsequent to REM sleep, the mind is awake and the body is asleep and paralyzed. During SP, it appears as though one's non-physical body – the astral body – is detached from, or out of phase with, one's physical body, facilitating contact and communication with entities that inhabit the 'spirit realm', including people in an out-of-body (OBE) state.

Featured in an article on psychic



Louis Proud lives in Melbourne, Australia. An avid writer/researcher of paranormal and occult phenomena, his work has appeared in *Fate*, *Mysteries Magazine*, *New Dawn* and *Nexus*. His interests include film, radio-controlled models and anything to do with the mysterious and unexplained. He can be contacted at louisproud@gmail.com



Unearthed

The letter which we reproduce here was written by a Mr Archibald Bell to one Colonel Campbell in 1808. Col Campbell

had requested details of an extraordinary vision seen by Mr Bell's father and grandfather some years previously. More than 100 years later the letter was made available by the Duke of Argyll to the editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, who reproduced it verbatim in his December 1901 edition. I do not believe it has been reprinted in its entirety since, so am pleased to do so here, bearing in mind the importance of primary sources. It's intriguing that phantom armies, most of which date from the 17th century, are often perceived at the time as forewarnings of battles or invasions to come, rather than as ghosts of the past and Mr Bell's grandfather draws precisely the same conclusion.

A phantom army:

A vision of troops at Inveraray in 1746

Sir, As you wish to have an Account of the Vision, which my Father and Grandfather saw in the neighbourhood of this place, I will now endeavour to comply with your request.

I have heard it, with all its circumstances, so often related by them both when together, as well as by my Father separately since my Grandfather's decease, that I am as fully convinced they saw the Vision, as if I had seen it myself. At the same time I must acknowledge that, however desirous I am to oblige Lady Charlotte and you, I commit the account of it to writing with some degree of reluctance, well knowing how little reliance is given by the more intelligent kind, and how little it corresponds with the ordinary course of causes and events.

This Vision was seen by them about three o'Clock in the afternoon of a very clear sunny day in the Month of June or July, between the years 1746 and 1753. I cannot go nearer to ascertain the Year. My Grandfather was then a Farmer in Glenaray (which you know is within four Miles of this place), and my Father, who was at that time a young unmarried Man, resided in Family with him.

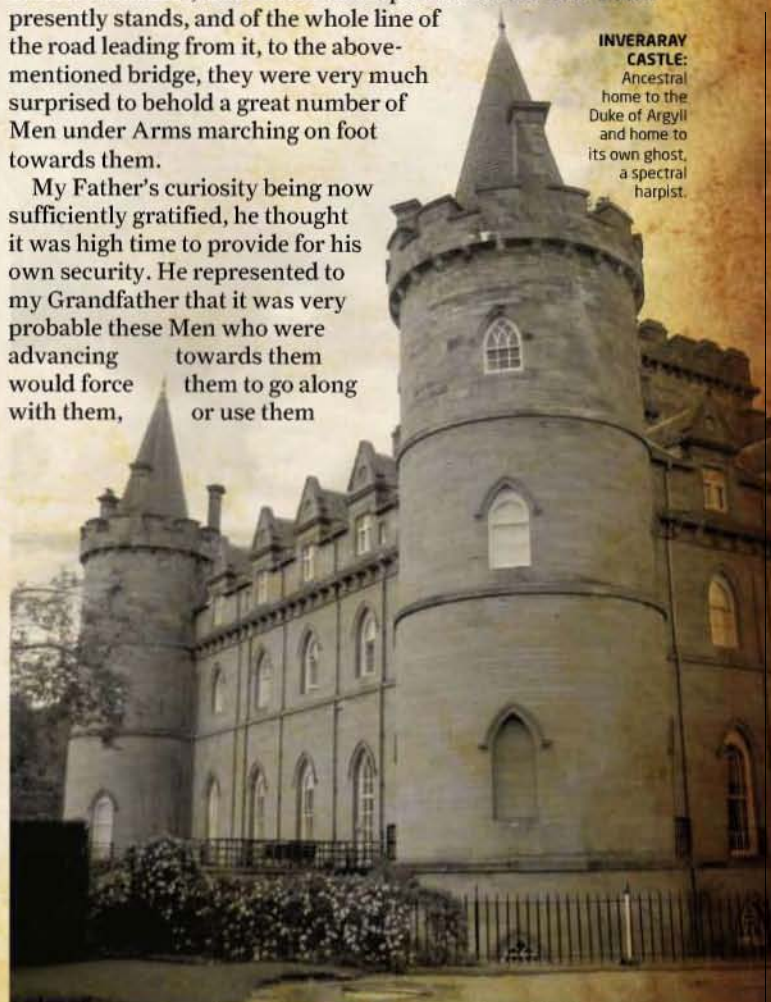
On the Morning of the day above mentioned, my Grandfather having occasion to transact some business in Glenshiray, took my Father along with him. They went there, by crossing the Hill which separates it from Glenaray, and their business in Glenshiray being finished a little after Midday, they came round by Garron Bridge in order to return home. At that time the road generally used from Glenshiray to Inveraray lay upon the west side of the river of Shiray, all the way to the Garron bridge, where it joined the high road which leads from Inveraray to the low Country by that bridge.

'But when he looked back to observe the Motions of the Army, and whether any person attempted to follow him, he found to his utter astonishment that they were all vanished.'

As soon as they came to that bridge, and had turned towards Inveraray upon the high road, being then (as you know) within view of a part of the old town of Inveraray which has been since demolished, and the Ground upon which the new Town presently stands, and of the whole line of the road leading from it, to the above-mentioned bridge, they were very much surprised to behold a great number of Men under Arms marching on foot towards them.

My Father's curiosity being now sufficiently gratified, he thought it was high time to provide for his own security. He represented to my Grandfather that it was very probable these Men who were advancing towards them would force them to go along with them, or use them

INVERARAY CASTLE:
Ancestral home to the Duke of Argyll and home to its own ghost, a spectral harpist.



otherways ill, and he therefore proposed they both go out of their way, by climbing over the Stone Dyke which fences the Deer-park from the high road, observing that the spot where they then were, was very convenient for that purpose, as the Thorn-bush would help to screen them from their view, while going over the Dyke.

To this my Grandfather objected, saying, That as he was a middle-aged Man, and had seen some service, he did not believe they would give any trouble to him, but he told my Father, as he was a young Man, and that they might probably take him along with them, he might go out of their way or not, as he thought fit.

Upon this my Father leapt instantly over the Dyke; he then walked behind it for a little time in the direction of the Garron Bridge, and when he had got about half way, he turned up towards the clumps in the neighbourhood of the Bridge, believing that he was then out of the reach of pursuit should any be attempted.

But when he arrived near the clumps, he looked back to observe the Motions of the Army, and whether any person attempted to follow him, but he found to his utter astonishment that they were all vanished, not a sign of them was to be seen.

As soon as he recovered from the surprise, which this extraordinary Scene had occasioned, he returned to my Grandfather and cried out "What has become of the Men?"

My Grandfather, who seems not to have paid much attention to them after my Father had left him, then observing that they had all disappeared, answered with an equal degree of Astonishment, "that he could not tell."

As they proceeded on their way to Inveraray, he recommended to my Father, to keep what they had seen a profound secret, adding, "That they would make themselves ridiculous by mentioning it, for that no person would believe they had seen a Vision, so extraordinary." At the same time, he told him, that tho' he (my Grandfather) might not live to see it, my Father might probably live to see the Vision realized.

This conversation was scarcely ended, when they met one Stewart, an old Man, who then resided in Glenshiray, going home, and



'He told him, that tho' my Grandfather might not live to see it, my Father might probably live to see the Vision realized.'

GHOSTLY MANOEUVRES:
The scene near Inveraray where the phantom army was seen marching in the 18th century.

driving a Horse before him. This, as they believed, was the same Animal, they had observed before, surrounded by a Crowd. My Father, notwithstanding the Admonitions he had just received, was not able to contain himself; he asked Stewart "What had become of the people who were travelling with him?"

Stewart, not understanding the drift of the Question, answered that "nobody had been in company with him, since he left Inveraray, but that he had never travelled on so very warm a day: that the Air was so close and sultry, he was hardly able to breathe, and that his Horse had become so weak, and feeble, he was obliged to alight, and drive him before him."

The Account I now send you of this Vision, was not only communicated by my Father & Grandfather to me, but was also communicated by them to many others in this place, and neighbourhood, soon after it happened, it being scarcely possible that so extraordinary Occurrence should be long concealed.

It is, no doubt, extremely difficult to account for it upon the ordinary principles which regulate human Events, but no person acquainted

with my Father & Grandfather ever supposed that either of them was capable of inventing such a Story. And accordingly, as far as I can understand, no person to whom they told it, ever doubted that they told anything but the truth.

My Grandfather died several Years ago. My Father only died within these two years, but neither of them saw their vision realised, tho' indeed my Father had strong expectations of seeing it a few years before his Death, particularly at the time of the Irish Rebellion, and of the last threatened Invasion by the French.

It may not perhaps be improper to add, that upon the day on which the Vision was seen, neither my Father nor Grandfather had tasted anything stronger than Milk, so that, whatever was the cause of the impression made upon their imaginations, it shall not be owing to any Intemperance.

I shall be extremely happy if this little Story can contribute, in any degree, to your own, or Lady Charlotte's Amusement, and am, with due respect:

Your most obedt. humble Servant,
ARCHD BELL INVERARAY

Nov. 8th, 1808



HEART OF THE FENS:
Ely Cathedral rises out of the mist in what was once an island of sanctity surrounded by the mysterious and - if folklore is to be believed - monster-haunted Fenland.

Creepy Cambridgeshire



Author of *Mysterious Cambridgeshire*, **DANIEL CODD**, takes us on a supernatural tour round a county both cosmopolitan and, in places, surprisingly isolated.

'KNIGHT TO KNIGHT, COME FORTH!'

These were the words that a horseman named Osbert of Barnwell shouted one dark night in the late 12th century upon arriving at the ancient Iron-age hillfort south-east of Cambridge called Wandlebury, in a time-honoured tradition to entice a ghostly Black Knight out and engage him in combat.

By the time this story was first written down a generation later, Wandlebury was deserted and had been for centuries; yet on this occasion the sinister Black Knight had once again materialized out of the mists of the Gog Magog Downs and charged his steed at the valiant Osbert.

According to the story, Osbert actually managed to unhorse his phantom adversary, and although seriously wounded he escaped with the Black Knight's furious, snorting steed and led it back to Cambridge; glancing over his shoulder he saw the Black Knight dematerialise behind him at Wandlebury.

This is the county of Cambridgeshire's most enduring story of the supernatural, but there are many, many others. Cambridgeshire is a richly diverse county, encompassing four distinct regions: the Soke of Peterborough, where can be found the 'jewel of the River Nene', Peterborough Cathedral; to the south, old Huntingdonshire, birthplace of Oliver Cromwell; to the east, the vast, impossibly flat drained marshland of the Fens; and southern Cambridgeshire, where can be found Cambridge itself, and the world-renowned seat of learning that is hallowed Cambridge University.

Cambridge University houses 31 ancient, worldly and architecturally beautiful Colleges at various places in the town of Cambridge itself, and there are long-standing and remarkable stories of ghosts here that gain a new lease of life with every new College year.

At 15th-century Jesus College they tell the tale of Charles Bellasis, the

sole surviving member of the Hell-raising 'Everlasting Club', who was found slumped dead over a table in his rooms in 1766. The table had been set as though to accommodate all the other long-deceased members of the club, and the previous night the terrified Master had heard the sounds of multiple voices engaged in swearing, laughing, singing and ●

'Cambridge University houses 31 ancient and beautiful Colleges [with] long-standing and remarkable stories of ghosts that gain a new lease of life with every new year.'



KNIGHT-MARE: The site of Wandlebury hillfort, the scene of Osbert's supernatural confrontation eight centuries ago. © Daniel Codd

GIANT'S GRAVE:
The Gog Magog Downs, looking in the direction of Cambridge. Folklore says that the giant Magog is buried under the chalk. © Daniel Codd



'The same woman (he told friends before he died) had pointed a bony finger at him in childhood and told him that when his time was up, she would come for him.'

drunken conversation emanating from behind the closed door of Bellasis' quarters.

In 1770 one John Cowper fell ill and died after seeing the apparition of an elderly, stooped and haggard old woman near St John's College garden – the same woman (he told friends before he died) who had pointed a bony finger at him in childhood and told him that when his time was up, she would come for him.

At Christ's College, the Fellow's Garden is said to be haunted by Christopher Round, who in his youth had murdered a rival academic who had fallen into the pool. As the victim, Philip Collier, reached for help, Round – in a sudden fit of madness – had dashed Collier on the left temple with a boat-hook pole and let him drown.

Collier had long been suspected of being a drunkard, and it was little surprise that he had fallen in the pond...but it later transpired that he had been experimenting on himself with anaesthetics in an attempt to ease the pain of one Mary Clifford. With Collier dead, his trials aborted and poor Mary died in distressing agony from a painful illness. Mary Clifford had been Christopher Round's sweetheart, and his guilt at his own actions is the reason why, they say, his tortured and tormented

spirit walks the Fellow's Garden: a tall, stooped elderly-looking man wearing dark 19th-century clothing.

At Easter Term 1904, an undergraduate spotted an unfamiliar man leaning out of one of the upper rooms opposite his own at Corpus Christi College. The head and shoulders of the fellow were visible, and he had long hair; moreover, he glared angrily at the young student from his vantage point. Agitated, the student ran to his bedroom to get a better look



MARKED FOR DEATH:
St John's College, Cambridge, was the scene of a remarkable, and fatal, visitation.

but found the strange figure had withdrawn into the room and was no longer visible. He was even more agitated when he discovered that the rooms opposite had been firmly locked and empty until 6.30pm that day. In an eerie prelude to this incident, the student had formed the subconscious opinion that something was looking at him from across the court some time before the actual sighting.

Corpus Christi is said to be haunted by Dr Henry Butts, its 23rd Master, who hanged himself in his garters in his own Lodge on Easter Sunday 1632. Dr Butts' ghost is the University's most famous spirit. There are many others, but maybe the weirdest is the phantasm of a large, furry, penguin-like creature described thusly: 'This was a furry animal that walked on its hind legs and had flipper-like front paws and a long beak.'

This monstrosity supposedly haunted Merton Hall, a small Tudor manor in the grounds of St John's, and also Abbey House in the town. Sidney Sussex College is allegedly haunted by the ghost of Oliver Cromwell, or more specifically, the apparition of his head. This gruesome, yellowed phantasm has been seen floating by itself about Sidney Sussex ever since Cromwell's head – decapitated post-mortem – was finally interred here in an airtight container on March 25, 1960.

But surely the most incredible apparition concerns the following allegation. At Sidney Sussex, in 1841 and again in 1967, a gruesome floating 'purple eye' was reported, with the '67 sighting being the spur



for a widespread debate on the supernatural. Even in the realm of the paranormal, some things are *truly* inexplicable.

Of the town of Cambridge itself, we learn of a remarkable incident of 'murder by ghost' in 1662 when a minister's son named Franklin was fatally beaten about the head by a ghost in the garb and appearance of a gentlewoman that had taken to following the young apprentice about. She appeared to have developed an evil fixation with the lad, and at the time of

'In 1662 a minister's son named Franklin was fatally beaten about the head by a ghost that had taken to following him about.'

her supernatural assault the boy's father and his employer were sat at table in Ely discussing matters when the ghostly woman appeared before them both and looked at each angrily before disappearing.

Ely is a good distance away from Cambridge in a north-east direction, and is situated in the flat,

gloomy primeval landscape known as the Fens. Out here there is a true sense of isolation in places, and Cambridge can seem a *very* long way away. In the past there have been numerous instances of lonely Fenland dwellings being invaded by violent poltergeists.

In the extremes of the county of Cambridgeshire, nestled just shy of Lincolnshire's border to the west and Norfolk's to the east, is the little village of Gorefield. Here, Joseph Scrimshaw's farmstead on Turnover Bank was invaded by an invisible, nightmarish entity that smashed crockery and tipped over furniture in front of witnesses in 1923. The spirit was apparently banished by a 'wise-woman' named Harriet Holmes, but not before delivering a 'parting shot': Harriet Holmes was shortly thereafter found drowned in a few inches of water in one of the dykes that criss-cross the Fens.

Across the county, one can find many famous ghosts. The phantom canine known as Black Shuck patrols the lanes of the Cambridgeshire/Norfolk border, leaving a smell of brimstone behind it. ●

Above BUTTING IN: In 1904 a student saw a strange figure glaring at him across a court at Corpus Christi College - was it the ghost of Sir Henry Butts?

Left UNHAPPY FELLOW: The ghost that haunts the Fellow's Garden at Christ's College is a reminder of a tragedy that took place in the 19th century.





AWFUL EYEFUL: As well as the floating head of the Great Protector, Sidney Sussex College is said to be haunted by a disembodied eye.

‘The Fens was inhabited by nightmarish creatures described as having “great heads, fiery mouths, scaly bodies, pointed chins, crooked legs and unwinking eyes as big as saucers”.’

Nun’s Bridge, near Hinchingsbrooke House, Huntingdon, was – or is – haunted by a young Benedictine nun who has allegedly caused a number of car accidents, as terrified drivers swerve to avoid her. Some of these accidents have been fatal, but the ghost may not be evil: she may in fact be pathetically trying to tell people where she is buried.

Peterborough Museum is haunted by the ghost of a soldier from the Australian and New Zealand Corps named Sgt Thomas Hunter. And at Caxton, the gibbet at the roundabout is reckoned to have at one time accommodated the swinging corpse of a landlord’s son who murdered three guests at his father’s inn during a botched robbery. Ever after, the nearby inn was haunted by the sounds of footsteps thumping down the stairs that stopped before the well on the property – the same

well into which the murderer had tipped his victims’ bodies.

Cambridgeshire’s other mainstay of the supernatural concerns miraculous phenomena. Signs and wonders have been observed at many locations through the

centuries, particularly in the Fens, where the inhospitable and waterlogged conditions made ideal retreats for Anglo-Saxon hermits, many of whom went on to become saints. The Fens was a demon-haunted landscape, inhabited by nightmarish creatures described as ‘many horrible shapes with great heads, fiery mouths, scaly bodies, pointed chins, crooked legs and unwinking eyes as big as saucers.’

The county’s most famous saint is Etheldreda, an Anglo-Saxon princess who founded what would become Ely Cathedral on the Isle of Ely. She died on July 9,



MOST HAUNTED: Abbey House was one of the haunts of a weird ‘furry, penguin-like creature’. The upper reaches of this house are said to be the most haunted place in the city. © Daniel Codd

‘In Spaldwick an awful, many-tentacled parasitic entity was killed with a dagger as it slithered from the body of a horse it had killed.’

679, from a tumour beneath her jaw that she believed was God’s judgement on her for wearing necklaces in her youth. In 695 her sister Seaxburgh ordered Etheldreda’s remains exhumed to provide her with a better tomb than her current wooden one; whereupon it was observed that Etheldreda’s remains were miraculously uncorrupted by decay. Furthermore, her tumour had simply vanished.

Etheldreda’s relics were lost in 1541 during the Reformation, but a piece of her hand survives in the church of her name in Holborn, London. There is also a remarkable – but very controversial – relic at St Etheldreda’s Church on Egremont Street, Ely. This is an entire hand, mummified and shrivelled but still possessed of its greying skin, the fingers curled as though they want to hold something. There are many who deny this relic, but whatever its antiquity it is still fascinating to

observe, and consider whether it is, in fact, an *actual* hand that once belonged to the great lady who founded Ely and to whom churches are dedicated all over Britain.

The secrets this county hides are much, much more gruesome and diverse than this.

In Spaldwick an awful, many-tentacled parasitic entity was killed with a dagger as it slithered from the body of a horse it had killed in 1586. In 1978 a man claimed an encounter with a ‘tank-like’ object that alighted close to the ground on a playing field he was crossing near Huntingdon. The thing was possessed of small wings, swivelling stabilisers, flashing lights on its metallic dome – and a telescopic probe that emerged from it and appeared to search the earth. Letters embossed on the side read ‘VAWCON’, and what this thing was has never been explained, although the Ministry of Defence and the RAF took the time to carry out an investigation.

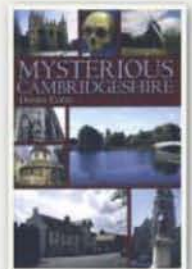
IN HAND: This niche in St Etheldreda’s Church, Ely, contains what is said to be the 7th century saint’s mummified hand. © Daniel Codd



In Cambridge in 2009 the proprietor of the Haunted Bookshop along Saint Edward’s Passage explained to me that the premises was haunted by a female phantom. He said: ‘She occupied mainly the middle floor area and would walk around and at times look out of the window. Also, books would be misplaced and jump around. This has happened on one or two occasions and I have seen the lady walking up the stairs and vanishing into nothing. I have to say that the presence, such as it is, is thoroughly benign.’

It is somehow reassuring to know that even in hallowed Cambridge, scepticism of such oddities has not overtaken us just yet. On any day, a visit to Cambridge is a marvellous experience; even more so when you know what mysteries this city and the surrounding county hides away.

Witchcraft, stranded mermaids, buried giants, prowling panthers, moving statues, werewolves, cursed barracks, crop circles, and a boy in Willingham who died of extreme old age at just five years old...Cambridgeshire has it all for lovers of the bizarre and mysterious. ☪



Daniel Codd has spent years delving into supernatural history, a fascination borne out of a belief that truth is far stranger than fiction and that even the most outlandish folkloric story may have a basis in fact. He gains great satisfaction from seeking out locations that are supposedly haunted or which have other legends attached to them. In addition to *Mysterious Cambridgeshire*, published by Derby Books, Daniel has previously written *Mysterious Lincolnshire* (2007) and *Mysterious Northamptonshire* (2009). He is currently working on a novel inspired by some of the strange tales he has unearthed.



STILL HANGING AROUND: The site of the Lawton Gibbet where many a felon ended their days suspended in irons. One of them still haunts the nearby inn. © Daniel Codd

experiences

Do you have a story to share? Here at Paranormal, we are always interested to hear of our readers' true life experiences of the supernatural. Email your story to: editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or write to The Editor, Paranormal Magazine, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ.

Double night terror

Back in November 2009 I had a terrifying experience. I am a believer in ghosts. I have witnessed a few, mostly harmless or even comforting apparitions, others mere feelings of a presence, however I have never before been touched or harmed by a spirit.

I was asleep one early morning on my side when I was awoken by a movement of my quilt around my ear. I had felt something similar in the night, like someone tucking me in, but as I was overcome by a feeling of peace, I had thought nothing of it. Then suddenly I felt a crushing pressure on my side like someone was sitting on me.

I screamed out my partner's name (or I thought I did) but although he was lying right next to me he didn't stir, so I screamed again but still nothing. I kept on trying but to no avail. I have now come to the conclusion, after speaking to him, and my brother (who sleeps in the room next door and claims he heard nothing either) that convinced as I was that I was screaming, I wasn't making any noise at all. Thankfully a few minutes later my partner rolled over and the weight lifted.

I was completely terrified by what had happened so I woke my partner and told him what had occurred.

'That's weird,' he said. 'I just dreamt that someone was sitting on my chest and I couldn't open my eyes or call out.'

I have told a few people and my Mother told me that she had a similar experience a few years back but as it was in a different location I don't believe that the encounters are related. Thankfully there has been no repeat of the attack and as I am a witch I have done a cleansing spell on my bedroom so I hope there never will be but it has unnerved me a lot.

Sharon Parke, via email

The dog at the Falls

Some 13 years ago myself and a friend travelled to Mid Wales to film a woman who was a psychic and healer. I had been writing some material on another subject at the time and it seemed apt to see if what she had said was true and agreed to film her at a place called Breakneck Falls where she was taking a man who had severe cancer.

Breakneck Falls was a strange place: very eerie and completely closed in, with a high cliff face on one side and a very high woodland climb the other. As we reached halfway I saw a sheep had fallen and was lying with its head partly in the running stream. A lamb was by

its side. I called to the others to stop and help me try to move the sheep to a more comfortable position but they would not, saying it was normal to leave them. Being an animal lover, I couldn't leave it like that, so I moved its head and the lamb ran off with such speed that after climbing forty feet I gave up trying to catch it.

After a day's filming around the falls, we decided to head back. The others went ahead before me. When I reached the halfway point, I saw the sheep had slipped back into the water. I kneeled down and tried to lift it but it was too heavy, as was my mind at that time, knowing that the farmer would not bother to come out until the morning and the sheep was to lay there all night in pain and die as it had obviously broken its leg.

I took the choice to put it out of its misery and with a heavy heart I put my hand over its eyes and another over its mouth and nose. There was no struggle at all, which gave me some comfort. I had never killed an animal before. By this time I was grief-stricken and I got up slowly and turned to walk away.

Standing in the stream was a dog looking at me. He was black and perfectly still. When I looked into his eyes they were not a dog's but human! As I started to walk away, the dog silently came to my side and walked with me. I didn't say anything to the dog, or have any contact with him. When I reached the end of the track I could see the cars waiting for me and as they waved, the dog walked off in the other direction.

When the farmer pulled up he had his dog with him and I asked him if he had another dog. He said no and that if he saw another dog around he would shoot it. I asked the others if they'd seen a dog and they said they had seen a dog run down the track but vanish into thin air. I will never forget those eyes: so human, so compelling and reassuring.

I had done the right thing and it was only years later someone told me a legend existed that Merlin shows himself at the falls as a bird, dog or fish when someone cries out for him. I can only leave it to the imagination of others to believe that if we still have what is called a primal howl, then someone out there is hearing us and comes to comfort us.

Maxine Pearson, via email



When the piper calls

Firstly I would like to say how much I enjoy your magazine. I have only just found it because the high street vendor I obtained it from puts them in a section of the shelving that is hard to see: on the bottom section of shelves that are at floor level which can only be seen if you are standing about six foot away from them, which is difficult because of the people who think it's a library, or if you decide to do some press ups!

Reading some of your reader's experiences has prompted me to tell you of an incident which occurred when I was in my early teens; my actual age escapes me but I remember that it was during summer time as it was hot and I had difficulty sleeping. I awoke suddenly and was for a while disorientated. As I lay there collecting myself I realised that there was a faint noise in the background like two notes, one slightly higher than the other, played on a wind instrument, like a flute. I opened my eyes and to my surprise the ceiling was about two feet above me!

I promptly closed my eyes again, thinking I was hallucinating. The noise continued and I also became aware of the pattering of feet, as if someone was hurrying around the room, but taking small steps. My immediate reaction was

'Standing in the stream was a dog looking at me. He was black and perfectly still. When I looked into his eyes they were not a dog's but human!'

‘As I stared at the figure it turned slightly to look at me and its eyes glittered with the reflected moonlight. Slowly it raised its arms and slowly faded away before my eyes.’

to lay still, because if someone was in the room, I did not want them to know I was aware of them. I lay there for several minutes listening to the scampering feet and the undulating noise, and then the noise began to get fainter, until it faded altogether. At this I decided to take a look so I opened my eyes and found that the bed was once again on the floor.

I sat up in bed and as I looked across the room moonlight flooded in though the window allowing me to see clearer. Across the room from me stood a small figure, probably a metre high. It looked like a child. It had a slim but not thin body and the head was slightly out of proportion to the body, but not too much bigger and the eyes seemed in proportion with the size of the head but they were slightly deep set so they were in shadow.

As I stared at the figure it turned slightly to look at me and its eyes glittered with the reflected moonlight. Slowly it raised its arms until they were horizontal, and as I watched it slowly faded away before my eyes!

I sat there for ages, transfixed by the memory of what I had seen. I kept asking myself what could it have been: was it a ghost? But no-one had lived in our house before my family. Unable to find any answers eventually I fell asleep.

When I awoke the following morning the events of the previous night came back to me, but I then thought that I had had a vivid dream, but while I was washing I noticed marks on the left

hand side of my body, just level with my elbow. What drew my attention to them was that they itched; two round red spots that looked similar to an injection mark.

Years past, I left school and continued my education at college, and although I never had an experience like that again I would awake with the same type of marks, only in different parts of my body. It seemed that one time it would be on the left side of my body and the next time on my right. Although I knew that something had happened I did not know how to investigate it.

I started work, for the same high street vendor that I bought you magazine from, and of course I discovered books about aliens and abductions. I became fascinated by the subject and read everything I could find about it, but I never told anyone about what had happened to me. From what I had read I was convinced that I had been the subject of an abduction or some experiment!

Robin Alone, via email

EDITOR'S NOTE: In addition to this intriguing experience, Robin provided details of two encounters with strange individuals later in life. Unfortunately, we didn't have room to use these stories this month but hope to find space for them next month.

Hanging in the sky

On Saturday 12th June me and my brother and his girlfriend's daughter

were driving back from Braintree in Essex around 9.30pm and 9.45pm back to Witham where I live, along the Crossing Tye Green Road, and I happened to notice some people along the edge of the road looking and taking photos up at the sky. Out of curiosity I decided to look up and through the windscreen at what they were looking at.

It's hard to tell at ground level but roughly 2,000 ft, maybe higher up, there was a stationary object up in the sky not moving. It can only be described as a black metallic hunk of metal with points in all directions. It definitely wasn't triangular or saucer-shaped, which fits the notion of normal UFOs, this was different. It was just suspended there, no lights flashing like a normal aircraft, and because it was turning to dusk, the sun was still out and shone on it, showing its size. It was pretty big from the ground.

There were no other aircraft in the vicinity or helicopters and the object wasn't any stealth aircraft because I'm interested in aircraft myself so I know what these look like. It was no kite or anything because that would be pretty obvious as I could have seen the strings attached and it sure wasn't no Chinese lantern.

Unfortunately my brother couldn't see it because he was driving. As we slowly headed back to Witham, I kept an eye on it and it hadn't moved until it was out of sight. Suddenly I started to get what seemed like a migraine headache right across my eyes but when I finally got home the headache started to go away. The object actually looked quite menacing just hovering there suspended in the sky.

It's opened my beliefs from 100 percent to a million percent: we are definitely not alone in the universe.

Dave Kernan, Witham, Essex

A little horror

This picture was taken by me on a preliminary visit to Fort Amherst in Chatham, Kent, prior to a Haunted Weekend event earlier this year. It appears to show a strange creature behind an iron gate.

The creature is about 3ft tall and was not seen with the naked eye, only noticed when the pic was put on the computer. It does not appear human and we believe it is an elemental entity. Although we felt it follow us around the caves it didn't reveal itself to us. No one else has come across it in investigations to our knowledge.

Most Haunted showed it on their live broadcast earlier on the year but they couldn't explain it either. The management there have no explanation as no animals are present in the complex and there were only three people on the site at the time I took the photograph.

John Blythe, HauntedWeekend.com



CREATURE FEATURE:
Is it just a shadow
or something
more sinister? ©
HauntedWeekend.com

responses

Angel of the Thames

I was annoyed by Robert Goodman's references to the Thames Angel in his article 'Legends of the Thames' in the July issue (49). Annoyed because it piqued my interest enough for me to follow it up, yet even a basic investigation revealed the story has no substance.

I could find no reference in the on-line copy of Samuel Pepys' diary to a sighting of the angel during or shortly after 1666, so I'd be interested to know from where the author's quotation of this was taken. And in the YouTube video that was mentioned, of the angel's supposed appearance to TV presenter David Grant (<http://tinyurl.com/d7mymk>), there is in fact no sign whatsoever of 'a misty shape in the form of a winged angel'.

This video, and the website to which it directs viewers (angelofthethames.com), didn't ring true to me, so I did a 'whois' look-up and discovered it is registered to a 'Marksteen Adamson'. A search on this obligingly unusual name led me to discover that Mr Adamson is a marketing expert, and his company specialises in - among other things - viral marketing campaigns. Indeed, a blog I also uncovered in my search makes a substantial case for the angel having been a viral marketing campaign for a charity concert that never happened (<http://tinyurl.com/2v82d4x>).

So, there are no references to a Thames angel traceable to sources older than 2006, just lots of comments indirectly asserting that there are. Point me to an original source and I shall stand corrected, of course.

Duncan Barford, Brighton

Robert Goodman responds:

The Angel of the Thames, was, in answer to your query, sourced through conversations I had with serious, and well-known paranormal investigators who first alerted me to this fascinating phenomenon.

I was vaguely reminded of similar stories I had heard many years ago which prompted me to investigate further. My research took me to dozens of web sites which are all over the internet, where one can find eye-witness accounts, photographs, historical accounts, even video footage.

Here is a small selection of further reference sources for you to look into: www.socyberty.com; www.friendsofthethamesangel.blogspot.com; www.freewebs.com/jemimawaterhouse

They all talk of a reference by

'The Thames Angel is well and truly set in the public imagination, and therefore it exists: in idea form at least. But then where do most of these things exist? Where does anything exist?'

Pepys, 'I saw what could only be described as an Angel.'

Now, I suppose (if I suspend my disbelief) that it is possible that a hundred or so web sites could ALL be giving 'misinformation' on exactly the same thing. This makes a direct search difficult, if the wording has been modernised for example, or the quote is not exact. A 'fuzzy' search will also be difficult without an alternative phrase. However, I am doubtful that serious paranormal researchers will be 'in on' a hoax.

Incidentally, did you know that Pepys diaries were originally written in code and were well over 1,000 pages long? The majority of published versions are less than half this length. I will plough through the full translation over the next few months in search of the exact reference - it could take me some time though!

The fact that the YouTube film did not show in clear HD vision an actual angel is hardly surprising. Show me a clear unmistakable photo of a flying saucer, or a photo of a yeti, or the Loch Ness monster. These things being from 'somewhere else' (probably projected from US) are notoriously camera shy.

In regard to the suggestion that this was a marketing ploy, I would say that it might well have been: many marketing companies will use existing phenomena to advertise their stuff. I remember a few years ago a piece of TV advertising which used the yeti in their ads: this does not mean that they 'invented' the yeti!

The fact of the matter is, that the Thames Angel is well and truly set in the public imagination, and therefore it exists: in idea form at least, but then where do most of these things exist? Where does anything exist?

Robert Goodman, London

What is a UFO?

Are they from outer space? Are they from earth? The only answer can be 'Yes!' They're from both.

When you see a 'UFO' and you tell someone, they point at you and ridicule you. But these people have limited imagination, because they

MUST have seen something that they couldn't explain. Not just a UFO, but just a 'U.O.' The only difference is the 'F' is for flying, but it seems that the person who puts the 'F' in is nuts!

A 'UFO' is just something in the sky that you, as the viewer, cannot tell what it is. It doesn't mean that it's from outer space. It clearly just means 'Unidentified Flying Object'.

I remember when I was younger, and staying at home, I saw a UFO, and my first words were not 'Ooh! A spaceship with aliens!' No. My first words were, 'What the hell is that!?' (in a broad Scottish accent). But I never told anybody at the time, because it was the late 70s / early '80s, and I would still be getting abuse for it.

Anyway, I know what I wanted to think I saw, and I'm sure it was a disc-like object, with flashing lights around it. When I got my driving licence in the early '80s, I decided to look into this thing further, and I was what you could call an 'amateur UFO hunter', but I never did find out what it was that I saw that day.

Nowadays, I'm not allowed to drive because of disabilities and I can't get out of the house much, so I can only keep track of 'strange things' by internet, magazines, etc. We moved to



Wales to a supposed UFO hotspot and I watch regularly, but I haven't seen anything recently. But fingers crossed.

So to sum up, a UFO is what the viewer cannot name and hasn't seen before!

Joe McNamara, via email

Back from the future

I stumbled across your superb magazine on a recent trip back to the UK. Regarding the question, 'What is a UFO?' and your request for feedback, in my humble opinion it is quite obvious that UFO's are time-travelling visitors from our own future.

My reasons are simple: at some point in the (probably distant) future, time travel will probably become a reality. By then planet Earth will be in dire straits (not the band!), so collecting samples, harvesting sperm and eggs etc, sounds quite plausible to me.

Also, no one else seems to think much of the physical similarities between our perceived alien visitors and ourselves. Being from a different planet with presumably vastly different atmospheric conditions etc, they could look like blobs of jelly, sea creatures, anything, but they don't, they all tend to look like... us. That's my reasoning, anyway.

**Christian Saunders,
Hunan Province, China**

Parallel universe

In response to your request in *Paranormal* Issue 50, my preferred theory is that of liminal, fourth-dimensional beings that live in a parallel universe to our own and yet intrude regularly into ours.

Not only did John Keel feel that something like this was the answer but there are also the books by F W Holiday (*The Dragon and the Disc, The Goblin Universe*) and the sightings and encounters in books such as the Bible: 'And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.' (Ezekiel 1:4). Keel himself linked the behaviour of humanoid forms associated with the UFOs to that of biblical demons.

There also seems to be a strong correlation with the all-knowing UFO entities whom Keel interacts with and those met at séances who occasionally seem to know everything about

the sitters including personal (and sometimes embarrassing) information.

Holiday asserted that not only were lake monsters creatures who existed only partly in our world but that, especially in mediaeval church art, discs were strongly associated with them. He went on to draw parallels between the disc-like faery mounds and contemporary UFOs. Indeed, the famous (in UFO terms at least) author Jacques Vallée wrote the book *Passport to Magonia* covering such ground. To conclude, I think the best way of summing up is to directly quote Vallée's paper, 'Five Arguments Against the Extraterrestrial Origin of Unidentified Flying Objects', *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 1990: 'Five specific arguments articulated here contradict the ETH (Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis):

'Unexplained close encounters are far more numerous than required for any physical survey of the earth;

'The humanoid body structure of the alleged "aliens" is not likely to have originated on another planet and is not biologically adapted to space travel;

'The reported behavior in thousands of abduction reports contradicts the hypothesis of genetic or scientific experimentation on humans by an advanced race;

'The extension of the phenomenon throughout recorded human history demonstrates that UFOs are not a contemporary phenomenon; and

'The apparent ability of UFOs to manipulate space and time suggests radically different and richer alternatives.'

I hope that this lends fuel to the debate!

Trevor Pyne, via email

'There also seems to be a strong correlation with the all-knowing UFO entities and those met at séances.'

Unidentified Floating Organisms

Regarding Nick Redfern's article 'What is a UFO?' (issue 50), I do think that there are many phenomena here that explain the UFO question.

I believe there could be the nuts and bolts craft from distant solar systems, there could also be visitors from other dimensions and visitors from the

future. There is also, as Nick said, good reason to suspect that they are from here, and still here. Certainly, as there seems to be a lot of reported cases where the 'aliens' differ very little from ourselves in appearance, this raises lots of other questions especially about our own origination.

But looking at the evidence from reports and especially from video evidence, there are things flying around in the sky which seem to be of a biological nature as well as the nuts and bolts flying craft. You can see that from here in a video compilation I made for my YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyiF4xKZb04

I think quite possibly that rather than life being the exception to the rule, that life IS the rule in the universe, just look at how jam-packed our world is of life, there is not a square inch of sky or earth that doesn't have some sort of life in it. How can that be and not have life elsewhere? Seems very unlikely to me. This Earth may be exceptional in respect to the amount of life, I don't know, but when you see the NASA tether incident, it looks like the very space around the earth is like a fish pond full of life.

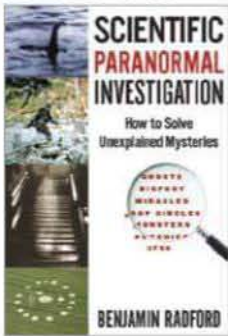
So in the end I think as much as we try to clump the UFO phenomena into one camp or another, its never going to fit, because it's a combination of different entities from different places as well as unknown natural phenomena including living creatures living on the edges of known science. Just look at the work done by Trevor James Constable.

I do think we are being visited by advanced alien cultures, but I also think that's only one part of a much larger spectrum of phenomena yet to be understood.

Trevor Owen, via our website

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: Thank you to everyone who responded to our request for views on 'What is a UFO?' The possibility of UFOs being living creatures inhabiting our upper atmosphere was roundly discussed by Dr Karl Shuker in the March 2009 edition of *Paranormal Magazine* (issue 33), in an article entitled 'Unidentified Floating Organisms'. I'm grateful to Mr Owen for reminding us of the importance of this interesting theory. Mr Owen was also kind enough to include two fascinating experiences of his own with his email: we do not have room for them this month but I will do my best to find space for them in our Experiences section next month.

Books



Scientific Paranormal Investigation: How to Solve Unexplained Mysteries

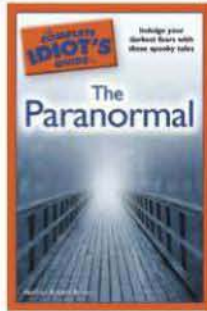
Written by: **Benjamin Radford**
 Published by: **Rhombus**
 Price: **£10.95 pb**
 Reviewed by: **Nigel Watson**

Benjamin Radford applies scientific principles to his own detailed investigations into paranormal phenomena throughout the world. As the managing editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, it is not surprising he feels he is able to solve such mysteries as crop circles, ghostly hauntings, poltergeists, lake monsters, the White Witch of Jamaica and the blood-sucking Chupacabra monster.

This can be dismissed as the work of a dedicated sceptic and debunker, who wants to eliminate silly superstitions and exotic beliefs in favour of all-knowing science. Certainly, he categorically states that for the sceptic or believer the only right way to carry out paranormal investigations is to use 'sound science and valid investigative techniques'.

Although he makes a long list of things to use in an investigation toolkit - from rubber gloves to a Swiss Army knife - his main approach is to consider the perceptions and expectations of witnesses and the general will to believe in paranormal happenings. Often, rather than being visitors from outer space or from the other side, paranormal happenings have very mundane explanations. Benjamin features investigations by several other researchers, including one by Susan Blackmore, which is explained by an accumulation of dust inside a clock (rather than a poltergeist) that made it jump in the air.

This approach isn't as exciting as locking yourself in a haunted stately home with an excitable psychic, and I can already hear you mumbling about pompous science-types who know nothing beyond their own fixed centre of logical principles. Benjamin challenges such lazy and wishful thinking and provides an excellent guide to using simple logic and science to probe and even solve paranormal 'mysteries'. So ditch your shaman and give it a try.



The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Paranormal

Written by: **Nathan Robert Brown**
 Published by: **Alpha**
 RRP: **£9.99 pb**
 Reviewed by: **John Stoker**

Written along the lines of the highly successful and extremely useful *Books for Dummies* series, this volume has a title which belittles its usefulness. The book assumes little or no knowledge on the part of the reader and offers a concise and surprisingly comprehensive guide to the many facets of the paranormal.

Nathan Robert Brown has taken a commendably straight forward attitude to the subject with a style which never becomes overly academic and is always accessible.

Unlike similar volumes this book doesn't ignore religion. Just consider how many paranormal events take place in The Bible. The author also produces a fascinating overview of creeds and cultures from around the world and also manages to explode a number of myths in the process. There's also advice on how to organise paranormal investigations and a useful list of organisations and groups. Admittedly most of them are American but the list also includes some based in Britain, Australia, Canada and even Malaysia.

Added to this there is a comprehensive index which is certainly a major plus considering how many so-called research books neglect to include this item, which should be an essential. Another useful addition to each chapter is a section entitled 'The Least You Need to Know' which offers a brief summary of each section.

For a book of less than 300 pages it's surprisingly compact, authoritative and, dare I say it, entertaining. Read it from cover to cover or merely dip in and out. It's certainly a very useful volume which can be recommended to the novice or the serious student because it works on both levels. I'll certainly be giving it a permanent place on my book shelf.



Paranormal London

Written by: **Neil Arnold**
 Published by: **The History Press**
 RRP: **£9.99 pb**
 Reviewed by: **Nick Redfern**

Neil Arnold's new book is an entertaining trip around Britain's swinging capital and seeks out some of the high-strangeness that absolutely saturates this ancient and historic city. The book is very well written, in a captivating, atmospheric style that is best suited to a dark and stormy night beside an old, glowing fireplace, in a spooky old mansion on the edge of a cold, windswept moorland.

If UFOs are your thing, you'll find intriguing sections in the book on centuries-old encounters with all-things flying and saucer-shaped; and you'll learn much about London-based sightings, in the early years of the 20th century, of so-called Phantom Airships and much more.

Ghosts and paranormal phenomena feature, too, with much emphasis on the notorious and ominous red-eyed and black-garbed Highgate Vampire, as well as Spring-Heeled Jack and similar anomalous assailants of a bygone era.

But, as someone with a deep interest in cryptozoology and unknown animals, I have to say it was these sections of *Paranormal London* that so interested me. Neil delves deep into such controversies as the spectral Bigfoot of the London Underground; phantom black dogs of the typically glowing-eyed variety; the many and varied out-of-place big cats that call, or have called, London their home; very thought-provoking accounts of ghostly bears; the strange, convoluted and captivating story of the Brentford Griffin; as well as encounters with dragons and mermaids.

And, I cannot omit mentioning 'King Rat', a hideous giant rodent said to haunt the winding, old sewers of London - and a true abomination, if ever there was one!

So, all in all, Neil Arnold's *Paranormal London* is a definitively spooky, out-of-this-world, and monstrous look at London and its many and varied attendant mysteries that I guarantee you'll greatly enjoy. Indeed, you'll never look at the old winding streets of London in quite the same way again!



DVDs/Blu-Ray



Hot Tub Time Machine

Directed by: **Steve Pink**
 Starring: **John Cusack, Rob Corddry, Clark Duke, Craig Robinson**
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Hop aboard the *Hot Tub Time Machine!* This (not exactly highbrow) comedy is one of the main 2010 entries that will fill the void of dumb but innocently fun films - a nostalgic trip back to the '80s courtesy of a divine hot tub.

A classic buddy movie... four friends bored by their dysfunctional adult lives get transported back to the '80s by a shared experience in a time-bending hot tub. Here they will each have a chance to make amends for themselves and hopefully change their individual futures for the better.

A screwball farce that never reaches the levels of other films of this type from the last few years (*The Hangover*, *Knocked Up*, etc.) but there are enough laughs to make this well worth a watch.

The real quality of the film comes in the four actors involved. True to form, John Cusack is simply not in bad films. They are always at the very least enjoyable and at the very most, true classics (this falls somewhere in between). Special mention must be paid to Rob Corddry. Recognisable from *The Daily Show*, he goes at portraying a middle-aged drinker with such intensity and seriousness that it will have you in stitches although he is someone who is without doubt a horrible character.

As expected all the jokes and clichés of the '80s are present and for the most part, they work well. For a gross-out comedy, of which there are far too many, there is enough here to make it stand out. Have a drink and watch, you will enjoy.



Book, DVD & Game reviews from back issues can be found online at:
www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk





Legion
 Directed by: **Scott Charles Stewart**
 Starring: **Paul Bettany, Lucas Black, Adrienne Palicki**
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Assault on Precinct 13 meets the *Book of Revelations* in *Legion* and surprisingly forms a decidedly limp and lifeless genre piece that will not be remembered.

An out-of-the-way diner sets the unlikely scene for an onslaught of God's vengeance and the battlefield that will either save the human race or bring on the end of days. After losing faith in humanity, God sends forth his Legion of angels to bring on the apocalypse. Only a rag-tag group of strangers accompanied by the Archangel Michael (Bettany) can possibly stand in the way.

Former SFX wizard, Scott Stewart, fumbles in his transition to director, delivering a clunky, bizarre and forgettable high-concept action flick. The warning signs were there - Uzi-toting Angels, demonic old ladies and killer cherubs - none of which exactly scream either interesting or high quality.

Legion is virtually void of excitement, populated by one-dimensional characters that are difficult to like or believe. But the real killer for this movie is the unambitious plot. A ropery regurgitation of *Terminators 1 and 2*, we see very little action that you would expect in regards to warring angels. The exciting trailer depicting a battalion of angels and demons (wings and all!) at war turns out to be a short flashback. We are left with scenes that could be from any poor action film, underlining the surprise of a director coming straight from the SFX world choosing not to match the high-concept with ambition.



Repo Men
 Directed by: **Miguel Sapochnik**
 Starring: **Jude Law, Forest Whitaker**
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Jude Law and Forest Whitaker star in this satirical take of money-grabbing healthcare systems, or rather how they would be in a dystopian Sci-fi future.

In an alternate (I hope) future, people have the ability to purchase artificial replacement organs to fight damage or just for enhancement. However, given the expense of the organs, if you fall into arrears, then the *Repo Men* come to collect, with painful, bloody and deadly results.

The high-concept story reads like a Philip K. Dick novel, and for the first 30 minutes manages to keep up enough pace and black humour to make it work. But when Jude Law decides to grow a conscience, the sporadic and action-packed plot starts to take one bloody wrong turn after another. A pity, as the potential was clearly there, but the sense that a great film has been lost amongst the unnecessarily excessive violence is unshakeable.

Repo Men unfolds like an amalgamation of *The Island* and *Crank 2*, i.e. there's too much action and blood to allow the already weak Sci-fi storyline unfold properly. No satirical concept could survive the degeneration into brainless horror sci-fi that is on display here.

In different circumstances, *Repo Men* may have been a satire worthy of the Sci-fi greats. But with too much of an agenda in plain view (with Obama pushing through healthcare reform currently) it is quickly evident that *Repo Men* is punching above its weight. A bloody and tiresome film that is an unsatisfying watch. Leave your brain at the door or don't enter!



Games



Transformers: War for Cybertron
 Format: **DS, PC, PS3, Wii, Xbox 360**
 Publisher: **Acitvision**
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

With the origin story hitting multiplex franchises hard for the last few years without any sign of slowing, it is with an air of inevitability that the gaming universe has fallen into that pattern, too.

As the title suggests the action unfolds back in the glorious early days, when Optimus was rising to become the Prime we know today. You play in two campaigns, one as an Autobot and one a Decepticon. Both are similarly styled, but differ enough to be enjoyed separately, and both pack a hell of a mechanical punch.

Thankfully *War for Cybertron* does not fall in line with Michael Bay's glossy presentation of things. Instead we are returned to generation one of the cartoon series, meaning that there is some welcome room for cameos that will please all the dedicated fans/ geeks (delete where applicable). This adds to the simply styled Gears of War-like action (clear room... push button... move on), as well as some iconic moments to please the eye.

The transformations especially are excellently handled if a little disjointed from the core action, but they do help you to forget about any issues that you will find with the sometimes awkward gunplay and poor AI.

Transformers: War for Cybertron was both inevitable and ominous given the money to be reaped in these cash cow franchises. Surprisingly though, it is not with regret that you sit down and play because Activision have actually done a great job. An action-packed, sensitively handled origin tale for the Transformers that will leave you wanting more.



Dragon Quest IX
 Format: **DS**
 Publisher: **Nintendo**
 Developer: **Square Enix**
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Spending some time in Japan recently made it virtually impossible to miss this recent release. One of the forebears of the role-playing game, *Dragon Quest* is back on the DS for its ninth outing in the digital world.

You take control of a Celestrian charged with the protection of your mortal flock. But when a dark force devastates your celestial home, you lose your wings and fall to Earth. Now you must find the sacred fruit in order to ascend once again and defeat your enemies.

While this series is not garnished with the praise (and 50-foot neon billboards) lavished on it in the East, the game itself is interesting and addictive. There are some hang-ups in the interruption by menu selection screens - of which there are many - for the most part this is a smooth action quest. There is much enjoyment found in unleashing the power with a dragon-smashing sword, or by inviting friends to join the quest for some hearty multiplayer fun in various turn-based battles.

Don't be put off by the pseudo-religious plot on display (if you are that way inclined), as this is combined with enough wit to keep the balance. And with some classic gameplay, and a huge world to explore that contains numerous monsters to cross paths with during the lengthy main narrative, this will keep fans both busy and entertained.

Once you give *Dragon Quest* a chance you will be embroiled in it for weeks - instantly addictive, charming and enjoyable... a lethal combination.



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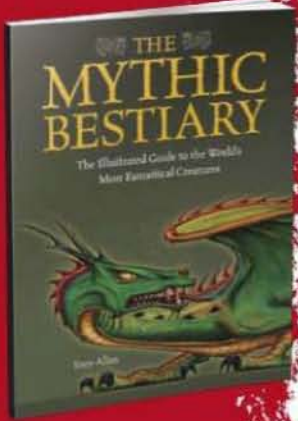
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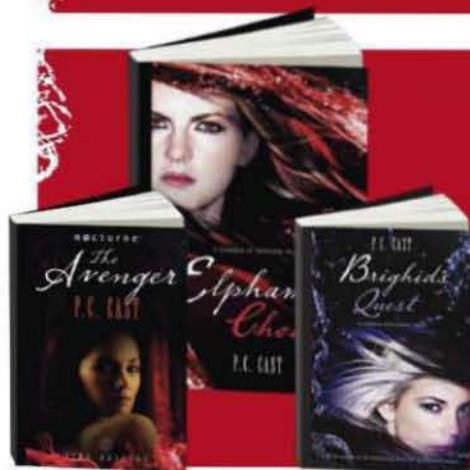
DVD game: *StarCraft 2: Wings of Liberty*

It is the distant future, in the darkest reaches of space. You are Jim Raynor, a marshal-turned-rebel on a vigilante crusade to bring down the evil Dominion regime. Whether you command the mysterious Protoss, the nomadic Terrans of the ruthless Zerg, you must decide to outwit or outgun the enemy in an unforgiving universe of intense strategic combat.

StarCraft 2 from Blizzard Entertainment is a thrilling sci-fi spectacular full of pitched battles and blazing confrontations using an exciting range of futuristic weaponry and hardware. The original *StarCraft* was hailed as one of the all-time greatest real-time strategy games ever.

StarCraft 2 sports a vibrant 3D graphics engine and allows you to wage war on your friends and foes over the internet. A fair fight is assured thanks to AutoMatch technology via Battle.net. Thanks to Blizzard Entertainment, we have FIVE copies of *StarCraft 2: Wings of Liberty* to give away. For your chance to win a copy, just log on to paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions and be prepared to answer this question:

What is the name of the character you play in *Wings of Liberty*?



Three 'romantic horror' novels by P C Cast

Despite telling publishers we don't review fiction, they keep sending fiction books to us anyway. So, partly to help clear the editor's dangerously overlaid desk (mainly with bits of his lunch), we've decided to give away three of them by the same author.

Sunday Times and *New York Times* bestselling author P C Cast is at the forefront of the booming horror-romance fiction market. We have one novel published by Mills & Boon (*The Avenger*) and two by Mira (*Elphame's Choice* and *Brighid's Quest*) to give away, each brimming over with paranormal passion.

For your chance to win this set of three P C Cast novels, just log on to paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions and be prepared to answer this question:

Dracula is arguably the first romantic villain in horror fiction. Who wrote *Dracula*?

You may also enter by post. Please write your answer, with your full name and contact details, onto a postcard or sealed-down envelope and send it to:
Competitions, Paranormal Magazine, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ.



Bookend

ALL THE FUN OF THE PSYCHIC FAIR

By Dr. Matthew Smith



DR MATTHEW SMITH was until recently an Associate Professor of Psychology at Liverpool Hope University. He left in order to explore the paranormal in a more personal way. His research into telepathy, precognition, luck, séances and psychic pets has led to appearances on a number of television programmes broadcast throughout the world. You can follow his journey as he learns to become a psychic at www.spiritualjunkie.co.uk.

I recently made the rather unusual decision to see if I could learn to be psychic. As a consequence, I am now sitting behind a table at a psychic fair, about to give psychic readings.

This might make sense if I was well on the way to being psychic. But I'm not. In fact, all I have done to prepare for today is to memorise the basic meanings of each of the 78 cards in a deck of tarot cards. Why? Because I want to see whether I, armed with this basic information, could give readings as good as anyone else.

So now I am sitting behind a bare-looking table, feeling rather anxious about what will happen.

To help create the right effect, my partner-in-crime, Rachel, nips over to one of the stands to buy me a small laughing Buddha for good luck. £5 well spent.

I'm not charging for my readings. To get a reading from me you have to get a reading from someone else at the fair (I was the free one in a buy-one-get-one-free deal). This way I could ask people to compare my readings with readings they got from others.

My first few readings are decidedly vague... 'You're experiencing a lot of change at the moment'... 'creative projects are coming to fulfilment'... 'financial matters need attention'... that kind of thing.

I was sincerely giving readings based upon my understanding of the meanings of the cards as they were laid out in front of me. The trouble was, I found myself saying much the same things no matter which cards I was trying to interpret!

But this changes when Linda sits down. As I turn over the cards Linda has chosen,

the first two cards are the Two of Swords and The Emperor. The Two of Swords is upside down, which, if my memory serves me correctly, relates to 'suspicion'. The Emperor can refer to a few things, but the one that immediately springs to mind is 'fatherhood'. In the 'Celtic Cross' spread that I'm using, these first two cards are laid one on top of the other, so I start each reading with an interpretation that links these first two cards. In Linda's case, the interpretation that immediately occurs to me is a difficult relationship with her father.

But can I *say* this? Dare I say something that actually seems quite personal (and frankly none of my business)? I um and ah until eventually, almost apologetically, I give her my interpretation. I expect her to look blankly back at me but, instead, she nods. And Linda proceeds to tell me exactly *why* their relationship is so difficult!

I have surprised myself. Whether I have genuinely uncovered a source of stress in her life, or whether it is just a coincidence, I don't care. Not right now. At this stage, I'm counting this as a success. I feel quite chuffed. Maybe, if I didn't worry so much about being wrong, I might actually be able to do this!

As Linda walks away at the end of the reading, suitably impressed, I am left wondering whether tarot cards do provide a way of tapping into our otherwise ignored psychic or intuitive abilities. Or is it all just wishful thinking? Whatever the answers, I have a feeling I'm going to learn a lot over the coming year. And I'm already up one laughing Buddha. What could possibly go wrong?

'I UM AND AH UNTIL EVENTUALLY, ALMOST APOLOGETICALLY, I GIVE HER MY INTERPRETATION. I EXPECT HER TO LOOK BLANKLY BACK AT ME BUT, INSTEAD, SHE NODS. I HAVE SURPRISED MYSELF.'



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