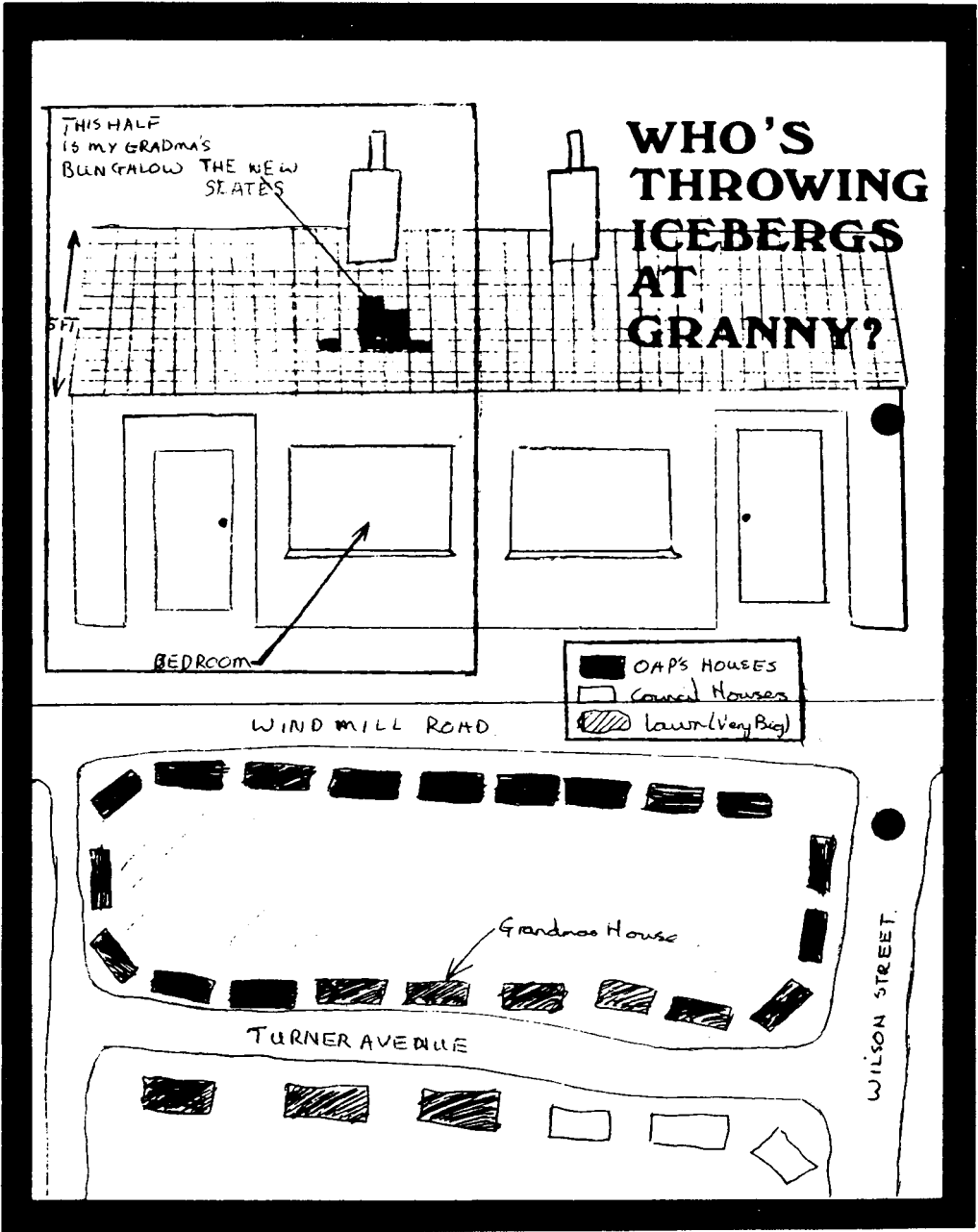


# The News





vehicle as the dead bird landed almost in his lap. (Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph. 28 Dec 73. Credit: Nigel Watson.) See our FALLS section for a tale of ducks plummeting out of the sky.

Yessir, someone or something Up There seems to be chucking things at people. Daily Mail 29 Nov 73 - Maryland Secretary of State Fred Wineland, was aiming at his second goose when the first one he'd shot fell on him from 100ft up. He was knocked out, cracked four ribs, and his dignity was badly bruised. Maryland also figures later.

From New England comes a report that hunters are suffering acute frustration because the grouse are committing suicide before they can be peppered with lead. For a week (says the note) tales of kamikaze birds were being told, flights through or into the sides of barns, walls and windows. Explanations have been ventured from being drunk on fermenting fruit or hallucinating on fungus, to the theory that they are responding to some unselfish stimulus to thin out over-populated flocks. (Daily Mail. 2 Nov 72. Credit: Steve Moore.) You notice how the most obvious theory is always overlooked? That out of some obstinate and cantankerous pique a plot may be hatching to turn the tables, to deprive the hunters of their explosive depravity. No? Well... we've always been a bit suspicious of the 'obvious' ourselves.

Perhaps pheasants were feeling particularly peeved at the end of November - leastways they had a few tales to tell wherever pheasants gather at the end of the day to tell their tales. Some, like Peter Cowtan, just come right out asking for it - striding around on a Berkshire moor with an ample, russet-coloured pheasant-like beard. Before the day was out somebody had shot half his beard clean off his face; miraculously he was unharmed. (Daily Express. 29 Nov 73). This seems far from the bizarre anomalies most think to be exclusively fortaean. It may seem inconsequential, but it smacks to us of an outrageous justice, and after all, that is a kind of hidden universal force.

Some birds take a more practical way out - he who runs away lives to run away another day. James Twomey, a Nottingham chiropodist, was waiting for his next client, when in walked a cockerel with swollen feet. Said Mr Twomey: "My street door is always open in the daytime. Suddenly the cock came in, limped around, and looked at me with his head on one side. Its quite fantastic that of all the houses on the road it should seek refuge in a chiropodist's. Somebody had obviously tried to fatten it up...and the feet were swollen through having run a long way. (Daily Mail. 8 Dec 72. Credit: Steve Moore.)

From Westminster, Maryland, comes a tale of a dog shooting a hunter. Charles Brown, 69, was nearing the end of a day's shooting, when a companion put his gun down to pick up a bird. An excited dog, eager for more fun, jumped on the gun and Brown was hit in the lower right leg. (Daily Mail. 25 Oct 72.) We also have a note that

a dog in Brooklyn bit a policeman in the leg and immediately dropped dead. The dogs of Brooklyn are not noted for their sensitive palates. The policeman said: "It didn't bark or nothing. It just bit and died." (Daily Mail. 11 Nov 72. Credit for both items to Steve Moore.)

## animal curiosities

### A CHIMP THAT CAN READ.

Three days into the new year - and the Circus is in full tilt. The Daily Mirror (3 Jan 74. Credit: Robert Forrest.) carries an account of some experiments by Prof. Duane Rumbaugh, at Ape City, the primate research centre at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Lana, a 2-year-old chimp, in a special cage with colour-coded push-button panels linked to a computer, can punch simple sentences to order food, watch TV, or listen to records. To our minds this achievement is in danger of being undervalued. Those of us afflicted with sticky nephews who can only grunt or scowl through a similar itinerary, know that this is a significant step in some kind of direction.

Cathy Purcell sent us a note about a talking cat (Weekend. 5 Dec. but unidentified year, probably recent.) Mrs. Kamile Mutluturk of Konya, Turkey, was woken from her sleep, when her 5-year-old cat, Pala, jumped onto the bed, and whispered in her ear: "Mother, mother," She told her husband who naturally didn't believe her, until he heard for himself. Pala can say it's mistress's name (which is more than we can), the name of her daughter Alba, and the Turkish words for mother and father.

### OF DOGS LOST...AND FOUND.

Barry, a huge Alsatian, was sold by his master (?), Armin da Broi, to a neighbour. On a visit to Bari in Southern Italy, the dog escaped. One year later Barry turned up on Armin's doorstep having travelled 1200 miles (at least) to find his changeable master in Solingen, West Germany. Armin has vowed they will not be parted again. (Ahhhh!) Sunday Mirror. 30 Dec 73).

Peter Rogerson sent us a note from the Daily Mail 3 Jan 74, that Santa, a huge St Bernard, had disappeared for four months, and was only recovered by his owners 'luckily' spotting a photo of the dog in the papers. I guess the odds on that would be quite large.

Before you put your handkerchiefs away, here is one more. Albert and Estelle Bondel from Belgium stopped in the Black Forest for a picnic, leaving their dog Rudi, a huge mongrel, asleep in the back of the car. When they had finished, they drove off. They didn't notice the dog was missing until they reached the Belgian border some hours later. In July 1973, almost 12 months later, they returned to the Black Forest in a half-hearted attempt to find him. For two hours they tried to find the spot they had picnicked. They were about to give up when they heard a barking. Yes...it was Rudi who came bounding up to them in happy joy. They learned

from a local cafe proprietor that the dog had been seen frequently during the year, coming into the village in search of scraps, but always going back into the forest before nightfall. (Weekend. 5-11 Dec. 73. Credit: A Smith.)

#### GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS.

Another Ahhhh! story... we're getting them over with before <sup>we</sup> get all choked up and can't go on. This concerns the real-life adventures of a goldilocks, 5-year-old Goranka Cuculic, who got lost in a forest near her home village of Vranje in Yugoslavia. Parents and villagers with dogs and torches combed the forest. When woodcutters told of seeing bears in the vicinity, there was despair at ever seeing little Goranka alive... except for farmer Ivan Furian, who roamed deeper and deeper into the forest, armed only with a cudgel. A nice touch, that cudgel, the word gives this story an added storybook charm. Anyway, as in all goodfairy tales, Ivan found her, cold and hungry. Replete, she told of how she met the three bears. "One was big and fat, and the other two were quite small and as cuddly as they make them. I played in a meadow with the two small ones and shared my biscuits with them. The big one licked my face...its tongue tickled no end. At night I snuggled between the cubs and was beautifully warm. The next day I somehow lost my teddy bears. Then I found I was lost too. I spent another night in the cave, but it was cold and dismal and I was frightened. I was glad when Uncle Ivan found me and I hope I meet them again!" (Daily Mirror. 3 Nov 1971. Credit: A Smith.)

#### 968 PIGS ON A RAMPAGE EAT A PLANE.

Prompted by our note on the cows who <sup>licked</sup> the paint off a helicopter (NEWS 1. p3.), reader Robert Forrest was reminded of the following incident, which he duly sent to us.

Sam Cottle's hungry pigs went on a rampage, eating anything they could lay their snouts on... including the plane, an Auster, parked at the farm. They completely devoured the planes fabric. "This is a very unusual case...pigs eating an aeroplane," remarked the prosecuting council at Devizes Crown Court, Wiltshire. In the dock was Wilfred Grist, pigman on Craymarsh Farm, Seend, owned by Mr. Cottle.

Grist is accused of deliberately opening the Sty gate, and the Court heard that the pigs went on, tearing into 2½ tons of hay, a straw rick, half a ton of cattle food, and 30 asbestos sheets. They uprooted 3 acres of pastureland, damaged four farm gates, and were 'running around berserk. Ten were killed as they fought among themselves.'

We note our (almost) blasé acceptance of such behaviour - pigs is pigs, and eating is their thing. What is more curious is the odd behaviour of the people involved. Grist claimed that Cottle hit him, then Cottle and his brother put him in a car saying they were going to put him in a

slurry pit. Later, Cottle admitted, he changed his mind - they were going to put him in a giant animal-food mixer. Hmm. With food like that we would probably develop a hankering for aeroplane fabric ourselves. Anyway, the story is from the Daily Mirror 13 April 1972.

While we are on the subject of animals getting their own back, and eating on the attack, we have a little story of the San Francisco police chasing a zebra down a six-lane freeway at 45 mph. When stopped, it kicked in two doors, smashed a mudguard, climbed on the bonnet, chewed up the steering wheel and bit two handlers before being returned to the Marine World zoo. (Daily Mail. 27 Oct 1972. Credit: Steve Moore.)

## appearances

#### THE PHANTOM FARMER SOWS ANOTHER GHOST CROP.

Madelon Dimont. Rome. The phantom farmer has struck again - and once more a 'ghost' crop of wheat is springing up. The crop is growing in a 2½ acre field left fallow by a land-owner near Milan. No one has seen the phantom - but again and again he has planted wheat on uncultivated lands in North Italy. And each time the crop has ripened, the phantom has returned unheard and unseen, to reap the harvest. His acres of golden wheat have vanished overnight. Now, the angry land-owner has laid charges against 'unknown persons' for invasion of his land. And police have decided to leave the crop to ripen, and lie in wait for him. (Daily Mirror. 29 April 1968. Credit: Anthony Smith.)

Fort noted a few 'phantom crop' stories in his books. These stories bear some curious affinity with poltergeists and the falls of various things...the sudden appearance of something. This something being confined to a definite area and homogenous throughout. Consider the possibility of a fall of seeds, all of one kind, from some point more or less stationary above a field. Or that in response to a need elsewhere the seeds were caused to appear in unused ground, ripen and harvested by a mysterious process and sent to answer the call - or perhaps, to judge from our experience of having needy calls answered, the stuff was dumped down somewhere else, and the fortunes of that place logged up one more curiosity. We have notes on falls of straw.

#### SOMETHING FISHY UNDER THE PIER.

Experts were puzzling over the appearance of a rare tropical fish...under Southend Pier. The 5½lb. Plectropoma Oligacanthus, normally found only in the Pacific, was still twitching, say the three schoolboys who pulled it out of the water. One expert said: "Unless someone says they dumped such a fish in the sea nearby, it will remain a mystery." (Daily Mirror. 14 Aug. 73. Credit: Anthony Smith.)

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# SCAN YOUR LOCAL PAPERS, AND....

## FISH MYSTERY.

From letters to the Editor, Sunday Express. 20 Jan 74:

Visiting a trout farm near the village of Valls on the German-Dutch border, I found the employees puzzling over a wounded salmon swimming among the baby trout. It had wounds on its back. It hadn't been there the day before and the farm had been guarded, as usual, during the night. The only theory we can think of, which fits our facts is that a large bird, possibly an Osprey, caught the salmon at sea, and lost its grip over land....more than 100 miles from the coast! Better theories will be welcomed.

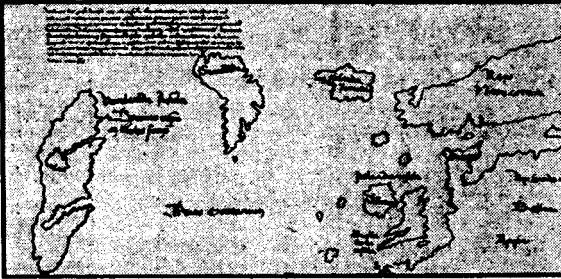
William Fisher.  
Grant St, Glasgow.

(Credit: DJ McAllister.)

## archaeology

### ANCIENT MAP WAS 'TOO GOOD'- IS IT A FORGERY?

We reprint here an article from the Sunday Times (3 Feb 74) - the map is from an introductory article in the same paper (27 Jan 74).



AFTER SO many years of mingled scepticism and doubt, what remains of the prestige of the Vinland map? Now that scientific tests have unmasked its supposedly medieval coastlines and portentous Latin captions as being entirely penned in modern ink, must the learned world now accept that someone tried to perpetrate on it the most elaborate and ingenious historical forgery of recent times?

At a private meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London tomorrow, a gathering of scholars and experts, ranging in attitudes from the fairly loyal to the always-sceptical, will try to determine whether the costly piece of parchment now sheds any authentic light on early cartography and the claims of a Viking settlement of North America before Columbus.

Support for it was dwindling fast last week even at Yale University, one of whose benefactors reputedly spent £100,000 in acquiring the document on its behalf, triumphantly launching it on Columbus Day, 1965, only after it had been given several years of careful scrutiny. Yale's librarian, Mr Rutherford Rogers, says that

from the laboratories who have re-examined it seeped "overwhelming evidence" that the Vinland map was a forgery.

The feeling among scholars on this side of the Atlantic was generally that the tests had simply confirmed long-held doubts about this intriguing maverick of cartography, which would have been the first-known Viking map, with the odd lump of "Vinland" stuck up in the top left-hand corner where Labrador or Newfoundland might be. "There appears to be hardly any loophole through which the Vinland map can regain credibility," comments Dr Helen Wallis, head of the map room at the British Museum.

The map has been questioned on many grounds over the years and the fact that Yale put an insurance value of \$1.5 million on its head did nothing to cement its esteem with some. There should have been no school of Norse cartography at all, since the Vikings used an oral tradition of sailing directions, sun and star sights. Gerald Crone, formerly head of the Royal Geographical Society's map room, never found it credible. "Greenland was too good," he says—a phrase that may haunt

the alleged forger as his biggest mistake—in the way it suggested that Vikings had rounded even the north coast of Greenland in open boats, centuries before their time.

As long ago as 1962 Dr Eva Taylor, Emeritus professor of geography at Birkbeck College, London, wrote a lengthy analysis of the map's false pretensions (to be published in the next issue of "Journal of Navigation"), concluding that the map had been cribbed from various source-books in American libraries.

But the forger, if there be one, was fiendishly plausible, as Holmes might put it, in the way he presented the package. To have kept cartographers, historians, geographers, and others, in a state of nagging doubt for 17 years is no mean feat. It was beautifully "laundered," in Watergate terminology.

The map apparently passed from an Italian bookseller in Barcelona to a now-defunct but respected Hampstead firm, Davis and Orloff. It was bound up with an undoubtedly authentic medieval manuscript called the "Tartar Relation." A second book, also authentic, called the "Speculum," which matched the script of the other perfectly, was found (by a coincidence that staggered some scholarly minds) by a Yale curator. Both hung perfectly together with the Vinland map.

George Painter, of the British Museum's department of printed books, is one of the few who still gives great credence to the way

the three documents hang together, down to the very wormholes. He points out that a number of the captions on the Vinland map are taken verbatim from the Latin of the "Tartar Relation" which is itself unique and a definite historical discovery in its own right. For a forger to have kept dark about the "Tartar Relation" until he could present a bogus map with it argues a formidable patience.

No one can yet guess clearly what the motives of a forger could be. The map was sold to Yale by Lawrence Witten, a Connecticut bookseller.

He bought it from Enzo Ferrajoli, a Barcelona agent in antique books, in Geneva in 1957. Mr Witten pointed out last week that he had no reason to suspect a forgery. He had dealt with Ferrajoli before. He only paid \$3,500 for the map—a small amount of Ferrajoli had set up an elaborate forgery.

Mr Witten still does not think it is a forgery. He says that he has visited the Smithsonian Institute, the Washington museum, and given all details of his financial transactions to refute the "rumours" of passing off a fake as genuine.

He confirms that Ferrajoli did not give the previous owner's name. This is common practice, but scholars say they would very much like to know more about this provenance before dismissing Vinland as a truly dead but well-down duck.

Roy Perrett

## ROME'S IMPERIAL BEAGLE.



Snoopy, Charlie Brown's philosophical beagle, has just sprouted a distinguished and classical pedigree - according to the Vatican. The pensive pooch, says Professor Filippo Magi, director of the Vatican's Archaeological Study and Research, first appeared 1600 years ago. A vast market of the first century after Christ has been discovered under the Papal Basilica of St Mary Major, one of Rome's most historic churches. And there, amid some crowd-scene graffiti, is traced a creature, which is pure copybook Snoopy. Some Rome newspapers are reported to be showing cartoons of Snoopy in his most comfortable, kennel-roof, prone position (tummy much in evidence), thinking: "Suspirium! Aetate progredi, heu!" (Translation: Sigh! The years roll on, alas!)

Daily Mail. 22 Jan 1973. Credit: Steve Moore.

## RUSSIAN MAMMOTH BUGGED.

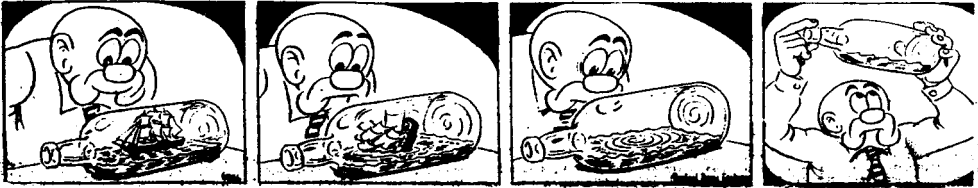
At a recent Academy of Sciences symposium on the mammoth, in Novosibirsk, scientists were able to examine the nearly complete skeleton and parts of the bowel of a mammoth reckoned to have lived 20,000 years ago on the Shandrin River. The remains of the animal were flown intact inside the 500 kilogram iceblock. Paleontologists then discovered larvae of an unknown species of botfly, which lived in and on the mammoth and died out with it. Novosti Bulletin 14677. 17 Jan 74.

# PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS FOR DATA.

# disappearances

UNCLE CHARLIE

By Lavery



Paul Screeton sent us this cartoon cutting with the question: 'Bermuda Triangle?'

## RIDDLE OF MISSING STUDENT.

Lucy Partington, 21, on vacation from Exeter University, told a friend, Helen Render, of Culcross Place, Cheltenham, that she was just going out to post a letter, then catch the bus to nearby Gretton. That was at 10.15pm, and the busstop was less than 200 yards from the house. The bus never stopped at the stop because there was no one waiting there. Since then, the evening of 29 Dec 73 police have exhausted their enquiries. Thanks to Pete Rogerson who sent the above from Daily Mail. 31 Dec 73. A fairly long story of sorts appeared in the Sunday Express for 27 Jan 74. We learn that between leaving the house and the scheduled bus time was ten minutes, and what ever hapened happened then. The only lead the police have come up with, is that she was a recent convert to Catholicism and if she was alive somewhere or in retreat, she would not want to miss Mass, and so a watch on Masses 'throughout Britain' has been undertaken. But to judge from the silence in the media, the case is still far from solved.

## FAMILY DISAPPEAR IN RUSSIAN DESERT.

Vladimir Dmitrenko, with his wife and two kids (only 18 months, and 9 years), was driving down to the Caspian Sea to take up a new job. At some point, he took a wrong turning, and drove on out into the desert for 175 miles before the car just stopped - no petrol. Vladimir decided to set out (off to the right), on foot. After a considerable time, his wife became worried, then desperate. She wrote a message for her husband in case he came back - then set off carrying the baby, to the mountains - she could see off to the left. The boy went with her. Officials reconstructed all this from a diary the couple kept in the car.

## 'PLANE CRASH' MYSTERY.

Police searched Hockley Woods, near Southend, Essex thoroughly after a 'plane crash' report earlier today. A caller had reported hearing a crash followed by screams for help. Police reported no planes in the area missing. Express & Star. 3 Aug 73. Credit: Anthony Smith.

## HUSBAND'S AIR HUNT.

After a report that his missing wife had been seen walking near their country home yesterday,

antique dealer John Lincoln called in a friend with a helicopter, and they made an aerial search for the 37-year-old mother of five who vanished last Thursday. "We covered a large area but there was no sign of Patricia. She has suffered from depressions since an operation a year ago." Daily Express. 12 Nov 73.

## TWO JETS MISSING.

RAF planes joined an air and sea search off Cape Town yesterday for two South African jets and their four crew members missing after an exercise. Daily Mirror. 26 Nov 73. Credit: A Smith.

# esp & powers

## URI GELLER.

Since our little piece on Geller in NEWS 2 his media exposure has been fantastic - with some organisations like the Society for Psychical Research, and the 'New Scientist' falling over themselves to test him, whilst the obstinately sceptical have their knives out for our mystic cutlery-twister. (And that is not an allusion to the threats on his life recently, which, looking at it callously, has neatly got him away from the test-hungry mobs.) Most of the arguments we have run across have confused two things in the desire to prove or disprove - that Telekinesis (TK) exists; and that Geller has it.

The first is what the NEWS is all about. We believe, if we believe anything at all, in the continuity of all phenomena, the totality and integrity of the organic universe. Fort, when he let it shine through, had a fondness for the idea of a 'Teleportative Force' (remember, he invented the word) that responded to universal need or will - it lifted frogs, blood and stones from one place and dumped it in others; it started fires and powered ghosts and UFOs - and often reacted to express a sentience - a life or living force. Men have run across it at various times giving aspects of names like Vrill, Od, Orgone, Mana, Ley Power, etc. It certainly is about time the research-energy itself is coordinated. We see no reason to doubt the existance of Tk or whatever - it seems a more efficient way of moving things around on the universal level. Indeed, by Occam's Razor, it simplifies and unifies many previously separate and inexplicable events.

Does Geller have TK? Well - if he hasn't, some believe he has, and vice versa. Fortunately for us the universe is not run by the concensus of opinions; it goes on despite our beliefs. We have seen metallurgists come forward and say that on analysis, Gellerised items show no sign of work-hardening toward the fracture; that the break was more akin to a tensile than a flexing action. And in one case he would have had to apply 63lbs pressure on a stubby key with his thumb and finger - try it sometime! No wonder the magicians (how pathetic the modern usage of the word sounds.) are getting hot under their budgie-stuffed jackets - for it is clear he is using no tricks from their armory - from known science too, come to that. We have so much material that we will only cover the most pertinent and interesting. But the file is available to anyone who wants to follow each bend and twist in the saga.

#### TELEPORTATION.

Apart from the now familiar references to stopping escalators in Munich, and motor-yaughts in the Mediterranean, there have been inferences of more dramatic displays of TK. The News of the World (2 Dec 73) mentioned that Geller had TKed a camera-case from New York to Tel Aviv; and himself from NY to Brazil; and that he is going to try and return a camera-case from the Moon, left there by Ed Mitchell in 1969.

There were also stories of teleporting eggs: for instance, this story from author Felice Gordon: "Uri telephoned me from New York, he said that a black and orange papier-maché egg had just appeared in his living room. He felt it was mine and wanted to check. I said I had several decorative eggs but only one like that. I went into my bedroom where I keep it in a drawer. It wasn't there. If the one he has got is mine, I have no explanation of how it got there. He briefly visited my house in Kensington at my invitation - but he didn't go into my bedroom." (Sunday Express. 16 Dec 73.). In the documentary on Geller by an ITV team, it was mentioned that when Geller stayed at a friend's apartment in New York (we think), many witnesses saw a china egg follow them about from room to room, appearing near the ceiling and falling slowly to the floor. Dr Andrija Puharich, Geller's aegis at Stamford and author of a 100,000 word study of him due out in May this year, has said that Geller made his dog vanish into thin air (or to somewhere where the air might have been thinner), and reappear 60 yards away. In another experiment, he said, Geller brought a flow-erbud to full bloom in 20 seconds. (Daily Express. 14 Jan 74).

If you can get hold of the latest Flying Saucer Review (Vol 19. No 5. Sept/Oct 73.), you will be rewarded by an excellent article on Geller and how Puharich found him, written before all the publicity. There is a fascinating reference to Out-of-the-body experiments; sending along a human transponder to learn about 'where' things go when he 'sends' them away. In Israel, Puharich put a Mexican silver 5 peso piece in Uri's hand

and asked him to 'do' something with it, and bringing it back deformed "...so that I would know something had happened to it outside the space in his hand. It takes about 600lbs of force to bend this kind of coin. Two hours later, Uri jumped up, ran to the telephone, and as he did so the 5 peso piece dropped from the ceiling, bounced off his shoulder and fell into my lap. It was bent to an angle of about 60 degrees."

#### GELLER AND UFO.

The rest of the reports contain few items of more than passing interest. Geller doing a Ted Serios and imprinting an image onto film in a camera with its lens cap still on (News of the World. 2 Dec 73.). The Daily Express gave half-pages to its reporter Don Coolican on 24, 25 & 26 Jan 74 for his 'expose' of Geller. He revealed the use by magicians of a liquid 'metal halide' that can force divisions on grain-boundaries in metals, making bending and breaking easier. But the Sunday Times (27 Jan 74) revealed that the substance is a cumulative poison that attacks the kidneys and is absorbed through the skin. "If Uri regularly bent spoons like this he would be 6ft underground by now." (Credit: Nigel Watson.)

In the Sunday Times, (2 Dec 73.), Puharich is reported to have said in an interview with the American magazine 'Psychic', that he and Geller drove into a desert and 'found' a UFO - 'a disc shaped metal object with a flashing blue light on top. Geller entered the UFO while Puharich filmed him, and filmed him emerging 10 minutes later. Unfortunately, Puharich explained, the record was lost, as the film cartridge dematerialised a few minutes later.' Bryan Silcock, who wrote the article, adds sarcastically: "With friends like that, Geller has no need of detractors."

It might be amusing to note that Coolican later admitted publicly that after challenging Geller to disprove the things he had said about him, he was now back to being as puzzled as anyone else. We find that refreshing. In the Daily Express (28 Jan 74) is an account of what happened when Coolican took Geller back to a fully 'cleaned' hotel room. He frisked Geller; had him wash his hands free of any substances that might be there and then perform his key-bending in his shirt-sleeves, watched by two other reporters. After keys bent in the hands of the sceptics with Geller nowhere near them, they admitted their bafflement.

Dr Puharich rates Geller as the 'best find in 1000 years, and what we could learn from him could cause a whole new scientific revolution.' Perhaps so - but we muse on the fate of the bright hopes held out to such telekinetic power-houses as Eusapia Palladino and DD Home, and beside whom some would say, Geller is but a psychic pstripling. If we are to get anywhere at all - we must find more Gellers; we must study, research and publish - or we may as well pack up now and go back to the oblivion of ignorance.



The scene...and results of Geller's camera experiment. From the News of the World. 2 Dec 73.

## falls

### ICE FALLS.

The falls of masses of ice from the sky is only one of the many meteorological curiosities that occur from time to time. This particular issue seems to be particularly resplendent with examples of some of the others. As with any puzzling phenomena there are many theories, lots of guesses, and scientific doubletalk. Among the basic questions we should ask are, where in Heaven's name did it come from, and how did it get up there, and since some of these chunks have had calculated weights of up to half a ton plus, we must also ask how they managed to stay up there - that is, of course, unless they were teleported directly into the sky to fall?

The most common theory is that it is nothing more than a giant hailstone, or a conglomeration of the same. Investigation will show that the structure of such conglomerations, and the signs of ablation (partly melting and re-freezing) is quite distinctive and different from the blocks of homogenous ice that interest us. Giant hail is not uncommon - we have a note from the Express & Star of 23 March 1968: 'At least 20 people were killed and 150 injured when giant hailstones showered like bullets on a village on the River Ganges, near Monghyr, India, in the severest hailstorm in living memory, according to delayed reports. These said the hailstones, some weighing as much as 21lb, struck down those caught in the open; hundreds of mud and thatch houses were damaged and tiled roofs smashed. Many cattle were killed. Reuter.' (Credit: A Smith.)

For those interested in taking their interest further, we draw attention to an article on 'Ice-Falls' by Ronald J Willis, in Vol 1, No 3 of the INFO Journal. It includes a small reference list and a listing of 46 falls from 1802-1968. This list, by no means exhaustive, includes such monstrosities as the mass 'nearly 20 ft in circumference, and of proportionate thickness' that fell in August 1849 at Ord in Scotland. The problem of how they were sustained in the air is so boggling that it is not surprising to find suggestions that either they are ice meteorites, or that the darned stuff had formed and broken off the wings of overhead aircraft. It has been the-

orized that if an ice meteorite had pockets of gas within its structure and that these acted like breaking jets in steering and slowing the ice-mass, then it might survive the heat of entry into the earth's atmosphere with sufficient mass to cause what our notes have recorded. But it is quite clear from first-hand witnesses that the majority of these ice-chunks still have the pointed, sharp-edged and jagged irregularities that we normally associate with ice.

Let us quote from Willis: "If these ice masses are not meteorological products, then what are they? The common explanation today is that they fall from aircraft. However it is difficult to imagine how an ice-coating of more than several inches over the surface of the wings and control surfaces of an airplane could avoid bringing the plane down with it. Older de-icing equipment used an expandable rubber covering to break away any ice layer, and this layer could hardly be more than 1/2 inch thick at any time. Modern commercial planes use an electrical heating system to melt ice as soon as it forms so there is nothing to fall. The Federal Aviation Agency informs the author that military planes usually do not have such de-icing equipment, but due to their speed and construction "the possibility of accumulating such an amount (10lbs) is extremely rare." In addition, in the modern cases, hardly any of them were correlated with any planes being in the vicinity. And the aircraft receives its final blow with the simple question: What about all the cases in the 19th century?"

Before we go on to some recent cases in our files, we would like to add the quote from a letter Willis received from a Prof. Stewart, University of Virginia: "I have read of such ice falls and am rather mystified by them...I had read of the German who was killed by the 6ft mass of ice. No hailstone was ever that big. Perhaps there are ice meteorites that do not completely ablate away on the way down...this is a very mysterious thing...It can be put in the class with the small percentage of UFOs which cannot be explained away." Indeed, there are some correlations with UFO sightings, eg No 18 on the Willis list..in March 1887, 'North Atlantic, Capt. Sweet reported two UFOs which fell into the sea and "immediately afterward lumps of ice fell."



## ICE BOMB CRASHES THROUGH ROOF.

Pensioner Mrs Jane Williamson, 72, was bombed in her home yesterday by huge chunks of ice, more than a foot wide and six inches thick. One lump smashed through the tiles of Mrs Williamson's roof. A dozen more fell in her back garden, and one dented a car parked nearby. Mrs Williamson of Meadway, Sevenoaks, Kent, said: "I realised that even this summer, the weather couldn't be bad enough to do this. I got onto the police and they told me the ice probably fell from the wings of an aircraft."  
(Daily Mirror. 19 Aug 68. Credit: A Smith.)

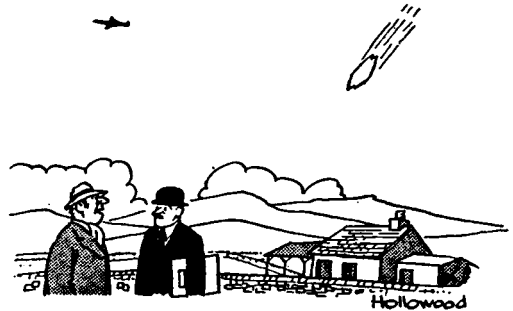
## VAN 'BOMBED' BY ICE BLOCK FROM A PLANE.

The Mirror reporter who recorded this even seemed convinced it fell from a plane, though to be fair there is not much detail or evidence to judge either way: The 'ice bomb' fell from an aircraft flying over Bracknell, Berks, to crash through the roof of a van. The chunk was found in the driver's seat and more ice was scattered over the road. It was parked outside the home of Gerry Foulkes, in Calfridus Way, who said: "We heard a tremendous crash and thought there had been a road accident, or a plane had gone through the sound barrier. Then a neighbour came to tell us the van had been hit. My two children were playing outside shortly before. If the ice had fallen a few minutes earlier there might have been a terrible accident. A police spokesman at Bracknell, 15 miles from Heathrow Airport, said: "We are in touch with the airport about this. Until the facts are known, I can't say what action will be taken, but I think it would end up as a civil matter. An aircraft is not legally a vehicle and could not be prosecuted for having an insecure load, or anything like that." (Daily Mirror. 24 Feb 69. Credit: A Smith.)

This latter point brought to mind an article in the Times for 18 Nov 72 on 'Aircraft Damage' insurance policies. Technically, it advised, that although the damage was done by, say, the load impacting with the house, the load was not part of the plane at the time of impact, and that a successful claim does not necessarily follow. "There is, however, still plenty of worthwhile 'aircraft' cover. For instance, quite often, large blocks of ice fall from aircraft. They can cause serious damage to a house, and the chances are that one will not be able to discover from which aircraft a particular block of ice fell. In this case, the claim for cost of repairs can be made against one's own insurers, and they can try to make a recovery."

## ICE CRASHES INTO HOUSE.

A huge lump of ice, big enough to kill, smashed into a house in Twickenham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, yesterday. The family of four who live there were asleep when the block - thought to be from an aircraft - crashed through the conservatory roof. No one was hurt.  
(Daily Mirror. 17 Aug 70. Credit: A Smith.)



"We've no fridge out here but we do get ice from aircraft wings delivered accidentally about once a month."

From The Times. 18 Nov 72.

## ICE BOMB. 22 Sept. 73.

A ball of ice, believed to have fallen from a plane, crashed through the roof of a bungalow in Turner Avenue, Wombwell, near Barnsley, at the weekend. No one was hurt.  
(Daily Express. 24 Sept 73. Credit: Phil Ledger.)  
Phil Ledger followed this one up with a letter to the victims, and received the following reply from the thirteen-year-old grandson of the lady whose bungalow was hit:

"In reply to your letter. It was Saturday at 3 o'clock on the day of the Finningly Air Show. An hour after the impact three council workmen brought down a 6lb hunk of ice. Fragments of ice as big as a hand were scattered about 30ft around in the gardens of other houses. My Grandma is 76 next birthday. She has central heating in her home for about 18 months and it has never worked properly until this happened. Lately she has had constant hot water. No-one saw or heard the ice until it hit the roof, although it was a perfectly sunny day (It said in the papers it was raining at the time.) Barnsley is under the flight plan of the large planes from Europe when they start there descent over the Pennines and into Manchester. When the ice melted, there was not much water and it did not appear clean. My Grandma does not have a fridge, and is partly blind after slipping off the edge of a kerb. This is why she does not write. She is also a widow. She gave me your letter and I hope my reply is satisfactory.

T. Upton. (Age 13)."

Thanks very much, your reply is most helpful. We judge by your observation on the antics of your Grandma's central heating system, that you display commendable Fortean talents. The lad also sent with his reply, the diagram of the scene that we have used as this issue's cover, because we liked it a lot and it was relevant to this feature section.

## 'BLACK RAINS'

From the Daily Mail, 11 Jan 73, comes the story that Health Inspectors were trying to trace the source of a dense cloud of 'soot' which blanketed large areas of Kent, yesterday. The 'soot'

with grains the 'size of a large pinhead' covered parts of Dartford, Bexley and North Cray, and was thought to have come from a factory, but none in the area have admitted to causing the pollution. (Credit: Steve Moore.)

From the Daily Mirror, 15 Jan 74, we learn that office girls in Aldwych, London, found mysterious holes appearing in their tights, yesterday, as a strange black rain fell. The cause was thought to be acid fumes given off by a boiler and dissolved in the rain.

#### FALLS OF FROZEN DUCKS.

Frozen ducks came tumbling out of the sky above Stuttgart, Arkansas. "It was thought they had been caught in a tornado, pitched into the sky, 'and like aircraft, got iced over'. The townsfolk had them for dinner. This business of planes and ice seems to be firmly written into the human library of 'explanations'. (Credit for this note from the Daily Express. 6 Dec 73 goes to Paul Screeton. The same item appeared 2 days later in the Daily Mail, Credit: Steve Moore.) Neither tells us what we really want to know; ie did they come down plucked and oven-ready? or was it another case of the following: Three deep-frozen seagulls found in the hold of a ship carrying thousands of tons of herrings in ice from Ullapool, Scotland to Norway, were thawed out....and promptly flew away. (Daily Express. 24 Jan 74.)

#### THE FROG FALL OF '54.

Further correspondence with Mrs Sylvia Mowday, has identified the time of the fall of frogs she witnessed in Sutton Park, Birmingham, as Saturday 12th June 1954. See NEWS 1. p8. for her account. She also wrote to us something else of interest. We quote:

'Whilst I was scanning the pages of 'The Compleat Angler' by Izaak Walton, I came upon a reference to 'raining of frogs' in Chapter VIII. There is a conversation between Piscator and Venator about frogs thus -

Ven: "But good Master, did you not say even now, that some Frogs were venomous, and is it not dangerous to touch them?"

Pisc: "Yes, but I will give you some rules or Cautions concerning them. (I will miss out some of it and continue).. and the Land frogs are some of them observed by him (Topsel), to breed by laying eggs; and others to breed of the slime and dust of the earth, and that in winter they turn to slime again, and that the next summer that very slime returns to be a living creature; this is the opinion of Pliny; and Cardanus undertakes to give a reason for the raining of Frogs; but if it were in my power, it should rain none but water frogs, for those I think are not venomous..." The reference is to the 19th book of Cardanus, De Subtil, Ex. '

Always ready to bring a bit of culture to the NEWS, we ventured to find out more and track that 'reason' down. Hieronymus Cardanus, known to the English as Jerome Cardan 'The Gambling

Scholar' after his work on games of Chance called 'Liber De Ludo Eleae', was in fact one Girolamo Cardano, Italian, (1501 - 1557). And the work in question, 'De Subtilitate'.

The book was conceived in a dream - a master work of 21 parts or books, which was completed in 8 months, and published in Nuremberg in 1550. He was a brilliant and prolific writer. Someone called Tiraboschi said of him: "A man of whom, if we read only certain of his works, we should say that he was the greatest fool that ever lived. Who would think that he was one of the most profound geniuses that Italy had ever produced, and that in medicine and maths he had made rare and valuable discoveries." Sounds familiar. He was despised by many orthodox scholars who were outraged by his apparent acceptance and belief in dreams and superstitions, and thoroughly horrified that he dared to cast the horoscope of Christ.

Alas, our search for the literary remains of this proto-Fort, turned up only one translation, and only contained the first seven parts, which deal specifically with scientific and physical notes. So - the quest is still open. Can somebody out there, with access to better facilities than ours, discover exactly what Cardano said in his 19th Book about rains of frogs? And please don't forget to let us know when you do.

## fires

#### FIREBUG HUNT AFTER AIRPORT BLAZE.

After a wave of blazes at Heathrow Airport, the police are hunting a probable fire-raiser, but they are not quite sure. The latest blaze was in the long-distance terminal. Flames and a pall of black smoke shot from the roof as travellers and officials from many departments were rushed to safety, and water poured through the roof on to hundreds of passengers. Harvey Burrows, Deputy Chief Constable of the British Airports authority, said: "There is a possibility of a fire-raiser on the airport - a man intent on damage. There have been a series of fires since July. It is all too much of a coincidence." From Daily Mirror 27 Sept 73. Credit: DJ McAllister.

#### MYSTERY FIRES RIDDLE.

Srinagar, Kashmir. A Reuter's report in the Express & Star, 19 May 1970, mentions some 538 houses in Kashmir destroyed in a series of fires - 291 were gutted in three major incidents, two 'accidental' and one caused by a 'madman'. This still leaves 247 conflagrations in mysterious circumstances for the Cause-Unknown file. (Credit Anthony Smith.)

#### BLAZE JUDGE FLEES BLAZE.

Mr Justice Cantley, who heads the Summerland fire disaster inquiry on the Isle-of-Man, was among 200 people who had to be moved from a Douglas hotel when fire broke out early yesterday. Sunday Mirror. 25 Nov 73.

## WOMAN DIES AFTER BED BLAZE.

We see a lot of this kind of story, where the police or firemen can only 'suppose' a likely cause for the blaze. We are interested in them because there is 'reasonable cause for doubt'. A conventional cause may well, in fact, be so - the firemen are experts of a kind and generally first-hand witnesses. While we recognise the dangers of over-active imaginations, we also feel in certain cases where evidence is lacking and the circumstances are 'mysterious' (whatever that may mean), there is the tendency to be conventional and deal only in 'safe' speculations. The following story is from the Sunday Mercury. 25 Nov 73.

A young Birmingham housewife has died in the burns Unit of Birmingham Accident Hospital after she was found lying on a blazing bed by her neighbour. Christine Warren, 21, had been in the Unit since 16 Nov. after the fire in Ash Rd, Saltley. She is believed to have knocked over a paraffin stove in her bedroom, which set fire to her clothing. Apart from certain questions we have, we note that this event happened barely three weeks after the double of similar fires (see NEWS 2, p7.) to young women in the Birmingham area. The hospitals involved seem to have ignored our request for more information.

Police were unable to give any statement about the cause of a fire in a flat in Salford, in which James Matson, 61, died in his blazing bed. (Credit: Peter Rogerson.) In fact we may have to drop the more suspect cases for lack of room - the reports of cars, buses, homes found ablaze and only a 'supposed' cause; like this one:

A 17th century farmhouse at Cannock was thought to be set alight by a tramp or by children playing. The main staircase was destroyed and the building, Newhall Farm, Cannock Road, Heath Hayes, is unoccupied. (Sunday Mercury. 27 Jan 74). We often have the feeling, that even if we did have unlimited space and total news coverage and access, the exercise might be one in futility. In the meantime, however, we can only proceed to record what we find, and find some small joy in one lost sheep being found.

## ghosts & poltergeists

### WAITING FOR A GHOST.

A company boss and four of his workers sat-in last night on the factory floor waiting for a ghost. The vigil was arranged after night-workers at Press Mouldings Ltd. in Soham, Cambs, complained they had been scared by shadowy figures and mysterious voices. (Daily Express. 24 Nov 73. Credit: Steve Moore.) A further comment from the 'boss' involved, a Mr Ronald Uden, was in the reportage of the Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph (same date. Credit: Nigel Watson.) "We didn't hear or see a thing. The men seemed so convinced we may try again another night."

### ITS...A GHOST.

The ghostly Lady in Grey walks a factory floor at Ilkeston, Derbyshire. At least that's what women workers at Denleen Separates say. They see her in trailing gown, crossing the 100-year-old building at eight in the morning. Managing Director Dennis Whitworth said: "She's a friendly ghost and does not worry anybody. I'd take her on if she asked for a job."

Daily Mail. 23 Dec 72.

Credit: Steve Moore.

### VICAR'S BID TO RID SHIP OF GHOST.

Sailors on a British ship docked in Hartlepool called for assistance from the Vicar of St Oswalds, the Rev. Anthony Hodgson, when they discovered that a stowaway was on board - in spirit. The seamen asked him to exorcise the unwelcome passenger whom they firmly believed to be a ghost. The Rev. Hodgson spent about an hour on the coaster Somersby Dyke at the Central Dock saying prayers in various cabins on the ship. "They said they had seen phenomena on board the ship that they could not explain. The men were normal intelligent sailors, and when I got down to the ship they were obviously frightened of something so I took their request seriously." (Hartlepool.Mail. 27 Oct 73. Credit: Paul Screeton.)

### FRIGHTENED WOMAN ASKS FOR HELP.

Marie McFadden, 27, her husband Ben and son Benedict, waited for two years on a caravan site before they got their council house in Avenue Vivian, Scunthorpe. Now her dreams are shattered and she has made a desperate appeal to the local housing authority to accommodate the family elsewhere, and wants a Roman Catholic priest to exorcise the house. The shock from ghostly goings-on was so dramatic, she claims, that it caused the death of her other child, born prematurely in March (1973).

18 months ago, she was sitting in her new livingroom in the early hours of the morning: "I saw a face staring at me through the glass door of my kitchen. I made a search inside and outside but there was no-one to be seen." Then again in February (1973) she saw the apparition in the livingroom, of "a young boy with curly hair and wearing a brown suit. It walked across the room and straight through the window. I was trembling all over." The following night Mrs McFadden felt a 'strange presence' around her but saw nothing. On other occasions there have been knockings and bumps in the night - objects have dropped from the mantelpiece without visible cause - and once the plastic covering of the settee she was sitting on depressed "as if someone was sitting on it." Her mother, who stayed for a while was frequently disturbed by the phenomena that happened over four months.

The McFadden's son, Benedict, 4, is deaf and dumb - "But when he was here, he woke up four times, screaming, trembling pale-faced and would not let go of my hand," says Marie. "If he could

only talk, I'm sure he would say there's something terrifying in this house." Her husband Ben, a steelworker on nightshift, sceptical about these happenings, "heard a knocking which seemed to come from the chimney-place." Seven families have left before the McFaddens, and neighbours appear frightened of the place. "I was told of a murder of a young boy many years ago further down the street and I am sure his ghost is haunting our house," said Mrs McFadden. *Scunthorpe Star*. 16 Nov 73. Credit: Nigel Watson.

#### A THREE GHOST FAMILY:

Ron Bowles, 42, saw a mirror and two brass plaques move several inches from their hooks on his livingroom wall. His son said he saw a ghostly figure. The milkman, Chris Smith, 26, swears he saw an armchair raise itself two feet from the floor. A friend of his wife's has been pelted with slippers, books and pillows. All this activity took place after the Bowles moved into their council house a year ago.

Ron, a railwayman, said; "I'd come home off night shift and find all the lights on. Yet my wife would assure me she switched them all off before going to bed." The cabinet at the bedside of Mrs Joyce Bowles seems to be the focal point. Her friend Mrs Briget White, who stays in the house when Ron is on nights, said: "I've seen the cabinet move four feet and rock from side to side." The first night she stayed, she began a little diary of events, and recorded: 'Cabinet creaks, and doors burst open. It moves forward 12in then sideways.' Then she was pelted with comics, a slipper, books and a nightdress case. As Mrs. Bowles woke up, the mattress began to rise under her and the two women struggled to push it back. When the disturbance ended, the cabinet moved back into place and they heard several knocks. "We now know that Our Friends give seven knocks when the show is over." On following nights the cabinet moved and pillows began flying.

One night: "My husband had gone to work early & I saw the figure of a man in black by the livingroom table and thought it was him. I said: 'Why haven't you gone to work?' and the figure turned slowly. It had two gold buttons at the top of the cloak and a gold chain. I was paralysed and my eyes weren't focusing properly. I have also seen a nun-like figure in the house, & a woman in white. But each time I've been unable to move or speak.

Ron Bowles said: "I have not seen any apparitions but I have heard the noise of furniture being moved about. I woke one night and found a chair in a room had been moved. I could see an imprint on the seat as if someone were sitting there. It disappeared slowly. Perhaps it was a ghostly bottom?" The house has been exorcised twice already since the Bowles moved in, by the Rev. Ramsdale Whalley of Winchester. Mrs Bowles said: "It seems to have got worse since." (*News of the World*. 2 Dec 73. Credit: Cathy Purcell.)

#### LONELY GHOST OF A VILLAGE CEMETERY.

Scores of people in the little village of Lariano, in Central Italy, say they have seen the figure of a woman in black struggling to get out of her tomb. Cemetery keeper Alberto Galente said: "Some people come from their homes after supper and stand outside the cemetery for hours - sometimes till dawn - hoping to see the ghost." The other night, when I passed on my bicycle just before midnight, there were about a thousand people looking through the railings." First to arrive for the nightly vigil is always Riccardo Candidi, whose wife lies in the only tomb in the cemetery, which was opened only last month, (the cemetery, that is, not the tomb). He believes she is lonely, and until her coffin is joined by others, her spirit will seek to escape. (*Sunday Express*. 23 Dec 73. Credit: DJ McAllister, Steve Moore.)

#### VISITORS FLEE THE COLONEL'S GHOSTS.

Colonel Francis Claridge has just taken a 14yr lease on an 11th-century manor house in the village of Sandford Orcas, near Sherborne, Dorset. "Scores of guests have been forced to flee," he says, with reference to the resident ghosts. "The place comes alive with them when visitors arrive" (*Sunday Mirror*. 23 Dec 73.)

#### NEW PLAY STARS A LOCAL GHOST.

The Lodenek Press, Padstow, have recently published 'A Cornish Quintet', a collection of five original plays with a distinct Cornish flavour, from the Cornish Drama Festival. But our interest centres on one of the five plays, 'The Happening at Botathen' by Donald R Rawe, for this is based on a strange incident which actually took place in the Launceston area just over three hundred ago. The Botathen ghost has been written of by many, Daniel Defoe and Charles Causley among them - of how the redoubtable Parson Ruddle, of St Mary Magdalene, Launceston, laid the troublesome Trebursye Ghost. His story is as reliably documented as anything of this nature can be, and we have knowledge that research is currently going on into the matter, indeed we may yet be publishing certain documents in our possession giving a contemporary account of the apparition. Remember, John Ruddle did exist, and wrote: "These things are true; I know them to be so, with as much certainty as eyes and ears can give me." (*Cornish & Devon Post*. 29 Dec 73. Credit: Nigel Watson.)

#### STRANGE GOINGS-ON IN THE STORE.

Members of Jeff's Discount Store in Abergele Rd, Colwyn Bay, claim there are strange goings-on among the kitchen-units and other goods. It all started when a large broom-cupboard in the balcony area upstairs suddenly crashed forward... and there was no-one near it. Mr Dave Mackie, the sales manager, saw a figure in evening-dress in the corner of an upstairs room. "He was tall,

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## WE NEED MORE SUBSCRIBERS .. .. .

slim and middle-aged. He just stood there and, in a second or so, disappeared." A former employee, Roy Tebbitts, seeing a man go upstairs, went to see what the 'customer' wanted. There was no-one there - and on several occasions, footsteps have been heard with nobody to cause them.

One day Mr Mackie was standing near a packet of tile bath-trims hanging on a bracket on the wall - when he was astonished to see a tile detach itself from the packet, move through the air horizontally, then drop to the floor. A woman customer, from Gronant, also saw the tile behave in this odd manner. Some members of Jeff's regard the spirit - if that's what it is - as a permanent feature of the place and call it 'George' whom they regard as friendly. In the past despite the favourable position, the premises have often seemed to have a jinx on them. Even an estate agent once used the term - since many previous businesses on the site had not prospered as well as 'Jeff's'. A customer, who may or may not have been clairvoyant, once remarked to an assistant: "A heavy cloud has lifted since you have been here."

Jeff Gunning, the owner said: "We certainly feel that whatever it is, likes us. This has been a boom year for trade." Before the war, apparently someone had committed suicide on the premises, but that was a woman, and the figure seen was quite definitely a man. Mr Dryhurst Parry, now the manager of Jeff's new Tile Centre, was a definite disbeliever when Mr. Mackie recounted his adventure with the tile - and later, when in the cellar, he suddenly felt an unaccountable icy cold, and for no apparent reason a number of worktops 'fell' on him. "That was an unnerving experience. There are more things in heaven and earth..." he mused. 'George' has gained another convert. (Bangor & North Wales Weekly News. 4 Jan 74. Credit: MR Mowday.)

#### CONCERT NIGHT FOR THE PHANTOM PIANIST.

Jean and Bill Duncan were sleeping peacefully, when weird strains of music made them sit up in bed, in their rented Victorian home, in Humber Avenue, Coventry. It was coming from downstairs and sounded like the strumming of an old-fashioned lute. When the couple investigated, they found the keyboard was not moving and the lid was shut. "At first we thought the cat might have got into the piano, but when we lifted the lid there was nothing inside," said Mr Duncan. In the last year alone, the piano-playing phantom has given about 100 impromptu concerts in their front room. "It sounds as though someone is plucking the strings, rather as a harp is played. It doesn't sound anything like modern music. As soon as we enter the room it stops. We wefn't told anything about this before we moved in two years ago. But of course it may not have happened before." Other strange noises frequently give the couple a shaking at night - ghostly raspings and hammering on

the doors. And in the small general store next door, lights switch on and off inexplicably. (News of the World. 13 Jan 74.)

#### SNOOKER SPOOK RATTLES A CLUB.

The strange goings-on at the 300-year-old clubhouse of the West Bowling Golf Club, Bradford, Yorks, are unnerving the caretaker George Webster and his family - he is convinced 'something' is watching them and his two sons. Snooker balls have played themselves; A ghostly grey-suited man walked into the Ladies toilet and frightened the life out of a barmaid; footsteps echoed through the locker-room and out into the night, through a door found to be bolted from the inside; their bedroom doors have locked themselves; and a mysterious 'dead-rat' smell has been giving Mrs Webster sleepless nights.

Mr Webster said: "One night I distinctly heard snooker balls clicking about on the table. But when I went in they were all in the pockets! Club member, David Cockcroft, added: "I went into the snooker room one night. As I was leaving I heard clicking and saw the balls moving about on the table. I was not frightened, but it was unusual and I cannot explain it away." Mrs Webster, who has been 'red-eyed with worry over the death-smell', said: "I have the feeling something is there all the time. My bedroom doors have locked themselves from the inside - and sometimes there is a horrible smell. I never go to bed without leaving a light on."

(Sunday Mirror. 13 Jan 74. Credit: Robert Forrest REUNITED - BY A GHOST.

A ghost, who haunted a house for six years, reunited a brother and sister, after 26 years apart, and has not returned since their reunion. Mrs Christine Adams of Imperial Road, Gillingham, Kent, said it was a bearded man in an 18th century cloak, who opened doors, turned lights on and off and threw things. A newspaper report of the ghost's activities was seen by her brother, John Simmons, who lives less than a mile away, and whom she had seen without recognising several times. (Sunday Mirror. 20 Jan 74.)

#### ANOTHER SHIP-BOARD GHOST.

A Muslim priest (sic) went aboard the Malaysian freighter 'Bunga Orchid' at Liverpool yesterday to exorcise the ghost of a woman which crewmen said they had seen. (Daily Mirror. 24 Jan 74. Credit: DJ McAllister.)

#### OPENING THOSE GHOSTLY GATES.

The gates of a 17th century manor house near Stroud, Gloucestershire, will be left open tomorrow night to prevent a ghost from opening them. Legend says a blacksmith was hanged even though the owner, Judge Cox, offered a reprieve if he made the gates. Now every January 25 his ghost has allegedly returned and opened them. (Daily Express. 24 Jan 74.)

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**BRING *THE NEWS* TO YOUR FRIENDS!**

## GHOST IN AUTHOR'S HOUSE OF DEATH.

No doubt you remember reading of the murder of the author James Pope-Hennessy in the media recently. Well, it appears that the scene of the crime has a history of ghostly doings - in fact haunted by the ghost of a man knifed to death, as Mr Pope-Hennessy was, about 70 years ago, and the earlier murder took place on a staircase just yards from where he died bound and gagged.

Mrs Dorit Forte and family moved into the house in 1942, and six months later so did Pope-Hennessy, on the floor below, and suddenly things began to happen. Mrs Forte recalls: "My little boy, Henry, told me not to step on a certain couple of the stairs leading to the first floor, because there was a little man there who was always smiling and friendly. I didn't take too much notice until James (Pope-Hennessy) said the man was always there and even described him in detail. From then on I walked around the spot." Then a second presence made itself felt - roaming casually and clumsily around the upper floors of the house, once shattering a row of shelves nailed to the wall. "This was very upsetting for us all, including James. One sensed it was there. It seemed evil and sent a coldness through you." Mr Pope-Hennessy's curiosity made him investigate the history of the property, and what he found sent a chill through the tenants. Mrs Forte continues: "A man, an ostler who looked after horses for a nearby inn, had been stabbed to death on the staircase. The description fitted all that James and my son knew of the ghost which danced up and down on the stairs, except that he had shrunk to about two feet in size. As for the evil presence, it could have been the murderer making his getaway or entering the house. James told me the spirits were then exorcised and it was a relief for him. A Roman Catholic priest had done what was necessary." A friend of the family said: "James was extremely sensitive, almost psychic in a certain way. He spoke of the murder as if he had been there." (News of the World. 3 Feb 74. The Editor's underlining, of a most curious and interesting detail.)

## 'heavens above'

### NOT SO PLEASED TO METEOR.

The coming of the comet has been accompanied by some pretty ironic turns. Dr. Alan Hunter, director of the Royal Observatory, has failed in his bid to get special permission from the Dept. of Trade & Industry to use his electrically driven tracking motors on his 26ft telescope on the days most favourably predicted to afford the best shots. Never mind, Alan, you'll get another chance in 75,000 years time - if we've solved the energy problem by then. (Story from Daily Mirror. 7 Jan 74.)

To judge from our general discomfort due to the social, political, financial and industrial unrest, we may feel that the supercilious portrayals of 'primitive peoples' gawping in weak-kneed

terror at eclipses, and white men with lighters, is altogether too close to home. Some are beginning to suspect that perhaps they knew something we are painfully discovering for ourselves. The Daily Mail (3 Jan 74) has a note on two astrologers who have just completed a five year study of the effects of planetary movements on political situations. Peter Simester and Marion Flanagan say: "It was in June we heard about Kohoutek. By September the charts we were preparing for the long term still presented a stable overall picture. Then came a strange change in the stars. It was at that time we foresaw the Middle East crisis, and political upheaval in Greece." The effects of the comet, we are told, will be present until 1985 - and they feel 'convinced that Nixon will seize power very shortly by some form of coup d'etat. (Credit: Steve Moore and Pete Rogerson.)

As a matter of passing interest, being one of the few unexposed theories around, the beginning of the present 'Jeff Hawke' strip in the Daily Express hinted that the comet might be some kind of alien trick - a cosmic trojan horse. And then Phil Ledger writes, asking if we had noticed the new arrival had coincided with the publication of Arthur Clarke's SF novel 'Rendezvous with Rama'?. Rama, for those not numbered among the cognocenti, is a vast, hollow, artificial asteroid approaching the solar system from far 'outside'.



"Scuse me guv'ner: Can you tell me where I can get a view of this 'ere comet?" A 'Punch' cartoon of June 1910, on the last return of Halley's comet

## THE STING IN THE TAIL.

There was a lengthy comment on cometary technicalities in the Listener for 10 Jan 74 (and from which our Punch cartoon is lifted) by Patrick Moore. How Fort would have chuckled to learn that Moore, who has done more to popularise astronomy than all the professionals put together, is an amateur enthusiast. Moore mostly bewails the comet's lack of cooperation, having provided all the pyrotechnics of a damp banger on a cold and rainy Bonfire night. "The comet really is on the fringe of visibility. It can be seen in binoculars, if you know where to look for it - but this is very different from the idea of a spectacular comet with a tail stretching across the sky, as had been suggested only a few months ago. The wrong prediction is not the fault of the astronomers. Comets are unreliable things, and it is impossible to be certain how they will behave." We find ourselves daring to smile - that Prince among 'exact sciences' stooping to common or garden uncertainties. From across Olympian distances we can hear Fort bellowing with laughter, as he wrote: "Astronomers are led by a cloud of rubbish by day, and a pillar of bosh by night."

## MYSTERY EXPLOSIONS, FIREBALLS & METEORITES.

Perhaps it's the comet - perhaps it's not. These are portentous times nevertheless. We have lumped the following notes on bangs, thumps and flashes together for no sounder reason than that they seemed to belong in a similar bag.

OLDHAM: 21 Nov 73.

We blast off with a brief note, or rather a faint report, from the Daily Mail, that an explosion at Coppice, near Oldham, Lancs, was to be heard at least a mile off, but no damage or cause could be found. (Credit: DJ McAllister.)

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON: 11 Dec 73.

On the morning 11 Dec 73, there was a bang, and a flash that lit the sky over Knightsbridge, London, for a few seconds. Firemen were called to Knightsbridge Green after several people had witnessed the happening. The only clue was some damage to a road surface in Old Brompton Road, and it was not clear whether the damage had anything at all to do with the explosion. Police, who are appealing to anyone with information to come forward, described it as "one of the mysteries of London". Evening Standard 11 Dec 73. Credit: John Brosnan.

WINDSOR: 22 Dec 73. A FIREBALL.

During the night of the 22 Dec. terrified residents of Windsor, Berks., rushed into the streets or jammed the police switchboards with calls. A huge fireball was seen in the sky over Windsor. There was a loud explosion, and the fireball was reported to have dropped into Windsor Great Park. A police search of the park discovered nothing, and a spokesman said: "It must have been a freak storm, or thunderbolt." Reports appeared in both the Sunday Mirror and News of the World, on the 23 Dec 73.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, OR KOHOUTEK? 23 Dec. 73.

Nigel Watson sent us some reports from the Gainsborough News, on a series of sightings that happened on the 23rd, the Sunday before Christmas. First, Mrs Edith Hart and her husband saw, from their home in Park Springs Road, a bright object like a four-pointed star moving slowly in the sky in the direction of Middlefield School. This was about 3.24pm on the Sunday. 'A spokesman for the Met. Office in Bawtry said the description was something like the appearance of a comet.' (Gainsborough News, 28 Dec 73). In a further report from the same paper (11 Jan 74), Mrs Hart is quoted as saying that having since seen Kohoutek, she knew the object she saw could not have been the comet. The Gainsborough News then got the opinion of the Appleton Laboratory, (formerly the Space Research Station) that it was a plane. Faced with the judgement of experts (who hadn't seen the darned thing, and were given only secondhand info) Mrs Hart's conviction begins to falter. It seems that she saw several 'things' that evening, the one above, and again at 4.30 they went out to see Kohoutek, "and saw... something that looked as if it had broken away from Venus."

In the 4th Jan edition comes a corroboration. Mrs Tacey was looking out of a window across to Whites Wood from her home in Theaker Avenue. "I was watching this bright light. It was just 3.15 and I thought 'why, its too early for a star! It came from over the woods and went across to the Baines Road area. I mentioned it to someone on Monday and they said it must have been a plane. But there was no sound and it was too bright."

Curiously, the same report also mentions a man from Gainsborough who saw something at roughly the same time as Mrs Hart and Mrs Tacey...but while he was in Shelf, Yorks. Mr Blenkin was walking along the main road in Shelf (between Halifax and Bradford) with his daughter, when he drew her attention to a lit-up Christmas tree. "As I pointed, there was a break in the clouds and this object was there. It was similar to an illustration of Halley's Comet which appeared on Patrick Moore's programme 'The Sky at Night' the night before. It was like a bright incandescent light with a tail on it. I looked at my watch, and it was exactly 3.55. We were facing a south-south-westerly direction. After a couple of minutes the cloud covered over and the object disappeared." Although he is not sure whether it was Kohoutek he saw, he is quite definite that it wasn't a plane or a star.

We could have put these reports in our UFO section but they seemed relevant to this collection. The sightings were of something brighter than aircraft, and with more movement than the comet (which by all accounts wasn't very bright or visible.) Perhaps it was another 'fireball' tracking over the country - or perhaps the inhabitants of Gainsborough were acted upon to see 'things' in the sky by a conjunction of unknown forces.

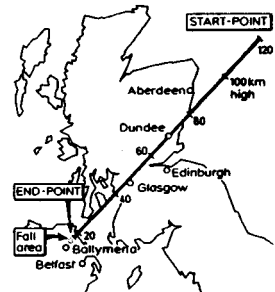
LAKELAND SPACE SPECTACLE. 27 Dec. 73.

OVER/

Police have received scores of reports of what is believed to have been a spectacular meteorite seen over Cumberland and Westmorland. It was said to be green and white and lit up the countryside as it raced from east to west last night. A man at Appleby, Westmoreland, said the object lit up much of the town for about five seconds. Other reports came from the Scottish borders, the Penrith area, and the west Cumberland coast. Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph. 28 Dec '73. Credit: Nigel Watson. Phil Ledger sent an identical cutting from the Torbay Herald Express of the same date.

Well...that was how it was in the papers, and the extent of our own information - so we reprint the following from the New Scientist 24 Jan 74, and it may be that some of you could help Dr. Hindley in his quest for more information.

The evening of 27 December 1973 was mainly clear and moonless over northern England, Scotland and Ireland when, at 21.07 hours, an exceptionally brilliant fireball lit up the whole of northern Britain. Sightings have been reported from as far north as the Shetland Islands, as far south as Dublin, North Wales and Manchester, and over the whole breadth of the British Isles. Witnesses describe the object as having an intensely bright, deep green head about 1/4° across, set in a teardrop shaped coma, and trailing an orange-red tail containing a shower of red sparks.



The fireball began as a rapidly brightening meteor at a height of about 120 km, at a point latitude 57° 7' N, longitude 0° 2' W, out over the North Sea, moving downwards to the south west at a shallow angle of about 12°. It passed south of Aberdeen, almost directly over Dundee, Stirling and Glasgow and out over the Firth of Clyde and north Channel, to end just five miles in from the coast of Antrim only about 12 to 15 seconds after it had begun. The most notable things about the fireball were its intense brilliance and its colour. It was already brighter than the full Moon (magnitude -12.5) over Dundee and reached a peak brightness of about magnitude -18 (over 100 times brighter than the full Moon) over the Clyde. Here observers agree it was uncomfortable to look at directly and lit up the surrounding countryside brightly. Observers are remarkably concordant about the intense green colour of the fireball head. The main fireball faded out at a height of 22 km, with a shower of two large, and several small, red fragments continuing down to 18 km—a very low end height. In the minutes that followed the disappearance of the fireball, strong sonic booms were

heard all over Scotland, Ireland and northern England, as far away as 300 km from the trajectory.

The smooth brightening and fading of the fireball with no major flares, coupled with the low end-height and the extensive sonic-boom reports, point strongly to a meteorite fall. An initial analysis suggests a fall area about eight miles by five miles (long axis pointing along the track), some five miles north east of Ballymena, County Antrim. Moreover, the smooth light-curve of the fireball and its intense green colour suggest that we may be dealing with an iron meteorite fall rather than a much commoner stoney meteorite.

Three groups of scientists are now canvassing the fall area, on the southern slopes of some of the Antrim mountains and the River Braid area. The region is sparsely populated and abounds with dark meteorite-like basalt boulders, but an intensive campaign over the coming months may yield some recoveries. Iron meteorite falls are extremely rare indeed, and so recovery of a sample would supply much valuable scientific data after exhaustive study.

The British Astronomical Association Meteor Section now has a nationwide network of reporters and observers to investigate events such as this, and the team were alerted across the country within hours of the fireball. We have interviewed several hundred people who saw the fireball, and who will continue to collect data over the next few months. Any New Scientist readers who witnessed the event are urged to contact us—write to Dr Keith Hindley, 44 The Turnways, Leeds LS6 3DU. We will continue to refine the preliminary track in the diagram until we get a definitive path. We can then compute a much more accurate impact area, using atmospheric wind velocities (which can carry falling meteorites considerably to one side) and perhaps narrow the region where we believe meteorites have fallen.

The irony is that we are also just initiating a system of all-sky fireball cameras at sites around Britain specifically to photograph bright meteorite-dropping fireballs such as this. On the date of this event, we had three stations making test-exposures in Edinburgh, Prestwick and Leeds, but, unfortunately, none was operating at the vital moment. Stations at Oxford, Stoke-on-Trent, Sheffield, Burton-in-Kendal and the Isle of Man will be functioning by the end of February, with more to follow in 1974. But statistics suggest that we may have to make hundreds, if not thousands, of exposures to catch an event of similar importance to that of 27 December.

Keith Hindley

## MYSTERY EXPLOSION: 15 Jan. 74.

Back to Gainsborough, again, where, on Tuesday afternoon (15 Jan), something exploded loudly, somewhere. It was heard by people in Gainsborough and Misterton as they finished work at 5.00. Local RAF stations denied being responsible for any sonic booms, and the regional power station at West Burton could give no information on likely causes. The police were stumped too. The ubiquitous Met. Office at Bawtry could only say that there had been thunder about earlier that afternoon. 'The mystery persists'. ends the report. (Gainsborough News. 18 Jan 74. Credit: Nigel Watson.)

## GIANT FIREBALL: 23 Jan. 74.

Not to be outdone, we have our own modest glory. Intrepid NEWShound Phil Ledger was on the loose. He wrote to us: "Here, behind the village in the BERWYN hills something had bumped in the night. You must have heard about the explosion/tremor/meteorite that rocked North Wales last Wednesday evening (23 Jan) and nearly tipped us into the sea, and reported on BBC radio news at 9.00 on Thursday. At the village of Llandrillo I found 4 mountain rescue people, two of whom had done a couple of searches in their landrover, but as they were now sure it wasn't an aircraft, they were rapidly losing interest. Apart from this there was an enormous crowd...of reporters, and photographers photographing reporters! So, not much I could do as I wasn't going to risk life and limb going into the hills by myself that day.

"So yesterday, Sunday 27 Jan, two other bounty hunters and I set off again in the hope of finding whatever there was to find up there. Set off very well in high spirits which decreased as the heather got thicker, the paths got scarcer, the snow got deeper and the mist came over...about 100 sq. miles covered in 2 foot of heather!! The thing would have to be as big as a bus to be found by a normal search. I had tried dangling my little pendulum over the O.S. map before we set out, but to no avail, it just wasn't interested. I think there might still be someone from Keele University out there. (He actually wanted 'it' to be a meteorite, the fool!) (What do you call a UFO when it has landed? A ULO?) It looks to me that the whole sordid business will now gradually fade away, recorded only in the annals of the NEWS."

The reports of this fiery monster didn't appear in the nationals until the 25th Jan. On the evening of Wednesday (23rd) the villagers of Llandrillo, Merionethshire, were considerably alarmed by a series of flashing 'green and blue' lights in the sky, followed by a huge explosion. The popular theory was that a meteorite had hit the side of Cader Bronwen in the Berwyn Hills. RAF photo-reconnaissance planes made repeated sweeps over the mountain. Astronomer Dr. Ron Madison of Keele University said: "It is likely to weigh a ton, and it will be 4,000 million years old, and came through space from between Mars and Jupiter to hit the Earth. The crater



could be anything from 5ft to 50ft across.... unless it smashed into pieces on impact." This must be the guy Phil mentioned. (Above info from Daily Mail.) Amazing what you can tell about it when you don't even know what it is yet.

The Daily Mirror reported that the 'thing' was seen by hundreds as it swished over Central and Northern Wales; that it exploded on impact; and that seismographs at Edinburgh reported the biggest earth tremours in England for five years. The experts at Edinburgh said the thing could only have been a meteorite. And meteorologist Keith Hindley (rapidly becoming the superstar of the craters) is quoted as saying: "Nothing will be found in the Welsh Hills."

The Daily Express, however, takes a different and altogether more stimulating tack (from the Fortean point of view). The flash, they say, could very well have been a meteorite or piece of satellite junk, 'But the experts say that this was completely unconnected with the tremor which set the observatory graphs quivering in Eskdale Muir, Dumfriesshire, and Edinburgh. The most likely cause of the tremor: an underground rock-slip. Result: A coincidence that produced a mystery flash and bang that startled thousands.' Gee - ain't science wonderful; a couple of mystery events 'explained' by a doubly mysterious (and more sinister) 'coincidence'. Fear not kids, nothing fazes Dr. Hindley. "To have made that noise and caused that tremor, a meteor would have had to weigh 20 to 30 tons. And a meteor of that size would have made a fireball so large it would have lit up the whole country and woken up half of Britain." Dr. Roy Lilwall of the Institute of Geological Sciences, Edinburgh, says "The brightness of the light in the sky was consistent with a small meteorite of a few pounds." (Credit for these cuttings to Steve Moore.)

Well - if we accept the words of Hindley and Lilwall, we are still left with the mysterious coincidence of the two events. Oh well! We'll just have to lump it with our other notes on 'coincident' bangs and flashes - but something will have to be done about it sooner or later, because a file full of 'coincidences' of a similar nature begins to smell after a while.

In the meantime, we had another letter from Phil Ledger (7 Feb) saying: "They're still talking about it on the radio. On the evening in question, there were three lots of lights ('fireballs') between 8.30 and 10.00ish, and the latest appeared to coincide with the bang, but still nothing has been found on the ground." Phil also sends us news of a most peculiar contraption 'thing' washed up on the beach near South Stack, Holyhead. There is no apparent connection with the various events in this section, and we will be getting together a report on it for next ish.

We also hope to carry the results of investigation and gathering of eye-witness reports of the Llandrillo hit next time.

## images and echoes

### MYSTERY RADIO SIGNALS.

We were pleased to receive the following write-up of an earlier enquiry from Nigel Watson, who was prompted by seeing our note on 'Ghost SOS Flares' in NEWS 2, p18. . . . .

During the August of 1971 many funny things appeared to be going on in the area of Grimsby, Lincolnshire. These centred around a mad radio-hoaxer whose activities were given quite a bit of publicity. The first cutting I want to quote from was in the Sunday Mirror of 31 Oct 71, entitled 'Joker who Squeaks'.

'The voice coming over the police radio definitely did not belong to the girl at headquarters. It was high-pitched and squeaky, and said: "Take me to your leader." And it came as the police were being swamped with calls from people who said they had seen an orange, cigar-shaped object in the sky. The message was the climax to a whole medley of noises from screeches to warbles - which have been butting in on police messages in Grimsby. Police believe a joker is at work. "He must have a knowledge of radio and our frequencies," a spokesman said yesterday. GPO & Home Office officials have been called in to sort out the tangle.'

This is in contrast to the rather more critical view published in Weekend (8/14 Dec 71.) titled 'Radio Hams.' 'They are a brilliant lot at Grimsby HQ. A right bunch of little Mairgrets in fact. They were baffled when somebody got on their patrolcar radio frequency and started broadcasting weird noises. Then there were telephoned reports of a strange orange light in the sky. Finally a sinister voice on the radio said: "Take me to your leader." After much cogitation, a police spokesman came up with: "We are beginning to think there is a joker at work." Personally, I'm beginning to think that, if that's the best the criminologists of Grimsby can do, someone should tell them about 'Z Cars'. They might learn something about the blindingly obvious.'

I doubt if the police were at all pleased about the whole affair - but being slightly curious myself, I wrote to the GPO, to see if they could shed any light on the matter, and this was the reply from the North Eastern Telecommunication Region, dated 29 Nov 71: 'In reply to your letter dated 10th Nov. 71. concerning interference to the private mobile radio of Grimsby Police, a radio service can be, and at times is, affected by interference of many types from a variety of sources. In the case of interference to Grimsby Police, our investigation has proved the source to be man-made and steps taken to suppress the interference. Nothing is known in this case or any other investigated in connexion with unidentified flying objects. Signed. MB Burrell for

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Regional Director.' Although no definite date is given in either report, it is interesting to note that during August 71 many reports were published in the local press about a radio hoaxer transmitting several distress calls, upsetting local lifeboats.

Unfortunately I did not bother to keep most of these reports, except this cutting from either the Sun or Daily Mirror, dated 21 Aug 71: 'Police have stepped up their search for a hoaxer transmitting distress calls which seem to come from ships in the North Sea. Two lifeboats searched all night in thick fog off Lincolnshire after a coaster picked up a Mayday call claiming to be from a ship on fire. It was the third unexplained Mayday call in the Whitby area in two years.'

From what I can remember, I don't think anyone was caught by the Grimsby Police. Indeed, if the mysterious radio hoaxer had been caught, I doubt if they would have taken long to deal with this anti-social menace. That case brings us to the topic of 'frame of reference' - the police, GPO and Home Office were on the lookout for a hoaxer, a mad human agency who got a kick out of transmitting distress calls from the calm waters off the Lincolnshire coast, or who liked messing about with the patrolcar frequencies.

As Peter Rogerson recently wrote\*: 'One of the most terrifying things that people can be confronted with is the random, disturbing event. Faced with one or many such events, there is a general tendency among people to try to fit them into a convenient pattern. Any pattern, however irrational and capricious, is better than no pattern at all.'

This I think leads us to a paradox - we can be found guilty of labelling things 'Ufological' or 'Fortean' just because they sound mysterious; but on the other hand we can be found guilty of rationalisation in which we can even ignore the world of 'Magonia' - a serious crime indeed.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Nigel Watson is Chairman of the Scunthorpe UFO Research Society.

\*(Merseyside UFO Bulletin 6:2. Rogerson, Peter; "Interpretation of UFO Type Data in terms of Contemporary Panics.")

#### 'TANKER BLAZE' HOAX SUSPECTED.

Well - it seems our hoaxer ham is still at it, as Nigel Watson sent this cutting through with his piece above, dated only 22 Jan 74:

Ships and planes resumed their search at first light today, after a Mayday call last night that a tanker with a dangerous cargo and a 35 man crew was about to blow up, and they were abandoning ship. A coastguard spokesman at St Margarets Bay, Kent, said: "It's beginning to look rather strange. This could have been a hoax but we are still treating it as an urgent report. The position of the ship was rather vague so we will continue to search for some time yet. French coastal officials were saying much the same: 'It seems as if this is a hoax for no vessel can

disappear in a flash in such a congested area." They added later that the description of the vessel did not match anything in their register. (Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph.)

#### RADIO SIGNALS FROM OUTER SPACE.

At the second international symposium on extra-terrestrial civilisations held in October 73 at Baku, USSR, a Soviet project was revealed that had detected signals from outside the solar system. Since 1970 radio observatories in four separate places had been monitoring the entire celestial hemisphere on wavelengths in the centimetre and decimetre bands. The signals occur every few hours and last for a few minutes - the character of the impulses, their regular form and strict periodicity 'made it possible to assume that they were of artificial origin.' The monitoring equipment was designed to eliminate earth-based signals, and identify other sources within the solar system. There is also some speculation that the signals originate from an artificial satellite within the orbit of the earth. 'Now a lengthy period of observation, analysis, and finally the development of a theory about the phenomena' will follow before the speculations can be confirmed or otherwise refuted. More details can be found in Novosti Bulletin 14499. 23 Nov 73. (If anyone is interested The Novosti Agency, is a Soviet news service that sends out free bulletins from, 3 Rosary Gardens, London SW7 4NW.)

#### IMAGE ON AN EGG.

A hen in Arkansas has laid an egg with a '6' printed neatly on it at one end. 'All the experts are baffled,' says the smartalec reporter. 'I can't think why. It's quite obvious that 'Half a dozen.' wouldn't fit.' Ho Ho!  
Daily Mail. 14 Dec 73. Credit: Steve Moore.

## meteorology

#### A ROAD IN THE CLOUDS?

The following observation of a curious effect in the clouds was originally mentioned in The Ley Hunter last year. We managed to contact the lady who witnessed the phenomenon through Paul Screeton, editor of TLH, and we publish below her reply and description. She has requested to remain anonymous.

"It is some time since I saw the phenomenon...I think that it was on a morning flight from Edinburgh in mid-January; but whether this occurred last year (1973), or in 1972 I am unable at this moment to say. I do this journey often. As I recollect, however, the weather was cloudy; the cloud lying well above the land, but we were flying a little above it so that this cloud cover was visible in detail. There was no break in it. I am afraid I cannot be accurate as to height.

"I was seated next to the window, on the left-hand-side of the plane as you face the engine. About half-an-hour before we touched down at London Heathrow I was surprised to see, on the

cloud below, an absolutely straight 'furrow', about the width of a lane, or single-track road, as though it had been cut with a 'digger' and this was soft earth, for at either side the cloud was 'rolled back'. This track ran in a SE direction as far as the eye could see, nor did it fade or change shape as I looked at it. We soon passed out of sight of it, and I have never seen such a thing again in all the flights I have made in this country, or abroad. I wondered if it could have followed the track of a Ley on the ground below, but have never had this confirmed." The lady added a rough drawing, with the post-script: "This furrow did not penetrate the cloud cover, but lay on it smoothly."

#### WEATHER CHAOS OVER BRITAIN.

All the countries of the world have a climate, so the saying goes, but only Britain has weather, which got its name from the fact that you never know for certain whether it will, or won't. Well, over the last few months it certainly has, with the worst rainfall, storms and winds on record for many a year. Freak gales at the end of the year killed three men and injured 140 others in the Bradford and Leeds areas, with widespread damage and injury reported from most of the northern counties. (Sunday Mirror 28 Nov 73. Credit: Robert Forrest.)

A freak whirlwind tore a path of destruction through the Somerset town of Crewkerne, ripping off roofs, breaking windows, and lifting garden sheds, fences and a milk-float. Fortunately there was only one casualty - a roof-tile was flung through his bedroom window hitting him on the head - of the wind described as a 'terrifying roar'. It struck at 5am during a thunderstorm. (From the Manchester Evening News and Daily Mail. 7th and 8th respectively. Credit: Peter Rogerson). The Daily Express of the 8th (these are all in January 74 - sorry) says most of the damage was caused in about 90 seconds. Then, the whirlwind appeared to leapfrog, coming down in the quiet town of Deanshanger, Northants, where it did much the same sort of thing, including uprooting elm trees. Then some 'hours later' it hit Camber in Sussex. A London Weather Bureau spokesman said "The whirlwinds are caused by a funnel-like storm cloud which gets rid of its energy by uprooting trees and the like and then rises up until an energy force is built up again, when it comes down once more. Hence the leapfrogging effect." Sounds tough on the trees, though such hostilities are conceivable - our inbuilt suspicions, however, feel uncomfortable in the presence of 'pat' explanations.

The Sunday Mercury (13 Jan 74) records a wind of 13mph for the previous day, at the Board of Trade weather station on Great Dun Fell in the Westmorland Pennines. In the continuous universe, it seems to us that 'freak' this and that cannot be considered in isolation. All this nasty weather is concurrent with the recent wave of flashes, bangs and wallops currently puzzling the various (separate) interested parties. See backward to 'Heavens Above'.

## ufos

#### MORNING SIGHTINGS.

Three printers, on their separate ways to work at dawn this morning, spotted a yellow-white cigar-shaped object in the sky over Higham Ferrers, Northants. John Bartlett was driving when he saw what he describes as: "a cigar-shaped object travelling very high in the sky, yellowish in colour and not leaving any vapour trail." Dick Craddock, looking from Irthlingborough, seemed to see it travelling towards Higham Ferrers Church and then change direction to head for Bedford. Glenn McDonald was waiting for a bus on the A6 at Barton Seagrave as the sun was coming up: "I saw a sort of straight line sharp at one end but fuzzy at the other." Sounds very much like the latter was a vapour-trail, but that contradicts the first statement. Everywhere we turn, contradictions and questions. around - perhaps that's the nature of it all.

Northampton Evening Telegraph. 26 Nov 73.  
Credit: BR Bates.

#### THE PHANTOM HELICOPTER RIDES IT OUT.

An odd sort of drama is being played out around Manchester and regions of Derbyshire and Cheshire. The Daily Mirror for 15 - 18 Jan 74 has carried stories of the spook-chopper's exploits, which include flying below the 500ft level at night, without any civil markings, without clearance, landing in fields and taking off again just as the fuzz were about to nab him. Police from four counties, including Special Branch, have been involved, it was revealed, for over 6 months in tracking down and mapping 'its' activities - and to no avail. Bearing in mind the tales of the early UFO/Airship scares, reports of the choppers' bright, stabbing spotlight are quite interesting. Curiously, red and green navigation lights were also mentioned. 'The fact that it has not violated air space, even on inky nights, or caused any danger to planes flying in and out of Manchester Ringway, brought this comment from a controller: "Whoever he is, this pilot is no fool - but he must have plenty of nerve. How he can see baffles me." One theory is that the chopper has an accomplice on the ground, somebody who lights up a makeshift flare path. Maybe, too, he refuels the chopper.' (DM 17th Jan) (Same date for the following quote from a police spokesman:)

'We have a full sightings file on him for the last six months. And more are coming in. He seems to be up and about after midnight most of the time and mainly about three in the morning. We are literally lying in wait for him. But we can only wait and watch. We have looked at places where we thought it has landed. And even though the investigations were made in daylight, we can't find any trace of a touchdown - but it is easy for us to be mistaken, easy to think it has landed when it has not. We only know it's medium-size, with a single rotor on top and a tail rotor. We feel it is coming from not too far away. It uses so much fuel when it veers off straight

flight and starts hovering and changing direction that its range becomes limited.'

The landings appear to have been, just before dawn on the 14th, near Goostrey, Cheshire; and early on the morning of the 16th near the Arclid traffic lights on the Sandbach-Congleton road, Cheshire. In both cases the copter took off as unmarked police saloons sped towards the spot. If there was a ground based accomplice with the aforementioned 'flare-paths' etc, these would have been readily visible. It is also not clear what kind of activities are involved, legal or otherwise - both the IRA and sheep-rustling have been mentioned, but the police are quick to admit that there is no evidence of either. All the cuttings involved were forwarded to us by Robert Forrest, who has been scanning all the media for further information without hearing much - except: "One TV news item circa 21-22 Jan to say it had been spotted again, but that was all." It's our guess that we haven't heard the last either.

## THAT DAMNED PROCESSION AGAIN.

By PHIL GRANT.

Question: When is a ghost not a ghost; a UFO not a UFO; and a puma not a puma?

Answer: When they all appear on a Ley line.

Well that's the riddle solved folks, now to the meat of the problem. As a Fortean I was at once attracted to the writings of Alfred Watkins - the chap who rediscovered the 'ley' or straight track system in the 1920s. He published a by now famous, or should I say infamous, book, The Old Straight Track (Garnstone Press) in which he sketches the system of alignments through pre-historic and ancient sites. Both Fort and Watkins, although the latter may have not realised it, were fighting against the same thing: so-called scientific isolationism. With Watkins it was the blinkered way the archaeologists and anthropologists approached the massive ruin in which we live, and that relates to some pretty cute thinking way back. Both were struggling to find a point, or points, of reference - a common origin in fact - for all the bizarre and scientifically damned phenomena. Possibly with the Ley system we have that very point - a key to the enigmas of the world. Let us look further.

Taking an area 35 to 45 miles around my hometown (Bournemouth) I first plotted the obvious leys - some running through such key sites as Old Sarum, Stonehenge, Maiden Castle and the Badbury Rings. Grafting first the local UFO sightings since 1950; then the local ghosts, poltergeists and spectres, I came to a dead stop. Over 90% of both phenomena fall on the lines - With the UFOs that could be plotted down to compass heading & ground position the tie-in was truly amazing. If the damned things did not appear bang over the lines and siting points, they were going in the same straight line as the ley underneath. Ghosts and 'grounded' phenomena of this sort are much easier to plot, and the ley/ghost tie-up can be proven time and time again. ALL the local black puma-type of mystery animal sightings plotted on

the same map, related to the leys. We have had about 20 puma sightings since 1964 in the area and they all fall on a ley line. This latter phenomenon seems to have some relationship to the 'Black Shuck' dog ghosts, reported down in the West Country for years.

The best way I have found to detect ley lines, apart from map and fieldwork, is to dowse for them. The same pattern of 'water' lines appear on every ley I have dowsed up to now, and judging by the results got by friends doing the same thing, we have a pattern too common to be pure coincidence. The thing has been staring us right in the face for centuries, and that's the truth.

The patterns we pick up using angle rods and pendulums are best described in 'The Pattern of The Past' (Abacus paperback) by Guy Underwood, in the section on 'Track Lines'. Underground water seems to be the main element of the leys - the UFO and ghost having a possible origin in the refraction principle of radiation or 'influence' being altered or 'bent' when in contact with a surface or 'plane', the latter in this case being the surface of the planet. Henri Mager, the French dowser, did a lot of research on the 'bands' of radiation or force given out by underground streams. These bands take on a very complex pattern of colour and wave elements from the surface of the ground up. The fact that dowsers can pick up water from a plane at over two thousand feet may be a clue to the UFO or aerial phenomena. I believe we are dealing with subjective stimuli when the UFO, ghost and similar 'transient' phenomena are encountered. The fact that the UFO often takes on a 'solid' space-age form is no proof that it is purely restricted to our modernday awareness of the external universe.

At the moment I am working with one or two others on a code that relates to the etymology of the ley place-names. So far we have uncovered some amazing coincidences. Number-letter-sound-compass direction relationships point to a once common language that consisted of simple one-syllable words - a functional 'vibratory' tongue that was far more simple than our presentday conceptualising, analogous, complex collection of utterances. It appears that we are dealing with a science that could utilise, activate or nurture natural elements simply by making certain key sounds-vibrations that set something in motion, or completed a more complex nature-man set-up. One of our little group is at this moment working out the frequencies of the local leys by taking the cross-section (contour) of the ley running over an important hill site or centre. Sea-level to sea-level is the way to determine the length, I believe. Of course this pre-supposes a lot, but we are trying all the angles to see just what comes up. The number-letter-colour code, by the way, is the same one as used by the Cabbalists.

I am collecting data for a book on the ley-UFO-ghost tie-up and would appreciate any ideas, comments or help from fellow NEWS-readers. Please write to Phil Grant: 2A New Park Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Hants, UK. and please enclose a SAE for the replies.