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LOST LAND
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JUNE 2010 • ISSUE 48

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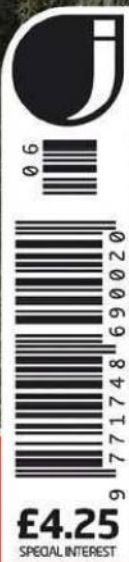
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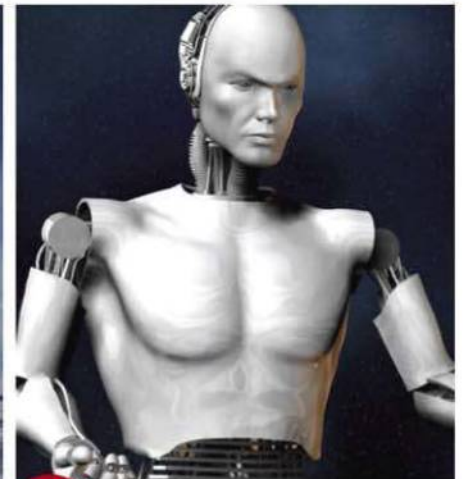
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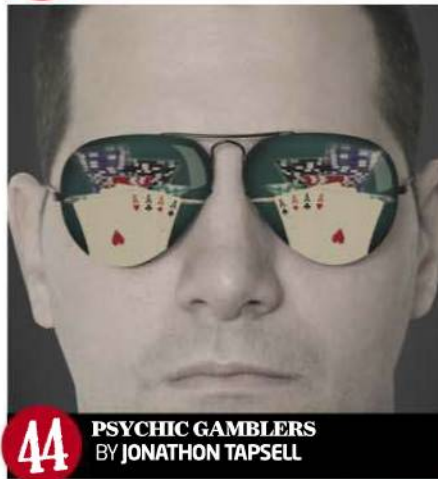
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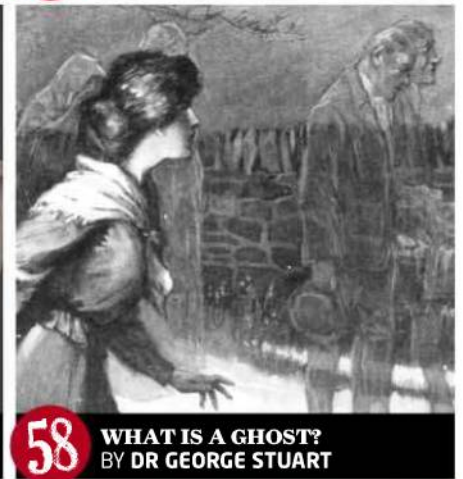
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EDITORIAL

The science faction



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A few weeks ago I had the honour of introducing the guest speaker at a charity event in my home town in Flintshire, Nick Pope. Nick, of course, is the UK UFO luminary whose years running the now defunct Ministry of Defence unit dedicated to sightings of anomalous

flying things has given him a unique insight into the phenomenon.

Nick had generously broken into his hectic schedule (he was flying off for a round of conferences the very next day) and come all the way up from London to North Wales for the event, which raised a great deal of cash for a disabled little boy. I was delighted to meet Nick, whose work I have long admired, and found him to be a charmingly self-effacing chap whose modest demeanour belied his shrewd intelligence.

Nick's topic for the night was based round the Royal Society conference on extraterrestrial life we'd flagged up in *Paranormal News* in issue 46. As he pointed out, it was a real milestone to see a formerly 'damned' subject like the possibility of visitors from space chosen as a topic worth focusing on by Britain's foremost scientific establishment.

Is this an indication of the scientific establishment beginning to open up to so-called paranormal phenomena? It would be nice to think so. Even allowing for the fact that the existence or otherwise of alien civilisations is a reassuringly technological topic compared to, say, ghosts or premonition, UFOs are still very much on the fringe.

Having said that, Nick noted that particular acronym was studiously avoided throughout the conference. But what cheered him was the numbers of scientists between lectures, gathering in the bar or café, who were, despite the official diffidence, chatting enthusiastically about UFOs and ETs.

I'm convinced many scientists are interested in the sort of stuff you and I are interested in - they just don't feel able to admit it professionally.

Which is why I'm particularly proud of having attracted so many professional scientists to the pages of *Paranormal Magazine*. We've boasted among our writers professional zoologists, anthropologists, sociologists, Egyptologists, analytical chemists and psychologists.

This month Dr Matthew Smith - the parapsychologist, not the Matt Smith who is another sort of Doctor altogether! - explains in Bookend how he is trying to develop psychic powers because he believes it is wrong to dismiss ESP out of hand. (You will no doubt recall anthropologist Jack Hunter in our previous issue writing about similarly immersing himself in the world of spiritualism with - for him - unexpectedly spooky results.)

'Many scientists are interested in the sort of stuff you and I are interested in - they just don't feel able to admit it.'

This month I am pleased to welcome Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of York St John, Dr George Stuart. George is writing on the theme of 'What is a Ghost?' And, no, he does not limit himself to the psychological or hallucinatory possibilities. On the contrary he explores a broad spectrum of theories and beliefs, spiritual to quantum physical - and I have invited other writers to add their views to this important and fascinating article, too.

So, are some scientists keen to take a wider view of the world around them than the establishment might approve? It would seem so.

Oh, and I should add that I fully expect Nick Pope to be added to our roster of writers in the near future - once he can squeeze us into his busy schedule!

Richard Holland, Editor

Paranormal News

The latest from the world of weird

Alien sheep slayers from outer space

[The Sun, Apr 5 & 10]

Claims of UK livestock being slaughtered by laser-wielding butchers from the stars.

Farmers on the Welsh Border have been left puzzled by a series of weird incidents involving their sheep.

Dead sheep have been found with 'neat holes' in their skulls and bodies, and their brains and other internal organs missing. Other carcasses have been found with their eyes missing or their flesh 'carefully stripped away', usually on the left side.

According to UFO researcher Phil Hoyle the incidents have taken place along a 50-mile 'corridor' between Shrewsbury in Shropshire and Powys in Mid Wales. The area is a well-known hotspot: a particularly famous case involved a soldier's sighting of a 'fleet' over a military base at Shawbury, near Shrewsbury, in 2008.

UFO researcher Phil Hoyle and 15 members of his Animal Pathology Field Unit told *The Sun* newspaper that they saw UFOs 'at work' one night in March at a hill farm near Radnor Forest in mid Wales. He said he had witnessed the sheep being 'lasered' by unidentified beams emanating from orange lights in the sky.

'The technology involved in these attacks is frightening. These lights and spheres are clearly not ours,' he said. 'For a short while it looked more like a *Star Wars* battle.'

Hoyle said that the day after the incident he interviewed farmers and 'all but one had some type of unusual disappearance of animals or deaths with strange injuries'.

If lasered sheep was not enough, news has just broken of jet fighters being filmed apparently chasing a UFO over the M5 near Birmingham.

The 30-second clip, revealed by *The Sun*, is believed to have been taken from a service station in the West Midlands. Nick Pope is quoted as saying it 'is one of the best videos I've seen'.

He added: 'It could be a new drone - that might explain the military jets. But you don't normally test-fly secret projects in daylight. Alternatively, this could be the real thing, a UFO in our airspace and military aircraft scrambled to intercept, probably due to it being tracked on radar.'

The MoD refused to comment on the sighting, however, and West Midlands Police said they were unaware of any reports of unidentified aircraft near the M5'.

"The technology involved in these attacks is frightening. These lights and spheres are clearly not ours."



Paranormal Shorts



CLOSE SHAVE

Rebels in Democratic Republic of Congo are reported to have kidnapped a Spanish doctor and shaved off all his body hair, believing it would give them magical powers in battle. The Congolese Information Minister said Dr Zarza Manresa had been 'shaved completely by [a rebel leader] who believes in magical fetishes made with body hair of whites'.

Nick Redfern's article on 'Occult Offensives' in issue 41 highlighted the use of such fetishes in warfare round the world. The Enyele, the ethnic group the rebels come from, believe wearing fetishes will turn bullets into water. Manresa is believed to still be a hostage but in good health.

[The Telegraph, April 10]

MAY DAY!

A Wiccan woman has been accused of killing a man with a dagger she was using to perform a pagan spring ritual. The victim, Joel Leyva, had suffered 13 stab wounds and Angela Sanford was found at the crime scene in just her underwear. She pleaded not guilty to the murder at court in Albuquerque. At the time of going to press, she was being held on a \$500,000 bond.

According to her police statement, Sanford had met Leyva a few days before the attack and invited him to join her because she was 'going up to the mountains to celebrate Beltane'.

[ABC News, Mar 24]

BIGFOOT'S GRAN?

DNA from a finger bone found in a cave in Siberia has shown that a new and previously unknown type of 'ape man' lived alongside modern humans and Neanderthals. The hominid, nicknamed 'woman X', appears only distantly related to modern humans or Neanderthals, say the researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig.

'Woman X's discovery shows that three different forms of humans lived in the Altai Mountains perhaps as recently as 30,000 year ago. The discovery may be relevant to reported sightings of the Almasty (the Russian 'wild man') and other Bigfoot-types. Do descendants of this unknown hominid still survive in the world's remote mountain wildernesses?' [Reuters, Mar 24]

Possessed Indians freed at Ghost Fair

In the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand a unique festival was held for nine days in March. Hundreds of devotees of tribal and non-tribal families participated in the Navratri festival or 'Ghost Fair' at the Sheetala Mata temple. People believed to be possessed by evil spirits were escorted to the temple where priests and sorcerers performed rituals of exorcism. The annual 'Ghost Fair' has been taking place at the ancient temple for 50 or 60 years.

[AndhraNews.net, Mar 27]

BLACK MAGIC USED IN DRUGS WAR

Catholic saints abandoned as under-siege
Mexican police turn to Voodoo for help.

Police in Tijuana, Mexico, are getting so desperate in their battles with ruthless drug barons that they have started to use 'voodoo' rituals to give them the winning edge.

Priests have been employed to slaughter chickens at the full moon and then smear officers with the blood while calling on spirits to protect them.

Violence escalated four years ago after Mexican president Felipe Calderon declared war on the drug cartels, which use the town as a staging post in their bid to smuggle the drugs into California.

More than 150 police officers have died throughout the area over the past few years. As a result, some police officers feel unable to rely on the saints – Mexico is a mainly Roman Catholic country – and have begun to turn to Haitian Voodoo, Cuban Santeria and local forms of witchcraft.

Although many officers only earn around \$300 a month, some have been prepared to pay more than half that for a tattoo of protective Voodoo spirits. Voodoo meetings in which the rituals are carried out are believed to have started about 18 months ago but only came to light when a council cleaner noticed a trail of dead chickens on the local beach.

One Tijuana policeman told a *Telegraph* reporter: 'We all know that guns and body armour are useless against the cartels because they are well-armed and can attack any time. But this is something we can believe in, that really works.'

Another former officer, who left the force a year ago after surviving a drug gang attack, added: 'Sometimes a man needs another type of faith. I was saved when they killed two of my mates. I know why I didn't die.'

[*The Telegraph*, Mar 23]



JORDAN SPOOKED

Katie Price is selling her Surrey mansion because of two ghosts that have 'put the willies up her'. The spooks are said to be a 'shadowy figure' and an old lady who frequents the upper floors of Jordan's mansion.

A friend said: 'Katie wants out of there quickly as she's convinced it's haunted by a pair of ghosts. She's seen shadows on a regular basis. She feels like she's being driven out of her own home by spirits – she's had enough. A few weeks ago she thought the ghoul had tampered with the sun bed and she can't get that out of her head.'

[News of the World, Mar 28]

JORDAN HOAXED

The desert town of Jafr in Jordan was gripped by panic after the *Al Ghad* newspaper published a front-page story about a UFO landing there. The mayor, Mohammed Mleihan, believed the story and sent security authorities in search of the aliens.

He said: 'Students didn't go to school, their parents were frightened and I almost evacuated the town's 13,000 residents. People were scared aliens would attack them.'

The newspaper immediately got in touch to apologise for the prank but Mleihan said he may sue them for all the trouble it caused.

[*The Telegraph*, Apr 5]

WHAT A PICKLE

A fake mystic healer convinced blind man Axel Pfeffer that he could give him back his sight. He fed him 'medicine' that did indeed cause all sorts of visions, and the impressed Pfeffer coughed up a total of \$30,000 as the 'treatment' continued.

But in fact conman Patrick Baecker was feeding him gherkins laced with LSD – the true source of the 'visions'. Baecker was jailed for eight months by a court in Fehrn, Germany, after it was found he'd stolen money from the former motorcyclist who had tried everything to restore his sight after losing it in a crash years before.

[bangshowbiz.com, Mar 26]

BIG DOWNER

An Australian Broadcasting Corporation reporter was on board a Qantas flight from Sydney to Singapore when a fellow passenger began to loudly claim that he was going to make the plane crash with the 'power of his mind'.

Nick Luchinelli said the middle-aged man appeared agitated and to be suffering some sort of delusion. He told the people sitting near him he was going to use mind power to bring down the flight. The stewards had no choice but to take the threat seriously, so they cuffed his arms and legs. Singaporean police boarded the flight and took charge of him after passengers disembarked.

[ABC news, Apr 6]



AT RISK:
Chimpanzees are among the primates threatened by magical traditions. Chimps are killed so that their bones can be worn as amulets.

Monkey magic threat to species

Magical beliefs and traditional folk medicine have been highlighted as an ongoing threat to endangered species of primate around the world. [The Telegraph, Mar 30]

Poaching, deforestation and habitat encroachment are threats facing many rare animal species and these are constantly monitored. But there is another threat, particularly to primates, which has gone largely overlooked.

A new survey has highlighted how supernatural beliefs, medicinal or otherwise, lead to many scarce species of monkeys and apes being killed for their body parts, accelerating their decline.

For example, in Sierra Leone, a small piece of chimpanzee bone is sometimes tied around the waists or wrists of children in the belief that it makes them stronger as they grow into adulthood. In India, the eye of the Hanuman langur is sometimes worn in an amulet to increase courage.

The survey, details of which were published in the journal of the UK Mammal Society, showed that more than a hundred species are regularly killed for their body parts, with 47 species being used for their supposed medicinal properties, 34 for use in magical or religious practices, and 20 for both purposes.

At least 30% of the primates used are administered to treat more than one ailment, making them particularly vulnerable. Spider monkey body parts, for example, are used in Bolivia to cure snake bites, spider bites, fever, coughs, colds, shoulder pain and sleeping problems.

Other monkeys or lorises have their bones or skulls ground up into powder administered with tea, or have their gall bladders ingested or blood or fat used as ointments. Gorilla parts are given to help pregnant women. The biggest threat to the scarce pygmy lorises of Vitenam is the high prices people will pay to smuggle them into China to be used in medicines.

Of the 101 primates recorded by the survey, 12 are classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as being critically endangered, 23 as endangered and 22 as vulnerable.

The survey, which was carried out by the State University of Paraiba in Brazil, did bring some good news, however. Folk beliefs can also protect primate species. The Manon people of the Republic of Guinea, for example, consider the chimpanzee sacred, with similar beliefs helping to protect long-tailed macaques in Bali and grey langurs in India.

It's possible the human-like characteristics of apes and monkeys have encouraged their magical status, when compared to most other animals.

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Psychics go behind bars

Psychics and fringe medicine practitioners are doing well in the Netherlands. The Dutch authorities are employing a range of alternative approaches to prisoners and the long-term unemployed. [The Telegraph, Mar 30]

Paul van Bree, for example, is a self-styled clairvoyant who has been hired by the prison service in the Netherlands to help jailbirds 'love themselves'.

He explained: 'I tell them that dead relatives are doing well and that they love them. That brings them peace. Big strong men burst into tears.'

Mr van Bree has claimed that by talking to the prisoners' dead parents he can gain psychological insights to help them rehabilitate.

'With my antennae I sometimes reveal more than a psychologist or a prison welfare officer,' he said. 'My work can be compared to mental health care in the widest sense of the words.'

Mr van Bree, who also publishes annual predictions of the future, told *De Tijd* magazine he is not the only psychic employed by the Dutch justice ministry.

Meanwhile - according to the report - the Dutch employment service has told long-term welfare claimants they will lose benefits unless they agree to undergo regression therapy to help them get in touch with their past lives!

More generally, thousands of Dutch people have been signing up to state-funded spiritually-based 'personal development programmes'.

Untiring polt at ghostly garage

There's a very busy ghost in South Yorkshire that never gets tired. Or at least, it never gets tired of tyres. [Daily Mail, Apr 5]

According to Nick White, owner of a tyre depot in Doncaster, a supernatural visitor has been moving tyres around his premises and stacking them up overnight. It's also fond of coins. Two 1936 pennies and two other coins of similar date have been found, on separate occasions, placed neatly on the garage floor when staff have arrived to open up.

Members of staff have also claimed to have coins thrown at them.

Mr White had heard from a former owner of the depot - which used to be a chapel - that the site was haunted but had been sceptical about it. Now he's rather more convinced.

He told the *Daily Mail*: 'It's a little bit scary knowing that there's something happening while the place is locked up at night.'

Mr White learnt from former owner Nigel Lee that the ghostly figure of a man dressed in the style of the 1940s had occasionally been seen at the depot back in 2003. In Mr Lee's time tyres were also mysteriously moved about and he presumed the apparition was responsible.

Mr White said: 'Nigel told me all about the tyres being moved around when the place was locked up at night and customers witnessing small change and stones coming out of nowhere and flying here and there.'

'It's all right being sceptical about these things, but I'm the owner of two very old pennies now, and I'd love to know where they came from.'



President Antichrist?

Poll reveals extreme views about America's first black president. Nearly a quarter of Republicans think Barack Obama is the Antichrist.

According to a controversial new survey, 14% of Americans think President Barack Obama may be the Antichrist. Split by political party, 24% of Republicans and 6% of Democrats viewed their nation's leader that way.

The results come from an online Harris Poll involving 2,320 adults who were surveyed in March. They were asked to read 15 statements and then state whether they thought they were true or false. The sample was selected from about 4 million people who had agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys and are given 'modest incentives' to do so. The results were then weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population.

The suggestion that Obama is the Antichrist is only the most extreme of a number of extreme views thrown up by the poll. For example, 32% of those surveyed believe the President is a Muslim; 29% think he wants to turn over



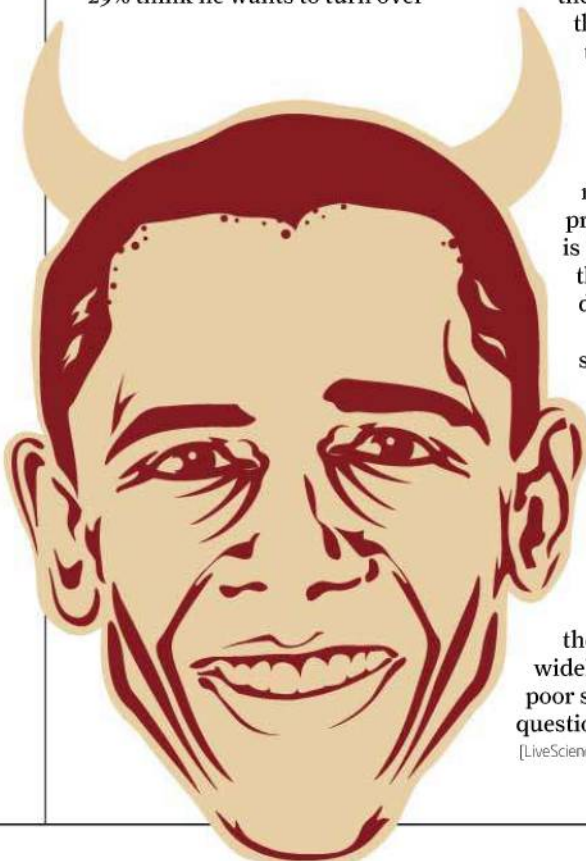
BIRTH OF A NATION'S LEADER: An anti-Obama protester in Florida, reflecting a surprisingly widely held view that the President may not be an American.

the sovereignty of the United States to a one world government; 25% say he was not born in the United States and so is not eligible to be president; 20% say he is 'doing many of the things that Hitler did'.

In addition 23% say he is a racist, or anti-American or 'wants to use an economic collapse or terrorist attack as an excuse to take dictatorial powers'.

Not surprisingly, the poll has been widely criticised for poor screening, leading questions and bias.

[LiveScience.com, Mar 26]



Gran sends boy back to Earth

A three-year-old boy was given up for dead after he was found floating face downwards in a lake near his home in Lychen, Germany. His father tried mouth-to-mouth resuscitation without success and he was airlifted to hospital where doctors also struggled to bring him back to life. [Sky News, Apr 8]

More than three hours after he was found, as the medics were about to give up and pronounce him dead, a 'miracle' occurred – his heart suddenly started beating. Paul – his surname has not been released – is making a full recovery but the apparent miracle of his revival isn't the fact that has made the world's media sit up and take notice.

When he was able to speak, he cheerfully told his mum and dad that he met his grandmother in heaven and it was she who sent him back to Earth.

He said: 'I was with Oma (granny) Emmi in Heaven. She told me to go back really quickly.'

Professor of Paediatrics Lothar Schweigerer said the extremely low temperature of the water in the lake helped Paul survive, because it slowed down his metabolism. If it had been warmer he would certainly have been brain dead after 40 minutes. Nevertheless, he called the boy's recovery a 'fantastic miracle'.

'I've been doing this job for 30 years and have never seen anything like this,' he said. 'The boy is happy and healthy. It's a wonderful thing.'

Perhaps when he's a bit more grown up, Paul can tell us what 'Heaven' was really like.

CO2 maybe be behind NDEs

Near death experiences (NDEs) may be caused by raised levels of carbon dioxide in the blood, according to researchers at the University of Maribor, Slovenia. Zalika Klemenc-Ketis worked with a team investigating NDE events in 52 cardiac arrest patients. [ScienceDaily, Apr 7]

She said: 'We found that in those patients who experienced the phenomenon, blood carbon dioxide levels were significantly higher than in those who did not.'

Of the 52 patients, 11 reported NDEs (just under 20%). Their occurrence did not correlate with patients' sex, age, level of education, religious belief, fear of death, time to recovery or drugs given during resuscitation. But they were more common in people who had previously experienced NDEs.

Klemenc-Ketis added: 'The association with carbon dioxide has never been reported before, and deserves further study.'

Carbon dioxide is a prosaic explanation for the vivid, prolonged and often euphoric nature of some NDEs – does its presence really answer the extraordinary case of three-year-old Paul in the story above?

Do people have Evil Eye beams?

Psychiatrist Colin A. Ross, MD, made it into Paranormal News way back in October 2008. We reported on Dr Ross's attempt to claim the £1 million prize off arch-sceptic James Randi by demonstrating that he could emit energy rays from his eyes. [Yahoo.com, April 5]

He failed to convince Randi (would Randi ever be convinced by anything?) but has now published experimental data that supports his hypothesis that the eyes emit energy that can be captured and measured.

His paper, 'The Electrophysiological Basis of Evil Eye Belief', is published in the journal of the American Anthropological Association. Dr Ross says his research explains why people experience the sense of being stared at only to find a person really is looking at them.

He used modified EEG neurofeedback equipment to detect the 'human ocular extramissions' (or 'eyebeams') and hopes future experiments will whether the energy 'can be harnessed through focused attention'.

The full paper by Dr Ross is available at www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/123310535/PDFSTART.

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sightings

Have you had a Sighting? Please let us know if you have seen a ghost, UFO, mystery beast or anything else strange and inexplicable. Send the details of your sighting to: editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or visit www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk



GHOSTS

TOOLED UP GHOULS: Workers restoring a church in Rutland Place, in the city of Edinburgh, are convinced ghosts are stealing their tools. They have now refused to work night shifts. Apart from the missing tools, the workforce have seen vague shadows flittering around and heard footsteps from empty parts of the building. Foreman Ross McMillan said: "People were really troubled about being here at night. On some occasions some of the guys said they wouldn't come in. It's been really quite scary. We've been seeing things, particularly in the morning when shadows just move for no reason. On night shifts, when there were just a few of us, we would hear walking noises from the upper floors - even though we knew nobody was up there." (*Edinburgh Evening News: 5th March*).

ELECTRIC BRAE: Monks are said to haunt the road around Ayrshire's natural magnetic phenomenon, the Brae, as well as the nearby Crossraguel Abbey at Maybole. It has been a long time since any reports came from the area, but I heard from a friend that a motorist in early March had a terrifying encounter after passing the Brae, heading for Denure. He braked in terror as three figures crossed the A179. The description he gave was of monks in black robes, floating off the ground, their heads covered and bowed by their hoods. They never looked up, but floated eerily away to his left. They floated in single file with the lead figure holding something to his chest in cupped hands. The incident lasted a matter of seconds, but was enough for the witness to state that he would never travel alone on that stretch of road in the dark again. (*Personal communication*).

IRISH EXORCISM: A family fled their house in terror after their son was hurled from his bed by an invisible force. Now a local priest plans to hold an exorcism on the premises. Laura Burke, her partner Ritchie and her son Kyle are too terrified to stay in the house in Hollyhill, Cork. The family have seen "glowing orbs" hovering in rooms, and religious pictures have been knocked off the walls. Laura said: "It's an evil spirit. I don't believe it means us well. We tried saying prayers in the house and the next thing all you hear is banging furniture upstairs or clothes being fired out of wardrobes." Locals said that no previous residents have reported unusual activity in the house. (*Belfast Telegraph: 20th March*).

GHOST LAGS: Now that the Victoria Road Prison, Douglas, on the Isle of Man has closed, tales of its ghostly residents are emerging. Ex-prison officer Norman Douglas Quilliam said: "There were three cells in this prison which were extremely haunted and I speak from personal experience. One night when I was sleeping in the officers' room upstairs I had the bed clothes pulled off me by, what I can only describe as, an entity. So I can say with conviction that the haunted stories from Victoria Road were true." Prisoners took to putting bibles under their bed as the phantoms banged and crashed around their cells on a night. (*BBC: 10th March*).

14 GHOSTS: Joy Hanson never believed in the ghosts that she was told haunted the Mason House Inn in Bentonsport, Iowa, at first. But after buying the property her mind has now been changed. "A little old lady" haunts one particular bedroom, and Joy reports that they have had "fourteen full bodied apparition sightings" over the years. All the usual phenomena occur at the Inn, including footsteps, door-knobs rattling, bangs and crashes, lights being turned on and off etc. Joy said: "Personally, I and my husband and daughters have seen an old man with white hair and wearing a black suit, a middle-aged man with a reddish beard and longish hair, a teen aged girl named Amanda, a boy with dark hair, the little old lady on the third floor, and the cat." (*travelparanormal.com 9th March*).

HAUNTED HOTEL: The oldest hotel in Denver USA, the Oxford, not surprisingly is the most haunted. The room with the most activity is number 320. A male ghost often frequents the downstairs ladies toilets, and there is a ghost of a little girl searching for her canary in the attic! Guests tell of strange events and visitations while they sleep. Mediums, the curious and professional investigators are all queuing up to spend a night at the hotel. (*denver.yourhub.com 12th March*).

CREEPY COOPERS: Members of The Atlantic Paranormal Society have recently conducted an investigation at the Otesaga Lake resort in Cooperstown, NY, as part of a television documentary. Tech manager Britt Griffith said: "Everybody has a ghost story in this town." The local cemetery on River Street has an eerie reputation among locals for being haunted by deceased members of the local Cooper family. A wall near Cooper Park had the strange habit of buckling. The skeleton of a Native American, who was said to be a "great Mohawk Chief", was discovered along with pipes, weapons and other artefacts. After the skeleton was found in the 1960s the wall never buckled again, according to some. (*The Daily Star, 24th March*).

MORE TAPS: The Atlantic Paranormal Society is also investigating reports of paranormal activity from the Southern Mansion in Cape May, New Jersey. Reports indicate that some people believe that a former resident, Ester Mercur, still haunts the building. Strange things began happening after a restoration, "a soldier dressed in civil war clothing" has been seen on several occasions, and a dark haired woman has also been spotted. The TAPS team had some degree of success with male voices caught on tape, and an invisible something grabbed hold of one of the investigators arms. (*Shore News Today: 8th April*).

PREDATOR: On April 2 a couple were on their way to Abilene in Texas at 07.30hrs along the 180 west bound near the bridge over Hubbard Lake, when they saw something strange run across the road. One witness reports: "It was like seeing small feet and partial legs in a fast trot across the road. It was almost like something mirroring the road surface, but visible above the road by about 10 inches or so. It reminded me of the Predator in the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. I could not see above the calf area

of the legs, except the rippled, distorted sky behind the object, about the size of a body." Only one witness saw the apparition. (*Phantoms & Monsters, April*).



UFOS

PLANE CRASH: Witnesses in Limerick, Ireland, have reported a spate of UFO sightings over the county recently. Journalist Richard Meagher took a photograph and video footage of one on his mobile phone. One witness reported a plane crash but after a search by the authorities no wreckage was found nor any planes reported missing. Explanations given for the rash of reports include that of a local man who performs aeroplane stunts and the passing of the International Space Station which has been recently visible over Ireland (although investigations found the times do not tally). (*Limerick Leader: 18th March*).

STARGATE SUFFOLK: Several friends witnessed strange lights over Rendlesham Forest in Suffolk in late March and contacted the local newspapers with their story. They saw what they describe as a UFO flying silently over the forest, and followed it in their car before it shot up at great speed and disappeared. One witness said: "There was also a man in a car whose dogs were going mad." Frightened, the witnesses left the area in a hurry. Sightings have become so regular in the area that the *Evening Star* newspaper has dedicated a "special Stargate Suffolk" page on their website for them. (One of the main reasons for illegal parking today is that they had stopped to watch a UFO according to a recent survey!). (*Evening Star: 28th March*).

DOGFIIGHT: A witness is left wondering if he witnessed a UFO battle over Slough, Berkshire, at the end of March. He saw and photographed black dots "darting around the afternoon sky, followed by explosions". The witness who observed the lights while in Sussex Place said: "It freaked me out a little bit." Other witness in the area also reported seeing UFOs. (*Maidenhead Advertiser: April 2010*).

SOLID LIGHT: On the 7th of April the witness was standing in his back garden at about 9.30pm when he saw a "constant solid light fairly low in the sky [which] stopped briefly and then moved away again." The witness captured the light on camera before it left the area, making no noise. (www.uk-ufo.co.uk).

FIREBALL: At 8.45am on the April 9 three adults witnessed an orange fire ball while standing in Todmorden town centre, Yorkshire. They watched it disappear out of sight over the town. Two more witnesses nearby caught the object on video with their mobile phone. Another witness also reports that while driving through Todmorden at the same time he saw a large oval shape "made up of light which made no noise." He followed it for a short while. (www.uk-ufo.co.uk).

ORANGE SPHERE: Early morning on April 9 several motorists on the A5 near Shrewsbury observed a large orange sphere "shoot

across the road" near Nesscliffe Village, at an altitude one witness estimates to be around 200ft. The sphere was also observed by locals the previous day. Checks were made to see if any military aircraft had been operating in the area, but turned up negative. (www.uk-ufo.co.uk).

V-FORMATION: At 10.50pm on April 9 two friends witnessed several UFOs over fields in Biddulph, Staffordshire. They saw three orange lights rising from trees close by. They ascended in a V formation, two being closer together than the third. The lights faded and as they did so two more orange lights rose from the tree line. This occurred several times. The witnesses gave no size indication, nor is it known if they checked the tree line area for anyone releasing Chinese lanterns. (www.uk-ufo.co.uk).

BIZARRE: For six consecutive nights in early March Eugen Erlikh reported that he saw "bizarre lights" from his apartment window over Lake Erie, in Cleveland. He said: "They get bright, bright, bright, different colours and then they gets dim, dim, dim and as soon as it gets dim, it starts moving towards my location." FOX 8 News visited Mr Erlikh and caught the light anomalies on camera. FOX 8 checked with NASA's Glenn Research Centre. A spokesperson said they have a few aircraft that perform routine testing, but those planes were not flying the past few nights. (FOX 8 News: 8th March).

OVER VEGAS: A couple saw unexplained lights in the skies over Las Vegas on the 15th of March at about 10pm. The couple were travelling along Highway 375 in Rachel, Nevada. The witness reported: "I noticed a bright object high up in the sky headed towards Vegas. Then more lights came into view they seemed motionless and as if they were affixed to each other." These lights then started moving left to right in the sky; at this point the witnesses began to film them. They then disappeared only to reappear a few moments later; the lights then merged into one another and left. (MUFON).

FLEET OF SPHERES: "Four spheres evenly spaced" were observed travelling across the sky by an Albuquerque couple sat in their hot tub in their garden at about 9pm, on March 21. The sighting disturbed the witnesses who immediately dried off and got dressed. While doing so more lights, about 20 of them, appeared and travelled in the same direction. One witness later reported: "The spheres were in a V pattern and all moving at the same rate of speed. The pattern was like a flock of geese and the V moved north and as it moved the front or point of the V moved back till the V became flat and evened out. The V was then a straight line and still moving at the same pace. The middle then started to move out ahead of the line it was starting to become a V pattern again until we lost sight of the objects in the north sky." (MUFON).

PURSUED BY PLANES?: At Stephenville, Texas, a witness reports: "On 03/04/2010 at approximately 20:15 I was stopped at a stop sign near Wolf Nursery and the north west loop. I noticed four orange lights to the south-west. I noticed the lights were from east to west and started to disappear one at a time. The object was moving to the east toward Granbury and was followed by what I believed to be aeroplanes that were very fast. I cannot

say that the planes following were military or not, I do know that object left after the planes arrived." (MUFON).

VOLCANIC: On April 2 video footage was taken of a disc-shaped UFO hovering around the Eyjafjoll volcano in southern Iceland at 9.45pm. The witness went to the area especially to catch on video the UFOs that have recently been reported in the locale. The volcano began erupting on March 20, and explanations given by some is that the light effects seen are due to the eruption. (Doom Daily News: 24th March).

FORMATION: Fiona Hartigan took photographs of a UFO in Chipping North, Australia, in late March. She said: "As I was about to take a picture this black object appeared and then it started to move. It started off about 800m away but it came closer - to about 400m - and then two other little round things appeared from this bright orange light above. There was no noise. It was calm and peaceful but it was very weird. The sky and the area around us was so dark, the red spot was very clear as it travelled horizontally across the sky for about three minutes and then disappeared. We were all blown away by it; we stood there for a few minutes trying to grasp what we saw." (Daily Telegraph, 24th March).

BRIGHT FLASHES: In late March several residents in Lugue, Paraguay, observed a "strange luminous object" late at night. The objects lights changed constantly. One witness, Selva Torres, said: "Its bright flashes, and its colours, impressed us all. Many of us here were watching. It wasn't your ordinary star. It moved and then remained still." The phenomenon was captured on video. (Inexplicata 30th March 2010).



CREATURES

UK ZOO: Wildlife officials in Cumbria report that a coati has been seen near Sizergh Castle in the Lake District. It is the fourth report made in 12 months of the animal. In Dorset the RSPCA rescued a raccoon from a tree in Walcott Avenue, Christchurch; its origin is unknown. An HGV driver spotted a wallaby near Long Itchingham, Warwickshire, and reported the incident to Beastwatch UK. In Northampton police issued a warning that a Burmese python was on the loose in the Lingswood Housing Estate. Described as "several feet long," it was seen slithering in undergrowth. Meanwhile, in Leicestershire the local radio station contacted Beastwatch UK with news that a "6ft black snake" had been reported by several residents along Shetland Road in Belgrave. (BBC News 7th March & www.beastwatch.co.uk)

STONEBOW JAWS: Is something nasty eating ducks in Leicestershire's Stonebow Lake? At least three adult ducks on three separate occasions have been seen to disappear under the water in a 'commotion', leaving nothing but feathers. Speculation is that it could be a pike, catfish or a turtle. Researcher Chris Mullins of Beastwatch UK lives near the lake and plans, with permission, to use his underwater cameras to locate the predator. He said: "It wouldn't be unusual for it to be some kind of exotic creature, like a snapping turtle, that

has been released into the lake by someone who lives nearby, but it may even just be that the witness saw a duck diving under the lake's surface to get weed, and resurfacing somewhere else out of their vision. (Leicester Mercury & www.beastwatch.co.uk).

GOLLUM: A witness contacted Big Cats in Britain after spotting a strange creature she and her husband saw while sitting at Fairhaven Lake, Lytham St Annes, just before midnight on March 19. They describe it as "the size of a medium dog, legs too long for its body, with limbs that seemed gnarled and twisted. Brownish in colour, no fur or ears or tail, and looked like Gollum from *Lord of the Rings*." The witness adds: "It looked up at us as soon as the headlights came on and it snarled, squinting with one eye; I guessed it was due to the light shining on it. It had a face, almost human-like but deformed in a way. It did not look happy we did that, and it looked very sad, miserable and evil." (Big Cats in Britain, April).

CHASED BY A PANTHER: A pregnant woman and her sister report they were chased across a field by a big cat near Blagreaves Lane, Sinfin, Derbyshire. They saw the large black cat in the middle of the field which turned to them, crouched and then started running towards them. One of the witnesses later reported: "We were so scared. Nicole is six months pregnant and could not run as fast as me, so I was trying to pull her quicker to get away. We kept turning around and saw the dogs running towards us but could not make out the cat. We thought any second we would hear one of the dogs howl because we thought the cat was trying to attack one of them. We were running for our lives." Despite the recent claims by English Nature, Big Cats in Britain have received 87 reports of apparent large cats loose so far this year. (This is Derbyshire 9th April).

MYSTERY MONKEY: Vernon Yates has tracked a monkey across three US states and has still not caught it. He has managed to hit it three times with a sedative dart, but the monkey's response has been to grimace and throw faeces before running off. The animal is also road traffic aware, stopping and looking both ways for cars before crossing. It has been seen sunning itself by garden pools and evades capture equally as well in an urban environment as a rural setting. It is now in Florida. No one knows where it came from but the street-wise monkey has its own Facebook site with 24,000 fans. (New York Telegraph, 24th March).

PA BIGFOOT: There has been a rash of hairy man-like creatures in Fayette County, Philadelphia, mostly around Dunbar. One teenager says the creature followed him as he rode his quad through woods. The latest sighting was made by Heath Landman, who saw something crossing the road while driving along the Ferguson Road at 9.15pm. He said: "The creature was walking at a fast pace on two feet, stood about 6 feet 3 inches tall and had a cone-shaped head. It was moving at a good clip without running, got across the road in three steps, then headed up an embankment and into a thicket. The next thing I knew, I heard my son say, "My god, Dad, what was that?" (Herald Standard 15th March).

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



Illustration by Anne Elizabeth Robinson



FORGOTTEN

A haunting in Connecticut

In 2009 *A Haunting in Connecticut* was the big spooky film of the year, until it was eclipsed by *Paranormal Activity*. But there is another case from the state that at one time was far more well-known. CT resident and journalist **TONY SPINELLI** recalls the days when a media frenzy hit his quiet neighbourhood.

I PULLED OVER TO THE KERB in Bridgeport, CT, at 966 Lindley Street, a small, white non-descript single-level bungalow, and couldn't believe the place was still there.

Thirty-five years earlier, in November of 1974, I had been a 15-year-old boy standing with a group of neighborhood friends behind big yellow police barricades that had been set up around the house. That part of the street had been closed to traffic. We had walked over there - there was also a crush of reporters and photographers on the scene - because we had heard reports on local radio station WNAB that the place was spooked, that a witness had seen the two concrete swans that sat on the front stoop twist their necks, as if they were alive.

It was straight out of a cheap horror movie, and it turned out to be one of the best-known cases of a suspected poltergeist in the US.

But as I stood there, on a chilly, overcast November afternoon before Thanksgiving, it was clear that those cold nights 35 years ago, when the world's attention seemed to have been focused on this little white house, had been forgotten.

A group of neighbourhood kids were hanging around out front, and gaped at me as I snapped off a few pictures with my cellphone camera.

'Why are you taking pictures of that house?' one of the boys, about 15, asked me.

'This place used to be famous,' I told him. 'Thirty-five years ago newspapers all over the country

were writing about what was happening here.'

The boy looked amused, but had no idea what I was talking about. He had never heard of the poltergeist case at the home in which heavy pieces of furniture and appliances floated in the air, a cat sang *Jingle Bells* in a frightening human voice, and a 10-year-old girl was lifted from a chair and thrown through the air by unseen hands.

So I am here to tell the story.

THE BOTTOM OF IT

In an era when stories of ghosts abound and television networks are full of programmes about hauntings, it must be noted that actual poltergeist cases are quite rare. This is the view of Jon Nowinski, founder and director of the Smoking Gun Research Association, a parapsychology group based in Connecticut. ●



FLASHBACK: Tony Spinelli as a teenager in 1974, as he was at the time of the haunting, which happened just round the corner from where he lived in Bridgeport. © Tony Spinelli

'First and foremost, cases like Lindley Street are very rare, although you couldn't tell by watching TV or movies,' Nowinski said. 'These cases tend to have the "fright factor" that make for good ratings, so they are the majority of what people see. After over 12 years of investigating phenomena in the field I've only come across about eight cases that I believed were truly extreme.'

Movies like *Amityville Horror* [in 1979 following the alleged haunting that took place in 1977], *Poltergeist* and recently *A Haunting in Connecticut* add to the fears of activity like this.'

Nowinski never had the opportunity to conduct his research at the Lindley Street house. If he could have, he would have looked at the individuals experiencing the phenomena, looked for environmental issues, and looked at possible psychological causes. He is one of those in the psychic community who believes much of the activity reported in supposed poltergeist cases may actually be a result of psychic energy from the people involved.

'MOST U.S. HAUNTINGS OF THE 20TH CENTURY HAPPENED QUIETLY, WITH NOBODY IN THE COMMUNITY KNOWING ABOUT IT. BUT THE LINDLEY STREET CASE WAS A MEDIA CIRCUS.'


He explained that he believes all people have psychic energy, although they may not be aware of its existence.

'But when we do things like get stressed, have a fight with someone, or even get ill, we put out a lot of psychic energy. Parapsychologists believe that that energy can be put out into a location and perhaps even cause some of the activity that is reported as poltergeist activity,' he said.

The Lindley Street case was a classic example. The activity only seemed to be focused around one family living there, and did not continue with the next owner. Once the host family was gone, the activity seems to have gone away. Actually, the activity stopped in 1974. If it were a typical ghost 'haunting' then others would have experienced the same thing when they moved in.

'So, is a poltergeist an actual entity or is it something perhaps caused by the family or someone in the family?' Nowinski said.

These poltergeist cases are typically resolved with a type of



DESTRUCTION:
Many objects were damaged in the house during the period of the 'haunting', including a crucifix which exploded into pieces while hanging on a wall. © Anne Elizabeth Robinson

exorcism ritual, either on a person in the home or on the home itself. Pentecostalist or Evangelical ministers or unofficially-responding Catholic priests – the Catholic Church does not like to own up to exorcism – are usually called in to perform the ritual, although the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport denied any relationship with the priest who presided over the Lindley Street case. House blessings are usually done first, before the more involved ritual of exorcism or deliverance is performed.

'Doing a blessing or a cleansing of a location does seem to make the activity lessen, but again the question is whether or not it's lessened because of that, or because the family experiencing it is feeling better about the situation,' Nowinski said.

'Very often people get so stressed that the only thing they can think to blame is a supernatural cause. So, in some cases where activity like this seems to be going on, simply talking to the family about keeping their energies or "vibes" positive, doing some house cleansing etc. seems to

work well. In the extreme cases, an exorcism is performed on a house or a person which is similar to what you may see in movies or TV shows.'

THE MEDIA BLITZ

The thing that set the Lindley Street case apart from other hauntings, making it unique in the annals of paranormal research even after 35 years had passed, is that from the start, the case was reported in the press.

Most US hauntings of the 20th century happened quietly, with nobody in the community the worse for knowing about it. But the Lindley Street case was a media circus.

It all started on Sunday, November 24, 1974, when Gerald Goodin, a 56-year-old blue collar labourer, and his wife Laura, a high-strung and devout Roman Catholic, also middle aged, called police to their home to help them with what they believed was an evil presence, knocking things around and making a mess of the place.

It went out as an unknown help call. Officers responded, and it made the police blotter. Local beat reporters saw the blotter and stories immediately began being filed in the local newspaper, the *Telegram*, and on the local AM radio station, WNAB. Almost instantly, a floodgate

of media interest came from across the US and Canada – Gerald Goodin was French Canadian.

Mr and Mrs Ed and Lorraine Warren, the best-known paranormal researchers of their time, were working the case. They told reporters that they believed the psychic disturbances were centered around 10-year-old Marcia Goodin, a native girl from Canada who had been adopted by the Goodins a couple of years earlier after the illness-related death of their 7-year-old son.

They had lived in the 1906-built house since 1960, and had not experienced any type of disturbances until December 1973, when Marcia was 9-years-old. Mrs Goodin was a protective mother, walking Marcia to Read School, just around the block, each day, not letting her meet other children in the neighborhood, and the girl was known to be unhappy and reclusive, referring to her orange cat as her only friend.

The Warrens believed at the time the disturbances were a combination of the psychic energy from her hurting, angry aura, and by evil spirits attracted to that aura. She had been home six weeks from school with a back injury suffered at the hands of a boy who beat her because of her native heritage. She was wearing a back brace when the case came to the attention of the Warrens.

'It was something inhuman,' Ed Warren told reporters. 'As far as we're concerned, those were evil spirits in that house.'

Warren told the *Bridgeport Sunday Post* in 1976 he believed the jealous soul of the Goodins' deceased son may have been the spirit at work.

John Gleason, Fire Chief at the time, said his men had seen dinner plates rattling, pictures jumping off the wall, a television set falling over and a heavy leather chair jumping at least six inches off the floor. A 22-page report prepared a year later by a seminary student who performed the rituals of exorcism at the house quoted Bridgeport police records – which were destroyed years later as part of what the department said was routine maintenance of vintage files – as saying officers witnessed the refrigerator rise about six inches off the floor, a 21-inch portable television rise off a table and turn around, and objects on shelves vibrate and fall to the floor.

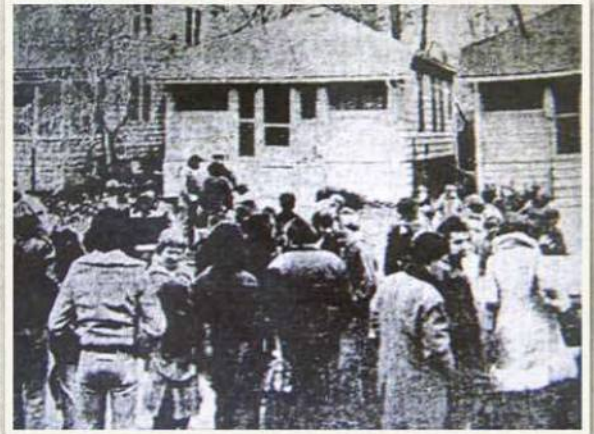
They also allegedly saw a lounge chair Marcia was sitting in move rapidly backwards and overturn.

A plastic crucifix exploded from a wall, to become one of many supernatural collectibles at the home of the Warrens.

But young Marcia was also described as a deceitful girl with an unhealthy interest in the occult. Researchers noted years later that the incidents at the home began shortly after the release of the 1973 film *The Exorcist*, which excited the public imagination with its tale of a demonically-possessed girl.

At the time, long before the New Age and before knowledge about the paranormal was as widespread and readily available as it is today on the Internet, people were less familiar with parapsychology and frightened by it. Some of the early newspaper reports even used words like ghost and demon to describe what was happening in the house, although researchers today would tell you that a poltergeist is neither a common ghost nor a demon.

The media frenzy was short-lived, though. By November 26 the city's police boss, Police Supt Joseph Walsh, coaxed a confession out of the girl that she was making the cat talk with ventriloquism and



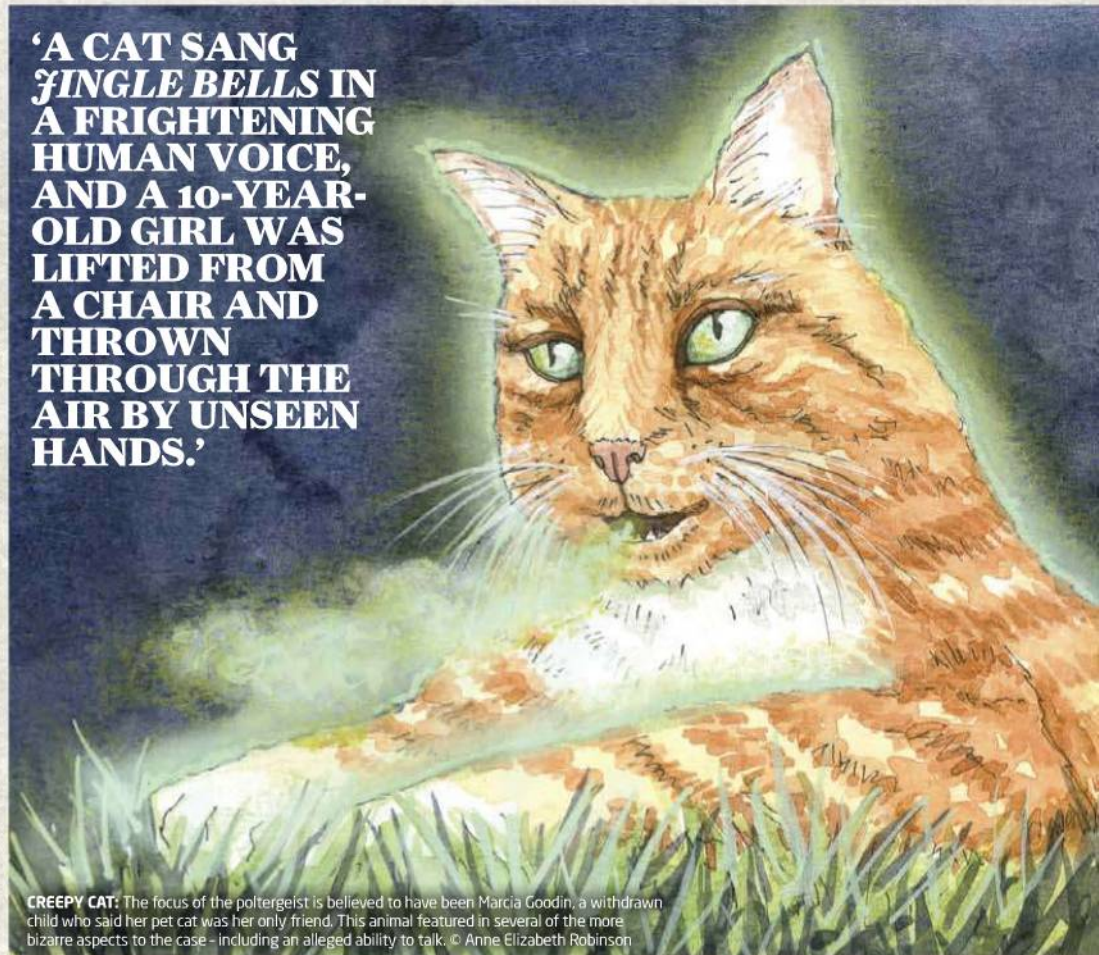
pushing objects with her leg when nobody was looking. Walsh called a press conference and called the entire affair a hoax.

Researchers later contended that they believed the Lindley Street case was a mixture of both real phenomena and obvious tricks like the girl admitted to, in an effort to gain attention. They never conceded like Walsh that the case was a fully blown hoax.

'I know the things that I saw and the things the police saw in my presence, and it was real,' said the Rev Bill Charbonneau, who was

ATTENTION: A significant aspect to the Lindley Street case is the column inches it gained in the press. This newspaper photo shows crowds of reporters and curious residents gathered outside the house in the hope of glimpsing something inexplicable. © Tony Spinelli

'A CAT SANG JINGLE BELLS IN A FRIGHTENING HUMAN VOICE, AND A 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS LIFTED FROM A CHAIR AND THROWN THROUGH THE AIR BY UNSEEN HANDS.'



CREEPY CAT: The focus of the poltergeist is believed to have been Marcia Goodin, a withdrawn child who said her pet cat was her only friend. This animal featured in several of the more bizarre aspects to the case – including an alleged ability to talk. © Anne Elizabeth Robinson

The other Connecticut haunting

The Southington, Connecticut, case which has become better known thanks to a TV show and subsequent movie, was first presented in a book called *In A Dark Place* by Ray Garton, published in 1987. The activities reported by the Snedeker family included poltergeist activity which mum Carmen believed was caused by 'demons'. These demons, which Carmen claimed to have seen, were quite exotic: one was dressed in a tuxedo, another had a sinister smile which stretched far enough to reach his eyes. Their interest seemed to focus on her teenage son, who was being treated for cancer.

The case was investigated by Ed and Lorraine Warren, who also investigated the Bridgeport haunting. They said they experienced many strange things in the house but a great deal of doubt seems to have since attached to the case. Subsequent researchers have poured cold water on it and even Ray Garton seems to have had his suspicions. He is quoted as saying: 'I never met the son, although I was allowed to talk to him on the phone once, supervised by Carmen. When the boy told me he didn't hear and see strange things in the house once he began taking his medication, Carmen ended the conversation.'

A handy Wikipedia entry on the case is available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Haunting_in_Connecticut

the priest on the scene at the time, although not with official Catholic Diocese approval. He made the comment to the *Connecticut Post* in 1995. 'It certainly was not explicable in normal terms.'

The Lindley Street case may have faded from memory for many residents of the city, but in paranormal research circles it remained one of the most documented poltergeist cases in history. Modern-day paranormal researchers are only dismayed that the police records of the case were destroyed as part of a pre-computer era purging of old records. Most of the accounts of what happened are what was published in the newspapers at the time.

The names of the officers at the scene were published in the newspapers in 1974. A number of them have died. I spoke with one of them, who did not want to be interviewed because he is trying to forget the incident and put it behind him, and from what he said it would appear the destroyed police records indeed included detailed reports by officers of the strange phenomena they had witnessed and could not explain.

'I saw the refrigerator move. I know what I saw,' he said. 'The police superintendent had said the witnesses at the scene suffered from overactive imaginations. A little girl did not do that. Could not do that.'

THE FINAL WORD

Of all the witnesses at the scene, the ones you would expect to be the most skeptical and honest in their recounting of the tale are the reporters who were there. One of the reporters did not include his personal observations in the stories he wrote at the time, but he said in an



CHILLING: One incident which continued to puzzle both hardened police officers and newspaper reporters long after the event was the apparent levitation of a fridge - something impossible for a small girl to fake.
© Anne Elizabeth Robinson

“THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT SAID WITNESSES AT THE SCENE SUFFERED FROM OVERACTIVE IMAGINATIONS. I KNOW WHAT I SAW. A LITTLE GIRL COULD NOT DO THAT.”

interview he believes the police called the case a hoax deliberately to run the press off. The city and its police department had become the focus of national attention it did not want.

'I thought at the time that her confession was a pretty convenient way for the cops to quiet things down and restore order, that it would not have been hard for a seasoned interrogator to figure out a way to get a 10-year-old kid to say what he wanted her to say.'

'Right now, I still don't know how to explain all of the things that were supposedly going on. Most of them could have been a hoax, I suppose. But what about that levitating refrigerator? To this day, that puzzles me.'

The Goodin family continued to live quietly in the home for many years after that. Mrs Goodin died in a car crash in Monroe in 1994 and Mr Goodin continued to live in the home until at least the late 1990s. He passed

away some years ago. Efforts were made to contact Marcia Goodin, who would today be middle-aged, but she could not be reached.

EPILOGUE

I drove away from the house at 966 Lindley Street with the impression that it did not look like the haunted houses you see in movies, certainly not like the one in the movie *Amityville Horror*. Indeed no film was made about the Lindley Street case. Apparently the police records of the case were destroyed; they are believed only to exist in transcriptions made in private reports and perhaps one book.

If even kids in the neighborhood are not aware of what happened there 35 years ago, it is may be the city would rather put the case behind it. But like it or not the Lindley Street poltergeist case remains the best documented case in US history. ●

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DOING DEALS WITH DEMONS

Can people in the modern world really summon up demons? Yes they can, claims **DUNCAN BARFORD**, and using a book readily available on the high street. Whether or not they are truly infernal spirits isn't the point, Duncan argues - he has plenty of first-hand experience to convince him they must be left well alone.

THERE'S A VOLUME you'll find on every occultist's bookshelf: *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, more commonly known as *The Goetia* (an Ancient Greek word derived from a root meaning 'to moan' or 'to howl'). It's a book containing names, pictures and descriptions of 72 demons imprisoned by the biblical King Solomon in a brass vessel, but available to perform the bidding of any magician who follows the correct procedures and precautions.

Wherever modern magicians gather you're likely to hear them whispering war-stories concerning the shocking effects of this book. I happen to know this because I'm one of the veterans, too.

The demons have wonderfully exotic names, such as Shax, Gremory and Glasya-Labolas; and some impressive abilities to go with them, including 'the building of Towers and the overthrow of Great Stone Walls', and 'to maketh men to die in Three Days by Putrefying Wounds' (although others, such as 'he can teach Geometry perfectly', don't sound quite so sexy).

If you're brave enough to perform the ritual for evoking these demons, you'll be using some of the classic paraphernalia of black magick. The essential components include a circular boundary marked onto the floor, which the magician must stay ☉

THE GOETIA: A recent reprint of this essential item on every magician's bookshelf, from the author's own collection.

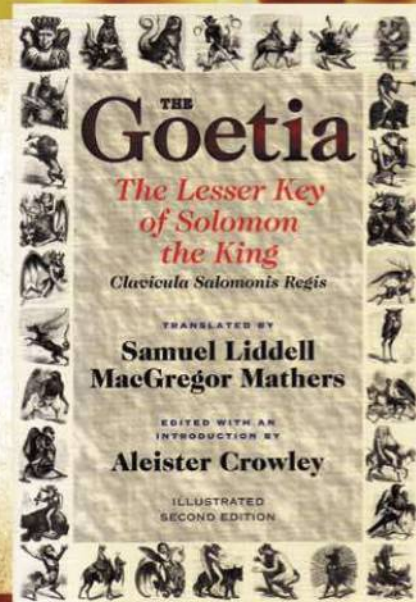
LITTLE BLACK BOOK

The Lesser Key of Solomon the King or *Lemegeton* is a grimoire (a book of magical spells) whose earliest sources date to the 16th century. The first and second parts of the book contain descriptions of 72 demons supposedly captured and used by King Solomon to bring him wealth and power, along with instructions to enable any magician (or 'exorcist' as the book puts it) to do the same.

Ars Goetia is the title of the first part of *The Lesser Key*, containing the descriptions of the demons, and so 'Goetia' has since become a general term that refers to this text, to the hierarchy of demons described therein, and to the practice of evoking them. The descriptions consist of the demons' names, their rank in the demonic hierarchy, and the number of spirits under their command. A list of the special powers of each demon is given, which assists the magician in choosing the one most appropriate to whatever task lies at hand.

Most importantly, the book supplies a magical seal or sign for each, which binds the demon to the magician's will, and can also serve - during the summoning ritual - as a visual representation of the demon itself.

In 1904 an edition of the *Goetia* was published by master magician Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), which is still widely in use today and includes Crowley's additional and explanatory material. Crowley used the *Goetia* throughout his career, often as a tool for self-exploration rather than simply for low sorcery. There is a famous anecdote about Crowley's magical mentor, Allan Bennett (1872-1923), accusing the young Crowley of 'meddling with the *Goetia*'. Crowley denied this (falsely), stating that he was 'unworthy even to pronounce the word'. 'In that case,' Bennett replied, 'the *Goetia* has been meddling with you!'



BAEL: One of the demons listed in the Goetia. 'He appeareth in divers shapes, sometimes like a Cat, sometimes like a Toad, and sometimes like a Man, and sometimes like all these..' An engraving by Louis Breton c. 1800.

inside for his or her protection, and also a triangle – to the east of the circle – which, if all goes to plan, will hopefully confine the demon after it has materialised. In addition, various amulets, talismans, incense, prayers and magical words of power also play a role in summoning the demon and keeping it under control.

Sounds unlikely? Well, that's exactly what I thought, too, the first time I turned my front room into a smoke-filled magical temple and gave it a try. At the time I'd recently become interested in the occult and supposed that summoning demons was what magicians did. I was about to learn the hard way that there are far safer forms of magick for beginners.

I needed some cash, so I decided to summon a demon who 'steals money out of the houses of Kings'. A couple of days afterwards I was standing in a shop queue. The man in front was fiddling with his wallet when a rolled-up wad of cash fell out of his trousers onto the floor. Weirdly, as I bent and picked it up, everyone in the shop seemed to have entered a trance. I realised that none of them had seen me retrieve the money and I could have easily put it in my pocket. But I'm glad to say I gave it back.



That was the moment I learnt that the *The Goetia* is a very dirty form of magick.

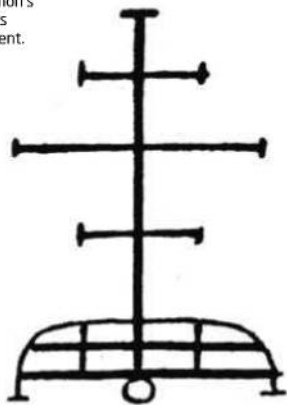
You might say it was coincidence that I happened to be standing behind the man, and that the cash would have dropped out anyway. I'd agree, of course, except that it didn't 'just' happen;

I performed a ritual to *make* something like this occur.

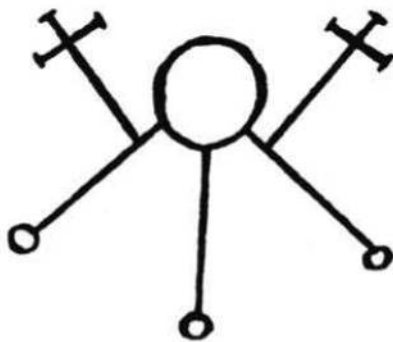
You see, magick works in a way more subtle than most people assume, by changing our perceptions. Magick can't cause £20 notes to drop out of thin air, but it can allow us to perceive events in our lives in a way that

'WHEREVER MODERN MAGICIANS GATHER YOU'RE LIKELY TO HEAR THEM WHISPERING WAR-STORIES CONCERNING THE SHOCKING EFFECTS OF THIS BOOK.'

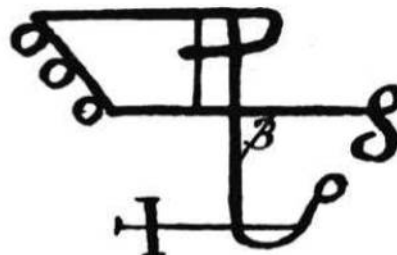
IDENTS: Examples of demonic seals. In a ritual, the demon's seal becomes its living embodiment.



THE SEAL OF GAMYGYN



THE SEAL OF MARBAS



THE SEAL OF VALEFOR



DEVIL'S TRIANGLE:
The Triangle of Art, containing incense and the demon's seal. Into the triangle the demon is summoned and confined. © Julia Ingle

SPELLED OUT: A page of magical sigils from *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, just a small part of the rituals used to summon demons.

makes it seem those twenties intentionally appeared.

Before we rashly conclude magick is simply the art of self-delusion, however, consider the following incident that I personally witnessed. A friend of mine asked a *Goetia* demon to obtain him some camping equipment that he needed but couldn't afford. (Like you do!) A few days later he noticed a man looking forlorn and distressed outside. My friend comes from a more genial country than England, so he invited the man in for coffee. The man had left his girlfriend and had arrived in town homeless, with nothing but the rucksack on his back. After talking things through with my friend they both decided the best thing for him was to return home.

As he left, he insisted that my friend accept the rucksack as a parting gift. Can you guess what was inside? That's right, exactly the kind of tent and sleeping bag my friend had asked for...

Surely, only coincidence yet again – and it would be self-delusion to

think otherwise! But I'd suggest it might be wiser to take the view that everything we consider 'real' is in fact simply another instance of 'self-delusion'. Magick, by enabling us to choose one form of self-delusion over another, has a power equivalent to changing 'reality' – but not in the simplistic way people commonly imagine magicians to mean.

You might be wondering why – if magick merely boils down to a kind of psychology – we should suppose the demons of the *Goetia* are in any sense *real*. Aren't they just in our minds?

It has to be admitted that anyone who expects a physical imp-like creature to pop up in the triangle like a movie special effect will probably be disappointed. But to assume that because this hasn't happened the ritual has failed is to dice with danger, because demons can assume far more subtle forms.

In one ritual I performed the demon manifested as a wailing voice from inside the wall of my living-room. Granted, this may



'THAT WAS THE MOMENT I LEARNT THAT THE GOETIA IS A VERY DIRTY FORM OF MAGICK.'

have been noises from next-door, but it still responded in all the right places when I asked it questions – so what else was I supposed to think? Often, the form is even more insubstantial, such as involuntary flashes of thoughts or images in the magician's own mind, or even just a spooky sense of 'presence' inside the triangle. After another ritual, an indefinable sense of merely 'something nasty' lingered in my flat for days – which brings me back to my main point: *Goetia* is dirty magick with unpleasant side-effects.

On another occasion a small group of us performed a summoning. Afterwards we went to unwind at the home of the couple who ran the group. During our conversation, one of the group was offended by some comments our hostess made and stormed off in a temper. This behaviour wasn't out of character for him, so we thought little of it and the conversation continued. An hour later, however, the doorbell rang. Answering it, our

'MAGICK, BY ENABLING US TO CHOOSE ONE FORM OF SELF-DELUSION OVER ANOTHER, HAS A POWER EQUIVALENT TO CHANGING REALITY.'

MALPHAS: 'He can build Houses and High Towers, and can bring to thy Knowledge Enemies' Desires and Thoughts.'



hostess was presented with a dead cat by a neighbour who had just witnessed it being run over. Luckily it wasn't our hostess's cat, but she was distressed by the incident and broke down in tears.

When we told this later to the person who had stormed out he was unable to conceal his delight. He confessed that after leaving he'd been so angry that he had summoned one of the demons and commanded it to punish the hostess. Slightly to his credit, he was full of remorse when he heard how upset she'd been.

When practising magick, demons may not present themselves as 'real' in the usual sense, but the way in which they have a psychological dimension only makes them more dangerous.

It may not involve 360 degree head-spins or green vomit, but

cases of 'possession' in people who use the *Goetia* too much are unfortunately not rare. A demon isn't anything if it doesn't have our attention or belief, so – like a Dawkinsian 'meme', an advertising campaign or a catchy jingle – demons thrive the more we use and think about them.

I've encountered people using *The Goetia* to achieve goals that are only ever realised partially, or in a skewed way that seems designed to keep them coming back eternally for more. Whether this is simply down to their personalities – or something else entirely – I wouldn't dare to presume, but like junkies or gamblers they'll often talk about how they'll give it up once they gain that big result they're after. These are also the people most likely to decide that a protective circle isn't really necessary, because those 'poor demons' don't



DEMON'S SEAL: The seal has here been drawn onto a CD and is accompanied by protective amulets and a ceremonial dagger (or 'athame'). © Julia Ingle



NO PARTNERSHIP:
The author believes evoking the Goetian demons, whatever their true origins, will only lead to trouble for the magician – including a kind of addiction as hoped for solutions are only partly realised or strangely skewed from the planned intention.



Duncan Barford has pursued a long and active interest in the paranormal, esoterica and the occult. He is a practising magician with a hands-on attitude to occultism, and is particularly interested in the relationship between spiritual enlightenment and western esoteric traditions. He is the co-host of a website for cutting-edge magick, www.thebaptistshead.co.uk, and author of *Occult Experiments in the Home* (Aeon Books, 2010).

‘DEMONS MAY NOT PRESENT THEMSELVES AS REAL IN THE USUAL SENSE, BUT THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION ONLY MAKES THEM MORE DANGEROUS.’

deserve their bad reputations and are really on our side.

The reason why *The Goetia* is destructive and has such bad effects is because that's precisely what it sets out to do. The reader of *The Lesser Key* is left in no doubt that the demons will screw the magician over royally, given half a chance. Magick, let's remember, is the art of changing our perceptions to change our reality, so if the demons are presented to us as evil and dangerous then that is exactly what we will get.

My advice to anyone who asks is to steer well clear of the *Goetia*, unless you're an experienced magician. There's no need to meddle with such a dodgy group of characters when there are other magical systems that work with far more benevolent beings – such as Enochian angel magick, or the Holy Guardian Angel.

All magical practices, ouija boards and tarot cards included, pose a certain risk to users who may be psychologically vulnerable to them. The *Goetia*, I think, is perhaps the most dangerous system of all. I try to encourage people to think twice about it, but I'm not naive enough to imagine that what I say will dissuade anyone.

In magick, as in many other fields of human knowledge, sometimes the hard way is unfortunately the only way to learn. ☉



ASTAROTH: 'Thou must in no wise let him approach too near unto thee, lest he do thee damage by his Noisome Breath.'



Atlantis: The unusual suspects

NIGEL WOOLSEY outlines five of the lesser-known and in some cases quite bizarre, locations for the lost land of legend.

SINCE PLATO FIRST WROTE of the mythical lost island continent of Atlantis countless individuals through the centuries have wondered about its location. The most common perception is that, if such a place existed at all, then it sank beneath the waves of the Atlantic Ocean but this is by no means the only theory. Over the intervening centuries many other sites around the world (and even beyond it) have been proposed as the home of the fabled civilisation that perished in a terrible cataclysm.

Presented here are five of the more unusual and little known locations where it has been said the ruins of Atlantis still lie, awaiting re-discovery.

1) **THE SAHARA DESERT**

Considering Atlantis was said to have slid beneath the waves in a watery demise, the idea that Plato's lost continent was located in one of the driest places on Earth may seem a little counter-intuitive, to say the least. This surprising theory was first postulated by a French botanist, D. A. Godron, in 1868. Godron believed the fabled civilisation had in fact been swallowed by the sands of the Sahara desert.

Interestingly, over 13,000 years ago, the Sahara region was a much more pleasant environment, enjoying a wetter climate, lush vegetation and an apparent abundance of wildlife. In addition, Neolithic cave

SANDS OF TIME:

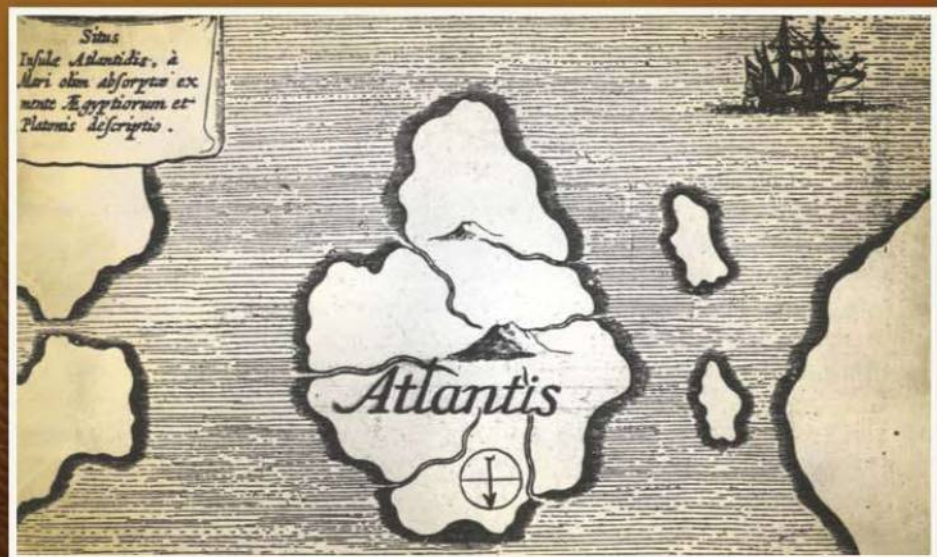
Although the earliest references to Atlantis state quite clearly it was destroyed in a watery deluge, there is a theory that the great civilisation was actually engulfed by the sands of the Sahara desert.

paintings found in the Tassili mountains of Southern Algeria depict a verdant savannah with large animals, such as crocodiles, and people engaging in hunting and dancing.

Intriguingly, North Africa was also home to the great Egyptian civilisation which some people believe may have inherited some of Atlantis's advanced knowledge and building skills from its survivors. Some have even pointed to the naming of the nearby Atlas Mountains as proof of an Atlantean connection.

If this unusual theory is to be believed then Atlantis was not overwhelmed in a great upheaval in the course of a single day and night. Rather it was gradually lost beneath the encroaching sands as the climate of the Sahara region became increasingly arid and inhospitable. However, it is difficult to reconcile such a scenario with two of the basic facts as laid out by Plato - namely that Atlantis was located beyond the Pillars of Hercules (ie outside of the Mediterranean) and that it sank suddenly beneath the ocean in a day of destruction rather than a gradual abandonment as would seem to be the case here.

LEGENDARY: An early map showing Atlantis clearly as an island with one prominent feature - a mountain or more likely the volcano, presumed to have destroyed it.



'IF THIS UNUSUAL THEORY IS TO BE BELIEVED ATLANTIS WAS GRADUALLY LOST BENEATH ENCROACHING SANDS.'

2) ANTARCTICA

The polar opposite (pardon the pun) of the above theory sees Atlantis buried beneath countless tons of ice and snow in one of the world's coldest locations. The idea of Antarctica as the graveyard of the first great civilisation has been put forward by several well-known researchers such as Charles Hapgood, Rand and Rose Flem-Ath, Charles Berlitz and Graham

Hancock. One of the pieces of evidence in support of this theory is the famous Turkish Piri Reis map, drawn in 1513, which apparently shows regions of the southern polar continent as ice-free; a situation which current scientific belief says has not been the case in the last 100,000 years. It has been suggested that the Piri Reis map was compiled from charts from a far earlier epoch, originating with a previously



UNDER THE ICE:
Could Antarctica have been a temperate zone in comparatively recent prehistory? Perhaps the frozen continent was once on a different latitude or warmed by subterranean heat. This stunning photo by August Allen is of Mt Erebus, the last active volcano in Antarctica. © August Allen

'THE IDEA OF ANTARCTICA AS THE GRAVEYARD OF THE FIRST GREAT CIVILISATION HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD BY SEVERAL WELL-KNOWN RESEARCHERS.'

Earth's crust thrust it into the frigid grip of the South Pole. However, recent scientific investigation has produced evidence that Earth's spin axis has not deviated significantly in the last 130 million years.

Despite some difficulties with regard to an ice-free Antarctica-as-Atlantis this remains a popular theory. There is something tragically romantic about a lost civilisation being brought to ruin by the sudden glaciation of their homeland. Perhaps, one day great megalithic structures, as seen in both Egypt and South America might be discovered beneath the harsh ice of this desolate continent.

3) SWEDEN

That the Scandinavian country of Sweden was in fact the vanished Atlantis may well raise a few eyebrows amongst even the most ardent and open-minded supporters of alternative archaeology. However, this was the theory advanced by Olaus (or Olof) Rudbeck, a Swedish Doctor, in his colossal work, *Atlantica*. Born in 1630 Rudbeck was convinced that the dating of the supposed destruction of Atlantis was not some 9,000 years before Solon's visit to Egypt, as Plato described, but rather only 900 years – thereby placing the catastrophe at around 1500 BC. At this time the physician asserted that the Swedish people ruled over much of both Europe and the Mediterranean countries.

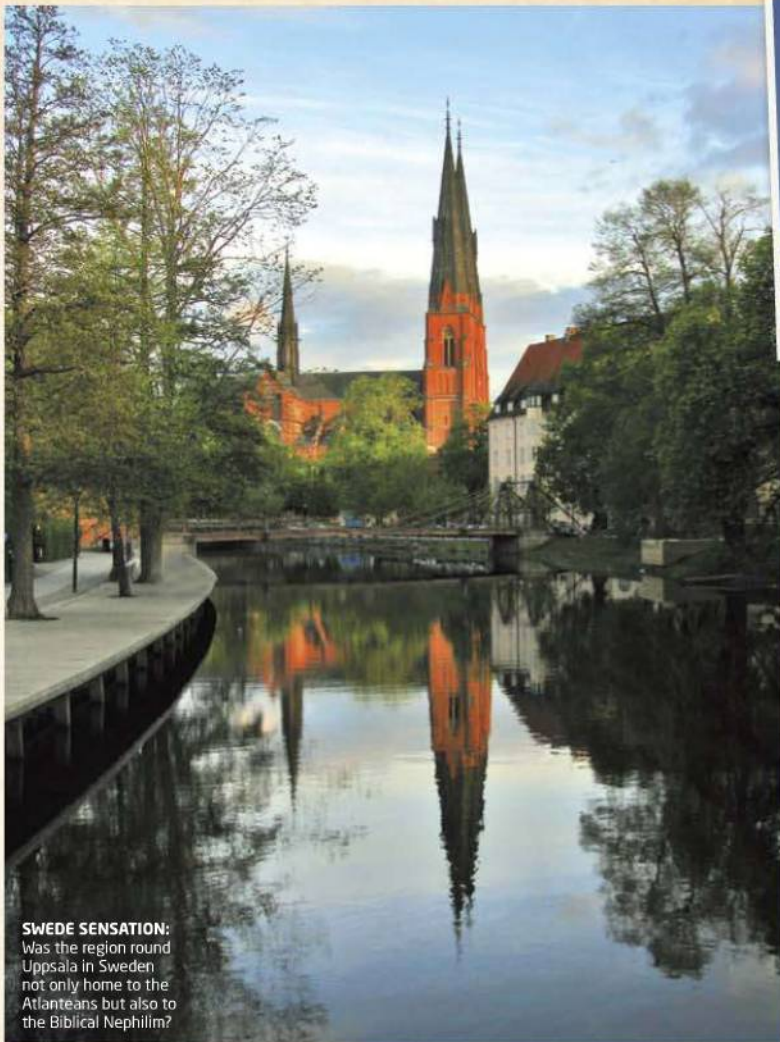
To lend weight to his theory Rudbeck apparently also discovered the remains of very tall people in burial mounds located to the north of the town of Old Uppsala near modern day Stockholm. Perhaps a further speculation could be advanced that these very tall Swedish Atlanteans were the Biblical Nephilim or giants

unknown civilisation of sea-faring peoples who had explored much of the globe in pre-history. Some have gone even further and advanced the theory that such cartography was the work of visiting extraterrestrials drawing maps from orbit and supplying these to the primitive inhabitants of Earth.

Leaving aside the question of alien visitation, if Antarctica was once inhabited by an advanced civilisation then it must once have had a much warmer and more temperate climate. To account for

this Charles Hapgood proposed a mechanism he called 'Earth Crustal Displacement' – namely that the entire outer crust of the Earth was capable of dramatic shifts around the inner molten core – as he puts it in his book *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*: 'Much as the skin of an orange, if it were loose, might shift over the inner part of the orange, all in one piece.'

By this theory Antarctica might have been located much closer to the equator before the sudden and dramatic movement of the



SWEDEN SENSATION: Was the region round Uppsala in Sweden not only home to the Atlanteans but also to the Biblical Nephilim?

as described in the Old Testament? Despite being one of the less well known locations for Atlantis today Rudbeck's theory did attract some surprising interest in its time, with even Sir Isaac Newton writing to request a personal copy of his multi-volume book.

Sadly, the theory itself does not seem to have many modern supporters – two principle stumbling blocks would seem to be both the revision of Plato's timescale for the collapse of the Atlantean empire and the fact that surely a Swedish dominion stretching across Europe to the shores of the Mediterranean and beyond could not have vanished in such comparatively recent times without leaving any trace in the archaeological or historical record.

However, the story of Olof Rudbeck and his search for Swedish links to the Atlantis legend are explored in David King's 2002 book *Finding Atlantis: A true story of Genius, Madness and an Extraordinary Quest for a Lost World.*

ORIGIN: It is to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato that we owe the first account of Atlantis.



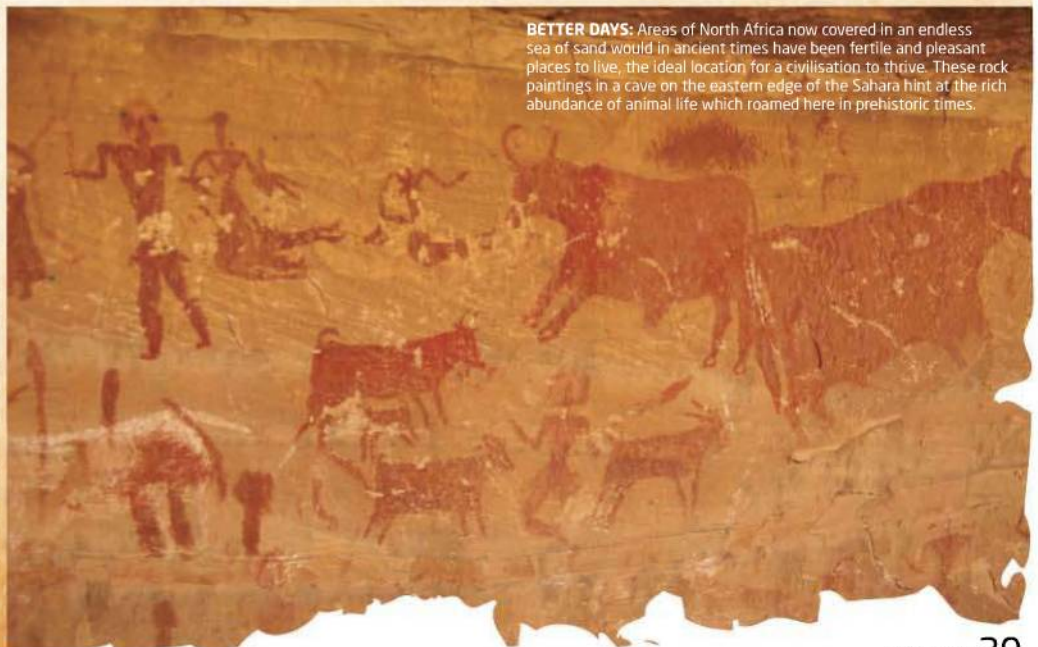
'IN 1997 RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS BELIEVED THEY HAD LOCATED ATLANTIS ROUGHLY 100 MILES OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH-WEST BRITAIN.'

impressive megalithic structures which have long been the focus for a great deal of mystery and speculation as to their original builders and purposes – not least of which are the world famous Newgrange in Ireland and Stonehenge in the UK.

In 1997 Russian scientists believed they had located Atlantis roughly 100 miles off the coast of South-West Britain. This centred around the Little Sole Bank which, as a relatively shallow underwater feature, might have been dry land during the last ice-age when sea levels were lower than they are at present. Quite why the Russian team believed this sand bank to be the location of Atlantis is a little unclear although it must be acknowledged that it is, at least, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, as Plato indicated. ●

4) BRITAIN AND IRELAND

It may come as a surprise to many British and Irish readers that these two countries and the surrounding seas have all featured in theories as locations for the lost civilisation of Atlantis. Both are able to boast



BETTER DAYS: Areas of North Africa now covered in an endless sea of sand would in ancient times have been fertile and pleasant places to live, the ideal location for a civilisation to thrive. These rock paintings in a cave on the eastern edge of the Sahara hint at the rich abundance of animal life which roamed here in prehistoric times.

MYSTIC MEGALITHS:

Atlantis has also been placed among the British Isles, with megalithic structures like Stonehenge presented as examples of the remnants of an Atlantean civilisation.

'LEWIS SPENCE PLACED THE LOST CIVILISATION BETWEEN BRITAIN AND FRANCE ON THE CELTIC SHELF.'

Coincidentally, the idea that Ireland was in fact Atlantis was advanced by a Swedish geographer, Dr Ulf Erlingsson in his 2004 book, *Atlantis from a Geographer's Perspective*. This seems a strange twist of fate as the said Dr Erlingsson was from Uppsala University - the same Uppsala near Stockholm that his fellow countryman, Olof Rudbeck, had pinpointed three hundred years earlier as being central to the idea that Sweden was in fact Atlantis, as detailed above.

Erlingsson theorised that the Atlantean state was actually

the Neolithic Tomb culture as evidenced in several of Ireland's magnificent ancient stone megalithic structures. This, together with the flooding of the Dogger Bank area of the North Sea during the melting of the ice sheets around 6100 BC, and a subsequent tsunami led to the devastation of this region as Plato described. Curiously, it must be acknowledged that prehistoric remains, such as moor peat, mammoth and rhinoceros teeth and even Palaeolithic hunting artefacts have in fact been dredged up by fishing trawlers working the area of the Dogger Bank.

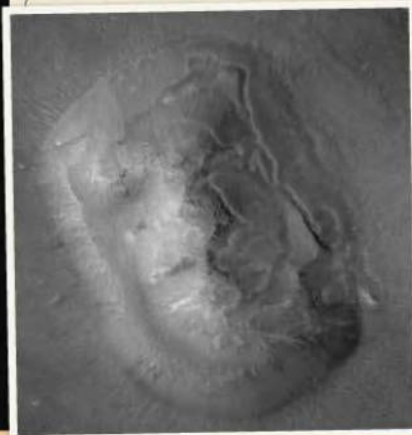
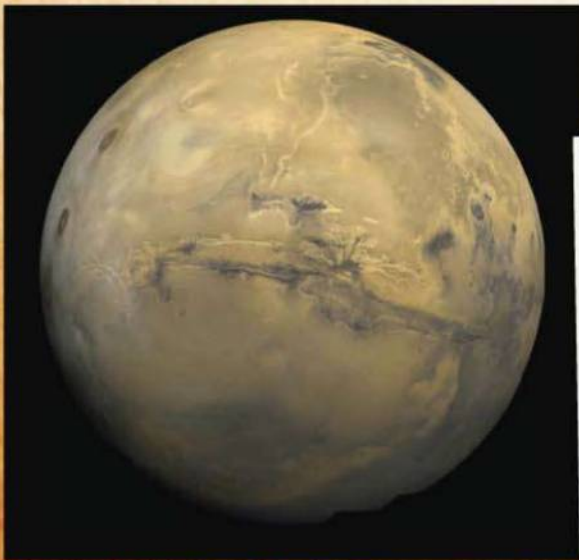
FALSE FACE: The rock on Mars that appeared to show a face on orbital scans carried out in 1976. No face or any other artificial carving was apparent in 2001 after an orbital scan using vastly improved technology.

This, however, is not the only theory to have placed Atlantis in the North Sea - one of the most prolific 20th century writers on Atlantis, Lewis Spence, placed the lost civilisation between Britain and France on the Celtic shelf. Even as recently as September 2007 The *Sunday Times* newspaper reported that scientists from the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity at Birmingham University had discovered human settlements, salt marshes and even coastlines in the North Sea which had been inundated by the flood waters from melting ice sheets around 5,000 years ago.

5) THE PLANET MARS

In 1976 the Viking 1 Orbiter was carrying out photo reconnaissance and mapping of the surface of Mars. On 25th July, as it began passing over a region of the planet known as Cydonia, the unmanned spacecraft photographed what appeared to be a two-mile long human face looking up from the cold Martian desert. Officials at NASA quickly dismissed this phenomenon as merely a 'trick of light and shadow' occurring on an unusually shaped outcrop of rock. However, following a subsequent search of other images taken of this area researchers found not only more shots of the 'Face' still appearing under different lighting conditions but also other anomalous structures - described as pyramids and other huge artificial buildings in close proximity.

COSMIC: The Valles Marineris region of the planet Mars. There are indications of the presence of water, including erosion, on Mars. Were the Atlanteans actually Martians as some believe?





'FOLLOWING A SEARCH OF OTHER IMAGES TAKEN OF THIS AREA, RESEARCHERS FOUND ANOMALOUS STRUCTURES DESCRIBED AS PYRAMIDS AND OTHER HUGE ARTIFICIAL BUILDINGS.'

by a civilisation not only from another continent but another planet entirely. Could Mars actually be the true location of Atlantis?

Intriguingly, astronomers largely agree that in the past Mars might once have been much more amenable to life. As it exists now the red planet has a thin, unbreathable atmosphere of Carbon Dioxide which provides very little protection to solar radiation or sterilising ultraviolet light from the Sun. With such a sparse atmosphere it is not possible for liquid water to exist on the surface and due to the prevailing frigid conditions any water present must be frozen either beneath the surface or at the planets poles.

However, certain surface features, such as apparently dry river beds and even coastal regions, would seem to strongly indicate that the surface of Mars has seen flowing water, perhaps even oceans in the distant past – a hypothesis made stronger when NASA announced in 2004 that its Opportunity Rover had identified hints of water action on Martian rocks. The question is when did

Mars dry out and lose its protective atmosphere? Unfortunately, current scientific belief is that Mars has been in its present state for millions of years.

Subsequent reimagining of the Cydonia site from 1997 onwards by the Mars Global Surveyor, Mars Reconnaissance and Mars Express orbiters with much higher resolution cameras produced disappointing results for adherents to this theory. The face looks much less human and much more like a wind-sculpted plateau or mesa. Nevertheless, many still feel that any structure existing on the surface for millennia and subject to wind erosion might well have deteriorated over time. Perhaps the question will only be finally settled when an on-site robotic or even a manned inspection can be made of the whole Cydonia region. ☉



Nigel Woolsey spent 20 years not particularly enjoying himself in the insurance industry before recently becoming a freelance writer. In this short period he has had a range of articles and features published in various UK magazines. He has a lifelong interest in astronomy and space sciences, in particular the search for extraterrestrial life, but also enjoys mysteries, alternative archaeology and other paranormal phenomena.

SOURCES, FURTHER READING & USEFUL LINKS:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location_hypotheses_of_Atlantis; www.bibliotecapleyades.net/atlantida_mu/esp_atlantida_17.htm; www.datasync.com/~rsf1/vel/atlantida.htm; *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings* (new edition 1996) by Charles Hapgood; *When the Sky Fell* (1996) by Rand & Rose Flem-Ath; *Fingerprints of the Gods?* (updated edition, 2001) by Graham Hancock; *The Mars Mystery* (1999) by Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval & John Griggsby; *Monuments of Mars* (5th Edition, 2002) by Richard C. Hoagland.

In particular computer enhancement of the original low-quality Viking pictures seemed to introduce more details on the Face – although the validity of these was hotly questioned by scientific heavyweights such as the late Carl Sagan at the time – including eyes, teeth and the suggestion of a Pharaoh's Egyptian headdress.

With such obvious similarities there was speculation in some quarters that here was proof that the Egyptians had been influenced

STONE AGE: Dr Ulf Erlingsson believes the Neolithic Tomb Culture of Ireland, as typified by Newgrange, are the origins of Atlantis, submerged beneath the waves when the northern seas rose thousands of years ago.



MONSTER IRELAND

What lurks beneath the tranquil loughs and in the green woods of the Emerald Isle? **GARY CUNNINGHAM** introduces the surprisingly rich and varied monster menagerie of Eire.

MOST PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD will be familiar with the Sasquatch, the Yeti, sea serpents and the Loch Ness Monster but not everyone is familiar with the enigmatic creatures which are said to dwell in my home country of Ireland.

Yet the forests and lakes (called loughs) of the Emerald Isle are believed to harbour their own equivalents of Bigfoot and Nessie, as well as other mystery beasts that are unique to Ireland. And if that was not enough to whet your appetite – we must also add to the list the sea monsters that have been sighted off the Irish coast.

There is a menagerie of monsters hiding in the Celtic mist.

THE HORSE-EELS

Ireland's most celebrated lake monsters are those reported from the western region of county Galway, known as Connemara. Connemara's lake monsters are

known locally as Horse-Eels on account of their appearance, with the front parts of the animal looking similar to a horse, and the rear parts resembling an eel. According to my records there have been a total of 42 reliable sightings of Horse Eels dating as far back as 1847.

An excellent example is the creature seen by Georgina Carberry and three other eyewitnesses at Lough Fadda, Connemara, in June 1954. This lake is approximately 2 miles in length and lies in the boggy, windswept area of Roundstone Bog. Miss Carberry's group had been fishing when their attention was drawn to an object in the lough moving towards them. Miss Carberry thought at first it was someone swimming but as the object approached to within 20 yards (6m), she saw that it was an unidentifiable animal with a small head, a slung-open mouth,

long neck, a couple of humps and a forked tail (although this last feature is disputed by one of the living eyewitnesses, Una Moran.)

Georgina later reported that the creature's mouth reminded her of a shark's and was pale inside. The creature possessed constant movement over its body and was described by her as 'like a worm, creepy'.

There are other reports from Connemara that are very intriguing due to the duration of the actual sighting and detail observed during it! One such instance occurred near Claddaghduff on February 22, 1968, by Stephen Coyne and his family. Nestled at the bottom of Glen Mountain is a small peat Lough known as Narrawaun (often referred to erroneously as Nahoooin, which is actually the deep bog hole which helps to feed the lough).

As Stephen approached the Lough with his son and dog to fetch

IRELAND'S NESS:
The lovely lakes of the western part of County Galway, known as Connemara, are home to mysterious monsters, if centuries of reports are to be believed.



some peat, he saw a dark coloured animal with a pole-like neck and an indistinguishable head swimming about without an apparent care in the world. Stephen initially thought the animal was his dog but whenever he whistled, the dog came bounding up to him from behind! He then instructed his son Pat (who was 10 at the time) to fetch his mother and the rest of his brothers and sisters. Subsequently Mr and Mrs Coyne and their five children watched their unidentifiable animal continue to patrol the tiny lough.

They estimated the animal was approximately 12 feet (4m) in length, black with a smooth skin texture. Not only did it possess a lengthy neck and small head but as it submerged a large hump came into view. There was also a flat tail which occasionally appeared close to the head, suggesting the animal was flexible.

Aside from the pale interior of the mouth and the presence of two protuberances which Mrs Coyne

'The creature possessed constant movement over its body and was described by her as "like a worm, creepy".'



WITNESS: The author with local personality Tom Joyce in January 2006, outside Tom's former home which overlooked Lough Shannaheever. Tom has had sightings of unidentified creatures in both Shannaheever and Lough Auna during his lifetime. © Gary Cunningham



'The Coyne's' experience is regarded as one of the best, if not the best, sighting of an unidentified lake monster anywhere in the world.'

IMPORTANT SIGHTING: View of Lough Narrawaun, near the village of Claddagaduff, Connemara. The reeds and lilies in the foreground are in the place where Stephen Coyne and his family watched a mysterious animal patrol the lake for approximately three hours on February 22, 1968. © Gary Cunningham

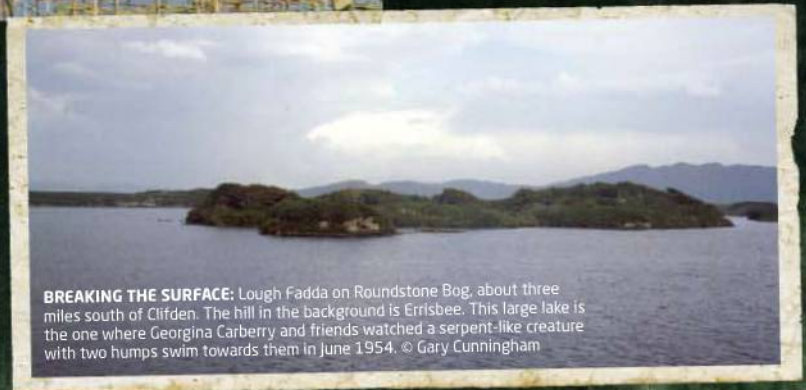
thought were ears, the only other significant aspect that I discovered was how fast it moved in its small Lough. Stephen Coyne told me that in the time it took to click one's fingers the animal had moved from one side of the Lough to the other – a distance of about 200 yards.

In fact the sighting is remarkable for not only the detail observed but more significantly the length of time involved – Stephen Coyne told me they watched their unexpected visitor for as long as three hours! Consequently, the Coyne's experience is regarded as one of the best, if not the best, sighting of an unidentified lake monster anywhere in the world.

Lough Auna is a glacial lake approximately three-quarters of a mile long and is the largest of a chain of three eventually flowing into the Streamstown Bay. Together with Lough Shannakeever, this lake has accounted for roughly 40% of all reliable reports from Connemara. Two famous cases include the creature which stalked a Welsh Guard near Lough Auna in June 1977 and the 30-ft (10m) creature seen frolicking in the same lake by Paul Walsh and his mother. Local personality Tom Joyce claims to have had seven sightings in his lifetime but unfortunately no longer lives or farms near Shannakeever and Auna.

THE DOBAHR-CHÚ OR MASTER OTTER

The country's equally celebrated and as yet unidentified lake monster is the Dobahr-Chú, also known as the master or king otter. According to legend, its coat was purported to have magical qualities: it was said that even an inch would protect a person from gunshot



BREAKING THE SURFACE: Lough Fadda on Roundstone Bog, about three miles south of Clifden. The hill in the background is Errisbee. This large lake is the one where Georgina Carberry and friends watched a serpent-like creature with two humps swim towards them in June 1954. © Gary Cunningham

and a horse from drowning! Some stories describe its coat as white and bearing a black cross.

This giant breed of otter could be dismissed as a myth if it were not for one curious piece of information. On the road between Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim, and Bundoran, Co. Donegal, is a large lake known as Glenade, where in the 18th century a woman is stated as having been killed by the Dobahr-Chú. Grace McLoughlan (or McGlone) lived with her husband on the north-western end of the Lough. On September 24, 1722, Grace went down to the Lough to wash her clothes (in some versions to bathe) when out of the peaty depths emerged the dreaded Dobahr-Chú, which mauled the unfortunate woman to death.

When her husband went looking for her, he was horrified to find the savage beast crouched on his wife's lifeless body. Terrence slew the animal but its dying screams alerted its mate. Terrence and his brother Gilmartin were pursued by the second Dobahr-Chú for miles, until they reached a place called Cashelgarron (a stone fort). Here they were able to lie in wait and ambush the creature but before they succeeded in slaying it, it had

already killed their horses.

Arguing against the natural assumption that this is merely a fanciful local legend is the fact that the grave of the unfortunate Grace still exists to the present day and that the Dobahr-Chú itself is depicted on her tombstone. It is shown dying with a gloved hand spearing it at the base of its neck.

If you examine the photograph reprinted over the page you will notice that the Dobahr-Chú possesses both dog-like and otter-like characteristics. It has an otter-like head and neck, small ears and large paws. Conversely, its powerful hind limbs and deep chest are more canine in appearance.

Even though the Dobahr-Chú is well-known in counties Leitrim, Donegal and Sligo, what is more provocative is the idea that certain unidentified lake monsters seen in Ireland have borne more than a passing resemblance to this giant, enigmatic otter in more recent years.

One such creature was seen in and around a remote lough on Ireland's largest island, Achill, especially during the 1960s (although accounts date back to the early 1900s). Sraheen's Lough, also known as Glendarry Lough, is circular, about 200 ft (60m) in diameter and

supposedly the flooded caldera of an extinct volcano.

The most well-known sighting occurred late at night on May 1, 1968. Michael Nulty and John Cooney, both from the island, were driving to Achill Sound from the village of Keel, when as they drew parallel to the Lough, an animal leapt from the dense cover of rhododendron bushes about 12ft (4m) high in front of them. The mysterious creature eventually disappeared into the undergrowth on the opposite side!

They described it as 8-10ft (2.4-3m) in length, four-legged, black or dark brown in colour, having a thick tail and a long neck like a swan's, with the head similar to a sheep's or greyhound's.

The men's sighting, however unusual, was certainly not an isolated one, as two unrelated sightings by two sets of girls hitching lifts happened shortly after Nulty and Cooney's encounter.

During my initial researches into this enigmatic creature I was unable to find any sightings more recent than those of the late 1960s. However, in the past couple of years I have learnt of sightings of giant otter-like creatures at Sraheens Lough and from near Lough Derg (bordering counties Galway and Limerick) in 1999 and 2001 respectively. Apparently, the Dobahr-Chú has not died out as I feared at first, and like other unidentified lough monsters may simply be going unreported due to fear of ridicule.

THE WURRUMS OF COUNTY KERRY

Connemara can lay claim to be Ireland's Loch Ness, but it isn't the only county possessing mysterious, enigmatic creatures inhabiting loughs and waterways.

Take, for example, Lough Brin, sometimes called Lough Bran. This relatively small lough is situated 15 miles south-west of the tourist mecca of Killarney. Sightings in this lake go back to the 1940s. One of the most significant happened on Christmas Eve in 1945. Local farmer Timothy O' Sullivan went to bring in his cattle for milking, and as he passed the lake he saw something he initially thought was a line of ducks. However the 'ducks' rose higher and he then realised they were two fins belonging to some unknown creature. The fins were about 2 feet (0.6m) long and the same in height. The distance between them was 12

feet (4m). O'Sullivan witnessed this amazing sight only 60 metres (or yards) from shore.

Other loughs in Kerry which have hosted inexplicable sightings include Lackagh Lake three miles (4.8kms) northeast of Killarney. An eyewitness reported a mysterious animal which showed several feet of neck, accompanied by a serpent-like head and furnished with two horns on top!

Davy Breen encountered his lake monster in another Lough Fadda (a common name, not to be confused with the one in Connemara). This lake is situated approximately 16 miles (26kms) from Kenmare and lies in the shadow of Knocklomeena

Mountain (2,012ft/641m). In or around 1975 Davy and a friend saw a lot of commotion on the lake's surface. They then saw a long curved neck of some animal which they likened to the handle and lower part of an umbrella. Davy told me that the commotion was water spraying out of (presumably) the mouth of the creature and was similar to the spray from a fire hose.

Davy also told me of a sighting his father had in the 1950s at the small lake south east of Fadda, Lough Beg. Davy's father described it as similar to a pig, only larger, and was actually travelling overland from the small lake to the larger one. ◉

'GRACE WENT DOWN TO THE LOUGH TO WASH HER CLOTHES WHEN OUT OF THE PEATY DEPTHS EMERGED THE DREADED DOBAHR-CHÚ, WHICH MAULED THE UNFORTUNATE WOMAN TO DEATH.'

DOBAHR-CHÚ: Was Ireland formerly the habitat of a giant form of otter? Does it live there still?





WHAT WAS IT?: Sraheens Lough on Achill Island, County Mayo. This deep lake surrounded by thick rhododendrons bushes was the home of an enigmatic quadrupedal lake monster witnessed by several different eyewitnesses in 1968. It may have been a giant otter - perhaps the legendary Dobhar-Chu. © Gary Cunningham

Martin Riney, also from Kenmare, saw a mysterious dark hump in the previously mentioned Lough Brin whilst fishing there as recently as July 2003.

THE IRISH WILDCAT

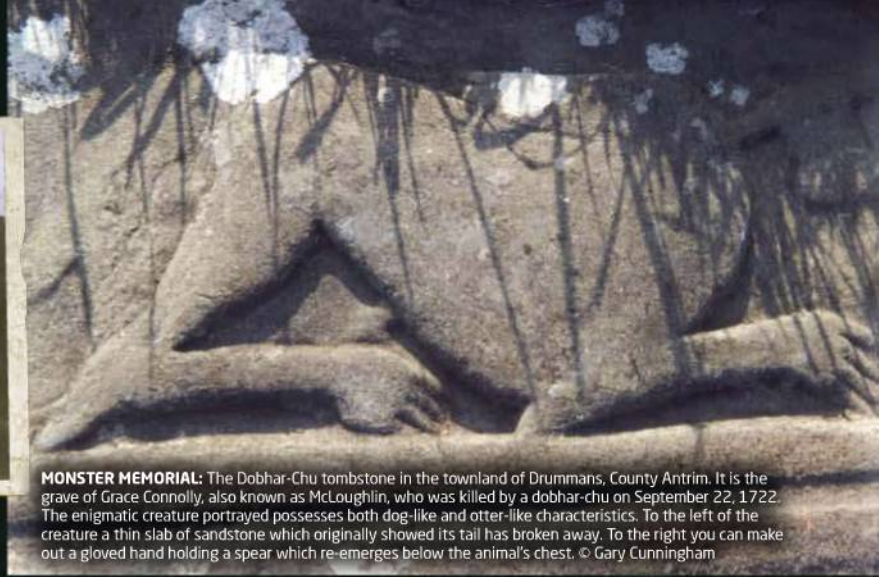
Ireland also possesses her own version of the Scottish Wildcat. From a zoological perspective, the presence of a *bona fide* Irish wildcat has yet to be conclusively proven, although the anecdotal evidence is difficult to ignore. Intriguingly, new archaeological data has emerged which seems to indicate that the animal may have indeed existed (it still might!). Its origins may involve the African-European Wildcat (*Felis catus*) as opposed to the Scottish form (*Felis sylvestris*).

One curious feature attributed to this enigmatic animal was the belief that it possessed a claw or nail at the end of its tail, indeed some accounts deliberately refer to it. Moreover, myself, my wife Deirdre and our girls Maebh and Darcy spotted a large grey/white feral cat hunting rabbits on the Machair habitat on the island of Inishbofin, off Connemara, in April 2006 - a veritable Irish wildcat, indeed.

DWARF WOLVES

One of the most mysterious and fascinating cryptids that was believed to occur in Ireland were the Dwarf Wolves of Achill island. As already mentioned, this is Ireland's largest island and more famous for the Sraheens Lough monster. However, there was a belief that a miniature form of wolf existed on Achill long after its larger cousin became extinct about 1790.

Intriguingly, I have discovered via correspondence with local people and Pap Murphy (an invaluable source of information regarding the folklore/forteana of Co. Mayo), that the dwarf wolves allegedly bred with a small breed of hunting dog known locally as a Cordog. Achill's mini-wolves supposedly disappeared in about 1920.



MONSTER MEMORIAL: The Dobhar-Chu tombstone in the townland of Drummans, County Antrim. It is the grave of Grace Connolly, also known as McLoughlin, who was killed by a dobhar-chu on September 22, 1722. The enigmatic creature portrayed possesses both dog-like and otter-like characteristics. To the left of the creature a thin slab of sandstone which originally showed its tail has broken away. To the right you can make out a gloved hand holding a spear which re-emerges below the animal's chest. © Gary Cunningham

'Apparently, the DOBAHR-CHÚ has not died out BUT like other UNIDENTIFIED LOUGH MONSTERS may simply BE GOING UNREPORTED due to fear of RIDICULE.'

ALIEN BIG CATS

Unlike mainland Britain, Ireland does not have the same frequency of reports pertaining to mysterious big cats on the loose. Occasionally, there have been sightings of cats resembling lynxes, panthers and pumas, with the most famous of these being responsible for the so-called 'County Antrim cat flap of 2003'.

SEA SERPENTS AROUND THE COAST

A very notable example of a sea serpent is the long-necked creature reported off the Cork coast in 1907 by no less a distinguished mariner than Sir Arthur Rostrom (who later became the captain of the SS *Carpathia*, the sole ship to respond to the distress call of the ill fated *Titanic*). The creature possessed a neck 12-14ft (4-4.5m) in length, a sizable body and two small protruberances or ears on top of its head.

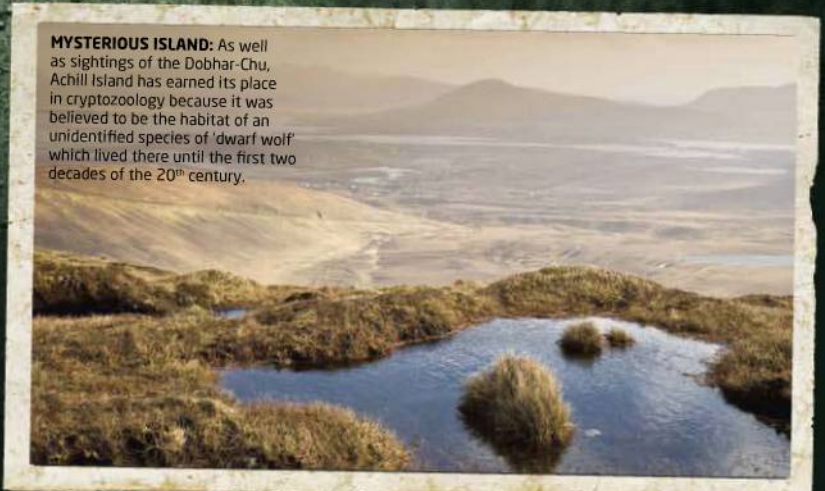
IN CONCLUSION

The existence of creatures such as those outlined here would seem surprising given that Ireland is relatively small. However, there are still plenty of uninhabited, remote wildernesses remaining, particularly in the west, to accommodate unidentified, sometimes large creatures.

Perhaps one day somebody will produce a body and therefore the identity of the Dobahr-Chú, Irish wildcat or Connemara Horse-eel. Ted Holiday once said that if a specimen of the elusive Horse-eel was ever obtained, he would 'like to send photographs of it to certain zoological authorities who have assured me that lake monsters don't exist. The Horse-eel when we finally get one should cut these pundits nicely down to size!' ☺



Gary Cunningham's passion cryptozoology began after he read the Usbourne Big Book of Monsters at the age of 6! Other books such as The Bigfoot Casebook by Janet and Colin Bord and The Loch Ness Monster by Nicholas Witchell were integral in fuelling his passion for undiscovered animals and strange phenomena in general. Gary and his wife Deirdre visit the Connemara region of west Galway annually in order to research the Irish lake monster phenomenon first-hand. Gary would welcome any response or interest with regard to Irish cryptozoology and can be contacted via e-mail at: monsterdude71@yahoo.co.uk



MYSTERIOUS ISLAND: As well as sightings of the Dobhar-Chu, Achill Island has earned its place in cryptozoology because it was believed to be the habitat of an unidentified species of 'dwarf wolf' which lived there until the first two decades of the 20th century.

**THE
GOOD FEAR
GUIDE**

We come to the end of this short series of Fear Guides with the poshest hotel so far considered, indeed one of the most luxurious anywhere. The five-star Langham Hotel, which is situated in the heart of London just off Regent Street, is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World association.

It was built in 1865 as Europe's first ever 'Grand Hotel' and in the 19th century it was *the* place to stay, with any number of statesmen, crowned heads and other celebrities enjoying its opulence. The dazzling Palm Court is said to have started the tradition of the gentry taking afternoon tea and is so famous that it has even given its name to a style of music, a concoction of soothing strings to aid the digestion.

Recently the Langham was restored to the glory of its heyday thanks to an £80 million renovation. The hotel had suffered badly during the Blitz and for many years ceased to function as a hotel. Now it boasts 380 luxurious guestrooms and suites, 15 function rooms, a health and fitness centre and three superbly stylish eating places: the Palm Court, the Artesian cocktail bar and the celebrated Landau restaurant.

Alas, luxury doesn't come cheap and a quick check on the hotel's website reveals that one night's B&B for two in a standard room will set you back more than £300. However, if you're a particularly well-off ghost hunter (complete with diamond-studded EMF meter), the Langham has more than its share of ghostly attractions.

The hotel's spooky reputation stems from its days after World War 2 when the Blitz-damaged building was used as administration offices by the BBC (the hotel stands opposite Broadcasting House). Sleeping accommodation was provided for late-night news readers and the like on the third floor. It soon became apparent that Room 33 (now, I believe 333) was haunted.

A former newsreader, James Gordon woke up one night in 1973 to see the figure of a man at his bedside. He lobbed a boot at it – but it passed straight through. He switched on the light but the figure remained staring at him. Mr Gordon ran out of the room. When he told a colleague, Peter Donaldson, about it, he was relieved to hear he wasn't the only person to have had a weird experience in Room 33.

Mr Donaldson told him: 'I woke up to find a force trying to push me out of bed. The curtains were closed but there was a glowing light inside the room.'

Another newsreader, Ray Moore, told author Jack Hallam about an incident which occurred a couple of years previously: 'It was about 4.30am when I got out of bed, pulled back the curtains and pushed up the window. I noticed this figure at the window of the floor above. He was a biggish man, thick-set, with a crew cut and wearing a uniform-style coat that buttoned up to the neck. He was surrounded by a kind of aura of bright, white light.'

'I felt it was something creepy and fled for the lift, half expecting to meet him there. I told the commissionaire on duty, who said he sounded like the German officer who

committed suicide before World War I by jumping out of a window.'

Terence Whitaker, in his *Ghosts of Old England*, states that this ghost is also encountered wandering the corridors and that there are two 'cold spots' on the fifth floor. One employee told him these could feel like 'walking into a deep freeze'.

A couple of websites add further spooks: allstays.com refers to 'a silver-haired Victorian with blank staring eyes' (the spirit of a doctor who committed suicide after murdering his wife on their honeymoon) and bloghotelclub.com states that Napoleon III 'has supposedly selected to spend eternity in the hotel's basement!'

So, by the sounds of it there is plenty of ghostly activity at the Langham Hotel to satisfy any ghost-hunter who can afford the privilege of staying here – especially if they get to book Room 333!

FACTFILE

The Langham Hotel, 1C Portland Place, Regent Street, London W1B 1JA
Tel: 020 7636 1000
<http://london.langhamhotels.co.uk/>

- High class luxury accommodation
- Range of rooms from 'Classic Room' to 'The Infinity Suite'
- Superb restaurant, lounge and bar
- Spectacular public rooms
- Fitness centre
- 16m swimming pool
- In the heart of London's West End
- Superior conference and wedding provision
- Well-attested ghosts.

© Bobby Cox

alien androids

A surprising number of reported 'close encounters' involve robots. **NIGEL WATSON** has noticed that even in cases of encounters with living beings, they often behave in a suspiciously robotic, soulless way. Are we being invaded by cyborgs from space?





A CYBORG IS a living combination of biological and technological parts or systems. You are a human cyborg if you have an implant like a heart pacemaker, or if your senses are restored or enhanced by using something as simple as a hearing aid or eye glasses.

Within ufology the idea that aliens are cyborgs has not had much consideration. This is surprising, as the term cyborg was coined by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in a paper discussing human-machine systems for the purpose of space exploration way back in 1960.

There are certainly plenty of cases of robots or machine-like beings seen in conjunction with UFOs. One of the most famous is that of the Flatwoods Monster that appeared to a group of boys who were playing football in Flatwoods, West Virginia. On the evening of September 12, 1952, they saw a round red light cross the sky and land behind a nearby hill. Gathering a couple of adults and some other boys, who had also seen the light, they ran up the hill where they encountered a strange



CRUSH, KILL, DESTROY: Many of the robotic entities reported in close encounters, even in recent years, have fitted the clanking cliché of hackneyed sci-fi now only seen in toy robots, such as red eyes or glowing visors and guns blazing from their chests.

mist and an unpleasant odour in the air that made them feel sick. As they got to the top of the hill they were shocked to see two glowing eyes. The light from one of the boy's torches showed they belonged to an 'ace of spades-shaped' head that had a circular window in it. The 3 metre (10ft) tall creature seemed to have a green skirt-like body and when it started to glide towards them, they ran away in sheer panic.

On the night of September 4,

1964, a young man at Cisco Grove, California, had an even stranger experience. Donald Shrum was bow-and-arrow hunting with some friends when he lost his way and decided to sleep in a tree. It was then that he saw a domed craft land nearby.

Not long afterwards two humanoid beings wearing silvery uniforms with helmets came into view. They were followed by a dark coloured robot that had large glowing red eyes and a rectangular mouth. A white vapour shot from the robot's mouth and Shrum became unconscious. On awaking he found that the three visitors were still below his tree.

Throughout the night he managed to stop these beings from climbing the tree by throwing lighted matches at them as the robot repeatedly gassed him.

At dawn, another robot came on the scene and it exchanged bright flashes of light with the first robot. Finally a large cloud of vapour rendered Shrum unconscious and on re-awaking he found everything was back to normal.

In Britain there have been similar robot encounters. On the night of January 2, 1978, four young men were driving through the Simonswood Moss area, Rainford, when they saw a 2-metre (7ft) tall entity in their car headlights. It had a silver body or suit with matching boots. The head had no facial features and it had short claw-like arms. On its chest was a box with two red flashing lights. As this strange thing started walking towards them the men quickly drove away in panic.

A copycat entity was seen by several witnesses on the outskirts of Chardzhou, Turkmenistan, on March 24, 1990. This 2-metre tall thing also had lights shooting out from its chest and walked in a mechanical fashion. This time, though, the creature had a head like a flattened saucer with two poles of light sticking out the top of it like horns. Just like the

'another robot came on the scene and it exchanged bright flashes of light with the first robot. Finally a large cloud of vapour rendered him unconscious.'

DECHMONT DEVICE: Artist's impression of the weird mechanism that captured a forestry worker in Scotland. © David Sankey / davidsankey.com



ROBOTS IN THE FOREST

Alien robots can come in all shapes and sizes. For example, forestry worker Robert (Bob) Taylor had an impressive close encounter with a UFO on 9 November 1979 that sparked off a worldwide interest in his case.

Whilst working in a clearing at Dechmont woods, Livingston, Scotland, Taylor encountered a 20-foot diameter domed object hovering above the ground. The craft discharged two round spiked objects that rolled across the ground towards him. These robot devices grabbed him by his trousers and tried dragging him to their craft. At this point, he smelt something rotten and he lost consciousness.

Twenty minutes later he recovered and was relieved to find the objects had gone. Evidence of his experience consisted of rips in his heavy trousers, a mark on his left thigh and markings in the ground at the landing site. The police never found an explanation for his encounter. Taylor always stood by his story and believed he saw an alien spacecraft and that this was an attempt to abduct him.

Two years earlier, at 1am on 27 January, Lee Parrish was driving home to Prospect, Kentucky, when he saw a radiant rectangular UFO fly over his car. When he got home he realised that his journey had taken 45 minutes longer than expected. Under hypnotic regression he recalled being taken inside the UFO where one large slab-like and two box-shaped machines, conducted a physical check-up on him. He felt that they these unusual entities were conscious and had feelings.

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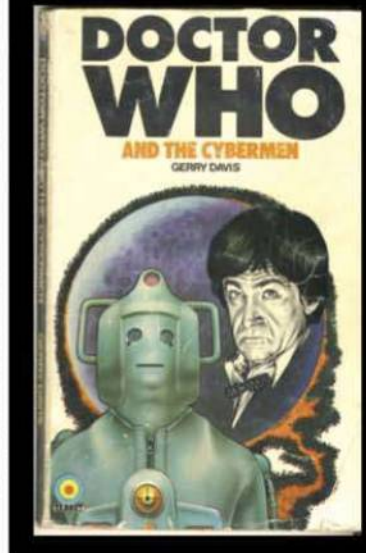
CYBORGS ON SCREEN

Cinema and TV productions have featured several examples of cyborg humans. One of the most memorable is Steve Austin who was the hero of *The Six Million Dollar Man* television series of the 1970s. After an accident, his legs, plus one eye and one arm are replaced by prosthetics that give him superhuman qualities. His bionic legs enable him to run as fast as a car, his eye has a zoom lens and the ability to see in the dark and the replacement arm features a Geiger counter.

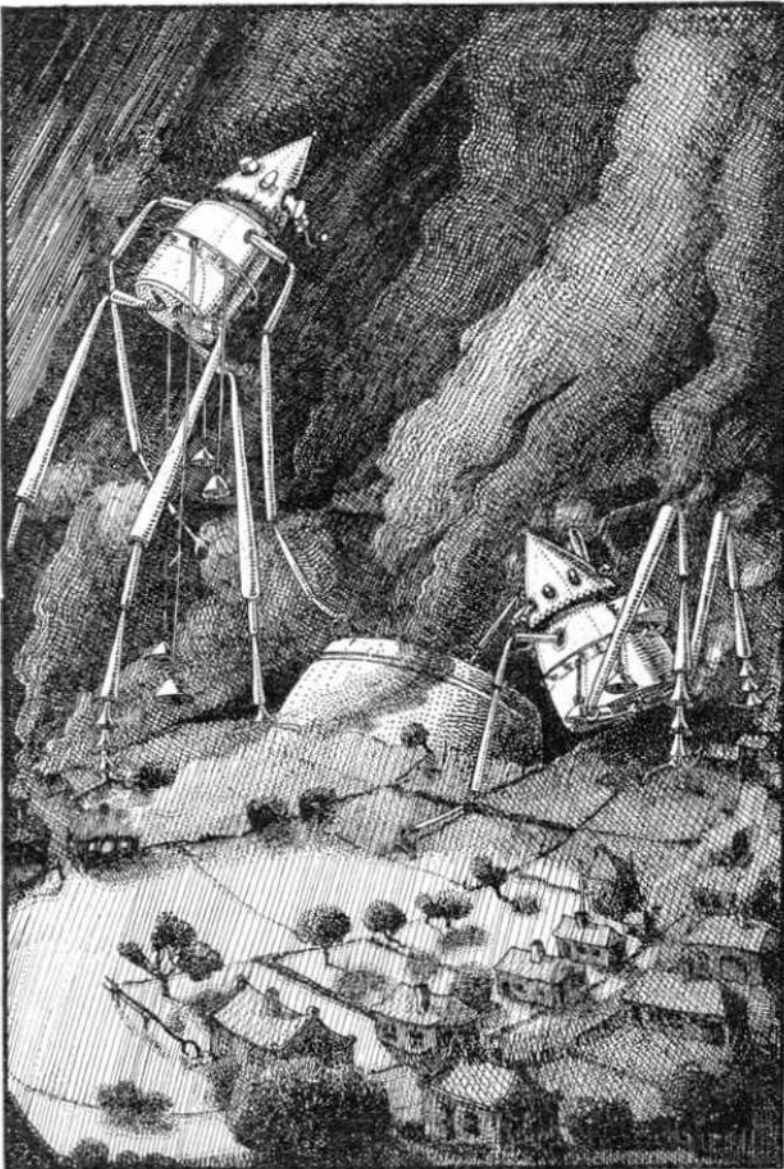
More dramatically Officer Alex Murphy in *RoboCop* (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1987) is blasted in a shoot-out and his destroyed body is replaced with a state-of-the-art robotic body and a directive to uphold the law. Through odd flashes of memory the RoboCop slowly realises that he was a fully-fledged human being.

There are many screen aliens who are a combination of tentacle and metal. The Daleks in the *Dr Who* television series are a good example. Inside each large salt shaker-shaped body resides a vicious octopus type creature who originates from the planet Skaro. *Dr Who's* Cybermen have also proved to be a powerful enemy worthy of reappearing in the latest outings of this BBC franchise. They had humanoid origins like our own but their continued use of artificial parts and replacements led them to become emotionless killer robots.

Meanwhile, the half-machine half-biological Borg made a nuisance of themselves in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Voyager* television series. They are humanoid beings who are surgically enhanced with implants and are part of a hive-like central mind network. They have no personality of their own and their main imperative is to assimilate new technology and life forms into their collective.



'the man was fondling the female and asking if he was doing it right. when john left the room, the man asked maureen if she had any nude photographs of herself and wondered about how she was made.'



MECHANICAL MONSTERS: Robots have been a staple of science fiction stories since science fiction began. Even the Martians in H G Wells's seminal *War of the Worlds* (1897) were cyborg-like. In common with Terry Nation's Daleks, Wells's Martians were largely confined to their robotic war machines. This illustration by Johan Briede comes from a reworking of Wells's tale published in 1921.

Flatwoods case, the robot emitted a foul-smelling gas.

A year earlier on September 27, Vova Startsev and several other students saw a spherical UFO land in Levoberezhnyi's park, Voronezh, Russia. Tall, three-eyed humanoids wearing silver suits and bronze-coloured boots came out of the craft along with a headless box-like robot. One alien shot a beam of light at a boy, making him disappear until the UFO flew away. Another witness is said to have been paralyzed when one of the aliens stared at him.

As might be expected, the Voronezh and the other stories

here have all been subject to much controversy, with allegations that they are either hoaxes or misidentifications of animals or other objects by witnesses in an unusually stressful situation.

Sightings of robots might really be of alien humanoids inside suits to adapt to our atmosphere or some humanoids might really be androids – robots made to look like humans. John Keel noted that many Men In Black (MIB) who visit UFO witnesses to stop them making their stories public, act in an odd manner. The MIB don't seem to know a lot about normal social interaction and act in a robotic fashion. ●



SLAVE RELAYS: Central to the abductee phenomenon for many years has been the suspicion that aliens are inserting 'implants' into people's brains. Will these implants one day be activated to create a race of remote-controlled human 'robo-slaves'?

One such case involved an odd couple who visited John Hopkins and his wife Maureen on September 24, 1976. The male and female couple wore old-fashioned clothes and walked with very short steps. The female's hips seemed out of shape with her body, making her look in danger of falling over at any moment. Sitting on the sofa in John's home, they asked what TV they watched, what books they read and what they talked about. At the same time the man was fondling the female and asking if he was doing it right. When John left the room, the man asked Maureen if she had any nude photographs of herself and wondered about how she was made. On leaving, they awkwardly walked in a straight line out of the door.

No wonder ufologists like Keel have wondered if MIB and alien entities are remote-controlled by higher forces.

Reading abduction researcher David Jacobs' book *Secret Life*, I was struck by the unrealistic, cartoon-like nature of the aliens reported by abductees. They are not seen to eat or drink, they don't have teeth, stomachs or any variation in weight

'they are not seen to eat or drink; their skin is smooth without hair, spots or blemishes; they don't seem to breathe; their faces do not have unique features to tell them apart. they seem more like blank automated machines than living entities.'

or body mass. Their skin is smooth without hair, spots or blemishes. They don't seem to breathe. Their faces do not have unique features to tell them apart. They do not have fingerprints and often have only three fingers with no opposing thumb. Given the aliens' predilection for sexual intercourse with abductees, they do not show any genitalia and are often regarded as androgynous or sexless. Combined with the fact that their behaviour is business-like, and that inside their craft no living or recreational facilities are ever seen, they seem more like blank automated machines rather than living entities.

To colonise other planets, like Mars, the possibility of terraforming the atmosphere to make it suitable for human habitation has been seriously considered, but another possibility is to genetically modify ourselves. *Homo sapiens martialis* would require a tougher skin and an alternative method of extracting oxygen from the atmosphere. The science fiction author Greg Bear speculated in 2004 that we might even have scales on our body to survive on Mars. He certainly thought that modifying ourselves would be far easier and economical than trying to change the entire atmosphere of a planet.

In terms of aliens it does seem logical that they would use technology and genetic modification to explore our planet. Jason Gammon, who is one of the few to discuss the possibility that aliens might be cyborgs, told me:

'I feel that we need to look to our own future, specifically referencing the subject of transhumanism/posthumanism, in order to understand what form any visitors may take. We simply would not be visited by beings "just like us" but with better technology.'

GORT: The all-powerful robot from the 1951 sci-fi classic *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, directed by Robert Wise and produced by 20th Century Fox, takes out a couple of puny Earthmen.



ALIEN ROBOTS GO HOLLYWOOD

Alien robots are nothing new in fiction. *The Robot Aliens* was the title of a novella by Eando Binder published in 1935. Modelled on H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* invasion classic of the previous century, Binder had the robot aliens descend from the skies to rampage through cities in the USA.

With the flying saucer craze in full swing during the 1950s, several movies featured robot-like aliens. The most important one is Gort who was a servant to a humanoid alien called Klaatu, in *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (Robert Wise, 1951). The two entities arrive on Earth in a flying saucer and threaten us not to use atom weapons, or else...

It has been suggested that Gort was the inspiration for the robot-alien seen by Parker and Hickson in the Pascagoula abduction case of 1973. They said these humanoid appearing aliens had two claw-like fingers at the end of each arm, and unlike today's greys, had small slit-like eyes, and conical ears and noses.

UFO researcher, Martin Kottmeyer, points out that *Invaders from Mars* (William Cameron Menzies, 1953) also contains themes that have become part of modern-day abduction beliefs. Here Martians try taking over our planet by inserting implants into the spinal cord of everyone they can capture. These devices are used to control our actions, and when the host is no longer useful for them the implant is triggered to explode.

Such movies might well have had a strong influence on real alien robot encounter experiences, but it is hard to prove a direct correlation.

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HALF HUMAN, HALF MACHINE: Cyborgs - people augmented with mechanical bodies - also have a lengthy heritage. This cyborg featured on the cover of a 1930s British sci-fi publication, *Fantasy*.

'Instead, we would be dealing with cyborgs, advanced A.I. [artificial intelligence] machines into which minds have been uploaded, and genetically engineered organisms. Any advanced civilization in the universe capable of visiting earth would have gone through its own version of the technological singularity. The result would be these types of beings, far removed

from their organically evolved predecessors. These are the forms any visitor to earth would take and these are the forms the human species will eventually become, assuming we survive the transition.'

A more sinister twist is that aliens seem to be intent on implanting abductees with small spherical devices. Whitley Strieber popularised this concept in his 1987 book *Communion: A True Story*. In this he claims that aliens inserted an implant into his brain via his nose. A similar implant was also alleged to have been inserted up the nostril of abductee Betty Andreasson Luca

by a needle-like device during an abduction experience in 1967. This procedure explains why many abductees complain of having nose bleeds.

There are various theories about why abductees are implanted, which range from a simple desire by the aliens to monitor human behaviour, to them wanting to control our thoughts and desires. Perhaps this is just the start of them turning us into cyborgs like them so that we will eventually become aliens ourselves! That is a chilling thought to end with. ☪

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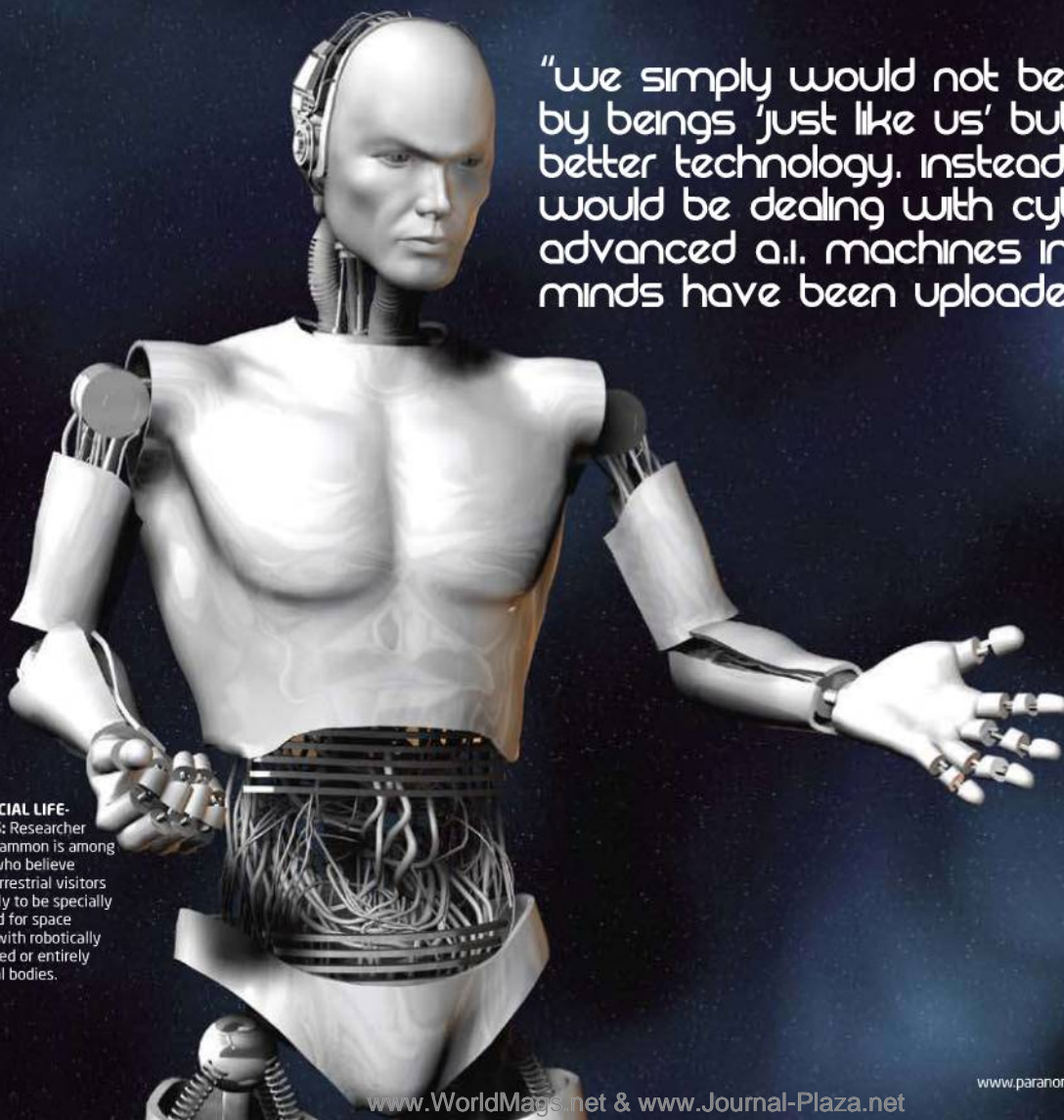
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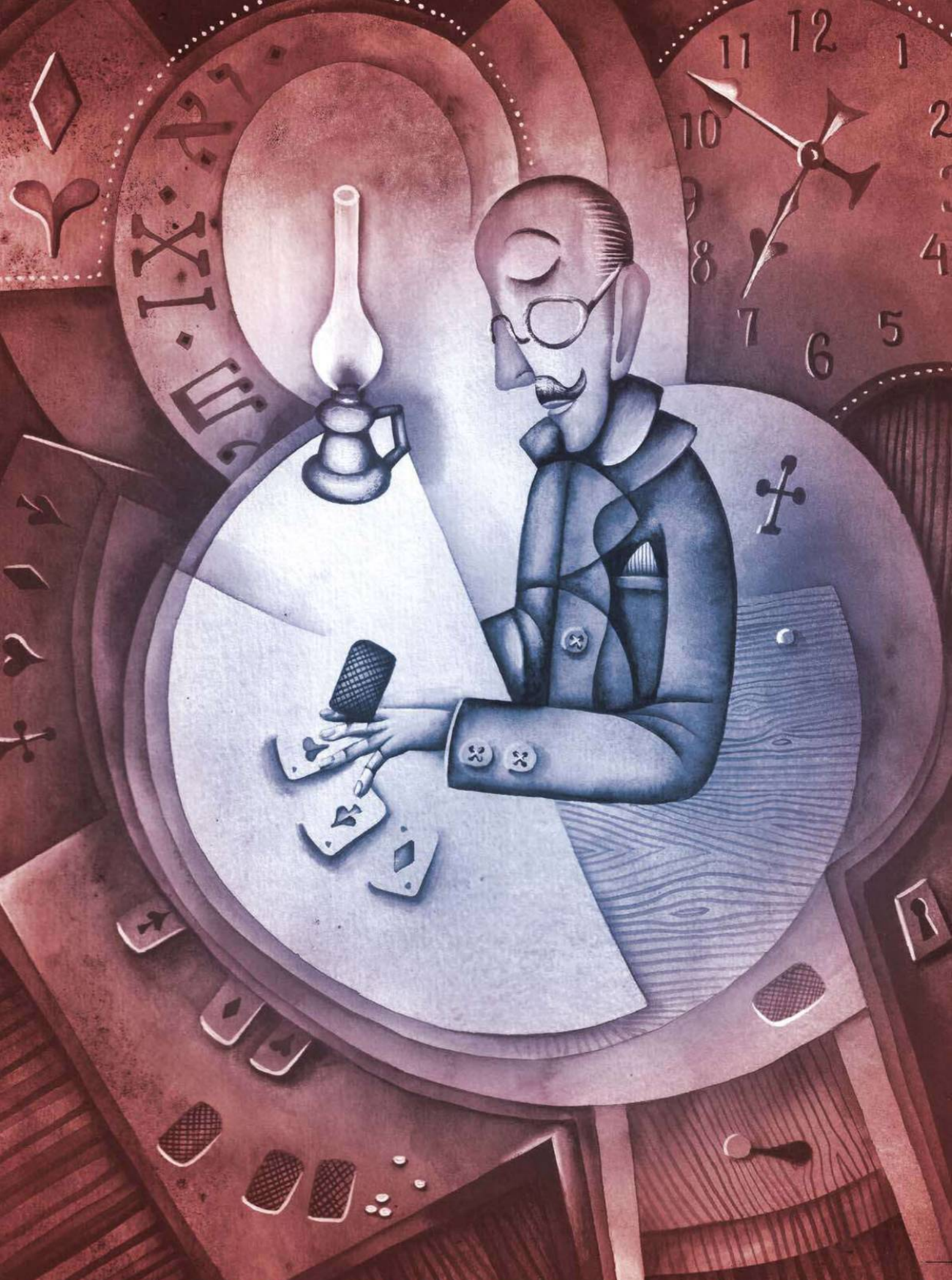


Nigel Watson's books include *The Alien Deception*, *Portraits of Alien Encounters* (1990), and *The Scareship Mystery* (2000). He is a long-time contributor on the subject of UFOs for numerous publications, including *Fortean Times*, *Wired*, *History Today*, *Magonia* and *Flying Saucer Review*. He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

"we simply would not be visited by beings 'just like us' but with better technology. Instead, we would be dealing with cyborgs, advanced a.i. machines into which minds have been uploaded."

ARTIFICIAL LIFE-FORMS: Researcher Jason Gammon is among those who believe extraterrestrial visitors are likely to be specially adapted for space travel, with robotically enhanced or entirely artificial bodies.





PSYCHIC GAMBLERS



Can some people predict the throw of a dice, the spin of a roulette wheel, and others see in to the minds of their opponents in a game of cards? **JONATHAN TAPSELL** examines the evidence and discovers that even some scientists are coming round to the possibility of a link between ESP and 'luck'.

PITCH AND TOSS, games-of-chance, cards, dice, casinos and gambling have always walked hand-in-hand with lucky numbers, omens, charms, dreams, predictions and moments of intuition but at what price? We are told increasingly of the dangers of gambling with its addictions, disappointments and desperate search for money to feed a habit – surely we are being led further from our own innate human happiness by this activity? Yet gamblers and psychics often waltz ever closer, both genuine and fake, in a dance that is hard to interpret.

The Chinese are often described as the community who relish gambling the most. Here it is easy to see Mah Jong, card playing and other forms of speculation combine with ancient adages on wise counsel. Superstitions here are many: avoid saying anything about 'books' since in Cantonese, the word 'books' is

similar sounding to the word for 'lose', it is also advised not to count winnings at a table, also to avoid coming into contact with nuns or monks prior to gambling and never touch someone's shoulder while they are playing.

Chinese gamblers also keep an eye on the Feng Shui of a casino, as it is inauspicious in some circumstances to enter by the main entrance. These entrances may sometimes be cursed by Feng Shui geomancers. According to Chinese gambling lore, if you are checking into a hotel room avoid room number four as it sounds like the word for 'Death', again not an auspicious start to betting. If you want a lucky number then it's always eight for the Chinese.

Psychologists have looked at this relationship between gamblers and their superstitions, both cultural and personal, and have highlighted some interesting anomalies. Often a gambler will look at his or her

fortune or misfortune and examine events leading up to the said outcome. They may decide that a piece of clothing, a certain number or even a particular croupier brought them good or bad luck, as the case may be, and this belief influences their future gambling habits from that point on.

Some gamblers might adopt complex rituals prior to play based on what they think caused their former good fortune or winning streak. But psychologists agree that often as not this 'memory' of events leading to a win or loss can be selective, as the gambler manipulates their own version of events to reinforce beliefs. So is Lady Luck just a figment of our imagination after all?

One person who disagrees is Dr Snake, poker expert, blues guitarist and modern voodoo and hoodoo practitioner who, among other things, was called in to take a curse off the England football team during the last world cup. He cited an example whereby the international poker player Jerry Yang prayed to God for a win. Yang cleaned up a cool \$8.2 million on one win alone.

Snake says: 'Jerry was a Californian psychiatrist and only started playing poker two years before his big win. When play

"I'D SAY IT WAS HIS BELIEF THAT BROUGHT OUT HIS ESP POWERS. YOU COULD GET THE SAME EFFECT WITH A MOJO HAND OR PRAYING TO YOUR OWN SPIRITS."

CHINESE CHECKERS: The vibrant Chinese gambling community is especially superstitious, concerned with ensuring the correct rituals have been carried out to bring good luck.





began on 6 July there were 6,358 players in the No-Limit Texas Hold 'Em main event, the biggest poker tournament of the year. Whenever Jerry was in an all-in situation, he'd kiss the picture of his children and say a prayer. One time, he had a pair of fours against an over-pair. Jerry said: "I kept saying 'Lord, give me a set'." Whether by chance or as a result of his prayer, Jerry won.'

On a separate occasion Jerry Yang was acting as dealer in a game of poker when his opponent Tuan Lam went all in but Jerry called his cards. Lam had an ace and queen. The flop was queen, nine, five. Snake recalls: 'Yang needed some help if he was going to beat Lam's pair of queens. So he called on the Lord again. Jerry won the tournament with a nine-high straight.'

'Now, I don't think you have to be a holy roller to follow Jerry's lead. I'd say it was his belief that brought out his ESP powers. You could get the same effect with a mojo hand or praying to your own spirits.'

So is Lady Luck perhaps a kind of self-created luck, or in other words a feeling of overriding confidence or complete faith in our actions? If this is so then is luck a function of the mind that we rarely use but is there when we need it? Dr Snake thinks that it may indeed be a latent power inherited from our forebears.

'HER DREAMS WERE SO ACCURATE SHE COULD EVEN RECALL THE ODDS OF THE HORSES BEING RUN.'

He said: 'With poker you live off of your wits. You're like a hunter from ancient times, out on the African savannah, spear in your hand, senses sharpened, stalking the kill ... It's your survival instinct. That instinct is dormant today. But bring it to the fore... Your senses are heightening and this could seem like ESP. In truth, it's your natural senses, but you're using parts that haven't been used in a long time.'

One scientific study conducted in the 1970s looked at the connection between out innate powers (precognitive dreams) and winning horse racing results. Dr Thelma Moss, of the Neuropsychiatric Institute, of California University much to her surprise found several people could predict the outcome of horse races, even when they had no interest in the sport.

One of Dr Moss's subjects was a personal friend and fellow psychologist who recollected horse racing dreams despite not knowing anything about racing or following the progress of the sport. Yet, she recollected with much colour and vivid detail the results of races she had no knowledge of. These races did indeed exist and when results were polled Mrs Sammie Hudson was found to have predicted the winning horse each time. Dr Moss soon came across others who shared this remarkable ability.

Another subject who featured in the study was a lady who for religious reasons did not gamble and tried in vain to ignore her dreams of winning races. Her dreams were so accurate she could even recall the odds of the horses being run. Finally her husband - an insurance salesman - persuaded her to test her ability and actually gamble some of the couple's money on the dream. They selected a horse and won nearly a thousand dollars on a two-dollar bet.

From her research Dr Moss concluded that her subject's background, training and work influenced how they would predict the winning horses. For example, a bookkeeper might take more notice of the odds, whereas a television producer might focus on the actual photo-finish as if he were there filming the event (a genuine case recorded by Dr Moss).


The study found that our personalities shape the information received by precognitive abilities. Although Dr Moss had fallen short of declaring a gambling type of personality, by default her studies had clearly shown that gamblers who follow a hunch, a dream or vision may well be acting with complete justification in their ability. Dr Moss may have proven a case for psychic gambling, albeit as a by-product of her own interests.



Jonathan Tapsell was born in Sussex in 1964. He has worked as an investigative journalist and filmmaker and is archivist of the world's largest witchcraft collection bequeathed by English Witch Doreen Valiente. He has written books about the occult and true crime and founded the annual Occulture Festival. Jonathan regrets to announce that he has had to cancel his national Prophecy Tour due to unforeseen circumstances.



HORSE SENSE: Psychologist Dr Thelma Moss was astonished to discover that some people really could predict the results of horse races.



POKER FAITH: Is it possible that some gamblers are able to draw on a primal force of intuition which gives them a powerful advantage over their opponents?

**'SOME
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TO PSYCHIC
ABILITY.'**

However, we should not forget that this recognition of psychic gambling ability must be measured carefully in each case, as frauds and fakers abound in this area. The internet offers thousands of pseudo-psychic sites promoting books, betting systems and the like advancing all sorts of claims to snare the would-be punter.

Why are so many people so desperate to gamble away their hard-earned cash? Modern research has shown that a significant factor in gambling addiction may be dopamine, the neuro-transmitter

connected to giving pleasure. Both sex and food release dopamine to the brain. Put simply, the gambler releases dopamine and gets a high during betting.

This is interesting because some advanced research carried out by scientists such as Dr Peter Brugger, of the Neuropsychology Unit at University Hospital, Zurich, suggests that dopamine may contribute to psychic ability. If this is so then perhaps we can begin to join the dots between comments made by Dr Snake, Dr Moss and Brugger himself. It may

well be that a personality type exists for gamblers based on their brain chemistry. It is often said that successful gamblers are extroverts, optimists who will take a chance where others play safe.

Perhaps this basic type also includes so-called psychic abilities as part of the package? Perhaps this tenuous link between dopamine, psychic ability and gambling may one day be explained. It may provide more than just a cure for those addicted to gambling but might also recover the latent abilities once taken for granted in times past. ♣



Popular Haunts

Considering the age of some of the buildings and the range of artefacts stored within them, it's surprising we don't hear of haunted museums more often. RICHARD THOMAS joins a ghost hunt at his local museum and chats to members of staff who have witnessed ghostly goings-on there.



FRIGHTS IN THE MUSEUM: Swansea Museum, where several members of staff as well as visiting members of the public have experienced spooky phenomena. © Richard Thomas

Swansea Museum

SWANSEA, SOUTH WALES
ORIGINALLY SET UP BY the Royal Institution of South Wales (a local group who wanted to investigate all aspects of history, the arts and science at the beginning of the 19th century) Swansea Museum was completed in 1841 in the grand neo-classical style, and is the oldest museum in Wales.

'It had "come out of the wall" and walked along a corridor ... in view for at least 15 to 20 seconds.'

The main museum on Oystermouth Road contains all kinds of unusual objects from Swansea's past as well as the wider world. The building's six galleries house everything from an ancient Egyptian mummy to a traditional Welsh kitchen.

In addition to this treasure trove of both ordinary and extraordinary exhibits the museum has three floating exhibits in its collections which are kept at the marina: the lightship 'Helwick', a tug boat called 'Canning' and the 'Olga', a Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter built in 1909. Other popular items kept at the museum's collection centre in Landore include old vehicles like a travellers' van, lorries, a fire engine

and two lifeboats, the 'Naomi Beatty' and the 'William Gammon.'

On March 27, I attended an evening investigation at Swansea Museum. With so much history surrounding not only the main building itself but more significantly the items within it, I was hopeful for some activity. And although most of the night was admittedly very quiet, I did experience what might be interpreted as paranormal activity.

Most significantly, while I was downstairs with three others, we could hear clear and distinct footsteps and knocks coming from the library room above us when nobody should have been in that location at the time. Also, later in



SCARI-TIME: In the section of the museum, housed at Landore, a staff member heard an eerie whistling. A visiting medium claimed that a suicide had taken place on one of the craft on show here and that this might account for the haunting. © Richard Thomas



the evening one member of the investigation team I was with felt someone pinch his backside. I was standing directly behind this person at the time and can say definitively it wasn't me!

However, if anyone was to have experienced anything out of the ordinary at the museum – just as with any allegedly haunted location – surely it would be the staff who work there day in day out. During the investigation, I spoke with one of the staff, Catherine Perrie, who told me she and two colleagues (Paul Giuffrida and Trish Nicholls) had seen a 'dark-cloaked figure' walking up and down the stairs. Intrigued, I arranged to return to the museum in the daylight hours to see if I could find out more. I wasn't disappointed.

When I interviewed Catherine further, she told me that she saw the strange figure on top of the stairs twice, on two different evenings. While reading, she saw the outline of a figure on the top of the stairs. When she turned to see who (or what) it was, though, the apparition immediately turned and ran up the next flight of stairs leading to the 'Cabinet of Curiosities' gallery room, where, according to Catherine, the strange activity in the building 'seems to be mainly focused'.

Paul Giuffrida shared with me two other strange experiences he had had at the museum. The first of these took place in the 'Cabinet of Curiosities' gallery. While putting in a window for one of the exhibits, "The Victorian

Room' (where Catherine told me visitors had reported cold spots and a 'presence'), Paul said he heard 'a lot of noise ... tapping and banging' coming from the corner opposite the lift. Naturally, he assumed someone must have come upstairs but, on investigation, he discovered nobody had.

On another occasion, this time at the museum's collection centre at Landore, Paul told me that while he was working in the storage area he heard 'loud whistling' in his ear.

In addition to these two accounts, Paul also related to me that when a medium had been brought in to investigate the strange activity at the museum, they were told the ghost of

'One member of the investigation team felt someone pinch his backside.'

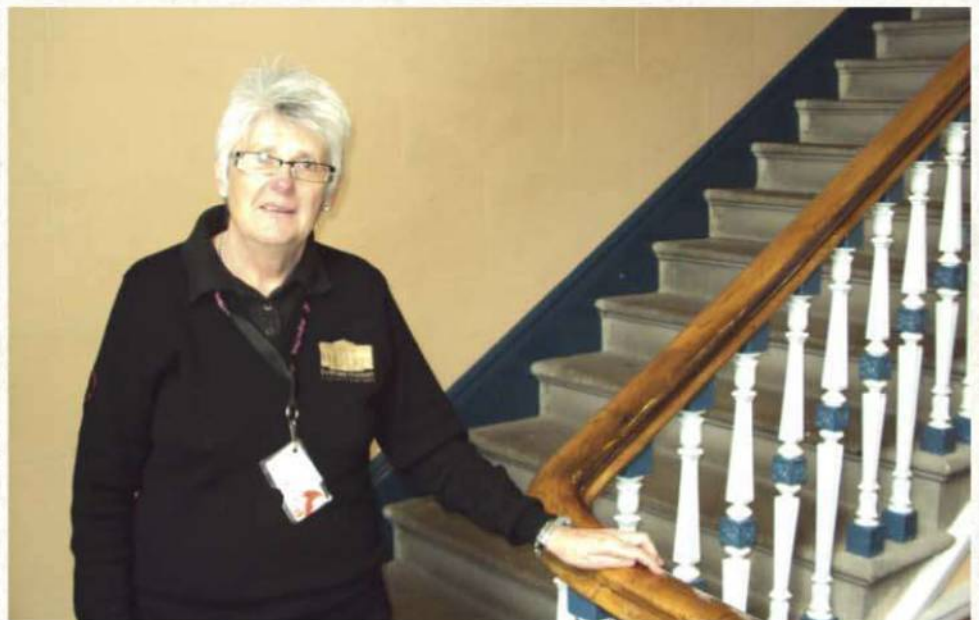
someone who had committed suicide on the lightship 'Helwick' now haunted the museum; this might even be the cloaked figure who had been seen on the stairs.

Roger Gale, Swansea Museum's Exhibition and Events Officer, wasn't convinced about this, though, since he doesn't believe in the abilities of mediums and other sensitives. Despite this, however, Roger did admit after some coaxing to seeing and experiencing things at the museum. Although a little embarrassed, Roger went into some detail about a full-bodied apparition he saw. It had 'come out of the wall' and walked along a corridor before vanishing. Roger said the apparition was in view for at least 15 to 20 seconds and that it looked so lifelike that for a moment he thought it was one of his colleagues.

'It was as real as you are now,' he said.

When people think of haunted locations, they tend to think of ancient castles, theatres or pubs. But with so much history surrounding them, museums should not be overlooked when considering haunted hot-spots, as the experiences of the staff at Swansea show. ☉

STAIRCASE MYSTERY: Catherine Perrie at the foot of the staircase where twice she has seen a ghostly figure in a black cloak. © Richard Thomas





A new wave of sightings

Along with fairies and unicorns, mermaids are among the archetypes of legend - and perhaps the most unlikely of the lot. And yet there has been a rash of sightings in recent years. Is it possible mermaids are more than just a fishy tale? **KARL SHUKER** investigates.

SIGHTINGS OF MERMAIDS did not end in bygone times like those of unicorns, centaurs or other beasts of fable. On the contrary, these aquatic demi-damsels are apparently still very much alive and well and startling bemused onlookers.

As recently as September 29, 2009, for instance, the Israeli media were carrying reports of an entity resembling a young girl leaping out of the water and performing aerial feats across the waves before submerging beneath them, as viewed by dozens of people at the beach in Kiryat Yam, in a suburb of Haifa. Indeed, her appearances attracted such interest that the local council offered a staggering \$1 million dollars as a reward for anyone who can confirm her reality. As yet, however, despite an influx of camera-wielding would-be millionaires, the prize has not been claimed.

According to Iranian media sources in 2005, for the past two years a merman had been spied by sailors and residents of coastal regions around the southern and south-western Caspian Sea. Referred to by sailors as the *runan-shah* ('master of the sea and rivers'), it was said to be roughly 165cm tall and of strong build, with a protruding stomach, relatively squat legs and arms, flipper-like feet, four webbed fingers on each hand, black and green hair on its head, a sharply-pointed nose,

large orbicular eyes, a fairly large mouth with a projecting upper jaw but no chin, and skin the colour of moonlight(!). It had also been supposedly sighted by Azerbaijani fishermen in waters linking the cities of Astara and Lenkoran during May 2004.

Documenting this extraordinary story in March 2005, the Russian newspaper *Pravda* added some extra snippets concerning modern-day mermaid reports that I had not previously encountered.

'A book of collected scientific articles titled *The Universe and Humankind* that was published in St Petersburg in 1905 contains a story of [a] "marine female" caught in the Caribbean. It also has stories about dead bodies of amphibious humans washed ashore in the Azores in 1876. Their descriptions largely correspond with the reported description of *Runan-shah*.

'An amphibious humanlike being was reported in Karelia in 1928. This creature was repeatedly seen in the lake of Vedlozero by local residents. A group of researchers from the Petrozavodsk University arrived to investigate the case on location. Unfortunately, the findings were classified and the members of the research party eventually perished in the Gulag.'

A reputedly genuine blonde-haired mermaid with a porpoise-like lower body, sitting eating

a salmon on some rocks at the entrance to Active Pass, in British Columbia, Canada, was reported by several passengers aboard a ferry passing by in 1967. Moreover, photographs snapped by an eyewitness in a plane flying overhead apparently corroborated their description of this being. One of these photos was subsequently published in Canada's *Times-Colonist* newspaper, but nothing more has seemingly emerged regarding this potentially significant encounter. ☉

ARCHETYPAL: Frederic Leighton's painting of 'The Fisherman and the Syren' from the 1850s is an excellent example of the romantic - indeed erotic - image of the mermaid from legend.



'A BLONDE-HAIRED MERMAID WITH A PORPOISE-LIKE LOWER BODY, SITTING EATING A SALMON ON SOME ROCKS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA WAS REPORTED IN 1967.'

SOUTH AFRICA'S ROCK PAINTINGS

Created for untold centuries by the San hunter-gatherer people, the rock paintings in the Karoo, South Africa, depict some remarkable entities, but none more so than certain ones bearing a striking resemblance to mermaids!

Seeking to provide a rational scientific explanation for them after the discovery of some additional examples in Ezeljachtpoort (again in the Karoo) was made public during 1998, anthropologists have suggested that they either portray departed spirits (a dominant theme in San society) or represent the hallucinogenic experience of San shamans. According to one elderly San man interviewed by the paintings' researchers, however, they depict bona fide water maidens, and even today such beings are indeed reported quite frequently in this African region.

'WHERE, IF ANYWHERE, AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS THE REAL MERMAID?'

Speaking from a purely personal, wholly subjective point of view, however, the most surprising mermaid report of recent years for me has to be one that was posted by the online Fanoos Encyclopedia in September 2009. It contained the extraordinary claim not only that an alleged mermaid had been visiting the shores of Batroun, Lebanon, each spring for the past six years but also that a dead mermaid had recently been found there. And this was not all. The report continued by stating that the decaying corpse had been shipped under very tight security to Germany, whereupon it had then been sent to Birmingham University here in England and placed in *my* care!

Disappointingly, I can confirm no such specimen has ever been sent to me; indeed, I am not even attached to this university any longer, having left over 20 years ago to pursue a full-time career in freelance writing and consultancy. Consequently, the origin of this bizarre report remains a complete mystery to me (and photos of the purported Batroun mermaid accompanying the Fanoos report clearly show a stuffed specimen of the Feejee variety – see below).

THE BODIES OF EVIDENCE? Historically speaking, the mermaid has always suffered from a troublesome dichotomy. On the one hand (or fin!), the archives are packed with folklore appertaining to beauteous sea-maidens combing

their lustrous tresses while perched on a rock above the waves; on the other hand, there are many alleged sightings, and even some reported corpses too, of rather more homely marine entities, of somewhat vaguer humanoid persuasion, supposedly encountered by perplexed sailors and other maritime eyewitnesses down through the centuries.

So where, if anywhere, and what, if anything, is the real mermaid?

Sightings and photos are all very well, but some physical, tangible evidence for the reality of mermaids would be much more beneficial from a scientific standpoint. As it happens, there have been all manner of purported merfolk captured and exhibited throughout history.

For example, Pausanias, a 2nd century Greek geographer, personally observed the preserved body of a reputed triton – a mythological merman-like sea-being – during a visit to Rome. According to his description, this creature had greyish eyes, a human nose, a broad mouth containing animal-like teeth, gills beneath its ears, and hair on its head, but was otherwise covered in fine scales resembling the rough skin of sharks. Its upper body was equipped with a pair of arms that bore fingered hands, but in the place of legs its lower body sported a dolphin-like tail. Pausanias also claimed to have seen a similar corpse in his native Greece.



FOLKLORE: This famous old chair in the church at Zennor in Cornwall represents a mermaid who, according to local legend, was tempted to come ashore after hearing the beautiful singing of the squire's son as he walked along the cliffs above the sea. © Tom Oates.

In 1560, on p. 174 of his groundbreaking bestiary of water beasts, *Nomenclator Aquatilium Animantium*, Conrad Gesner included two remarkable engravings of scaly marine humanoids. One was of a 'sea-monk' that had allegedly been captured off the Norwegian coast during Gesner's own lifetime, the other was of a 'sea-bishop' reputedly observed off the Polish coast in 1531.

However, the preserved sea-maid *par excellence* was the so-called Feejee Mermaid, which first came to light during 1822 aboard an American ship harboured in South Africa's Table Bay, and was ultimately exhibited on Broadway by world-famous circus showman Phineas T. Barnum during the 1840s.

A truly hideous creature, boasting a monkey-like head and withered face set in a permanent half-snarl, and with a multi-finned body terminating in a long, curved fish-tail, it was displayed inside a glass dome, and was viewed with a mixture of wonder and revulsion by countless visitors to Barnum's exhibition, eventually becoming so (in)famous that the term 'Feejee Mermaid' is now used in relation to all such exhibits of this nature.

But what were these diverse, ostensibly-erstwhile denizens of the deep? In the case of the Roman and Greek tritons, with no illustrative material to study, it is difficult to ascertain their true identity with any degree of certainty, though it seems likely that they



UNLIKELY: The manatee is the most frequently suggested animal that might have inspired mermaid tales but in truth they are very unlike, as this 19th century engraving helps to show.



WHAT WERE THEY?: Engraving of the so-called sea-monk and sea-bishop described by Conrad Gesner in the 16th century.



far-flung backstreet hovel. Nevertheless, some of these fabricated specimens are spectacular in their own right, and are still produced on occasion today as greatly-prized curios.

Indeed, in March this year I was delighted to receive from expert movie model-maker Alan Friswell a wonderful modern-day Feejee Mermaid

constructed entirely from non-biological materials (no monkeys or fish were harmed in the making of this monster!), which had been specially

created by him as a gift for me, and now takes pride of place in my personal collection of zoological exhibits (read more on page 55).

As for Gesner's sea-monk and sea-bishop: when viewed dispassionately, they can readily be seen to bear more than a passing similarity to large squids (commonly encountered off the Scandinavian and Baltic coasts), but again artfully modified into quasi-humanoid guises.

Much more perplexing, and intriguing are certain reports of

dead mer-beings from modern times that seem too scientifically precise and sober to be easily discounted as hoaxes or even misidentifications of known species. Two in particular are worthy of serious consideration.

The first of these consists of an account by naturalist Dr Robert Hamilton of a monkey-like mer-being captured during the 1800s off Yell, one of the Shetland Islands, by some fishermen of his personal acquaintance, after it had become entangled in their lines. According to Dr Hamilton's description:

'The animal was about three feet long, the upper part of the body resembling the human, with protuberant mammae, like a woman; the face, the forehead, and neck were short, and resembling those of a monkey; the arms, which were small, were kept folded across the breast; the fingers were distinct, not webbed; a few stiff, long bristles were on the top of the head, extending down to the shoulders, and these it could erect and depress at pleasure, something like a crest. The inferior part of the body was like a fish. The skin was smooth, and of a grey colour.

It offered no resistance, nor attempted to bite, but uttered a low, plaintive sound. The crew, six in number, took it within their boat; but superstition getting the better of curiosity, they carefully disentangled it from the lines and from a hook which had accidentally fastened in its body, and returned it to its native element. It instantly dived, descending in a perpendicular direction.'

This does not recall any of the (un)usual suspects generally offered by mainstream science as mermaid identities – seal, sirenian (manatees and dugongs), dolphin, large fish, optical illusion caused by temperature-inversion phenomena, or a human suffering from ichthyosis (a genetic skin disorder in which the skin is covered in fish-like scales). Indeed, it does not recall anything known to science.

Nor does the unfortunate creature discovered inside the stomach of a

COMPOSITE: A 19th century engraving of Barnum's famous Feejee Mermaid, a skillfully worked together upper body of a monkey attached to the stuffed tale of a large fish.



were probably forerunners of Barnum's Feejee Mermaid. For this specimen, just like the many others that followed in its lucrative wake, was nothing more than a skilfully-constructed composite of the preserved upper carcase of a small monkey and the dried lower body and tail of a large fish. In short, it was a fraud, and owed its hybrid form to the ingenuity of a deft manipulator of animal remains in the shadowy anonymity of some

'MUCH MORE INTRIGUING ARE CERTAIN REPORTS OF DEAD MER-BEINGS FROM MODERN TIMES THAT SEEM TOO SCIENTIFICALLY PRECISE AND SOBER TO BE EASILY DISCOUNTED.'

THE SIREN OF THE FJORD

For three successive summers spanning 1998-2000, a very traditional-looking mermaid, sitting naked atop a rock and complete with long golden hair, fluked fish-tail, and buxom, bare-breasted joie de vivre, astounded scores of voyagers journeying along the Lyse fjord in western Norway. Sadly, after hitting the headlines worldwide, it was finally revealed in June 2000 that Norway's very own not-so-Little Mermaid was not a silent siren after all, but was in fact a 37-year-old woman called Line Oexnevad in a blonde wig and false tail, who had been hired to serve as a surprise attraction for tourist boat trips!



OUT EAST: This contemporary parchment illustration shows a mermaid reported in Toyama Bay, Japan, in 1805.



BENBECULA: Does a genuine mermaid lie buried near the beach in this Hebridean Island?

“SADDENED, AND SHOCKED BY HOW HUMAN-LIKE YET NON-HUMAN THIS MYSTERIOUS INDIVIDUAL SEEMED TO BE, THE ISLANDERS PREPARED A GRAVE NEAR THE SHORE WHERE ITS BODY HAD BEEN FOUND.”

shark caught on Iceland’s north-western coast, which was closely studied afterwards by the priest of Ottrardale, whose detailed description was subsequently quoted in Sabine Baring-Gould’s book *Iceland, Its Scenes and Sagas* (1863):

‘The lower part of the animal was entirely eaten away, whilst the upper part, from the epigastric and hypogastric region, was in some places partially eaten, in others completely devoured. The sternum, or breast-bone, was perfect. This animal appeared to be about the size of a boy eight or nine years old, and its head was formed like that of a man. The anterior surface of the occiput was very protuberant, and the nape of the neck had a considerable indentation or sinking. The alae [lobes] of the ears were very large, and extended a good way back. It had front teeth, which were long and pointed, as were also the larger teeth. The eyes were lustreless, and resembled those of a codfish.

‘It had on its head long black, coarse hair, very similar to the fucus filiformis [filamentous seaweed]; this hair hung over the shoulders. Its forehead was large and round. The skin above the eyelids was much wrinkled, scanty, and of a bright olive colour, which was indeed the hue of the whole body. The chin was cloven, the shoulders were high, and the neck uncommonly short. The arms were of their natural size, and

each hand had a thumb and four fingers covered with flesh. Its breast was formed exactly like that of a man, and there was also to be seen something like nipples; the back was also like that of a man. It had very cartilaginous ribs; and in parts where the skin had been rubbed off, a black, coarse flesh was perceptible, very similar to that of the seal. This animal, after having been exposed about a week on the shore, was again thrown into the sea.’

If only its remains had been preserved – what, I wonder, would today’s DNA analysis techniques have revealed?

DOES THE ANSWER LIE BURIED ON BENBECULA?

Although science has indeed missed its opportunity with the mer-monkey of Yell and Iceland’s

shark-swallowed enigma, there may still be one more chance for it to examine a *bona fide* mermaid. The history of this unique case began over 150 years ago, on the Scottish island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides or Western Isles.

One day in or around 1830, a group of Benbecula islanders were cutting seaweed when they spied a humanoid entity resembling a small woman splashing and cavorting playfully in the sea nearby. The men in the group attempted to capture this most unexpected visitor, but in vain. However, some of their children then began throwing stones at it, and one of these stones struck the being on its back, after which it sank beneath the waves, and was not seen again – until, a few days later, its lifeless body was found washed ashore at Cuile Bay, a few km away from where it had been seen when alive.

According to the description of its corpse in Volume 2 of Alexander Carmichael’s *Carmina Gadelica* (1900):

‘The upper portion of the creature was about the size of a well-fed child of three or four years of age, with an abnormally developed breast. The hair was long, dark, and glossy, while the skin was white, soft, and tender. The lower part of the body was like a salmon, but without scales.

‘Saddened, and shocked by how human-like yet nevertheless non-human this mysterious individual seemed to be, the islanders prepared a grave near the shore where its body had been found. And after conducting a solemn funeral, they duly buried the slain mermaid there, in a coffin and shroud as ordered by Duncan Shaw, factor for Clanranald, baron-bailie and sheriff of the district.’



Karl P N Shuker PhD is a zoologist and expert in cryptozoology, animal mythology and wildlife anomalies. A scientific fellow of the Zoological Society of London, a fellow of the Royal Entomological Society and a member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, he is the author of more than a dozen books on mysterious phenomena, including *In Search of Prehistoric Survivors*, *The Beasts That Hide From Man* and, most recently, *Dr Shuker’s Casebook*. His website is www.karlshuker.com



FRAUD: Another version of the ‘Feejee Mermaid’ type of fake, also called a Jenny Haniver. This one is on display at the Indian Trading Post in Banff.

For well over a century, the story of the Benbecula mermaid was discounted as little more than folklore, but in recent years it has attracted renewed interest, due to various claims that a headstone marking its grave had been found and that its grave still exists – situated somewhere in the graveyard of the Chapel of St Mary, a small medieval church immediately to the east of Cuile Bay. The church itself is ruined, but its graveyard is still used today as the principal burial ground for Benbecula's inhabitants, and is thus a likely location for the grave of so humanoid an entity as a mermaid.

Notwithstanding this, when American cryptozoologist Nick Sucik spent three weeks on Benbecula in 2008, he came upon a previously-undocumented grave-shaped mound in a field next to the bay where the creature's body was seen, and which many locals believe to be its burial site. Nick did not have time to begin any excavations here, but he plans to revisit Benbecula in order to continue his investigations.

What, if anything, might he find? Could it be, for example, as has occurred to me, that the Benbecula mermaid story gradually emerged and enlarged through the ages as a much-embroidered folktale based originally upon the death of a malformed child on the island in the distant past? There is a rare congenital condition actually known as sirenomelia, in which an affected baby is born with its legs fused together to yield a mermaid-like single limb with two fluke-like feet at its tip. In the 1830s, such a child would probably not have survived very long, but would nonetheless have been buried with a full funeral service.

Is this what Nick will unearth, should he succeed in tracing the mermaid's grave? Or might he instead discover the mortal remains of a true mermaid – whatever that proves to be? Perhaps the answer to one of natural history's most enduring riddles will indeed be unfurled one day on the lonely shores of a small Scottish island – or will it once again elude discovery, just as readily as the mermaid itself, laughing in carefree delight as it slips effortlessly from sight beneath the wild and ruffling waves of its mysterious undersea domain? ❖

How to make a monster

ALAN FRISWELL explains the procedures he followed to create Dr Karl Shuker's very own 'Feejee Mermaid'.

Karl's mermaid started life as a steel frame bolted to an old, weathered wooden base that I got from my garden shed.

I put together a basic skeleton, which gave the anatomical form of a humanoid torso combined with a fish-like tail. The muscles and 'flesh' were built up with a traditional modelling putty much like the sculpting compounds that were employed in the construction of the original Feejee Mermaids at the turn of the last century.

As I refrained from using real fish and monkey parts, the bones and skull had to be sculpted from scratch, as did the effect of ribs and the backbone.

The teeth were made from a plastic resin, sanded and finished with taxidermist's paint and clear vanish, then set into the skull. The fingernails, or more accurately, 'claws', were made the same way, but built into the fingertips, for greater realism.

Once the putty had dried, the 'skin' was applied. The original Feejee Mermaid's exteriors would often be made from leather soaked in glue, and 'wrapped' around the figure. This is basically the same technique that I used, but I also mixed in some colouring, to give the skin an 'organic' appearance. Watercolour paint was used for this, but also – and this surprises some people – gravy powder, which blends realistically with the paint.

The face has its own application of the 'skin', wrinkled around the skull with a sculpting tool, with special attention given to the eyes and mouth. The ears were made from the same modelling putty, and glued to the skull.

For the hair, I had originally thought of using real human hair like the taxidermists of old, but decided against it, for fear that it might make the figure too grisly. I opted instead for doll's hair, which I straightened in boiling water and rolled in fine earth to give it its 'sheen'. This was then glued to the skull and painted to blend in with the skin.



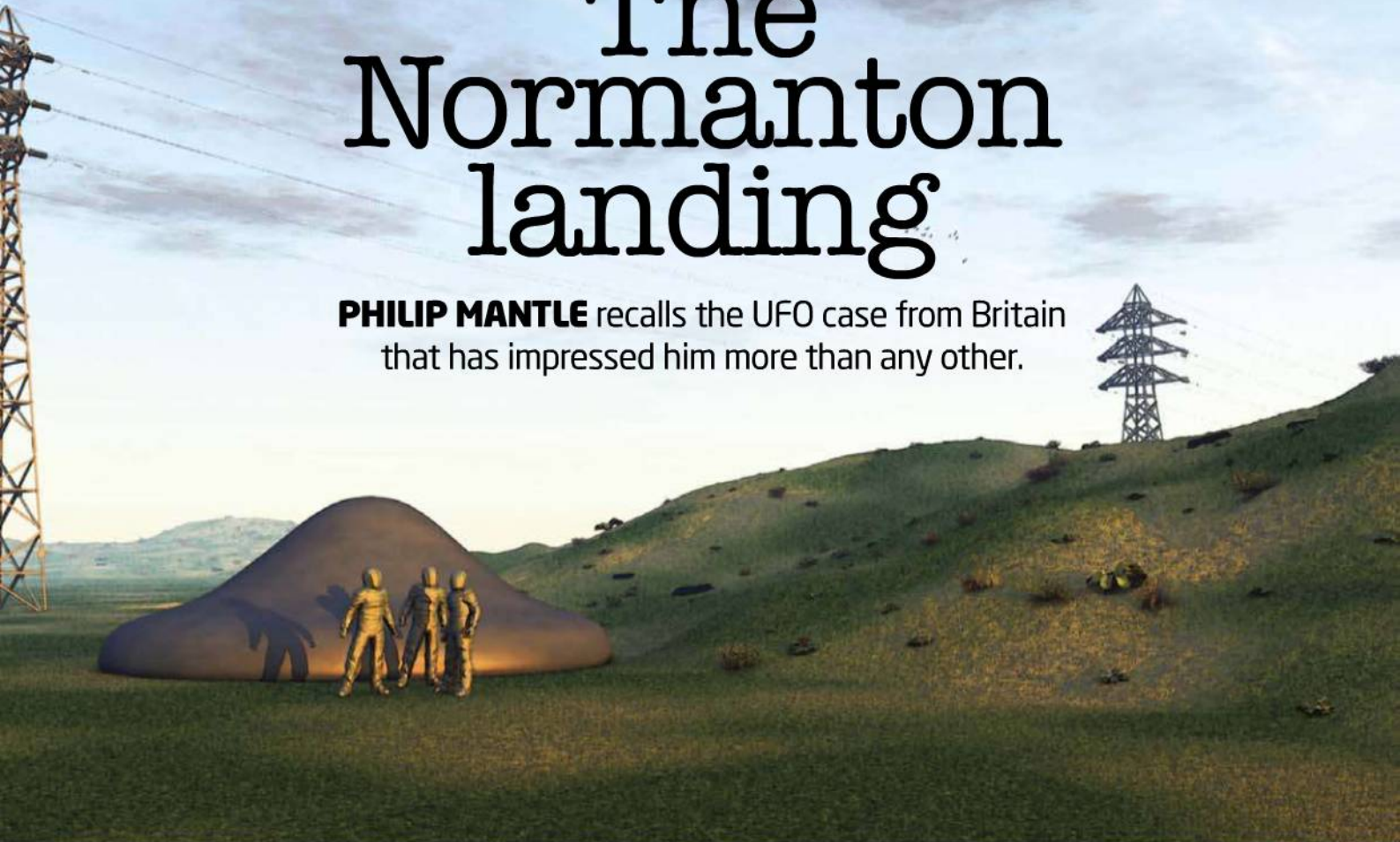
HIS OWN CREATION: In the original faked mermaids a monkey's skull would be used. Alan sculpted his own skull by hand creating a face that is no less hideous than the original. © Alan Friswell



FEEJEE MERMAID: Alan Friswell's own version of this famous fake specially made for Dr Karl Shuker. © Dr Karl Shuker

The Normanton landing

PHILIP MANTLE recalls the UFO case from Britain that has impressed him more than any other.



WHAT THEY SAW:
Artist's impression of the 1979 UFO landing case at Normanton, West Yorkshire. © David Sankey (www.davidsankey.com)

WHEN I LOOK BACK NOW I am amazed to find that I have been involved in UFO research and investigation for 30 years. Over those years I have been a member of six UFO groups, four of which were in the UK and two overseas. I've always had an interest in all things 'paranormal' but for some reason UFOs gained my full attention in the late 1970's.

Without doubt the UFO case that has most impressed me is one I investigated with Mark Birdsall when we were both part of the Yorkshire UFO Society. I doubt if you have ever heard of the following case but I remember interviewing the witnesses like it was only yesterday.

The following account was first published in the July/August issue of *Quest* magazine, at the time the hand-printed publication of the Yorkshire UFO Society (YUFOS).

On Friday October 13, 1986, I had been featured in the regional newspaper the *Wakefield Express*, which encouraged its readers to report any UFO sightings to YUFOS. We received a number of observations but one stood out. I was telephoned by a lady by the name of Mrs Westerman who told

me she and a number of her children had witnessed the landing of a UFO near her house in Normanton, West Yorkshire, a few years earlier.

Mark Birdsall and I interviewed Mrs Westerman at her home in Normanton which lies just a few miles outside of the city of Wakefield with the M62 and M1 motorways close by.

'AROUND THE OBJECT STOOD THREE VERY TALL "MEN", ALL OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE DRESSED IN SILVER SUITS.'

Mrs Westerman said the incident took place in the summer of 1979. She could not remember the date but speculated it could have been May or June. Mrs Westerman went on to inform us that on the sunny afternoon in question she was at home doing the washing. Her children were outside playing a ball game and enjoying the sun. They were not on school holiday so it must have been a weekend.

It was around mid-afternoon when her eight-year-old daughter Sandra suddenly ran into the house shouting and crying and telling her mother to 'Come quick, an aeroplane has just landed in the

field.' The Westermans' house was an elevated property near the end of a cul-de-sac, beyond which were fields containing electricity pylons. Mrs Westerman switched off her washing machine and ran outside.

In the fields just a few hundred yards away she saw an object on the ground. It was a dull grey colour and had the appearance of

a 'Mexican hat'. Around the object stood three very tall 'men', all of whom appeared to be dressed in silver suits. These men seemed to be pointing a dark instrument at the ground. The children and Mrs Westerman made their way over the field towards this object and stopped at a fence. The men walked to the rear of the object and it rose vertically, stopped in mid air, and then shot off at an angle at a high rate of speed. Needless to say, they were speechless.

This was a brief description given by Mrs Westerman but we also took advantage of speaking to some of the children as well. Unlike Mrs

Westerman, they had also seen the object come in to land. The children were interviewed separately and their story was very consistent. This is what they had to say:

They had been playing ball behind the house. The ball had been thrown up into the air as part of the game and as Sandra went to catch it, she observed a strange object in the sky. Sandra shouted to the rest of the children to look and pointed skyward. They all observed a silvery coloured object, disc-shaped with a rim around the perimeter. The object was at low level and was seen just above the electricity pylons. It suddenly stopped in mid-air just a few hundred feet up and hovered for a few seconds before slowly landing in the field. Sandra immediately ran off to get her mother.

The other children ran towards the object but stopped when they reached the fence that enclosed the field. The object itself wasn't very big, perhaps as long as a large Volvo car. However, the 'men' around the object all seemed to be very tall. The object in their hand looked similar to a torch. These three humanoid figures had been seen to emerge from the rear of the landed object. Their heads and face were covered by some kind of 'visor'. Their silver suits had no zippers, buttons or seams; they had gloves or mittens covering their hands; and were wearing wedge-shaped boots. None of these men appeared to communicate with each other and their actions were slow and precise.

It was at this point that Mrs Westerman and her daughter Sandra caught up with the other five children. They continued to observe this strange spectacle for about a minute or so. Suddenly, one of the figures looked up and noticed Mrs Westerman and the children standing behind the fence. At once these three very tall men quickly walked behind the object and were never seen again. A few seconds later the object silently rose from the ground, stopped in mid-air, before moving off at an angle at high speed.

All seven individuals were amazed by what they had just seen and Mrs Westerman, the only adult there, had to calm the children down. All seven witnesses hardly spoke about this incident down the years and had never told anyone outside of the family about

it until relating it to me and Mark.

All six children related similar accounts to us. There were minor discrepancies but we expected to find that from different people and several years after it had happened. All the children were of the opinion that the dark object the men had in their hands and were moving about looked like a torch but it had no light and gave off no sound. The 'uniforms' the men were wearing were metallic silver and it would crease when the men moved. All of the witnesses stated quite clearly that both upon landing and departure this object never made a sound.

At our interview a young man by the name of Andrew Lewis was invited to attend by Mrs Westerman. He was a friend of the children at the time and although he did not observe anything unusual himself, he arrived shortly afterwards and confirmed how excited they all were. Another friend was Danny Shore. He was one of the seven original witnesses and was 13-years-old at the time. He estimated that the whole incident last no more than between five and ten minutes.

The location of this event is interesting. The field lies at the end of the houses which in turn are part of a large housing estate. There are many electricity pylons in the field, making it very difficult for such things as helicopters to land.

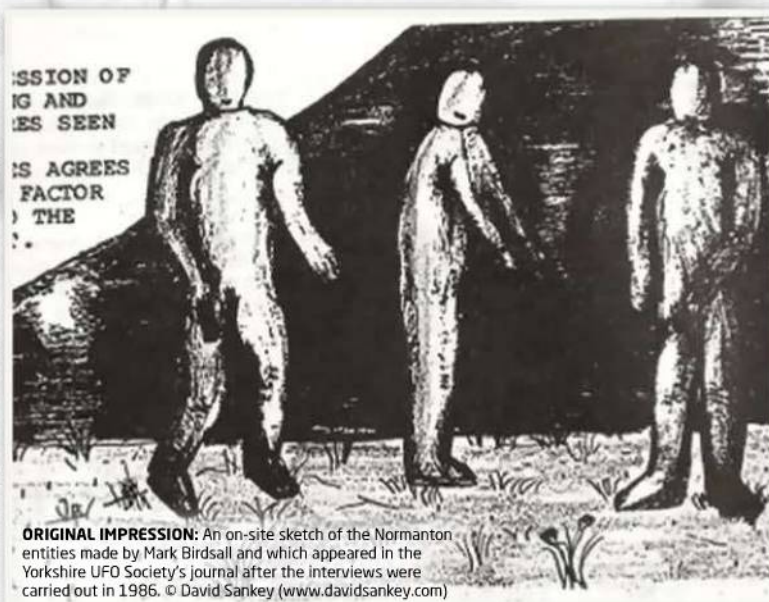
Both Mark and I visited the location and were impressed by the credibility of the witnesses. At no time did they call the object a 'spaceship' or a 'flying saucer' and

there was no way Mrs Westerman wanted any publicity, she would not even allow us to take her photograph. They were honest, down-to-earth people. The children's accounts were consistent and all seven witnesses were in no doubt that they had observed something out of the ordinary. Both Mark and I could find no reason for them to concoct such a story. Mrs Westerman did say she was amazed no one else had seen the object. It was a sunny day and it flew at low level over the housing estate.

'SUDDENLY, ONE OF THE FIGURES LOOKED UP AND NOTICED MRS WESTERMAN AND THE CHILDREN STANDING BEHIND THE FENCE.'

So there you have it. This is the one UFO case that most impresses me above all others. Why? Well it's not just because I was involved in it, and it is not necessarily what the witnesses related to us. Instead it is the witnesses themselves.

Normanton formerly had a large mining community. My late father worked down the mines all his life and I grew up with people very much like Mrs Westerman, whose husband also worked at a local colliery. Added to that, and despite our best efforts, neither Mark nor I could find any rational explanation for this event. It either happened as they reported it to us or they were lying but we could detect no evidence of the latter. ●



Philip Mantle is a former Director of Investigations for BUFORA and is an international UFO researcher, author, lecturer & broadcaster. His books include: *Beyond Roswell*, *Without Consent*, *Mysterious Sky*, *Soviet UFO Phenomenon* and *Alien Autopsy Inquest*. He lives in West Yorkshire and can be contacted via his web site at: www.philipmantle.com



What is a ghost?

For some they are the returning spirits of the dead. For others they are 'all in the mind': hallucinations, misinterpretations, or wishful thinking. Psychologist **GEORGE STUART** looks at all the angles and makes some intriguing suggestions of his own as to the true origin and nature of a ghost. In addition, several of our regular writers offer their own ideas on the matter.

I'VE BEEN FASCINATED by the idea of ghosts since early childhood and in my consideration of the question 'what is a ghost?' the answer always seemed obvious. So obvious, in fact, that a quick consultation of the Oxford English Dictionary reveals a definition that would no doubt satisfy most interested parties, c.f.:

'Ghost: *Noun*; an apparition of a dead person which is believed to appear to the living.'

Four hundred years earlier, a similar definition was given by King James I of England and Scotland (who fancied himself as something of a scholar as well as ruler over the newly and informally United Kingdoms) and he wrote in 1597 '... what means then these kindes of spirites, when they appear in the shaddow of a person newlie dead, or to die, to his friends?... When they appeare upon that occasion, they are called Wraithes in our language' (King James I, *The Daemonologie*, Thirde Booke).

So, the label may change, but the subject clearly remains the same. However, when we consider the 'ghost' question more deeply, the inadequacies of these simple definitions become clear. The King James definition, like its predecessor, merely informs us that some resemblance of a dead person (Aunt Nellie, King Henry

the Eight, etc) is observed by a living person (Cousin Gerald, or best friend Mike) without giving any indication of how (or indeed why) it happens.

Interestingly, in the opinion of James I, these apparitions were not caused by the deceased themselves, but were rather manifestations of the Devil in disguise, attempting to deceive susceptible people. The King's scepticism stemmed from one interpretation of the New Testament (and remember that James oversaw its first authorized version, so he should know) that the dead remain dead until the resurrection, at which point they would attain eternal life.

Unravelling the definitions further still, I now take issue with the phrase 'of a dead person', since a large number of reported apparitions are of living people, or at least of people living at the moment of the experience (c.f. Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886, *Phantasms of the Living*. Perhaps this is what King James was getting at when he talks about 'a person newlie dead, or to die').

Moreover, the phrase 'believed to appear to the living' is unnecessarily cautious. There is no doubt that 'ghosts' are encountered by many people across the globe and this is tacitly acknowledged by psychologists in their adoption of

the term 'apparitional experiences' (a neutral expression, used to describe the experience, without any attempt to attribute a cause). The ambiguity or controversy resides not in the experience but in the cause of the apparitions (i.e. normal vs. paranormal).

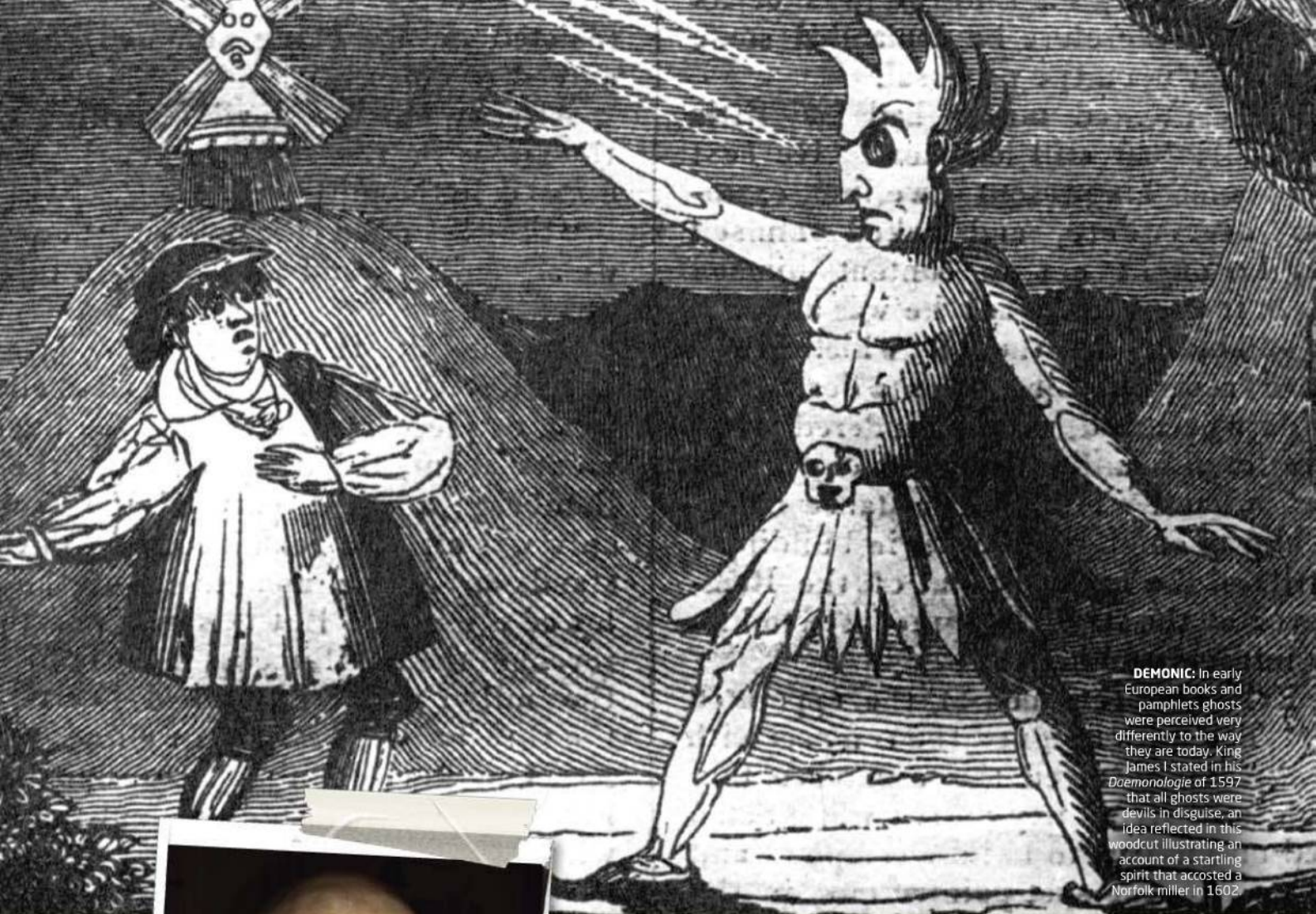
EXTERNAL VS INTERNAL

Unfortunately, this leaves us little of the original dictionary definition to work from, but I'll try to salvage what I can. In my own exploration of this topic, I've found it useful to break down the explanation of the apparitional experience into two broad categories: External (i.e. something that exists physically in a particular location, independently of any observer) vs. Internal (i.e. something in the

'THE DEFINITION MERELY INFORMS US THAT SOME RESEMBLANCE OF A DEAD PERSON IS OBSERVED BY A LIVING PERSON WITHOUT GIVING ANY INDICATION OF HOW (OR INDEED WHY) IT HAPPENS.'



Dr George Stuart is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of York St John, with a particular interest in Anomalistic Psychology (a subject that he teaches at undergraduate level). His other research interests include memory, a topic on which he has published extensively in international academic journals and given conference presentations throughout the world. For more information, visit www.yorksj.ac.uk/georgestuart



DEMONIC: In early European books and pamphlets ghosts were perceived very differently to the way they are today. King James I stated in his *Daemonologie* of 1597 that all ghosts were devils in disguise, an idea reflected in this woodcut illustrating an account of a startling spirit that accosted a Norfolk miller in 1602.



MY VIEW: NICK REDFERN

One theory that intrigues me greatly is the idea that witnesses could be experiencing time-slips. For example, in cases where people claim to have seen ghostly soldiers fighting on the battlefield, perhaps they're not seeing ghosts, after all. Maybe, instead, the witnesses have been given a unique and brief glimpse into the past, as a result of some strange time-displacement. As for people claiming to see the ghosts of dead loved ones, I sometimes wonder if the human mind has the ability to subconsciously, and outwardly, project imagery that the witness sees and interprets as a visit from the person who has passed away. In other words, the subconscious is trying to help the grieving person with comforting images that may be purely internal without the person realizing.

'WE KNOW THAT THE HUMAN BRAIN HAS A NATURAL PREDISPOSITION TO SEE THINGS THAT ARE NOT THERE. WE'RE ALSO PREDISPOSED TO IMPOSE MEANING ONTO RANDOM OR DISTORTED INFORMATION.'

mind of the mind of the beholder), though neither explanation is necessarily linked to a normal or a paranormal perspective.

So, for example, an apparition that exists in the mind of an observer may be, at one extreme, a fantasy (normal explanation) or transmitted by and received from some as yet unknown source (paranormal explanation). Similarly, an apparition that exists externally may be a normal phenomena (e.g. a cloud or mist formation that appears coincidentally in human form) or paranormal (e.g. the manifestation of a spirit of the dead).

I'd like to begin with the external account but, before considering any paranormal alternatives, it's useful to exclude a range of normal phenomena that might result in an apparent paranormal experience. To quote the words of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, 'We

must fall back upon the old axiom that when all other contingencies fail, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.'

In this case, we know that the human brain has a natural predisposition to see things that are not there. We're particularly susceptible to seeing faces that aren't there, so for example, young babies demonstrate an innate preference for face-like configurations. But we're also predisposed to impose meaning onto random or distorted information, something known as either Apophenia (Conrad, 1958) or Pareidolia (Goldstein, 1994).

Among the many examples of external stimuli that might falsely be interpreted as paranormal are entopic phenomena, which are small 'objects' or points of light that apparently move in front of eyes and are caused by debris or imperfections in the fluid of the

eye, or white blood cells moving in front of the retina. Under normal circumstances, you probably wouldn't pay any attention to them but, given the right setting and atmosphere, they could easily be misinterpreted.

Finally, a common physiological reaction that might lead to a 'paranormal' experience is the sudden increase in pupil size as a response to a sudden noise or emotion. In effect, this means that you'll have an abrupt increase in the amount of light entering the eye which may easily be misinterpreted as movement.

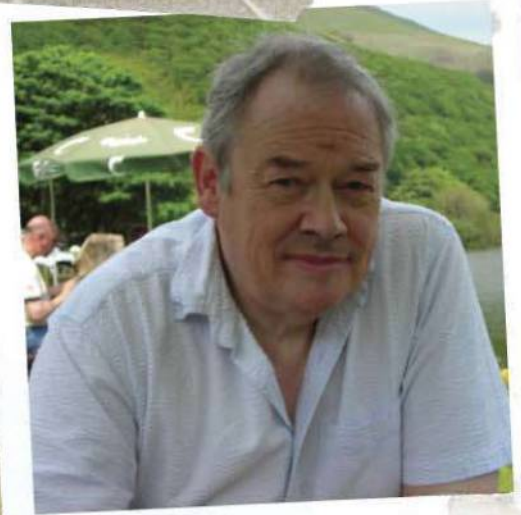
WHAT ARE GHOSTS MADE OF?

Interesting as these 'normal' explanations are, having ruled out misperceptions and optical illusions, we must consider the material of which an external, physical 'ghost' might be composed. To make things difficult, there are a number of limiting factors. For example, such an entity must appear invisible for

MY VIEW: JOHN STOKER

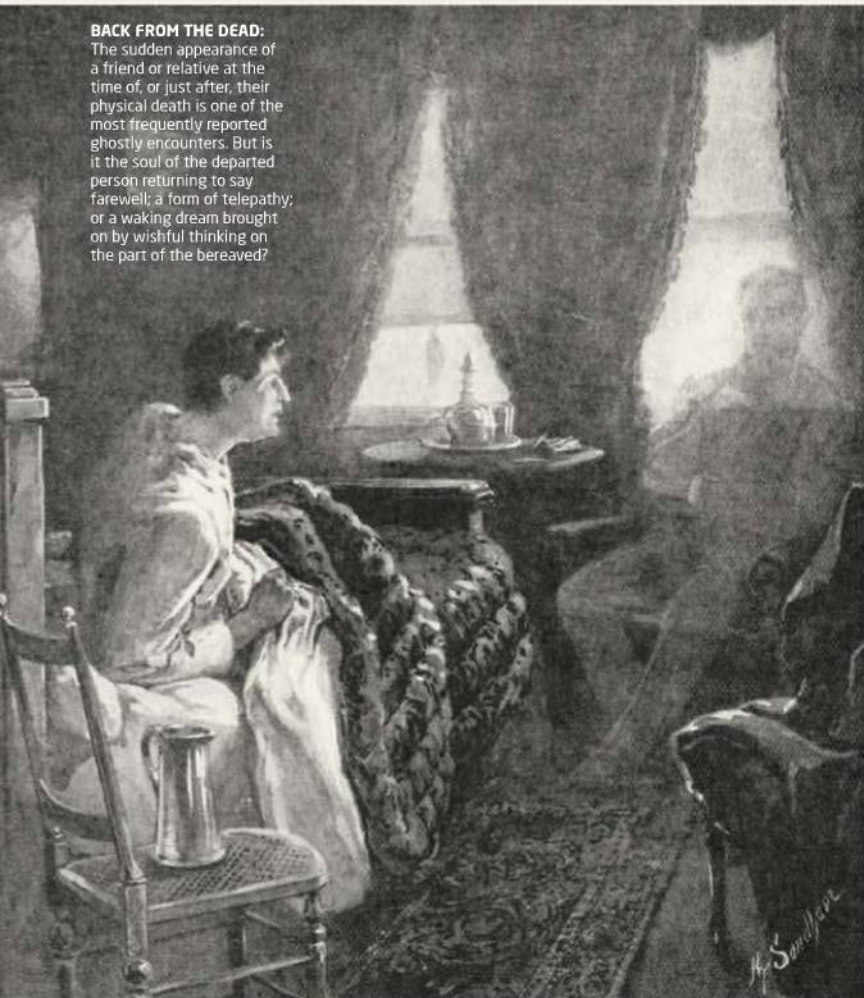
For some years now I've been drawn to the stone tape theory which states that our world contains a natural recording mechanism that can sometimes, under certain conditions, play back images of the past. It could be the reason why ghosts of the living are sometimes seen as well as those of the dead.

But it doesn't explain everything. What causes poltergeist activity, for instance, and why do some phantoms make their presence felt in more physical ways? And what are we to make of events in the séance room? Are we dealing with souls who have left their human bodies and now reside on another plane? Can these entities be described as ghosts? The more you think about this question the more puzzling it gets. That's why we find it so fascinating.



'A SINGLE PARTICLE OF LIGHT CAN EXIST IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE. AND IF THAT'S NOT MYSTERIOUS ENOUGH, WE ALSO KNOW THAT SOME FORMS OF LIGHT CAN ALSO PASS THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS.'

BACK FROM THE DEAD:
The sudden appearance of a friend or relative at the time of, or just after, their physical death is one of the most frequently reported ghostly encounters. But is it the soul of the departed person returning to say farewell; a form of telepathy; or a waking dream brought on by wishful thinking on the part of the bereaved?



most (but not all) of the time and it must be capable of passing through solid objects.

The most obvious candidate, at least in my opinion, is light. In fact, there has always been a strong association between spiritual entities and light. For example, patients resuscitated following a period of brain death often report conversing with beings of light and in religious works (including the Old and New Testaments) there are frequent references to God as light.

Yet when we think of light in a secular sense, we think of that tiny section of the ElectroMagnetic (EM) spectrum known as visible light with little thought for the full spectrum that ranges from radio waves (around 10000 Hz) to gamma rays (10000000000000000000 Hz) and beyond (in theory, the EM spectrum can stretch to infinity, but I stick here with the conventionally accepted limits). This means that unaided, we perceive no more than 0.0035% of the possible frequencies in the EM spectrum.

And even in science, light is not without its mysteries. For example, as every physics student will tell you, light exists either as particles or as a wave, depending on how you choose to measure it ●

(therefore before you measure it, it exists simultaneously as both). Another interpretation of the same demonstration is that a single particle of light (a photon) can exist in two places at once. And if that's not mysterious enough, we also know that some forms of light can also pass through solid objects (e.g. radio waves, microwaves, etc.).

Of course, with the right instruments, we can detect electromagnetic radiation outside the visible spectrum, but could this be what the scientist Thomas Edison was referring to during his interview with *Scientific American* in 1920 in which he said that "...I am inclined to believe that our personality hereafter will be able to affect matter. If this reasoning be correct, then, if we can evolve an instrument so delicate as to be affected, moved, or manipulated... by our personality as it survives in the next life, such an instrument, when made available, ought to record something."

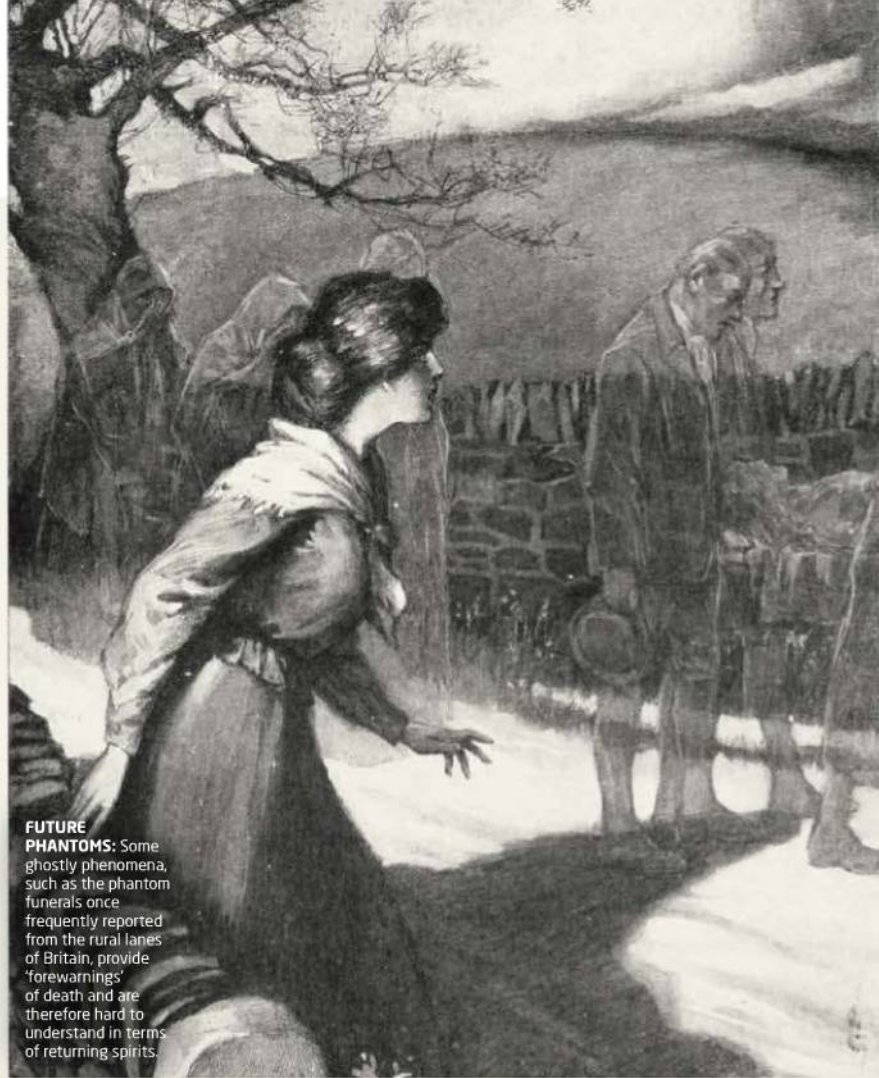
There is an interesting post-script to the Edison episode in that after subsequent affirmations and denials of his belief, an article in *Modern Mechanix Magazine* (1933) claims that in 1920 Edison actually demonstrated to colleagues a 'photo-electric cell' that revealed

'THE STUFF OF GHOSTS MAY LIE BEYOND THE KNOWN PHYSICAL MATERIALS OF THE UNIVERSE. THERE ARE INVISIBLE FORMS, DARK MATTER AND DARK ENERGY [AND] WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THEIR COMPOSITION.'

MY VIEW: MARK GREENER

Apparitions, spirits and ghosts appear across too many societies, cultures and environments to be, I feel, solely hoaxes, misidentifications or delusions. Some could, possibly, be para-life: results of an alternative route of evolution that we're poorly adapted to perceive. Some could be 'recordings' embedded in a particular place - the stone tape theory. But my money is on most actually being the spirits of the dead.

As I pointed out in my feature on Para-life (September 2009), scientists can't define life - so they can't define death. I believe, although I can't offer any scientific evidence, that ghosts arise from life processes that remain cohesive after 'medical death'. They dissipate slowly, which helps explain the dearth of ghosts of people from the pre-medieval world. And I think they're all around us, all the time. But we need particular circumstances, places or emotional states for us to perceive them.



FUTURE PHANTOMS: Some ghostly phenomena, such as the phantom funerals once frequently reported from the rural lanes of Britain, provide 'forewarnings' of death and are therefore hard to understand in terms of returning spirits.

spirits in a beam of light.

The stuff of ghosts may, however, lie beyond the known physical materials of the universe. Indeed, there are other invisible forms, dark matter and dark energy, first proposed in 1933 yet still we know nothing about their composition. Dark matter neither transmits nor reflects electromagnetic energy, therefore it is completely invisible to our available scientific instruments, but we know from its gravitational effects on other planetary bodies that it makes up around a quarter of the matter in the universe. A more

recently discovered phenomenon, dark energy, accounts for more than half of the universe.

Of course, I'm not making a serious suggestion that dark matter or dark energy is in anyway related to departed souls and yet, like the external ghost theory, it hypothesises the existence of matter thus far undetectable by conventional means. Or are they? Almost in parallel with Fox Talbot's development of modern photography in the 1830's came the development of spirit photography, much of which employed primitive double exposure techniques, yet we still regularly encounter photographs and videos that purport to have captured the image of disembodied spirits.

With the development of audio recording equipment came the Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) pioneered by Dr Konstantin Raudive, a psychologist at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Raudive would leave a tape recorder running, either in an empty room, or next to an out of tune radio (white noise) and reported hearing voices of the dead. Indeed, in the original recordings (you can currently listen to them at <http://blog.wfmu.org/freeform/2006/09/>



MY VIEW: STEVE MERA

Coming from a parapsychological background, I believe many sightings of ghosts could be down to our own psychology and perception: if you believe a place is haunted you might convince yourself you have seen a ghost, for example. And there are many psychological and medical reasons why a person may experience a hallucination.

But what about those who have shared experiences, when three or four people report having the same experience? What about some of the video and photographic evidence people have provided? What about those rare cases where there is physical evidence?

No matter how much you read, no matter how many times you interview people, it all boils down to what you believe. My mind's still not made up, even after all these years - there is such good evidence both for and against ghostly sightings as a genuine phenomenon.



' IF GHOSTS REALLY ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES, WE MUST ASK BY WHAT MEANS THE NATURAL HUMAN SENSES (SIGHT, HEARING, ETC) ARE ABLE TO PERCEIVE SUCH SOURCES AND WHY SOMETIMES THEY ARE PERCEIVED AND SOMETIMES NOT. '

was first adopted by the English language, its meaning was rather more specific than the meaning it has now. Its first English appearance was in the 1572 translation of Lavater's *De Spectris, Lemuribus et Magnis Atque Insolitis Frigoribus* and here hallucinations were defined as "ghostes and spirites walking by nyght, and strange noyses, crackes, and sundry forwarnynges, whiche commonly happen before the death of menne, great slaughters and alterations of Kyngdomes".

A modern definition of a hallucination, taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, is to 'experience a seemingly real perception of something not actually present' ●

voice_from_the_.html) it's possible to hear responses to various questions posed by Raudive.

Regrettably, for my own part, I've yet to see a picture or hear a sound recording that can't satisfactorily be explained by normal rather than paranormal means. Moreover, if ghosts really are physical entities, we must ask by what means the natural human senses (sight, hearing, etc) are able to perceive such sources and why sometimes they are perceived and sometimes not.

WANDERINGS OF THE MIND

This brings me to the second of the two possibilities, which is that a ghost is internal or, in other words, hallucinatory. There are many normal potential sources of hallucinations and it's beyond the scope of this article to elaborate them, but before I go any further I'd like to clarify something about the term hallucination.

The word comes from the Latin *allucinatio*, which means 'a wandering of the mind'. When it



EVIDENCE?: Although most 'spirit photographs' of the 19th and early 20th century have been dismissed as fakes - this one purports to show the spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle floating above the sitter - photos continue to be taken of apparitions that cannot so easily be explained. Perhaps such photos provide evidence of the objective existence of ghosts.



MY VIEW: MATTHEW SMITH

I don't think anyone really knows for sure what a 'ghost' is. Many apparent experiences of ghosts can, in my opinion, be explained in terms of beliefs and expectations influencing the way people interpret fairly mundane phenomena like knocks and bangs, changes in temperature, tricks of the light and so on. The really impressive, and less easy to explain, cases are when several people report seeing recognizable apparitions of people who have recently died. But the question remains whether they are really spirits of the dead or can be explained in some other way.'



GHOST VIEWER:
In 1920 the great inventor Thomas Edison claimed to have developed a 'photo-electric cell' that revealed spirits in a beam of light.

'EARLY SPR RESEARCHERS GENERALLY SUGGESTED THAT AN APPARITION WAS THE RESULT OF TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEAD OR DYING.'

MY VIEW: LOUIS PROUD

In my opinion, the majority of what we call 'ghosts' are recordings in the 'psychic ether' of a particular location, created by emotionally charged activity involving one or more persons. Such ghosts are non-sentient, and could be thought of as holograms. When, for example, a house is haunted by a ghost of this kind, it may be because, in the past, someone living in the house underwent a great deal of suffering, saturating the location with their negative psychic energy. This leaves behind a recording; the sound of some footsteps, perhaps, or maybe the animated image of a person. When the right conditions are present, the recording will be activated. It helps to be intuitive and receptive to notice the presence of these 'psychic recordings'.

There are other types of ghost, too, which are sentient and can act on the physical environment to some degree. Poltergeists fall into this category. I firmly believe in the existence of a 'spirit world', a world of the dead, occupied by entities of various kinds, some of them of non-human origin. Although this realm exists on a different vibratory level to our own, its inhabitants can - and in some cases do - manifest within our realm. To do so, they work thorough the living. They select, in other words, a medium. This provides them with a bridge into matter, as well as a healthy supply of vital energy.



and such a definition doesn't in itself rule out any paranormal source of the vision. Indeed Henry Sidgwick, Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge, and other early members of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) published a volume in 1894 entitled 'Report on the census of hallucinations' which took for granted the hallucinatory nature of the experience without denying a supernatural cause (the authors were also at pains to point out the differences between the 'hallucinations' reported to them by sane and healthy members of the public and those reported by the clinically insane).

In other words, if we accept that human consciousness can exist beyond bodily death, we might also possibly accept that such a disembodied spirit would have the capability of communicating in some way with the minds of the living. This was certainly the stance adopted by many of the early SPR researchers, who generally suggested that an apparition was the result of telepathic communication from the dead or dying.

Incidentally, one advantage of the hallucination hypothesis is that it gets around the problem of the spirit equivalent of clothes (or indeed carriages, cars or other objects that are often reportedly encountered in ghostly form).

For my part, my mind remains open on the subject. In other words,



MY VIEW: JACK HUNTER

A brief perusal of the anthropological literature reveals a startling number of ghost stories from every corner of the globe. It is interesting to note, however, that different societies have different ways of conceiving ghosts and their function, and different ways of dealing with them. In Chinese belief, for instance, ghosts require sustenance through offerings of food and paper money. For the Navajo of North America ghosts visit the dying and guide them safely to the spirit world. Unlike in our own culture, the people of Kiriwina, Papua New Guinea, have no fear of the ghosts of the dead. It is clear, therefore, that the way we experience and understand ghosts is largely influenced by our cultural background.

I've yet to be convinced one way or another. In Sidgwick et al.'s (1894) study, 17,000 people were interviewed, of whom around 10% reported an apparitional experience of some kind. A similar figure, 17%, was reported in a 20th century survey by Palmer, published in 1979, and in 1977 Haraldsson et al. reported that more than 30% of their interviewees had experienced an apparition.

Clearly, then, such experiences are limited amongst the population and perhaps true belief comes only from personal experience. I would love to be convinced. ☘

So what do you think?

We would love to learn our readers' opinions on this endlessly fascinating subject. Please share your thoughts by emailing editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or by writing to: The Editor, Paranormal Magazine, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester, CH4 9AJ (UK).

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Unearthed

The following account is a ghost story of classic form, in which terrible deeds of the past result in the horror becoming soaked, as it were, into the very fabric of the walls, like the blood that was formerly spilled there. I always find interesting stories in which ghostly sounds are the only clue as to the reasons for the haunting. Usually, such sounds are subtle and unclear but in this account they are quite literally elephantine in their volume. The story is one of a series which appeared under the heading 'Strange But True' in *The Strand Magazine* in the early 1900s. Written down by a rather aristocratic lady by the name of Edith C Gerrard, taken from memory from the first-hand accounts of her friends, it is presented as being absolutely true. But be warned – there are some gruesome details awaiting you. *The Haunted Palace* appeared in *The Strand* in the December 1907 edition.

The Haunted Palace

I CAN VOUCH FOR the absolute veracity of the persons whose experiences I relate, without any embellishment, in the following narrative. During many years' residence in the East, and travel in nearly all parts of the Indian Empire, I have witnessed many strange scenes, and have had experiences of my own and others that have quite surpassed the flights of fancy.

One camping season I was travelling with my husband (a government official) in the district of Rewari, in Upper India, and had arrived at Hissar, where we were exchanging hospitality with the European residents.

We were invited to dinner by a particularly nice couple – a Colonel and Mrs Robinson. We were quite a small party, consisting only of Colonel and Mrs Robinson, their grown-up son, their only other child, a dear little, delicate-looking boy of seven years old, the Civil Surgeon of the station, and ourselves.

The residence of the Robinsons was a huge, gloomy-looking structure, as seen from outside; a long, rambling building with an upper storey, a basement and "tykhanas" (or dungeons) underground. It had formerly been the palace of the Rajahs of Hissar, but the last ruler, having been a wicked and infamous man, was removed from the seat of government and his territory confiscated.

The Robinsons lived in apartments in the upper storey of the palace, and I remarked it as peculiar that, instead of entering the building in the usual way, through the doors on the basement, these were all closed and barred, and ascended to the upper storey by an iron staircase or ladder attached to the outside wall, and entered immediately into a very large, long, and lofty hall, running for a considerable distance along the front of the building. This hall or room contained many high windows. Through a door at one side of the room we entered another precisely the same size and shape, running parallel with the one we had just passed through; this second room was used by the Robinsons as a dining-room, and was lighted by windows at the far end.



THE AUTHORESS, MRS. E. C. GERRARD.

At the back of this room was another, of exactly the same dimensions, entered by a similar door at the side of the dining-room; this third room was the drawing-room, towards the centre of the building, was a door leading into the bedroom, and beyond that again another door led out of the bedroom, and beyond that again another door led out of the bedroom into a bathroom.

It must be distinctly understood there were four very large, double cube-shaped room, one immediately behind the other, all running parallel.

My host took me in to dinner. Towards the end of dinner some remark had been made about the excellence of the food, and I said: "What a first-rate cook you must have! How lucky you are to possess such a clever servant!"

"Yes," replied Colonel Robinson, "he's a splendid man, but he is leaving us, more's the pity. None of our servants will stay with us, and we have to get new men from a distance."

"Can't you get servants in the district? I inquired.

He replied, "Not a soul for miles round would come and take service here. When first we came we were told as much. This house is haunted, you know, and not a man-jack of them will stay in it. Your men who have come with you this evening will be told all about it, and I venture to say they wouldn't remain here the night through if you asked them to."

'We were told the place was haunted and had a very bad name. Such wicked things had been done in it that the natives of the place were frightened of it.'

"How very ridiculous! How silly they are to believe in such nonsense!"

"Oh no, it's not nonsense; the place is haunted right enough!"

I thought he was poking fun at me. I looked across the table at Mrs. Robinson and said, in a raised voice: "I think Colonel Robinson must imagine I am a very stupid person; he is trying to make me believe such nonsense – that this place is haunted and servants won't remain here."

I had hardly made this inopportune remark when Mrs. Robinson, with a very uncomfortable look on her face and a quick side-glance at her little boy, said in a subdued voice: "Oh, yes, it's all true. By and by I'll tell you all about it."

Seeing my mistake, I turned to Colonel Robinson and apologized for my unbelief. At the conclusion of dinner, as I passed into the drawing-room with Mrs. Robinson, I told her I quite thought her husband was making fun of me, and I only appealed to her in order to stop the conversation.

Then she said, "If it would interest you, I will tell you all there is to know – full particulars about everything – whilst we are alone."

We seated ourselves before a blazing wood fire which was burning in a large, open fireplace surmounted by a long, wide mantel-piece which was edged with a very handsome peacock-feather valance or border.

As nearly as I can, I shall describe the strange narrative in her very own graphic words.

Mrs Robinson's story

It is fifteen years ago (she said) since my husband was ordered to this place. We were very glad to come, because the climate is good here and the appointment a permanent one; but when we arrived in Hissar we found, to our dismay, there was no arrangement about quarters for us. After thorough investigation we hit upon the idea of using a portion of the closed-up old palace, which was as strongly built as a fortress and in as good repair as one could desire – it only wanted cleaning up and generally ventilating, and our dwelling rooms would be sumptuous.

My husband gave the necessary orders, we selected the rooms we wished to inhabit, but though we had no difficulty in taking possession, we were told that if

we lived in the palace we should certainly never have a servant to wait on us there, as the place was haunted and had a very bad name. Such wicked things had been done in it that the natives of the place were frightened of it.

We thought all this very foolish, and that probably, for some reason unknown, the people wanted to keep us out of it; but we determined to take no notice of what was said, beyond assuring the natives we had no fear of any kind, and forthwith domiciled ourselves in the palace.

Truth was uppermost, so far as our not being able to procure servants was concerned. Not a single man, woman, or child would come to us in that place, and even the few old servants we had brought with us left shortly after our arrival, making the usual lame excuse for going.

We determined to get a fresh staff of servants from a distance, and by giving them extra pay make them contented to remain with us in spite of any local opposition. We settled ourselves very comfortably, and as nothing out of the way happened to disturb our equanimity, we soon forgot all the silly talk we had heard or rather what we had imagined to be foolishness, until we were suddenly and unpleasantly brought to another way of thinking.

One night we had gone to bed as usual, when, just as I was falling asleep, I heard my husband, as I supposed, fumbling about with my bunch of keys, trying to unlock the wardrobe. I always adopted the Indian habit of placing my keys and watch under my pillow. I had not noticed my husband getting out of bed nor his withdrawal of the keys, but thinking I must have dozed off I said: "George, what's the matter! What do you want out of the wardrobe at this time of night?"

There was a dim light in the room; as you know, one always keeps a little light burning at night in this country. I did not turn round to see what he was doing at the far end of the room where the wardrobe stood, for I was very sleepy, but as I received no reply to my question and the keys continued to rattle, I looked over my shoulder, and to my surprise, instead of seeing my husband opening the wardrobe, as I supposed, met his wide-open eyes staring in my face close by my side in bed. He had momentarily



"WE TRAVERSED LONG STONE CORRIDORS, ENDLESS PASSAGES, AND STATELY HALLS."

'The sound came nearer and louder as we spoke, seeming to drown our voices. I was shivering and shaking in absolute terror.'

fallen asleep, and either I had wakened him with my voice or the rattle which still continued, had disturbed him, as it had me.

He said he thought I was responsible for the noise; that I had been rattling my big bunch of housekeeping keys, and wondered what I was doing. When seeking for an explanation, we each assured the other we had not touched the keys, and to prove we were neither of us making a mistake I drew them forthwith from under my pillow. This was extraordinary! We sat up in bed and stared at each other, very wide awake.

The sound continued, louder and louder; not like the rattle of a bunch of keys, but rather the shaking of chains in the far distance. It was not we alone who were disturbed by the unaccountable noise, for two fine hounds, very great favourites of ours, that always slept in one corner of our bedroom, were roused by it. They both stood up, stretched themselves, and gave a deep growl.

The extraordinary sound came nearer and nearer and still louder. It seemed to us like the rattle of heavy chains being dragged along stone passages and the dull hard thud of elephants' feet. *Thud! Thud! Thud!* it came. *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! Rattle! Rattle! Rattle!* The sound was absolutely incomprehensible and alarming, as it came nearer and nearer, louder and clearer.

"What an extraordinary thing!" my husband said. "What can it be? Somebody must be up to tricks of some sort. I must find out what this means."

He sprang out of bed, turned up the lamp, took the bunch of keys in his hand, unlocked the wardrobe and lifted from it a loaded five-chambered revolver, slipped on his camelhair dressing-gown, went into the bathroom, fetched out a hurricane lantern that used to burn there at night, and, turning to me, said: "You stay here, dear" – for he saw me hastily putting on my dressing-gown. I told him I very much preferred going with him, as I thought, choosing between two evils, it would be the lesser one. I very much objected to being left alone in that lonely room, listening to the gruesome and inexplicable noise. I must confess I was very frightened.

The sound came nearer and louder as we spoke, seeming to drown our voices. My husband strongly objected to my accompanying him, and said it would be much better for me to remain in the room until he returned, as I might get a shock if I went out, especially if firearms had to be used. So, in compliance with his wish, I remained behind, sitting on the side of the bed. I was shivering and shaking in absolute terror.

My husband opened the door, took the hurricane lamp in one hand, his revolver in the other, and called to the hounds to come with him, but they require no calling. As soon as the door was opened they had rushed past him with deep, angry growls, and had gone ahead. Then my husband left me.

I suppose he had not been gone for more than a few minutes, though to me it seemed a long time, when all of a sudden the sounds completely ceased; not dying away by degrees,



"THEY RUSHED PAST HIM WITH DEEP, ANGRY GROWLS."

but at once, in a moment. They had commenced, as it were, in the far distance; then, when the noise seemed to be so loud it might have been close by, it absolutely stopped, and there was dead silence. This sudden silence seemed as strange as the uncanny sounds.

The palace is searched

Almost immediately when the sounds had ceased a strange thing happened. The two noble hounds that had rushed out so bravely and fearlessly in front of my husband returned, looking the most abject sights I had ever beheld. They were crouching on the ground, dragging themselves along almost on their stomachs, their tails between their legs, their bodies quivering with fear, and making moaning sounds.

I spoke to them and called them by name, but they took not the slightest notice of me. I went up to them and tried to touch them, to comfort them, but they shrank past me and crawled under the bed beyond my reach, and there they lay moaning and trembling. My heart ached for them; I knew they had had some terrible shock, and, as my belief is the same as many others – that dogs possess a kind of second-sight – my fear was not lessened, though they occupied my thoughts till my husband came back into the room.

"Well," I said, "what is it? What is the matter? What have you seen? Just look at those poor hounds-what a terror they are in! They have certainly seen something."

"Well, I have not," he said. "I cannot understand what all this means. As I went through one room into the other the sounds seemed to come nearer and nearer, as if they were meeting me; then, when I got to the far room of all, where the cause of the noise, whatever it was, seemed to be, the sounds ceased in an instant. Before I got half-way there I met the hounds coming back in the state you saw them now. What has happened to them and what they've seen I don't know; but I mean to get to the bottom of it if I can. I'll put on my clothes and call the servants in from the compound and search every part of this building, down to the very dungeons."

"Very well," I said, "I'll dress, too, and go with you."

My husband hastily put on his things and, going to the butler's quarters in the compound, told him to rouse the servants to come and make a thorough search of the whole place. It took us a long time to go over that entire building, and in the cold winter night, for it was just Christmas-time, as it is now, it was anything but pleasant to be roaming through those many vacant rooms and dank and noisome dungeons.

Well, we discovered nothing, no trace whatever of anything, not even men's footprints in the accumulated dust of the lower rooms, and certainly no footprint of an elephant. We traversed long stone corridors,

'When our soldiers entered this room in which we are now sitting, on this very mantelpiece they saw sixteen blood-bedaubed heads, all placed in a row.'

endless passages, and stately halls, with the remains of past splendour clinging to them, but nothing did we see to account for our recent experiences or bring our search to a satisfactory termination.

We were absolutely as much mystified at the end of it as we were at the beginning, and we eventually went back to bed, thoroughly tired out and foiled, and at last we fell asleep.

Now I must tell you a strange and sad thing that happened. When we woke in the morning our beautiful, noble hounds were lying cold and stark under our bed, quite dead! We could hardly credit it when we saw them, but it was too true. We had done what we could to cheer and comfort them before sleeping, yet they continued to shiver and shake violently, and we could not induce them to come out from under the bed, so we thought it best to leave them alone, trusting they would eventually become calm, would sleep, and be all right by the morning. Had we realised that theirs would be the sleep of death there would have been no sleep for either of us that night.

The next day there was a commotion. Most of servants told us their mothers had "gone sick," and they must go to their "ghur log." The inevitable had come; our frightened servants departed, and the constant changing of domestics commenced.

A possible solution

"What an extraordinary account!" I said. "Did you ever hear the strange noises again?"

"Yes, often," she replied, "and

always in precisely the same manner, commencing as from a distance, then coming nearer and louder, until quite suddenly they cease entirely. We have always noticed they come on particular days, festivals, holidays - either English or native."

I asked my hostess whether there was any possible solution of the mystery.

"Well," she said, "there is no doubt that horrible deeds were done in the palace. There was a terrible mutiny and massacre in Hissar, and the Rajah of the palace was a wicked, cruel man; not only was he treacherous to our people, but he was inhuman to his own.

"It was an authentic fact that he kept elephants trained to destroy people. If any of his unfortunate wives in his harem displeased him, they used to be thrown into the underground dungeons of this place; elephants, trained as executioners, were led in to them, and would either trample the women to death or twist their poor victims up in their trunks, wave them round in the air, and dash them against the walls or on the stone floor of the dungeons. Oh! I have heard that the atrocities which took place were terrible.

"In the Mutiny days many lives were lost here. This used to be a military station of minor importance. An officer holding the same appointment as my husband does now was playing chess with another official, when a servant rushed into their presence and told them a number of 'sowars' had arrived from Delhi. The native troops and

'They shrank past me and crawled under the bed beyond my reach, and there they lay moaning and trembling.'

inhabitants rose at once. Some of the Europeans fled, and Mr. Taylor, the official in charge, though severely wounded, eventually escaped; but seven unfortunate European men and seven women, with fifteen poor little children and two Eurasian women, perished miserably.

"They sent to the Rajah and prayed that he would protect them. This he promised to do if they would proceed at once to the palace. The terrified people put their trust in him and fled to this palace; but as soon as they arrived they were all collected in the room I use as my bathroom now. Native soldiers rushed in to them, the door was fastened and they were literally hacked to pieces, not a soul amongst them being left alive.

"When our brave soldiers arrived, too late to save them, a ghastly sight met their gaze. They found the room ankle-deep in blood, gory bodies lying one on top of another in a mass, battered brains and clotted hair sticking to the sides of the walls, and the door hacked with sabre-cuts, the marks of which are there to this day. You can see them on the door now.

"To crown the fiendish brutality that had been wreaked on those betrayed fugitives, sixteen bodies were headless, and when our soldiers entered this room in which we are now sitting, on this very mantelpiece they saw sixteen blood-bedaubed heads, all placed up-right, in a row, from one end of it to the other.

"It is on record that those infuriated English soldiers rushed back into that room of carnage, and with fierce oaths upon their lips, dipped their swords into the gory mass and swore before heaven they would kill the natives as long as they could hold their swords in their hands. It is to be wondered at, in a building where such a terrible deeds have been done, strange phenomena should take place?"

As Mrs. Robinson said these words my eyes were fixed on the mantelpiece, and horror was in my heart. ●



"ELEPHANTS, TRAINED AS EXECUTIONERS, WERE LED IN TO THEM."



ICONIC: The Unesco World Heritage Site of Durham's beautiful cathedral overlooks the River Wear.

DARK DOINGS in County Durham

We return to the North-East of England in the company of **ROB KIRKUP**, author of the recently published *Ghostly County Durham*.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE shows there have been settlements within County Durham since at least 2000 BC. The present City of Durham and the county that has since sprung up around it dates from 995 AD, at which times monks from Lindisfarne on the Northumbrian coastline settled at Durham, which was known at the time as Dunholme.

The monks had been forced to flee from Lindisfarne, known more commonly these days as Holy Island, some 120 years earlier due to constant raids from Viking invaders. The monks decided they had no choice but to leave Lindisfarne: they gathered up their most sacred relics, including The Lindisfarne Gospels, remains of King Oswald and St Aidan, and the coffin of St Cuthbert, and they set out on a journey which would take them to Chester-le-Street, and eventually lead them to Durham.

In the present day, the City of Durham is a wonderfully historic location with an astonishing 569 listed buildings within the city centre alone. It is famed for the magnificent castle and cathedral which both date back almost 1,000 years, and are jointly designated a Unesco World Heritage Site. Given the rich, yet horrific, history that the County of Durham has been exposed to over the centuries, it is perhaps no surprise to learn that it is very, very haunted indeed.

The present Durham Castle was built in 1072 as one of the first fortresses commissioned by William the Conqueror during his 'harrying of the North'. It is home to at least two spectral residents. The ghostly figure of a woman has been seen regularly gliding up the Black Staircase on countless occasions since the 17th century. The Black Staircase, named for the dark oak of which it is made, is 57 feet high and one of the most impressive staircases

CREEPY CASTLE:
Durham Castle,
looking suitably
spooky and dramatic
at night, and a
more intimate
view showing its
ancient, massively
constructed walls.
© Rob Kirkup

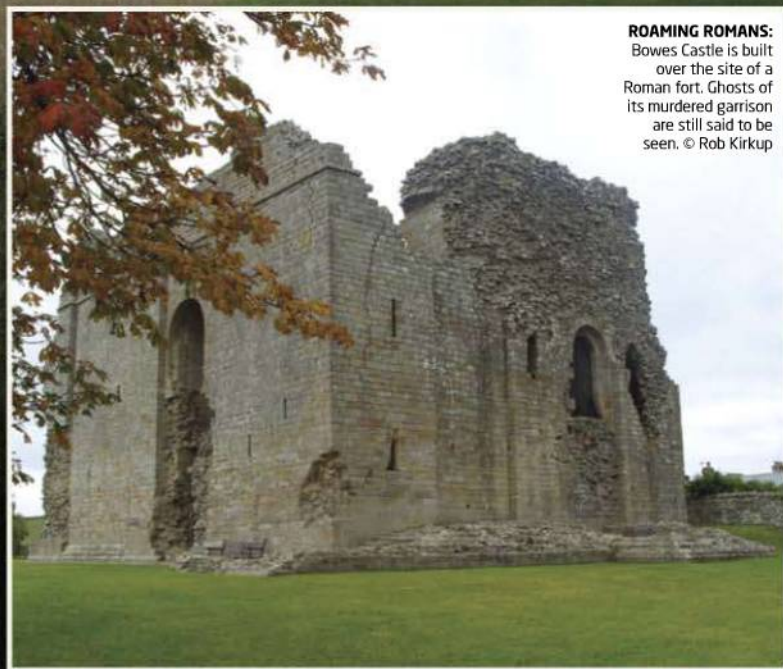


'GIVEN THE HORRIFIC HISTORY THE COUNTY OF DURHAM HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO OVER THE CENTURIES, IT IS NO SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT IT IS VERY, VERY HAUNTED INDEED.'

of its period in England. Local legend tells that the apparition is the spirit of Isabella, the wife of William Van Mildert, who died in a fall down the staircase. Isabella is also seen in the Norman Gallery, but only from the knees up, due to the difference in floor levels as a result of restoration work performed in 1840.

Durham Castle's second ghost is that of a tragic student who committed suicide having, mistakenly, believed that he failed his degree. His spirit is seen, and heard, in the highest room in the castle, known as the Crow's Nest.

A less well-known castle within the county of Durham is the haunting ruin of Bowes Castle, which stands on the site of the Roman Fort of Lavatrae. By the end of the 4th century the Roman occupation in England was coming to an end. The Roman garrison stationed at Lavatrae raided the local villages and stole all of their valuables. The furious locals retaliated and launched an attack



ROAMING ROMANS:
Bowes Castle is built over the site of a Roman fort. Ghosts of its murdered garrison are still said to be seen. © Rob Kirkup

on the fort, which despite a brave fight, was overrun and the Romans mercilessly slaughtered. However, the Romans had already hidden the treasure – and no one survived to tell where. The gold remains buried somewhere in the area to this very day.

On the anniversary of the massacre, the ghosts of the murdered Roman garrison are said to appear at Bowes Castle to ritually bury their stolen gold. However, those who see these spirits are said to die in mysterious circumstances before they can share its location.

Raby Castle, often referred to as the Windsor of the North, will forever be remembered as the meeting place in 1569 of 700 men who planned the infamous 'Rising of the North', a plot to remove Elizabeth I and replace her on the throne with her Catholic cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. Today Raby looks every bit the archetypal haunted castle, and does not disappoint.

The castle is reputed to be haunted by the spirits of three of its previous inhabitants. The most commonly reported sighting is that of the ghost of Charles

Nevill, a member of the northern nobility and a major player in the Rising of the North. He is often seen in the Barons Hall, re-enacting the plot. He has also been witnessed ascending the staircase which leads to the hall.

There are literally dozens of haunted castles within County Durham but undoubtedly the best known is Lumley Castle. The castle dates from 1398 and today is a luxury hotel. The hotel is full of dark corridors and has a medieval atmosphere enhanced by the rooms being made up in a period style, and the staff wearing period costume.

Lumley Castle is famous the world over for its resident ghost – Lily of Lumley. She was a Lollard, a follower of John Wycliffe's preaching of a New Testament Gospel. When her husband, Lumley Castle's creator Sir Ralph, was away in Berwick-upon-Tweed, two monks from nearby Finchale Priory who had heard of Lady Lumley's religious views visited her and tried to bring her back to the Catholic fold. She was strong-willed and politely thanked them for their visit and explained she had no intent of returning to Catholicism. The priests were concerned for her soul, so lured her into a bedroom,

where they murdered her and carried her body to the basement, where they callously threw her lifeless body down a well.

The well where Lily of Lumley's body still remains to this day is now covered by a pane of glass, but guests can still look down it. It is said that every night her ghost comes up the well and walks throughout the castle. Her footsteps are heard on landings and even in rooms.

Lumley Castle made the front pages of newspapers worldwide in June 2005 when the Australian cricket team spent a terrifying night at the hotel. All rounder Shane Watson was so scared that he slept on the floor of his team mate's room. Australian media officer Belinda Denenett admitted to journalists that several of the players were uneasy in the hotel. She went on to tell reporters that she actually saw ghosts for herself.

Finchale Priory, where the monks who killed Lily of Lumley travelled from, is home to the rare phenomenon known as a 'time slip'; an extremely frightening paranormal occurrence in which witnesses are taken back in time and given a glimpse of their current location in a bygone age. This is said to occur on the bridge next to Finchale Priory that crosses

'ISABELLA IS ALSO SEEN IN THE NORMAN GALLERY, BUT ONLY FROM THE KNEES UP, DUE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN FLOOR LEVELS AS A RESULT OF RESTORATION WORK PERFORMED IN 1840.'



CARRYING CUTHBERT: 'The Journey', by Fenwick Lawson. This bronze statue stands in Durham's Millennium Square and pays tribute to the monks who transported St Cuthbert's coffin from Lindisfarne to Durham to escape the Viking raids. © Rob Kirkup

ROYAL PLOT: At Raby Castle plans were made to remove Good Queen Bess from the throne. One of the plotters still haunts the ruin today. © Rob Kirkup





TIME SLIPS: Several people have seen the ruins of Finchale Priory suddenly seemingly rebuilt, appearing as it did centuries ago. It is also the haunt of a ghost called Slewfoot.
© Rob Kirkup

'ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE MASSACRE, THE GHOSTS OF THE MURDERED ROMAN GARRISON ARE SAID TO RITUALLY BURY THEIR STOLEN GOLD.'



WELL DOWN: A pane of glass covers the well in Lumley Castle where monks deposited the body of a woman who refused to return to Catholicism. © Rob Kirkup

the River Wear. Individuals have claimed to have seen Finchale Priory, no longer ruined, but how it would have appeared when it was in use as a priory, with monks wandering between the buildings. Witnesses have described sensations such as sounds appearing muffled, colours appearing muted and a feeling of depression.

There is also a legend of a club-footed ghost called Slewfoot who has been seen throughout the ruined priory.

Ghost-hunting visitors to County Durham are spoilt for choice when it comes to choosing a haunted hotel for an overnight stop. Lumley Castle may seem the obvious choice but there are a number of worthy alternative options. The Manor House Hotel in West Auckland, for example, has ghosts galore, with virtually every room in the hotel home to various levels of activity.

The Manor House was built at the end of the 16th century as a farmer's dwelling. The building has had a fairly unremarkable history, but despite this the building seems to hold some terrifying secrets. The most common sighting is of the apparition of a tall woman seen on the staircase by visitors and more often by staff, who have nicknamed her Betty.

Betty is often reported to be weeping, and mediums have claimed that Betty is endlessly searching for her young child who vanished when she was working in the building. There have been skeletal remains of infants and babies found buried in the hotel's garden, and it is believed one of these is Betty's missing child. Why the children are buried in the garden, and who killed them, is a mystery that may never be solved. The owner's young son has claimed to have seen the ghosts of children in Room Six and that they tell him they want to play with him. He said they cover their eyes and count to ten, and then they chase him.

The owner's son was also subject to a terrifying attack in

POLTERGEIST: Room Seven at the Manor House Hotel has seen many disturbances, including a lamp that was thrown at a guest by unseen forces. © Rob Kirkup



Room Eight: he was asleep in bed when something grabbed him by the throat; he was then picked up and thrown from his bed. He ran downstairs in hysterics to see his mother, who comforted him assuming it was all a bad dream. However, she was then horrified to notice bright red finger marks round his throat. The little boy now won't go upstairs on his own, but sits at the bottom of the stairs waiting for an adult to go up with him. A medium visiting Room Eight has claimed a murder took place in this room.

Rooms Six and Seven have also experienced poltergeist activity,

'THE OWNER'S YOUNG SON HAS CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN THE GHOSTS OF CHILDREN IN ROOM SIX. HE SAID THEY COVER THEIR EYES AND COUNT TO TEN, AND THEN THEY CHASE HIM.'

with large figures being seen moving swiftly through the room and objects being thrown around – including a lamp which missed a guest's head by inches. All of the rooms in the hotel have had reports of TVs turning themselves

on and off during the night. This was captured on film during a *Most Haunted* episode recorded at the Manor House Hotel.

Cauldron Snout Waterfall is one of the more unusual active sites in County Durham. It is found on the upper reaches of the River Tees, situated below a dam at the east end of the Cow Green Reservoir. Cauldron Snout is truly a breathtaking sight, the angry water rushing, bubbling and crashing along a series of dolerite steps over 600 feet long. Vertically, it is 200 feet from the first cataract to the last, meaning that Cauldron Snout is not only England's longest waterfall, but also the highest.

The ghost of a Victorian farm girl is said to haunt Cauldron Snout. Her true identity is unknown but she is known locally as the Singing Lady. She was in love with a married lead miner and was broken-hearted when he ended their affair. Devastated, she threw herself to the mercy of Cauldron Snout, cracking her skull on the rocks, and drowned.

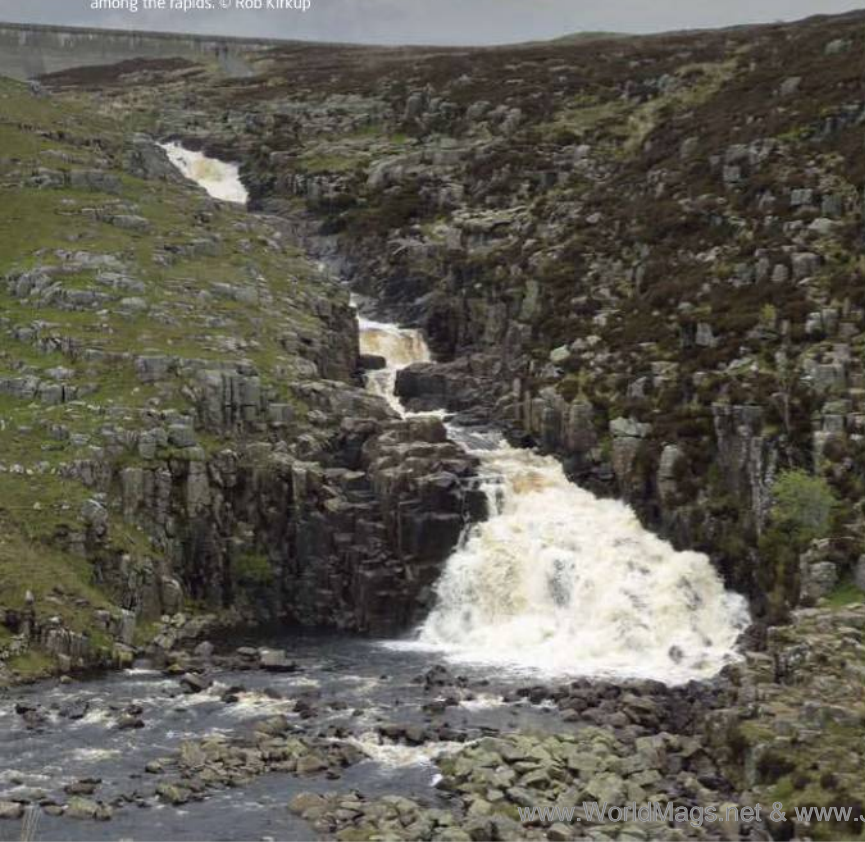
Her forlorn spirit is often seen gliding across the water on moonlit nights. Witnesses have said she appears to be crying, others say singing, but any noise she may be making is all but drowned out by the loud roar of the angry, fast-flowing water. ☺

HAUNTED HOTEL: The Manor House Hotel has had an uneventful history yet seems to possess numerous ghosts. © Rob Kirkup



Rob Kirkup developed a keen interest in the paranormal from an early age, amassing a large collection of material on the subject, in particular stories of supernatural happenings in the North East of England. Rob has conducted investigations at some of the North East's most haunted locations, including Hylton Castle, Woodhorn Church, Flodden Field and Chillingham Castle. Rob's first book, *Ghostly Northumberland*, was published in 2008 and was followed by *Ghostly Tyne and Wear* in 2009, both published by The History Press. *Ghostly County Durham* is available now and will be followed in 2011 by the fourth book in this series, *Ghostly Cumbria*.

WATERY GRAVE: The impressive Cauldron Snout waterfall, the longest in England, was the scene of a tragedy when a jilted girl threw herself down it. It is said her ghost can still be seen - and heard singing - among the rapids. © Rob Kirkup



experiences

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

Shop of horrors

My family came to England from India in 1970, and we all chipped in to buy a small corner shop. This we enlarged into another room and widened the stock and kept open 18 hours every day. We spoke good English and integrated into the Christian community in Bedford, where we were well accepted.

But problems began when we took down the wall into the room behind the shop to enlarge again in 1974. During the night the racks of tinned goods in the newly enlarged room would be thrown onto the floor; at midnight bangs and bumps and a man wailing in pain could be heard; and things from that room would go missing and turn up in strange places. These things would almost always be worse at full moon, when the large shape of an obese man could be seen wearing spectacles, and a shadow of this was easily visible many times in the newly enlarged room.

Things came to a head when my wife also reported a human eye watching her through the crack in the door, and my young son said he saw an eye through a hole in the garden fence.

Things reached fever pitch when I was at the kitchen stove one lunchtime and I noticed from a knot-hole in the floorboards was a human eye watching me from the floor right by my foot, so I took a kettle of boiling water from the stove and poured it through the hole, but the eye was back several minutes later.

Several nights later while shaving I saw in the mirror an angry looking fat man's face with glasses and a black swollen eye, standing behind me.

We called in several priests, a holy man and a couple of mediums but, if anything, after their visits the night-time wailing and banging was worse and my family was getting very afraid.

On one occasion we had a lady in the shop try to sell us the *Watchtower* magazine [the Jehova's Witness publication], and in chatting we told her about the haunting. She organized a prayer meeting in the back room of the shop, and a bunch of these religious people came and prayed, but they saw quite plainly the shadow appear of the obese man in spectacles standing watching and they quickly all shuffled out.

We saw a magazine article about a man who had to call in an exorcist for his cottage and he gave us the address



'A human eye was watching me from the floor. I took a kettle of boiling water and poured it through the hole, but the eye was back several minutes later.'

of a man he just called 'the exorcist'. We wrote to him for help, and he phoned us that night and said: 'Tell me nothing. I will come tomorrow.'

We had a sleepless night, and the man came and said do not tell me anything, and he looked from outside the shop for some while, before walking round inside. He eventually came to where we had enlarged the shop and most phenomena occurred, and he stunned us as he said: 'All this part of the shop was bombed in World War 2. The light from a full moon was ideal for bombing, and an obese man was reading his newspaper just here on this spot and ignored the air raid sirens.'

'His body is still under the floorboards here. If you dig down and clear the rubble you will first find a pair of tortoiseshell glasses.'

This was all a bit of a shock, but he just asked for his train fare back to

London and left. We had a builder in the next week who lifted the floorboards and sure enough found a pair of fake-tortoiseshell glasses, while moving the rubble he pulled out an old brown wartime *Daily Express* newspaper, then the remains of the obese man.

The police came and cordoned off the area and took away the poor man. As they lifted him, the contents of his ragged trouser pockets all fell to the floor with keys, coins and glasses case; it was all totally very bizarre. The floor was put back and no more night-time disturbances occurred.

We often talk about this and confess we did not believe in ghosts or hauntings until this time. My family will always be grateful to the exorcist who came to help us that day, with his penetrating intuition - Mr T Stokes - who asked that the overweight man have a Christian burial.

N. Patel and family via email

'When the object was glowing red I could just see a disc-like shape within.'

Sheerness saucer

On the evening of Sunday 14th February at 7:45pm, I saw a strange object from my kitchen window in Sheerness. The object appeared as a huge red light which changed its colour to an orange as it flew from the direction of Minster In Sheppey towards the south-west.

When the object was glowing red I could just see a disc-like shape within. The shape vanished when it was orange.

I have lived in Sheerness for a number of years and have seen many aircraft flying over during the day and a night. I have seen many aircraft with flashing lights fly over my area at night but this object appeared as a single big light changing from red to orange.

Kevin Lee, via email

Gasping for breath

Well, I think my study is haunted. It is always 5 degrees centigrade or lower, even in summer! Sure, a good explanation is that it's facing south, but I have also seen strange apparitions: an old lady lying on the floor, gasping for breath.

The first time I saw this I was SO freaked out, but it happens so often now I've got used to it. What I want to know is if it's my grandma, who died in there about 20 years ago.

Lorelei Nielson, via email

The face in the wall

My son and I found this photo taken in my old flat with a standard normal camera. Notice the dog looking at the wall... the face. A psychic tells me it is a woman with her little boy behind her and that she is trapped.

My son always since age 2 used to see a boy in that flat. I am spooked.

Sally Mayer, via email



Have you seen an Arcadian?

One evening in September 2003 I was reading the paper and my husband was asleep. A bright light appeared beside me. It was the shape of a Greek mask, with two eyes and a mouth [see sketch]. You couldn't see anything through, just black.

I looked up at my husband and then at the face and was scared. It looked resigned because I was afraid and it disappeared.

At first I couldn't believe what I had seen but I found out that someone I knew had seen the same shining face but with a brown body sitting in a chair watching him sleep.

This happened twice, each time going when he woke up. He had also seen the face in a book, where they were called Arcadians and referred to (fortunately for us) as benign watchers. Does anyone know anything more about them?

We have a lot of paranormal activity in our home: lights, shadows, even manifestations so real that they look like a live person; cats, dogs; black balls that disappear; things move to different places; people walk past our window and go away half way across. Our dog 'talks' to someone in the kitchen, always in the same place. Although 'busy' here, nothing horrible has ever happened.

The other reason for writing is that I was very interested to read in *Sightings* in issue 45 about the orange lights seen from Cardiff over the M4 corridor, and also at Oldham. We live beside the M5 and on 31st December 09, my husband went outside just before midnight and saw two orange lights travelling at a great speed above the motorway. They were moving north to south. One went behind a cloud but did not reappear. The second light just vanished from the sky.

We have seen white lights in the sky moving all over the place. They move away when a plane appears and at great speed. Also, a solitary light speeding across the sky, then staying still for five minutes and then it was gone.

M A Debrick, Bartley Green, Birmingham





More spooky smoke

This smoky-looking picture was taken by my 6-year-old son. The vision is blurry as my son is autistic and had the camera upside down.

It was taken around Christmas. The weird part being that twice last Christmas [2008] and at no other time of the year, my wife heard her name being called behind her head, where the Christmas tree was, then several days later through the computer's speakers. Then this picture this year.

I try to look for explanations myself. If it was the camera strap then it would have to have been moving at an amazing speed as the smoky-looking lines seem to move in several directions. I can see the shape of a man looking like he is sitting on the couch; I can almost make out a lapel at what I would call the top of the shoulder.

Darren Cosgrove, via email

Attacked by the jinn

It was the summer of 1996 and I was on holiday in Azad Kashmir, in Pakistan. One night I was travelling on a motorcycle with a friend and he said to me: 'Jagga, be quiet, this place is inhabited by jinns.'

I was young and naive and did not believe in jinns. Sensing the fear of my friend, I decided to wind him up. I shouted: 'Oh jinns, come out and mess with me, let's see how tough you really are!'

My friend got more scared and told me to shut up which made me laugh and I continued to challenge the jinns. Little

did I know that they would accept my foolhardy challenge.

Two days passed and I was out in the valleys of Kashmir with a cousin and it was late at night. We were walking back to the small village where I was staying at my aunt's house. We were walking on a cobbled path with a cliff face to my left and fields to my right. As we approached the village my cousin said he had left his walking stick in the valley where we had sat chatting. He told me to wait for him on the path while he went back to retrieve his stick, which was a long staff with metal caps on the end.

So off he went to get the stick while I waited for him on the path. After a few minutes I heard a weird noise come from above and to my left and at the same time the noise of the insects which you can hear clearly at night went totally silent. I thought, what was that noise? I knew it came from the top of the cliff to my left, which was about 20 or 30 foot high. I could not see the top of the cliff, being on the path right under it, so I walked out about twenty paces into the field on my right and turned around to see what was on top of the cliff.

It was a moonlit night and on top of the cliff I saw a black, smoky shadow about 6 foot tall and the hairs on the back of my neck stood up. As I watched this shadowy black creature it started to get taller and wider and I was frozen to the

spot in amazement (I was not scared at that point). It grew and grew till it was at least 200 feet tall and 200 feet wide and it blocked out most of the sky behind it.

Then slowly it started to descend down towards me. As it got closer it blocked out everything in my vision it was so huge. It came right up to my face it was close enough to reach out and touch and then suddenly it disappeared and at the same time it felt as though my chest was crushed in a vice or a huge hand. I could not breathe, no air would go past my throat because my chest was being crushed. I rolled around on the floor, fighting to get this thing off me, flailing my arms around but because I could not breathe I very quickly had no energy left.

So I ended up on the floor and I'm saying to myself, 'Jagga, breathe!' but no air would go past my throat. Something was crushing my chest. My entire body was covered in sweat and my clothes were damp. That's when I heard a ticking noise from behind me and whatever was crushing my chest released its grip and I gasped for air.

I turned around and saw my cousin approaching; the ticking noise was the metal cap of his staff hitting the cobbled path. I stood up and as he approached me I managed to control my heavy breathing. A part of me wanted to tell him what had just happened to me but then I thought he would think I got scared for no reason and make fun of me so I decided to keep quiet.

We walked back to the village. I was silent, thinking about what had just happened to me. When we got to the village, which had small alleyways, we said goodbye to each other and he went down his alley and I proceeded up another to go to my aunt's house.

I did not get very far – there it was again waiting for me about 30 or 40 feet away on the path I had to use to get to my aunt's house. This time it was about 6 foot tall and the same black swirly smoky shadow. I stopped and it flew towards me fast, like it was carried by the wind. It hit my chest and disappeared and at the same instant my chest was crushed and I could not get any air past my throat. I tried to run to my aunt's house but after taking about ten or 15 paces I was completely exhausted, already tired by round one with this creature.

'It blocked out everything in my vision, it was so huge. Then suddenly it disappeared and I felt as though my chest was crushed in a vice or a huge hand. I could not breathe.'

I didn't have the energy to take another step and rested my back against a wall, all the time trying to breathe but my chest is crushed. My legs gave away and I slid down the wall into a sitting position with my hands on my knees and my vision started to go.

It was like turning the brightness down on a old TV: the edges of my vision went black and the picture got smaller and smaller and then the small white dot in the middle went black. So there I am sitting there with my eyes open but no vision. Suddenly, my whole life went past me from childhood to that day: it was like flicking the pages of a book with an image on each page. That's when I thought I was about to die. That's when I recited the kalimah: 'Laa ilaaha illallaahu Muhammadur rasoolullaah.'

Praise be to Allah, as soon as I read the kalimah I was released from the grip on my chest and I gasped for air. After several minutes, my vision returned and I staggered to my aunt's house, holding the walls for support and collapsed on my bed which was outside due to it being so hot in the summer.

I awoke the following morning and found a doctor was examining me. He said I had some type of indigestion (lol) and I had a deep fear inside me that if I told anyone I would not survive. My chest hurt a lot and I did not tell anyone about what happened.

When I got back to the UK I started to catch glimpses of the same creature following me but as soon as I looked it would disappear. At first I tried to ignore it but this kept on happening for about a year and I thought, am I going crazy? Finally, I decided to confide in my mother about what happened to me. She was shocked to hear about it and said I was very lucky because other people had been attacked by jinn in the same place and had either died or gone mad.

This thing followed me for three years until I went to Pakistan and saw someone who gave me taweez and a bottle of water which he had recited the Quran on; he told me to make ablution with the water when I got home to the UK before I went to bed and that the jinn would appear in a dream and I would be able to ask it questions. He said the jinn was female and was in love with me and that if I did not get it treated, that when I got married it would sit in the nikkah and I would never get rid of it and it would harm my wife.

After wearing the taweez, I never saw it again but I never got to try the water because when I got home a visitor, who was a little girl about 3 years old, picked up the bottle and emptied its contents over the carpet.

Jagga, via email

RESPONSES

Military v werewolves

Very interesting article in the latest magazine the US military stories about werewolves ['The Fiend Beyond the Fence' by Crispin Andrews in issue 46].

Thought the following may be of interest to you. It was a comment from a former USAF man named 'Wes' (that was his blogger/blogspot name), who was stationed in England at RAF Alconbury and had a werewolf encounter there. Anyway, below is a copy-paste of the message from Wes from my blog:

'I encountered a werewolf (lack of better description) in England in 1970. I was 20 yrs old when I was stationed at RAF Alconbury. I was in a secure weapons storage area when I encountered it. It seemed shocked and surprised to have been caught off guard and I froze in total fright. I was armed with a .38 and never once considered using it. There was no aggression on its part.

'I could not comprehend what I was seeing. It was not human. It had a flat snout and large eyes. Its height was approx 5 ft and weight approx.200 lbs. It was very muscular and thin. It wore no clothing and was only moderately hairy. It ran away on its hind legs and scurried over a chain link fence and

'I was in a secure weapons storage area when I encountered it. I could not comprehend what I was seeing. It was not human.'

ran deep into the dense wooded area adjacent to the base.

'I was extremely frightened but the fear developed into a total commitment of trying to contact it again. I was obsessed with it. I was able to see it again a few weeks later at a distance in the wooded area. I watched it for about 30 seconds slowly moving through the woods and I will never forget my good fortune to encounter it... and to know this "creature" truly does lives among us.'

It's very weird indeed that there are these common threads of the US military and werewolves.

Nick Redfern via his blog: monsterusa.blogspot.com

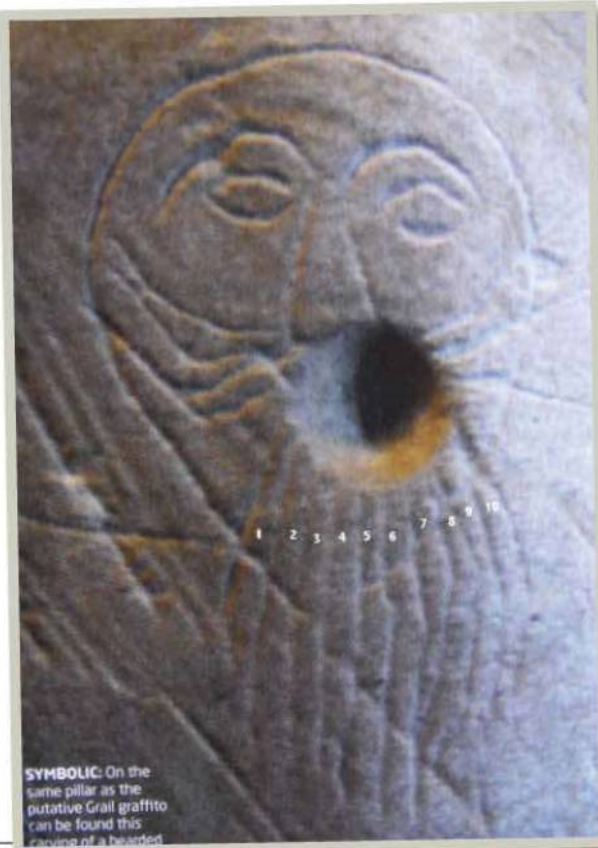
The 'bearded' man

I've just read your latest magazine (May 2010, issue 47). As always I really enjoyed it. Especially the article entitled 'Is This the Holy Grail?' by Jerry Glover.

In the article Mr Glover makes reference to an image of a bearded man on one of the pillars in the church. Looking at the picture included with the article, I noticed that the beard (if this is what Mr Glover is indicating) may well be hands coming up to the mouth as there are ten digits, which may represent the man drinking or eating.

I am not an expert on such things but this may be something of interest to Mr Glover and would be grateful if you could pass this information on to see what he makes of my observation.

Darren Wilson, via email



SYMBOLIC: On the same pillar as the putative Grail graffiti can be found this carving of a bearded

Books



Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction

Written by **Malcolm Gaskill**
Published by **Oxford University Press**
RRP **£7.99** pb
Reviewed by **Mark Greener**

Far from being banished to the margins of academia, the study of witchcraft is increasingly integral in several disciplines, from psychiatry to anthropology to history and political science. Witchcraft offers a lens through which psychiatrists, anthropologists and historians can examine a society's details.

As Malcolm Gaskill - a historian from the University of East Anglia - notes in this excellent book, studying witchcraft offers 'a glimpse into the intimate spaces and intricate mechanisms' of our ancestors' lives and history. And, in so doing, such studies say much about ourselves.

Witchcraft's growing academic respectability led to a steady stream of serious works over recent years. But separating the informed wheat from the sensationalist chaff isn't always easy. *Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction* offers a well-informed, eminently sensible introduction to this area, exploring the evolving concepts 'of witchcraft in different contexts over time'. And despite being accessible to non-academics, Gaskill's erudition, immense research and sensitivity comes across on every page.

There's more intellectual meat, more fascinating facts in this short introduction than in many books with two or three times the page count. Inevitably in a book this length, Gaskill is selective. However, he provides an extensive reading list that allows you to explore several aspects in detail.

If you've been practicing the craft for decades, Gaskill's insights place your traditions in their historical, societal and cultural contexts. If you're interested in witchcraft as one of the mutually reinforcing strands that weave the wonderful tapestry of the paranormal, the book offers an excellent synthesis of current research.

And Gaskill reminds us that witchcraft remains a vital, even dangerous force. The authorities in Tanzania combat a trade in albino body parts for *muti* magic. Some fundamentalist West African churches have persecuted children they believe are *kendoki* - witches. Every *Paranormal* reader should have a copy on their shelves.



The Cryptoterrestrials: A Meditation on Indigenous Humanoids and the Aliens Among Us

Written by **Mac Tonnies**
Published by **Anomalist Books**
RRP **£8.50** (pb)
Reviewed by **Nigel Watson**

We've had aliens, ufonauts, reptoids, extraterrestrial biological entities (EBEs), extraterrestrials (ETs), elementals, greys; now Mac Tonnies offers us *The Cryptoterrestrials*.

In contrast to the majority of UFO researchers, especially those in the United States, Tonnies casts aside the idea that aliens visit us in their flying saucers from outer space.

Like John Keel in the 1970s classic *Operation Trojan Horse*, he puts forward the idea that the 'aliens' have always been with us. Keel thought they were able to use and manipulate hidden dimensions that exist in parallel with our own existence, so they could pop in front of us and then pop out of sight again.

Tonnies refines this concept and speculates that the aliens ruled this planet thousands of years ago. Everything went well until they were afflicted by a genetic syndrome combined with the onslaught and unstoppable rise of a savage species - namely us humans.

As humanity took over the planet, the aliens, sorry the cryptoterrestrials, hid away from us and lurked in the shadows. Tonnies says that over the centuries they have posed 'as gnomes or fairies or demons or even humans (as in the case of the mysterious airship sightings of the late 19th century)'. Now these expert tricksters who 'appear as they do by the cultural biases and limited expectations of the witness' pose as aliens from outer space.

Using a combination of advanced psychological and technological techniques, the small population of cryptoterrestrials, who are literally dying out, have been able to persuade us that they represent a vast army of invincible aliens.

Using this disguise the Cryptoterrestrials have been able to abduct people to conduct their medical work, which they hope can eventually sort out their own genetic problems.

Mac Tonnies died last year and this is a fitting tribute to his left-field take on the UFO riddle.



Stalking the Tricksters: Skinwalkers, Shapeshifters, Dark Adepts and 2012

By **Christopher O'Brien**
Published by **Adventures Unlimited**
RRP: **£15.99** (pb)
Reviewed by **Nick Redfern**

When, in my early teens, I became seriously interested in the world of Fortean, most things were pretty black-and-white to me: Bigfoot were giant undiscovered apes; the Loch Ness Monsters were surviving relics of a time long-gone; and UFOs were nuts-and-bolts spacecraft from other worlds. But, as I got older my views began to change.

The more I dug into the realms of alien entities and strange creatures, the more I came to realize that they were not just strange: they were *too* strange. And they were way too elusive. The phenomena seem to be always one step ahead of us - tricking us into following them down Fortean pathways, but always careful to ensure we never quite get close enough to solve the riddle.

Chris's book is an excellent, in-depth study of the 'Trickster' puzzle in all its strange and surreal glory. But, you may ask: what are Tricksters? Well, that's the big question, of course!

People may disagree on the actual point of origin and specific nature of the Tricksters, but as Chris demonstrates, they are most assuredly among us. They are entities whose whole role in life, it seems, is to play games with the Human Race. Sometimes those games can be fun and even amusing. Other times, they may be enlightening and helpful. But, then, they can be downright vicious and deadly, too.

And they come in many guises and disguises, as Chris skilfully shows: aliens, Mothman, skinwalkers, pixies, elves, gods, hairy giants, angels, werewolves, ghosts, demons, vampires and much more. Chris has culled from his files countless reports of Trickster characters and also gets into the fascinating realm of human-tricksters, like P.T. Barnum and Crowley and the way in which they play a role in this weird affair.

I strongly suspect you'll also come away from *Stalking the Tricksters* with a realization that both our world and our reality are not what they seem to be. Someone - or *something* - is using us as pawns in a strange, intricate and huge game. It is a game where the rules are those of the Tricksters alone. Or, perhaps, there are *no* rules. After all, what place can rules have for creatures that are defined by absurdity?



DVDs



2012

Directed by: **Roland Emmerich**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**
Price: **£19.99**

Roland Emmerich rolls out another in his line of apocalyptic thrillers (*Independence Day*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, etc) in what promises to be a start-to-finish roller-coaster ride of destruction, chaos and doom.

Playing on the now famed theory from ancient Mayan teachings that prophesise the end of the world in 2012, Emmerich creates an epic blockbuster where the world quickly crumbles while humanity fights for survival. The culprit is a solar flare that sparks a catastrophic chain of environmental disasters.

Aside from the obvious allusion to the ongoing global warming debate, there is nothing in this film that will strain the brain. There is no meaning or motive in what's on display. Instead everything that happens is little more than one perilous occurrence after another, creating the effect of a plot that seems to be very loosely stitched together by a bunch of one-dimensional, clichéd characters - a pity really, as the acting talent on display in the film is fantastic, but they all struggle to maintain the gravitas the plot demands to make you care about anyone on screen.

All that said, if you go into this film not expecting anything more than some gargantuan special effects, some devastating set pieces and some sheer, unbridled enjoyment... then there is very little to fault in *2012*.

This movie may not appeal to everyone, but in the disaster genre mainstream *2012* stands out for the sheer unbridled entertainment of it all - a well-seasoned, mindless popcorn movie.



Being Human Season 2

Created by: **Toby Whithouse**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**
Price: **£24.99**

Russell Tovey, Lenora Crichlow and Aidan Turner are back as the troubled trio of werewolf, ghost and vampire in the critically acclaimed BBC drama.

Returning for a second season we once again follow the three housemates

as they attempt to live out a normal life. But again this is going to prove to be an uphill struggle, exacerbated by the fallout from season one's finale that has left the vampire community close to chaos.

Being Human yet again shows the quality that can be instilled in low budget fantasy, without treading the *Doctor Who* path of slapstick drama. Fantasy features can be played seriously rather than opting for the gimmick, for what we get is a reality where three friends must come to terms with each other, their loved ones and their enforced lives, while at the same time dealing with the remorse of their crimes in the form of their more animalistic forms.

Possibly the best handled, and most interesting aspect of this follow up series, is the well-handled 'unknown' elements involved. One being Annie's increasingly troubling dealings with a power from the afterlife trying to force her to leave her current "life" and carry on into limbo. While the other takes the form of a secretive team gathering and experimenting on werewolves, who inevitably make designs on this supernatural household.

Series two has successfully advanced from the groundwork of the first season. This is the only real British rival to American behemoths like *True Blood*, and picking up momentum with each episode, *Being Human* is a great fantasy to sink your teeth into.



The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus

Directed by: **Terry Gilliam**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**
Price: **£19.99**

Has Terry Gilliam ever been involved in a film production that has not been fraught with problems and imminent disaster? Probably not, but perhaps the time has come to realise that all the trouble, while at times having a discordant impact on the films, forms the basis for Gilliam's trippy surrealist style.



This time the disaster was well publicised. Heath Ledger's untimely death during filming meant that Gilliam had to draft in Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell to form a triumvirate that would complete Ledger's missing scenes. Obviously this would create a bewildering dynamic as the lead character shifts shape, but out of the madness the passion and raw beauty of *Imaginarium* shines through.

The plot follows the titular Doctor and his travelling 'Imaginarium' (an imaginary world where dreams come true), and his attempts to protect his daughter from the Devil.

At times it is clear that the trouble in production has created a scrappy film borne from chaos and unfortunately showing too much of this chaos on screen to be fully understood. But with a characteristic visual and storytelling flare, *Imaginarium* does well in its celebration of the imagination and in what is a completely unique vision.

It is a pity that this film will be remembered mainly for the death of Heath Ledger, just as much as it was a pity that Ledger was not there to complete the film himself. But there is so much more to the film in its visual nuances, whimsical movement and ramshackle quality that make this well worth watching. Though a word of advice, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* is more easily explored on second viewing.



Sherlock Holmes

Directed by: **Guy Ritchie**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**
Price: **£19.99**

It has been a long wait for a new feature film based on the intrepid adventures of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, but it has arrived in the form of Guy Ritchie's rough-and-tumble thriller.

When an old nemesis of a down-trodden Sherlock Holmes returns from the grave, he and his accomplice

Watson will have to use his legendary intellect and new-found fighting skills to save the country from a devastating plot from a secret society.

While the plot sounds familiar enough to be considered a worthy Sherlock Holmes mystery, the liberties taken by Ritchie as director somewhat distort what could have been an excellent rebirth of a classic character. Instead we are presented with an action-packed adventure that reads more like a caricature of a more refined detective.

However, it is not without it's merit: the grimy appearance of London; the derailed train momentum of the plot; the fantastic eccentric portrayal of the protagonist by Robert Downey Jr. All are thoroughly enjoyable and appealing. But if you do not want to see an action-hero version of Sherlock Holmes (and I wouldn't blame you!) then this is not the film for you.

However, if you can set aside preconceived notions of Sherlock Holmes, the man, and not think too much about what is going on, on screen, then this is a fun adventure with some spectacular moments. Definitely not a film for devotees of crime fiction but an adequate modernisation of a character left criminally untouched by the big screen for too long.



Games



Mass Effect 2

Format: **Xbox (tested), PC**
Publisher: **EA**
Developer: **BioWare**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

BioWare takes you back to the 22nd century in the follow-up to its award-winning, sci-fi role-playing game.

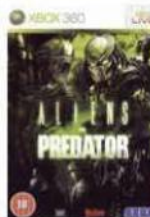
Mass Effect 2 takes place two years on from the original after Commander Shepard repelled countless invading Reapers whose only purpose was the destruction of all organic life. Now a mysterious new enemy appears, quietly and methodically abducting entire human colonies. Shepard must now work with the secretive organisation, Cerberus, organise a crack team and go on a suicidal mission to save the world.

More so than its predecessor, *Mass Effect 2* has more of an individual feel to it, where the changes and improvements to the game have managed to shift the tone and create a welcome sequel, but also a stand-alone, original game. Most of this originality

comes in the fantastic art design in the form of an intense chiaroscuro of light and shadow that perfectly sets the tone for this bleak space-opera.

Heavily based in action, it is always important that players feel a strong level of control in the gameplay. And gladly the shooting mechanics of the first game have been improved upon to give a solid system that makes encounters with any foe exciting and genuinely fun.

There are times when scanning planets can become a little tedious, but with each location you visit and explore having an element of freshness in the level design, there is enough in *Mass Effect 2* to keep you interested and wanting more. And you won't have to wait too long with the third in the trilogy currently planned.



Aliens vs Predator

Format: **360 (tested), PC**
Publisher: **Sega**
Developer: **Rebellion**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Another return to the world of AVP once again pits three infamous species against each other; Alien, Predator and Man, in what promises to be three action-packed and brutal campaigns.

The main appeal of this title is the multi-narrative feature. You get to run through three stand-alone stories each tailor made for their man character; you will face the fear when you fight against the odds as the Colonial Marine; as the nimble Alien you will get a chance to get up close and personal to launch vicious attacks; as the skilled Predator, you will stalk your prey with advanced weapons searching for trophy kills, each story adding some much-needed variety to the game.

However, each story is flawed in its own way, and more often than not, the interest in the idea just doesn't last. Dull level design coupled with some flimsy have made this more frustrating than fun. For instance making a kill as the alien and getting it right is great, but getting there is a chore. With fickle movement control you never quite feel in charge of what should be an agile, deadly creature, and so never enjoy being the Alien. Similar problems are encountered in each character, resulting in a standard shooter that never quite lives up to each character's extraterrestrial capabilities.

Aliens vs Predator is a good concept with good variety of gameplay and a welcome return to a beloved series. But with more flaws than claws on display it is difficult to sink your teeth into the game.



Book, DVD & Game reviews from back issues can be found online at:
www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk





BOOKEND

CAN A SCIENTIST BECOME A PSYCHIC... AND WIN A MILLION DOLLARS?

By Dr. Matthew Smith



Do we all have hidden psychic powers? Is it possible to learn to be psychic? I have long been fascinated by these questions, and I'm hoping to find some answers as part of a unique and ambitious project over the coming year.

After nearly 20 years of researching 'paranormal' experiences from a strictly scientific perspective, I want to see if I can discover and develop my own hidden psychic abilities. If, of course, such things exist at all! I am naturally sceptical about the claims made by psychics, but I have always been intrigued by the possibility that maybe, just maybe, psychic ability could be real. And what better way to find out than to see if I can discover my own abilities? Unless, of course, I turn out to be as psychic as a brick.

I would love to know what it feels like to 'hear' voices in the way mediums often say that spirits talk to them. It would be amazing to be able to influence objects just by thinking about them using psychokinesis. And I would give anything to be able to 'remote view' and get visions of some distant event that I couldn't know anything about, or see into the future and know what's going to happen before anybody else! Are all these just fantasies, or is any of it actually possible?

To find out, I'm going to devote a year of my life to developing my psychic faculties.

As my very own test subject, I'll attend courses and workshops, and seek tuition and guidance from the leading figures in the psychic world.

I'll explore first-hand the world of clairvoyants, mediums, and psychics and learn how to read everything from auras to palms to the tarot. On the flipside I'll also learn how to cold read, and see just how much more information we give away without even knowing.

At the end of the year I plan to put myself forward for the million dollar challenge offered by the James Randi Educational Foundation for anyone who can demonstrate genuine psychic abilities. A professional magician, Randi is all too aware of how people can be fooled by those claiming to have paranormal powers. The question is, can *anybody* demonstrate they really have such abilities?

As the scourge of psychics across the world, he's made it his mission over the years to debunk and demystify the paranormal, offering a cool \$1,000,000 for anyone who could demonstrate such abilities. The money has never been claimed. And this, argues Randi, is testament to the fact that they don't exist.

But what if he's wrong? What if they *do* exist? And what if psychic abilities are available to any one of us who makes the effort to search for them? Then, surely that would be worth far more than a million dollars. It would be priceless.

Dr Matthew Smith was until recently an Associate Professor of Psychology at Liverpool Hope University. He has conducted research on telepathy, precognition, luck, séances and psychic pets and his sceptical views on the paranormal have led to appearances on a number of television programmes broadcast throughout the world. You can follow his journey as he learns to become a psychic at www.spiritualjunkie.co.uk. You can discover more about the James Randi Educational Foundation at www.randi.org.

'I'M GOING TO DEVOTE A YEAR OF MY LIFE TO DEVELOPING MY PSYCHIC FACULTIES. AT THE END OF THE YEAR I PLAN TO PUT MYSELF FORWARD FOR THE MILLION DOLLAR CHALLENGE OFFERED BY JAMES RANDI.'



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