

# MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME



*The Unexplained*





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**MYSTERIES  
OF MIND  
SPACE & TIME**

*The Unexplained*

VOLUME

6



Originally published in the United Kingdom in weekly parts as *The Unexplained Mysteries of Mind Space and Time* is a study of the paranormal, mystical and psychic phenomena commonly referred to as the Supernatural. It is not intended to justify or persuade, but to describe the unexplainable phenomena and occurrences experienced by men and women—events that defy normal human experience.



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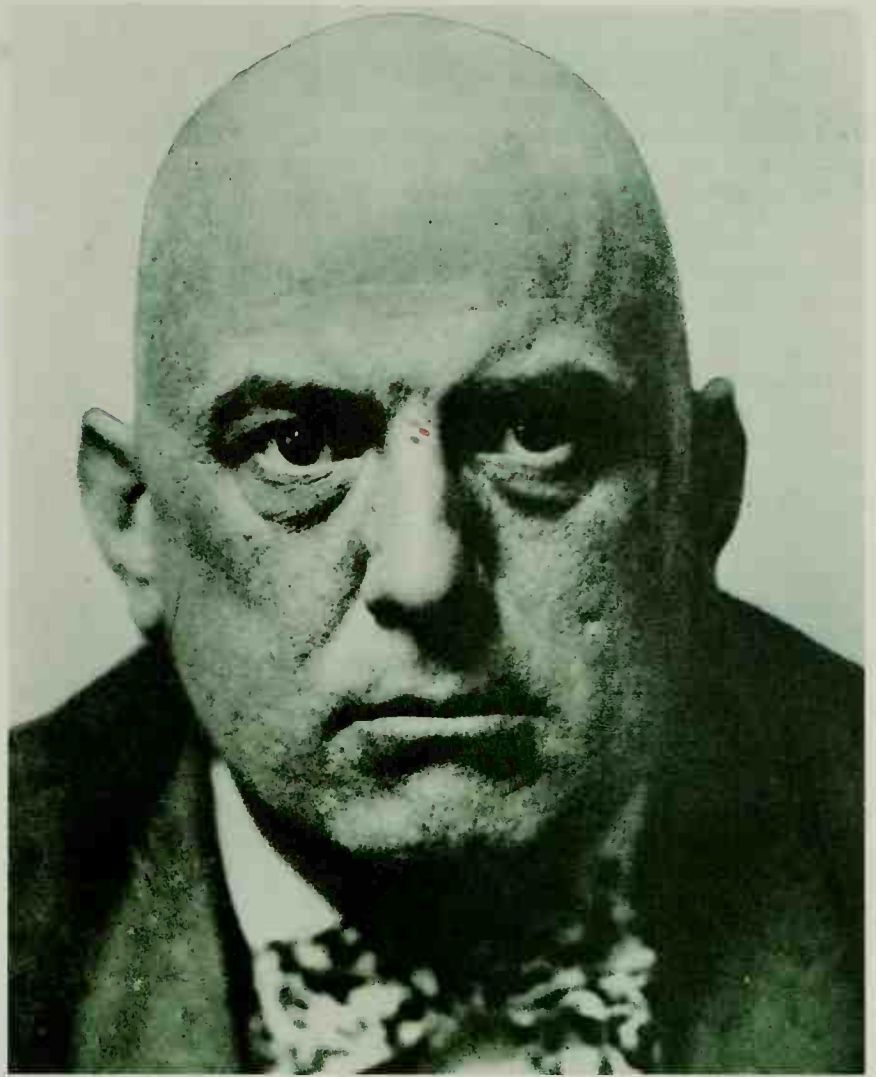
**Aleister Crowley, one of the most infamous Englishmen of the 20th century, had many interests: mountaineering, poetry, drugs, pornography – and ‘magick’. FRANCIS KING tells the story of the man who believed he was the ‘Beast’ of the book of Revelation**

IN THE LATE 20th century psychical researchers, who tend to call themselves ‘parapsychologists’, largely concern themselves with mental phenomena such as telepathy and precognition. However important the scientific implications of such supposed phenomena there can be no doubt that they are less spectacular than the alleged physical phenomena of mediumship – such things as levitation and materialisations of departed spirits – which were the main focus of psychic investigation during the period 1860 to 1930.

At that time there were many physical mediums, the most notable of them, apart from the great D.D. Home (see page 1674), being Eusapia Palladino, an Italian medium whose powers impressed such serious researchers as Everard Feilding and Hereward Carrington.

But one amateur investigator in particular was not at all impressed; after a sitting with Palladino he came to the conclusion that she was no more than a clever illusionist and that all those who had recorded her supernatural feats, notably the extrusion of a phantom ‘ectoplasmic’ limb, had been duped.

The seance in question took place in 1913 and the researcher was trying to answer one



## ‘The wickedest man in the world’

question that had presented itself to his mind: ‘Feilding and the rest are clever, wary, experienced and critical, but even so, can I be sure that when they describe what occurs they are dependable witnesses?’

Palladino sat at the end of a table, at her back a curtained cabinet containing a stand on which were placed the various objects intended to be manipulated by her ghostly arm. Her right wrist was gripped by Mary d’Este Sturges; her left by the investigator who had arranged the sitting.

The seance began in a way typical of many Palladino sittings – the curtain over the cabinet first bulged and then fell across the medium’s left arm and hand and the investigator’s right hand and arm. By turning his head the researcher could now see into the cabinet where he glimpsed the movements of a shadowy left arm. He reasoned to himself that this could not be the medium’s left arm as he himself was holding it; but as the mysterious arm disappeared

Above: Aleister Crowley in middle age, having perfected his disturbing hypnotic stare. A few – usually unbalanced – women found him irresistible, but most found him repulsive. Even as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge (right), it was clear that Crowley had mapped out a future for himself that would be pure neither in mind nor in body. As a student, however, he contented himself with writing and printing poetry, including *Snowdrops from a curate’s garden*, *Scented garden* and *White stains*: pornographic juvenilia that is not easily available today



from view he suddenly felt Palladino's wrist slipping into his hand *although he had never been conscious of it ever leaving his grasp.*

This minor but significant incident led the researcher to discount all the reports given by others who had attended Palladino's sances. 'If I,' he argued, '... cannot be relied upon to say whether I am or not holding a woman's wrist, is it not possible that even experts, admittedly excited by the rapidity with which one startling phenomenon succeeds another, may deceive themselves as to the conditions of the control?'

This investigator went on to have sittings with other mediums and to study the findings of other psychical researchers. As a result he became a complete sceptic, deciding that almost all the reported phenomena of the seance room were the outcome of fraud and self-deception.

### Enter Aleister Crowley

Yet it is perhaps surprising that this particular investigator came to such negative conclusions. For, far from being a pure materialist, he was himself a dedicated occultist; he was none other than Aleister Crowley, the practising ritual magician who, in the 1920s, was denounced as 'the wickedest man in the world'. His combination of total disbelief in Spiritualist mediumship with total belief in ritual magic was typical of the man; a thread of ambivalence and paradox ran through his life, his teachings, and his relationship with others.

Edward Alexander Crowley – later he abandoned his Christian names in favour of the strangely spelt 'Aleister' – was born in October 1875. His parents were members of the Plymouth Brethren, that most rigid of Protestant sects, and they brought up their



Above: Crowley as family man in 1910. His marriage ('a detestable institution' he called it later) to Rose Kelly, a clergyman's daughter, was apparently perfectly happy until he discovered she was a dipsomaniac. After his divorce he called his mistresses 'Scarlet Women'

Left: Allan Bennett, one of the few men whom Crowley revered, describing his mind as being 'pure, piercing and profound beyond any other'. Bennett taught Crowley magic when they were both members of the Order of the Golden Dawn. But they took different paths: Bennett went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and became a Buddhist monk. Crowley became 'the Beast'

only son in all its rigid beliefs – that every word of the Bible was the literal truth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the Catholic and Anglican Churches were 'synagogues of Satan', that the overwhelming majority of mankind was doomed by a just God to roast in hellfire for all eternity.

The elder Crowley died in 1887, and young Aleister became the object of his mother's fanatical venom. On more than one occasion she accused him of being the actual 'Great Beast' of the book of Revelation whose number is said to be 666. To the end of his life Crowley did everything he could to live up to this archetypal image. He may even have come to believe he really was the biblical Beast.

He was sent away to a school run for the sons of Brethren. Here his experiences were such that he lost his Christian faith and acquired a hatred of the Brethren and their beliefs that was to survive throughout his long and eventful life.

In October 1895 Crowley, in possession of a fortune of £30,000 that he had inherited on reaching the age of 21, became a student of





Trinity College, Cambridge. His three years at the university were happy ones; he collected rare books, wrote much poetry, spent his holidays climbing in the Alps – and became interested in the occult.

This led him, in 1898, to become a Neophyte – a student member – of ‘the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn’, a semi-secret society devoted to the study of the ‘occult arts and sciences’, including the evocation of spirits, divination, and even alchemy.

Crowley considered most of his fellow members of the Golden Dawn to be ‘absolute nonentities’ but he was impressed by the occult magical abilities of two of them, Cecil Jones and Allan Bennett. The latter took up residence with Crowley in his London flat, and together the two carried out many occult experiments, among them the ‘consecration’ – the charging with magical powers – of a talisman intended to cure a certain Lady Hall of a serious illness.

This was duly prepared and handed over. Unfortunately, however, neither Lady Hall nor her daughter followed Crowley’s precise instructions. So that when the talisman was

Above: Crowley the magician. Despite some of the more ludicrous poses he affected (right), the core of his ‘magick’ seems to be genuine enough. His famous, and much misunderstood, ‘Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law’ was amplified by ‘Love is the law; love under will’. He constantly urged his followers to seek their true selves, for this, he believed, was the divine purpose of all human lives. Perhaps he had taken the idea from the Elizabethan magician Dr Dee, who had written ‘Do that which most pleaseth you. . . .’ These ‘laws’ referred to profound spiritual truths, but the unenlightened took them to advocate moral laxity; in his less noble moments so did Crowley

applied to ‘the venerable old lady’ she was ‘seized with a violent series of fits and nearly died’.

The consecration that produced these unpleasant effects was probably carried out in what Crowley called the White Temple, a room lined with mirrors and devoted to white magic. But his flat also included another room, the Black Temple, in which the altar was supported by the image of a Negro standing on his hands and which contained a skeleton to which Crowley was silly enough to sacrifice sparrows.

#### Invisible vandals

There seems to have been a thoroughly sinister atmosphere about Crowley’s flat. One evening in 1899 he and a friend, also an occultist, went out to dinner. On their return they found that the locked door of the White Temple had been mysteriously opened, its furniture overturned and the ‘magical symbols’ that it held scattered around the room. As Crowley and his friend restored the room to order they clairvoyantly observed ‘semi-materialised beings . . . marching around the main room in almost unending procession’.

In 1900 the Golden Dawn split into two competing factions. Crowley managed to quarrel with both of them and for the next three years or so lost interest in Western occultism. Instead he wrote poetry, travelled the world and got married to a lady whom he called ‘Ouarda the Seer’, although she knew little about the occult and probably cared less.

In March 1904 the two were staying in Cairo. Crowley, wanting to demonstrate his occult abilities to his wife, carried out a number of magical rites. The results, if





Crowley's written records are to be believed, were startling. He received a psychic message, flashed into his brain from some unknown source, which told him that a new epoch in history was about to begin. He, Crowley, had been chosen to be the prophet of this new age. Crowley's wife also received a message: her husband was to sit down for one hour on three consecutive days with a pen and paper before him. The gods would then dictate to him, in voices audible only to their chosen prophet, the gospel of the new age that was about to dawn.

Crowley obeyed the directions. He heard a voice, presumably originating in the depths of his own mind, and wrote down the words dictated to him. The result was *The book of the law*, a prose poem, which Crowley came to believe was literally inspired in precisely the same way that his parents had believed the Bible to be inspired.

The meaning of some parts of the *The book of the law* is obscure. Even Crowley admitted that some passages of it were beyond his own comprehension. But the basic message was clear. Crowley was to be the prophet of a new era, 'the Age of Horus'. In the new age all the old religions of mankind – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism – will pass away and be replaced by a new faith of 'Force and Fire', the basic moral principle of which will be complete self-fulfilment. For 'Every man and woman is a star' – in other words, each individual has an absolute right to develop in his or her own way. 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law', says the new gospel,

for 'Thou hast no right but to do thy will' and 'The word of sin is restriction'.

In fairness to Crowley and his followers it has to be emphasised that the former was always careful to point out that 'Do what thou wilt' is not quite the same as 'Do what you like'. When *The book of the law* says 'Do what thou wilt', claimed Crowley, it means 'find the way of life that is in accordance with your inmost nature and then live it to the full'.

For some years Crowley only half-believed in the truth and importance of *The book of the law*, but by 1910 it had mastered him, and he devoted the rest of his life to spreading its message and converting others to the belief that he, Aleister Crowley, was a new messiah.

The methods he adopted to achieve these ends included the authorship of numerous books, most of them eventually published at the expense of himself and his friends and followers, the setting up of two occult fraternities, the public performance of occult ceremonies at London's Caxton Hall, and even the establishment of an 'Abbey', situated in a slightly derelict Sicilian farmhouse, the inmates of which devoted themselves to the practices of the new faith.

In the years before the outbreak of the First World War Crowley and a few disciples carried out an intensive propaganda campaign in England. This, although it cost all Crowley's money and much of that belonging to his friends, was notably unsuccessful. Few converts were made and Crowley was subjected to much unfavourable publicity.

In 1914 Crowley took himself and his new faith to the United States where, so he

Left: Leila Waddell, violinist and Crowley's magical assistant in London in 1910, seen here in her robes as 'Sister Cybele'. She played the violin in Crowley's Rites of Eleusis at Caxton Hall, which was open to the public. Crowley claimed to have magically changed her from being 'a fifth-rate fiddler' to a musical genius – but just for the evening

Right: Crowley and 'Scarlet Woman' Leah Hirsig with their baby Poupée outside the infamous Abbey of Thelema in Sicily in 1921. An experiment in communal living for students of 'magick', the Abbey was a disaster from the first, ending in 1923 with the death of one of its members

Far right: Jane Wolfe (left), a former stage and screen actress, with Leah Hirsig outside the Abbey in 1921. The Abbey attracted many visitors from all over the world. Some were horrified (especially when Crowley offered them 'cakes of light', which were made of dung) and most went away disappointed



Above: Crowley's sketch of a devouring demon

Right: 'the Devil', from the Tarot pack designed by Crowley and painted by Lady Frieda Harris. The work on the cards was expected to take three months; it took five years



♄ The Devil ♁



hoped, people would be more receptive to the new gospel and to 'magick', Crowley's occult system derived from his own synthesis of Western occultism, the teachings contained in *The book of the law*, and the tantrism – yogic theory and practice largely concerned with sexuality – that he had learned from Eastern sources.

But the New World proved even more resistant to Crowley than the Old. The six years the self-proclaimed prophet spent in America were unhappy. He was perpetually short of money, made few converts, and was accused of being a traitor to his own country – reasonably enough, for until the United States' entry into the war in 1917 he earned a scanty living by editing a pro-German propaganda sheet.

In 1920 he returned to Europe along with two mistresses – Crowley always maintained a vigorous sexual life – and set up his 'Abbey of Thelema' (a magical word, implying New Aeon, but Crowley often translated it as 'will') in Sicily. For a time this enjoyed a modest success. The Sicilians were surprisingly tolerant of Crowley and his 'magick' and a number of disciples, actual and potential, made their way to the Abbey. These



Above: a pornographic wall painting from the Abbey of Thelema – one of the lesser of its evils, according to the world's press

included Jane Wolfe, a minor Hollywood star, Norman Mudd, a one-eyed professor of mathematics, and Raoul Loveday, a brilliant young Oxford graduate who had decided to devote his life to Crowley's new religion.

Loveday died while at the Abbey, probably of enteritis. His wife, who believed that her husband had been poisoned by some blood he had drunk in the course of an occult ceremony, returned to London and began a virulent newspaper campaign against Crowley. Eventually this campaign, which included the denunciation of Crowley as 'a beast in human form', led to the closure of the Abbey. The Sicilian authorities promptly deported him.

The remainder of Crowley's life was, in many ways, an anti-climax. He wandered through Europe, a lonely and increasingly unhappy man, and eventually died in 1947.

At the time of Crowley's death he had only a handful of followers, but today there are many thousands. In some way his teachings seem to attract a greater following than they did during his lifetime.

# Mad, bad and dangerous to know

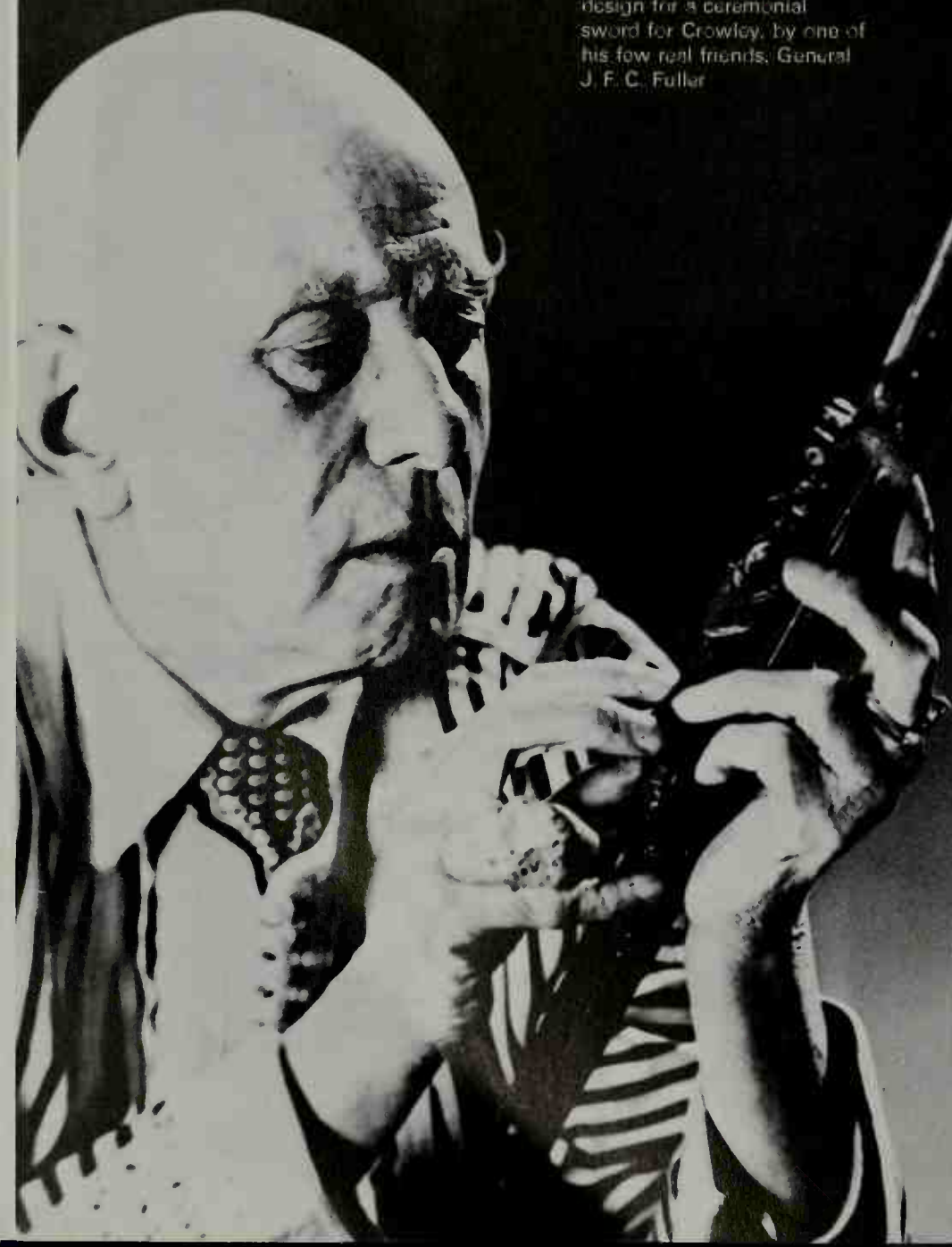
When Aleister Crowley – ‘the Beast’ – died in 1947, it seemed that, for all their notoriety, his life and his ‘magick’ would soon be forgotten. But, as FRANCIS KING explains, the years since his death have seen an explosion of interest in ‘Crowleyanity’

Below: Crowley in old age. He ended his days in 1947 at a boarding house in Hastings, Sussex, heavily dependent on heroin and alcohol. His landlady, who knew little of his past life, felt he exuded an aura of evil

Below right: the original design for a ceremonial sword for Crowley, by one of his few real friends, General J. F. C. Fuller

ALEISTER CROWLEY died in 1947 in comparative obscurity. There was, it is true, a slight fuss over his memorial service, which took place in the chapel of the crematorium at Brighton, Sussex, and was denounced by some pompous local councillors as a ‘black mass’. In reality the ceremony was totally innocent – consisting of no more than the writer Louis Wilkinson reading aloud some of Crowley’s poetry and prose. The matter was soon forgotten.

It seemed likely that, after a few years, only a tiny band of dedicated occultists would remember Crowley, his ‘magick’ and *The Book of the Law*, which, Crowley insisted – and seems genuinely to have believed – had been dictated to him by a superhuman being and was destined to be the gospel of the new age.



Ten years after his death, however, there were signs of a revival of interest in Crowley's life and opinions. John Symonds's study of Crowley's occult practices, *The magic of Aleister Crowley*, drew some attention. Second-hand copies of Crowley's books, once almost unsaleable, began to command high prices. Perhaps most significant of all, some of the 'beat poets' of California discovered the similarities between some of Crowley's teachings and the sexual mysticism with which they had become acquainted through translations of obscure Buddhist and Hindu treatises.

### Crowley crazy

By the end of the 1960s a 'Crowley revival' was apparent. The Beatles included his photograph as 'one of the people we like' on the sleeve of their *Sergeant Pepper* album; an 'Abbey of Thelema' – better organised than its Sicilian predecessor, which Crowley had run in the 1920s – flourished in rural Switzerland; and most of Crowley's occult writings (although not his poetry) had been reprinted and was selling in substantial numbers.

In the 1980s this revival was showing no sign of abating. In California an occult brotherhood once led by Crowley flourished under the leadership of Grady McMurtry, many fortune tellers employ the 'Thoth Tarot cards', designed by Crowley and Lady Frieda Harris, and all over the world little groups of occultists study Crowley's writings and practise the magical techniques taught by him.

Clearly enough, there is something in 'magick' that is in tune with the times we live in. The system that Crowley constructed from elements derived from Western occultism, from tantrism (sexual yoga), and from



the demonic prose of *The book of the law* may be complete rubbish, may be of great importance, may combine some worthless features with others of great value – but clearly makes a genuine appeal to some people inclined to mystical and magical studies.

The Western occultism that Crowley incorporated into 'magick' was the 'Western Esoteric Tradition', itself a synthetic system, built up from disparate elements and combined into one harmonious, although artificial, whole.

The Western Esoteric Tradition was created in the last decade of the 19th century by S.L. MacGregor Mathers, head of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the magical brotherhood into which Crowley had been initiated in 1898.

Mathers had taken such occult arts as



Top: Raoul Loveday, whom Crowley designated 'to be my Magickal heir', and whose death in mysterious circumstances at the Abbey of Thelema, Sicily (above), in 1918 eventually led to its closure. Loveday's wife Betty began a campaign of vilification against Crowley, which was taken up eagerly by the British press. It seems that Loveday had died from enteritis brought on by drinking contaminated water – not, as some implied, by Crowley's 'magick'

Left: the controversial filmmaker Kenneth Anger in 1955, with one of the Abbey's original doors inscribed with Crowley's creed 'Do what thou wilt'

astrology, cartomancy (fortune telling by cards), alchemy, ritual magic, the strange Enochian occult system derived from Dr Dee (see page 642), and 'astral projection', and blended them with one another.

The Mathers system, described at length in the many books of Dr Israel Regardie, has been, and is, found by many to be a satisfactory guide to occult theory and practice. Those who have practised the whole system claim that it *works*, that it induces profound and valuable psychological and spiritual changes in its devotees.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Mathers's system, later incorporated almost in its entirety into Crowley's 'magick', shows signs of straining after an artificial unity. Thus, to give one example, the system attributes the 78 cards of the Tarot pack to various degrees of the zodiac used by astrologers, to various segments of the Hebrew mystical diagram known as the 'tree of life', and even to various 'Enochian letters' copied down by Dr Dee at the dictation of the 'angels' with whom he and his medium,

Edward Kelley, believed themselves to be in communication.

Mathers made these attributions because, following the French occult writer Eliphas Levi, he believed that the Tarot cards were of ancient origin, mystical instructions in pictorial form designed by the Egyptian priests who served Thoth, god of wisdom. Crowley, following Mathers, also accepted this, going as far as to call his treatise on the Tarot *The book of Thoth*. In fact there is no evidence at all that the Tarot cards originated before the later Middle Ages, at which time, and for centuries afterwards, they were used only for playing games. It is interesting to note that occultists were not concerned with the Tarot cards before about 1780 and that, surprisingly enough, there is no evidence of them having been used for fortune telling purposes before that date.

### Attractive and effective

In spite of the artificiality of the Mathers system it is internally coherent, intellectually attractive enough in its own way and, more importantly, those who have used it have found it effective. In spite of its almost glib eclecticism it is perhaps the strongest of the three strands that Crowley plaited into the rope of his 'magick'.

However, Crowley himself would not have believed this. As far as he was concerned *The book of the law* with its doctrine of the coming age of 'force and fire', of which he himself was to be the new messiah, was central to his teachings. Although he was never confident that he had fully mastered the book's meaning, it is certain that the book's meaning mastered him. He devoted his life to the propagation of its gospel, he studied every word of its text with the same fanatical devotion that his Christian parents

## A magickal experience



When 'Prince and Princess Chioa Khan' – more properly known as Aleister Crowley (left, in 'magickal' robes) and his wife Rose – moved into apartments in Cairo in March 1904, the first thing they did was to convert one of the rooms into an occult temple.

Crowley, an ex-member of the Order of the Golden Dawn, sought to make contact with the gods – and consequently invoked them in their ancient Egyptian forms: Thoth, Isis, Apophis and Osiris. Almost immediately Rose, who, it is said, had little knowledge of occult mysteries, entered into a trance and led Crowley to the (now defunct) Boulak Museum and pointed to a certain exhibit. She had been muttering 'They are waiting for you' and 'He who was waiting was Horus.' Crowley looked closely at the exhibit: it was a statuette of Horus. But more important to him was the exhibit's number – 666. It was the number of the Beast.

For nearly a month Crowley and Rose (now called Ouarda the Seeress) invoked the gods; and the gods, they believed, spoke through them. Crowley's 'Holy Guardian Angel' Aiwass dictated what was to become his Bible, the collection of exclamatory lines known as *The book of the law*. It was to be the holy scripture of the new era of which Crowley was Messiah. But Crowley was in no doubt as to its true nature. Its originator, Aiwass, he referred to as 'our Lord God the Devil'.



"the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world." AL II. 21

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." AL I. 60

"thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay." AL I. 42-3

"Every man and every woman is a star." AL I. 3

There is no god but man.

1. Man has the right to live by his own law – to live in the way that he wills to do: to work as he will: to play as he will: to rest as he will: to die when and how he will.
2. Man has the right to eat what he will: to drink what he will: to dwell where he will: to move as he will on the face of the earth.
3. Man has the right to think what he will: to speak what he will: to write what he will: to draw, paint, carve, etch, mould, build as he will: to dress as he will.
4. Man has the right to love as he will – "take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where, and with whom ye will." AL I. 51
5. Man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights. "the slaves shall serve." AL II. 58 "Love is the law, love under will." AL I. 57

*Aleister Crowley*

Left: a postcard version of Crowley's 'magickal' opus, *The book of the law*. 'There is no god but man' seemed, to respectable churchgoers, a statement of rather shallow atheism. In fact, Crowley was ahead of his time, believing that Man's subconscious mind is responsible for many, if not all, paranormal events or 'miracles'

Right: a scene from Snoo Wilson's play *The number of the Beast*, in its London 1982 production, with John Stride as Crowley and Marty Cruickshank as a 'Scarlet Woman'

had devoted to the Bible, and – whenever he was perplexed and in need of guidance – he would open it at random and take the sentence his finger alighted upon as a direct message from the gods.

His attitude towards *The book of the law* was totally uncritical. As far as he was concerned it was beyond criticism. Thus he was in the habit of opening his conversations with everyone with a direct quotation from it: 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.' On one occasion he said this to the painter Augustus John, who testily replied: 'To hell with all laws.' Crowley felt – perhaps for the only time in his life – shocked.

Today Crowley's disciples study *The book of the law* with the same obsessive concern as their master. All religious texts are liable to conflicting interpretation and *The book of the law* is no exception; one contemporary group, for example, is the custodian of a special revelation concerning the relationship between the book and a tenth planet of the solar system, supposedly in an orbit beyond that of Pluto, called Isis.



On the whole, it seems likely that *The book of the law* is, as far as 'magick' is concerned, a source of weakness rather than strength. For its phraseology is so vague that conflicting readings of its text tend to lead to internal disagreements and schisms in the occult groups that accept its 'divine' inspiration.

### Sex as a sacrament

The third element in 'magick', and perhaps the one that has received most public attention, is its tantrism – sexual mysticism and magic. Tantrism is a powerful element in both the Hinduism of Bengal and Tibetan Buddhism. It is concerned with the use of sexuality – expressed sometimes physically, sometimes only symbolically – as a sacrament leading its devotees towards mystical union with the gods.

Crowley may have come into contact with it in the course of his oriental travels, but the main source of the sexual-magic techniques that he taught, practised and incorporated into 'magick' was a German occult society called the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, or the Order of Templars of the Orient (OTO).

Crowley met and became friendly with the chief of this fraternity, a somewhat dubious individual called Theodor Reuss, who headed several pseudo-masonic lodges, in 1911. In the following year Crowley was appointed head of its British section, taking the imposing but perhaps ludicrous title of 'Baphomet, Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains within the Sanctuary of the Gnosis'.

The sex-magic of the OTO would seem, certainly to the outside observer, to be on a somewhat lower plane than that of authentic tantrism. Crowley's own diaries – his 'Magickal Record' – make it apparent that he used it more in order to obtain his material desires,



Above: a portrait of Crowley by a modern disciple. In his poem *Hymn to Pan*, Crowley had written: 'Goat of thy flock . . . I am god/And I rave and I rip and I rend/Everlasting, world without end . . .'

money and power over others, than to attain the enlightenment that is alike the goal of the Hindu and Buddhist tantrism.

Crowley wrote several instructional manuscripts, most of them now published, in which he codified Reuss's sexual teachings. They are largely concerned with complex visualisation exercises designed to be used in conjunction with sexual activity.

These, then, are the three strands that make up Crowley's 'magick'; only time will show whether all, or any of them, contain something of permanent value to students of the occult.

But one thing seems certain. Crowley was not, in the ordinary sense of the word, a charlatan. There were elements of the showman, the charlatan, and the confidence trickster in his personality. But he believed in his self-formulated system. He worked for it, suffered for it and devoted his life to it. But, sadly, it may all have been a delusion. It is said that his last words, uttered in a seedy boarding house in Hastings, Sussex, were 'I am perplexed. . . .'

#### Further reading

Colin Wilson, *Aleister Crowley: the nature of the beast*, Borgo Press 1988

John Symonds and Kenneth Grant (eds), *The confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Viking Penguin 1989



confirmed that she wrote 1750 words in one hour and five minutes. But it was the content of the scripts that impressed investigators rather than the speed with which they were produced.

Through Geraldine's hand, apparently guided by someone calling himself 'the messenger', came a chronicle about early Christian history. The communicator was said to be an agent of someone called Cleophas, and he gave information about the



The Abbey Theatre in Dublin is world famous. The 22-year-old Geraldine Cummins had a play produced there in 1912, two years before the seance that changed the direction of her life

period between the death of Jesus and St Paul's departure from Berea to Athens.

There was so much interest in these scripts that Geraldine Cummins allowed distinguished churchmen, scholars and psychical investigators to watch at her side while she rapidly and 'automatically' wrote what was being transmitted through her.

These writings, published as *The scripts of Cleophas*, contained over one million words. Even if Geraldine Cummins had wanted to fake the messages, she knew no Greek, Hebrew or Latin to help her research the subject. But she was not accused of fraud: the scholars testified that the scripts 'contain much which, on consideration of the life and mentality of the intermediary, Miss Cummins, appears quite inexplicable on the supposition of human authorship'.

There is another factor that seems to speak for the authenticity of the scripts as messages from 'outside herself'. For they went against Geraldine Cummins's nature and culture. As she said:

I am not proud of the Cleophas Series as I feel such writings are not of me, are foreign in character to my Celtic, racial self. Lastly, because of his reactionary remarks about women, I disliked St

*Swan on a black sea*, the edited version of the scripts 'dictated' to Geraldine Cummins by the medium Mrs Willett. The title comes from a phrase in the scripts themselves

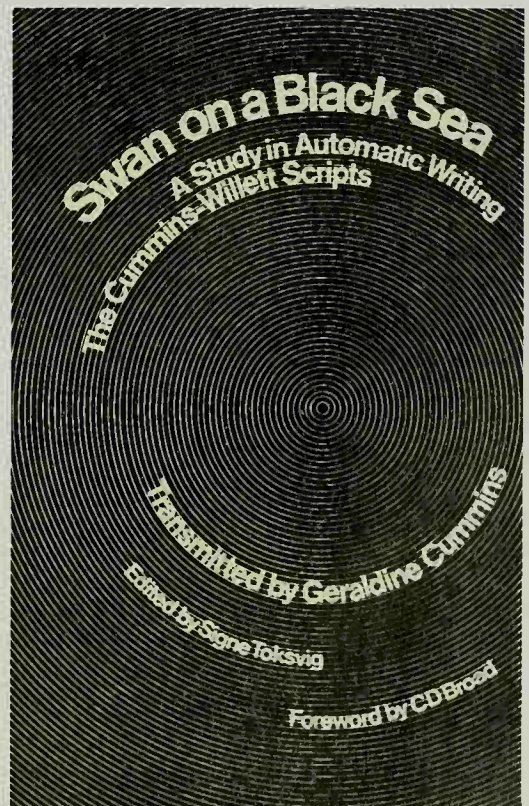
Paul. Why then was I compelled against my will and prejudices to write about him in such laudatory terms?

Whatever the truth about the Cleophas scripts, Geraldine Cummins produced many others, of which some appear to provide evidence of life after death. For example, the series of scripts she 'received' from an Australian writer, Ambrose Pratt, are included in Professor Raynor Johnson's book *The light and the gate* (1964). They convinced many people that Pratt had succeeded in communicating with Geraldine Cummins after his death.

These scripts were much publicised, but Geraldine Cummins also produced many private communications for her sitters. These were frequently full of significant and convincing details.

Among those who consulted her privately was Mackenzie King, three times prime minister of Canada at various times from 1921 to 1948. The former American president Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died in 1945, apparently used Geraldine's hand to write messages to Mackenzie King in 1948. In the first of these, he accurately prophesied the unexpected outbreak of the Korean War two years later and De Gaulle's coming to power in 1958.

For most people, the best evidence produced by this remarkable medium for survival after death occurred towards the end of her life. It started in August 1957 when she was 67 years old. One day while she was on holiday in Ireland, a letter arrived from W.H. Salter, honorary secretary of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR). He



wrote: 'A member of the SPR who lost his mother some months ago would like to give her the opportunity of sending him a message. I believe that this is a case that would interest you evidentially.' All that Geraldine was given was the man's name: Major Henry Tennant.

The Major's mother was Winifred Coombe Tennant, a woman high in society as well as active in public life. What was particularly significant for this experiment, however, was that Winifred Coombe Tennant had also been a gifted automatic writing medium who had kept her real identity secret by working under the pseudonym of Mrs Willett.

Five days after being given Major Tennant's name, Geraldine Cummins received the first script from his mother. She had other pressing affairs at the time, but she undertook Salter's request quickly because, she said, 'Otherwise these critical people would say I spent time making inquiries about this blasted major.'



The communications she received were richly detailed and captured the personality of Mrs Coombe Tennant as the remarkable woman she was. Not everyone was impressed, however. E. R. Dodds, Regius professor of Greek at Oxford University, president of the SPR from 1961 to 1962, and a lifelong friend of Geraldine Cummins, wrote privately to Mrs Coombe Tennant's sons, Alexander and Henry, that there was 'internal evidence pointing in the direction of conscious or unconscious fraud' in the scripts. Did Geraldine Cummins know that Mrs Willett, her communicator, was really Mrs Coombe Tennant? The secret was well-guarded, but others have also suggested that in the comparatively small psychic circles of that time, it is highly likely that Geraldine would have learned of her fellow medium's true identity.

Even if she had indeed known the identity of the communicator she had been asked to contact, could she have produced scripts

Right: Mrs Winifred Coombe Tennant, who always kept her identity as the medium Mrs Willett a secret. Her son consulted Geraldine Cummins to make contact with her – from which resulted the famous Cummins-Willett scripts. A writer who analysed both the creative and 'transmitted' work of Geraldine Cummins has said that she 'could not possibly have invented Mrs Willett'



containing such intimate information without being in mind-to-mind contact with Winifred Coombe Tennant? For part of these scripts were 'too correct about private affairs to be published', according to their editor, Signe Toksvig.

Many who have studied the 40 scripts as published in *Swan on a black sea* (1965) are convinced that they provide some of the best evidence for life after death.

Professor C. D. Broad, a former SPR president and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, wrote an analytical 52-page foreword to the book, in which he said:

I believe these automatic scripts are a very important addition to the vast mass of such material which *prima facie* suggests rather strongly that certain human beings have survived the death of their physical bodies and have been able to communicate with certain others who are still in the flesh.

Perhaps the final word should come from Major Henry Tennant, to whom the scripts were addressed. Winifred Coombe Tennant's youngest son was initially sceptical about spirit communication. In a letter to the medium he wrote: 'The more I study these scripts the more deeply I am impressed by them.' He found only one incorrect name. 'Every other name and reference is accurate, and to me very evidential and at times surprising. There was no tapping of my mind because much appears that I never knew.'

The Cummins-Willett scripts, as they came to be known, were the crowning glory of Geraldine Cummins's career as a medium. They were published only four years before she died at her Chelsea home in London. Always questioning of her own powers, she admitted that with the Willett scripts, she was satisfied that her mediumship had produced telling evidence of life after death.

Pro and con: Professor E. R. Dodds (above left), though a lifelong friend of Geraldine Cummins, did not believe in the Willett scripts. On the other hand, Professor C. D. Broad (above) found them 'a very important addition' to the evidence for life after death. Perhaps most convincing of all, Mrs Willett's sceptical son was 'deeply impressed' by their accuracy and detail

When 'believers' and 'sceptics' about the paranormal run out of arguments, the odds are that they will proceed to psychoanalyse each other. The result is a proliferation of theories as to which psychological, sociological, political or religious pressures may have induced the blindness in the opposite camp that prevents them seeing the truth that should be self-evident. PIET HEIN HOEBENS discusses the advantages and shortcomings of such an approach

Being a moderate disbeliever in extra-sensory perception, ghosts, flying saucers and life after death, I do not think that I will learn the ultimate truth about the paranormal by psychoanalysing those people who are unable to share my scepticism. However well-founded, conjectures about the believers' motives do not relieve the sceptic of the duty to evaluate the believers' arguments. (It goes without saying that this also applies to believers' conjectures about the motives of sceptics.) I happen to be one of those old-fashioned individuals who believe in something called objectivity – that is, I think that beliefs are true or false regardless of the psychological needs or powers of argument of those who hold them.

So even if someone were to demonstrate to my satisfaction that all believers in the paranormal are raving lunatics, this would not disprove the reality of the paranormal – any more than all those threadbare theories about scepticism being the result of materialist-reductionist prejudice, if true, would disprove scepticism.

All the same, I think that some insight into the 'needs' of the antagonists is vital if we wish to understand something of the nature of the public controversy over the paranormal. Many people appear to have a strong inclination to disregard David Hume's sound advice that we should not believe more than is warranted by the available evidence. To such people, 'evidence' is an instrument to convert the

heathen; they themselves would be happy to embrace the truth without any proof at all. When invited to provide an empirical foundation for their claims, many will gravely proffer evidence that can be seen at a glance to be flawed. Even if it is possible to convince them that this is the case, however, this does not have the slightest effect on the strength of their beliefs. To them 'evidence' is apparently no more than an illustration of a truth – not a rational foundation of a belief. If the evidence turns out to be spurious, well, that means only that we have picked the wrong set of illustrations.

What moves these people? I cannot avoid remarking that I have been struck by the fact that most believers, asked *why* they believe, give strikingly similar replies: almost always, these replies will be, essentially, 'Don't you think there must be *something*?'

#### **Transcendent reality**

Now there is something peculiar about the way these people use the word 'something'. It never refers to physical, biological or astronomical somethings – but always to a transcendent level of reality, a reality in which a deeply felt 'impossible' wish may turn into a fact. Psychologists tell us that children inhabit a magical universe where teapots dance the foxtrot and pigs have wings. Might not much belief in the paranormal be prompted by an unconscious longing for that paradise from which the angels of reason have expelled us?

Attractive as such conjectures may be, they belong to the realm of poetry rather than to that of science. They may enable us to make an intuitively plausible guess as to why so many otherwise sensible persons eagerly embrace paranormal claims on the basis of arguments they would find preposterously weak in any other context. However, they tell us little – if anything – about the most fundamental question of all: do paranormal phenomena exist or not, and if they do, what is their nature?

# Riddle of Racetrack Playa

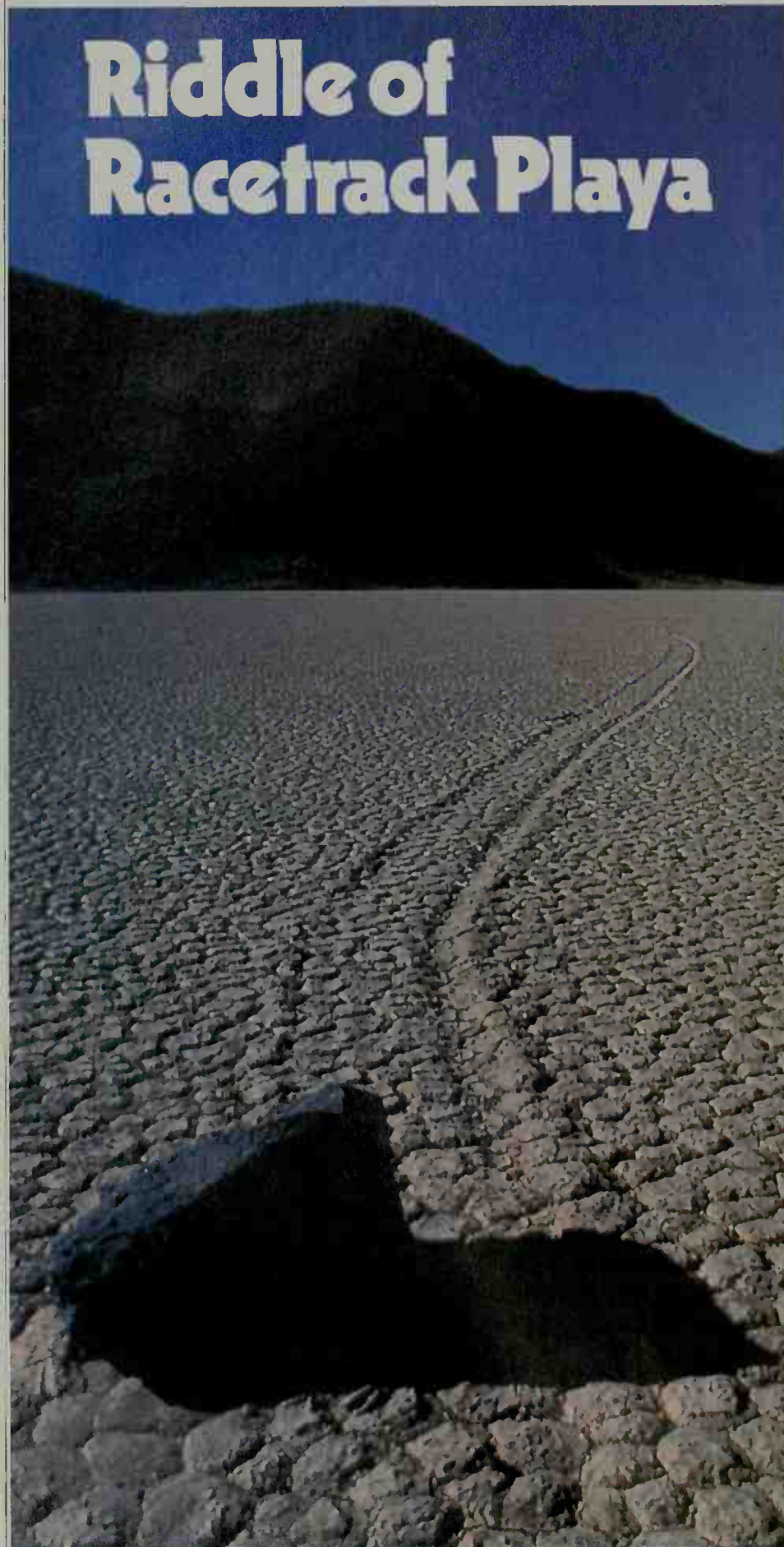
The stones move – and no one sees them do it. Yet thousands have seen their tracks in the dry lake beds that dot the Sierra Nevada mountains in the western United States. BOB RICKARD tells how the moving stones make their mysterious journeys

HIGH IN THE Sierra Nevada mountains, in the remote region of California's border with Nevada, there are places where stones move at night. Once, a band of pioneers was trapped in these rough, deeply channelled hills and unexpected dried-up lake beds, on their way to prospect or to settle in more hospitable places. Now it is part of the vast Death Valley National Park, of which the moving stones are a great attraction.

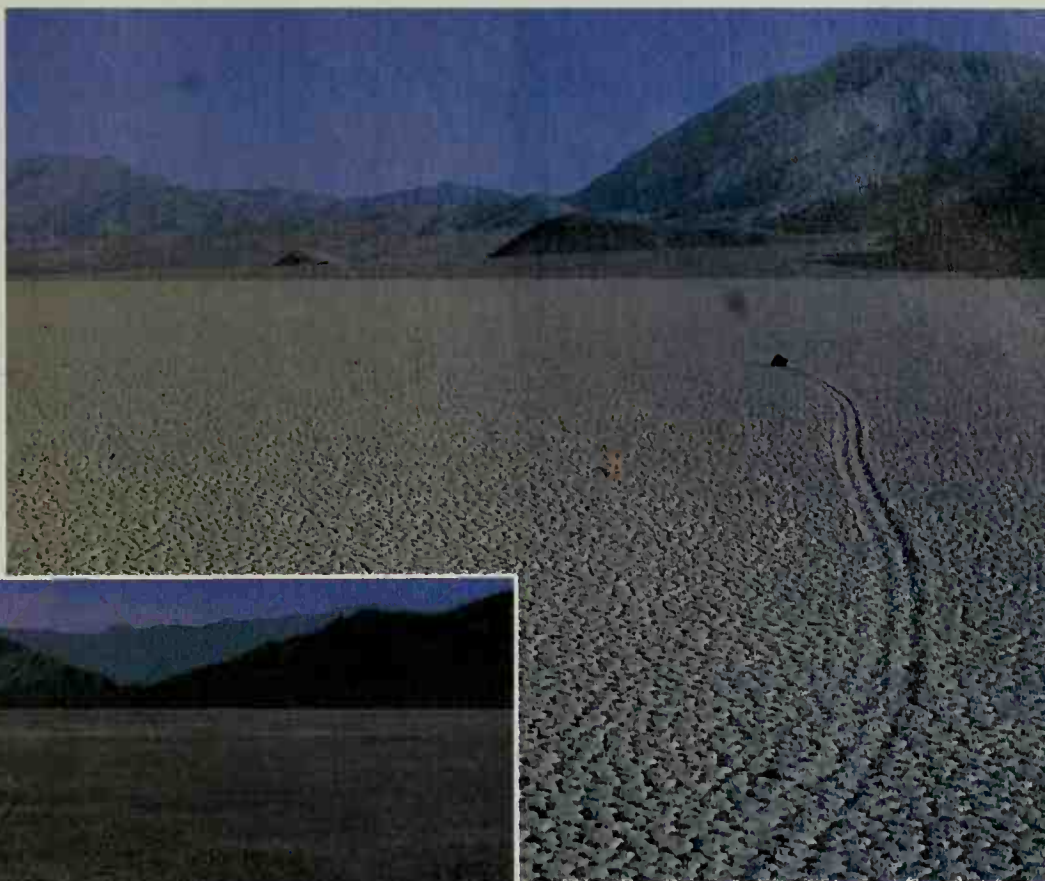
Perhaps the most famous of these dry lake beds, or playas, is Racetrack Playa, about 1½ miles (2 kilometres) wide by 3 miles (5 kilometres) long and nearly 4000 feet (1200 metres) above sea level. The visitor's eye is immediately drawn to the scattered boulders and stones that litter this plain of hard, cracked mud. The quality of light at this altitude adds to the surreal effect, so that the rocks, with their snaking furrows behind them, give the impression of being both stationary and stirring. No one has ever seen the stones move – but move they do.

Over the years it was noticed that the rocks that moved had not rolled along but were pushed, leaving a groove the same size as their width behind them. Then in 1955 a geologist called George M. Stanley wrote in the *Bulletin* of the Geological Society of America (GSA) that he believed wind and ice were involved. Stanley was intrigued by the fact that groups of rocks often moved together. He suggested that sheets of ice formed around a group of rocks and that the wind raised the whole sheet slightly and propelled it along. This sounds plausible and was accepted for many years, especially after ice sheets embedded with rocks had been seen moving on other Californian playas. However, the ice layers on the Death Valley playas are extremely thin, and while they may be capable of moving smaller stones, even Stanley did not suggest they could shift the 300- to 600-pound (135- to 270-kilogram) boulders that had made tracks.

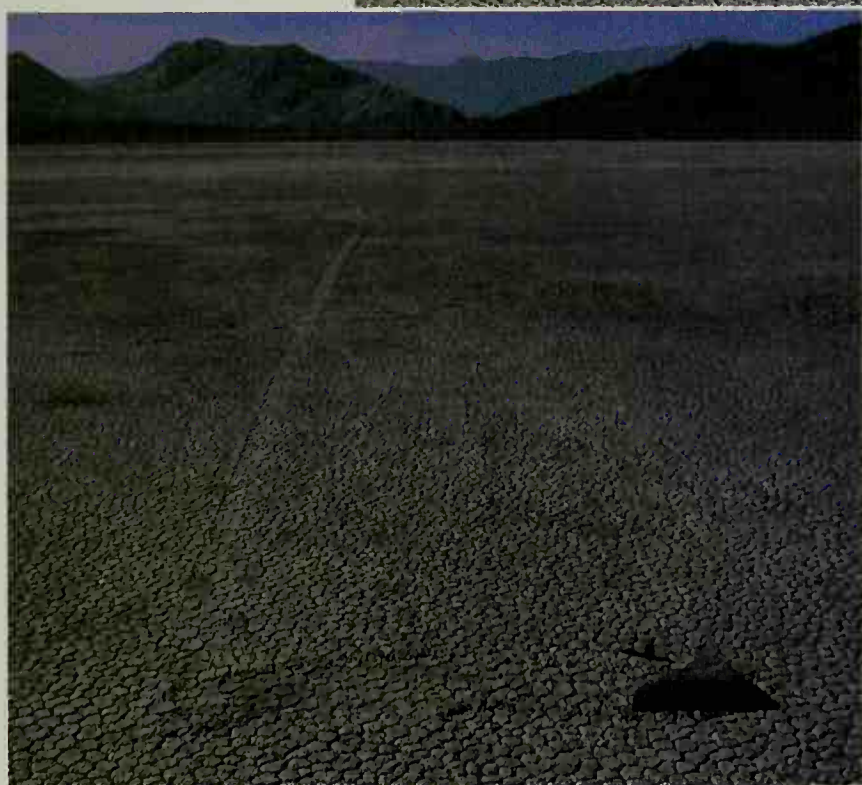
The mystery of Racetrack Playa became world-famous in the 1960s, and in 1969 it attracted the attention of Dr Robert P. Sharp, of the California Institute of Technology's geology department, who began a study of the moving stones that lasted seven years. He selected 25 stones of a variety of shapes and weights, up to about 1000 pounds (455 kilograms), named them, and used a metal stake to mark their position. Later he included five more rocks. When he was able to make the arduous journey to the playa over more than 30 miles (50 kilometres)



Opposite: the trail of a moving stone is marked by clear tracks behind it in the arid landscape of Racetrack Playa – one of the dried-up lakes of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The moving stones are a tourist attraction of the Death Valley National Park



These two sets of tracks show how far some of the moving stones travel (right) and how they can change direction (below)



of rough dirt road, he looked for any tagged rocks that had moved, staked their new position and measured the distance travelled.

During the seven-year study period, 28 of the 30 rocks moved. The longest track measured 860 feet (262 metres) but, as in all cases, this distance was reached by a number of smaller moves rather than all at once. The longest single movement was 659 feet (201 metres) by a 9-ounce (250-gram) cobble called Nancy. The direction of these movements was north-north-easterly, with a few deviations to the east and south-east, which matched the direction of the prevailing winds in the playa.

Sharp soon noticed that there was a ridge on the edges of the furrow and that a small heap of debris was pushed up at the front of

the rock by its movement. This indicated that the rocks must have moved when the playa surface was soft, not during its hard-baked or frozen state. Sharp found that most of the recorded movements occurred in three periods: the particularly wet or stormy winters of 1968 to 1969, 1972 to 1973 and 1973 to 1974. Although only some of the stones moved during all three periods, Sharp could infer that rain was as important a factor as wind. The playas get very little rain – about 0 to 3 inches (0 to 8 centimetres) annually – but they are surrounded by about 70 square miles (180 square kilometres) of hills, which make a fine catchment area. Even a light rain in the area could result in a thin layer of water over most of the playa.

Because the surface of the playa is made of fine clay, the action of the rain creates a sheet of water with clay particles in suspension. If the water soaks the surface deeply enough or for long enough, the rocks get bogged down in soft, sticky clay. But when about a quarter of an inch (0.6 centimetres) of water collects, the surface is firm enough to support the rocks. 'The secret,' Sharp wrote in the *GSA Bulletin* in 1976, 'is to catch the play of wind and water at precisely the right moment.' He thought that movement probably occurred within one to three days of wet or stormy weather when the surface is 'as slick as a whistle'. A powerful gust of wind is all that is needed to make the rock slide, and a slighter wind afterwards will keep it going. Sharp maintained that the surrounding hills scoop



and channel the winds into the playa at sufficient speeds to start the rocks moving – and the smoother the bottom of a stone, the farther it will skid. He also calculated the maximum velocity of a moving stone as about 3 feet (1 metre) per second.

The phenomenon of moving rocks is not unique to Racetrack Playa. Tracks have been observed on at least 10 other playas in California and Nevada, and from time to time, in the literature of geology, similar anomalies have been reported. In an article written in 1879 for the periodical *Nineteenth Century*, Lord Dunraven told of a strange sight on the shore of a lake in Nova Scotia the previous year:

One day my Indian told me that in a lake close by all the rocks were moving out of the water, a circumstance I thought not a little strange. However, I went to look at the unheard of spectacle and, sure enough, there were the rocks apparently all moving out of the water on to dry land. The lake is of considerable extent, but shallow and full of great masses of rock. Many of these masses appear to have travelled right out of the lake and are now high and dry some 15 yards [14 metres] above the margin of the water. You may see them of all sizes, from blocks of, say, 6 or 8 feet [1.8 or 2.4 metres] in diameter, down to stones which a man could lift. Moreover, you find them in various stages of progress, some 100 yards [90 metres] or more from the shore and apparently just beginning to move; others halfway to their destination; and others again, . . . high and dry above the water. In all cases there is a distinct groove or furrow, which the rock has clearly plowed for itself.

One of the 'walled lakes' in the state of Iowa, USA. According to Professor Charles A. White in a *Scientific American* article (1884), these walls were formed by deposits of compacted gravel, earth and boulders through the action of ice expansion in the shallow lakes. An early theory about the moving stones of the playas maintained that ice formation had caused their movement

Lord Dunraven noticed one enormous specimen some distance from the water's edge; earth and stones were heaped up in front of it to over 3 feet (1 metre) in height. A furrow the exact width of the rock extended down the shore and into the water until it was lost from sight in the depths.

This weird scene, remarkably similar to that on the playas, was explained in a letter to the *Scientific American* later in 1879. The writer, who signed the letter 'J.W.A.', claimed to have seen identical effects in other Canadian lakes. The effect is most prominent in shallow lakes that are partly bounded by steep banks or cliffs, according to the explanation. As ice forms it expands and pushes outwards in all directions. The cliffs form an immovable obstacle on one shore, however, doubling the thrust on the opposite, open shore. In shallow water the ice extends to the lake bottom and embeds the rocks there. As the ice expands, it takes the rocks and any other debris with it, depositing them farther along when expansion stops and a thaw sets in. As the lake ice expands and melts each winter, cumulative movements would be enough to drive the rocks onto the land. A similar explanation was proposed by Professor Charles A. White (*Scientific American* 1884) to account for the mystery of the so-called 'walled lakes' of Iowa, which were originally thought to be 'the work of an extinct race'. He said that successive expansions of ice in shallow prairie lakes gradually deposited substantial ridges of compacted earth, gravel and boulders around the perimeter of the lakes.

So we may know how the rocks move. But the surrealistic scene of playas, rocks and their snaking track marks can still awaken a keen appreciation of the wonder and mystery of the natural world.

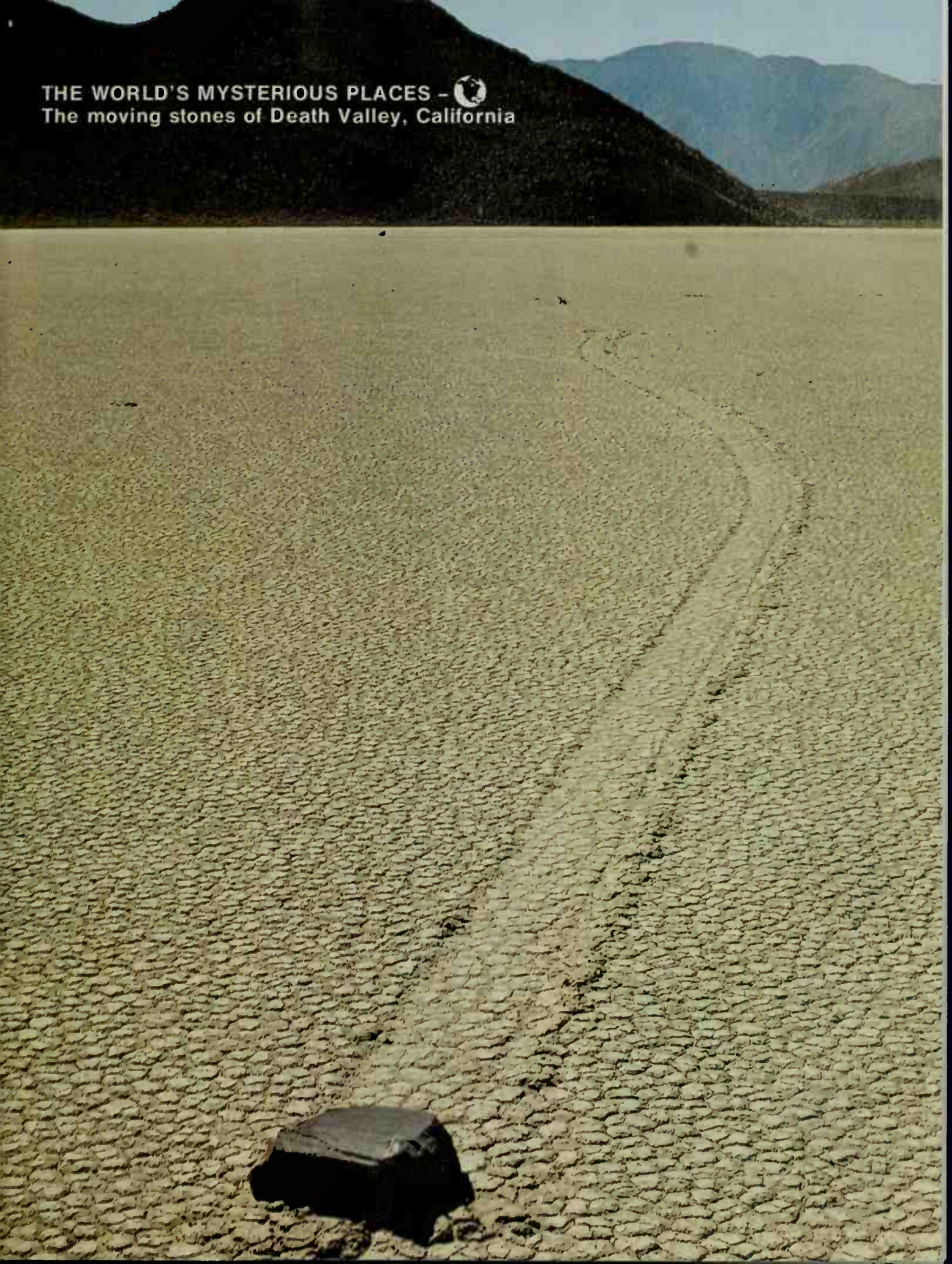
#### Further reading

Jim Brandon, *Weird America*, NAL-Dutton 1978

John Michell and Robert J. M. Rickard, *Phenomena, a book of wonders*, Thames and Hudson 1977



THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES -   
The moving stones of Death Valley, California

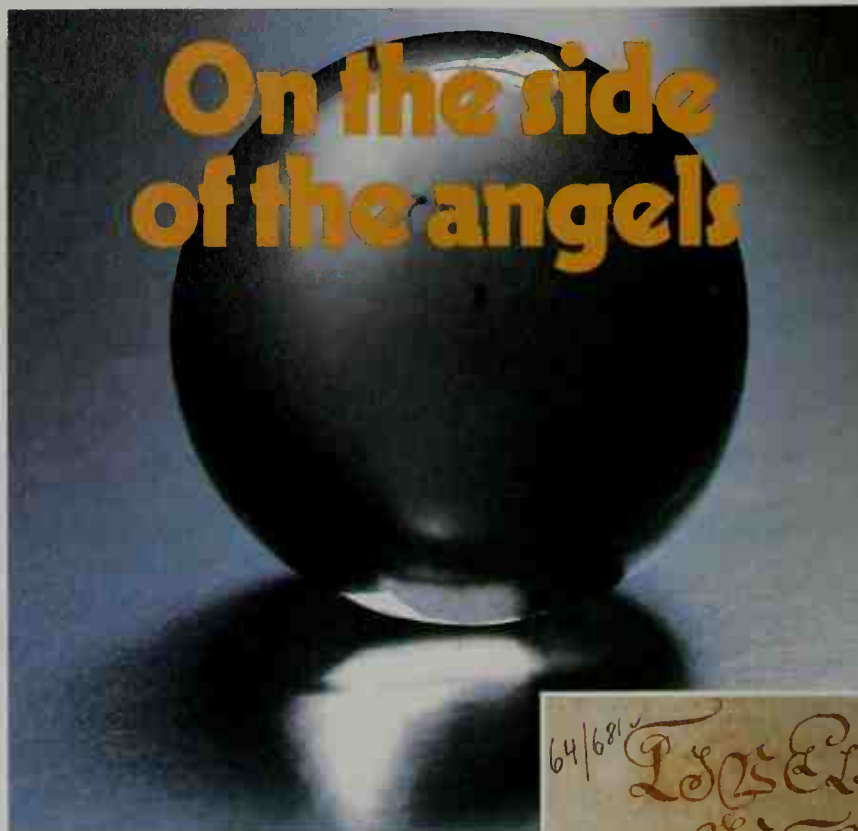


John Dee was a respected scholar who had more than a scholarly interest in magic. For he claimed to have found a way to talk to the angels and use their secrets to develop 'Enochian' magic. Or was he deceived by a cunning medium? FRANCIS KING tells the story

JOHN DEE RATES AN ENTRY in most standard reference works for his contribution to the mathematical and navigational knowledge of 16th-century England. Yet this same man believed he had learned the secrets of the angels: what went on in heaven and which angels controlled various parts of the world, for example. Did he actually communicate with the angelic spirits? Or was he the victim of self-delusion and the deception of a cunning medium?

The majority of those who have studied Dee's life and opinions have come to the latter conclusion. The *Biographica Britannica*, for instance, describes him as having been 'extremely credulous, extravagantly vain and a most deluded enthusiast'.

Occultists tend to take a very different view – particularly those inclined to what has been called the 'Western Esoteric Tradition'. This is the synthesis of European astrology, ritual magic, alchemy and other techniques of practical occultism as developed by S.L. MacGregor Mathers and his associates of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the late 19th century. It also incorporates some of the principles of Dee's system, called 'Enochian magic' and based on his presumed mastery of the language of the angels, called



'Enochian'. Many believe that Dee did learn the angels' tongue. And some argue that Enochian magic is of great significance and value. For, unlike other systems, it is not concerned with demons or devils and, because the language is of heavenly origin, it is supposed to enable the magician to control spirits more successfully.

But whether Dee was wise or foolish, an obsessed eccentric or a magus, there can be no doubt of his scholarship. His library, the printed and manuscript contents of which cost him more than £3000 (which would exceed £150,000 at today's value), was a very large one for the period. It included works on every subject with which 16th-century scholars concerned themselves. Theology, mathematics, geography, navigation, alchemy, astronomy, astrology and ritual magic – all were represented.

Dee was born on 13 July 1527 at Mortlake, now a London suburb, then a pleasant Surrey village. In view of the importance he always attached to astrology, it is interesting to note that, at the hour of his birth, the Sun was in Cancer and the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius was on the horizon. This combination, according to astrological devotees, is favourable for a career based on scholarship and the study of secret sciences.

These astrological indications were certainly confirmed when, at the age of 15, he became an undergraduate at Cambridge and commenced his studies with great intensity. As he himself recorded:

I was so vehemently bent to studie, that for those years I did inviolably keep



Left: John Dee, known as a scholar in reference books and as the developer of a system of magic in books on the occult. The preface he wrote for the first English translation of Euclid's work was said to have encouraged the revival of interest in mathematics in England in the 16th century. There are some who say he probably did the actual translation, though he did not get the credit for it



this order; only to sleepe four houres every night; to allow to meate and drinke (and some refreshing after) two houres every day; and of the other 18 houres all (except the times of going to and being at divine service) was spent in my studies and learning.

Dee's efforts received their due reward and, in 1546, he was appointed Greek under-reader, a sort of junior professor. He was also made a fellow of the newly founded Trinity College. But even at this early stage of his career there were whispers that he dabbled in black magic. Some even suspected that an ingenious mechanical beetle he devised for use as a special effect in a Greek play was a creature from hell.

The next 30 years or so of Dee's life were eventful, exciting, and sometimes perilous. He travelled widely in Europe, lecturing at ancient universities and making friends among the scholars; he became interested in the 'angelic magic' expounded by Abbot Trithemius in his influential manuscript *Steganographia*; and he cast the horoscopes of the great men and women of his time.

It was this last activity that, in 1553, during the reign of 'Bloody Mary', brought Dee into danger.

At the time, Queen Mary's half-sister, the Princess Elizabeth, was being held in semi-confinement, suspected of plotting with Protestant malcontents to overthrow the Queen and place herself on the throne. Through one of her ladies-in-waiting,

Blanche Parry, the Princess entered into a correspondence with Dee, which eventually resulted in the astrologer showing her Queen Mary's horoscope.

Through the agency of two informers, the links between Dee and Elizabeth were conveyed to the Queen's council. Immediately the unfortunate astrologer was arrested and thrown into prison. Not only were his astrological researches into the probable duration of Mary's life regarded as near treason, but it was believed likely that he was attempting to murder her by black magic.

Eventually Dee was cleared of the charges of treason, but he was immediately re-arrested as a suspected heretic. He gained his final release in 1555.

In 1558 Mary died and Elizabeth became queen. Dee enjoyed Elizabeth's favour as her astrological adviser. It was he who selected a propitious date for her coronation; it was he who was called upon for advice when it was suspected that sorcery was being employed against her.

Nevertheless, Dee's life was not entirely happy. He was perpetually short of money, spending most of his income on his library and his alchemical experiments. And he was distressed by the continued suspicions of many that he was, to quote his own words, 'a companion of hellhounds, and a caller and conjuror of damned and wicked spirits'.

### Talking with angels

It is likely that those who regarded Dee in this light would have believed their worst suspicions confirmed if they had known of Dee's experiments in communication with the angels, which he began in October 1581.

The six months before this were troubled ones for Dee. His sleep was much disturbed, his dreams were peculiar, and there were mysterious knockings in his house. As the Australian philologist and writer on Enochian magic Dr Donald Laycock has remarked, it would seem that the spirits wished to contact Dee, rather than the other way round.

Dee worked through a medium, the first being Barnabas Saul who claimed to be able to see angels and other spirits in a magic crystal. But Dee was not satisfied with Saul and dismissed the seer after a few months.

On 8 March 1582 a new medium approached Dee, one Edward Kelley, a strange young man whose antecedents were obscure. He was only 27 years old but his short life seems to have been full of mystery, danger and questionable deeds. He had been a student but had not taken a degree. He had been a notary and, accused of forgery in the course of his work, was said to have had his ears cropped for his offence. He had employed ritual magic in the search for buried treasure. He had studied alchemy and was in possession of strange elixirs, powders and cipher manuscripts. Most sinister of all, he was reputed to practise necromancy, the rite

Top left: Dee's crystal ball, used by the mediums through whom he worked

Top: the talisman of wax made by Edward Kelley, Dee's partner in magic, on directions from an angel. The angels' language was called 'Enochian' by Dee

Above: part of a manuscript owned by Dee, which gives instructions for invoking Venus in ritual magic



of raising the dead for the purposes of prediction and divination.

At first Dee was suspicious of Kelley, but not for long. For Kelley saw the angel Uriel in Dee's 'shewstone' and was given instructions for the manufacture of a powerful talisman, and this convinced Dee of his magical powers.

The association between Dee and Kelley lasted for seven years. The two held hundreds of seances, the first at Mortlake in Surrey, the last at Cracow in Poland – for, on the instructions of the angels who spoke through Kelley, the two men and their families wandered thousands of miles up and down Europe. Records of many of their experiments, carefully compiled by Dee, have survived to the present day. They are often virtually meaningless to the modern reader who has not made a specialised study of Elizabethan magic and alchemy. But they do contain passages that seem to be precognitive. Take, for example, the following exchange that took place between Dee and the angel Uriel on 5 May 1583:

*Dee:* As concerning the vision which was presented yesternight (unlooked for) to the sight of Edward Kelley as he sat at supper with me, in my hall, I mean the *appearing of the very sea*, and many ships thereon, and the cutting of

the *hed of a woman*, by a tall black man, what are we to imagine thereof?

*Uriel:* The one did signify the provision of foreign powers against the welfare of this land: which they shall shortly put into practice. The other, the death of the Queen of Scots: it is not long unto it.

In other words Uriel, speaking through Kelley in the year 1583, was specifically prophesying an attempt at the invasion of England by some large fleet, and the execution of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. The reference to the executioner as a 'black man' in that day could have meant the executioner in his black hood.

Mary was executed in 1587 and the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada came in 1588.

But little of the information supplied by the angels was as specific as this. Much of it consisted of obscure magical, mathematical and, particularly, linguistic teaching. The language of Enochian was, according to Uriel and his fellows, that spoken in the Garden of Eden. Lengthy discourses were dictated to Dee in this tongue – at first sight gibberish. For instance, *micalz olprt* means 'mighty light' and *bliors ds odo* means 'comfort which openest'. Sometimes translations were obligingly provided by the angels. From these it is clear that Enochian is more than mere strings of syllables. It exhibits traces of syntax and grammar and has the rudiments of language.

Dr Laycock has carried out a detailed study of Enochian and, in the introduction to

Right: a depiction of Kelley raising the dead in the churchyard of Walton-le-Dale in Lancashire. Kelley was a man of ill-repute with a shady past, but he won Dee's confidence on the basis of his genuine psychic skills

Far right: a manuscript in Dee's own hand, recording one of his conversations with the angels

Queen Mary (left) and Queen Elizabeth (below left) were prominent in Dee's life. The first imprisoned him for showing his horoscope of her to Princess Elizabeth. She in turn, when queen, made him her astrological adviser

Below: the Spanish Armada, sent against England in 1588. Five years before, Dee had learned about the invasion in a conversation with the angel Uriel who, as usual, spoke through Kelley





**Further reading**  
 Peter French, *John Dee*,  
 Dorset Press 1990  
 Gerald Suster, *John Dee*,  
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 Gerald J. Schueler, *Enochian  
 magic*, Llewellyn  
 Publications 1985

his *Complete Enochian dictionary* (1978), he concludes that its structure and grammar is remarkably similar to English. In spite of his scepticism about the language, Dr Laycock is prepared to admit that there may be something in Enochian magic. He remarks:

I have known well people who have pursued the study of Enochian from the point of view of practical occultism, and who claim that, whatever the origin of the system, it works as practical magic.

The seance on 17 April 1587 was the beginning of the end for the Dee–Kelley association. On that day, an angel calling herself Madimi gave instructions that the two men should sleep with each other's wives. Dee was deeply disturbed by this, wondering whether devils were impersonating angels; but the spirits urged him on: '... in hesitating you sin. . . . All these things . . . are permitted to you.' Dee still hesitated but, on 22 May, gave in and the wife-swap finally took place.

This event placed too much of a strain on the Dee–Kelley relationship and Dee returned to England, giving up all practice of magic. He died in poverty in 1608. Kelley preceded him in death, killed abroad in unknown circumstances in 1595.

What of the value of the Enochian magic, the Enochian language, and the other occult teachings conveyed to Dee and Kelley by their supposed angels? No one can be quite sure. But there is a lot to be said for the point of view expressed by Dr Laycock: 'If the true voice of God comes through the shewstone at all, it is certainly as through a glass darkly.'

# The gentle art of murder

Some masters of the martial arts are said to possess the ability to commit the perfect murder, using a forbidden technique that is known only to a handful of initiates. MICHAEL GOSS reports on the claims that have accumulated around the delayed death touch

George Dillman, an American karate teacher, smashes three ice blocks, each weighing 300 pounds (136 kilograms), with a single blow of his elbow. We are familiar with such well-publicised feats by masters of oriental martial arts – but is there also a secret art in which a covert ‘blow’, almost unnoticed by the victim and by third parties alike, can kill the victim after a long delay?

ANYONE WHO HAS SEEN A KARATE expert demolish piles of bricks, boards, tiles or concrete slabs with a single blow will testify to the lethal potential of a human body when it has undergone the right kind of training and conditioning. When a man such as George Dillman, an American master of karate, shatters simultaneously 10 ice blocks, each weighing 100 pounds (45 kilograms), stacked on top of each other, he leaves no doubt as to the reality of the feat: the splintered rubble that is left behind is proof enough.

But it is another matter to believe that some martial arts experts can cause internal injuries, unconsciousness and death by the briefest of pressures on certain apparently non-critical points of a victim's body – and that these effects can be deferred until hours, days or even months have passed. Yet this is exactly what has been alleged of the almost



legendary art of *dim mak*, the ‘delayed death touch’.

It was in search of the truth behind stories of *dim mak* and other fabled unarmed combat systems that a Western martial arts expert, John F. Gilbey, roamed from continent to continent. He finally encountered the delayed death touch technique in Taiwan in 1957. There, with all the reluctance that is natural when closely guarded and dangerous knowledge is imparted to an outsider, a boxing master named Oh Hsin-yang gave him a demonstration. The human guinea-pig used in the experiment was his son, Ah Lin.

The blow was a light, seemingly harmless, touch delivered just below the victim's navel. For the three days following, Gilbey was able to keep Ah Lin under the closest surveillance. His health was seemingly unimpaired, his spirits were lively. The master did not come near his son until noon on the third day. He appeared just in time to revive him with herbal medicine and massage – for, as

Mourners crowd around the coffin at a Hong Kong funeral (below). Their grief is for the superstar Bruce Lee (bottom), the hero of numerous kung fu films. He probably died from a freak reaction to a tranquilliser – but many fans believed their hero had been killed by a delayed death touch from some unknown rival

Bottom right: Dr John 'Biff' Painter allegedly showing the reality of *ch'i* force: he 'applies it to the auric field' of his blindfolded colleague – and the man sways back, even though no physical contact has been made



Oh Hsin-yang had anticipated, his son had suddenly and unaccountably collapsed into unconsciousness.

When Ah Lin had recovered (though he faced three months' convalescence to get over his experience completely) Gilbey left Taiwan convinced that he was one of the very few Westerners who had been privileged to witness the delayed death touch in operation.

Despite Gilbey's own expert status, this evidence remains anecdotal, as do most accounts of *dim mak*. Until 1980 no work even remotely approaching Western laboratory standards was available and the only masters said to possess the skill refused to demonstrate it, even under the most informal conditions.

#### Instrument of perfect murders

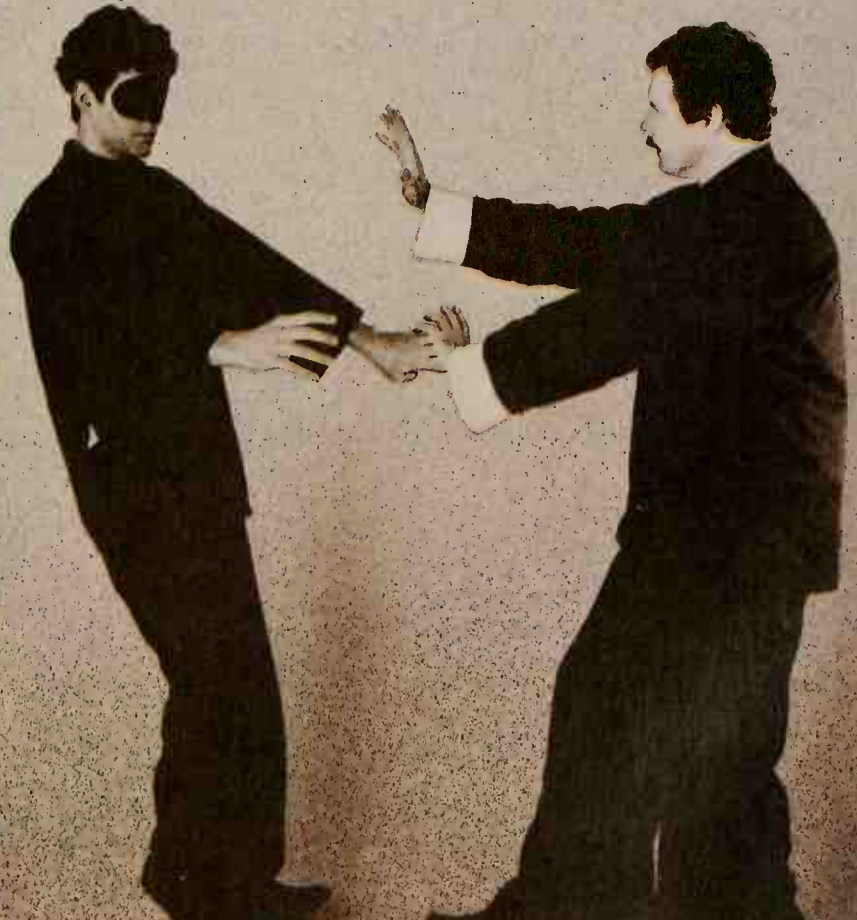
In consequence the delayed death touch remains the focus of wild fantasies: it is the supposed instrument of 'perfect murders', in which the victim dies of causes unknown, with symptoms suggesting severe, incomprehensible yet natural illness. In the East any unexpected death of a notable person can provoke rumours of a *dim mak* assassination. The untimely death of the martial arts superstar Bruce Lee in July 1973 had precisely this effect.

Stories of the delayed death touch occur all over south-eastern Asia, but particularly in China, where the skill reputedly reached a zenith during the T'ang Dynasty (AD

618–906). Although the term is applied somewhat loosely to a number of techniques, purists are careful to distinguish it from *tieh chang*, the iron palm (involving toughening of the hands), and from *tu wu shou*, the poison hand (involving the anointing of the hand with harmful substances). The true delayed death touch is not a ferocious movement like a karate 'chop', or one of the whiplash punches found in many styles of kung fu: it is more like a short-distance prod with, apparently, not enough force behind it to leave so much as a bruise.

Students of the 'forbidden art' must remember that a victim's vulnerability fluctuates according to the temperature and hour of the day. This is consistent with an Eastern tradition that the circulation of the blood through the body varies hourly. A Western karate master, Alan Lee, states that the circulation passes via 36 major, 72 minor and 108 subsidiary 'blood gates', and that the expert, knowing both their location and the times when the flow of blood through each is at its maximum, can use light pressure on a strategic point to cause a fatal disruption of the flow – by, for example, a blood clot. Such knowledge took years to acquire; once they were in possession of it, masters could reduce their own susceptibility to attack by regulating the pulse at crucial times.

According to Dr John 'Biff' Painter, an American master, the Chinese martial art technique of *duann mie*, a blow directed



against veins or muscles, can cause the wasting and death of important organs by an interruption of the blood supply to them. At first the victim suffers only minor discomfort, but later succumbs as the affected organ is starved of its blood supply.

But some writers attribute the efficacy of the true death touch to its interference with the mysterious 'intrinsic' or 'internal' energy of the human body, *ch'i*. This energy – *ch'i* in Chinese, *ki* in Japanese – is fundamental to a number of oriental disciplines of healing and of combat that Western researchers have viewed with increasing interest since about 1960. Acupuncture (see page 11) is a notable example. The energy is thought to pervade the human body, circulating in a 24-hour cycle along channels called meridians and feeding the organs. Although it is never entirely absent from each channel, it is subject to a kind of tidal effect, approaching and receding from them according to the hour of the day. Oriental therapists regard illness as imbalance or blockage of *ch'i* and seek by use of needles or by manipulations to restore the overall harmony.

The ability to control *ch'i* and to generate extra surges of it is alleged to enable martial artists to perform feats well beyond their normal ability, and many styles of fighting feature, during their more advanced stages, exercises designed to stimulate the flow of *ch'i*.

The martial arts student may also be taught the 708 points on the meridians to which pressure can be applied to enhance or retard *ch'i*, allegedly preventing it from feeding the vital organs. The result of such an attack would again be a kind of starvation – but of energy rather than blood. Unconsciousness and eventually death would ensue, without any physical clue to connect the antagonist with the damage.

### Disrupting the energy flow

John Painter puts the odds against an untrained attacker successfully making a lethal dim mak strike by pure chance at 10,000 to one. It is not enough merely to know the right points to strike, to gauge the right moment from knowledge of the timetable governing the *ch'i* circulation and to hit the target with unerring accuracy – taking into account such factors as the body temperature and muscular build of the victim. The attacker must then, according to the theory, be able to generate the requisite amount of internal energy. He must disrupt the victim's *ch'i* flow by transferring a certain 'voltage' of his own *ch'i* through his fingers at the moment of the strike.

Painter estimates that if the discharge of *ch'i* is 'light', the victim's end may be deferred by up to two weeks. A heavy blow might kill him in as little as 12 to 24 hours. Light-to-moderate attacks create a partial blockage of the meridians, augmented each time the *ch'i* reaches the affected point on its diurnal

circulation, until the meridian comes to resemble a choked water pipe. The process can be reversed only by the ministrations of someone with a superior knowledge of Chinese medicine, such as a skilled acupuncturist. However, Dr Painter regards some dim mak strikes as incurable: the victim 'should begin his funeral preparations', he grimly advises.

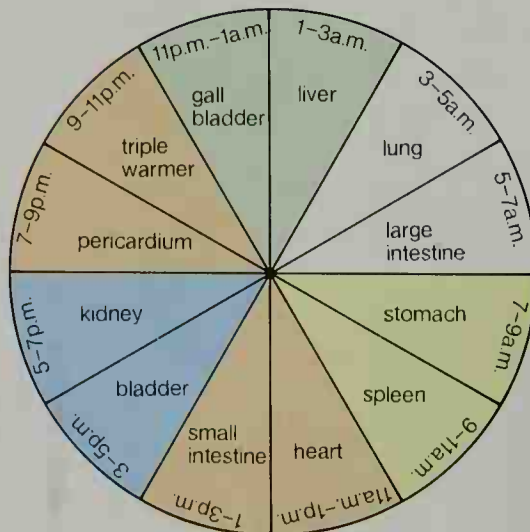
Many people in the East have a deeply rooted belief in the existence of the death touch. Could such a person be killed by the mere suggestion that the touch he had just received would be fatal?

The victim's belief in the efficacy of dim mak certainly figured strongly in a strange story carried in English newspapers on 17 February 1976. During a brawl aboard the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Empire Gull*, anchored at Marchwood, Hampshire, a Chinese cook, aged 48, stabbed to death an elderly compatriot who had hit him. His statement to the police suggested that he believed the blow had been imbued with more than physical force – that it was a delayed death touch. He remarked: 'He died first and I will die later.' And indeed he was suffering from a mysterious, undiagnosable illness that is said to have baffled three doctors. Was the illness due to his own evident conviction that the blow was to prove lethal?

But there are several reliable modern accounts of martial arts experts selectively breaking one brick or tile in a stack of several, leaving those above and below unharmed. Such feats make it more credible that a blow could be delivered to a human body and cause internal injury without leaving any external marks – but there can be no question of bricks and tiles being influenced by suggestion.

But just what evidence is there that the delayed death touch is more than a comic book fantasy?

John Painter gave a demonstration during a lecture on acupressure in November 1980 that goes some way towards conforming with scientific requirements. The experiment was



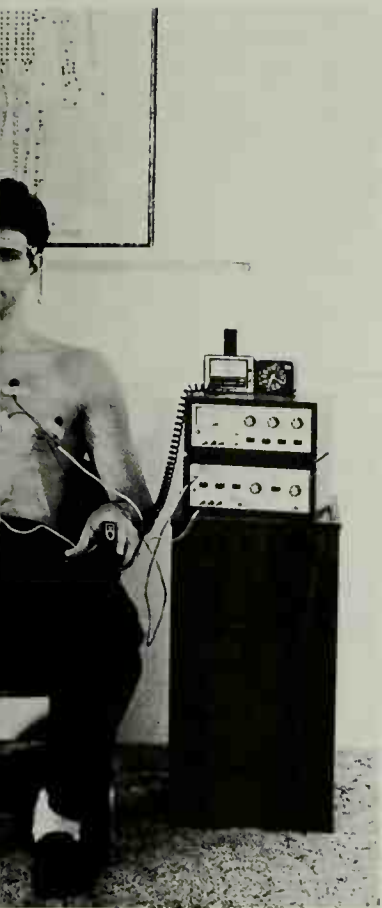
Above: the delayed death touch in action? Dr Painter is shown administering a mild blow, too gentle to be painful, to a volunteer. The symptoms that followed included rising temperature, fluctuating pulse rate, profuse sweating and trembling. Dr Painter claims that 'severe damage' would have occurred had he not taken remedial action

Left: the Chinese 'body clock': in each organ the *ch'i* flow is strongest at particular times. (The 'triple warmer' supposedly controls the harmony of the system)

#### Further reading

Fred Villari, *Martial arts and real life*, Morrow 1985  
 Glen Barclay, *Mind over matter*, Pan 1975  
 Wu Len Chang, *The forbidden technique of dim mak*, Strand Book Co. (Ipoh, Malaysia)





electronically monitored and carried out before an audience that included medically qualified witnesses. The event was striking – in more ways than one.

A healthy volunteer was connected to equipment monitoring his pulse rate, temperature, blood pressure and other physiological factors. He was not informed the exact nature of the experiment, only that it was intended to display a 'special type of acupuncture'. After the initial readings had been taken Painter applied a moderate strike to a point called *hui kui hsueh* in the chest. The subject reported no pain but said that his body felt numb and his right arm heavy.

During the next half hour he experienced a variety of unusual symptoms as, according to Dr Painter's thesis, the *ch'i* flow began to pass through the site of the strike. Within 10 minutes he was suffering abdominal discomfort; within another five minutes his body temperature had climbed from 98.6° F (37° C) to 100° F (37.8° C). After 20 minutes the pulse rate – which had been 62 beats per minute at the start of the test – was fluctuating wildly from less than 50 to more than 160. The subject suffered constriction of the chest muscles, profuse perspiration and trembling of the limbs. His blood pressure soared. When Dr Painter judged that it was approaching a dangerous level he ended the experiment by massaging the site of blockage and administering a herbal medicine. One

hour later the subject was back to normal. The onlookers accepted that, left unchecked, the *dim mak* process would have resulted in severe damage to the human guinea-pig; Dr Painter himself believed the man would have died within two days.

Sceptics might object that the trial did not wholly exclude the possibility of the subject's expectations or the experimenter's suggestions playing a part. But the symptoms recorded seem too extreme to be accounted for solely in those terms. That a person's pulse should race because of suggestion or excitement is highly probable; that it should vary between 50 and 160 from those causes alone is less probable. Still, one isolated experiment will not satisfy Westerners that the delayed death touch truly exists; it would be preferable to study a number of *dim mak* masters demonstrating their skills in a laboratory. But such persons are rarely encountered and when they are identified they habitually refuse to impart their learning to others. Painter concludes:

Such power in the hands of the unenlightened is like a chimpanzee with a bazooka. Such power corrupts and distorts reality. It is for this reason that those who possess the full power in such arts refuse to speak of it, and why many of the wise ones regret acquisition of such knowledge and have carried their arts . . . to their graves.

The karate expert C. W. Nicol wrote an account of his martial arts training in Japan in which he relates an almost incredible incident bearing on the delayed death touch. His master was a sixth-dan black belt, Hirokazu Kanazawa (right). One day, when with a few students, he placed three bricks on the floor and broke them with a single blow. But that, he said, was nothing. He put down another pile of three bricks. He determined to put his *ki* (the Japanese term for *ch'i*) into the middle brick. With a shout he brought his fist down on the pile – and only the middle brick cracked. This was in accord with the belief of

## Feeling the full force

many martial artists that 'mind-force could project itself further and deeper than the actual physical presence of the fist, and could of itself alone alter the state of matter.'

This is certainly the belief of Dr John Painter, who runs a martial arts institute in Arlington, Texas, USA. He believes that every human being possesses an aura consisting of *ch'i*, and that through certain forms of mental control, such as meditation, it is possible to increase the 'vibratory rate' of the aura. The 'vibrations' can be increased to a point where they are disruptive of any other living matter that comes within a certain radius of influence – up to 12 feet (3.6 metres). The power of this control of *ch'i* can also be demonstrated on a candle flame (far left). Dr Painter explains that it took 10 minutes to extinguish this flame. He believes that beyond the delayed death touch, *dim mak*, there exists a higher art – that of killing from a distance, without the need even to touch the victim. However, there is no need to fear this skill: a condition of acquiring it is to 'clear the mind of all sensual and egotistical desires . . . like a beautiful flower, it must be nurtured and cultivated. . . .' So this fearful power is possessed only by those who are beyond all desire to do harm.



**What is the purpose behind the UFO phenomenon? Some people are convinced that UFOs are essentially evil – that they may actually be emissaries of the Devil. HILARY EVANS investigates this bizarre notion**

'UFOs ARE HERE TO POSSESS YOUR SOUL!' Headlines such as this – from the American magazine *Official UFO* – are generally dismissed as coming from the lunatic fringe of ufology. The theory that UFOs are controlled by demonic forces seeking to delude or destroy mankind is often derided as just another crackpot suggestion, to be taken no more seriously than the idea that there is a UFO base near the Welsh coast (see page 798). But by no means all those who support the theory of the demonic origin of UFOs are eccentrics: among the nonsense are a number of realistic ideas that may point to a viable interpretation of the UFO mystery.

What is it that makes a ufologist turn to theories of this sort? Is it merely that nothing else seems to fit – or is there solid evidence that really seems to point in that direction? Some commentators have suspected the former; in their book *Flying saucers are*

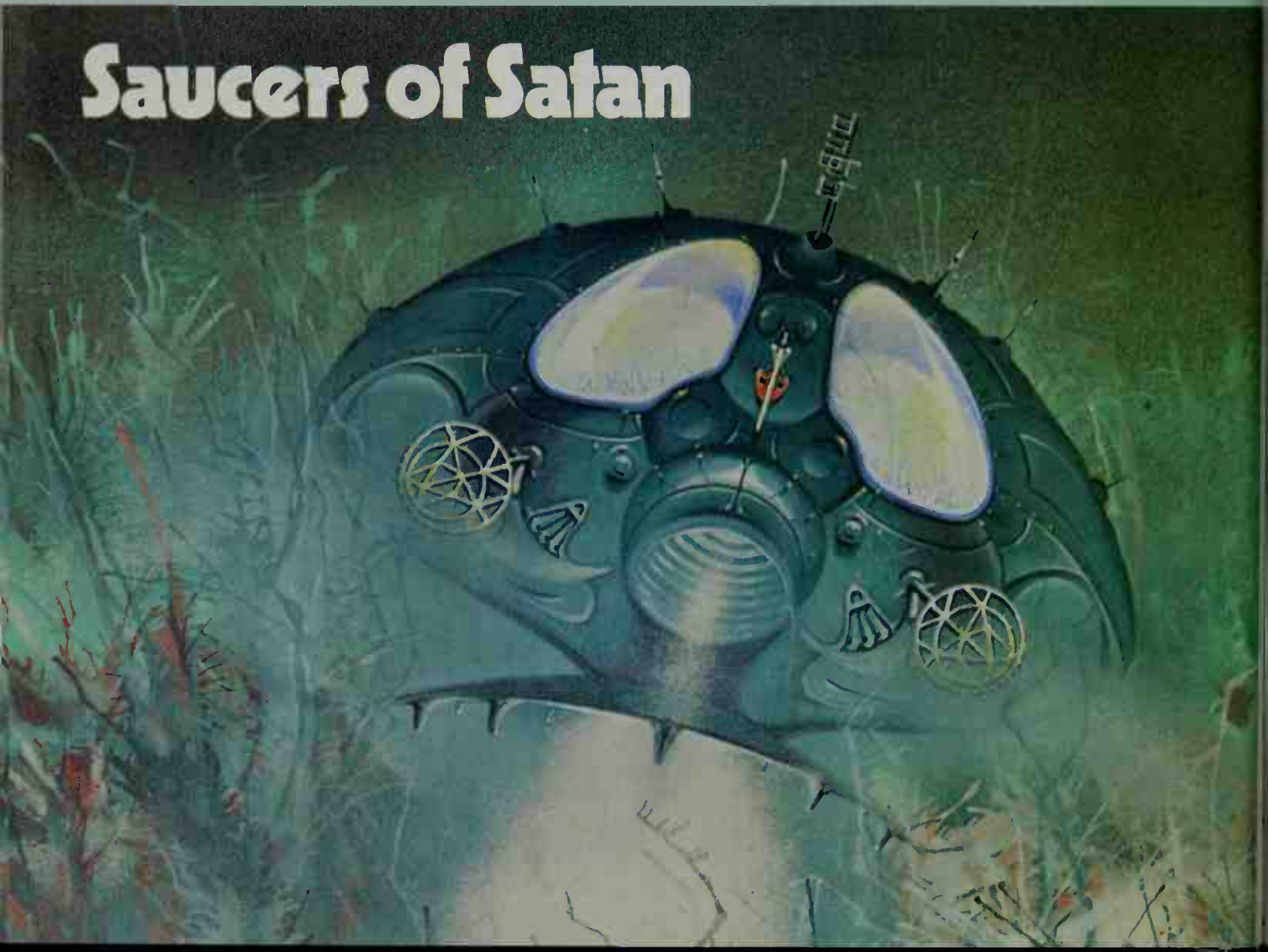
The typical UFO is frightening, or even menacing – as in this artist's impression of a demonic-looking flying saucer. Can it be, as many writers have suggested, that UFOs are representatives of an evil power?

*hostile* (1967), American authors Brad Steiger and Joan Whritenour observed:

Certain saucer cultists, who have been expecting space brethren to bring along some pie in the sky, continue to deliver saucer-inspired sermons on the theme that the saucers come to bring starry salvation to a troubled world. The self-appointed ministers who preach this extraordinary brand of evangelism ignore the fact that not all 'saucers' can be considered friendly. Many give evidence of hostile actions. There is a wealth of well-documented evidence that UFOs have been responsible for murders, assaults, burning with direct-ray focus, radiation sickness, kidnappings, pursuits of automobiles, attacks on homes, disruption of power sources, paralysis, mysterious cremations, and destructions of aircraft. Dozens of reputable eye-witnesses claim to have seen alien personnel loading their space vehicles with specimens from earth, including animals, soil and rocks, water, and struggling human beings.

Commenting in *True's New Report* on this

# Saucers of Satan



horrifying catalogue, science-fiction author Frederick Pohl riposted:

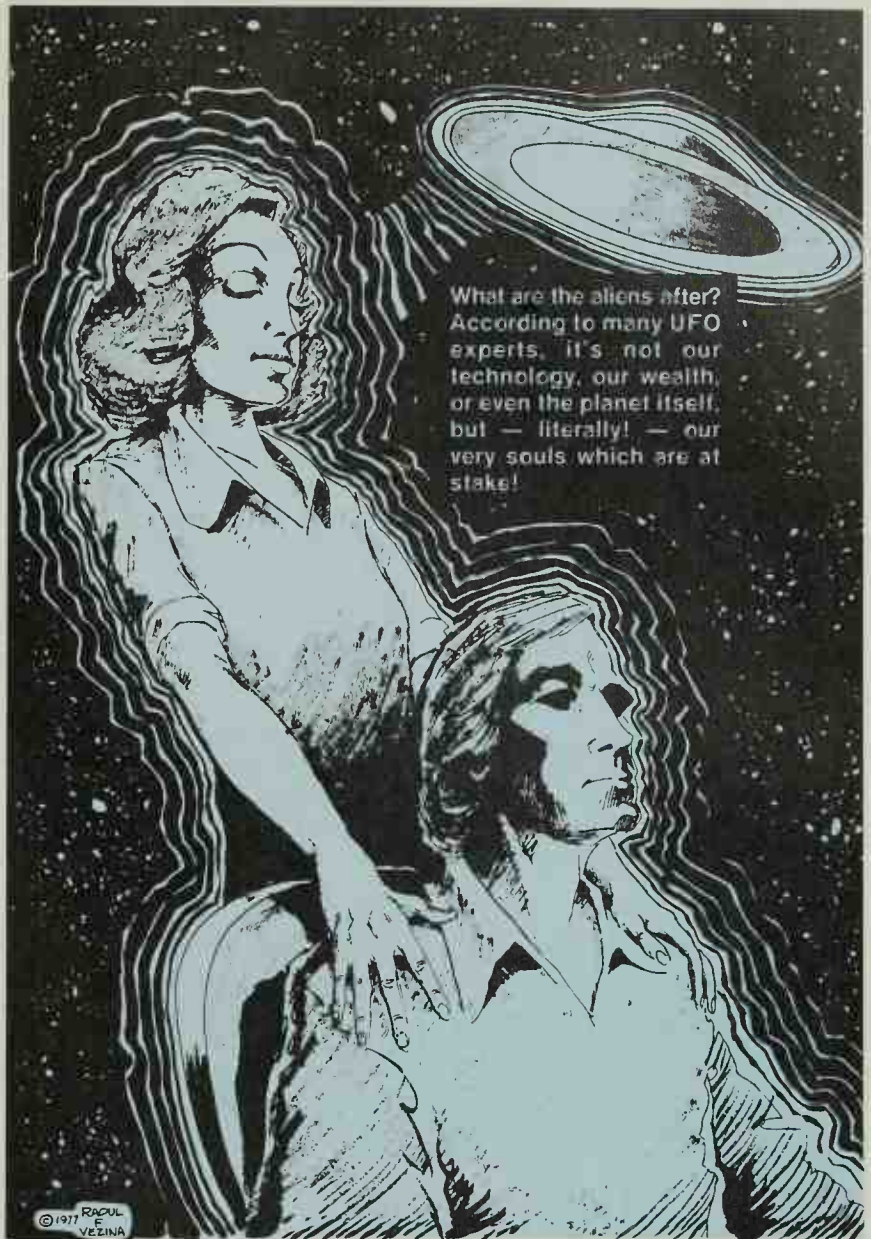
It's as false as false can be; there not only is not a 'wealth' of such evidence, there isn't *any*. The absolute best you can say in support of that claim is that there are many people who *think* such things happen, and a mass of circumstantial bits and pieces of events. There is no evidence at all for the assumption that the saucers are almost certainly hostile.

It is perhaps significant that even Steiger himself seems to have backed down from his former position. *Flying saucers are hostile* was just one of the books he wrote in the 1960s; others were entitled *Flying saucer invasion - target Earth*, and *The flying saucer menace*. But his *Gods of Aquarius* of 1976 is subtitled 'UFOs and the transformation of Man', and expresses the belief that 'the UFO will serve as the spiritual midwife that will bring about mankind's starbirth into the universe.' Cynics might suggest that Steiger, having milked the UFO-scare theme for all it could give, decided that the positive approach was more profitable; or perhaps he genuinely changed his mind.

However, there is no lack of continuing support for the demonic theory. But the crude business of rape and murder is not for the new demonists: what they fear is a more subtle take-over aimed at men's minds or, for those whose beliefs include such a thing, their souls.

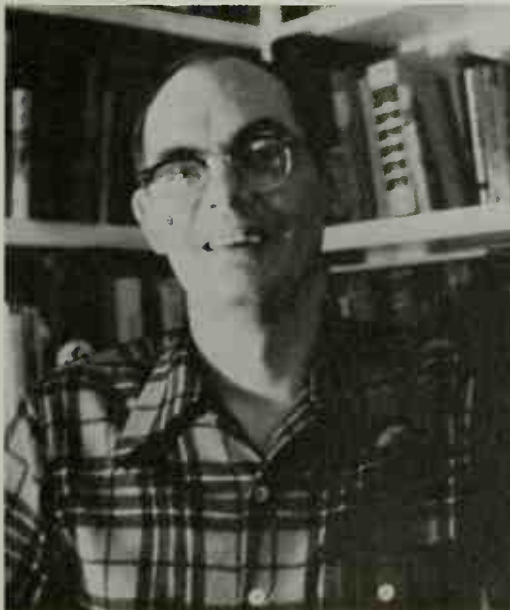
In the Baptist Church at Warminster on 28 January 1979 Arthur Eedle, physicist and astronomer, delivered a public address in which he told of his own personal encounters with demonic UFOs:

In the summer of 1967 I was out watching for UFOs with a teenager by the name of Philip. As we waited in the dark we became conscious that something was hovering silently overhead



Above: an illustration showing UFO witnesses being brainwashed, from the American magazine *Official UFO* of March 1978.

Supporters of the hypothesis that UFOs are demonic in origin cite in its favour evidence of physical and mental illness suffered by UFO witnesses after sightings. There is, however, an equally strong group of ufologists, among them Frederick Pohl (left), who believe that the evidence is too slight to prove the evil origin of UFOs



and quite near. I began to feel cold, more cold than seemed appropriate for the time of year. But Philip reacted badly to this thing, which incidentally we were only just able to make out, so low was its luminescence. He started to shake uncontrollably, and I realised that he was in some kind of danger. I bundled him into my car and took him home. We sat by the kitchen boiler and tried to warm up, but Philip could not recover from the shakes. The effect was no longer due to the cold, but to some induced effect from the UFO. I said, 'Philip, do you believe in God?' 'I don't know,' he answered, 'I have never given it any thought.' I laid my hands upon his head and said, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command this influence to leave Philip at once.' The result was quite dramatic. Philip explained that a cold sensation travelled upwards

through his body and out through my hands and away. Within a few seconds all the shaking had stopped. Feeling a lot better, he looked at me and said that he now believed in God AND the Devil!

A short time later Philip contracted the shakes all over again. I sensed that he was possessed of an evil spirit. Commanding this spirit to manifest itself, an old cracked voice spoke through Philip's mouth saying that his name was Satan. I commanded it to leave in the name of the Lord Jesus, and it did so.

### Taking away men's minds

Evidently, for Arthur Eedle the Devil is very much a living reality. Further confirmation came from another UFO-related incident in the course of which he had a dramatic encounter with three fallen angels. They told him of their plan to take away men's minds and reduce them to 'a zombie-like state'. Identifying themselves as coming from the planet Martarus, they said they aimed to bring peace to the world by eliminating Man's destructive urges – which involved removing his soul entirely.

But this, Eedle claims, is a pack of lies. 'They lie about their origin, saying they are from outer space; they lie about their purpose, saying they have come to help mankind; and they lie about their identity, saying

Terrifying aliens with huge, cabbage-like heads, from the 1950s movie *Invasion of the hell creatures*. Such movies have done a great deal to fuel the idea that UFOs are hostile

they are extraterrestrials.' In fact, Eedle insists, they are the fallen angels, based here on Earth where they are preparing for a final take-over that has been prophesied throughout history and is now imminent. He continues:

The present UFO activity points to the fact that these prophecies are on the point of fulfilment. People are already being brainwashed, and those many humans who are possessed of evil spirits have been prepared for the day of their coming. And it is clear that some of them are here already. The basic purpose behind all UFO phenomena today is to prepare for the coming of the Antichrist, and the setting up of World domination under the Devil.

This is all very well – but, before people can be brought to appreciate the mortal danger they are in, they must first be convinced that devils themselves are a reality. For most of us today, devils no longer form part of our system of belief; evil is seen as resulting from distorted impulses in people's minds, rather than from some tangible external source. So the first concern of believers like Arthur Eedle is to reawaken the public to the fact that the Devil is real.

In a privately-printed booklet entitled *Who pilots the flying saucers?* Gordon Cove insisted that, by refusing to believe in devils, people were laying themselves open to

**CRAWLING, CREEPING, UNBELIEVABLE TERROR!**

**INVASION OF THE HELL CREATURES**

CERT X ADULTS ONLY

SEE... THE NIGHT OF THE GREEN HORROR!

SEE... THE DISMEMBERED HAND THAT CRAWLS!

SEE... THE EARTH RUNNED BY CREATURES FROM HELL!

with STEVE TERRELL · GLORIA CASTILLO · FRANK GORSHIN

attack. In 1954, when the booklet was published, the majority of ufologists were inclined to interpret UFOs as physically real spacecraft, piloted by aliens from elsewhere in the Universe. Cove goes along with this view – but gives it his own interpretation:

What we are suggesting is the possibility that Satan has seized one of the planets as his base of operations to attack the earth. This thought . . . may seem fantastic: but upon cool meditation, does it seem so absurd? The first thing a military general seeks, when war is declared, is a convenient headquarters. Satan is the cleverest military genius ever known. Is it feasible that Satan, along with his principalities and powers, his wicked angels and demons, would continue to float airily around in the atmosphere for thousands of years, when there are literally millions of planets which would be well adapted for a headquarters?

Satan is partially powerless unless he can get some willing instruments to work through. Therefore, if Satan wanted to manufacture some flying saucers in order to facilitate the flight of his evil hosts throughout the vast universe, it would also be to his great advantage to get a race of beings under his control who would manufacture them for him. Could he not inspire the Venusians, if such exist, with supernatural cunning and wisdom to make a fleet of flying saucers, and also show them how to pilot these supernatural machines?

So, Cove concludes, the beings that have contacted people with terrible warnings may have been 'demon-possessed Venusians or Martians' whose seeming benevolence was a

An illustration from Francis Barrett's *The magus*, showing the demon Asmodeus who, in one of the stories of the Apocrypha, is conquered by the archangel Raphael. The face shows a marked similarity to those described by present-day witnesses of humanoids; it has been suggested by some writers that 'evil' humanoids are merely a kind of updated version of medieval demons

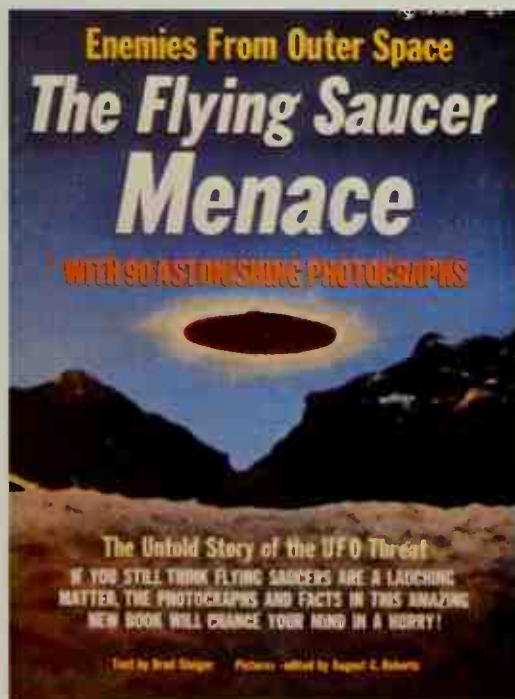


sham, designed to deceive.

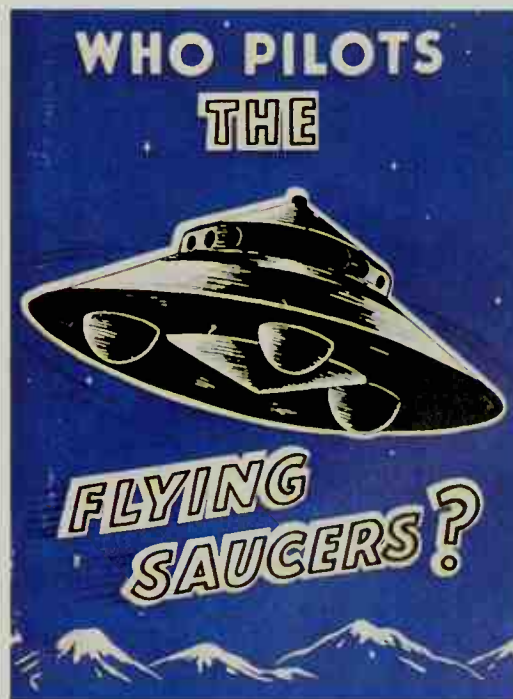
However, he does not rule out altogether the possibility that some of the UFOs may be piloted by benevolent beings. The striking increase in UFO activity of recent years, he argues, must surely indicate that a full-scale attack by the satanic forces is imminent; and the forces of good must be aware of this. So some, at least, of the flying saucers may contain angels, sent by God to report on the state of the Earth:

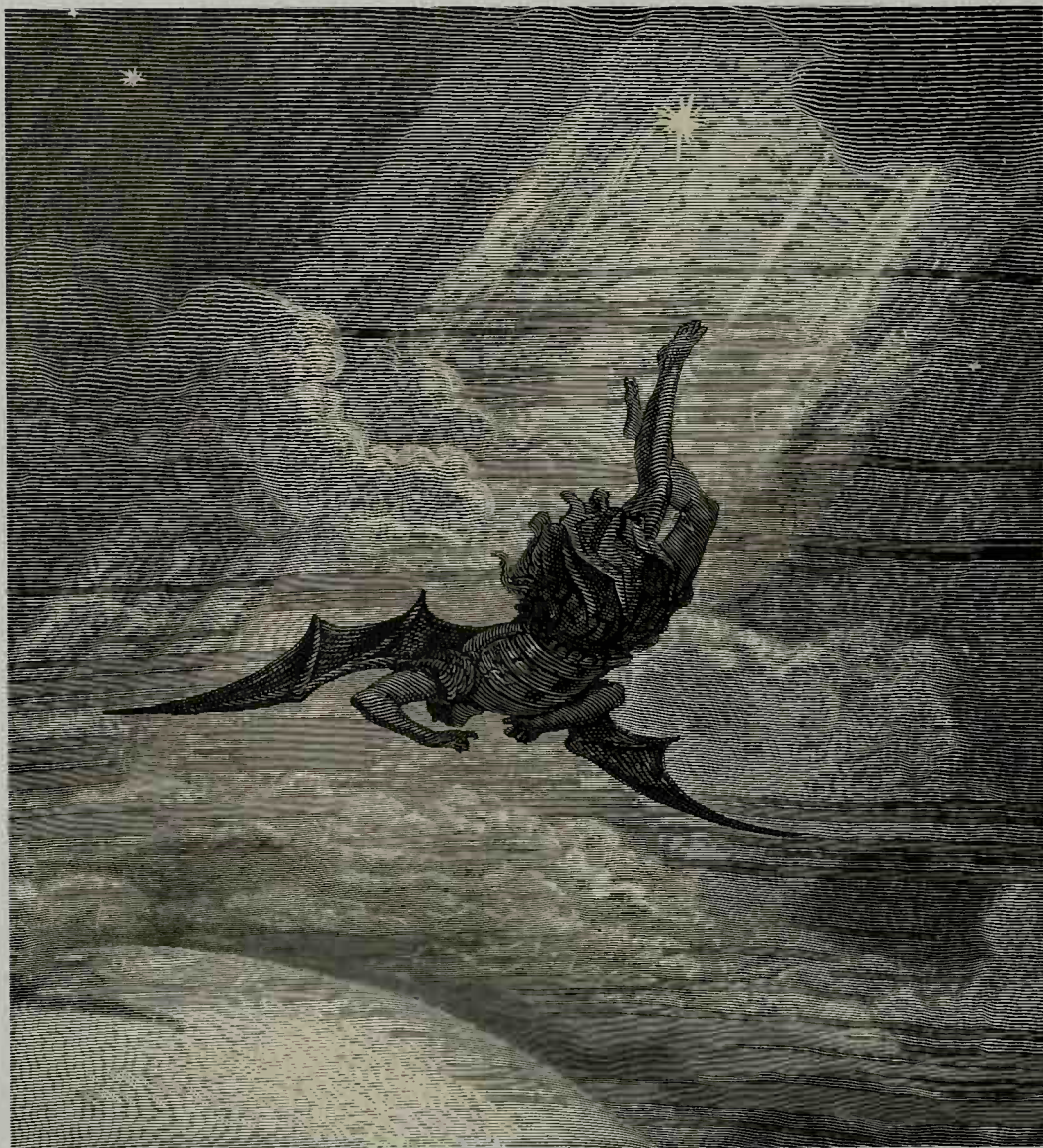
The question arises, what are the angels reporting to God after their tour of inspection? They cannot have failed to observe the awful tide of corruption and sin that is fast engulfing both the USA and Great Britain. Our sins rise up to the heavens like giant mountain peaks and literally scream to God to pour out his vials of wrath upon us!

However, we may draw some comfort from



Sensationalist books such as these testify to the belief that UFOs are sinister, bent on doing harm to mankind





Right: an illustration by Doré of the fall of Satan after his expulsion from heaven, as it is described in Milton's epic poem *Paradise lost*: 'From Morn/To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve.' Could it be, as ufologist Gordon Cove has suggested, that Satan, 'once a member of God's astronauts', has now enlisted the support of inhabitants of other planets in his fight against goodness?

the fact that he quotes a prophet named Hehr, to whom it was revealed as long ago as 1903 that 'a Third World War may wipe out our civilisation, and that an older race on Venus is taking measures to re-establish a new and better order in the shortest possible time. When the atomic bombs fall, these extra-terrestrial aeroforms may be used to salvage what is good in our civilisation, either persons or things.' And when is all this to happen? Hehr's target date for the start of the Third World War was 1960, and peace was to be re-established, after five years of chaos and total anarchy, in 1965!

However, even though we managed to escape that particular calamity, it doesn't do to be complacent: there are plenty more prophets with plenty more warnings of doom. Bob Geyer, of the Church of Jesus the Saucerian in Los Angeles, told the writer Eric Norman in 1970, 'Our conversations on the religious aspects of UFOs brought forth the conclusion that they herald the Second Coming of Christ.' But whereas Gordon Cove asserts that the UFOs are piloted by

devils masquerading as alien visitors from space, Geyer takes an opposite view. For him, the UFO pilots really are extra-terrestrials. It is we, here on Earth, who have labelled them as devils – not realising that Satan himself is an alien, who has persuaded other aliens to join him:

Satan, the old prince of darkness, and his legions of demons, are also beings from other worlds. They came down from another planet. Once, Satan was a member of God's astronauts. He became too greedy and too ambitious. He may have exploited the inhabitants of earth, or other planets. He may have tricked people into slavery.

The interpretations may vary, but the demonists are agreed on the main issues. Whatever the UFOs may be, they represent a menace to us on Earth; and the scale of their activity shows that menace to be imminent. But just what danger is it that they threaten?

**EYEWITNESS:** Personal encounters with the strange, extraordinary and sometimes terrifying mysteries of the vast unknown – *The Unexplained.*

Dear Sir,  
I have had many uncanny experiences over the years; this one occurred in the autumn of 1960.

I was out walking one evening when out of the sky a large, blue fluorescent ball hurtled towards me. It seemed to be made of gas, which swirled about within a clearly defined circumference. There was no noise – in fact everything had suddenly gone very quiet.

As the ball hurtled towards me it flashed through my mind that it was going to strike me. Instead I was bathed in a bluish light that rooted me to the spot. I was terrified. Suddenly the ball veered away to the north-west and disappeared. I trembled and shook. But after a while I was able to move again. I decided to report what I had seen to the police.

I went to the police station and reported what I had seen to the Station Officer. He gave me a very strange look. He said, 'Have you been drinking?' I assured him that I had not and that I wanted him to record what I had seen. He said: 'Sorry, but there is no way that I am going to put that in the book.' I asked why not and he replied: 'Because I think you were seeing things.' I told him he would be sorry when he read about it in the papers the next day, but there was no mention of it. So I ended up thinking I must have been seeing things after all.

Several months later I was discussing the Gemini rocket that was orbiting the Earth with the gate-keeper at the foundry where I worked. This led on to the subject of UFOs and Ernie, the gate-keeper, told me

that he had had a frightening experience with a UFO several months previously. I asked him approximately when and he said it had been in the autumn of 1960, at night. I stopped him there and said, 'Ernie, I'll tell you what you saw.' I then related my own experience of that time and he replied: 'That's almost right, only the one I saw was red.'

Ernie said that he wanted me to tell someone else what I had just told him and he called someone on the internal phone. When his friend arrived, Ernie changed his mind about my telling the experience first and asked his friend to tell what had happened to them. Their experience was similar to mine apart from the colour, which the friend also said was red.

My final experience happened in the 1970s. I was in bed and awoke suddenly in the early hours of the morning. I felt a presence in my bedroom. By this time I was thoroughly awake. I saw a figure standing by the bedroom door. It was dressed in a silvery suit and wore a helmet with a visor. I could see no features through the visor. As I looked at the figure, it turned its head. I noticed that the suit did not appear to move or crinkle as the head was turning, as though the visor was moving round the helmet without disturbing the 'fabric'. The figure appeared to have no lower limbs below the knees. I probably saw the figure for a few seconds. Then, as suddenly as it had appeared, it disappeared – as though someone had switched off the television.

*Name and address supplied*

**Ufologists have noted close parallels between the devils that, in the medieval period, were believed to be real, and modern UFOs. But, asks HILARY EVANS, does this really mean that UFOs are essentially evil?**

ON 18 MARCH 1978 Bill Herrmann, a 30-year-old truck driver of Charleston, South Carolina, was watching a 'slick metal disc, about sixty feet [20 metres] in diameter', as it manoeuvred in the sky near his home. Abruptly, it dropped towards him: 'Suddenly it was right in front of me. I fell backward. The next thing I knew, there was light all around me, green and blue, and I felt myself being tugged upward.'

In what seemed to him only a moment, Herrmann found himself sitting miles away in an open field, in a diminishing circle of orange light, as the spacecraft skittered away in a triangular flight pattern that, he was told later, was designed to avoid damage from Earth radar sources. 'I couldn't remember anything. I didn't know where I was. A terrible fear came over me, and I stood there weeping for what seemed a long time. I felt dirty. I felt like . . . I can't describe it. I felt like I had been around something I shouldn't

Below: demons torture their victims in hell, in a 16th-century illustration from a French manuscript. UFO expert Jacques Vallée has pointed out the similarity between some medieval accounts of demonic torture and the 'medical examinations' that many victims of close encounters of the third kind allege they are forced by their kidnappers to undergo. Other ufologists have been quick to name the power they believe inspires such events: the fallen angel Satan



## Heralds of the Antichrist?



have been around.'

Later, under hypnosis, Herrmann recalled an examining table, flashing lights, and creatures resembling human foetuses, with over-large heads and eyes, spongy white skin, and wearing rust-coloured jumpsuits. They were about 4½ feet (150 centimetres) high. For Herrmann, there was no question but that his experience was a 'Satanic delusion'. Since then, whenever he sees a UFO – and he has had several more encounters – he renounces it in God's name. This apparently works very effectively.

It is important to note that Herrmann is a fundamentalist Baptist by persuasion. Clearly his experiences are in some way related to his beliefs; what is less clear is whether his beliefs caused his experience, or whether they simply caused him to interpret it in a particular way. As a matter of historical fact, the majority of UFO reports have come from countries with a Christian culture, so it is not surprising that most metaphysical explanations for them have a Christian slant and set the UFO in a Christian context.

There is, of course, no rigid Christian dogma in UFO matters; but a concept that has been held by many Christians, from the foundation of their religion, is that of an Antichrist. Briefly, the Antichrist is a false Messiah, the exact opposite of Jesus, possessing many of his miraculous powers and offering – or seeming to offer – many of the same benefits. In fact, the origins of the idea





Left: the begetting of the Antichrist, with attendant demons, from a 15th-century woodcut. The existence of the Antichrist – a figure opposite to Christ in every respect – was widely believed in from the early medieval period onwards. Is it merely an echo of this ancient belief that causes some modern ufologists to believe that the Antichrist is behind the UFO phenomenon?

Below: Bill Herrmann, a truck driver from South Carolina, USA, who experienced a terrifying close encounter of the third kind in March 1978. His conclusion was that he had been the victim of a 'Satanic delusion'



of such a being antedate Christianity by many centuries: the notion is simply a personification of the dualism of good and evil that seems to have been one of Man's conceptions since he became capable of thinking.

Over the centuries a tradition has gradually been formulated that the Antichrist is destined to enjoy a temporary success, gaining control of Earth for a short while before a final conflict in which – it is confidently predicted – he will be worsted by Christ, who will then take over the reins of world government and inaugurate a golden age of everlasting peace. If we mere Earthlings know this, then presumably the omniscient Antichrist must know it too, but the prospect of inevitable defeat does not seem to deter him.

Certainly the demonic theorists have no doubt of his determination to continue the struggle, and in the turbulence of the present age with its violence, its sexual permissiveness, its decline of faith, they see indications that the coming of Antichrist is at hand: and the UFOs are the tangible signs that herald that coming. Two American theorists who take this view literally are John Weldon and Zola Levitt. In their book *UFOs – what on Earth is happening?*, published in 1975, they state:

UFOs are a manifestation of demon activity. They are here to misguide the multitudes and they are doing pretty well. They have judiciously utilised their powers through selected people to fascinate the masses, and they have widely promulgated their doctrines. They do not march through Times Square, of course, because this would reveal too much of the spiritual world.

This might make people reconsider, as well, the existence of God, and the nether forces would have advertised for their enemy.

Just how 'real' are the UFOs – solid objects or subtle delusions?

Are the flying machines really up there? Maybe so; it's not that important. If the demons wish them to be there, they are there, and if they wish people to imagine they're there, then they are imagined to be there.

But there is no such ambiguity about the demons who pilot them:

Are they just ideas of ours? No, not the way the Bible characterises them. They have motives and they take action. We are by no means making them happen or just dreaming up their activities. We believe demons can induce a whole series of experiences that, in fact, never really happened, similar to the experiences Uri Geller and Dr Puharich found were induced by their extra-terrestrial contacts [see page 1164]. They also, however, through various means produce 'real' UFOs which are visible to anyone. With the powers we know demons have, they could theoretically transform a large chunk of rock into a UFO, assume human form inside of it, and land openly, thus 'proving' the existence of advanced intergalactic civilisations.

However, the authors doubt if this is often done: 'more likely, the standard UFO sighting is either a projection into our atmosphere, or the self-transformation of whatever material the demons themselves are composed of.' As for their purpose, there is no doubt about that:

Quite simply, we think the demons are preparing the coming of the Antichrist. The Antichrist is not your run-of-the-mill world dictator. He is, in fact, something we have never contended with before; a political leader of great acumen – virtually a sorcerer, engaging and appealing – a kind of inverse Messiah.

In what way do the UFOs herald the Antichrist? They are a form of cultural conditioning. 'To properly set the stage for the Antichrist, who really is a supernatural personality, the world has to be made ready to think in terms of the new and the strange. Here's where we think the UFOs come in.'

Dan Lloyd is another demonist who does not underestimate the cunning of his enemy. No less than the fundamentalist Christians, Lloyd contemplates with misgivings the UFO-inspired cult followers who look towards 'benign visitors from outer space, visitors who will one day land on Earth and take over the reins from a humanity gone sadly astray and unable to solve its global problems'. He asks, 'Could it be that Antichrist will manifest in a guise that will fulfill



all the expectations of these sky watchers with their distorted religious longings?’

Lloyd quotes with approval the theory put forward by the eminent French ufologist Jacques Vallée in his ‘control-system’ hypothesis:

I believe there is a system around us that transcends time as it transcends space. The system may well be able to locate itself in outer space, but its manifestations are not spacecraft in the ordinary ‘nuts and bolts’ sense. The UFOs are physical manifestations that cannot be understood apart from their psychic and symbolic reality. What we see in effect here is not an alien invasion. It is a control system which acts on humans and uses humans.

What evidence does Vallée have for such a system? He points to the continuity of reported happenings, which show that today’s UFO reports are only yesterday’s folklore in an updated form. One of the cases he cites is the alleged abduction of Barney and Betty Hill:

While she was in the craft, Betty was submitted to a simulated medical test. Under hypnosis, she reported that a long needle was inserted into her navel, that she felt pain, and that the pain stopped when the leader made a certain

Above: a detail from a 14th-century interpretation of the events described in the book of Revelation. Among these is a struggle between the forces of good and evil. Believers in the demonic origin of UFO see the powers behind the UFO phenomenon as the latest contenders in the age-old battle between good and evil

## Everlasting conflict



gesture. . . . A fifteenth-century French calendar, the *Kalendrier des bergiers*, shows the tortures inflicted by demons on the people they have taken: the demons are depicted piercing their victims’ abdomens with long needles.

To explain such parallels, Vallée claims, they must be seen as part of a larger pattern; and that pattern implies a pattern-maker. But who that pattern-maker may be, who is operating the control-system, and for what purpose, Vallée cannot or will not say.

But many of those who, like Dan Lloyd, believe in supernatural beings of one sort or another, do not share Vallée’s hesitation:

Vallée is unable to point a finger at the group in question, but it should not be difficult for Anthroposophists to be alert to the fact that behind whatever human group may be active in this area, there hovers the invisible presence of the Being who acts as their inspirer . . . the cosmic being who has been known since ancient Persian times as Ahri-man. In the Bible he is known as Satan.

Like Weldon and Levitt, Lloyd credits the Ahrimanic beings with the capability to create UFOs to serve their purposes:

It is not from some hypothetical ‘fourth dimension’ that what we call UFOs are manifesting. It would be truer to say that they are deliberately distorted etheric effects, and it should surprise no one to learn that such effects can influence physical matter and create, in turn, physical effects.

Another group that welcomes UFOs as grist to its mill is that of the occultists – though perhaps ‘welcome’ is an inappropriate word, for occultists, too, see them as a menace to be taken very seriously. Anthony Roberts and Geoff Gilbertson see UFOs as the latest manifestation of a centuries-old conspiracy of evil forces – gods, demons, spirits, fairies – who seek to manipulate human credulity for their own ends:

The reason this activity is today manifesting itself in such a strictly scientific manner (spacecraft, men in silver suits, green aliens, weird technological gadgetry, and so on) is simply that this is a highly technological age and the phenomenon has merely adjusted accordingly. It knows how to put up a good front.

The authors cite a number of cases in which, they suggest, ‘the observant reader will notice some darker ambiguities hovering round them’. Ambiguities certainly hovered round the first case they quote, the west Wales sighting of 1977 (see page 798), though not perhaps of the kind that Roberts and Gilbertson had in mind; nor is their final case very convincing. Roberts describes how he was driving along the Kingston bypass, outside London, one evening, when both his wife and he saw an object variously described as ‘huge’ and as ‘the size of a very large grapefruit’ – does he mean the size of a grapefruit held at arm’s length? This so impressed them that they stopped and watched it for 20 minutes as it manoeuvred above



Above: Jacques Vallée, a ufologist who has pointed out the parallels between UFOs and the ancient belief in devils. Vallée himself does not go as far as to conclude that UFOs are demonic in origin – but a number of ufologists have been less cautious

If a good God created everything in the world, how can evil have come into being? This has been one of the besetting problems for theologians of all religions for thousands of years. There have been many suggested solutions; most involve the dualistic notion of the opposition of the two independent powers of good and evil, God and the Devil – as exemplified in this medieval illustration of the kingdoms of heaven and hell (left).

One of the most extreme – and the most influential – forms of dualism was the doctrine preached by a third-century Babylonian prince named Mani, which spread to the West through heretical Christian sects like the Cathars. Mani claimed that an angel had revealed to him that the world was governed by two spirits, one good and one evil. Man was created by the evil spirit – but God, the good spirit, has given us the knowledge of good and the power, if we wish, to attain it. Thus the world is in constant conflict, with the forces of good and evil continually trying to enlist the support of mankind – all in all, a state of affairs that seems strangely close to what the demonic ufologists believe to be the case.

them. Now, they were there and we were not; nevertheless, anyone familiar with the traffic conditions on the Kingston bypass must be sceptical of an account that involves a car pulling to the side of that very busy road, and an astonishing aerial display overhead lasting 20 minutes, apparently seen by no one else.

### Alien monster?

It remains the case that UFO experiences are undoubtedly a matter of sober fact, whatever their interpretation. There is certainly a case to be answered. But when so improbable a hypothesis as a cosmic conspiracy is being put forward, the evidence needs to be of the very best. The case of Albert Bender, allegedly visited by three men in black, is another instance of the conspiracy that Roberts and Gilbertson claim to have unearthed; but, as *The Unexplained* will show (see page 1920), the Bender case is, to put it kindly, dubious. Nor is ‘the observant reader’ likely to accept readily the authors’ version of the Loch Ness mystery; seemingly ready to detect sinister forces in every anomalous phenomenon, they endorse the dramatic adventure of American contactee Ted Owens who claims he acts as an Earth-based agent for the Space Intelligences:

They sent me on a mission and Loch Ness was one of the places I was to visit. It was the dark of night, just after midnight, when I stood on the shores of the lake. That’s when the monster came up out of the depths and surfaced. . . . It stared at me and in the moonlight I could see a long neck, about eight inches [20 centimetres] in diameter, and a small head. I communicated with the creature. It is from another dimension and has a link with the Space Intelligences.

In the course of their thesis, Roberts and Gilbertson point the finger at any number of forces who, they imply, are either servants of or unwitting agents for the Dark Gods. The CIA, the Mafia, the KGB, the Theosophists and the magicians, the House of Rothschild and the Rosicrucians – all are playing their part in a conspiracy of which the UFOs are merely the outward sign. When they add ‘and can we not add the MIB [men in black] for good measure?’ the reader may begin to suspect it’s all a gigantic spoof. Unfortunately, the authors show not a glimmer of a sense of humour. It seems they are in deadly earnest when they speak of ‘a cosmic battleground’ where there is to be fought a battle between forces that are (here they quote the American author H. P. Lovecraft) ‘coterminous with all space and coexistent with all time’. But this is rather more than most human imaginations are able to cope with; and for most demonists, the cosmic war is a much more here-and-now affair.

**The creatures described in close encounter reports come in a confusing variety of shapes and sizes. What are we to make of them? ALVIN LAWSON analyses the reports – and comes up with a startling new theory about the origin of alien beings**

THE CLASSIC PICTURE of an alien being is of a small, spindly creature with a large head and bulbous eyes, but often no other visible facial features, dressed in a one-piece grey suit without buttons or zips. The startling similarity of descriptions of aliens in many close encounter reports has led to speculation that all UFOs originate in one place. But for every report of these foetus-like aliens, there is one of creatures of a completely different kind – sometimes stiffly moving, like robots, sometimes indistinguishable from human beings, sometimes green and gnome-like.

What can ufology make of this fascinating but bewildering array of descriptions of supposed alien life forms? Are we to suppose that the Earth is being bombarded with spacecraft from many alien cultures, all conducting reconnaissance missions, or do the

close-fitting suits, usually of silver or grey, although space-suits are also sometimes reported.

Somewhat rarer are 'animal entities'. They are characterised by distinctly mammalian, reptilian, fishlike or other features, including fur, claws, a tail, scales or similarly strange skin texture, pointed ears, a snout, enlarged teeth, and non-human eyes. Their heights range from 6 to 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 metres). Most are ape-like in appearance, and walk on two legs. Their method of communication ranges from animal cries to telepathy.

Another form of alien is the 'robot entity'. Robots seem to be made of metallic or other artificial body materials, and often move in a jerky, stiff or otherwise unnatural manner. Glowing eyes are often reported; so is the robots' ability to float, or to make witnesses float. Their shape varies from bipedal to huge machines; their height can be anything between 6 inches and 20 feet (15 centimetres and 6 metres). They often wear padded space-suits with bubble-dome headgear. Their method of communication varies from a flat metallic voice to telepathy.

Other types of alien exhibit a variety of strange characteristics – they are the 'exotic



## The good, the bad and the ugly

pilots of the alien craft have some obscure purpose in disguising themselves now in one form, now in another? Or will we be forced to make a more radical hypothesis?

Let us begin by creating a tool for analysing the wealth of reports of close encounters of the third kind – those UFO reports that involve aliens. Some kind of classification system will be useful; let us start with those aliens that take the same basic form as human beings, and are immediately identified as such by the witnesses. They are generally dressed in one-piece suits, and move and speak normally. Their average height, in all the reports, is between 5 and 7 feet (1.5 and 2.1 metres). These are 'human entities'.

Perhaps the most commonly reported aliens are the humanoids. They resemble humans, but witnesses report clear anatomical differences. They often have disproportionately large heads, pallid skins, underdeveloped facial features, and hairless bodies – giving them an appearance reminiscent of human foetuses. The single feature most often reported is their exceptionally large eyes, sometimes described as unblinking, or having vertical pupils. They are small, with an average height of between 3 and 5½ feet (90 centimetres and 1.7 metres). Unlike human entities, they generally communicate not through normal speech, but telepathically; but like them, humanoid entities are generally dressed in one-piece,





Alvin Lawson has proposed a sixfold classification of alien beings reported in close encounter cases. Mr Spock (above left), from the planet Vulcan, is an example of the 'human entity' category familiar from television's *Star Trek*. The classification can also be applied to creatures from before the start of the modern UFO era in 1947. In this illustration from a 1918 issue of the French magazine *La Baionnette* (left) lunar entities – evidently belonging to Lawson's humanoid class – conjecture that Earth wars are a device to prevent the planet cooling. The Cyclops of Greek legend (far left) – in a painting by Odilon Redon (1840–1916) – is a member of Lawson's 'exotic class'; and the Greek river god Achelous (above) – seen here with Herakles – is an example of the 'apparitional entity'; he could change his shape at will

entities'. They may have grotesquely exaggerated animal or human features; they may combine human characteristics with non-animal ones – humans with robot arms, for instance. Most exotic entities are bipeds; but some of them combine the characteristics of two or more of the other categories. They range in height from 1 to 10 feet (30 centimetres to 3 metres). They may move like humans or animals, or like robots, or float; they often communicate telepathically, rather than by ordinary means..

The final category is also the most puzzling. It consists of 'apparitional entities' – aliens that share many of the characteristics

of ghosts. They may materialise or dematerialise, change form, manifest themselves selectively to witnesses, or move matter, including people, about at will. Their average height is 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 metres); they often float rather than walk, and they generally communicate by telepathy. Here again, they most often appear dressed in one-piece suits.

Let us use this system of classification to analyse the close encounter cases described in Webb's 1973 – *year of the humanoids*. Of a total of 66 cases, 16 were humanoids, 12 robots, 10 human, 8 animal, 7 exotic, 5 apparitional – and 8 were impossible to categorise because the descriptions were so vague.

It seems we have a working classification system. But is there an additional significance in the fact that *all* reported aliens appear to fall into one of six well-defined groups?

### 'Intelligent scum'

Some scientists have speculated about the existence of alien creatures that are so unusual that it would be impossible to classify them under the six-category system. For example, in his novel *The black cloud*, astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle describes a vast, intelligent cloud that 'lives' in interstellar space, complete with molecular heart system, brain and other necessary organs. It feeds on raw energy and its central nervous system functions via radio waves. And Ronald Bracewell writes of an 'intelligent scum', an enormous living civilisation that controls its environment through evolutionary specialisation. But in fact, such creatures are rarely, if ever, described in genuine close encounter reports.

Can the six-class categorisation be applied to any other phenomena, real or imaginary? The most well-established single pattern in the groups described above has to do with

entity clothing, typically a seamless, one-piece outfit that covers the body except for the head. This is distinctly similar to the clothing generally worn by brownies, traditional folklore figures. Another interesting parallel is provided by the many reports of instrument-carrying aliens and similar reports of elves from folk tradition. And a close examination of folk tradition shows that folk creatures fit the six-class categorisation neatly. Giants, for example, are human entities; pookas, gnomes and pixies are humanoid; kelpies are animal; stocks, wooden dolls substituted by fairies for kidnapped babies, are robotic; the fachan, a bizarre creature with one eye, one hand emerging from his chest, and one leg, is exotic; and fairies, like demons and divinities, are 'shape shifters', or apparitional.

The images of traditional Christianity fall into the same categories. At the centre is the human Christ. The cherubim and seraphim, ageless, sexless beings, are humanoid. The key symbol of the Garden of Eden is the serpent – an animal entity. Adam is the father of all 'robots' – inert matter infused by God with life, consciousness and sensibility. Devils and tempters show horrific bodily distortion – and fall into the exotic class; and angels, with their capacity for abruptly appearing and disappearing, are apparitional. And so on. The classification can be extended to the Greek gods, demonology, science fiction, many of the works of Shakespeare and Lewis Carroll – and even the characters of the *Wizard of Oz*.

It seems that our system of classification is perhaps more than merely a useful tool for analysis – could it be that it is actually a set of archetypes, deeply rooted in the subconscious, on which the mind draws when it is

subjected to unusual stimuli?

Evidence that this may be the correct interpretation comes from a series of hypnosis experiments conducted by Dr W.C. McCall, John DeHerrera and the author at Anaheim Memorial Hospital, California, in 1977 (see page 64). In these experiments, a number of subjects were hypnotised and asked questions about an imaginary UFO 'abduction'. The results were compared with 'real' cases – and, startlingly, the descriptions, in particular of the aliens involved, were closely similar. Here is part of an 'imaginary' description of an abduction:

They [the aliens] seem to be humanoid in form. They have round heads that are much larger than . . . humans. . . . They don't really have fingers. They seem to be kind of webbed. . . . I can't see any legs, or feet, because they're . . . what looks like possibly a . . . an article of clothing goes right to the floor. . . . Costume is . . . more purplish than blue in color. Seems to be all one . . . all made in one piece. There don't seem to be any seams on the costume. . . . They stand about four feet, two inches [1.2 metres] tall. Maybe a little taller . . .

It is a typical description of the humanoid type. This seems to be powerful evidence that the imagery of close encounters of the third kind is stored in the collective unconscious – that it is, in Jungian terms, archetypal (see page 1580).

An analysis of hallucinations and the images remembered from near-death experiences shows similar parallels with reports of close encounters of the third kind. Do all these similarities prove that close encounter cases are illusory? Not necessarily,



Below left: a detail of a chained devil from a stained glass window in the St Lawrence chapel of Strasbourg Cathedral, France. With its goatish beard, cow's horns, ass's ears and bird's talons, this devil exhibits the characteristics of Lawson's 'exotic' category. Interestingly, other aspects of Christian imagery show equally striking parallels with reports of alien creatures



human



humanoid



animal



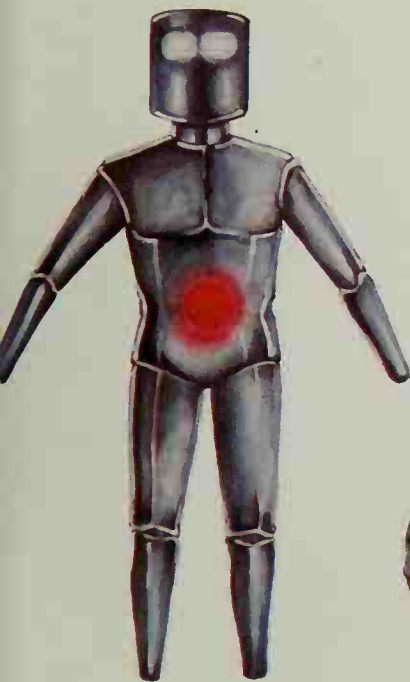
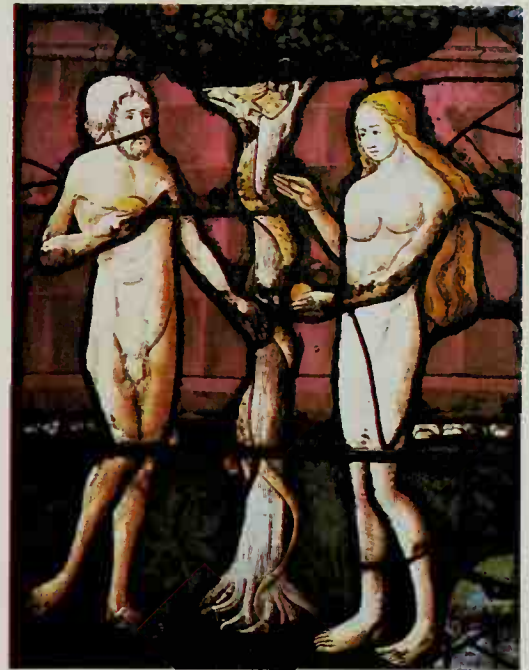
for four reasons. First, many abduction and other close encounter reports involve multiple witnesses, and it seems unlikely that multiple hallucinations lasting for several hours occur with significant frequency; second, there are reported physiological, psychological and physical effects associated with abduction experiences that – where authenticated – suggest that *something* happened. Third, hallucinating patients and those who have gone through near-death experiences are generally convinced only by extremely vivid experiences; but most close encounter witnesses are convinced very early of the ‘reality’ of the event – however unlikely they know it to be. Fourth, while the triggering mechanism or stimulus for hallucinations and near-death experiences can apparently be determined with some accuracy, the stimulus for ‘real’ close encounter experiences continues to be one of the major unknowns of ufology. No one knows what it is that makes a particular person, at a particular place and time, likely to experience a close encounter.

Although none of these arguments in itself provides positive proof, taken together they make it seem likely that close encounter reports are elicited by a real stimulus; but, as the French ufologist Claud Rifat has speculated,

UFO reports . . . do not give us any indication of the true stimulus which elicited the report; they give us only what the subject fancies about the nature of a UFO . . . CE IIIs [close encounters of the third kind] are LSD-like experiences in which a subject perceives a mixture of the real world and of her/his inner unconscious one. I myself feel certain that accounts given by

witnesses reflect what their senses have reported – that is, they do actually perceive humanoids, exotics, and so on. But if the six entity-types are indeed already in the collective unconscious, they are perhaps, therefore, already in some sense in the mind of the witness before his close encounter. If so, while perceptions of alien entities may well be stimulated in the witnesses by what can only be loosely called the UFO phenomenon, they only indicate that some kind of stimulus is present – they tell us nothing at all about the nature of that stimulus.

Above: *The Scream*, by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944), which, according to the painter, represents the ‘primal scream of nature’. On another level, however, Munch has unconsciously reproduced the archetype of the typical humanoid of Lawson’s categorisation. This 16th-century stained glass window (right) shows Adam and Eve – whom Lawson sees as examples of ‘robots’



robot



exotic



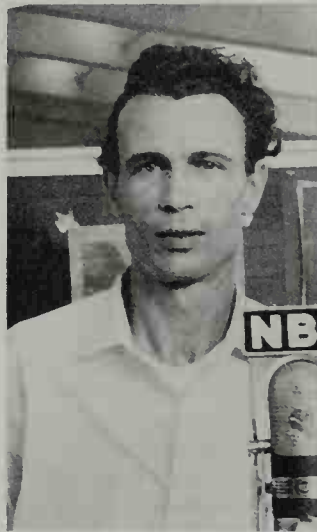
apparitional

Left: artist’s impressions of each of Alvin Lawson’s six categories of alien. They are, from left to right, human, humanoid, animal, robot, exotic and apparitional. Lawson argues that these categories are actually archetypal: that they are somehow built into the human mind, awaiting only the right ‘trigger’ to bring them to the conscious mind

**Some ufologists believe that the powers behind the UFO phenomenon intend to take over men's minds and turn humankind into a race of robot-slaves. HILARY EVANS assesses the evidence behind their claim**

'COULD I REALLY BE SURE the people I was then talking with were representatives of the real space brotherhood who wished humankind well?' This was the dilemma facing Howard Menger, who in 1956 allegedly met a group of 'space people' who not only introduced him to space music and the space potato (with five times as much protein as the Earth-grown variety) but revealed that he himself was Venusian, as was his second wife. They themselves claimed variously that they came from Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn – and, as though that were not sufficiently confusing, they also informed him that there were bad spacepersons as well as good. Since the bad ones pretended to be good, how could a mere Earthling know whom to trust?

The man looked at me sadly. 'My friend, this earth is the battlefield of Armageddon, and the battle is for men's minds and souls. Prayer, good thoughts and caution are your best insulation.' I shouldn't have doubted these people for a moment, but I was quite ill at ease. I had been sheltered from the knowledge that all of the space people's work on this planet is not sweetness and light. The others I had contacted must have been on the 'right



Above: Howard Menger who, in an encounter with 'space people' in 1956, was informed that he was a Venusian

Below: *The great day of his wrath*, by John Martin. Many people believe that UFOs presage Armageddon

side', for what I had seen convinced me they were a good people. Then the young lady spoke; 'You don't know, Howard, that there is a very powerful group on this planet, which possesses tremendous knowledge of technology, psychology, and most unfortunate of all, advanced brain therapy. They are using certain key people in the governments of your world. This group is anti-God, and might be termed instruments of your mythical "Satan". They are using the credulity and simple faith of many people to attain their own ends.' For the first time there was anger and frustration in her voice.

The gathering swarms of UFOs are an indication of approaching crisis. Eric Norman, in his *Gods, demons and UFOs*, cites the opinion of an unnamed research physicist at Stanford Research Institute, California:

The mounting evidence leads me to believe that UFOs are extraterrestrial in origin, piloted by intelligent beings. Their appearance in recent years is probably in some way associated with the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians believe in the imminence of such a second coming; but the traditional teachings are clear that Satan isn't going to let Christ walk in and take over the Earth without putting up a fight. The belief in a 'final battle' is a key element in every scenario for 'the last days', however they differ in other respects. What's more, it is going to be







Left: a photograph taken by Howard Menger of an alleged space woman with a shining 'gadget' on her belt. The space woman gave Menger an explicit warning that a powerful group on Earth was using advanced brain therapy techniques to further the aims of Satan

Below: one of the 'mystery planes' seen over Sweden during the 1930s. The French theorist Jean Robin has suggested that these were an early manifestation of the UFO phenomenon which, he has noted, seems to stay always one step ahead of Man's technological achievement. The aim, he believes, is 'the projection of a false belief system, just beyond existing beliefs'

a real war, fought by real people with real weapons. Dr Clifford Wilson, of New Zealand, has no doubt that the battle of Armageddon is scheduled for the very near future, and points out that the satanic forces will need all the people who can be pressed into service. Consequently, he suggests, men and women are being brainwashed, even possessed, 'so that when the signal is given they will be ready to give total allegiance to these beings who will then show themselves as their masters':

Even the act of taking over humans is to be taken literally: It seems that when these beings enter the solid state which is necessary for humans to observe them, they utilise atoms from the world in which we live. They do actually take blood and other physical matter from human beings and animals alike. In this way they are able to adapt themselves so that we limited human beings will understand them, and ultimately be programmed by them.

The French theorist Jean Robin takes a subtler view. For him, UFOs are only the latest manifestation in a long tradition of strange reports; and what strikes him most forcibly about these reports is that they seem to be imitating – or perhaps mocking – human ideas. In 1886, he points out, Jules

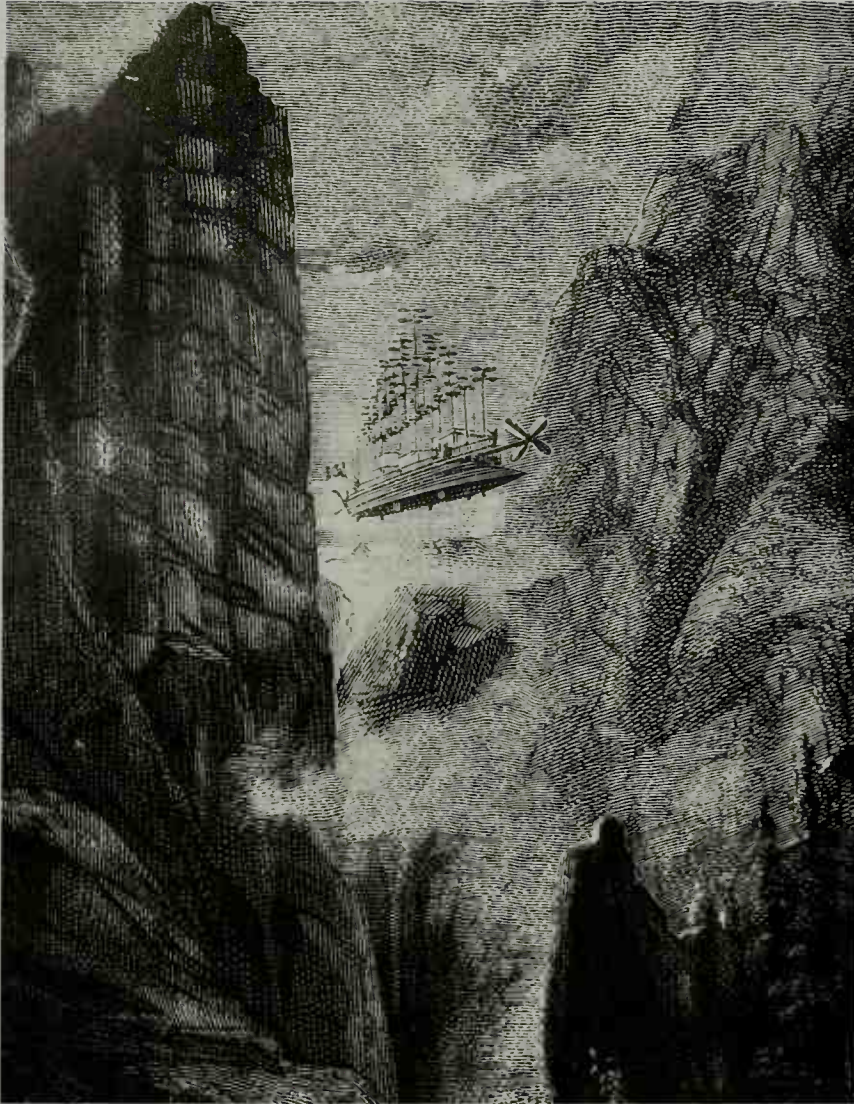
Verne wrote his famous *Robur le conquérant* which features a massive airborne 'clipper of the clouds'; a decade later, in America, there was a wave of UFO sightings in the form of airships, which at that date were purely experimental and to be seen only over France.

The subtitle of Robin's book is 'The great parody': every manifestation of the UFO phenomenon – the American airships of the 1880s, the Scandinavian 'mystery planes' of the 1930s, the Swedish rockets of 1946, the UFOs of today's space age – has been just one step ahead of human achievement. 'The heart of the problem,' he insists, 'is the projection of a false belief system, just beyond existing beliefs.'

And what is the point of this exercise? For some, it's a sign that the millennium is at hand, the advent of the brave new world brought by a new Messiah. But Robin is less optimistic. We are in for 'a cursed time when there will reign beings who are almost totally dehumanised, robots or golems artificially and temporarily animated by the satanic spirit'. And he adds, 'while it is certainly not our intention to forecast the precise form which the reign of Antichrist will take, it's not too far-fetched to imagine him descending from a flying saucer.'

Many ufologists, whose thinking disagrees in other respects, agree that whatever else is going on, humanity is certainly being conned. Too many UFO sightings have a 'staged' quality, as though someone is putting on a show; too many contact encounters,





with their phoney medical examinations and absurd 'messages', simply fail to ring true. John Keel asserts that 'The ufonauts are the liars, not the contactees. And they are lying deliberately as part of the bewildering smoke-screen which they have established to cover their real origin, purpose, and motivation.'

The ufonauts' purpose, he feels sure, is sinister and menacing, and for that reason he insists 'This is not a subject for teen-agers and wild-eyed believers. I strongly recommend that parents forbid their children from becoming involved.' Others share this feeling. Ivar Mackay, one-time Chairman of BUFORA, Britain's largest UFO organisation, claimed that 'some Intelligence or Energy is ready to invade our minds', and indeed had already started 'as has been only too apparent among some researchers in recent years'. He believed that many years' intensive training in the occult was necessary before seeking to tackle the UFO problem. Another BUFORA chairman, Roger Stanway, declared in November 1976 that he was now convinced that UFOs were of satanic origin, and that he was abandoning ufology. Eric Inglesby, the

Above: an illustration of the 'Clipper of the Clouds' from Jules Verne's *Robur le conquérant*, published in 1886. A decade later there was a wave of airship sightings over the USA at a time when such machines were to be seen only over France – an example that seems to lend support to the contention that UFOs anticipate the technological advances of mankind

Right: a hideous 8-foot (2.4-metre) furry, webbed-footed creature warns UFO enthusiasts John Stuart and Barbara Turner to discontinue their UFO research. They declined to do so – with horrific results

author of *UFOs and the Christian*, declared that 'Flying Saucers and Nazism are simply aspects of the same thing', and declared, 'UFOs are not just dangerous – they are deadly. It is a sphere in which the Christian (and indeed everyone else) is warned to KEEP OUT.'

Welsh UFO investigator Randall Jones Pugh echoed Inglesby when, in a 1979 letter to the *BUFORA Journal*, he wrote:

I feel we must accept, for want of a better description, the potential and probable presence of entities (as human beings) whose sole purpose is to destroy straightforward belief in Jesus Christ. . . . I would add a note of warning to all those concerned with the investigation of the paranormal, however innocent it may be – if you wish to delve deeply into what the UFO represents, then you should indeed work with Christ, because the search for ufological knowledge can be extremely dangerous.

Less than 18 months later, Pugh renounced the subject altogether. In a newspaper interview he declared that:

UFOs are dangerous and their aim is to disorientate, bemuse and eventually destroy the mind of mankind. . . . My first warning that I was into something very dangerous came from a friend of mine who became involved with UFOs from a scientific point of view after a sighting. After just 14 months he came to the conclusion that UFOs were involved with the occult, and decided to burn his books. He built a bonfire in the garden, but when he threw the books on it gave off an incredible heat. The



smoke billowed up in the form of a human being, and two hands began to reach out. He was scared out of his wits, and later pleaded with me to destroy my documents, but warned me not to burn them. I took his advice, but when it came to my collection of slides, I stupidly threw them in the living room fire. Immediately there were loud cracks like explosions, and the heat was fantastic. I thought the chimney breast was going to split. It was a terrible experience, and I'm convinced the slides were satanically blessed.

### The force of the Devil

Just how dangerous it can be to play with demonic forces was well-illustrated by what is said to have happened in 1954 to John Stuart and Barbara Turner of Flying Saucer Investigators of New Zealand. John and Barbara met every night (seemingly with his wife's approval) to discuss UFO theories and their implications. They took the demonic theory very seriously: 'There had to be some connection with Satan. But what?' As they got deeper into the subject, a change started to come over 'sweet, kind, innocent Barbara'. She, who seemingly took no interest in boys, suddenly interrupted their UFO-chat to say 'Gee, I'm glad I'm a girl. I like to be kissed. I like to tease boys, with a partly open shirt, brief shorts, all that.' Her smile turned more sensual, and she whispered in a very suggestive manner, 'I'd like to sit here naked. Like me to?'

Stuart concluded that this was 'some sort of evil possession'. However, the two UFO enthusiasts refused to abandon their studies despite many warnings, including one from a

#### Further reading

C. G. Jung, *Flying saucers: a modern myth of things seen in the skies*, Princeton University Press 1991  
 Jerome Clark, *UFOs in the 1980s*, Omnigraphics Inc. 1990  
 Jacques Vallée, *Confrontations*, Ballantine 1990

Images of hostile aliens: the discovery of a dead Martian in *Quatermass and the pit* (below), and urban destruction by a UFO in *War of the worlds* (bottom)



hideous 8-foot (2.4-metre) creature with a furry body and webbed feet. So it came about that, one night, 13 entities came to Barbara's bedroom, and while 10 of them watched, the other three raped her for three hours, marking her all over with scratches that she showed Stuart the following morning. This seems to have convinced her that UFO investigation was too risky, and Stuart himself was menaced by a creature that was male above the waist and female below one moment, vice versa the next – whereupon he too deserted ufology. History does not record what happened to Barbara or, for that matter, Stuart's long-suffering wife.

Such accounts seem to place the demonic theory of UFOs definitely within the lunatic fringe, but it is as well to remember that similar theories are taken seriously by some leading UFO specialists. Few researchers in Britain have contributed more to ufology than Gordon Creighton, yet he wholeheartedly concurs with William James's observation that 'the Demonic Theory will

come into its own again one day':

Time is running out fast. All the indications are that before the close of this century, cataclysmic and apocalyptic events will rend the planet. As the waves of senseless, irrational violence rise higher and higher on the Earth, and as the signs of moral and spiritual decay multiply, who can doubt that certain of the 'UFO entities' have a hand in the wrecking, and in the stirring of the nauseating brew?

Does the UFO evidence really support the demonists, or are they guilty of interpreting the phenomena to suit their personal beliefs? We shall each of us have our own opinion on that score, but one thing is clear: in the minds of many people, Satan is alive and well and piloting a UFO.

**Gilles de Rais was a hero who fell from grace – accused of the vilest acts of perversion and of mass child murder. PAUL BEGG tells the story of this famous French nobleman whose trial exposed him as an infamous criminal**

GILLES DE LAVAL, Baron of Rais (or Retz), is one of the most infamous figures in French history, although he was destined by birth for a most distinguished career. He was born in 1404 in the ominously named Black Tower at the castle of Champtocé in Anjou, in western France. He was the heir to a fortune that he later multiplied many times through inheritance and marriage until he was effectively the ruler of what amounted to a kingdom. He acquired fame and glory in battle and was the foremost champion of Joan of Arc, with whom he raised the siege of Orleans on 7 May 1429. At the age of 25, on 17 July 1429, he was made a Marshal of France.

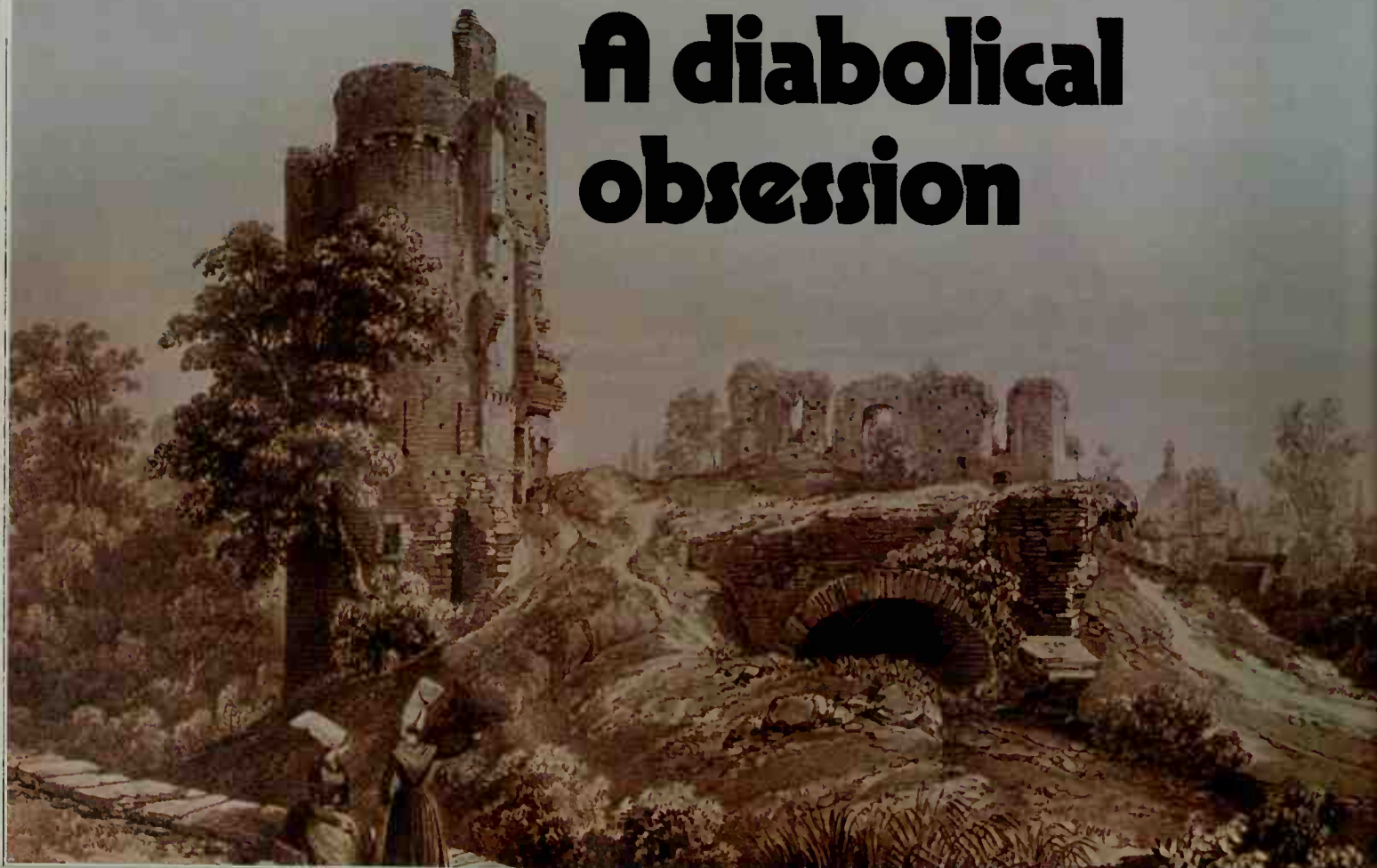
Within two years of Joan of Arc's execution in 1431, Gilles de Rais, then aged 29, a man who had never known anything but fortune and fame, and who indulged his every whim, had begun to reveal himself as a sexual pervert and a child murderer on a mass scale; in all, he is reputed to have killed between 140 and 200 kidnapped children. Some estimates suggest that as many as 300 children died at his hands or on his instructions, but this figure, though possible, is considered improbable.

Right: Gilles de Rais (pronounced Rah-ees) was labelled 'the vampire of Brittany' in a book written at the start of this century. An illustration depicts him watching ghoulishly as a boy is about to be killed by a henchman

Below: the ruins of the castle at Machecoul where many of de Rais's debaucheries and killings took place. The first of his victims actually known by name – 12-year-old Jean Jeudon – disappeared there



## A diabolical obsession



Below right: Joan of Arc. De Rais was a champion of the heroine of France and fought at her side during the historic siege of Orleans

Below: Gilles de Laval, Baron de Rais, in his prime. He achieved the high rank of Marshal of France at the early age of 25. No one could guess that his future held disgrace

Bottom right: Charles VII of France. It was to secure the throne for Charles that Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais joined forces in war

Whether or not Gilles had always nurtured his peculiar tastes is unknown. The general brutality of war may have concealed his psychopathic nature, and with the coming of peace and the lack of an outlet for his murderous instincts he may have turned his attention to children for the first time.

De Rais was discreet in his activities. His victims were procured for him by his cousins, Gilles de Sillé and Robert de Briquerville, and there was an ample supply from which to choose. The long years of war had left hundreds of children homeless and parentless and large bands of them wandered from town to town.

The first victim whose name is known was 12-year-old Jean Jeudon, an apprentice of a local furrier who allowed de Sillé and de Briquerville to send the boy to take a message

to de Rais's castle at Machecoul. He was never seen again.

De Rais soon gathered together an intimate circle of procurers, some of whom joined him in his perverted pleasures. Wherever Gilles went, children disappeared. Parents who knew or suspected the worst had no choice but to suffer their grief in silence. This was partly because Gilles de Rais was a very powerful man, but mainly because the privileged aristocracy cared little for the welfare of the peasants and their offspring. They were thought of as nothing more than cattle. In October 1437, for example, when the bones of about 40 children were being removed from a tower in the castle of Champtocé, Robert de Briquerville arranged for two noble ladies to observe the progress of the horrible spectacle. They were quite amused. They may have wondered at de Rais's sexual tastes, but certainly they displayed no shock or horror at the brutal death of so many helpless children.

### Victims turned accomplice

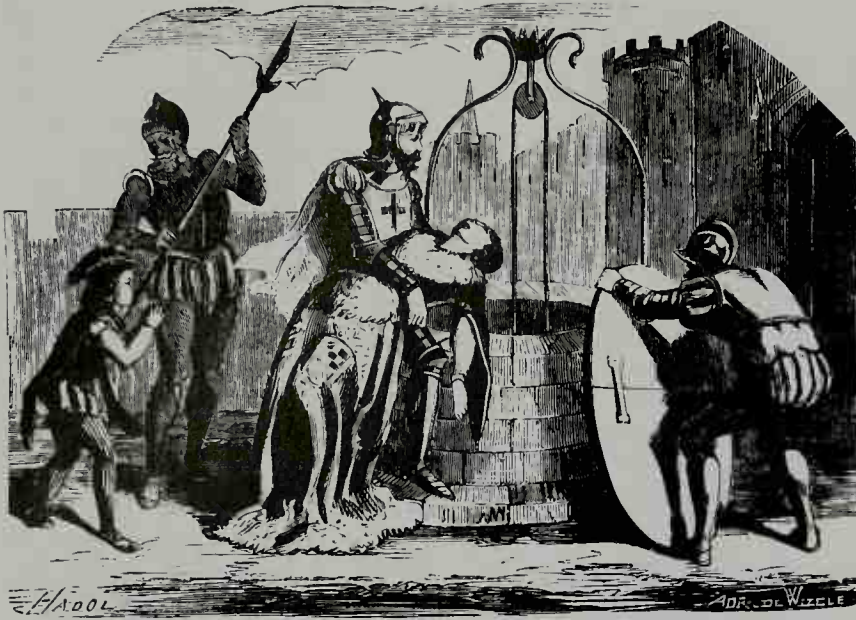
There were two projects in which de Rais had a special interest and into which he poured money. One was his own chapel, the Chapel of the Holy Innocents. Whether he took pleasure in, or even recognised, the black irony of his choice of title is unknown. The *Mémoire des héritiers* (a list of complaints against Gilles compiled by his family several years after his death, when they were trying to recover his confiscated lands) says of this chapel that no one could 'remember or believe that they had ever seen such superfluity, such excess, such unreasonable expenditure in the chapel of a prince or a king of France'. To this chapel he brought the best-looking choir boys, two of whom, André Buchet and another called Rossignol, he sexually seduced and who subsequently became actively involved with his crimes.

His other favourite project was the presentation of a mystery play in which one character represented de Rais himself at the very height of his fame and glory. The play, *Le mistère du siège d'Orléans*, was huge, with no less than 140 speaking parts, anything up to 500 extras and a great many sets. The cost was astronomical and it was de Rais who covered most of it.

Gilles de Rais had possessed a fortune greater than anyone else in Europe, but it disappeared, squandered on these and other elaborate and often insane schemes. The rot had begun to set in as early as 1429, when he began selling properties on the periphery of his estates. By 1433 he had no lands left, except some belonging to his wife in Poitou, and two castles in Anjou.

The need for ready cash began to obsess de Rais. By 1435 he had sold off most of his lands and was reduced to selling personal possessions. These included his most precious relic, a silver head of Saint Honoré. Alarmed, the various branches of the de Rais





family met in June 1435 to consider ways of forcing Gilles to curb his spending. The following month the King issued an edict forbidding any subject to enter into contract with him. In desperation he turned to alchemy as the means of his salvation.

De Rais sought the assistance of Eustache Blanchet, a priest from the Saint Malo district who had entered his service in 1435, presumably in connection with the Chapel of the Holy Innocents. Early in 1439 Blanchet went to Italy and was there introduced to Francesco Prelati, a young clerk in minor orders who was learned in alchemical arts and, it was claimed, could conjure a demon called Barron to do his bidding. Blanchet persuaded Prelati to return to France with him.

Prelati proved to be a consummate showman who could raise de Rais's expectations of producing gold by alchemical means and then gently deflate them with a series of ingenious excuses. De Rais fell under Prelati's spell and became increasingly dependent on his advice.

Meanwhile, Gilles's enemies were gathering. Chief among them were Jean v, Duke of Brittany and Gilles's liege lord, and the Duke's chancellor, Jean de Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes. They coveted de Rais's lands, which bordered the Duke's and were of strategic importance, and purchased some of them in defiance of the King's prohibition. The lands could be redeemed by de Rais within six years – which gave the Duke and his chancellor a strong interest in seeing that he was in no position to do so.

It was in May 1440 that Gilles de Rais made the most senseless move of his life and played into the hands of those who worked to bring him to book. He was particularly fond of the castle of Saint-Etienne-de-Mer-Morte but had recently been forced to sell it to Geoffroi Le Ferron, treasurer to Jean v.

Above: de Rais depicted as a wife killer in a book published in Paris in 1879. A short time after his trial, Gilles became identified with the legend of Bluebeard, and false stories arose of his mass wife murders. His transformation into a figure of legend shows what a great impact he made on his times

Right: a highly romantic picture of Bluebeard painted at the end of the 19th century. The Breton legend of Bluebeard was already old at the time of de Rais's trial, but his story of lurid crime became interwoven with it

#### Further reading

A. L. Vincent and C. Binns, *Gilles de Rais: the original Bluebeard*, Gordon Press 1976

J. K. Huysmans, *Down there*, Dover 1973

D. B. Wyndham Lewis, *The soul of Marshal Gilles de Rais*, Eyre and Spottiswoode 1952

Gilles now decided to repossess it; in doing so, he violated ecclesiastical property, offended Church law by imprisoning a priest and, by dispossessing Geoffroi, attacked a member of Jean v's household and transgressed the rights of feudal possession.

Jean v imposed a heavy fine on Gilles, knowing full well that there was no hope that it would be paid. Meanwhile de Malestroit, Jean's Chancellor, ordered an official enquiry into de Rais's affairs. Among those from whom evidence was collected were some of the people whose children had disappeared. The findings of this investigation were made public on 29 July 1440. Jean de Malestroit revealed that he had found that de Rais:

... with certain of his accomplices had slaughtered, murdered and massacred in the most odious fashion several young boys, and that he had taken with these children pleasure against nature. . . .

On 19 September, Gilles de Rais appeared before Jean de Malestroit in an upper room of the castle of La Tour Neuve. Gilles seems to have thought that the whole affair would be resolved by some kind of gentleman's agreement. It was not until 8 October, when the trial proper began, that he appears to have realised the full extent of the charges against him and the strength of the evidence.

Gilles's response to his realisation of the position was an outburst of wild temper. He withdrew all his earlier statements, denied the charges against him, rejected the court's



right to try him, and refused to take the oath.

Over the following days the hearing was adjourned and otherwise delayed for a number of reasons until 13 October 1440, when, in an atmosphere charged with drama and emotion, the horrifying charges against de Rais were publicly voiced. Foremost among these were that:

. . . for fourteen years, more or less, every year, every month, every day, every night . . . the said Gilles de Rais, possessed by the Evil One, forgetting his salvation, took, killed and cut the throats of many children, boys and girls. . . [he] held discourse with magicians and heretics. . . .

Gilles refused to answer the charges. He said his judges were 'thieving rogues who took bribes', that 'he would rather be hanged than answer their questions, and that it was intolerable that he should be brought before them.'

It must be said that de Rais did have a point. The court was far from impartial. Few of its members did not know de Rais, most had done business with him, and many stood to profit from his downfall.

The judges adjourned to give Gilles the opportunity to reconsider. Faced with his recalcitrance, they had formally excommunicated him. This period gave his accusers the opportunity to impress upon de Rais the advantages of a confession and the accompanying absolution of the Church.

We do not know what arguments were used or what pressures were brought to bear

Below left: an 18th-century miniature of the execution of Gilles de Rais. Because of his repentance, de Rais did not have to go to the flames alive: the court allowed him to be hanged first

Below: the castle of Jean V, Duke of Brittany. The Duke was one of Gilles de Rais's chief enemies and was instrumental in bringing him to trial. His motives were not all pure: he wanted to acquire lands belonging to de Rais

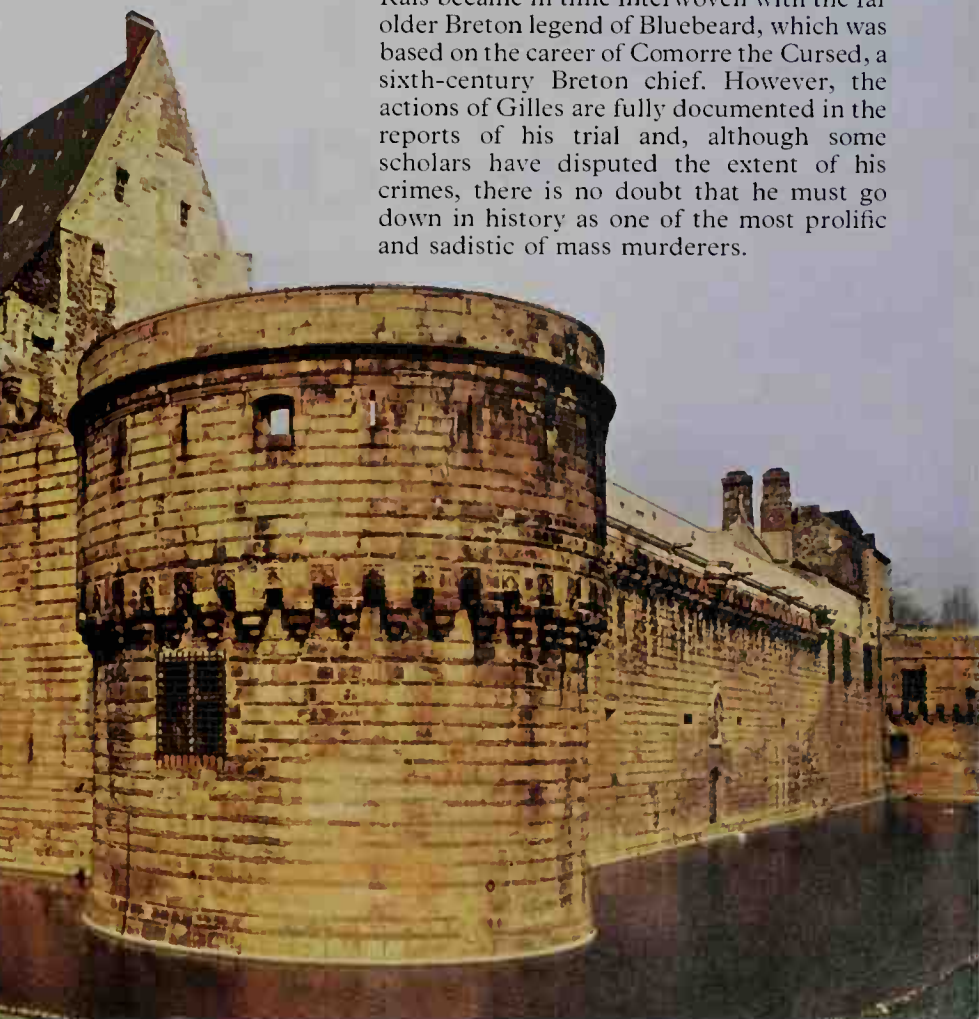
on him but when Gilles reappeared in court he was the picture of the perfect penitent. With the exception of the accusation that he had invoked demons, Gilles de Rais fully admitted the charges on his indictment. His excommunication was revoked.

On 25 October Gilles de Rais again stood in the upper room of La Tour Neuve and was pronounced guilty of 'perfidious, heretical apostasy and the invocation of demons'. He was sentenced to be hanged and burned. In view of his contrite attitude, the court allowed his body to be consigned to the flames only after he was dead from hanging. They also permitted the remains to be buried in a church of his choice.

Two of his henchmen were burned and their ashes scattered; another was fined and banished for life; an old procuress, Perrine Martin, hanged herself in her cell; and Prelati was sent to prison for life but escaped, only to be hanged later for further crimes.

Throughout the trial Gilles de Rais denied that the murders had been perpetrated as part of any witchcraft or alchemical ceremony. Some scholars doubt that this was true, but there seems to be no real reason for de Rais to have lied. As he said himself, 'I have told you greater things than this, and enough to hang ten thousand men.'

Both because of the enormity of his crimes, and because of his position as a vassal of the Duke of Brittany, the story of Gilles de Rais became in time interwoven with the far older Breton legend of Bluebeard, which was based on the career of Comorre the Cursed, a sixth-century Breton chief. However, the actions of Gilles are fully documented in the reports of his trial and, although some scholars have disputed the extent of his crimes, there is no doubt that he must go down in history as one of the most prolific and sadistic of mass murderers.



In 1982 a British best-seller argued the remarkable case that Christ was married to Mary Magdalene – and that their lineal descendants live in contemporary France. BRIAN INNES examines the evidence for this hypothesis – and assesses its implications

IN THE FIRST WEEKS OF 1982 a book was published in Great Britain that went very quickly to the top of the best-seller lists. Written by television script-writer Henry Lincoln, with the assistance of Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent, it was entitled *The holy blood and the Holy Grail*; and its subject matter – on the face of it a most unlikely one to interest a British readership – derived from the mysteries surrounding the tiny southern French village of Rennes-le-Château (see page 2419).

None of the content of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* was of itself new: much had already appeared in French publications devoted to the subject of Rennes, and the remainder had been gathered together from a variety of published sources – some of them respectable, some of them suspect. But it must be said for Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent that they had gone back to many original sources of information, that they had researched the background to the affair with some care, and that they had taken the trouble to interview a number of the people whose names and views are quoted with such



## A married Christ?

freedom by other writers on Rennes.

The conclusions that the authors reach are presented, properly, in the order in which they occurred in their research: beginning in 1969, when Lincoln first read a book by Gérard de Sède entitled *Le trésor maudit de Rennes* ('The accursed treasure of Rennes'), and ending with a startling proposition that seems to have little or no direct connection with the obscure hamlet in the uplands of the Languedoc. But it is simpler to summarise them in reverse order.

Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent propose that Christ did not die on the cross: that either the crucifixion was a sham, Christ's living body being taken down and spirited away, or that some substitute was found to endure the agony of death. The survival of Christ is not, however, necessary to the next part of the argument: that he had previously been married to the woman we know as Mary Magdalene, that she had had children by him, and that after the crucifixion she had fled with them, eventually reaching France.

*The holy blood and the Holy Grail* identifies the descendants of Christ and Mary

Did Christ marry? The gospel story of the first miracle, of the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana, pictured here in a painting by Juan de Flandes (flourished 1496-c. 1519), seems to suggest that the wedding in question was Christ's own

Magdalene with the Holy Grail: its argument derives from the fact that the Grail appears in many early writings as 'Sangraal' or 'Sangreal', which it proposes should properly be read as *Sang Réal*, or 'royal blood'. This royal bloodline, say the authors, became in time the family of Merovingian kings, who ruled southern France before they were deposed by Pepin III, the son of Charles Martel, from whom the subsequent French monarchy was derived. The Merovingian line appears to have died out in 751 with Childeric III, but Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent claim that direct descendants can be traced, with the Merovingian line being represented by a man calling himself Pierre Plantard de St-Clair.

Pierre Plantard de St-Clair made claim to be the modern Grand Master of an ancient order, similar to and connected with the Knights Templar, called the Prieuré de Sion. It is said that one of the principal activities of the Prieuré de Sion throughout the centuries has been to protect the succession of the Merovingians, in the hope that the present time will see the re-emergence of the ancient line. This is to be followed, according to the plan, by the establishment throughout Europe of some kind of hierarchy that will impose a new order of government, founded on the descendants of Christ, eventually to





bring lasting peace and goodwill to all men.

And where does Rennes-le-Château come into all this? Here the argument becomes rather fragmentary, but it is suggested that in 1891 the village priest, Bénéger Saunière, discovered documents that established the present Merovingian genealogy – that, in fact, the ‘treasure’ of Rennes was not gold, not the long-lost regalia of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, but the proof of Pierre Plantard de St-Clair’s heredity.

This brief summary is perhaps a little unfair to *The holy blood and the Holy Grail*: the book is more than 400 pages long, and the list of authorities consulted is impressive. Nevertheless, these are the conclusions, and it is worth looking in greater detail at the salient parts of the argument.

The authors quote an observation from



Top: the sleepy village of Rennes-le-Château in southern France. Investigation of the mysterious riches of a 19th-century Rennes priest led authors Henry Lincoln, Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent to uncover a complex series of clues that, as they revealed in their best-seller *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* (1982), suggested that descendants of Jesus Christ might be living in France today

Left: the Virgin Mary tends her son’s body after the crucifixion. But did Christ really die on the cross? The Greek version of the biblical story of Joseph of Arimathea (above, preaching to the English, in a water colour by William Blake) requesting the custody of Christ’s corpse has him asking Pontius Pilate for the *soma* – a word used to denote a living body

Dr Geza Vermes of Oxford University: ‘There is complete silence in the Gospels concerning the marital status of Jesus. . . . Such a state of affairs is sufficiently unusual in ancient Jewry to prompt further enquiry.’ Some justification for a belief that Christ was married can indeed be found in the fact that he is frequently referred to in the Gospels as a Rabbi – a trained teacher – and that the Jewish Mishnaic Law expressly states that ‘an unmarried man may not be a teacher.’ If Jesus was a rabbi in the strict sense of the word, he was almost certainly married.

Many of the disciples, such as Peter, are known to have been married, and at no point in his teaching did Christ advocate celibacy.



Indeed, in Matthew 19:4–5, he expressly declares:

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

And there is a curious incident in the Gospels that seems to describe the wedding of Christ. The story of the wedding at Cana is a familiar one to all Christians. Neither the groom nor the bride is named; all we know is that Christ was ‘called’ to the wedding, and that his mother was also there: ‘And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. . . . His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.’ And so Christ performed his first miracle, the transmutation of water into wine.

Immediately after, ‘the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.’ It seems inescapable that ‘the bridegroom’ is none other than the man who has just produced more wine – that is, Christ himself – and there seems no other explanation for the fact



Left: *The Magdalene*, by Antonio Correggio (1489/94–1534). The authors of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* suggest that Christ was married to Mary Magdalene – and that, after the crucifixion, she fled with her children to France, where her direct descendants continue to live. The descendants of Christ, they argue, include the Merovingian dynasty – the most famous of whom was Clovis, King of the Franks (below right), who ruled from 481 to 511 and under whom the Franks were converted to Christianity

that Christ and his mother appear to be the two people in charge of the celebration.

The identification of Mary Magdalene as the wife is based upon less sure grounds. She is identified as ‘the woman who anointed Jesus’, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, Mary of Bethany. And Lazarus is identified as the ‘beloved disciple’ who, at the Last Supper, was ‘leaning on Jesus’s bosom’.

### The Holy Grail

The argument that Christ did not die on the cross is not a new one; it has been proposed by numerous writers, notably by H. J. Schonfield in *The Passover plot*. *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* devotes some pages to it, but to follow its reasoning it is necessary only to assume that Christ and the Magdalene had one or more children, and that there is some basic truth in the old legend that Mary Magdalene brought the Holy Grail to France.

Most scholars are agreed that the legend of the Holy Grail (see page 1591) embodies a wealth of pagan symbolism that can be traced back to well before the birth of Christ. During the 13th century, however, it began to take on a peculiarly Christian significance. *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* points out that the elaboration of the Grail legend took place contemporaneously with the Crusades.

The first specific Grail romance is judged to be that by Chrétien de Troyes, entitled

The researches of Henry Lincoln, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh suggest that the Merovingian kings, who ruled southern France until the royal line apparently died out with Childeric III (right) in 751, were the direct descendants of Christ. And, they say, the present successor to the line is alive and well and living in France.

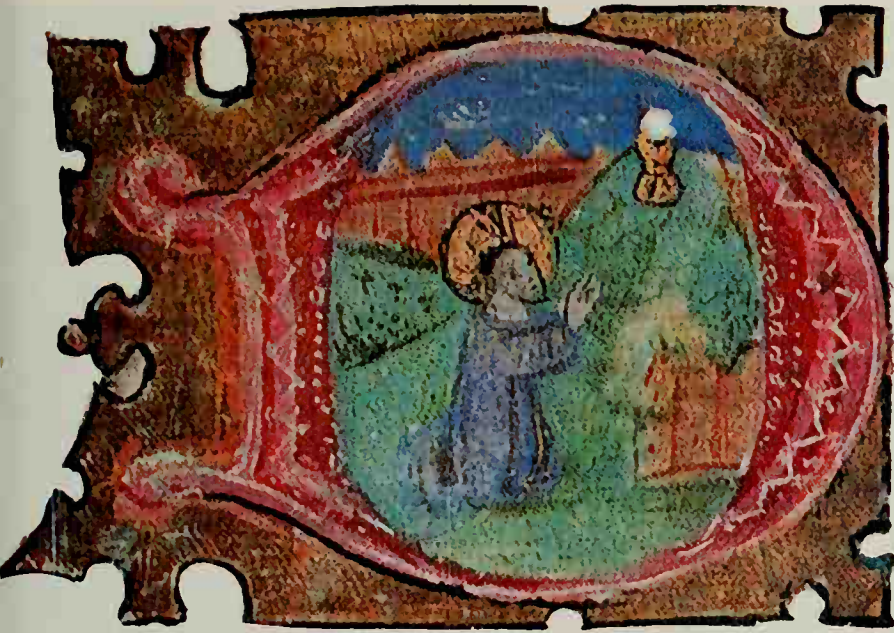
The brother of the Merovingian king Clovis II (633–656), Sigisbert III, who became king of Austrasia in 632, was succeeded by Dagobert II. On the death of his father in 656, Dagobert was kidnapped and exiled to Ireland where, despite the undertakings of his ancestor Clovis I, he was brought up in the Celtic Church. But in 664, at the Council of Whitby, St Wilfrid of York reconciled the Celtic and Roman Churches. Two years later Dagobert married an Irish princess, Mathilde – but the marriage produced no male heir, and in 670 Mathilde died in childbirth.

Dagobert returned to France, and in 674 was proclaimed king of Austrasia. Expert genealogists insist that he had no male heir by any subsequent marriage, and that, on his assassination in 679 near the town of Stenay in north-east France, the Merovingian line was finally extinguished. According to *The holy blood*

## End of the line...

*and the Holy Grail*, however, Dagobert married again – to Gisèle, daughter of the Count of Razès and a niece of the king of the Visigoths. It is through Dagobert’s son, Sigisbert IV, that the present representative of the Merovingian line, Pierre Plantard de St-Clair, is claimed to be descended.





*Le conte du Graal* or *Le roman de Perceval*, and written toward the end of the 12th century. In this story the Grail appears to Perceval in the castle of the Fisher King: we are told little about it, except that it is made of gold and studded with gems, and there is no mention of any connection with Christ. The Christian element was added by Robert de Boron, in his *Roman de l'estoire dou Saint Graal*, which was written some years after Chrétien's, but which Robert claims to be based upon a more ancient source. He explicitly states that the Grail was the cup of the Last Supper, filled with Christ's blood.

At about the same time as Robert de Boron's romance, another Grail story also appeared. It is anonymous, and is known generally as the *Perlesvaus*. It is in the *Perlesvaus* that the Grail becomes a truly mystic concept, apparently connected in some way with 'the secrets of the Saviour', and known to a group of 33 men and their two 'masters', who are 'clad in white garments, and not one of them but had a red cross in the midst of his breast'. The date of these romances, and this description, lead Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent to suggest that there is a direct connection between the Knights Templar – who also wore white tunics marked with a red cross – and the guardianship of the Grail.

This connection appears to be confirmed in the opening of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. Wolfram attributes the story to 'Kyot, the well-known master', who is readily identified as Guiot de Provins, a troubadour and Templar who visited Germany in 1184 – and almost certainly met Wolfram there. What is strange is that Wolfram apparently describes the Grail as a stone of some kind. It is guarded by knights in the castle of Munsalvaesche; is this Montsalvat, the legendary castle of the Cathars, which can perhaps be identified with Montségur,

Above: an illustration from a 15th-century Flemish book of hours showing Christ praying in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of the Last Supper. The Holy Grail – or Sangreal – appears on a hill before him. The authors of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* suggest that the Grail represents the *Sang Réal* – the holy bloodline of Christ



where the Cathars made their last stand in 1244 (see page 2420)?

*Parzival* is full of suggestive hints, but one point is particularly interesting. *Parzival* is the nephew of Anfortas, the Fisher King; Anfortas traces his ancestry back to one Laziliez, who may possibly be Lazarus; and Laziliez's parents are Terdelaschoye ('Terre de la choix' – chosen land) and Mazadan (from Masada? – or the Magdalene?). Parzival's son was Lohengrin, and Lohengrin's son or grandson – the tale is a little vague – was Godfroi de Bouillon, the leader of the First Crusade, who captured Jerusalem in 1099.

### The Merovingians

Between the fifth and the eighth centuries the Merovingian dynasty ruled large parts of France and Germany. They derived their descent from Mérovée, who is known to have been king in 417, and from that date they can be traced to Childeric III, who was deposed in 751. The most famous of the Merovingian kings was Clovis, the grandson of Mérovée, who ruled from 481 to 511; it was under Clovis that the Franks were converted to Christianity.

Most importantly, it was to Roman Catholicism that Clovis was converted, under the influence of his wife Clothilde. At that time, the Roman Church had less influence in western Europe than the Celtic Church, centred in Ireland, or even heretical Churches such as the Arian. The association with Clovis gave the Roman Church the power that it was to hold throughout Europe for the next thousand years.

The Visigoths, whose empire extended throughout Spain, over the Pyrenees and as far north as Toulouse, were adherents of Arianism. Perhaps Clovis's most important campaign was against the Visigoths, whom he drove steadily southward and finally defeated in the Razès at Rhedae – today the village of Rennes-le-Château.

The Merovingians were commonly known as 'the long-haired ones': like Sampson, they apparently believed that their power resided in their hair. It is certainly true that when Childeric III was deposed his hair was ritually shorn at the command of the pope. The Merovingians were also said to bear a peculiar birthmark that attested to their sacred origin: a blood-red cross – like that emblazoned on the white tunics of the Knights Templar.

Genealogists have been unable to discover any evidence for the continuation of the Merovingian line after the eighth century. For further information we have to turn to a very different source: a slender file in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, known as *Les dossiers secrets de Henri Lobineau* – the secret dossiers of Henri Lobineau.

**Proof that a direct descendant of Christ lives in contemporary France depends on some mysterious documents that are housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. BRIAN INNES assesses their significance**

THOSE WHO SET OUT to investigate 'the Rennes controversy' very soon find themselves consulting a series of publications that have been lodged with the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The Bibliothèque Nationale is similar to the British Library in that it holds in its archives a copy of every work published in the country. At the same time it provides both a more and less reliable record of published works than does the British Library: by means of its *Dépôt légal* system it establishes a date of publication for copyright purposes for each work deposited, yet there is no necessity to show that any copy but the one deposited has ever been published.

The series of publications in the Bibliothèque Nationale that Henry Lincoln, Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent refer to in *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* as 'the Prieuré documents' show no sign of having been 'published' in the accepted meaning of the word. They are mostly duplicated typescripts, with a date of publication and an author, but there is no evidence of any other copies ever having turned up in a bookshop or library. The only copy is the one in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The earliest of the documents is entitled *Les descendants Mérovingiens ou l'énigme du*



## A dossier of secrets

*Razès Wisigoth* ('The Merovingian descendants, or the enigma of Razès of the Visigoths'); its authorship is attributed to one Madeleine Blancasall, translated from the German by Walter Celse-Nazaire, and published in 1965 in Geneva under the imprint of the Grande Loge Alpina. The text traces the descent of the Merovingians from their alleged biblical origin to the 20th century, by way of the family of Plantard, and this genealogy is signed Henri Lobineau.

But there is more to this than meets the eye. Certain elements draw attention to themselves: the church of Rennes-le-Château is dedicated to the Magdalene, or Madeleine; the spring at Rennes-les-Bains known as the Madeleine is close to the confluence of the two rivers Blanque and Sals; the church of Rennes-les-Bains is dedicated to the two saints Celse and Nazaire; and the Grande Loge Alpina, the main lodge of Swiss Freemasonry, denies all knowledge of this work. Its provenance is therefore at the least obscure, if not suspect.

Nine months later, a second document was deposited with the Bibliothèque

Nationale. It also purports to come from the Grande Loge Alpina: its title is *Un trésor Mérovingien à Rennes-le-Château*, and its author is Antoine l'Ermite. Here it is only necessary to point out that the grotto of St Antony the Hermit is to be found a mile or two from Rennes in the Galamus gorge.

The following month there appeared *Pierres gravées du Languedoc*, purportedly a reprint of a book published in 1884 by Eugene Stublein. Stublein certainly existed: in 1877 he published a *Description d'un voyage aux établissements thermaux de l'arrondissement de Limoux*, but there is no known copy of his supposed 1884 publication. It is in this book that there first appears a reproduction of the gravestone of Marie de Negri d'Ables (see page 2422). In the records of the Bibliothèque Nationale the name of the depositor of this work is given as Antoine l'Ermite, his address a travellers' hotel in the 17th *arrondissement* of Paris.

In the spring of 1967 a further publication was deposited with the Bibliothèque Nationale. It is entitled *Le serpent rouge*, and three authors are named: Messieurs de

Above: a coin from the reign of King Dagobert II (651–679) who, most scholars believe, was the last of the Merovingian dynasty of regents of southern France. But there exist mysterious documents that purport to demonstrate that the Merovingian line did not, after all, end with the assassination of Dagobert in the forest of Woëvres (top) in the Ardennes region of eastern France. Instead, they claim, the present-day representative of the Merovingian line – also, they allege, the lineal descendant of Christ – lives in France. He was allegedly active in the election campaign that, in 1958, resulted in Charles de Gaulle (right) becoming president of France for the first time



Koker, Saint-Maxent and Feugère. There is some disagreement over the date of this work: the *Dépôt légal* – the date on which, after the necessary bureaucratic delay, the work was officially declared ‘published’ – is 20 March; the date on the deposition slip, according to Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent, is 17 January, but according to Franck Marie, who has investigated the matter closely, it is 15 February. But there is no doubt that Louis Saint-Maxent and Gaston de Koker were found hanged on 6 March, and Pierre Feugère the following day.

What is the explanation for this strange juxtaposition of events? Were the three men victims of a ghastly revenge, or did they agree to a suicide pact? Their families are unanimous on one point: that the three were apparently unacquainted with one another. The authors of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* briefly consider an alternative explanation, and then dismiss it: that some person, having found three suitable deaths reported in the French newspapers, added the three names to the title-page of the work and then deposited it at the Bibliothèque Nationale, in the all-too-likely expectation that the clerks

of the *Dépôt légal* department would not notice that the date on the deposition slip had been falsified.

What kind of a plot is this? Two documents attributed to transparent pseudonyms and to a publisher that denies all knowledge of them; and a third, almost certainly falsely attributed to three authors who died unexpected deaths. A few months later the first ‘proper’ book on the treasure of Rennes was published by the very respectable house of Julliard. It was entitled *L’or de Rennes*, and its author was Gérard de Sède; it appeared the following year in paperback under the title *Le trésor maudit de Rennes*, and in a revised edition, under the Plon imprint, in 1977, with the title *Signé: Rose + Croix*. It was the paperback that first attracted Henry Lincoln’s attention in 1969, and led him to make three programmes for BBC television: ‘The lost treasure of Jerusalem’ (1972), ‘The priest, the painter and the Devil’ (1974) and ‘In the shadow of the Templars’ (1979).

### Danger: keep out!

It is to Gérard de Sède that we owe most of the information about Bérenger Saunière and the mystery of Rennes-le-Château that has been made public. It is to Gérard de Sède that we owe the allegation that it is dangerous to enquire too closely into matters connected with Rennes. He cites a Citroën, ‘riddled with machinegun bullet holes’ – but Lincoln and his collaborators discovered that this was an old wreck that had been used by a farmer’s sons for a target! One feels that this could almost be a metaphor for de Sède’s story: riddled with improbabilities as it is, it is the source of much dubious information.

Contemporary with the publication of *L’or de Rennes*, a document attributed to one Henri Lobineau was lodged at the Bibliothèque Nationale. This was entitled *Dossiers secrets*, and *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* describes it graphically:

a thin, nondescript volume, a species of folder with stiff covers which contained a loose assemblage of ostensibly unrelated items – news clippings, letters pasted to backing-sheets, pamphlets, numerous genealogical trees and the odd printed page apparently extracted from the body of some other work. Periodically some of the individual pages would be removed. At different times other pages would be freshly inserted. On certain pages additions and corrections would sometimes be made in a minuscule longhand. At a later date, these pages would be replaced by new ones, printed and incorporating previous emendations.

The principal contents of the *Dossiers* were a series of genealogical trees, attributed to Henri Lobineau, and establishing one ‘Pierre Plantard de St-Clair’ as a direct lineal descendant of Dagobert II, who was assassinated in 679 and was not known to have had



Right: a statue of St Mary Magdalene in the parish church of Sainte-Madeleine – St Mary Magdalene – in Rennes-le-Château. One of the documents in the Bibliothèque Nationale that purports to establish the existence of the Prieuré de Sion is allegedly written by one Madeleine Blancasall – a pseudonym transparently derived from Sainte-Madeleine, which stands close to the rivers *Blanque* and *Sals*





any legitimate issue. Lobineau was obviously a pseudonym, derived from the Rue Lobineau near Saint-Sulpice in Paris, a church that also plays a significant part in the Rennes story. Papers in the *Dossiers* suggested that Lobineau was really an Austrian historian named Leo Schidlof, who had died in Switzerland the previous year; but Schidlof's daughter insists that he knew nothing of genealogy. Once again, a dead man's name was being used to give colour to something with which he had no connection.

Who, then, is this Pierre Plantard de St-Clair? As Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent rightly say, 'so far as release of information during the last twenty-five years or so was concerned, all trails seemed to lead ultimately to him.' It is difficult to put together a complete portrait of Pierre Plantard (the St-Clair appears to have been a recent addition to his name), for he has deliberately remained elusive for most of his life.

His career appears to have begun in the French Resistance, where he edited a clandestine journal under the title of *L'ainere*, and he is said to have been imprisoned by the Gestapo from October 1943 until he was – presumably – liberated toward the end of 1944.

According to a character sketch written by his first wife Anne Lea Hisler, who died in 1971: 'invited in 1947 by the Federal Government of Switzerland, he resided for several years there, near Lake Léman, where numerous *chargés de missions* and delegates from the entire world are gathered.' Little more is known of Plantard's activities for a decade; then, in May 1958, when Algeria rose in revolt and Charles de Gaulle stood for the presidency of France, Plantard was engaged,



Top: Pierre Plantard, allegedly the present successor to the Merovingian throne – and a direct descendant of Christ. His seal allegedly appears in a parchment of 1560. It is supported by two bears, interpreted by Philippe de Chérisey as 'the two celestial bears, Callisto and Arcas, with the polar circle and the fleur de lys representing the Pole Star'. This arcane description is unsupported by any source independent of the Prieuré documents. Whatever the significance of the seal, however, one thing is certain: Plantard's motto, '*Et in Arcadia ego*', is intricately bound up with the original mystery of Rennes-le-Château

with other prominent French citizens, in organising the 'Committees of Public Safety' that played an important part in de Gaulle's election.

Next, we find M. Plantard editing a slim duplicated magazine entitled *Circuit*, and described as the organ of 'the Organisation for the Defence of the Rights and the Liberty of Low-Cost Homes'. The first series of *Circuit* was published between May and September 1956; the volumes deal largely with the drawing up and registration of the statutes of an unnamed society at Sous-Cassan, Annemasse, close to the Swiss border at Geneva. A second series of the magazine appeared in 1959, as the 'cultural periodical of the French Forces' Federation'; as might be expected, the published address of this organisation is a false one.

Then came '*l'affaire de Gisors*'. A certain Roger Lhomoy, a guide employed at the ancient castle of Gisors, reported in 1946 that he had carried out unauthorised excavations beneath the castle, and had discovered a subterranean chapel beneath the donjon, which contained 19 stone sarcophagi and 30 metal coffers. The local authorities, horrified by Lhomoy's work and the dangerous nature of the excavations, immediately closed them and forbade any further interference. Little more was heard of the matter until 1962, when Gérard de Sède published his first major work, *Les Templiers sont parmi nous* ('The Templars are among us'). He suggested that the subterranean chapel contained the legendary lost treasure of the Templars, and that the Order of Knights Templar still survived in France. He appears to have derived some of his information from Pierre Plantard.

The publication of de Sède's book brought about a demand that Lhomoy's excavation should be further investigated,



and for two years a strange see-saw of official policy took place. First the Minister for Cultural Affairs, André Malraux (who had also been involved in the formation of the Committees for Public Safety), sealed the excavation; then, six months later, he authorised further excavation; finally, in March 1964, he declared that the investigation had been directed 'to verify certain assertions concerning the presence of a treasure beneath the castle donjon. The excavations have been completed today. They have given a negative result.'

### The gold of the temple

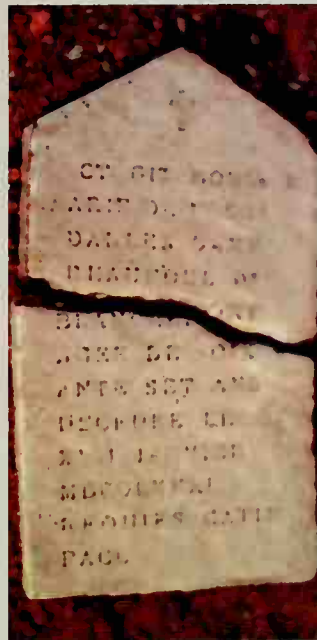
In an interview accorded in 1972 to Jean-Luc Chaumeil, Pierre Plantard is quoted:

I have said, and repeated many times, to Gérard de Sède: 'Why do you want to dig at Gisors? They were forced to camouflage the crypt for precisely the same reasons: the looting of the archives'. . . . Notice that in the matter of Gisors, I have never believed in a material treasure: there is no gold of the Temple. . . . The Order of the Temple disappeared in 1314. It has never been reconstituted; all the societies that pretend to derive from it (and there are many) derive purely and simply from the imagination of their founders. . . . There is a parallel branch: the Prieuré de Sion. . . . The society to which I belong has existed a very long time, it is very old. I myself am the successor of others, that is all. We guard certain things faithfully, and without any desire for publicity.

This was not the first mention of the Prieuré de Sion. De Sède had alluded cryptically to it in his book about Gisors; but for the most suggestive details we have to turn once more to the *Dossiers secrets*.



Right: the line of zero longitude, used by the French before the Greenwich meridian was generally accepted in 1884, as it passes through the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. Saint-Sulpice was apparently the centre of a 17th-century secret society, the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement – which, *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* argues, was a front for the Prieuré de Sion. Some writers find it significant that the tomb of Marie de Negri d'Ables (below) apparently lies on the same meridian



Left: the ancient castle of Gisors. In 1962 author Gérard de Sède suggested that an underground chapel that had been discovered in earlier excavations might hold the legendary lost treasure of the Templars – and that the Order of the Templars survived in France. There was, naturally enough, great public demand that the excavation be reopened. But official reaction was curiously complicated. The then French Minister for Cultural Affairs, André Malraux, intervened and first sealed the dig, then reopened it – and finally, in March 1964, announced: 'The excavations have been completed today. They have given a negative result'



Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent have succinctly summarised the claims made in these documents. First, a secret order pre-dated the Knights Templar, who were created as its military and administrative arm. This order is most commonly known as the Prieuré de Sion. Its directors – or Grand Masters – have been people whose names are among the most illustrious in history.

Then, although the Templars were dissolved in the period from 1307 to 1314, the Prieuré de Sion remained untouched and has continued to the present day. It has played a significant part in contemporary international affairs. Its declared objective is the restoration of the Merovingian dynasty.

The Merovingian line itself, by direct descent from Dagobert II and his son Sigisbert IV (676–758), extends through intermarriage through Godfroi de Bouillon, who captured Jerusalem in 1099, to a wide range of noble and royal houses – Blanchefort, Gisors, Saint-Clair, Montesquieu, Montpézat, Phoer, Luisignan, Plantard (perhaps Plantagenet?) and Habsburg-Lorraine.

These are bold claims, and Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent base the complex thesis of their book firmly upon them. It is essential to look further into them.

It has been suggested that there exists in France a secret society that guards the lineal descendants of Christ. Furthermore, the leaders of this society include some of the most illustrious names in history. BRIAN INNES reports



## Names to conjure with

THE FRENCH ADORE A CONSPIRACY. Hundreds of books have been published in France that set out to prove that the Knights Templar were not wiped out between 1307 and 1314, that secret societies claiming access to an 'esoteric tradition' derived from the Templars have played a significant part in political developments throughout Europe since that date – that, indeed, they were behind the French Revolution, on one side or the other, depending upon the individual author's predilections. In 1974 J.M. Roberts devoted a book of nearly 500 pages to *The mythology of the secret societies*, and demonstrated that there was no evidence for this belief; but still the books proliferate.

There is some firm evidence that the Order of the Prieuré de Sion existed at some time in the past. After Jerusalem fell to Godfroi de Bouillon in 1099, an abbey devoted to Nôtre Dame du Mont de Sion was built on the hill of Sion to the south of Jerusalem; it is referred to in later documents and figures in views of the city. A certain Father Vincent, writing in 1698, says: 'There were in Jerusalem during the Crusades . . . knights attached to the Abbey of Nôtre Dame de Sion who took the name of Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Nôtre Dame de Sion.' And R. Röhricht, in his *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* ('Roll of the kings of Jerusalem')

of 1893, cites two charters: one of 1116 by Arnaldus, prior of Nôtre Dame de Sion, and one of 1125, in which Arnaldus's name appears with that of Hugues Payen, the first Grand Master of the Temple. The existence of the Abbey of Sion up till 1281 is attested to by E.-G. Rey in a paper in the proceedings of the French National Society of Antiquaries (1887), which lists the abbots who administered the abbey's property in Palestine.

But these are the only historical documents referred to by Henry Lincoln, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh in *The holy blood and the Holy Grail*; all other material appears to come from what they call 'the Prieuré documents', those mysterious duplicated pamphlets that have been lodged with the Bibliothèque Nationale since 1965.

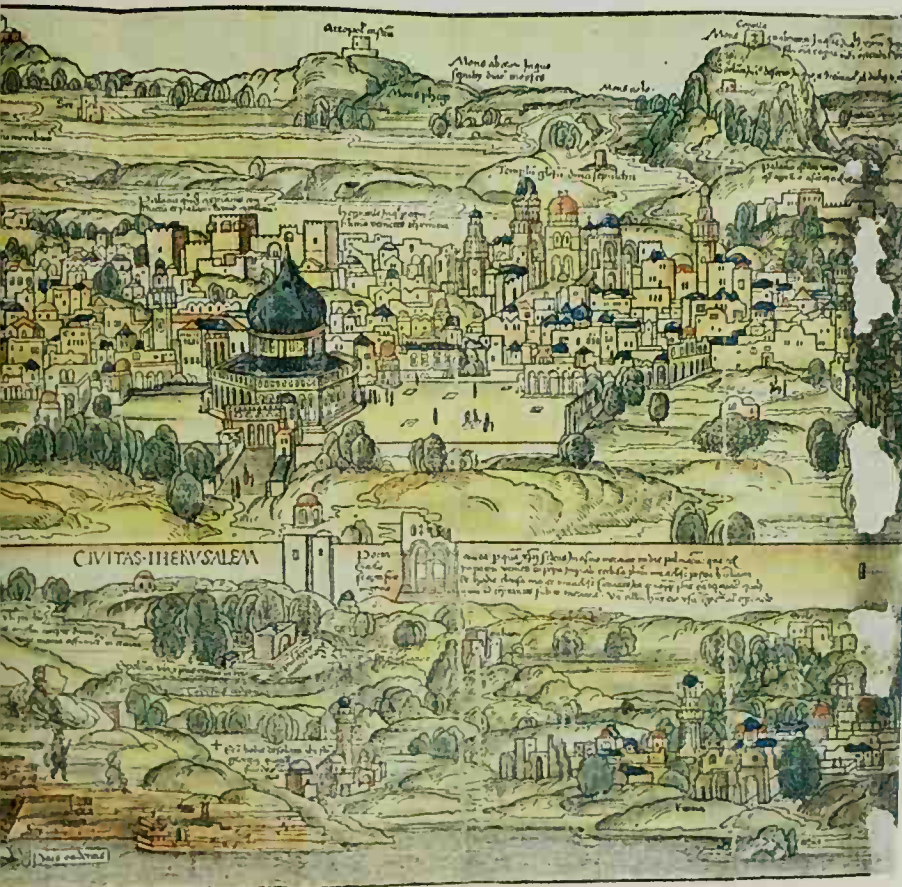
The *Dossiers secrets*, allegedly by one Henri Lobineau (see page 677), contain three lists of names. The first reproduces Rey's list (with two insignificant additions); the second is taken by Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent as proof of the authenticity of the third. It is a list of the Grand Masters of the Knights Templar between 1118 and 1190. It differs in certain respects from those given by most historians. The authors of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* write: 'We spent more than a year' – but it must be borne in mind that during this time they were also





Far left: *The Deposition*, by Botticelli (1444/5–1510). Christ's body, newly taken down from the cross, lies in the arms of his sorrowing mother, while Mary Magdalene passionately embraces his head. A theory has been put forward that Christ was married to Mary Magdalene, and that the interests of their descendants, who live in France, are guarded by a powerful and secret society called the Prieuré de Sion. Intriguingly Botticelli (left), who chose to depict Mary Magdalene's grief so movingly, was allegedly himself a Grand Master of the Prieuré de Sion, from 1483 to 1510

Below: a 15th-century Dutch print of a perspective of Jerusalem, showing the Temple and the Abbey of Nôtre Dame de Sion (top left, marked 'Mons Syon'). The coincidence of names, as well as some documentary evidence, suggests that the abbey may once have been the home of the Prieuré de Sion



engaged on a number of other researches – 'considering and comparing various lists of Templar Grand Masters.' Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent continue:

We consulted all writers on the Order, in English, French and German, and then checked their sources as well. We examined the chronicles of the time . . . . We consulted all the charters we could find . . . . As a result of this exhaustive inquiry, it became apparent that the list in the *Dossiers secrets* was more accurate than any other . . . .

The conclusion of the authors of *The hōy blood and the Holy Grail*, having in effect compiled this list after (at most) several months' work was:

Granted, such a list might perhaps have been compiled by an extremely careful researcher, but *the task would have been monumental* [my italics]. It seemed much more likely to us that a list of such accuracy attested to some repository of privileged or inside information – *information hitherto inaccessible to historians* [my italics again].

The third list claimed to be of the successive Grand Masters of the Prieuré de Sion, a succession that reached directly into the 20th century and included more than a few unexpected names:

Jean de Gisors	1188–1220
Marie de Saint-Clair	1220–66
Guillaume de Gisors	1266–1307
Edouard de Bar	1307–36
Jeanne de Bar	1336–51

Jean de Saint-Clair	1351–66
Blanche d'Evreux	1366–98
Nicolas Flamel	1398–1418
René d'Anjou	1418–80
Iolande de Bar	1480–83
Sandro Filipepi (Botticelli)	1483–1510
Léonard de Vinci	1510–19
Connétable de Bourbon	1519–27
Ferdinand de Gonzague	1527–75
Louis de Nevers	1575–95
Robert Fludd	1595–1637
J. Valentin Andrea	1637–54
Robert Boyle	1654–91
Isaac Newton	1691–1727
Charles Radclyffe	1727–46
Charles de Lorraine	1746–80
Maximilien de Lorraine	1780–1801
Charles Nodier	1801–44
Victor Hugo	1844–85
Claude Debussy	1885–1918
Jean Cocteau	1918–

There is no space here to consider the names on the list in detail. Lincoln, Leigh and Baigent write:

The Prieuré de Sion would seem to be both modest and realistic. It does not claim to have functioned under the auspices of unqualified geniuses, superhuman 'masters', illumined 'initiates', saints, sages or immortals. On the contrary, it acknowledges its Grand Masters to have been fallible human beings, a representative cross-section of humanity – a few geniuses, a few notables, a few 'average specimens', a few nonentities, even a few fools. Why, we could not but wonder, would a forged or fabricated list include such a spectrum?

This is more than a little naïve on the authors' part. Few of the names are less than illustrious: even Charles Nodier, who is unlikely to be familiar to any English reader, was a prolific author, a Master Mason, and an active influence in the French Revolution; and Charles Radclyffe was the illegitimate grandson of Charles II.

As for the others: Nicolas Flamel is France's most famous alchemist, and Robert Fludd an eminent English writer on every aspect of the 'Hermetic tradition'; René d'Anjou's name is associated with the 'conspiracy' surrounding Joan of Arc; J. Valentin Andrea was responsible for creating the myth of the Rosicrucians. Many of the remaining names on the list belong to high-ranking – if obscure – European nobles. Therefore it is quite obvious that any ingenious person who set out to forge or fabricate such a list would, with a dictionary of dates to hand, find the task a simple one.

And who, following the death of Jean Cocteau in 1963, is the present Grand Master of the Prieuré de Sion? All the clues point to a modest Frenchman, Pierre Plantard, now known as Pierre Plantard de Saint-Clair (see page 672). He was apparently described to author Franck Marie as:



a very secret man who did not like one to inquire into his affairs. He lived in a little room on the sixth floor of 35 avenue – in the 16th arrondissement of Paris. It was hardly comfortable: a table, a bed, some chairs, very little furniture . . . He left these lodgings in January 1973, forgetting to pay an important portion of his rent. His wife Annie Hisler died in 1971 . . . It seems he was frequently visited by, and put up for the night, M. Philippe de Chérisey, who was *interdit de séjour* (forbidden to stay) in Paris . . .

And so we meet Philippe de Chérisey, apparently Pierre Plantard's collaborator and spokesman. He is described by Jean-Luc Chaumeil in the following words:

Born of a prominent family in the Ardennes . . . Philippe de Chérisey carries his 53 years well, with the lively eye and gentle regard of a poet. First of all a journalist for Belgian TV, he veered later to the theatre . . . and then to the cinema, making films with Bourvil, Zavata and Francis Blanche. He is responsible for several works: *Grégoire et Amédée* (1961), *Circuit* (1969) and several publications on 'l'affaire de Rennes-le-Château' (1976 and 1978).

The novella entitled *Circuit* is of particular interest. It takes its title, obviously, from the same source that gave the name to the

Top: Leonardo da Vinci, one of the most illustrious of the alleged Grand Masters of the Prieuré de Sion, who apparently ruled the society from 1510 to 1519

Above: Robert Fludd, the English physician and mystical philosopher, who was allegedly Grand Master of the Prieuré de Sion from 1595 to 1637. In 1602 Fludd was appointed tutor to Charles, Duke of Guise – who later acquired the site, near Rennes-le-Château, of the tomb that appears in an enigmatic painting by Poussin

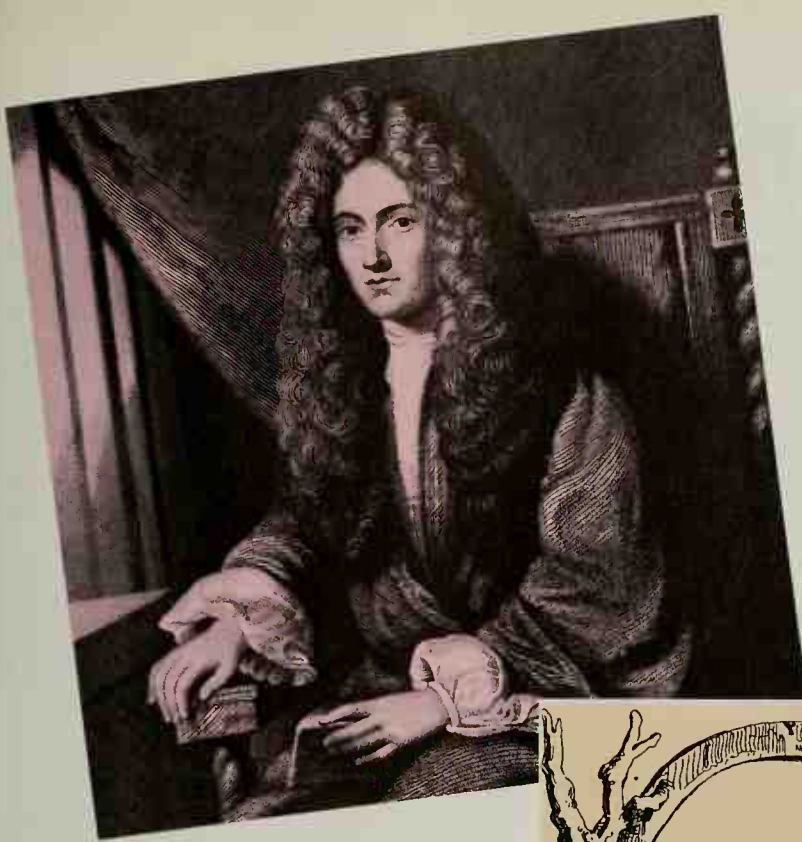
pamphlets published at various times between 1956 and 1959 by Pierre Plantard – and its name is said to be an acronym for the Chevalerie d'Institutions et Règles Catholiques, d'Union Indépendante et Traditionaliste ('Chivalry of Catholic Institutions and Rules of the Independent and Traditionalist Union'). And the plot of the story concerns an extraordinary adventure underground in the vicinity of Rennes-le-Château, during which the hero discovers the tomb of an ancient Roman and an inaccessible treasure of solid gold.

So we come back once again to Rennes. According to Jean-Luc Chaumeil, in *Le*



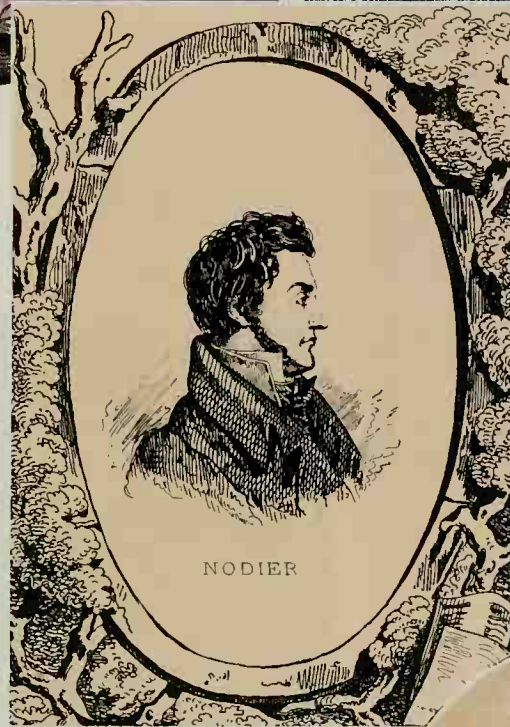
*trésor du triangle d'or* ('The treasure of the golden triangle'), Rennes forms one point of a 'mystic triangle' drawn upon the face of France, the other two points of which are situated at Gisors (ancient castle of the Templars) and Stenay (where Dagobert II met his untimely end). There is, however, one great objection to the apparent significance of this statement: *all* triangles have three points – and there is nothing the least remarkable about this particular triangle. It is irregular in shape, each side and each angle being different, so that hundreds of thousands of similar triangles could be drawn, with other, unrelated, towns at their three points, none of them any less – or more – significant.

The Rennes story became public knowledge in France in 1967 with the publication of Gérard de Sède's *L'or de Rennes* ('The



gold of Rennes'). This represented the culmination of a remarkable series of depositions in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Briefly summarising the depositions in chronological order (see page 676): first, in August 1965, came *Les descendants Mérovingiens ou l'énigme du Razès Wisigoth*; then, in May of the following year, *Un trésor Mérovingien à Rennes-le-Château*. This was followed the next month by an alleged reprint of Stublein's *Pierres gravées du Languedoc*. In March 1967 *Le serpent rouge* received its *Dépôt légal*, followed in April by *Les dossiers secrets*, attributed to Henri Lobineau. Then, in October 1967, came *Au pays de la reine blanche* and, in November, *Trésor au pays de la reine blanche*.

What do we really know of Rennes-le-Château? Pierre Plantard claims it as the home of his otherwise undocumented female ancestor, Gisèle, daughter of the Count of Razès (see page 674). Philippe de Chérissey, a friend of Plantard but apparently otherwise unconnected with the region, suggests that there is a buried treasure there. And the authors of *The holy blood and the Holy Grail* have pointed out that the first mention of this treasure in *Un trésor Mérovingien à Rennes-le-Château* is 'a verbatim text, reset and reprinted, of a chapter in a popular paperback – a facile bestseller, available at newsstands for a few francs, on lost treasures throughout the world.' It is time to look once again at everything that has been published since 1967 about Rennes, to try to sift the known facts from the mass of allegation and supposition that surrounds them.



Above: Charles Nodier, a prolific French writer who played an active part in the French Revolution, allegedly became Grand Master in 1801. He was succeeded in 1844 by his more illustrious colleague Victor Hugo (right). On Hugo's death in 1885 the title passed to the composer Claude Debussy

Above left: the Irish-born scientist Robert Boyle, Grand Master of the Prieuré de Sion from 1654 to 1691. It is said that Boyle taught the secrets of alchemy to the great English scientist Isaac Newton, who was allegedly Grand Master from 1691 to 1727. Newton was followed by the Jacobite sympathiser and activist Charles Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater (above), who supposedly ruled the Prieuré from 1727 to 1746



# Unravelling Rennes

The unravelling of the mystery that leads from Rennes-le-Château to the marriage of Christ is a gripping story. BRIAN INNES analyses its weaknesses – and adduces some evidence that appears to substantiate the tale



Left: the grave of François-Bérenger Saunière, parish priest of Rennes-le-Château at the end of the 19th century. After finding some ancient manuscripts, so the story goes, Saunière came into possession of vast sums of money – one estimate puts it at over a million gold francs – which he used in lavish entertainment, the sumptuous redecoration of the church, and the building of the ostentatiously magnificent Villa Bethania (below and right). But in fact there is no reliable evidence that Saunière ever had such a large sum of money at his disposal

WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW about the mystery of Rennes-le-Château and the village's 19th-century curé, Bérenger Saunière? The story – put very briefly – is this. François-Bérenger Saunière, eldest son of Joseph Saunière, mayor of the tiny village of Montazels, was born on 11 April 1852. On 1 June 1885, he became the priest of the church of Sainte-Madeleine in Rennes-le-Château, and remained there for the rest of his life. In 1892, making use of a small legacy available for the upkeep of his church, he replaced the ancient altar, and it is said that he found, in a hollow pillar that supported the altar, some parchment manuscripts. He also dug up a slab of stone that was found to be carved with a scene that could have been as much as a thousand years old, perhaps older still.

Rumour begins to creep in. All we know for certain is that Saunière contrived to have the church repaired and decorated in a crude style that incorporates a number of puzzling elements. He had a house built for himself next to the church, the Villa Bethania, which is ostentatiously finer than any other in the village; and a garden with a conservatory; and a two-storey tower, the Tour Magdala,

that rises on the highest point of the hill.

There is no doubt about this: the restoration of the church, the buildings that Saunière raised, are there for all to see. But should we – could we – believe all those tales of the curé's immense wealth, and of the rich guests that he entertained so lavishly in his house?

For a great deal of our information we seem to be dependent only upon the writings of Gérard de Sède. It is de Sède who tells us that Saunière's constructions at Rennes-le-Château, and the lavish entertainment that he provided for his guests, represent an expenditure of over one million *francs d'or*. But when one looks at what has survived, and attempts to estimate what it might have cost in 1900, it is difficult to value it at one fiftieth of this amount. It is de Sède who tells us how extraordinary the interior decoration of the church is; but this decoration is chiefly made up of plaster statues and reliefs supplied by the firm of Ané, of Letouzey, which also supplied such material to many other churches at the turn of the century.

It is de Sède who first draws our attention to the fact that drawings of the two stones





Bottom right: Isabel of Angoulême, wife of King John (below), who ruled England between 1199 and 1216. Isabel was eleventh in descent from one Theodoric, who ruled the Razès region of southern France from 721 to 738. King Pepin III of France (died 768) apparently granted the Jewish colony of Narbonne the right to be ruled by a Jewish king. A Babylonian Jew named Makhir, who claimed direct descent from the great Jewish King David (bottom), was selected as regent; on arriving in France, however, he assumed the name Theodoric. By this complex route the royal family of England could claim descent from King David



to produce an effect upon that author that has exceeded the wildest expectations. (4) The text *Jesu medela vulnerum* inscribed by Saunière on a plaque situated at the foot of the altar in his church has been put to good use by the author of these pseudo-parchments with the intention of giving them an air of authenticity.

Yet de Chérisey is reported to be the good friend of Pierre Plantard, who seems to have given de Sède assistance in the preparation of his original book.

So where did Saunière come by the money to pay for the works he carried out in Rennes-le-Château? On 23 May 1910 he was found guilty by his bishop of trafficking in masses, and was forbidden to continue his priestly duties – a ban that was lifted only in October 1915. The point is rightly made that no traffic in masses could possibly have resulted in a million gold francs – but then, we do not actually have any evidence that Saunière ever had a sum of money anything like this to dispose of.

#### The mystery of the tomb

The story of the tomb at Les Pontils, in the parish of Arques, which closely resembles that in Poussin's painting *The shepherds of Arcadia* (see page 2428), is given in detail by Franck Marie, who claims to have researched the area more thoroughly than any other writer. A certain Louis Galibert, with his wife Elizabeth, built a small factory to make braids and army boots at Les Pontils in 1880. His grandson erected the tomb in 1903, and his grandmother was buried there the following year. In December 1921 the Galibert family, which had removed to Limoux, built a communal tomb in the cemetery there; the stone dressings were taken from the tomb at Les Pontils, together with the remains of Elizabeth Galibert.

The property at Les Pontils was bought by a Mrs Rivera, from the USA. Her 52-year-old son Lawrence, an eccentric character who raised goats and rabbits, clad the



that Saunière removed have been reproduced in publications. The first, the gravestone of Marie de Negri d'Ables, wife of Francis d'Hautpoul de Blanchefort, is said still to exist: Philippe de Chérisey, in a letter to the editors of the French edition of *The Unexplained*, writes:

This slab was removed from the cemetery in the sight and knowledge of the inhabitants of Rennes, and is now at Carcassonne in the collection of an amateur antiquary, who is not very disposed to exhibit it. . . .

What is reputed to be the second slab still covers a communal grave in Rennes cemetery, though it has been broken into several pieces by treasure seekers. The alleged inscription appears in Eugene Stublein's *Pierres gravées du Languedoc*, but apparently only in the 1962 reprint of what is said to be the 1884 edition (see page 676). Infra-red photographs exist that are claimed to have revealed the obliterated inscription, but these appear to be crude forgeries.

As for the documents Saunière is supposed to have discovered in the pillar, two of which de Sède reproduces, Philippe de Chérisey writes:

(1) There were three parchments, not four. (2) These parchments were genealogies, not 'faked' gospels. (3) The gospels are of recent manufacture, photocopies of two sheets of paper composed a little before the publication of Gérard de Sède's book, and designed

remains of the tomb in cement to resemble that in Poussin's painting. In 1954, Lawrence Rivera died penniless in Carcassonne.

Still the doubt remains. The stories of a hidden treasure at Rennes-le-Château are long established, and the local rumours have attached themselves to Bérenger Saunière. It would be encouraging if it were possible to discover more about him, but so many of the details that have appeared in the hundreds of writings that have appeared since 1965 can be traced no further back than Gérard de Sède; and much of the rest is attributable to the 'Prieuré documents' that have been deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale since 1956, and in which the hand of Pierre Plantard can be so clearly seen.

And yet, and yet: little pieces of evidence still emerge that suggest there is something in history on which the whole frail structure of the theory put forward by Henry Lincoln, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh could find a firmer foundation. Shortly after the publication of the first series of articles about



Left: an illustration from the 14th century *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, or 'History of the Holy Grail,' in which Galahad is crowned by the son of Joseph of Arimathea. The theory that the Grail legend is linked with the countryside surrounding Rennes-le-Château is supported by the curious coincidence of a local place name. One of the romances of the Holy Grail tells how Sir Gawain shelters in the *Atre Perileus*, the Chapel Perilous. And close to the tiny village of Opoul, near Rennes, are the ruins of Château Perilos (below)

Rennes in *The Unexplained*, a correspondent sent in some information that had come unexpectedly to him in the post. There was an extract from *Pedigree and progress*, by Sir Anthony Wagner, formerly Garter King of Arms, and a genealogy by G. M. Moriarty from a work about the Plantagenet family.

It appears that toward the end of the eighth century the Jewish colony at Narbonne was granted the right, by Pepin III (the father of Charlemagne and deposer of the Merovingian king Childeric III), to be governed by a Jewish king. A suitable candidate was selected in Babylonia by the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid; his name was Makhir, but it appears that on arriving in France he took the name of Theodoric. His son was St William, Marquess of Septimania, Count of Razès, known as 'Count Nez', who became a Benedictine monk and founded the monastery of Gellone. Makhir claimed direct descent from the House of David, and from him Isabel of Angoulême, wife of King John


of England, was eleventh in descent – so that the royal family of England can perhaps claim King David as one of their ancestors!

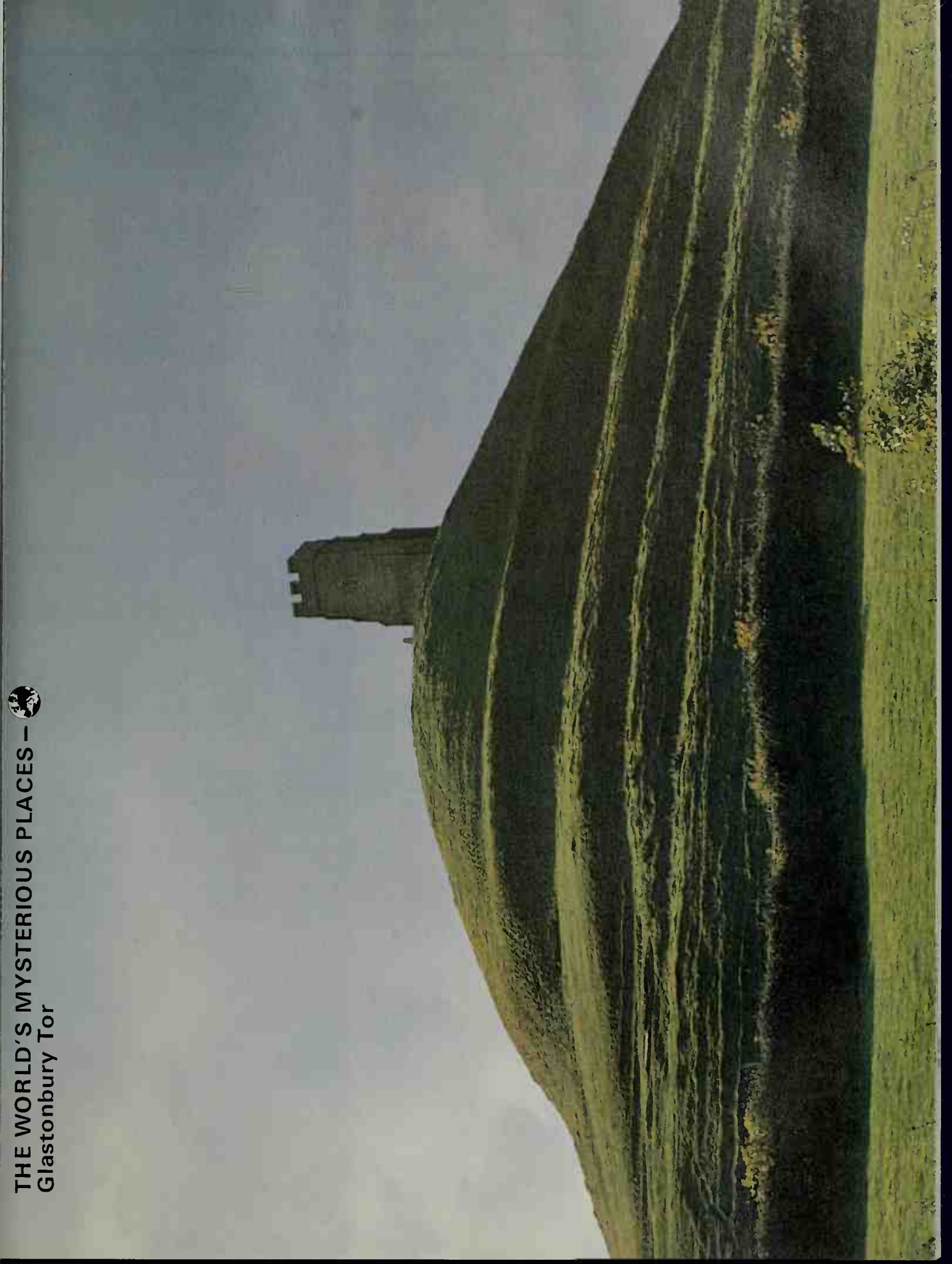
So there may be a Jewish connection: a prince of the House of David (as Christ himself was said to be) who becomes the ancestor of the House of Plantagenet, with which the name of Plantard may be associated.

There are other strange hints. More than one of the romances of the Holy Grail tells how Sir Gawain is overtaken by a terrible storm, and takes refuge in the *Atre Perileus*, the Chapel Perilous. Some 30 miles (50 kilometres) across the hills from Rennes-le-Château is the tiny village of Opoul, almost certainly the lands from which Francis d'Hautpoul derived his name. Take a narrow winding road that climbs among the crags behind the village, and you will come to an ancient chapel, above which loom the gaunt ruins of – Château Perilos. Perhaps there is something in the theory that links the development of the Grail legend – and the bizarre mystery with which it is associated – with the country around Rennes.

It is such straws in the wind that continue to persuade one not to dismiss the whole story of Rennes-le-Château, the descendants of Christ, the Merovingian dynasty and the Prieuré de Sion as nothing more than an elaborate hoax. Beyond those suspect documents in the Bibliothèque Nationale, there is no evidence whatsoever that the Merovingian bloodline survived the murder of Dagobert, or that the Prieuré de Sion continued to exist, in any form whatsoever, between the beginning of the 14th century and the year 1956. If it were not for that figure of a demon supporting the holy-water stoup in the church of Sainte-Madeleine, and the Tour Magdala brooding over the Razès countryside, it would be hard to believe in Bérenger Saunière himself.



THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES —  Glastonbury Tor





# Satan in the snow

One cold February morning in 1855 a strange trail of footprints was found in the thick snow that covered South Devon. No one could tell what had caused them and, as GRAHAM FULLER and IAN KNIGHT explain, the villagers began to fear that they were the marks of the Devil himself

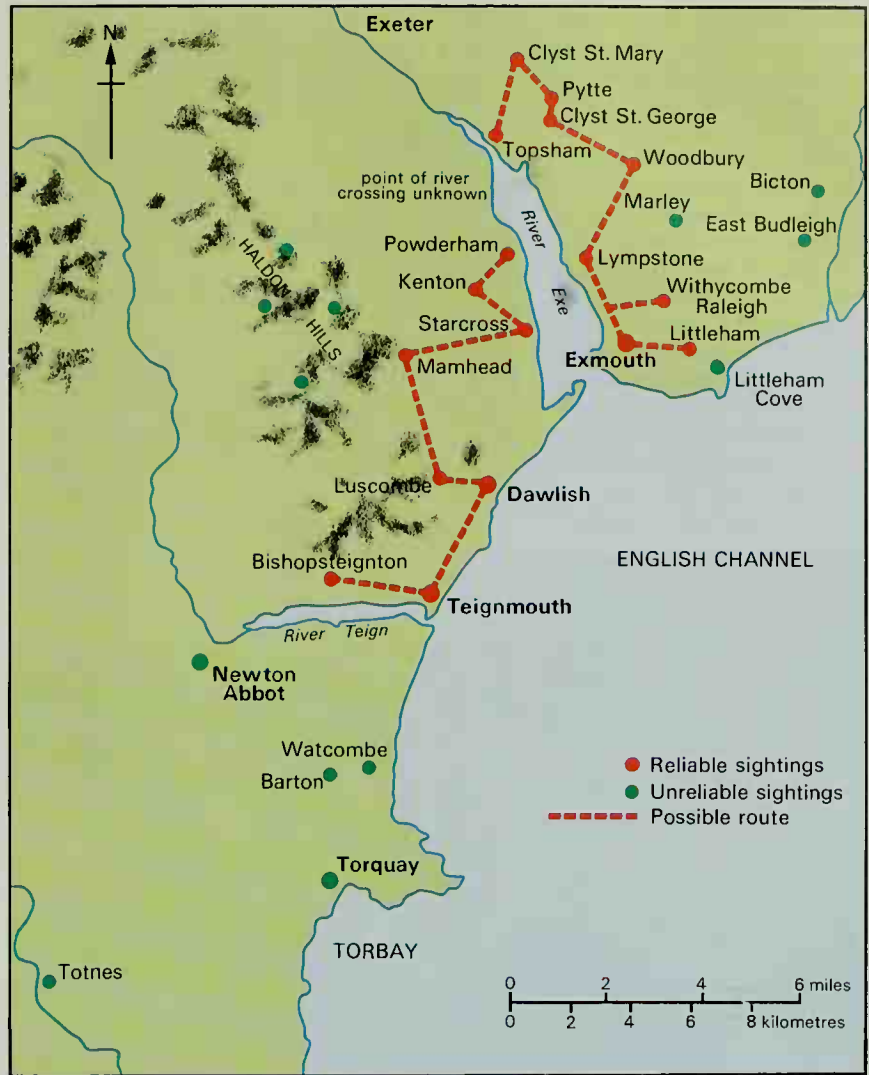


THE WEATHER in the winter of 1855 was very much on the minds of the Victorian public. In the Crimea a British army was slowly dying of exposure, its death throes meticulously chronicled in *The Times* and the illustrated weeklies. At home the Thames was frozen at Kingston and the adventurous were to be seen skating on the Serpentine. In the west of England isolated villages were cut off by flurries of snow; local bakers were unable to bring supplies to the stranded community of Lustleigh in Devon, and in Torquay hundreds were out of work due to the icy conditions. In February the ice on the River Exe was so thick at one point that gas was laid on from the street and revellers cooked a substantial meal; further west the River Teign froze in several places and the sea wall at Teignmouth collapsed, taking with it a section of the railway. Unwary travellers caught out overnight perished in the freezing temperatures.

The night of Thursday, 8 February must have seemed like any other to the inhabitants of the towns and villages along the Exe estuary. There was a heavy fall of snow in the early part of the night, followed by rain, a bitter wind and, in the morning, frost. Yet, accustomed though they were to the peculiarities of nature at her worst, the morning of the 9th gave them something of a surprise. As *The Times* reported on 16 February:

Considerable sensation has been evoked in the towns of Topsham, Lymington, Exmouth, Teignmouth, and Dawlish, in the south of Devon, in consequence of the discovery of a vast number of foot-tracks of a most strange and mysterious description. The superstitious go so far as to believe that they are the marks of Satan himself; and that great excitement has been produced among all classes may be judged from the fact that the subject has been descanted on from the pulpit.

It appears that on Thursday night last there was a very heavy fall of snow



Below: the Thames frozen at Richmond in 1855. That winter was exceptionally severe all over England: villages were cut off, food supplies were restricted, and many people died of the cold

in the neighbourhood of Exeter and the south of Devon. On the following morning, the inhabitants of the above towns were surprised at discovering the tracks of some strange and mysterious animal, endowed with the power of ubiquity, as the footprints were to be seen in all kinds of inaccessible places – on the tops of houses and narrow walls, in gardens and courtyards enclosed by high walls and palings, as well as in open fields. There was hardly a garden in Lymington where the footprints were not observed.

The track appeared more like that of a biped than a quadruped, and the steps were generally eight inches [20 centimetres] in advance of each other. The impressions of the feet closely resembled that of a donkey's shoe, and measured from an inch and a half [4 centimetres] to (in some instances) two and a half inches [6 centimetres] across. Here and there it appeared as if cloven, but in the generality of the steps the shoe was continuous, and, from the snow in the centre remaining entire, merely showing the outer crest of the



Previous page, top: reported sightings of the mysterious footprints in South Devon in February 1855, and the possible route taken (assuming that all the prints were made by the same entity). The trail stops at Bishopsteignton to the west of the River Exe and at Littleham to the east. The point at which the river was crossed is unknown, but it could have been at Topsham where the Exe is only a few hundred yards wide

foot, it must have been convex. [Probably an error – this description and all other accounts indicate that the foot must have been concave.]

The creature seems to have approached the doors of several houses and then to have retreated, but no-one has been able to discover the standing or resting point of the mysterious visitor . . .

At present it remains a mystery, and many superstitious people in the above towns are actually afraid to go outside their doors after night.

Certainly, the appearance of the unidentified footprints overnight, covering such a large area, caused something of a stir. At Dawlish, where the tracks went right through the village, the local hunt set out, accompanied by villagers with guns and clubs, to follow the tracks, 'till at last, in a wood, the hounds came back baying and terrified'. Rumour had

it that many of the marks clearly indicated that the foot that made them was cloven; other reports said it had claws. For the majority of the country-folk, this evidence led to one inescapable conclusion: 'The sages of Lympstone pronounced the *vestigia utiorsum* to be decidedly Satanic: and an Exmouth old woman has taken the occasion to remind us that Satan was to be unchained for a thousand years.' The effect, according to 'G.M.M.', a correspondent to the *Illustrated London News*, was that

labourers, their wives and children, and old crones, and trembling old men [dreaded] to stir out after sunset, or to go out half a mile into lanes or byways, on a call or message, under the conviction that this was the Devil's walk, and none other, and that it was wicked to trifle with such a manifest proof of the Great Enemy's immediate presence . . .

### Following the footprints

Fortunately several observers on the spot were sufficiently scientific in their approach to leave detailed records of the phenomenon. Writing from Newport House, Countess Wear, in the heart of the affected area, a Mr D'Urban, grandson of the man who gave his name to Durban in South Africa, reported: what he had seen:

The marks . . . to all appearance were the perfect impression of a donkey's hoof – the length 4 inches by 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches [10 centimetres by 7 centimetres]; but, instead of progressing as that animal would have done (or indeed as any other would have done), feet right and left, it appeared that foot had followed foot, in a *single line*; the distance from each tread being eight inches [20 centimetres], or rather more . . . This mysterious visitor generally only passed *once* down or across each garden or courtyard, and did so in nearly all the houses in many parts of several towns . . . also in the farms scattered about; this regular track passing in some instances over the roofs of houses, and hayricks, and very high walls . . . without displacing the snow on either side or altering the distance between the feet, and passing on as if the wall had not been any impediment.

Two reverend gentlemen, G. M. Musgrave of Exmouth (the 'G.M.M.' of the *Illustrated London News* columns) and H. T. Ellacombe of Clyst St George, spent some time and energy both following the footprints and corresponding with neighbours on the subject. Their descriptions of the track, which climbed over roofs, under bushes 8 inches (20 centimetres) from the ground, through a 6-inch (15-centimetre) drainpipe, and finally stopped dead in the middle of a field outside Exmouth, need not be doubted. 'My dog barked that night, and so did the dogs of my neighbour where the marks were seen,'



Above: these drawings of the footprints were made by the Reverend G.M. Musgrave and published in the *Illustrated London News* with an accompanying letter. In an attempt to allay the fears of his parishioners, Musgrave suggested that the prints could be those of a kangaroo that was reported to have escaped from a nearby private zoo

Right: a hoofed Devil from a 15th-century stained glass window by Hans Acker. To the superstitious among the inhabitants of South Devon there was no doubt that the footprints in the snow were the marks of Satan himself



commented Ellacombe, significantly.

Inevitably, the reports encouraged a welter of correspondence from people convinced that they held the key to the mystery. It was variously suggested that the visitor was an otter, a crane, a swan, an escaped kangaroo, even a rat jumping with all four feet together, and that the strange shape of the prints was due to atmospheric conditions. Richard Owen, a leading naturalist of the day, studied some drawings made by Ellacombe and pronounced the marks to be the tracks of a badger. Others, mindful that the trail passed over rooftops and appeared on high window-sills, believed a bird was responsible – the hoof-shaped impression caused by ice on its toes. Though more feasible than most, since large flocks of birds were known to have been sheltering in the estuary, this explanation still failed to convince everyone. D'Urban had recently passed a five months' winter in the backwoods of Canada, and has had much experience in tracking wild animals and birds upon the snow, and can safely say, he has never seen a more clearly-defined track, or one that appeared to be less altered by the atmosphere than the one in question . . . No known animal could have traversed this extent of country in one night, besides having to cross an estuary of the sea two miles [3 kilometres] broad. Neither does any known animal walk in a *line* of single footsteps, not even man . . . no bird's foot leaves the impression of a hoof.

#### 'A superstitious folly'

So, is it possible, after 135 years, to discover just what did visit South Devon that winter's night in 1855, causing such 'a superstitious folly'? By carefully sifting contemporary accounts, it is, at least, possible to obtain a better picture of the nature of the mystery. First, though D'Urban later became a respected antiquary, noted for his careful reporting, he was only 19 in 1855, and his writings may have been swayed by over-enthusiasm and hearsay. There is no evidence, certainly, to support his claim that the trail started as far west as Totnes, and only a little to verify its presence at Torquay; most independent accounts suggest that it started west of Teignmouth, passed through Dawlish, travelled northwards on the west side of the Exe estuary and then southwards on the east side, ending outside Exmouth – a much shorter distance than has sometimes been claimed. Only at its mouth is the Exe 2 miles (3 kilometres) wide, and the reports indicate that the mysterious visitor may have walked across the frozen river as far up as Topsham, where it narrows to a few hundred yards. The probability that it passed on the north side of the Teign estuary and on either side of the Exe – as if the creature were trying to avoid crossing water – discredits the rather



Left: Sir Richard Owen, a leading naturalist of the time. In a letter to the *Illustrated London News* of 3 March 1855 he expressed his considered opinion that the footprints were those of a badger (below). The badger is, he remarked, a nocturnal creature that 'comes abroad occasionally in the late winter, when hard-pressed by cold and hunger'. With such footprints, he said, 'those of the fore and hind-foot are commonly more or less blended together, producing the appearance of a line of single footsteps'



Above: the Reverend H.T. Ellacombe, of Clyst St George. He said that some of the prints looked as if they had been made with a branding iron or by carving shapes into the snow with a knife

outlandish 'sea monster theory' that was favoured by some.

Miss Theo Brown, a lecturer at Exeter University and Recorder of Folklore for the Devonshire Association, has studied the case and collected oral traditions relating to it, and believes that some of the marks can be eliminated. At Topsham the tracks were not seen until St Valentine's Day, several days after their appearance elsewhere, suggesting that not all the prints appeared simultaneously, as some described. There are slight differences, too, between the known drawings of the tracks – so maybe they did not share a common origin. Some so clearly resembled a donkey's shoe that they may have been just that, mistaken for something more mysterious in the uproar. Others looked, said Ellacombe, 'as if the snow had been branded with a hot iron or the form of such a shoe had been cut out with a knife to the ground', and may have been the work of practical jokers. Certain of the affected parishes were at the time dallying with Puseyism, a neo-Catholic revival suspected of being rather too Roman, and the fact that the prints went up to the church door in several

of these parishes hints at a human agency seeking to point the finger; certainly one local newspaper referred to a belief that the visitation was 'a warning to the Puseyites'.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to explain away the heart of the mystery. There were 'some thousands of these marks . . . extending over many miles of either side of the Exe and Clyst': even if one discounts a number for the reasons mentioned, the vast majority occurred overnight, and were sufficiently strange to throw the locals – who, like all country-folk, would have known a badger track from that of a rat or a swan – into a state of panic. The so-called 'Great Devon Mystery' remains exactly that.

It is not, however, the only case of mysterious prints in the snow. The *Western Times* reported that 'a similar occurrence



Above: Edward Pusey, a leader of the 19th-century neo-Catholic revival. Some critics of Puseyism saw the footprints as a sign that followers of the movement were possessed by the Devil



About 15 years before the mysterious markings were seen in Devon, the English explorer Sir James Clark Ross (above) had discovered strange single-track prints in the snow at Kerguelen Island (right), which lies near the Antarctic Circle. Called the 'island of desolation', Kerguelen was then uninhabited; seals and seabirds were the only wildlife to be found there. Yet Ross reported the prints he saw as being those of 'a pony or ass . . . and shaped like a horseshoe'

took place here about five years ago' (that is, in about 1850). Subsequent observers have been quick to point out that in May 1840, while on an exploratory trip to the Antarctic, Captain Sir James Clark Ross stopped off at the uninhabited, largely frozen Kerguelen Island and found in the snow unidentifiable 'traces . . . of the singular footprints of a pony, or ass, being 3 inches [7.5 centimetres] in length and 2½ [6 centimetres] in breadth, having a small deeper depression in either side, and shaped like a horseshoe'.

In Scotland, also in 1840, similar tracks were reported 'among the mountains where Glenorchy, Glenlyon and Glenochay are contiguous'. One correspondent, in the wake of the Devon incident, reported that on Piashowa-gora ('sand hill'), a small elevation on the border of Galicia, such marks were to be seen in the snow every year, 'and are attributed by the local inhabitants to supernatural influences'. Footprints left by an apparently one-legged, cloven-footed beast in parts of Inverness at the same time as the 'Devil's hoofmarks' appeared in Devon excited some local speculation but were later explained away by a passing naturalist as the tracks of a hare or polecat. In 1945 science-fiction writer Eric Frank Russell, while serving with the Allied army during the Ardennes campaign, reported seeing similar impressions in the snow. The local people were at a loss to explain them; unfortunately the scarcity of film prevented Russell from making a permanent record.

The question remains. Just what is it that can cover large areas of snowbound countryside in a short space of time, undeterred by obstacles, running in a fast, mincing step and leaving a hoof-shaped footprint?

#### Further reading

J. R. W. Coxhead, *The Devil in Devon*, West Country Handbooks 1967

Rupert T. Gould, *Oddities: a book of unexplained facts*, Carol Publishing Group 1965





## What killed the dinosaurs?

**Dinosaurs are usually thought to have been clumsy, slow-witted monsters, doomed to fail in the struggle for life. But, as FRANK SMYTH shows, they flourished for 140 million years before their sudden extinction. What cataclysm wiped them out?**

THE AGE OF THE DINOSAURS, known to science as the Mesozoic era, began about 225 million years ago. Geologists divide its 160 million years into three periods: the Triassic, which lasted about 32 million years, the Jurassic, which lasted about 57 million years, and the Cretaceous, which lasted about 71 million years.

This time span is so vast as to be beyond comprehension, but we can gain some idea of its magnitude if we consider that mankind's ape-like ancestors appeared only within the last 1.5 million years, and *Homo sapiens*, modern Man, has existed for a mere 50,000 years. When the dinosaurs ruled, Man's ancestors were tiny, rodent-like mammals, which probably formed part of the dinosaurs' diet.

'Dinosaur' means 'terrible lizard', but these great animals were not lizards at all. In the final stages of their development they combined features that are characteristic of

Above: *Triceratops*, one of the later dinosaurs, equipped with three horns and a bony protective frill

Below: the skeleton of *Diplodocus*, which weighed about 10 tonnes in life, dwarfs that of *Triceratops*

present-day reptiles, mammals and birds. They are classed in two great orders: the saurischians ('lizard-hipped creatures') and the ornithischians ('bird-hipped creatures'), named after the distinctive structures of their hip bones.

One group of dinosaurs looked rather like ostriches, but they had stereoscopic vision (both eyes looked forward, giving double



views of a scene and providing three-dimensional vision, as our eyes do). They had fine, finger-like claws capable of delicate handling, and they had large brains. In fact, the brains of some of these creatures were seven times as large as those of modern reptiles, according to Dr Dale Russell of the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa, Canada. Furthermore, their brains were convoluted, giving them an increased surface area. 'In other words,' says Dr Russell, 'they were as intelligent as primitive man.'

These masterminds of their age walked upright on their hind legs and were about the same height as human beings. But the hundreds of other dinosaur species came in weird and varied shapes and sizes, ranging from the flesh-eating *Cynognathus*, which was about as big as an Alsatian dog, to the 35-tonne herbivorous *Brontosaurus*. Through millions of years of evolution the dinosaurs dominated every part of the Earth except the Antarctic regions. They adapted to extremes of heat and cold, ate fish, meat, herbs and foliage and, in the case of some nimble species, may have had sufficiently swift reflexes to snatch primitive birds in flight.

Suddenly – compared with the length of their tenure of the Earth – these conquering creatures, with their great range of abilities, died out, leaving behind only a few distant cousins such as the crocodiles and turtles. Why did they go? Was it with a bang or a

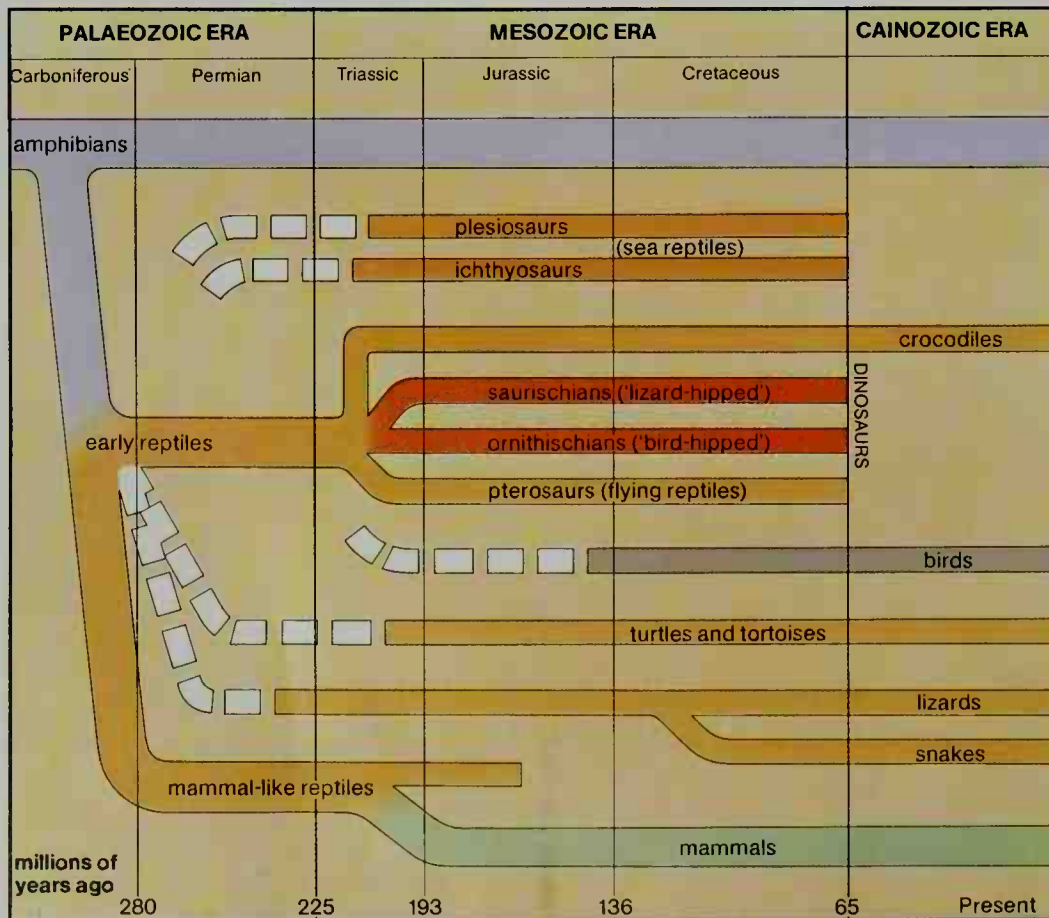
The lineage of the dinosaurs. Ancestors of both reptiles and mammals evolved from amphibians in the Carboniferous period. Some became mammal-like reptiles, while others developed into crocodilians, flying reptiles and dinosaurs in the Triassic period. The mammal-like reptiles vanished, leaving primitive, inconspicuous mammalian descendants, overshadowed by the dominant reptiles. Dinosaur species appeared and disappeared throughout the Mesozoic era, but all vanished in the great extinctions at the end of the Cretaceous period. They may have left descendants, however: some palaeontologists suggest that the birds evolved from one group of saurischians, though the orthodox view is that dinosaurs and birds had common ancestors

whimper? The question has been debated among palaeontologists – the scientists who study fossils – for well over a hundred years, but it is only since the early 1970s that satisfactory answers have been given.

The geological strata of the Earth that date from the Mesozoic era are rich in the remains of the dinosaurs and of the plants, insects, fish and animals that they lived on. From this long-buried debris scientists have been able to build up accurate pictures of the life that flourished during the era.

Like the reptiles, the early dinosaurs evolved from amphibians, sea-dwelling creatures that crawled ashore to lay their eggs. These were amniotic, like a hen's egg: they had a hard, leathery 'shell' that enclosed the embryo in a sac of liquid. They contained a reservoir of yolk too, on which the embryo fed until its limbs were formed and it was ready to emerge.

A variety of beings evolved from these amphibians. One of the most important adaptations in the dinosaurs was in the jaw structure. Generally speaking, the jaws and teeth of reptiles are simple affairs: often the lower jaw consists of two or more loosely articulated bones, enabling the creatures to swallow huge lumps of food that their primitive teeth are incapable of chewing. Fossil remains from the early Triassic period – which are particularly rich in southern Africa and North America – show that the early dinosaurs had developed a single lower



jawbone. The disused extra bones had developed into ossicles, bony plates that make up the structure of the inner ear. The dinosaurs had fairly sophisticated hearing. The teeth, too, had developed from the simple reptilian spike-like form, like crocodiles' teeth, into front incisors, for biting, canines for rending and flat-topped molars for chewing.

Otherwise the varieties of dinosaur had surprisingly little in common with each other. This was largely because of the changing natural conditions of the Mesozoic era and the differing environments in which each variety lived.

### The Earth's changing face

At the beginning of the Triassic period, the climate over about three quarters of the world's surface was warm and even, so that trees and shrubs thrived well inside the areas that now lie in the Arctic Circle. Lush tropical vegetation and swamps resembling those of Florida covered much of Europe, Asia and the Americas – though the land had not yet broken up into the present-day continents. For most of the Jurassic period dinosaurs were able to wander freely over much of the Earth's surface.

Towards the end of the 71-million-year Cretaceous period a mountain-building process termed the Laramide Revolution occurred. The oceans retreated from the plains of North America as ranges such as the



Above: a clutch of eggs laid by *Protoceratops*, ancestor of the horned dinosaurs. Many such nests, containing as many as 18 eggs, have been found in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia

Below: *Brontosaurus* weighed 35 tonnes – yet this colossus had a brain the size of a duck's egg



Rockies were forced into being. Much of Europe and Asia consisted of large islands and finger-like promontories. At this time many modern forms of plant life appeared, including both conifers – such as fir and pine trees – and deciduous trees – elm, oak and beech – as well as grasses and shrubs familiar today.

An early, tentative theory suggested that the changes in the Earth's foliage had affected the dinosaurs' diet, rendering the huge beasts sluggish and less able to take care of themselves: especially by rendering them less well-equipped to fend off the little rodent ancestors of Man, who could pillage their eggs and thus bring about the giants' slow extinction.

This idea was based on the reptilian characteristics of the dinosaurs. Some modern reptiles, such as the Florida alligator, become inefficient when the temperature changes by as little as 5° F (3° C); a greater variation can kill them.

But modern research has shown that the dinosaurs can be only superficially equated with modern reptiles. Some, like the giant plant-eaters *Brachiosaurus* and *Brontosaurus*, were almost certainly warm-blooded, while even the scaly meat-eaters, such as *Tyrannosaurus*, with their skulls 4 feet (1.2 metres) long, formidable brains and savage claws, horns and tails, may have been more mammal than reptile. The most reptilian of the dinosaurs, such as *Stegosaurus*, had triangular plates on their backs, which may have acted as efficient thermostats to control body heat. So heat, or the lack of it, was probably not the direct cause of the death of the dinosaurs.

In any case, how could a climatic variation of a few degrees affect such species as the plesiosaurs, marine leviathans that numbered among their species *Kronosaurus*, with a 12-foot (3.7-metre) skull?

A 19th-century theory looked to the sheer bulk of the majority of dinosaurs for a solution to the problem. In essence it



suggested that the hypophysis, the gland controlling growth, went berserk and increased the size of the dinosaurs to an impossible degree. The known characteristics of some of the big vegetarians, *Brontosaurus* of North America and *Brachiosaurus* of Africa and America, seem at first to support this view. Both were between 60 and 80 feet (18 and 24 metres) long, and weighed about 40 tonnes. Their legs were short and stumpy, and powerful enough to enable them to move about on land, but they may have preferred to spend most of their time in the swamps and lakes, like the modern hippopotamus, where their massive weight was buoyed up by the water.

These creatures fed on marine plant life, although their long, slender necks enabled them to supplement their diet with foliage from trees. At the end of the neck sat a ludicrously small head with weak jaws, housing a brain the size of a duck egg. The body was in fact controlled by a secondary 'brain' – a swelling of the spinal cord located in the pelvic region.

*Brontosaurus* and *Brachiosaurus* were, in effect, eating machines, laboriously consuming around one third of a tonne of plant life a day. According to the 'giantism' theory they spent most of their energy eating, and less energy remained for anything else – even the act of reproduction.

However, 20th-century research has shown that the supposed disadvantages of giantism were often advantages, particularly in reptile-like creatures. Giantism not only affords protection from all but the largest and fiercest predators, but the increased ratio of body weight to surface area helps the beast to conserve body heat, thus cutting down its expenditure of energy.

Above: the marine cousins of the dinosaurs. A plesiosaur, about 6 feet (2 metres) long, dives for its prey in the foreground of this Jurassic seascape. In the distance a school of air-breathing ichthyosaurs leaps from the water. Pterosaurs, flying reptiles that were also related to the dinosaurs, swoop on fish at the right

Right: the break-up of the continents. In Triassic times (top), the world's land formed one super-continent. (The darker areas are continental shelves, which were not covered by sea at all times.) Dinosaurs roamed the world. Towards the end of the Jurassic period (centre), Laurasia and Gondwanaland had started to break apart and the Atlantic had appeared. When the dinosaurs died out (bottom), the continents had largely assumed their present form



So the problem of the dinosaurs' extinction is not solved by the notion that they were too slow, clumsy and weak-brained to cope with nimbler competitors. This idea will not explain the disappearance of creatures such as *Brontosaurus*, which had flourished for millions of years; still less will it explain the passing of the fierce meat-eating dinosaurs. *Allosaurus* was typical of these: it was about 35 feet (10.5 metres) long and moved on powerful hind legs, with its body counterbalanced by a heavy tail, which could also be used as a club. Its forelimbs were savagely clawed, and its large jaws were equipped with ferocious teeth.

Even more formidable was *Tyrannosaurus rex*, about 40 feet (12 metres) long, standing 16 feet (5 metres) high, and weighing about 7 tonnes. All its armament was in its head, which was equipped with double rows of sabre-like teeth, 6 inches (15 centimetres) long. *Tyrannosaurus* may have had impressive brain power, too.

The other order of dinosaurs, the ornithischians, included some species that possessed well-developed defences. They



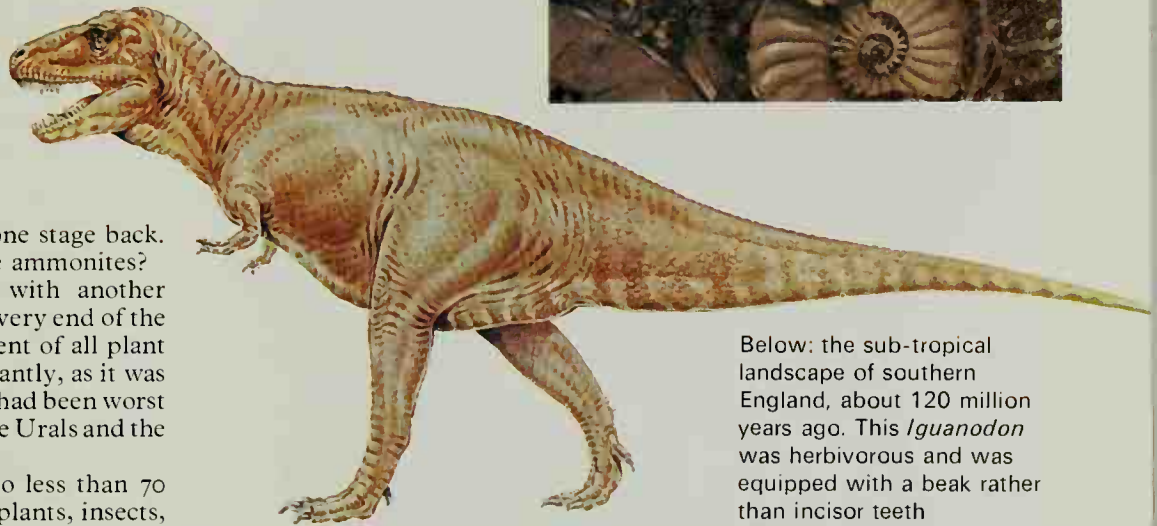
included *Stegosaurus*, the 'plated lizard', which appeared in the Jurassic period. It was a four-footed herbivore, which carried a powerful armament in its tail in the form of a four-pronged spike. Along its spine it sported a double row of triangular plates, which served, probably, as a thermostat, like the 'sail' of *Pelycosaurus*.

Whether fast-moving predator or slow-moving heavily armoured herbivore, the dinosaurs included some of the most successful and best-adapted animals that the world has seen. Whatever wiped them out, it was not any inherent deficiency in their design.

This fact was emphasised when, with the advance of palaeontology, it was realised that the dinosaurs had not suffered alone at the end of the Mesozoic era. Much marine life had died out at the same time. For example the ammonites, an ancient type of mollusc, which sometimes grew to the diameter of a tractor wheel, disappeared at this time.

It was suggested that the ammonites had formed a major part of the diet of plesiosaurs, and that the disappearance of one led to the extinction of the other. But this argument

Right: *Tyrannosaurus*, about 16 feet (5 metres) tall, 40 feet (12 metres) long and 7 tonnes in weight. This dinosaur was the largest carnivore that has ever lived



merely pushed the problem one stage back. What caused the death of the ammonites?

Palaeobotanists came up with another strand to the problem. At the very end of the Mesozoic era, about 50 per cent of all plant life had vanished too. Significantly, as it was to prove, plant life of all kinds had been worst hit in a broad band between the Urals and the Rockies.

It became apparent that no less than 70 per cent of all life on Earth – plants, insects, fish, birds, reptiles and animals – perished in this great wave of extinctions heralding the Tertiary period. What influence could have had this wide-ranging effect? Was it extra-terrestrial in origin?

The Fundamentalist Church of America, which repudiates Darwin's theories, especially insofar as they link mankind to the apes, believes that it has the answer. It was, literally, an act of God that wiped out the dinosaurs, in order to promote the development of the mammals, and especially Man.

To scientists such theories are absurd, explaining nothing. But nonetheless we now know that, had the dinosaurs not perished, it is extremely unlikely that the mammals would ever have evolved beyond the level of the rodents – and, therefore, unlikely that human beings would have established their commanding position on the globe.

Right: a bed of fossilised ammonites. These ancient molluscs resembled the modern nautilus, and one species could grow to a diameter of over 6 feet (2 metres). They became extinct, like so many other life forms, including the dinosaurs, at the end of the Cretaceous period, 65 million years ago



Below: the sub-tropical landscape of southern England, about 120 million years ago. This *Iguanodon* was herbivorous and was equipped with a beak rather than incisor teeth



# Out like a light

Sixty-five million years ago the dinosaurs vanished, with countless other species. Did the disaster originate on Earth or beyond it? FRANK SMYTH describes daring new theories on the death of the dinosaurs – and how they might have inherited the Earth



A STRIP OF REDDISH BROWN CLAY, half an inch (1 centimetre) thick, marks the place in the geological record where the dinosaurs died, about 65 million years ago. Normally it lies deep below the Earth's surface, sandwiched like jam in a sponge cake between the dirty white limestone of the Cretaceous period and the brownish limestone laid down over it during the Tertiary period that followed. Fortunately, geological upheavals in the past few million years have exposed this boundary at about 20 sites on the Earth's surface, enabling scientists to study it. That clay strip holds the key, they believe, to the dinosaur riddle.

One of the most noticeable features of the layer is its freedom from foraminifera, called 'forams' for short. They are a type of marine protozoa, simple single-celled creatures resembling amoebas, which secrete a shell-like substance to protect their soft bodies. In Cretaceous limestone their fossil shells are large enough to be detected with a large hand-lens, while in Tertiary limestone a powerful microscope has to be used to view them. But only long search and sophisticated instruments reveal them in the dividing layer. Like the other life forms, mostly of a primitive type, that bridged the gap between the age of the dinosaurs and the modern world, they had a hard time before they re-established themselves, but with bodies that were smaller than before.

While studying strata on a hillside near Gubbio in Italy in the mid 1970s, Dr Walter Alvarez, a Californian geologist, noticed the near-extinction of the forams. This convinced him that some huge catastrophe had overtaken the world. He took samples back to his father, Dr Louis Alvarez, a professor of physics at the Berkeley campus of the University of California.

Alvarez senior decided first to measure how long the boundary clay layer had taken to form. First he tested it for the presence of the element iridium and then he measured





Above: *Stenonychosaurus*, one of the later, relatively large-brained dinosaurs, with an intelligence as high as a modern opossum

Left: if the dinosaurs had survived, would they have developed like this? Dale Russell suggests that *Stenonychosaurus* could have developed a large brain, an upright posture to support the correspondingly heavy head, and shoulders, permitting the creature to throw heavy objects

Below: running behind the geological 'hammer', a thin layer of dark clay, lying above lighter-coloured rock, marks the end of the Cretaceous period and the time of mass extinctions



the amount present. Broadly speaking, if the amount of iridium was large, the clay layer would have formed over a long period, while if it was small, the layer would have formed over a short period.

This was because there was originally very little iridium in the Earth's surface rocks. The element filters down onto the surface through the Earth's atmosphere at a known rate, however. The more slowly the clay layer formed, the more time there was for iridium to accumulate in it.

Dr Alvarez's measuring was performed by an expensive process called neutron activation analysis. A sample of the clay was placed in the heart of Berkeley's nuclear reactor and bombarded with a flood of neutrons, a type of subatomic particle. The elements in the clay became radioactive, giving off gamma rays that revealed the identities of the elements present and their quantities. The amount of iridium discovered, though minute, was about 30 times larger than had been expected. It was far more than could have been laid down by the well-understood process by which iridium was deposited from the atmosphere. 'In no way,' said Alvarez, 'could it be accounted for by any known terrestrial geochemistry.'

So whatever caused the sudden iridium deposition came from space and may have been the factor that wiped out three quarters of the Earth's life.

Many scientists, including Dale Russell of Ottawa, had speculated on an extra-terrestrial cause for the dinosaurs' death – a supernova, or colossal stellar explosion. If this were sufficiently near, iridium-rich material could have been blown off the Moon. Some would reach the Earth. Living things would be more strongly affected, however, by the supernova's radiation.

Apart from the direct injury this could cause to land-dwelling life, it could have upset the Earth's climate, causing a massive change of sea level, and changing temperatures and patterns of rainfall. The resulting

disruption of food chains in the oceans and on land would have killed off the dinosaurs, along with many other species.

Such explosions in our own Galaxy have been observed at least eight times in history, and with the aid of telescopes are regularly observed in other galaxies. But to affect conditions on Earth, a supernova would have to be, according to Alvarez, 'impossibly close' – doing far more damage than whatever it was that killed the dinosaurs.

There was a test that could be performed. A supernova would have produced quantities of platinum 244, a short-lived radioactive element. Using neutron activation analysis, Alvarez searched for this material in the clay layer. As in other geological strata, it was absent.

Returning to the problem of the high iridium level in the clay layer, Alvarez considered volcanic upheaval as a source. During a large eruption, iridium from the Earth's depths might be thrown up. But no volcanic eruption known could have produced iridium in the required quantities.

However, the impact of a very large meteorite can have effects like those of a volcano and can indeed trigger volcanic activity. Although meteorites are falling on the Earth continually, only about 200 have ever left craters sufficiently large to have survived to the present day. About 50,000 years ago a large meteor created the famous Meteor Crater, a scar in the Earth's surface 1300 yards (1.2 kilometres) across.

### Model of catastrophe

At the California Institute of Technology Alvarez began tests to simulate the effects of a meteorite impact using an instrument called the light gas gun. It was a naval gun barrel filled with hydrogen gas; a plastic ram compressed the hydrogen, causing it to punch a projectile into a target at speeds of up to 15,000 miles per hour (24,000 km/h). Slow-motion film showed what happened at the moment of impact. Scaled up by computer, the experiment was a working model of what would happen to the Earth when a huge meteorite fell.

From his results Alvarez calculated that, in order to produce the quantity of iridium in the Cretaceous-Tertiary clay layer, a meteorite 6 miles (10 kilometres) across would have had to hit the Earth. It would have struck at 50,000 miles per hour (80,000 km/h) and forced into the Earth energy amounting to a billion times that of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

This energy would vaporise surrounding rock and much of the meteorite itself, and throw out a shock wave that would produce a huge mushroom cloud. Dispersed by the hurricane winds created by the shock, this cloud would encircle the Earth.

And this would be disastrous. Plants use the energy of sunlight for their development and growth, and in so doing provide food for

animals. Deprived of light, this process, called photosynthesis, ceases.

Alvarez's thesis was that such a chain of events had happened, but there were several difficulties. None of the 200-odd existing craters was either old enough or large enough to fit the bill. More importantly, total darkness for anything over a year would cause life to die out almost completely. Evolution would have had to begin all over again. This most certainly did not happen.

But there remained the possibility that the meteorite fell in the ocean. What would have happened in that case? Alvarez's colleague, the astronomer Dr Fred Whipple, began to make calculations. The Earth's crust in the continental areas is, on the average, 25 miles (40 kilometres) thick; but beneath the oceans it is much thinner. A body the size of the one postulated by Alvarez would easily penetrate the crust. If it struck one of the mid-ocean ridges, which are the scene of volcanic activity, it could trigger disturbances that would last for thousands of years, causing an island to build up.

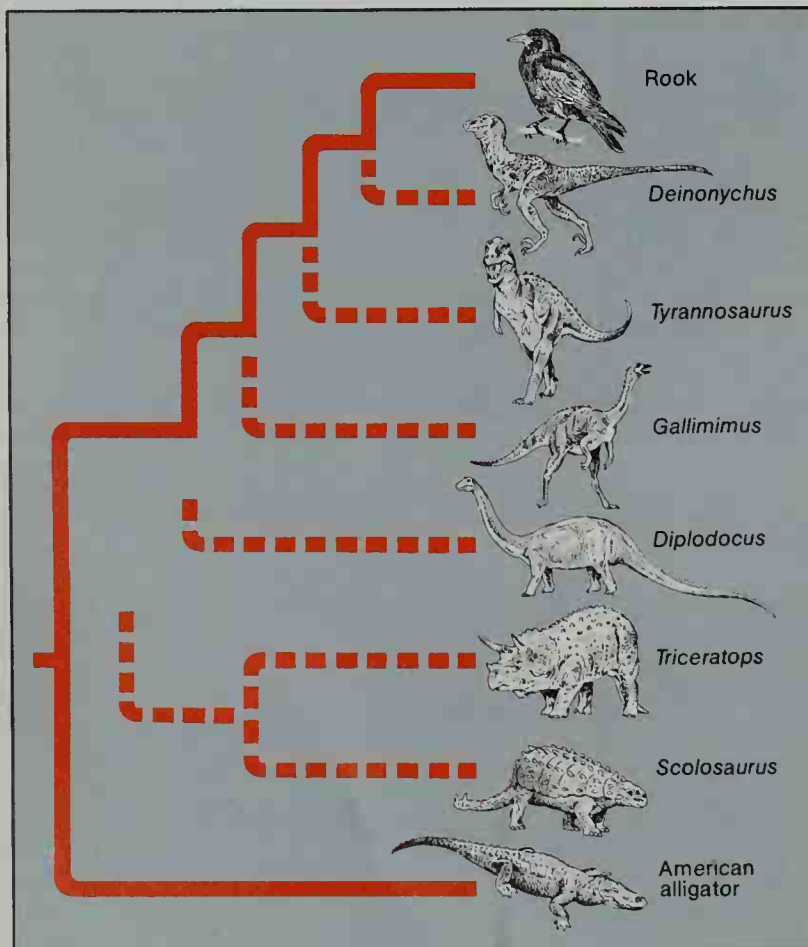
If this is what happened, where is this island today? At first glance Iceland, which is about 60 million years old, seemed an ideal site, but it was ruled out after other geological evidence had been considered.

However, fossil remains had shown that at

the end of the Cretaceous period the extinctions of plant species had been more severe from the Urals eastwards to the Rockies than elsewhere. This suggested that the impact site was originally in the North Pacific. The floor of the Pacific is one of the 'plates' that make up the outer layer of the Earth's 'mantle', which lies beneath the crust. The continents, made of relatively light rock, 'float' on their own plates. Each plate moves like a conveyor belt: in the case of the Pacific plate, new sea bed is formed at the southeastern edge as fresh molten rock wells up from the Earth's depths, while the old sea floor moves north-westward before plunging beneath the Asian plate. A meteorite scar on the Pacific floor would long since have disappeared into the Earth's depths.

Alvarez, Whipple and their colleagues were encouraged by the work of Dr Nicholas Shackleton at the University of Cambridge in England. Shackleton had studied the fossilised forams in rock drilled from the bottom of the North Pacific's Tertiary strata.

Shackleton calculated that the sea water temperature had risen suddenly by up to 5.5 F (3 C) at the beginning of the Tertiary, and that the temperature had remained high for between 10,000 and 100,000 years. The carbon content of the rock revealed a 'massive decrease in the productivity of the



## Meaningful relationship

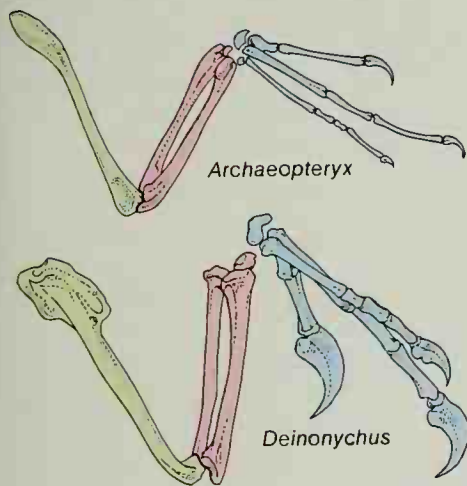
Palaeontologists work out the probable ancestry of ancient species, both extinct and living, by a careful comparison of the resemblances and differences in their structures. A feature that is common to two different species because it has been inherited from some common ancestor is called a homology. Examples are the feathers of birds, which are regarded as showing their common ancestry. The relationships inferred from studying homologies are shown in a 'cladogram' ('branching diagram'), like that at the left. This one shows that, among the dinosaurs, *Deinonychus* is more closely related to *Tyrannosaurus* than to *Gallimimus*: the first two have a common ancestor not shared by the third. *Triceratops* is more distantly related still, because it has a yet more remote ancestor in common with the previous species. The dotted lines and gaps signify the great uncertainties in fossil lineages.

The diagram shows what are currently believed to be the likely relationships of the dinosaurs with some modern creatures. Birds, crocodylians (which include crocodiles and alligators) and the dinosaurs all had some distant ancestor. The birds seem to be much more closely related to certain dinosaur species than



Above: *Deinonychus* gets its name from the Greek meaning 'terrible claw'. Fast-moving and up to 9 feet (3 metres) long, it could use its hind claws as fearsome weapons. It probably used its outstretched tail to provide balance when it was running at full speed

Above left: Meteor Crater, a bowl 1300 yards (1.2 kilometres) across, was blasted out of the landscape of Arizona, USA, 50,000 years ago. The meteorite that caused it was puny by comparison with the asteroid-sized object that, according to some scientists, caused the death of the dinosaurs



do the crocodylians, however. The bones of the forelimbs (above) are closely homologous and the wristbone (the uppermost bone in these diagrams) is especially convincing to palaeontologists.

*Archaeopteryx*, the first known bird, had feathers and wings, but opinions differ as to how well it could fly. The traditional view, still widely accepted, holds that it descended from the common ancestors of all reptiles, rather than from a dinosaur.

It is by numerous features, as well as these, that palaeontologists have concluded that birds are the closest relatives of the dinosaur surviving today.

oceans' during this period: a great deal of life had disappeared from the shallower waters, while deep-living organisms had survived.

The superheating of the ocean is just what would be expected if a meteorite were to smash into the sea bed. There would have been one significant difference between an impact in the ocean and one on land. In the case of a sea strike, millions of tonnes of water, largely in the form of steam, would have accompanied the mineral debris into the atmosphere. Total darkness would have enveloped the Earth, but only for a matter of hours or days: torrential global rains would have swilled much of the dust from the sky, allowing sunlight to filter through.

But plant life on land and in the sea would have been seriously damaged, with disastrous effects on the animals that fed on them. Furthermore, millions of tonnes of water vapour would hang in the atmosphere for years, creating a 'greenhouse effect' – a worldwide rise in temperature. This stifling humidity could have killed the dinosaurs – even those best adapted to temperature changes, such as the more mammalian species, and those equipped with thermostatic 'sails' and plates on their backs. Only the smaller species, including Man's ancestors, lived on to inherit the planet.

This may be the answer to the problem of the disappearance of the dinosaurs. It leaves a greater question: how would the dinosaurs have developed had they survived? Dale Russell is certain he has the answer:

There has never been any evidence that dinosaurs as a group were on a decline. If they hadn't been wiped out they would have continued to prosper. They had kept the mammals down for a hundred million years. Some dinosaurs would have undoubtedly grown highly encephalised – large-brained – exactly like ourselves. They may well have been ruling the world today.

#### Further reading

Alan Charig, *A new look at dinosaurs*, Facts on File 1985

Kai Petersen, *Prehistoric life on Earth*, Eyre Methuen 1978

Z. V. Spinar, *Life before Man*, Thames and Hudson 1974

# Into thin air

People, animals and ordinary household objects that vanish into thin air or appear suddenly in unlikely places – these have always been part of folklore. But, as LYNN PICKNETT points out, the disappearances continue . . .

**VANISHED**

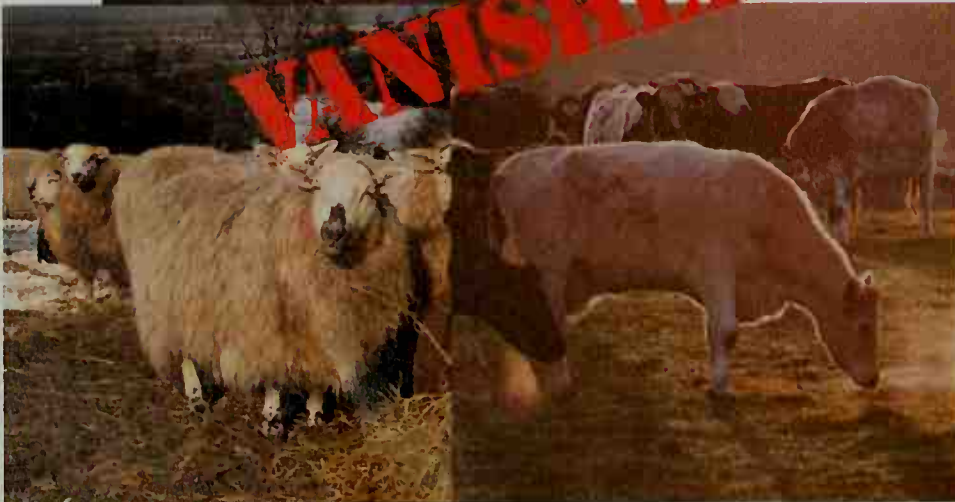


Right: Benjamin Bathurst, a Foreign Office employee, who disappeared in Berlin in 1809

Below: pigs, sheep and heifers were the victims of a series of disappearances from a farm near Manchester in 1974



**VANISHED**



'NOW YOU SEE HER, now you don't.' So runs the stage illusionist's traditional patter as he makes his assistant disappear. It's a skilful and enjoyable trick, this disappearing act – but even in the everyday world, far from the stage door, there have been many disappearances and strange reappearances. Only for a handful of them are there rational explanations; most of them are so extraordinary that they almost defy belief.

On 29 November 1809 Benjamin Bathurst, an employee of the British Foreign Office, was about to board a coach outside an inn near Berlin. He went to look at the horses and vanished forever.

In June 1900, Sherman Church ran into a cotton mill at Augusta Mills near Lake Michigan, USA. He never came out and could not be found again.

In 1974 pigs, sheep and heifers vanished from two farms near Manchester, England.

Weird and apparently random phenomena such as these were the province of Charles Hoy Fort, an American who published his *Book of the damned* in 1919. This – his most famous book – is a collection of well-attested stories, with a few sly hints that the natural world is one huge practical joke expressed through rains of frogs, people who disappear into nothing and people who come from nowhere. Charles Fort coined the word *teleportation* to describe the forcible removal of a person or object from one place – or even plane of existence – to another by agencies unknown and, unseen. According to taste, these forces have been ascribed to God, the Devil, spirit guides, fairies and UFOs.

## Sister Mary's missionary flights

Sometimes the teleportelee seems to be actually in two places at once – this phenomenon is called *bilocation*. A famous case of bilocation occurred in 1620 when a young nun, Sister Mary of Agreda in Spain, embarrassed her superiors with her persistent tales of her missionary 'flights' to the Jumano Indians in Mexico; she claimed she regularly made the 2000-mile (3200-kilometre) journey. No one was prepared to take her seriously, especially as she was not missed at the convent at Agreda and she made the far-fetched claim that, during her 'flight', she noticed that the earth was round. . . . Yet the official Papal missionary assigned to the Jumano, Father Alonzo de Benevides, complained to the Pope in 1622 that the Indians had already been taught about the Catholic faith by a mysterious 'lady in blue' who had handed out rosaries, crucifixes and even a chalice – which proved to be from the convent in Agreda.

On being closely questioned by Father Benevides, Sister Mary revealed a detailed knowledge of the Indians' way of life and language and described individual members of the tribe accurately.

Like most teleportation stories, that of Sister Mary and her missionary activities

seems to defy classification and analysis. The fact that she 'saw' that the earth was round indicates some kind of astral travel, yet the chalice was solid enough.

The sudden appearance of solid objects, often in sealed rooms, is called *apportation*. Apports can be literally anything, from stones or musical instruments to a dish of hot food or fresh flowers out of season.

### Things that go bump . . .

Apportation seems to be a favourite diversion of poltergeists, or so-called mischievous spirits; disturbed houses often provide the setting for spectacular apports appearing from thin air. Hans Bender, Director of the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene (Institute for Border Areas of Psi) in Freiburg, West Germany, has this to say of experiences of 'things that go bump in the night':

Stones, for instance, come into a closed room from outside a house during poltergeist attacks. Witnesses describe the stones falling from about 5 or 6 inches [12 or 15 centimetres] from the ceiling. They don't bounce, and when you touch them they are usually warm.

In one case . . . in Bavaria in 1969, stones came into a closed kitchen and objects flew out of the locked house. Some little dolls came out of a closed cupboard, seemingly through the very fabric of the door, and the people saw small bottles – perfume and medicine bottles – coming from the roof of the house. Interestingly, when the bottles were seen coming from the house, they were not falling in a straight line, but in a zigzag fashion, as if they were being transported, not as if they were falling free.

This notion of apports being *carried* by an invisible force accords perfectly with the spiritualists' belief that solid objects can be dematerialised and materialised through the agency of spirits. One 'spirit guide' named White Hawk described how he does it: 'I can only explain it by saying that I speed up the atomic vibrations until the stones [or other apport] are disintegrated. Then they are brought here and I slow down the vibrations until they become solid again.'

Spiritualists often explain the inability of most mortals to see the 'other side' – which is said to interpenetrate our world in space and time – by pointing out that the material world is 'dense matter', which vibrates slowly; the spiritual plane is 'refined matter', vibrating too fast for our physical perceptions. A sudden change in atomic vibration removes objects – or people – from one plane to another or one place to another, rather like the 'beaming up' and 'beaming down' of the personnel of *Star Trek's* starship *Enterprise*.

Vanishing people have always been part of the world's folklore – fairies, giants, spirits and, recently, UFOs have allegedly abducted

Below: Sister Mary of Agreda, who made her alleged missionary 'flights' to convert the Jumano Indians of Mexico in 1620. When the first official papal missionary visited the Jumano in 1622, he found that they had already been taught about Christianity – by a mysterious 'lady in blue'. Yet Sister Mary's fellow nuns in Agreda, Spain, testified that she had not left the convent during the time that she claimed to have been in Mexico

Bottom: Dr Hans Bender, Director of the Institute for Border Areas of Psi in Freiburg in Breisgau, West Germany. Dr Bender has made a special study of objects and people that mysteriously appear and disappear



hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people. Fairies were infamous for their trick of abducting healthy babies and leaving weak 'changelings' behind instead, and various demons of legend have been blamed for removing folk from 'before the very eyes' of their friends.

But some unfortunate people disappear without any apparent supernatural agency. These random and pointless disappearances fascinated Fort, who collected a formidable dossier of them. The victims are often typical 'men in the street', uninterested in the paranormal, on whom some practical joke seems to have been played.

The 'joke' was distinctly unfunny for a man in 1655 who was going about his business in Goa, India, when he suddenly found himself back in his birthplace, Portugal. This abrupt return home was witnessed by enough people to ensure it came to the ears of the Inquisition, who naturally – for them – assumed he was a practising sorcerer. He was tried and burnt at the stake.

In Connecticut, in January 1888, passers-by were astonished by the sudden materialisation of six people in the street. All six were suffering from concussion.

### The magician vanishes

Perhaps the most ironical dematerialisation was that of the stage magician, William Neff, as related by his friend L. J. Knebel, the American broadcaster. This extraordinary happening took place at the Paramount Theatre, in New York. There were few people in the audience and Neff went into his magician's patter routinely. His friend Knebel heard none of it: he was transfixed by the gradual dematerialisation of the artist. Neff became so translucent that the stage curtains could be seen through him. Curiously, the magician seemed to be unaware of his nebulous state and continued with his patter. Gradually he became solid again, beginning with a vague outline. Confronted by Knebel with this amazing occurrence, Neff confessed it was nothing whatever to do with his act! However, he was no stranger to the phenomenon – he had once partially dematerialised during his act at Chicago, and once, 'casually', in front of his very shaken wife. One supposes that if he ever learned how to reproduce this freak happening at will, he would have become a very rich man.

Someone whose fate and fortune seem inextricably linked is the Israeli sensitive, Uri Geller. Although – as far as we know – not a teleporte, his very presence in a house provokes a flurry of apports.

Professor John Hasted, head of the department of physics at Birkbeck College, University of London, set up a test to see if the young Israeli could in any way alter the structure of a vanadium carbide crystal – chosen for its particular hardness and its rarity. It was laid on a piece of metal and

enclosed in a cellulose capsule. First the professor interposed his hand between Geller and the crystal. Then as witnesses watched, Geller moved his hand, and the crystal jumped twice, 'like a jumping bean'. Apparently this was all Geller had intended to do, because Professor Hasted says 'Geller stopped concentrating and we looked at the capsule. Only half the crystal was there.' It would have been impossible for him to have broken the capsule by ordinary means.

After Geller had paid a short visit to Professor Hasted's home, solid objects began to behave unpredictably:

A small ivory ornament appeared out of thin air, not flying, but dropping to the ground from about a foot [30 centimetres] above the floor. There was also the key of a French Empire clock that teleported from one room to the next. I found it on the floor, by the kitchen door, and put it back in its proper place. . . . I walked back into the kitchen and found it lying in the same place on the floor.

Uri Geller seems to have a psychokinetic ability (power of mind over matter) that he can only partially control or predict. Ironically, it is this very lack of control that, many people consider, argues for his genuineness – anything too glib implies rehearsal or sleight of hand.

This suspicion attached itself to the feats of many famous Victorian mediums. So many of them were proved to fake their seances that any curious phenomena attached to their movement became suspect. Even the founder of Theosophy, the controversial Madame Blavatsky, was frequently suspected of sleight of hand – for example, a whole teaset conveniently fell out of the sky during a picnic and, more tellingly, her 'teleported' messages allegedly from her Master in Tibet contained whole passages from a recently published American sermon – a fact that, while it does not directly challenge the reality



Above: Uri Geller, the Israeli sensitive, whose presence causes objects to appear

Below: 'a moonlight transit of Venus' – a contemporary impression of the teleportation across London of the large Mrs Guppy in 1871



of the teleported letter, reveals the Tibetan Master as a plagiarist and on the whole not the sort of guru whose word should be taken as gospel.

Another medium whose phenomena were both spectacular and open to question was Mrs Guppy who, while still Miss Nichol, produced apparitions of six variegated anemones, 15 chrysanthemums and assorted other flowers at a London seance in 1867.

One of her more startling feats, however, seems to be genuine. On the evening of June 3rd 1871 Mrs Guppy, attired in her nightgown (some reports say her underwear), was sitting quietly in the breakfast room of her Highbury home, busy with the household accounts. A friend was with her, when suddenly she disappeared and appeared in a room in Lamb's Conduit Street (a few miles away) where a seance was in progress, still clutching her accounts book and in a trance. That she was as solid in Lamb's Conduit Street as in Highbury was borne out by the fact that her materialisation caused some buffeting round the seance table. There was a heavy thud on the table and one of the sitters cried out 'Good God – there is something on my head!' One sympathises; Mrs Guppy was described as 'the biggest woman in London'. She weighed over 230 lbs (100 kilograms) and, as she was something of a figure of fun, the whole story, instead of being the psychic proof of the phenomenon of teleportation so many mediums were looking for, became the biggest joke for years.

Fort, with his theory of the cosmic joke, might have pointed out that Mrs Guppy's name, size and joke reputation were precisely why it was she and not, say, Queen Victoria, who was 'selected' for this astonishing psychical demonstration . . . and why it was a stage illusionist who dematerialised 'before your very eyes'.

## The famous case of the 'Mary Celeste'

On 5 December 1872 the captain of the brigantine *Dei Gratia* sighted a ship sailing so clumsily that he went to investigate. The mystery deepened as he explored the abandoned *Mary Celeste*. Although showing signs of some storm damage, she was still sea-worthy. One lifeboat had apparently been launched (rather than having been washed overboard), but there was still plenty of fresh water aboard, provisions for six months were intact and the crew's clothes – including their oilskins – were hanging



on their pegs. On one bunk a child's toys lay as if left in mid-game. Everywhere there were signs of abrupt abandonment – however, the ship's navigation instruments and some papers were missing (although the log remained). The only signs of something bizarre were two long grooves apparently etched into the wood above the waterline, blood-like stains on the deck and on the captain's sword in his deserted cabin, and a mysterious cut in the ship's rail. What really happened? Did the crew fall victim to illness, insanity, homicide, suicide or the delusion that they were sinking? Were they abducted by giant sea-creatures or spacemen, as some suggest? The theories are many, but it seems very likely that we shall never know for certain.



# Who are the abductors?

**What is the truth behind the phenomenon of mysterious disappearances? Who, or what, are the abductors? LYNN PICKNETT attempts to answer these questions and chronicles more cases of inexplicably vanishing people**

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DISAPPEARING mysteriously since the beginning of time, but the agencies blamed for abducting them have changed according to the spiritual preoccupations of the day. Gods, demons, fairies, spirits, and now UFOs show an astonishing predilection for what seems to be the random picking up and setting down – or picking up and not returning – of perfectly ordinary people.

In 1678 a Dr Moore and his three friends were touring Ireland. They put up for the night at an inn at Dromgreagh in Wicklow. Something prompted the doctor to tell his tale about how he had been abducted many times as a child by fairies, only to be rescued by the intervention of the local witch's magic. And even as he spoke the whole process went into motion again . . .

He saw a 'troop of men' come into the inn and drag him off with them. Frightening enough for him – but terrifying for the three witnesses, for all they saw was Dr Moore being pulled out of his chair and out of the room by an invisible but irresistible force. His friends made a grab at him but the force was too strong, and he vanished into the

night. The innkeeper recommended they send for the local wise woman. She explained that the doctor had been abducted by the local fairies and was their prisoner in a nearby wood. She could break their hold on him, but her spell would only work for his release if he could be made to abstain from food and drink during his imprisonment. If not, he would return but would soon weaken and die. She cast her spell and they all waited.

Next morning at dawn Dr Moore came back to the inn, starving and thirsty, complaining that all the refreshments he had been offered during the night had inexplicably been dashed out of his hand. Unknown to him, the old woman's spell had been working and had finally secured his release – as morning came he had discovered he was suddenly alone near the inn.

The three witnesses attested to the story. It was published as a pamphlet and signed by one J. Cotham; a copy is now preserved in the British Museum.

Two thousand miles and nearly 300 years away, another story of abduction with witnesses reflects an entirely different preoccupation. On 5 November 1975 Travis Walton, a young forester, and his five workmates were driving to work near Snowflake, Arizona. They suddenly saw a bright light hovering over their truck. As the driver, Mike Rogers, stopped the car, Travis felt an extraordinary

Below: fairies abducting a human child, from a 19th-century book illustration. Folklore is full of tales of children being stolen by fairies, who leave their own fairy children – changelings – in their place



compulsion to approach the light. He jumped out and rushed towards it. There was a sudden flash of light, and Travis hit the ground. Terrified, the others drove off. When they had calmed down, they returned to the same spot and instigated a thorough search that was to last for five days and cover miles of the Arizona desert and forest. Suspicion naturally fell on the five friends, but their distress seemed completely genuine and their story held up even under close questioning with the aid of a lie-detector.

Five days later, a confused and shaky Walton appeared in Heber, a small town close to Snowflake. His story tallied with that of his friends – as far as theirs went – but he added some amazing details. The beam of light had knocked him unconscious and then somehow drawn him up into a spacecraft in which he was examined by foetus-like creatures before being ‘dumped’ in Heber.

The 1880s saw a large number of disappearances from East London, known to this day as the ‘West Ham disappearances’. One of the first victims was little Eliza Carter, who vanished from her home but later appeared in the street and spoke to some of her school friends. They tried to persuade her to



Above: Travis Walton, a young forestry worker who says he was mysteriously abducted by a UFO while driving to work near Snowflake, Arizona, USA on 5 November 1975. Five days later he reappeared, telling an amazing story of his ‘flight’ in the unknown craft

country station some mile and a half from my Sussex home. The train from London had arrived late, the bus had gone and no taxis were available. The rain was heavy and incessant. The time was 5.55 p.m. and I was expecting an important trunk call from overseas at 6 p.m. at home. The situation seemed desperate. To make matters worse, the station call box was out of order and some trouble on the line made access to the railway telephone impossible. In despair I sat down in the waiting room and having nothing better to do, I compared my watch with the station clock. Allowing for the fact that this is always kept two minutes in advance, I was able to confirm the fact that the exact time was 5.57 p.m. Three minutes to zero hour! What happened next I cannot say. When I came to myself I was standing in my hall at home, a good 20 minutes walk away, and the clock was striking six. My telephone call duly came through a few minutes later. Having finished my call, I awoke to the realisation that something very strange had happened. Then



go home to her family, but she said she couldn't – ‘they’ wouldn't let her. She was seen around West Ham for a couple of days before finally disappearing forever.

A similar case was that of Private Jerry Unwin of the US Army, who disappeared, reappeared, absented himself and appeared once more, before vanishing again on 1 August 1959.

The experience was not pleasant, and a far cry from the semi-mystical experience of the abductees portrayed in the film *Close encounters of the third kind*, but it was kin to the whole history of mysterious abductions.

The late psychic and writer Wellesley Tudor Pole recounted a strange tale of teleportation, in his book *The silent road* (1962):

On a wet and stormy night in December, 1952, I found myself at a

Above right: Eliza Carter, the 12-year-old schoolgirl who disappeared mysteriously in East London in January 1882. Her case was the first of a series of abductions that came to be known as the ‘West Ham disappearances’

Above: a series of sketches showing the fate of one Amelia Jeffs, thought to be another victim of the West Ham disappearances. This time, however, there was no mystery: clues quickly led police to the discovery of the little girl's body



much to my surprise, I found that my shoes were dry and free from mud, and that my clothes showed no sign of damp or damage.

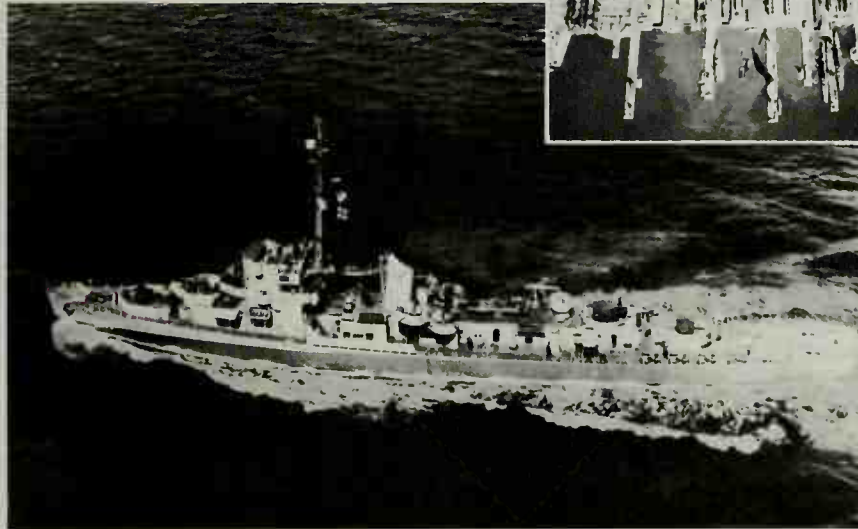
Like all such stories, there is something exasperatingly incomplete about this strange tale. Wellesley Tudor Pole has told all he can remember, but inevitably the phenomenon raises questions he cannot answer. As there were no witnesses in this case, no one will ever know how – or if – the teleported disappeared. Did he literally vanish? Was he transported invisibly? How did he reappear? But at least one thing seems certain – what triggered off the teleporting agency seems to have been no less than the writer's own will. He was desperate to get home in time for his telephone call and his anxiety seems to have put into motion whatever

natural law it is that governs the occurrence of the phenomenon.

Desire could also explain the bilocation of Sister Mary of Agreda (see page 703); intense piety and missionary zeal could have generated the unknown energies needed to transport a facsimile of herself to Mexico.

But in the annals of disappearing people there is no more controversial tale nor one stranger than the alleged 'Philadelphia experiment'. In 1943 there reportedly took place a horrifying experiment into invisibility involving a ship and its crew. This was not a psychic test, but a top-secret experiment of the United States Navy. According to Charles Berlitz and William Moore in their book *The Philadelphia experiment* (1979), the surviving witnesses to the experiment still suffer harassment and have been repeatedly warned against discussing it by government agents.

A force field was created around the experimental ship – a destroyer – as it lay in a special berth in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The crew could see one another normally but witnesses could only see the vague outline of both ship and men through the force field. They shimmered like a heat haze before



One of the most extraordinary disappearances ever allegedly took place in 1943, when the US Navy is reported to have carried out a horrifying experiment in invisibility, and succeeded in making a destroyer, the USS *Eldridge* (bottom), together with its crew, disappear for a few minutes from its berth in the Philadelphia Navy Yard (below). However, as most of the evidence comes from a single witness, it is impossible to judge whether the experiment took place



re-assuming normal shape and density. The effect on the crewmen involved was said to be appalling. The after-effects took various horrible forms: some of the men are said to have suffered a particularly harrowing form of spontaneous human combustion (see also pages 2692, 2696 and 2700) – bursting into flames that burned brightly for 18 days; some went mad, and yet others periodically became semi-transparent or partly invisible. Some died as a result of their experience.

An eyewitness claimed to have seen the entire experiment take place, and even to have thrust his arm into the force field that surged

in a counterclockwise direction around the little experimental Navy ship . . . I watched the air all around the ship . . . turn slightly darker than all the other

air . . . I saw, after a few minutes, a foggy green mist arise like a thin cloud. I think this must have been a mist of atomic particles. I watched as [it] became rapidly invisible to human eyes. And yet the precise shape of the keel and underhull of that ship remained impressed into the ocean water . . . The field had a sheet of pure electricity around it as it flowed . . . my entire body was not within that force field when it reached maximum strength density . . . and so I was not knocked down but my arm and hand was [sic] only pushed backward

The US Navy deny that the experiment took place. Yet the story is too persistent and has too much inner consistency to be dismissed entirely. If 'project invisibility' did take place, then it made scientific history – but compared to 'natural' disappearances it was clumsy and very dangerous.

The US Navy did have an interest in invisibility that can be verified, however. In September 1980 they made it known that they were experimenting with *radar* invisibility, but escaping a radar scan is a far cry from disappearing from human sight.

If it were possible to harness the 'natural force' that occasionally drags people from one place or plane of existence to another in a matter of seconds, or makes them invisible, then life as we know it would change completely. Whole armies could suddenly materialise unexpectedly in the country of their foes; spies could invisibly slip past the guards at top secret installations; criminals dematerialise when the law draws too close. . . .

Yet perhaps the clue, such as it is, lies in the very randomness of the phenomenon. Perhaps there is no natural force but, paradoxically, a random law creating freak effects for their own sake. This suggests a governing intelligence, a cosmic joker like the one who perhaps stage-manages the manifestations of the Loch Ness Monster, UFOs, bigfoot . . . and who jams the witnesses' cameras at the critical moments or contrives to discredit witnesses. So we come full circle – is the joker a god, a demon, a fairy, a spirit or a UFO?

Researcher Ivan T. Sanderson said of the UFO phenomenon, 'It cannot be all bunkum yet some of its implications are so bizarre as to be almost beyond comprehension.' This could well apply to all 'Fortean' phenomena. Those who disappear for ever – do they go to some other world, some other plane, or do they find themselves in that other unexplored region, the furthest reaches of the human mind? If abductions are ascribed to the agencies currently in vogue – put, as Fort said, 'in terms of the familiar' – then the phenomenon must be at least partly 'in the mind'. Yet the disappearances are real.

It is likely that such phenomena will remain unexplained until a comprehensive explanation for all strange phenomena can be formulated. Until then – who knows?

#### Further reading

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# Another time, another place

**There are not many cheap hotels that offer superb hospitality in an atmosphere of old-world charm. Four friends, however, discovered just such a place – or did they?**

Holiday memories tend to blur with time but for Len and Cynthia Gisby and their friends Geoff and Pauline Simpson – whose story was first reported in the *Dover Express* of 11 October 1982 – the trip they took together in October 1979 is one they will never forget.

The foursome were driving through France, en route for their holiday in Spain, when they decided to call it a day and find an hotel. They stopped at a motel on the main Montelimar Nord autoroute, but it was fully booked, and they were told to try a road further on.

It was 10 p.m. when the couples from Dover eventually found an old hotel set in a tree-lined lane, just off the main autoroute. They pulled into a lay-by opposite the building and parked the car. Having driven several hundred kilometres that day the Gisbys and Simpsons were naturally feeling tired, and the old-world atmosphere that greeted them when they pushed open the heavy wooden door of the hotel was a comforting one. The landlord, a jovial middle-aged man, had no trouble in understanding English. After booking two rooms the friends settled down to a meal of steak, eggs and chips served up on old-fashioned plates. There were tankards of lager to follow. Satisfied with the meal the couples decided to turn in for the night.

There were some surprises in store for them when they investigated their bedrooms. 'We were struck by how old-fashioned they were,' said Len. 'The beds were very high with bolsters instead of pillows. And there were thick sheets and several blankets, and the windows didn't have any glass in them, just wooden shutters. The doors didn't have any locks either, just wooden latches. We weren't all that bothered because everything was very comfortable and, being in rural France, we just thought that that was the way of life there.'

The bathroom – which was shared – was also somewhat unusual. The old-fashioned tub was on legs and there was an equally ancient-looking shower attached to the wall and covered by a grille. Even the soap, instead of the usual loose tablets, was attached to the bath by an iron rod.

At 7 a.m. the next day, after a good night's sleep, the foursome sat down to a typical continental breakfast of coffee, bread and jam. Just as they were finishing their meal a young woman came in, followed immediately by two gendarmes. Len was struck by the men's uniforms: both wore gaiters, high hats and capes – outfits quite dissimilar to the ones they had seen gendarmes wearing the day before. Len said: 'The young woman was dressed strangely too, in a long chiffon dress and button-up boots, the type I remember my granny used to wear.'

Len asked the gendarmes for directions to the autoroute for Avignon. 'The French policemen seemed puzzled at the word autoroute but they gave directions for Avignon,' said Len.

Once breakfast was over, Mr Gisby sought out the landlord to settle the bill and was



The Gisbys (in the foreground) and the Simpsons enjoying themselves in a restaurant that *does* appear in the guide books

surprised to find his host charged him only 19 francs (the equivalent of £1.70 today). 'I thought there must be a mistake,' said Len. 'I'd reckoned on between 200 and 250 francs for the four of us, but he insisted the bill was right and I paid up.'

Before setting out for Spain, Len and Geoff took photographs of their wives standing by the shutters in their rooms. When they eventually set off they found that there was an autoroute to Avignon, though the gendarmes had not been at all forthcoming about this and their directions had referred only to the original Avignon road.

### **The hotel vanishes**

One doesn't pass up an opportunity to spend a cheap night in a comfortable hotel so, on their return from Spain, the Gisbys and Simpsons again turned off the Montelimar Nord autoroute into the tree-lined avenue they remembered the hotel being in – but the place had vanished! Thinking they must have missed it, they turned around and drove back. Three times they drove up and down the avenue, but the hotel was nowhere to be seen. Even the place where they had parked the car – the lay-by backed by a brick wall – was missing.

'I am certain as can be that we were on the right road,' said Len. 'We went to the same Montelimar Nord turn-off, passed the same motel where we had originally asked for accommodation and where we had been advised to try down the road.'

'We passed the same building on that road we passed before, with the same advertising sign on it and the same roadworks signs. We couldn't have been on a different road. That was the main road between Avignon and Lyon, apart from the autoroute.'

According to Len, everything about the place was the same, apart from the lay-by, the wall and the hotel.

The foursome were forced to continue to Lyon, where they stayed at an hotel that charged them 247 francs for bed and breakfast, evening meal and drinks.

Puzzling over the strange event the couples returned to Dover. Two weeks later, when the holiday photographs were developed, the mystery deepened. For on both rolls of film that Geoff and Len had taken, every photograph had come out with the exception of the ones taken at the mystery hotel. There were not even any spoiled negatives on the roll of film; it was as if the photographs had never been taken.

Later, talking over the bizarre occurrence with a French dressmaker friend, Len and Cynthia were surprised to learn that the three people they had seen that morning in the hotel must have been wearing clothes that dated back to the early 1900s. According to the friend, the style of the gendarmes' uniforms had certainly not been worn since 1905.

Of all the explanations that the Gisbys and Simpsons have been given, for Len and Cynthia, at least, only one seems to ring true. The couple are both sympathetic to the idea that what they experienced was a timeslip – the phenomenon that involves a person moving backwards or forwards in time and seeing and participating in life as it was once lived or as it will be lived.

### **Travellers in time?**

Could the two couples have holidayed not just in another country but in another era in time then? Many people have claimed to have had similar experiences. Accounts suggest that the traveller is not aware of the transition from past to present (or vice versa) and is merely conscious of the sensation of having 'arrived'. It would appear that there is often a trigger that causes the timeslip – touching something that has ancient associations, for example, might account for a subject being transported backwards in time.

Unlike the Gisbys, Geoff and Pauline Simpson are still too confused and upset to give serious thought to possible explanations for what may have happened.

*The Unexplained* spoke to Thomas Cook, who have been in the travel business for a long time, to ask how much it would have cost to stay in an hotel in 1905. Spokesman Edmund Swinglehurst said: 'In those days we used to issue coupons for hotels. The nearest location we covered to Montelimar was the Grand Hotel du Louvres in Avignon. It cost 7/6d a day for the bedroom, breakfast and evening meal, and most guests had to share a bathroom. It is quite true that some hotels did have showers in 1905.'

A spokesman for the Montelimar Tourist Office has said that there were no hotels near the motel on the autoroute and that the nearest were all situated in Montelimar.

Len and Cynthia intend to solve the mystery of the missing hotel by driving back to France and trying to find the place where they stayed on that memorable October night. Says Len: 'Logic tells me I will find the hotel, but I know deep down I won't, because I don't believe there is a hotel there. But I won't be happy until I've tried.'

# The day the Norfolks disappeared

**One of the most frequently repeated stories of mysterious disappearances concerns an entire Norfolk regiment – allegedly abducted by a UFO in 1915. PAUL BEGG examines the story in the light of new evidence**

THERE ARE MANY STRANGE accounts of people having been abducted by a UFO. In most cases the unfortunate victim is returned to Earth and able to tell his story, often to an incredulous audience who not unnaturally express considerable disbelief. But sometimes the victim disappears forever, his fate to remain unknown. These cases are rare because a number of witnesses are required if more prosaic explanations for the disappearance are to be dismissed. Of this latter category is the case of the vanishing Norfolks, one of the most bizarre of such incidents and accordingly featured in dozens of books about UFOs, the Bermuda Triangle, and other 'paranormal' mysteries. But is it – can it possibly be – true?

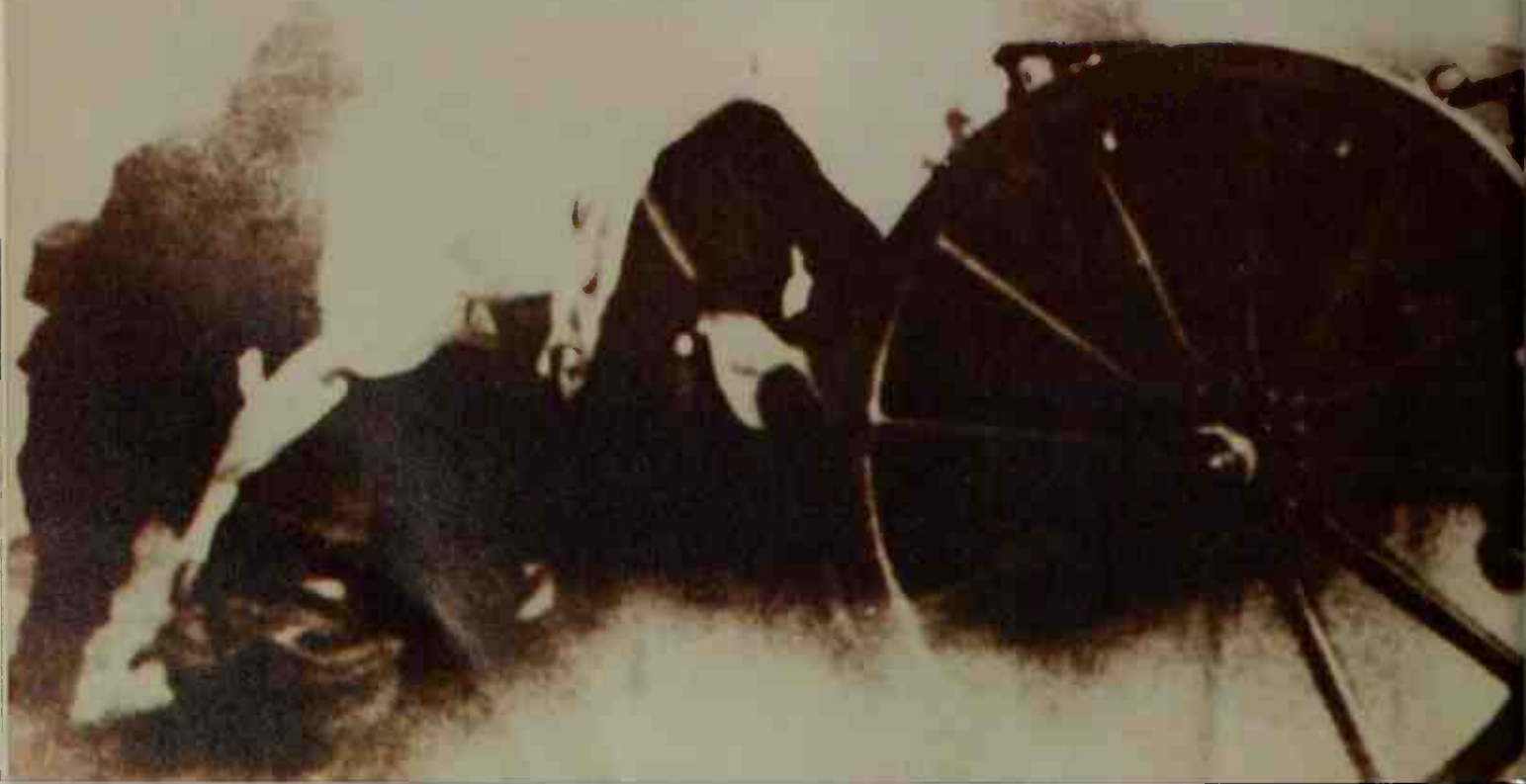
The incident allegedly took place in August 1915 during the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. According to a statement made by three of the original witnesses, 22 members of a New Zealand field company saw a large number of British soldiers, later identified as the 'First-Fourth Norfolk Regiment', march into a strange loaf-of-bread shaped cloud that was straddling a dry creek bed. After the last man had entered, the cloud lifted and moved off *against* the wind. Not one of the soldiers was ever seen again.

The New Zealanders' story contained

Below: troops landing at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, in 1915. Conditions were appalling; dysentery decimated the ranks and corpses lay everywhere, adding to the nightmare

some obvious errors; the First-Fourth Norfolk was not a regiment, for example, but a battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment. None of the errors has ever been corrected in any of the books that feature the story, which suggests that it has never been substantiated, the authors having simply copied the myth from one another.

This opinion is supported by one further and very important fact: the First-Fourth Norfolk did not disappear from Gallipoli in August 1915 or at any time or place thereafter. There is ample evidence to show that



they were in active service until the end of the year, when they were withdrawn from Gallipoli and sent to another theatre of war.

This fact would be sufficient to dispose of the New Zealanders' story of cosmic abduction as a figment of someone's imagination, but, perhaps coincidentally, it is a matter of undisputed historical fact that another battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, the First-Fifth, *did* disappear at Gallipoli in August 1915, their fate never having been satisfactorily ascertained. Therefore, if the New Zealanders saw any Norfolks abducted, those Norfolks could only have been the First-Fifth. So is it possible that, bizarre though their story most certainly is, 22 members of a New Zealand field company did witness the fate of the First-Fifth Norfolk? If not, where did their story come from, and what was the First-Fifth's fate?

The twisting trail in search of some answers begins in Dereham, a small market town not far from Norwich, England. It was here, as part of the predominantly East Anglican 163rd Brigade, that the First-Fourth and First-Fifth Norfolks prepared to go to war.

They were Territorials – called 'Saturday night soldiers' by men of the regular army – but they belonged to a regiment with a long and distinguished history going back to 1685, when it was raised by King James II at the time of Monmouth's Rebellion. At that time it was called Colonel Henry Cornwall's 9th Regiment of Foot.

The Norfolks embarked for Gallipoli on 29 July 1915. The Gallipoli campaign was fought for control of the Dardanelles – the ancient Hellespont – a long, narrow channel extending some 40 miles (65 kilometres) along the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey and

Below: a corner of the ANZAC position. Digging in was a necessary evil in a slow-moving war, providing both shelter and cover. But the overcrowding and less than perfect sanitation, added to the heat and flies, meant a squalid death for many before they had fired a shot. It was in such chaotic conditions that the Norfolks 'disappeared'

Bottom: Turkish artillery pound the ANZACS during the advance on Tekke and Kavak Tepe

connecting the Mediterranean with the Black Sea, for which reason it had acquired strategic importance following the alliance between Turkey and Germany.

The Gallipoli Peninsula is exquisitely beautiful in spring and early summer, but from May onwards it bakes under a relentless sun and by August it is one of the most inhospitable places on Earth. It was on 10 August, at the height of the terrible summer, that the Norfolks landed at Suvla Bay and surveyed what had already become the graveyard for so many men.

Not far from the beach was a large salt lake. Dry in summer, it reflected the harsh glare of the sun. Beyond lay the battlefield, Suvla Plain, and in the distance a semicircle of bleak hills stretched from north to south,



giving the plain the appearance of a giant arena. The northernmost was Kiretch Tepe, in the middle were the twin heights of Kavak Tepe and Tekke Tepe, and to the south was Sari Bair.

The Gallipoli campaign has gone down as one of the worst theatres of war in recent military history and to those Norfolks who had deluded themselves that they were off on a great adventure, the sights that met their eyes must have seemed like a nightmare vision of hell.

Conditions were appalling. The trenches were like ovens; a hot wind, pungent with the stench of death, stirred a fine dust across the plain; the food, the trenches, the latrines and the corpses were infested with a vile, bloated green fly – called the ‘corpse fly’ by the men because it feasted on the bodies of the dead and wounded – that spread a particularly virulent form of dysentery from which no soldier escaped and that reduced many to walking skeletons.

The troops, riddled with disease, were exhausted; corpses lay about in great numbers and it was by no means unusual to see the face or hands of a hastily buried comrade protruding from the ground; morale was low and a miasma of defeat hung heavy in the air.

The Norfolks had no experience of combat and in normal circumstances they would have been given time to acclimatise in a quiet sector, but Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, believed that the only chance of wresting victory from the jaws of dreadful defeat lay in the use of his fresh forces in a major offensive.

### Into the jaws of death

Hamilton envisaged a bold, sweeping attack on Tekke and Kavak Tepe and it was arranged that under cover of darkness on the night of 12 August the 54th Division (of which the Norfolks’ brigade was a part) should advance to the foothills and prepare to attack at dawn the next day. However, it was believed that a cultivated area called Kuchuk Anafarta Ova, over which the night advance would take place, was held by enemy snipers and it was accordingly decided that the Norfolks’ 163rd Brigade should move forward and clear the area during the afternoon of 12 August.

The advance that afternoon was a complete and utter fiasco, a prime example of the muddle and incompetence that marked the whole Gallipoli campaign. It was to begin at 4 p.m. with artillery support, but there was a delay of 45 minutes; however faulty communications prevented the artillery from being informed and they opened fire as scheduled, thereby wasting their support. The area was totally unreconnoitred, commanding officers were unfamiliar with the terrain and uncertain about their objective, most of the maps hurriedly issued at the last moment only depicted another part of the



Top: the ‘glorious fallen’. The effects of delay in burial and the burning heat made identification of the corpses often impossible

Above: Major-General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, under whose command 46,000 men lost their lives – including the 267 men of the Norfolks

Peninsula, and the strength of the enemy was completely unknown.

The 163rd Brigade, with the First-Fourth Norfolk bringing up the rear, had advanced no more than about 1000 yards (900 metres) when it became obvious that a mistake had been made in trying to cross the open plain in daylight. The strength of the enemy was greater than had been supposed and the main body of the brigade encountered heavy machine-gun fire and were forced to ground. However, on the right flank the First-Fifth Norfolk encountered less stiff opposition and pressed forward.

Sir Ian Hamilton described the following events in a dispatch to Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War:

In the course of the fight, creditable in all respects to the 163rd Brigade, there happened a very mysterious thing . . . Against the yielding forces of the enemy Colonel Sir H. Beauchamp, a bold, self-confident officer, eagerly pressed forward, followed by the best part of the battalion. The fighting grew



hotter, and the ground became more wooded and broken. At this stage many men were wounded or grew exhausted with thirst. These found their way back to camp during the night. But the Colonel, with 16 officers and 250 men, still kept pushing forward, driving the enemy before him. . . . Nothing more was seen or heard of any of them. They charged into the forest and were lost to sight or sound. Not one of them ever came back.

Two hundred and sixty-seven men had vanished without trace!

The failure of the advance that afternoon delivered a crushing blow to Sir Ian Hamilton's hope of turning the tide of the campaign and the evacuation of Allied forces at the end of 1915 was a major defeat. The Gallipoli campaign had lasted eight and a half months and cost the lives of about 46,000 soldiers, a horrific number by any previous standards of modern warfare. In 1916 the Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of the defeat. A heavily censored report, *The final report of the Dardanelles commission*, was released in 1917 and another in 1919. It was not until 1965 that a declassified edition was made available – a significant date as we shall see.

The fate of the First-Fifth Norfolk remained a mystery for four years when there was a further development in the story.

At the end of 1918 the British returned to



Above: a poster celebrating the Turkish victory over the invading ANZAC forces, Gallipoli, 1915

Below: Turkish troops. Knowing the terrain, used to the climate and far better organised, their victory over the ANZAC troops rapidly became inevitable

Gallipoli as the ultimate victors. A soldier of the Occupation Forces was touring the battlefield when he found a cap badge of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, and on making enquiries he learned that a Turkish farmer had removed a large number of bodies from his property and dumped them in a nearby ravine. On 23 September 1919, following the unpleasant task of recovering the bodies, an officer commanding a Graves Registration Unit triumphantly announced:

We have found the Fifth Norfolk – there were 180 in all: 122 Norfolk and a few Hants and Suffolks with 2/4th Cheshires. We could only identify two – Privates Barnaby and Carter. They were scattered over an area of about one square mile [3 square kilometres], at a distance of at least 800 yards [750 metres] behind the Turkish front line. Many of them had evidently been killed in a farm, as a local Turk, who owns the land, told us that when he came back he found the farm covered with the decomposing bodies of British soldiers which he threw into a small ravine. The whole thing quite bears out the original theory that they did not go very far on, but got mopped up one by one, all except the ones who got into the farmhouse.

'We have found the Fifth Norfolk . . .' Although generally considered the last word on the fate of the First-Fifth Norfolk, it is evident that this statement was somewhat premature. Only 122 Norfolks were found, which leaves more than half the men who vanished unaccounted for. Their fate remains a mystery – unless, of course, the New Zealanders' story of the strange cloud is true.



# Lost, believed kidnapped

**Fifty years after the Gallipoli campaign three old soldiers came forward with a bizarre tale of a cloud kidnapping a whole regiment. PAUL BEGG sheds new light on this 'mysterious' disappearance**

ON 12 AUGUST 1915 the best part of the First-Fifth Battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment disappeared. The decomposing corpses of slightly less than half the battalion were later found, but the precise fate of the remaining troops remains a mystery. However, a solution may lie in a story which has featured in several books about UFOs and other relative phenomena. According to a statement made by three of the original witnesses, members of a New Zealand field company saw a large number of British troops abducted by a strange cloud, perhaps a UFO. The troops were identified as the First-Fourth Norfolk and the event allegedly happened on 21 August. As there is ample proof that the First-Fourth Norfolk did not disappear it seems that the New Zealanders' story is either a complete fabrication or describes the fate of another body of men, perhaps the disappearance of the First-Fifth Norfolk on 12 August.

What the New Zealanders allegedly saw is described in a statement signed by three of the original witnesses:

August 21, 1915

The following is an account of the strange incident that happened on the

Below: British troops go 'over the top' during the Gallipoli campaign, 1915. These soldiers were part of the hastily formed Naval division – basically sailors, they lacked proper training in land fighting. Other divisions deployed at Gallipoli were equally inadequately trained. The Norfolks, for example, consisted mainly of raw recruits and 'Saturday soldiers' (Territorials) whose exposure to the conditions at Gallipoli came as a brutal – and in many cases, fatal – shock

above date, which occurred in the morning during the severest and final period of fighting which took place on Hill 60, Suvla Bay, ANZAC.

The day broke clear, without a cloud in sight, as any beautiful Mediterranean day could be expected to be. The exception, however, was a number of perhaps six or eight 'loaf of bread' shaped clouds – all shaped exactly alike – which were hovering over Hill 60. It was noticed that, in spite of a four- or five-mile-an-hour [6–8 km/h] breeze from the south, these clouds did not alter their position in any shape or form, nor did they drift away under the influence of the breeze. They were hovering at an elevation of about 60 degrees as seen from our observation point 500 feet [150 metres] up. Also stationary and resting on the ground right underneath this group of clouds was a similar cloud in shape, measuring about 800 feet [245 metres] in length, 220 feet [65 metres] in height, and 200 feet [60 metres] in width. This cloud was absolutely dense, solid looking in structure, and positioned about 14 to 18 chains [900–1100 metres] from the fighting in British-held territory. All this was observed by twenty-two men of No 3 Section, No 1 Field Company, N.Z.E., including myself, from our trenches on Rhododendron Spur, approximately 2500 yards [1350 metres]





south-west of the cloud on the ground. Our vantage point was overlooking Hill 60 by about 300 feet [90 metres]. As it turned out later, this singular cloud was straddling a dry creek bed or sunken road [Kaiajik Dere] and we had a perfect view of the cloud's sides and ends as it rested on the ground. Its colour was a light grey, as was the colour of the other clouds.

A British regiment, the First-Fourth Norfolk, of several hundred men, was then noticed marching up this sunken road or creek towards Hill 60. However, when they arrived at this cloud, they marched straight into it, with no hesitation, but no one ever came out to deploy and fight at Hill 60. About an hour later, after the last of the file had disappeared into it, this cloud very unobtrusively lifted off the ground and, like any cloud or fog would, rose slowly until it joined the other similar clouds which were mentioned at the beginning of this account. On viewing them again, they all looked alike 'as peas in a pod'. All this time, the group of clouds had been hovering in the same place, but as soon as the singular cloud had risen to their level, they all moved away northwards, i.e. towards Thrace [Bulgaria]. In a matter

Above: seen from a distance the Allied camp at Walkers Ridge, Gallipoli, looks organised enough. But the truth was very different; the tents provided little shelter from the relentless heat for men already weakened by disease

of about three-quarters of an hour they had all disappeared from view.

The regiment mentioned was posted as missing or 'wiped out' and on Turkey surrendering in 1918, the first thing Britain demanded of Turkey was the return of this regiment. Turkey replied that she had neither captured this regiment, nor made contact with it, and did not know it existed. A British Regiment in 1914-18 consisted of any number between 800 and 4000 men. Those who observed this incident vouch for the fact that Turkey never captured that regiment, nor made contact with it.

We, the undersigned, although late in time, this is the 50th Jubilee of the ANZAC landing, declare that the above described incident is true in every word.

Signed by witnesses:

4/165 Sapper F. Reichardt,

Matata, Bay of Plenty

13/416 Sapper R. Newnes

157 King Street, Cambridge

J. L. Newman

75 Freyberg Street, Octumoctai,  
Tauranga

This statement is sometimes accompanied by an extract referring to the event from an

unspecified 'official history' of the Gallipoli campaign:

They were swallowed up by an unseasonable fog. This fog reflected the sun's rays in such a way that artillery observers were dazzled by its brilliance and unable to fire in support. The two hundred and fifty men were never seen or heard from again.

The New Zealanders' statement contains several obvious errors: ANZAC was not a place at the time (although there is a faint likelihood that they were referring to an area that was invested with that name), but an acronym for Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, and the First-Fourth Norfolk was a battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment and not itself a regiment. It is difficult to believe that anyone familiar with the British Army or the Gallipoli campaign would have made such mistakes, which suggests that the statement may have been written by someone other than those who signed it and that signatures were provided without the statement having first been checked for accuracy.

Most important, of course, is the fact that the First-Fourth Norfolk did not disappear but were in active service throughout the Gallipoli campaign. The only Norfolks who disappeared were the First-Fifth Battalion and they disappeared on 12 August, not 21. It is perhaps possible but highly unlikely that the First-Fifth, disorientated after the fighting, wandered around Suvla Plain for nine days, but a more likely explanation for the difference of dates – assuming that the New Zealanders' story relates to the First-Fifth – is that Sapper Reichardt, who seems responsible for telling the story, confused the dates. After all 21 is the reverse of 12.

### An insubstantial cloud

As for the substance of Reichardt's story, the most diligent research has failed to locate any account of the 'kidnapping cloud' pre-dating the signed statement (except the alleged entry in an 'official history', of which more will be said later), and the statement is not contemporary with the events it describes, having been signed at an old comrades' reunion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ANZAC landing, namely in 1965. One can only wonder why Mr Reichardt and his companions did not report such an unusual occurrence at the time, or at least when the mystery could not be solved later, but perhaps they feared ridicule. Whatever the reason, the story rests with the testimony of those who signed the statement.

Sapper Frederick Reichardt, a sailor, enlisted in the British Section of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 8 October 1914 as a member of No 3 Section, First Divisional Field Company, New Zealand Engineers. He embarked for Gallipoli on 12 April 1915.

It will be recalled that Suvla Plain is dominated by a semicircle of hills stretching

from north to south, the southernmost being Sari Bair, which has three summits: Kojia Cheman Tepe, Besim Tepe, and Chunuk Bair. The most practical route to the summit of Chunuk Bair is along the Rhododendron Spur, so named by the Allies because of the red flowers (not rhododendrons) that had blazed along its length during the early days of the campaign. It was from Rhododendron Spur that Reichardt claims to have seen the First-Fourth abducted.

One and a half miles (2.5 kilometres) to the north of Chunuk Bair is a small hillock called Hill 60, towards which Reichardt claims the troops were marching when abducted by the cloud. A further three miles (5 kilometres) to the north is Kuchuk Anafarta Ova, the scene of the Norfolks' advance on 12 August.

According to the *War diary* of the First Divisional Field Company, No 3 Section was

Right: Turkish attendants look after graves in one of the 31 cemeteries maintained on the Gallipoli Peninsula by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Thousands of the dead, however, were never identified and many soldiers were never found

Below: a grim relic of the Gallipoli campaign – a human jawbone washed up by the Aegean Sea 50 years after the Dardanelles invasion by the Allies. Such was the carnage that the tides are still washing up fragments of the fallen and their equipment

Below: a rough trench congested with walking wounded and stretcher cases after an action. Rudimentary medical attention patched up the wounded until they could be carried out to the hospital ships moored offshore. However, the heat and dust – and the ever-present 'corpse fly' – combined to produce fever and infection, which wiped out thousands of the wounded





#### Further reading

Colin Wilson and Damon Wilson, *The encyclopedia of unsolved mysteries*, Contemporary Books 1988  
 Paul Begg, *Into thin air*, David and Charles 1979  
 Tim Carew, *The Royal Norfolk Regiment*, State Mutual Books 1988  
 Raymond Lamont Brown, *A casebook of military mystery*, Patrick Stevens 1974



away from the Rhododendron Spur until 13 August, being transferred there on that date. This being the case, Reichardt and his companions were in no position to observe the Norfolks' advance in the afternoon of 12 August. However, it is possible that No 3 Section was moved to the Spur during 12 August in order to begin work there at dawn the following day. Reichardt could have had an unimpeded view of the Norfolks' advance, but he was at least four and a half miles (7 kilometres) away and must have had acute powers of observation if he could accurately see what was happening at such a distance and in the midst of a battle.

Sadly, Reichardt's position neither proves nor disproves his story since he says that the troops were marching towards Hill 60, some three miles (5 kilometres) to the south of the scene of the Norfolks' advance. So once again the question is raised as to whether the Norfolks, disorientated, blindly wandered around Suvla Plain for up to nine days, eventually finding themselves heading for Hill 60, which was, incidentally, held by the enemy. This is possible, of course, but it seems highly unlikely that the Norfolks would not have fallen into the hands of either the Allies or the enemy.

When considering this eventuality it is impossible not to balance it against the errors in Reichardt's story: he names the wrong battalion; he calls it a regiment; he gives the date of 21 August, nine days after the First-Fifth disappeared; he says the troops were

three miles (5 kilometres) away from where the Fifth Norfolk vanished and has them marching towards enemy territory; he calls ANZAC a place; he waited 50 years before telling his story. It all weighs against believing the main substance of his story.

The only thing that will tip the scales in his favour is the reference to the event in the unspecified 'official history' of the Gallipoli campaign.

None of the official histories contains the entry cited in connection with Reichardt's story. However, in *The final report of the Dardanelles commission*, on the page facing the account of the First-Fifth's advance on 12 August, is the following:

By some freak of nature Suvla Bay and Plain were wrapped in a strange mist on the afternoon of 21 August. This was sheer bad luck as we had reckoned on the enemy's gunners being blinded by the declining sun and upon the Turks' trenches being shown up by the evening sun with singular clearness. Actually, we could hardly see the enemy lines this afternoon, whereas to the westward targets stood out in strong relief against the luminous light.

#### Havoc in the afternoon

There can be no doubt that this is the extract used to support Reichardt's story. And it refers to events on 21 August 1915!

'Freak of nature', 'strange mist', 'luminous light', these are words to conjure with, but the report in fact describes an unseasonable but otherwise perfectly normal mist that descended shortly after noon on 21 August and caused havoc with what was, in terms of numbers, the greatest offensive ever launched at Gallipoli.

During that afternoon a composite ANZAC force of 3000 men attacked Hill 60. The battle would rage for a week before the Allies withdrew, leaving a corpse-strewn hillock behind them. It was in the late afternoon when, as the *Final report* says, the mist reflected the sun. The Sherwood Rangers, led by Sir John Milbanke VC, could not see the enemy, but the enemy could see the Rangers only too well and wiped them out.

It is this incident that Reichardt seems to have confused with the disappearance of the First-Fifth Norfolk to produce the story of the kidnapping cloud. Both incidents are described on facing pages in the *Final report* and significantly, the declassified edition of the report was released in 1965, the same year that Reichardt told his story. But the Norfolks' fate is still a mystery and in all probability will remain one, but it is up to you to decide how mysterious their disappearance is. People disappear in time of war. Of the 34,000 British and Empire troops who died at Gallipoli, 27,000 have no known grave. In the light of such widespread carnage, how many more 'strange disappearances' do those bald statistics hide?

**FORUM:** Frank, open discussion regarding the physical phenomena described in *The Unexplained*.

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the articles concerning the loss of the First-Fifth Norfolks at Gallipoli on 12 August 1915 and the alleged sighting of the incident by 22 New Zealand soldiers. As the former historian at the New Zealand Ministry of Defence I took a special interest in this matter and made a careful investigation of it.

I agree with Paul Begg's conclusion that Sapper Reichardt did not see the 'disappearance' of the First-Fifth Norfolks. The story does not 'fit' with regard to either time or place. I do not believe that there is the slightest possibility (as Begg suggests) that the First-Fifth Norfolks wandered around disorientated for nine days to be seen eventually by Reichardt and the others on 21 August. Reichardt was specific as to place – 'about 14 to 18 chains [900 to 1100 metres] from the fighting in *British held territory*' (my italics) – which means that the First-Fifth Norfolks would, in this case, have been wandering about within British lines. A body of several hundred men would hardly have escaped scrutiny over such a long period. With prominent features all around and the sea close by, it seems inconceivable that a commander could be lost to this extent in such a small area, and British lines were known to lie in the direction of the sea.

At another point Begg raises the possibility that Reichardt confused the dates (21 being the reverse of 12) and that the sighting was actually on 12 August. This too can be discounted for the simple reason that the statement as originally published in the New Zealand UFO magazine *Spaceview* is headed 28 August (not 21 as given in *The Unexplained*).

Several other of Begg's arguments are open to question: for example, it is quite conceivable that an ageing, poorly educated man such as Reichardt would confuse a regiment with a battalion, and 50 years afterwards he would naturally describe the location as ANZAC – the place where the Australians and New Zealanders landed is, after all, known as ANZAC Cove; he would no doubt have been referring to the general area held by them.

Information that has recently come to light in New Zealand throws further doubt on the 'sighting'. Newnes, one of the alleged 'witnesses', turns out to have been a trooper in the Auckland Mounted Rifles rather than a sapper in the New Zealand Field Engineers. A person who forgets which unit and arm of service he was in can hardly be regarded as a reliable witness. Neither Newnes nor Newman (whose initials were, incidentally, I.L. not J.L.) was on Gallipoli at the time given in the original statement – 'in the morning' of 28 August 1915. Both were evacuated because of illness – Newman on 5 August and Newnes on 21 August. These facts, drawn from their service records at the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, immediately throw serious doubt on the authority of the statement.

The statement was undoubtedly written by Reichardt (not, as Begg suggests, by someone other than the signatories). According to Gordon Tuckey, who obtained it, Reichardt had attended a public meeting in Rotorua to discuss UFOs early in 1965. Following the meeting, he approached Tuckey and 'intimated that he had a story of his own to tell'. A meeting was

subsequently arranged at a private house and Reichardt recounted his story. He refused to allow a tape recording to be made, but some weeks afterwards provided a written statement. 'It was in his own handwriting,' recalled Tuckey, 'and was signed by himself and the other two alleged witnesses.' Tuckey never met the latter. Reichardt had obviously seen them at the 50th jubilee of the ANZAC landing, which took place at Rotorua between 24 and 26 April 1965. (Signing the statement would have been one of Newman's last acts, for he died on the 26th!)

Unlike Begg, I do not believe that Reichardt saw the disastrous attack by the Sherwood Rangers on 21 August. Reichardt was not on Rhododendron Spur on that date. Moreover, like the previous First-Fifth Norfolks' attack, the Sherwood Rangers' assault took place in the late afternoon. Apart from Reichardt's own assertion that the incident occurred 'in the morning', it seems most unlikely that such a visually striking cloud formation could remain present all day – Reichardt implies that it was visible at daybreak – without attracting widespread attention from the thousands of men in the vicinity. The fact that a mere three 'witnesses' have so far belatedly come forward suggests that few saw the clouds.

My own conclusion is that Reichardt's memory had become confused. I believe that he may have seen a unit march into a patch of ground mist at some stage of his service at Gallipoli and that the men of the unit may have taken cover, perhaps, viewed from a distance, giving the illusion of having disappeared.

Probably he heard accounts subsequently of the battle on 21 August, in which several battalions in the Sulva Bay area lost their direction and inclined too far to the north. He may have heard rumours of the 'disappearance' of the Norfolks and later read accounts of the 'lost battalion'. As time passed he may have convinced himself that he had witnessed the 'mysterious' event described in the despatch sent by Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, to Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War.

This explanation is given added weight by the importance Reichardt attached to the account of the incident, along with two earlier 'disappearances', that he claimed to have seen 'in one of the official histories of the Gallipoli campaign'. No official history recounting such events can be located. More probably, Reichardt saw accounts of them in some popular book dealing with unidentified flying objects or military mysteries and mistakenly decided that they were authoritative accounts. He was not a well-read man (it is most unlikely that he ever read the declassified *Final report of the Dardanelles commission* in 1965, as Begg suggests) and possibly fell a victim to one of the more sensational descriptions of the loss of the First-Fifth Norfolks. According to Tuckey, Reichardt was a British Israelite and had 'linked the happening, in his own mind, with his religious beliefs', fully expecting 'the missing troops to be returned presently to help fight the battle of Armageddon'.

Yours faithfully,

I.C. McGibbon

Wellington, New Zealand

# Gone but not forgotten

**Stories abound of people disappearing in mysterious circumstances, never to be seen again. But, argues PAUL BEGG, these tales should be examined closely: many have simpler explanations – and some are pure fiction**

SOME CURIOUS, inexplicable, and sometimes very frightening things have happened in this 'ordinary' world of ours, haven't they? Just look at all the books you can buy about ghosts, ESP, the Bermuda Triangle, ancient astronauts, mysterious disappearances, big-foot, the Loch Ness monster. A whole host of things that are incredible yet indisputably true. Or are they?

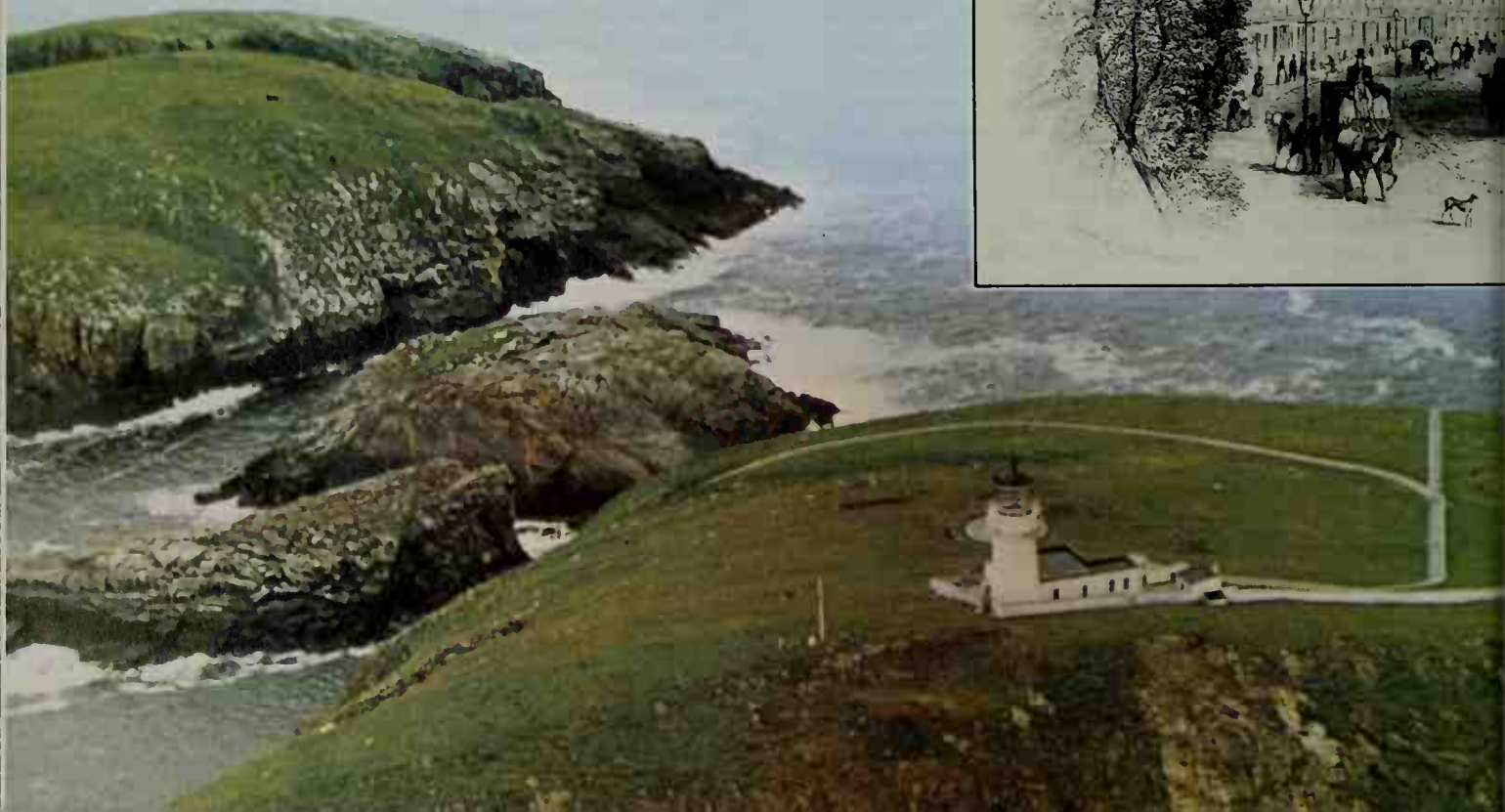
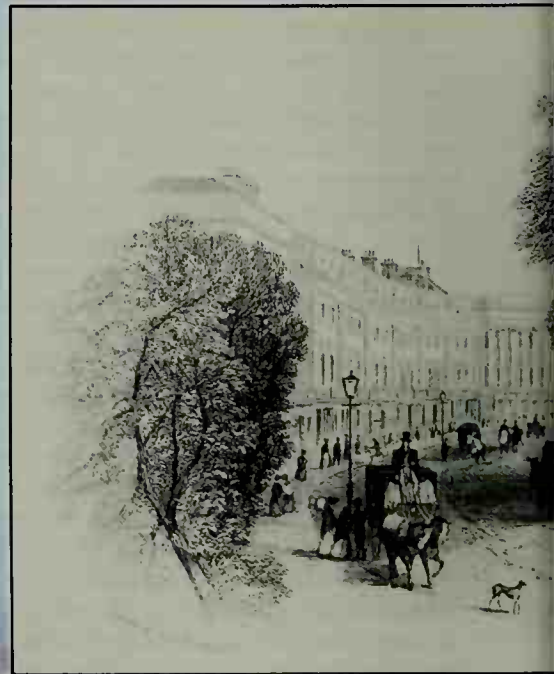
It is a mistake to believe everything you read. Alas, that is a truism that can be applied less to newspapers than to books about the mysterious, the unexplained and the paranormal. Look at any display of books on these subjects and it is almost guaranteed that a great many of them will be about what Arthur C. Clarke has called 'Mysteries of the Zeroeth Kind – the mental junk food of our generation.' As he said in *Arthur C. Clarke's mysterious world* (1980):

The only mystery about *these* is that anyone ever thought they were mysterious. The classic example is the Bermuda Triangle, though this has not prevented countless writers, some of whom may even believe the rubbish they are regurgitating, repeating the

In December 1900 three lighthouse keepers vanished from the Eilean Mor lighthouse (below) off the west coast of Scotland. James Ducat, Donald McArthur and Thomas Marshall were there when Joseph Moore left for shore leave on the 6th, but when he returned on the 26th they were gone. The beacon was not working and two sets of oilskins and boots were missing. The log told how a fierce storm had raged. On the 12th, Marshall had written in the log, 'Never seen such a storm.' The final entry, on the 15th, read: '1 p.m. Storm ended. Sea calm. God is over all'

same nonsense over and over again. In recent years, possibly because of the worldwide attention given to the Bermuda Triangle, the subject of mysterious disappearances has attracted considerable interest and a large number of truly incredible 'vanishings' have been recorded: there is the case of David Lang who vanished before the startled eyes of his family; of the 11-year-old boy who went to fetch a bucket of water from a well and vanished, leaving in the snow a trail of footprints that came to a sudden and abrupt end; of the British diplomat who walked around the heads of his horses and seemingly stepped off the face of the Earth; of an English settlement in North America that disappeared into thin air; of the three lighthouse keepers who vanished from Eilean Mor, off the coast of Scotland, in 1900. Case after amazing case.

James Burne Worson was a shoemaker of





Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, who boasted about his physical prowess and stamina to such a degree that one day in 1873 three of his friends decided to call his bluff and they wagered that he could not run to Coventry and back. Worson accepted the challenge and set off. He jogged down the dusty roads and his friends – Hammerson Burns, Barham Wise, and a third man whose name is not known – followed in a horse-drawn cart, watching Worson carefully for any sign that he was about to give up. Several miles had been covered in this manner when Worson suddenly stumbled. He cried out – and vanished!

This remarkable story has been told in several books, sometimes with a little elaboration, sometimes with a few details omitted, but it is always essentially the same. Rarely is a source given for the story and when one is, it always turns out to be another book about unexplained phenomena. Nobody, it seems, has tried to verify the truth of the tale. Nobody has produced a contemporary newspaper account of the disappearance or a report of the police investigation or of the

## All smoke and no fire

One of the more dramatic ways in which people have been known to disappear from this life is by means of spontaneous human combustion. Apparently, 7 April 1938 saw no less than three people engulfed in flames: Willem ten Bruik, who was driving a Volkswagen near Nijmegen, Holland; John Greeley, who was at the wheel of the ss *Ulrich*, approaching Cornwall; and lorry driver George Turner, reportedly burnt to ashes in Chester, though a can of petrol was untouched beside him. Not only that, but the apparent locations of the three deaths make an isosceles triangle.

Unfortunately, Volkswagens were not made at the time, the *Ulrich* does not appear on Lloyd's register, and no George Turner died in Chester that day. The three cases seem to be the product less of fire than of an overheated imagination – in this instance belonging to author Eric Frank Russell, who reports two of them as fact.



Left: Leamington Spa in the mid 19th century. It was from here that James Burne Worson is said to have set out on his run to Coventry in 1873 before disappearing en route. Reliable facts about this story are difficult to find. Indeed, the tale has probably never been verified

Right: Labour MP Victor Grayson addresses a rally in 1906. Grayson, a rousing orator, vanished during a train journey from Liverpool to Hull in 1920. Although there were reports that he had been subsequently seen in Britain and also that he had emigrated to Australia, no final answer has yet been found to the question: what happened to Victor Grayson?



inquest. Nobody has produced any proof of any kind that Worson, Wise and Burns ever lived in Leamington Spa or, indeed, that they ever existed. The only known fact about James Burne Worson is that his death – that is assuming that he was ever born – is *not* recorded at St Catherine's House, repository of all records of births, deaths and marriages filed since 1837.

The story of James Burne Worson is just one of many celebrated cases of 'mysterious' disappearance that have never been substantiated, stories that have been circulating for so long and so widely that authors no more think of checking their veracity than an historian would bother to confirm that the

battle of Hastings took place in 1066.

It is sometimes difficult to take a charitable view of the authors who perpetuate these non-mysteries. Some authors have related cases that they clearly know to be fraudulent, others have been satisfied to conduct little or no research beyond borrowing their material from somebody else, many are interested only in amazing their readers and are happy to disregard the facts completely.

The blurb to *Stranger than science* (1963) by the late American writer and broadcaster Frank Edwards says: 'The author has carried out extensive research to establish the authenticity and accuracy of all these fascinating stories.' Edwards says that if asked to cite what he believed to be the strangest case of disappearance he would 'unhesitatingly refer to a twin-engined Marine plane which crashed on the Tahoma Glacier in 1947'. Searchers apparently reached the aircraft and could

tell from the wreckage that the crew could not possibly have survived such a devastating crash, yet not one body of the 32 people who had been on board could be found. The authorities were baffled and offered a reward of \$5000 for information leading to the recovery of the bodies.

In fact this aircraft crashed in 1946, not 1947, 10,000 feet (3000 metres) up the storm-shrouded west slope of the crevasse-scored South Tahoma Glacier in the state of Washington, USA. Six months later, on 18 July 1947, searchers eventually reached the crash site and found all the bodies embedded in the ice. Bad weather and dangerous rock falls made recovery too hazardous to contemplate and the corpses lie there to this day. A memorial service was held for the men on 24 August 1947.

The story of how the wreckage was found, the bodies located, and of the memorial service, was told in the *Post-Intelligencer* of



## The lady vanishes

In 1937 Amelia Earhart, the celebrated aviator, disappeared in the Pacific during an intended round-the-world flight in a twin-engined Lockheed Elektra. The first woman to have flown the Atlantic solo (and in record time) began her most ambitious journey of all from Miami, accompanied by Fred Noonan, a navigator of great experience.

They headed eastward in a series of

planned 'hops'. All went well enough until they left New Guinea. On 2 July at about 7.30 a.m. Earhart radioed that fuel was running low. A little over an hour later she reported her course. She was heading for Howland Island, just north of the equator and east of the Gilbert Islands. Nothing more was heard from her.

The us Navy recorded that the aircraft had been lost at sea. In *The search for Amelia Earhart*, Fred Goerner claims that Earhart was carrying out an intelligence mission, reporting on Japanese military activity, when low fuel and high winds forced her to alter course. He agrees with Admiral Chester Nimitz, former US commander in the Pacific, that the aircraft went down in the Marshall Islands, over which the Japanese held a mandate. Earhart and Noonan may then have been transported to Saipan in the Marianas, for the locals tell of two American fliers, one a woman, who arrived in 1937, were imprisoned and interrogated by the Japanese, and then executed and buried in unmarked graves.



Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan (above) climb aboard their aircraft in Puerto Rico during their 1937 attempt to fly round the world. They disappeared somewhere between New Guinea and Howland Island (right)



Left: Colonel Percy Fawcett, who disappeared in 1925 in the Amazon jungle

Below: Ambrose Bierce, the American satirist, wrote about mysterious vanishings – and then disappeared himself. Nothing more was heard from him after he went to Mexico in 1913 as an observer with Pancho Villa's rebel army in the civil war

Bottom: South Tahoma Glacier, USA, where an aircraft crashed in 1946 with the loss of 32 lives. The bodies did not vanish, as writer Frank Edwards says; they were found six months later buried in ice



Seattle during August 1947. So much for 'extensive research to establish the authenticity and accuracy . . .'. The only mystery is how the fiction about the bodies being missing survived from 1947 to 1959 when Edwards published his book.

One dark night in November 1878, 16-year-old Charles Ashmore of Quincey, Illinois, went to fetch a pail of water from the well in the yard outside his home. After he had been gone an undue length of time his family went looking for him. In the feeble, flickering light of their lantern they saw the trail of the boy's footprints in the snow, but they came to a sudden and mysterious end halfway to the well. Charles Ashmore had inexplicably vanished. Even more mysterious, for several days Charles's mother could hear her son calling for help.

But wait. Perhaps it was 11-year-old Oliver Larch of South Bend, Indiana, who went to fetch a pail of water on Christmas Eve 1889, and vanished, leaving in the snow a clear trail of footprints, which came to an abrupt end. Or is that Oliver Lerch of the same place who vanished in the same manner on Christmas Eve 1890? Or Oliver Thomas of Rhayader, Wales, who went to fetch a bucket of water on Christmas Eve 1909 and never came back. *His* tracks in the snow ended halfway to the well. Or Charlotte Ashton, who met a similar fate on the night of 17 October 1876. Or James Settle, whose tracks came to an abrupt end in the snow of New York City. One does not have to be a particularly astute reader to detect certain similarities between these stories; perhaps all or some are derivatives of an original. But which account is the original and which, if indeed any, is true?

Ashmore, it seems, was an invention of the writer Ambrose Bierce in one of his short stories. The Oliver Lerch story (the change of year and the name from Larch to Lerch came later) is an old newspaper hoax, and its inconsistencies have been exposed several times: for example, there was no snow in South Bend, Indiana, over the Christmas period in 1890. As for the Welsh boy, Oliver Thomas, the story appears to have originated with a writer who is notorious for fictionalising events. The present author has searched the relevant copies of the *Brecon County Times*, which served the Rhayader area, and discovered that they contain no mention of an Oliver Thomas vanishing. There is also no record of a birth or death certificate for an Oliver Thomas of Rhayader to be found at St Catherine's House. From this we can conclude only that, like Ashmore and Lerch, Oliver Thomas is a figment of somebody's imagination. The same is also true of Charlotte Ashton and James Settle.

### Abducted by a UFO?

Several writers have used one or more of these stories to support a particular theory. For example, in his book *Strangers from the skies* (1966), Brad Steiger tells a much-expanded story of the Oliver Thomas 'disappearance' in a chapter called 'Flying saucers and disappearing people'. Steiger does not directly state that Oliver Thomas was abducted by a UFO, but his account follows the question: '... have outer-space creatures been periodically plucking up earthlings for study and interrogation?'

In his book *Vanishings*, Michael Harrison speculates whether the boys' cries (Larch and Thomas are supposed to have cried out something like: 'Help! They've got me!' which has, not unnaturally, given rise to much speculation about the use of the plural) released some sort of energy that snatched the boys away. 'Had the three boys remained silent,' writes Harrison, 'there would have been no sound to activate the forces arrayed against them; forces their own fear, *as well as the parapsychical properties of lonely farmhouses*, had created.' (The italics are Harrison's.)

Michael Harrison does not explain what parapsychical properties lonely farmhouses have, but such speculation, be it ludicrous or not – and frequently it can only be politely described as imaginative – is valueless when the incidents on which it is based never happened.

If 'mystery' books – which are presented as fact – are bought for their entertainment value, readers might find their money better spent on horror fiction, in which there is certainly no shortage of suitably blood-chilling tales to set the imagination working overtime of a dark winter night.



**Stories of people who ‘disappear into thin air’ abound – but disappointingly the facts do not often bear close scrutiny. PAUL BEGG re-examines some of the classic cases**

IN 1872 THE *Mary Celeste* was found aimlessly wandering in the Atlantic. She was in remarkably good condition and well-provisioned, but her crew had apparently abandoned ship. Since no experienced sailor is ever likely to desert a seaworthy ship for a comparatively dangerous lifeboat unless his life is in severe danger, the disappearance of *Mary Celeste*'s crew is an outstanding mystery (see page 1874). Over the years, however, it has been made even more mysterious by the addition of fictional details such as half-eaten breakfasts being found on the galley table and the aroma of fresh tobacco smoke lingering in the captain's cabin.

Such additions come into being for many reasons: to add to the eeriness of a story for entertainment value, for example, or, less innocently, with the deliberate intention of introducing supernatural overtones to a mystery that would otherwise be confined within the comparatively boring limitations of the natural and the known. Another much-publicised case is that of the disappearance in 1809 of the British diplomat Benjamin Bathurst (see page 702).

The Bathurst disappearance is a complex and, indeed, an impenetrable mystery yet, perhaps significantly, it is rarely expanded beyond a single, simple, and mystery-making paragraph that generally goes along the lines of: Benjamin Bathurst was about to board a coach outside an inn in (or near)



# Disappearing disappearances

Berlin. He was seen to walk around the heads of the horses – and was never seen again.

The disappearance of Bathurst is far too complex to describe here in anything but the broadest outline, but it is sufficient to say that in 1809 the British government sent him on a secret mission to the Court of Austria. Earlier in the year the Austrians had suffered a demoralising defeat at the hands of Napoleon and it is generally accepted that Bathurst's mission was to dissuade Emperor Francis II from total capitulation.

Bathurst was returning from this mission with a companion when he stopped at an inn in Perleberg, a day's journey from Hamburg, where a ship was waiting to return him to England. He stayed at the inn for a few hours and at 9 p.m. he told his companion that he was going to have the horses made ready for the continuation of the journey. What happened next is disputed. According to the memoirs of his father, Bishop Bathurst, published in 1837, it was an hour before the

One of the most frequently told 'mysterious disappearance' stories is that of the British diplomat Benjamin Bathurst (above), who walked round the heads of his coach horses in the German town of Perleberg (right) in 1809 – and vanished, never to be seen again. His disappearance, however, seems less mysterious when it is known that he was on a top secret political mission at the time

companion grew alarmed by Bathurst's continued absence and made enquiries, learning that Bathurst was about to climb into his coach when something in the shadows of the entrance to the inn courtyard caught his attention and apparently compelled him to investigate. He walked into the darkness and was never seen again.

So it is most certainly a mystery, but there was almost certainly no supernatural element to the Bathurst story. Nobody actually saw Bathurst disappear into thin air. He did *not* simply walk around the heads of his horses and step off the face of the Earth. It should be remembered that Bathurst was in a precarious political position: Napoleon would have been interested in the outcome of Bathurst's discussion with Francis II, and Bathurst had made enemies at the Emperor's court who may not have wished to see a renewal of hostilities between Austria and France. Besides, there were rogues and vagabonds in Perleberg itself who would have

killed Bathurst for no more than the clothes he wore. Bathurst could have met his end at the hands of any one of these. Yet the fact remains that his body was never found.

The exciting story of the 'lost colony' is another mystery that some unscrupulous authors have made more mysterious than it ever was, although this time they have done it by omitting certain details. The tale has several versions, a typical account being that given in Michael Harrison's *Vanishings*.

According to Harrison: in 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh established a settlement on Roanoke Island off the coast of present-day North Carolina. Harrison says that Raleigh left the colonists and

returned to England for needed supplies and a reinforcement of emigrants. The date of the settlement was 1585. When Raleigh returned to Roanoke, he found no trace of the settlers; all had gone. . . . The rationalists say that, despairing of their ever seeing Raleigh again, the settlers trekked over the mainland until they were either captured by, or voluntarily made common cause with, the Mandan Indians.

Almost everything Harrison has written about the disappearance of the Roanoke settlement is wrong. Raleigh organised and part-financed the settlement, but he never visited Roanoke personally. The colony that disappeared did so in or after 1587, not 1585, and the man who returned to England for supplies was not Raleigh but one John White. He was prevented from returning to the New World for the next three years, during which time the colonists are not known to have seen another European face. From these facts alone it is not too difficult to deduce a reasonable explanation for the disappearance of the colony.

In an effort to dismiss contrary and often more prosaic solutions to these 'mysteries',



Top: Michael Harrison, author of *Vanishings* (1981) which repeats many of the popular tales of people who allegedly disappear under 'mysterious' circumstances

Above: Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618) who, in 1585 – according to Harrison – established a settlement on Roanoke Island, off the coast of North Carolina. Harrison says that Raleigh returned to discover that the colonists had vanished. Yet the fact is that Raleigh never visited the settlement personally

sensationalist authors employ a variety of writing techniques designed to persuade the reader that the unlikely explanation is in fact the more reasonable one. Harrison uses one of these ploys when he refers to the theory that the colonists were absorbed by the Mandan Indians. He is clearly contemptuous of those whom he calls 'rationalists', implying that the *only* rational solution ever offered is the Mandan theory. Presumably the reader is intended to conclude that this is a desperately contrived idea evoked by people who refuse even to consider a more sinister, but reasonable, solution.

### The Mandan solution

In fact, rationalists would be among the first to dismiss the Mandan solution as absurd; it is highly improbable that the colonists would have attempted, let alone survived, a crossing from the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the Mandan Indians of Missouri. Moreover, it is doubtful that the Mandan solution was proposed by historians since they have had a fairly good idea of the colonists' fate for over 400 years.

Before John White left Roanoke he arranged that if the colonists abandoned the settlement they should carve the name of their destination on a stockade post and append a cross if the move was made under duress or in distress. To quote White's own words: 'one of the chiefe trees of postes at the right side of the entrance had the barke taken off, and 5 foote [1.5 metres] from the ground in fayre Capitall letters was graven CROATOAN without any crosse or signe of distresse.'

Yet much mystery has been made of this. In his *Strange people* (1966) Frank Edwards writes: 'It is possible that the word meant little or nothing to the Englishmen who found it. Or if they did recognise it as a clue to the missing colonists, perhaps they realised that they dared not follow the clue to its conclusion.' All very mystery-making – and all very untrue. White had stated quite plainly: 'I greatly joyed that I had safely found a certaine token of their safe being at Croatoan, which is the place where Manteo was borne, and the savages of the Iland our friends.'

White's joy was short-lived. He was prevented from going to Croatoan and was never able to verify that this was where the colonists went, but it is a fair conclusion that without food, surrounded on all sides by hostile Indians, and cut off from home in a new, unexplored, and equally hostile country, the settlers would have sought refuge in the one place where they were assured of friendship – Croatoan. Sad to relate, there is some evidence that suggests that the Indians of Croatoan were later massacred by the Indians of the powerful Powhatan Confederacy of the Algonkian tribes in the Virginia Tidewater.

The Roanoke disappearance *is* a mystery,



but only insofar as there is no absolute proof of the colonists' fate and not because of any suggestion that their disappearance was in even the slightest way paranormal or supernatural.

Another example of the 'manufactured mystery' is the case of the missing Norfolks (see page 710), a battalion of British soldiers who disappeared at Gallipoli in 1915 and whose fate remains unknown to this day – a mystery that considerably pales in significance when one takes into account the fact that 27,000 British and Empire troops died at Gallipoli and have no known grave. However, the story has become particularly popular in books about 'mysterious' disappearances and UFOs because a soldier named Reichardt claimed to have witnessed their fate. He says they were abducted by a cloud.

### Delayed reaction

Most accounts of the Norfolk disappearance omit to mention that Reichardt told his story 50 years after the event at an old comrades' reunion – events that are not noted as particularly sober affairs – and that it contains many details that are either wrong or inconsistent with the circumstances of the genuine disappearance. Examined in the light of thoroughly documented facts, it is almost certain that Reichardt confused two separate incidents.

In recent years writers such as Lawrence Kusche, Ronald Story and Philip Klass have conducted thorough research into many fields of the unexplained and on the basis of well-researched, and fully documented, evidence have concluded that many stories such as that of the Norfolks are not supported by the facts. Of course, these conclusions do not have to be accepted, but they should not be dismissed without reason. Some authors, however, for reasons best known to themselves, refuse to accept that certain stories have been demonstrated to be untrue and they continue to repeat these tales without providing a scrap of evidence to support their reasons for having done so. It might be thought that such authors intend deliberately to mislead their readers.

In this respect, two books are noteworthy for the retelling of tales long since discredited: Charles Berlitz's *Without a trace* (1978) and Michael Harrison's *Vanishings* (1981). Charles Berlitz, for instance, repeats once more the story of the *Freya* as a Bermuda Triangle fatality, long after it had been established that the incident took place in the Pacific; and Michael Harrison, while claiming to have read most, if not all, of the books that expose so many of these tales, nevertheless presents them again as if such evidence did not exist, or could safely be ignored.

For example, Harrison dismisses the errors in Reichardt's story about the disappearing Norfolks as 'unimportant' – which they most certainly were not – and makes the



Above: a drawing of the Indian settlement Secoton by John White, the English colonist who discovered the message left by the 'missing' settlers. They quite clearly stated that they were intending to make for the village of Croatoan – yet curiously many popular accounts of the settlers' subsequent disappearance make no mention of this

Above right: a North American Indian, as painted by one of the first European settlers. The Indians at Croatoan were known to be friendly to the Roanoke settlers, but shortly after the Europeans are assumed to have arrived at Croatoan it was overrun by a hostile tribe – and there were few survivors

remarkable statement that Reichardt's story was received by 'sceptics baying for "the facts"'. It seems he expects fantastic tales to be accepted without an ounce of corroborative evidence.

The paranormal attracts frauds, cranks, and hoaxers, and it is never easy to distinguish between serious books about the paranormal and those that are sensationalist. A good rule of thumb guide is to check whether the author begins by appealing to his readers not to have a closed mind.

In the introduction to her book *They dared the Devil's Triangle*, Adi-Kent Thomas Jeffrey almost fanatically implores her readers:

... let us lift our faces to the winds of mystery and not cover our senses with the impenetrable armour of suspicion and skepticism. . . . Let us not don the thick-helmet of closed-mindedness under the guise of so-called 'common sense' or 'reason'.

And in the foreword to *Vanishings* Michael Harrison similarly warns his readers against 'contemptuous scoffers' and 'authors charitably inclined to reassure the uneasy'.

But facts speak for themselves. The author of a well-researched and fully documented book has no need so to implore his readers. But the absence of facts is, of course, the essential weakness of writers who seek only to amaze and astound, and what sensationalist writers want of you, apart from your money, is your faith in what they write.

# Facts and fictions

**Two of the most frequently repeated of all 'mysterious disappearance' stories are those of David Lang and the airliner *Star Tiger*. But, as PAUL BEGG shows, the real mystery is the extent of human credulity**

DAVID LANG disappeared on 23 September 1880 in front of five witnesses – or so the story goes. This is probably the most famous case of 'vanishing' on record and the story has been told by so many authors that a list of their names would read like a *Who's who* of writers on matters paranormal. Yet not one of them has produced a scrap of evidence that David Lang ever existed.

Apparently, Lang was walking across the 40-acre (16-hectare) pasture in front of his large, vine-covered farmhouse on the 'Old Cottontown Road' near Gallatin in Sumner County, Tennessee, USA, when a buggy turned into the long drive leading to the house. It contained a friend of the family, Judge August Peck, and his brother-in-law, a man named Wade, from Akron, Ohio. Lang waved and began to retrace his steps to the house. He had gone no more than a short distance when he vanished. One moment he was there, the next he was gone. David Lang had stepped off the face of the earth. Mrs Lang, the two Lang children, Judge Peck and his brother-in-law had all seen farmer David Lang cease to exist.

Events were to become even more bizarre. About a year later the Lang children, Sarah and George, noticed that there was a ring of stunted yellow grass on the spot where David Lang had vanished. For some reason Sarah called her father's name and to her astonishment received a faint reply. Her father called for help over and over again until eventually his voice faded away for ever.

Years later Sarah Lang developed an interest in Spiritualism and, according to an article entitled 'How lost was my father' in *Fate* magazine (July 1953), which was written by Stuart Palmer but based on Sarah Lang's own testimony, she spent thousands

of dollars cultivating the most famous mediums, but with little success. Then someone gave her a planchette – an automatic writing device – and this awakened her own psychic abilities. In April 1929, compelled by a strange force to take up her planchette, Sarah Lang received the message: 'Together now and forever . . . after many years . . . God bless you.' Sarah compared this 'spirit' writing with an inscription written by her father on the flyleaf of a book. The writing matched. Sarah knew that at long last her father and mother were reunited in the realm beyond the grave.

Below: Herbert Hoover, then US Secretary of Commerce, headed the investigation into the mysterious disappearance of the *Carroll A. Deering* (bottom). The ship had been found drifting in 1921. There was no sign of life but no evidence of bloodshed or violence. Three months later one Christopher Gray of North Carolina claimed to have found a dramatic message in a bottle that stated that the crew had been kidnapped, but Hoover dismissed it as Gray's own work. The fate of the ship remains a mystery



## Sarah Lang speaks out

The story of David Lang contains three elements, the last of which – Sarah's story as told to Stuart Palmer – would help to confirm the others, so let us examine it first.

Palmer sent his article with a covering letter to Curtis Fuller, editor of *Fate*, and by good fortune that letter remained in the magazine's files. In it Palmer says that the article is a rewrite of a story he had written years before for *Ghost*, a small magazine published in 1936 and 1937. As proof of the truth of the story, Palmer and Sarah Lang went to the trouble of signing an affidavit and having it witnessed by a notary public. Palmer concludes the *Fate* article by saying: 'a student of Clark Sellers, perhaps the nation's foremost expert in handwriting and the study of questioned documents, has said that the inscription on Miss Lang's childhood book and the planchette writing are by the same hand.'

It is worthwhile noting that neither the handwriting expert nor Palmer says that the handwriting was that of Sarah Lang's father. A researcher and writer named Robert Schadewald submitted reproductions of the handwriting in the book, the planchette writing and the signatures on the affidavit to Ann B. Hooten, a member of the prestigious American Society of Document Examiners. Miss Hooten's reply came in the form of a



five-page report in which she concluded that the result of her examination conclusively proved that the accumulated writings were from the same individual. In other words, David and Sarah Lang's handwriting is, by some strange 'coincidence', the same as Stuart Palmer's.

Hershel G. Payne, a librarian at the Public Library of Nashville and Davidson County, was intrigued by the celebrated local mystery and set out to establish as many facts about it as he could. He checked the census records for 1830, 1850 and 1880, but there was no mention of anyone named Lang or Peck. He consulted a dozen or more early histories of the area, but none of them mentioned Lang or the Lang farm. Other librarians, local newspapers and local historians all replied to his requests with the same answer: there were no documents, photographs or records of any kind attesting to Lang, Peck or the Lang farm. Mr Payne even drove down the 'Old Cottontown Road', but found nothing that could have been or may once have been the Lang farm.

Numerous writers have told this story and each has used an earlier writer as their source. The principal source since the 1960s has been Frank Edwards's book *Stranger than science*, or books that have used

To Sarah:—  
On her tenth birthday,  
from  
her father  
—H

together now and forever  
after many years God bless you

Edwards's information. Edwards does not give his source, but it could have been any one of a number of writers who cite one of two articles about the Lang 'disappearance' in *Fate*: either that written by the psychical researcher Nandor Fodor, which was published in December 1956, or Stuart Palmer's article of July 1953. Palmer, of course, was rewriting his article originally written for *Ghost*, and it is at this point that the trail to the origin of the story runs into a stone wall. On the other side of the wall the trail picks up in 1893 with the publication of *Can such things be?* by Ambrose Bierce, which features a story called 'The difficulty of crossing a

**To Whom It May Concern:**

I, Sarah Emma Lang, hereby affirm and depose that I have read the accompanying hitherto unpublished account of my father, David Lang's, disappearance, and that in every detail this story is true.

Signed Sarah Emma Lang

Witnessed by Stuart Palmer

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 30th day of October, 1929

William C. Hinkley

Notary Public in and for the County of  
New York, State of New York.

My Commission expires March 30, 1931

The extraordinary collection of 'evidence' for the Lang case: Sarah Lang and author Stuart Palmer swore an affidavit (above) to the effect that the story of David Lang's 'disappearance' is true; and the two samples of handwriting, one taken from the flyleaf of a book (below left) and the other allegedly written from beyond the grave (below) by means of a planchette (bottom).

Handwriting experts agreed that the samples were written by the same person – but further research revealed that that person was Stuart Palmer, whose article for *Fate* magazine popularised the story

field', based on the Lang case.

Bierce is believed to have taken the idea from an article in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, but the date of publication is unknown; copies of the newspaper for the 1880s are available on microfilm, but there is no index and searches have failed to locate the relevant edition. However, the article is thought to have been written by a travelling salesman named Joe Mulhatten from Cincinnati who was delayed in Gallatin, Tennessee, by a snowstorm in 1889, and wrote the tale to pass the time and earn a few extra dollars. But where did he get the story?

**The biggest lie of all**

Hershel G. Payne says that in the late 1880s there were lying contests, a prize being awarded to whoever told the biggest lie. Mulhatten apparently won with his story of David Lang. However, in his book *Among the missing*, Jay Robert Nash says that the Lang story was based on a real event: the disappearance in July 1854 of Orion Williamson from his farm in Selma, Alabama. And so we are back to square one. Did Orion Williamson vanish?

The story of the search to verify the 'mystery' of David Lang serves to illustrate how such myths are born and how they develop over the years as they pass from one author to another, are occasionally elaborated, and sometimes even gain fraudulent 'corroborative evidence'. In the end the story becomes so well-accepted as fact that nobody thinks to check it, or perhaps they choose not to. For example, the Lang case crops up in *Vanishings* by Michael Harrison (1981) – despite the fact that at least one of the sources quoted gives all the information you have just read.

It is, perhaps, disappointing when such tales turn out to be no more than fiction, but some people – writers and readers alike – are so wrapped up in self-deception that they are hostile to any suggestion that these cherished whimsies are anything other than fact.

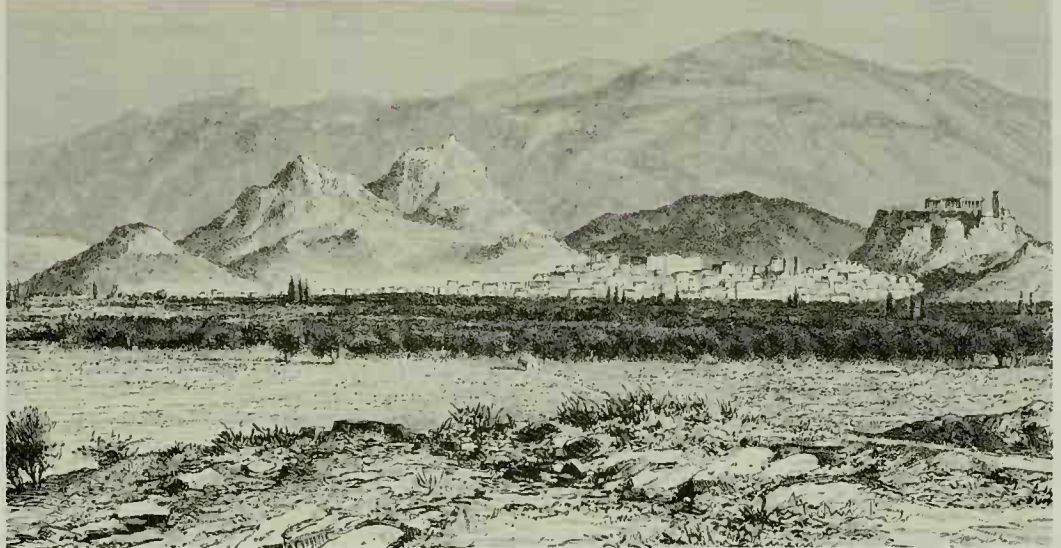
It may be argued that the truth of such







Above: in 1858, 650 highly trained French troops, sent to quell a riot in the Indo-Chinese city of Saigon, apparently disappeared only 15 miles (24 kilometres) from their destination. Did they desert *en masse*, were they taken prisoner or blown up – or was there a genuine mystery involved?



Above: in 1889 Malcolm Macmillan, a publisher from London and forbear of Harold Macmillan (the former British Prime Minister), vanished from the summit of Mount Hymettus in Greece. He had paused to wave to some companions, then disappeared. Careful searches of the area gave no hint as to his fate, yet the possibility remains that he could have committed suicide, his body being concealed by undergrowth

#### Further reading

Colin Wilson and Christopher Evans (eds), *The book of great mysteries*, Marboro Books 1990  
 Frank Edwards, *Stranger than science*, Carol Publishing Group 1983  
 Charles Berlitz, *Without a trace*, Ballantine 1985

called Station VRT, and no radio message was dispatched from the aircraft at 10.30 p.m.

None of these errors is particularly important insofar as they influence either Wolfe's theories or provide any possible solutions to the airliner's fate, but it is worth considering whether any rational reader would tolerate a history book that claimed that the battle of Hastings was a fist fight between Robin Hood and Abraham Lincoln. The mistakes made by many writers of books about the unexplained are of this calibre.

Often there is no deliberate intent to deceive and errors do not always invalidate the rest of an article or book, but it is a rather

stories is irrelevant because they are read for their entertainment value, but people do honestly believe these tales or at least believe that there is some substance behind them. Children are particularly susceptible to the misconceptions promoted through sensationalist books, and teachers have frequently expressed their concern over them.

James Raymond Wolfe contributed a chapter to *The riddle of the Bermuda Triangle* edited by Martin Ebon. Wolfe is a lecturer in paranormal phenomena at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, USA, and his chapter, says Ebon, was 'edited from a segment of one of his course lectures'. In other words, this is what he told his students.

Referring to the *Star Tiger*, an airliner that disappeared on a flight from the Azores to Bermuda, Wolfe says: 'At 10.30 p.m. its pilot, Captain David Colby, radioed the tower at Hamilton, Bermuda. . . . Hardly one of these 13 words is correct. The pilot was Captain Brian McMillan (Colby was the First Officer), all radio messages were sent by Robert Tuck and were not sent to the tower at Hamilton but to an Air Guard service

disturbing thought that parts of one's general knowledge are completely untrue. That is one of the reasons why stories such as that of David Lang have to be weeded out and set aside.

Critics of the many sensationalist books and their writers lay themselves open to the accusation of being unwilling to accept anything that lies outside the bounds of orthodoxy. But such criticism is not indicative of having a closed mind. On the contrary, it indicates having an open mind, one that is prepared to accept the possible truth that David Lang vanished before the startled eyes of his family and friends, but also a mind willing to investigate the story and try to get at the truth.

People do disappear and sometimes in the most bizarre circumstances. It remains possible that some people have stepped into another dimension or have been snatched by a UFO or fallen into a timeless void, but no matter how fascinating or frightening such possibilities might be, they remain the province of science fantasy writers until good, hard evidence can be presented to support their possible reality.

**FORUM:** Frank, open discussion regarding the physical phenomena described in *The Unexplained*.

Dear Sir,

I am a son of the late Frederick Reichardt, referred to in your article 'Lost, believed kidnapped'.

How I came across the article is strange. While on holiday in a town four to five hours' travelling time from my home, I went into a shop selling all sorts of articles, including a small selection of books.

In trying to kill time I looked at some of the books. The cover of your magazine tempted me to open it – and it fell open at the article mentioned.

At several points in the article doubt is cast on my father's word.

His reference to 'ANZAC' as a place can perhaps be explained by the pride that my father had in the fact that he was a part of this very valiant effort by the ANZACS – an effort perhaps seen now as futile. The names 'ANZAC' and Gallipoli were as one in his memory, and he often referred to the place and to the fighting there simply as 'ANZAC'.

The statement, I can assure you, *was* made by him – throughout his life, from the earliest days I can remember (I was born in 1932).

Because of this the story was not written down until the reunion on the fiftieth anniversary of the landing, when he came in contact with the other witnesses – for the first time, I believe, since the First World War.

I have no way of verifying other points that you mention in the article, but I wanted to give you these few observations as they are known to me. Perhaps I have written this for the sake of an old man who, when he died at the age of 84 years, still firmly believed in what he saw.

Yours faithfully,

W.A. Reichardt

Rotorua, New Zealand

# The pattern of the future

How does one distinguish between prediction and prophecy? Can the concept of free will accommodate predestination? BRIAN INNES takes a look at the principal methods of divination, and begins with the ancient, but still flourishing, art of geomancy

'How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!' Macbeth and Banquo encounter the Weird Sisters on a heath near Forres. The witches' prophecies were to change Macbeth's life, but they predicted nothing that did not remain in his control

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of mankind, those who were concerned about what the future held for them have sought guidance from 'wise' men and women. From the Azande tribesman who offers a chicken to the witch doctor in return for a prognostication of next month's weather, to the investor consulting his astrologer for assistance in forecasting future movements of the stock market, the motives, the means and the advice have always been very similar. But for all those prepared to *prophecy*, few would be prepared to say that they could *predict*.

The dangers inherent in placing too exact an interpretation on prophecy are exemplified very neatly in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Macbeth has – as the historian A.L. Rowse very rightly puts it – 'a flawed and ruined nobility – he is the victim of the Weird Sisters' prophecies; or, rather, of the promptings to which their "prophecies" gave confirmation.' In other words, Macbeth is given information that he interprets in one way; but subsequent events show that an entirely different, and equally plausible, interpretation could have been made.

When Macbeth first meets the witches, they hail him as thane of Cawdor, and as 'Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter'. They also greet Banquo:

*First Witch:* Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

*Second Witch:* Not so happy, yet much happier.

*Third Witch:* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none. . . .

Within minutes, Macbeth is named thane of Cawdor, and so, driven by ambition and the conviction that the witches have foretold his future, he murders King Duncan and himself becomes king of Scotland. Then, fearing that the rest of the witches' prophecy will also come true, he engineers the murder of Banquo – but Banquo's son Fleance escapes, and will sire a line of later kings.

But Macbeth must have more:

I will tomorrow,  
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:  
More shall they speak; for now I am  
bent to know,

By the worst means, the worst.

The witches are only too happy to give Macbeth what he asks. They conjure up a succession of apparitions, who advise:

1. Beware Macduff.
2. None of woman born shall harm Macbeth.
3. Macbeth shall never be vanquished until Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane.
4. A line of kings shall follow Banquo's death.

Since he can do nothing about the last



Rackham 99

prophecy, Macbeth determines to deal with the first. Learning that Macduff has already fled to England, he puts Lady Macduff and all her family to the sword. But he is greatly heartened by the other two prophecies, for they seem to imply clearly that no one shall harm him, and that he shall not be vanquished.

In the last scenes of the play, however, he discovers that the witches' words have another meaning. Birnam wood does indeed come to Dunsinane, for Malcolm's army wears its leafy branches as camouflage; and Macduff, who finally kills Macbeth, was not *born* of woman, but 'from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd' – that is, he was born by Caesarean section.

### An inescapable fate?

Prophecy is the outcome of divination, and the example of Macbeth, and the advice given him by the witches, should serve to make clear the difference between divination and prediction. What the witches foretold was *not* predetermined: if Malcolm's men had not hidden behind leafy branches from Birnam wood, if Macduff had not returned from England to avenge the murder of his family, then Macbeth might well have lived out his reign and died in his own bed.

Indeed, Macbeth failed principally because of the psychological effect of the prophecies upon his self-confidence. The weird sisters did not make any specific predictions: they made only negative statements: 'None of woman born shall harm Macbeth. . .' and 'Macbeth shall never vanquished be until. . .' They did not say that someone who was not born of woman *would* harm Macbeth; but the effect of their prophecy was that Macbeth's confidence was raised so high that, when he discovered that Macduff was not 'of woman born', he was immediately destroyed by his own guilt and superstitious fear.

If, then, divination is not prediction and is not concerned with predetermined events, what use is it? Why go to a fortune-teller with your problems, if a newspaper 'agony aunt' or even a close friend can provide you with a wealth of good advice? The reason, quite simply, is that the diviner does not make use of information that he or she consciously possesses about the person making the consultation: by the use of some means – whether it is the entrails of a freshly killed animal, arbitrarily chosen objects, a crystal ball, the astrological birth-chart of the subject or certain marks, such as moles, upon his person – the diviner is put in touch with information that is obtainable only by transcendental methods.

To those for whom a belief in the free will of the individual is paramount, the idea of a predetermined future is totally unacceptable. But look at it in this way. Someone's birth can be compared to the launching of a space vehicle. At the moment of 'lift-off', all

the conditions are known and understood by mission control: the rocket will follow a predetermined trajectory, and at a known time the vehicle will be detached and will follow a predetermined course. The astronaut need do nothing thereafter; he can leave the future manoeuvring of the vehicle to those on Earth. But he is also provided with manual controls that he can use himself; he may become bored and start tinkering with fine adjustments in flight that produce results he did not expect; or, in a fit of rage – or other show of temperament – he may throw himself about the capsule and disturb its equilibrium. Whatever he does, *of his own free will*, will be recorded by mission control; and they can immediately inform him what will be the outcome of his actions, however unplanned.

They can, however, only advise. If he persists in what he is doing he may miss his target and disappear for ever in the depths of space, and nothing that anybody on Earth can do will help him.

This is how divination works. The diviner can give advice on the basis of information that is not available to his subject; he can predict the outcome of a particular course of action and suggest an alternative; but he cannot state that any future event will definitely occur.

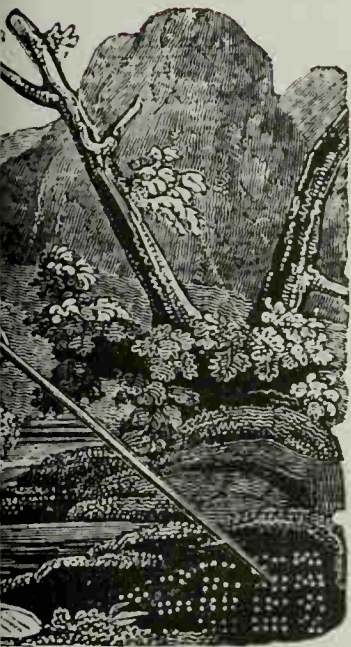
All divination, by whatever method, follows the same sequence:

First, a question is formulated. This may range from something very specific – such as 'Will I win today's lottery?' or 'Should I marry this man?' – to general enquiries of the form 'What will my future life be like?' Obviously, the more specific the question, the more specific the answer is likely to be – and, therefore, the more trustworthy it is for the enquirer. Generalised questions usually attract answers that are susceptible of many different interpretations.

Next, some physical means is employed to

Below: a geomancer practises his art. Reading meaning into randomly generated patterns remains popular. In the West, tea leaves are read, in other cultures the throwing of inscribed tablets – similar to the throwing of dice – is a common method of divination (divining tablets from Mashonaland, Zimbabwe, right). The belief persists that a specially gifted person – shaman, witch doctor or fortune teller (a Vietnamese stick thrower, below right) – is needed to practise divination, but it seems that almost anyone can





Left: the life of an individual can be compared to a space mission. Its purpose is known to mission control, who can – and do – manoeuvre the spacecraft from the Earth. Yet the crew could depart from the prearranged programme. Mission control could advise the crew not to, and they could still take no notice. Similarly, we have free will; divination can only advise us; it does not actually determine the future of our lives

provide a link between the enquirer and the diviner. The enquirer may be asked to provide an intimate possession, to touch something belonging to the diviner, or to make an arbitrary choice of cards from a pack, objects thrown to the ground, or any random arrangement of things from which he does not make a conscious selection. Or the diviner may employ some device, such as a crystal ball or a pendulum, on which he can concentrate so intensely that consciousness of his surroundings recedes to a point where he is effectively in a trance. Drugs may also be used for this purpose.

#### Skill – or cunning?

Then, avoiding any temptation to make use of knowledge he may consciously possess about the enquirer, or to reason logically from one premise to another, the diviner *intuitively* produces his ‘message’. Depending upon his skill – or cunning – this message may be straightforward advice of a practical nature, or a succession of cryptic statements that only the enquirer can interpret for himself. Frequently, as innumerable tales throughout history have told us, this advice can appear so obscure that the enquirer despairs of it; on occasion, diviners have been killed by their clients in an agony of frustration.

The methods of divination have their own archaic names, from abacomancy – divination from patterns of dust – to zoomancy – the observation of the behaviour of animals. There are, however, five methods of divination that have particularly attracted the attention of practitioners over the centuries, and that have therefore gathered about them a vast amount of literature and working tradition. These are astrology (see page 233), cartomancy, cheiromancy, geomancy, and the Chinese method of divination known as the *I Ching*.

Although astrology has claimed to be the oldest of these, there is little doubt that geomancy is as old – and it is certainly the

simplest. In this context, geomancy got its name from the practice of making a pattern of holes in the earth, and should not be confused with the Chinese practice of *feng-shui*, which is concerned with finding propitious places on which to erect tombs, build houses or found cities.

Geomancy, in fact, may be the surviving ancestor of the *I Ching*: the divinatory figures of geomancy are made up of four lines, and those of the *I Ching* of six. Since each line can take one of two forms, the total number of combinations in geomancy is only 16, compared with the 64 of the *I Ching*.

The lines may be marked in the dust or earth – which is how the art of geomancy got its name; or they may be made up of kernels or stones; or they may of course be marked on paper.

The art is said to have originated in Persia, but it is widespread over the whole of the Mediterranean region, the near East and much of Africa, and since its spread over this area followed the spread of Islam it is at least possible that Arab traders had brought it from China. In Malagasy, geomancy is known as *sikidi*; on the west coast of Africa as *djabe* or *fa*. In Europe, the first full description occurs in the second book of the *Occult philosophy* of Cornelius Agrippa (1531).

#### The right lines

The ‘lines’ from which the geomantic figure is derived can be obtained in a wide variety of ways. They may be straight horizontal lines traced – randomly and without conscious direction – in the dust, which are distinguished as short or long lines; or they may be either straight or wavy. These two classes of line are then identified as ‘odd’ or ‘even’, and are represented conventionally by either one or two stones, palm kernels or dots. Or the lines may be made up of a random succession of dots, the oddness or evenness being determined by the number of dots. In



fa, a handful of 18 palm kernels is passed from the left to the right hand, and the number of kernels remaining in the left hand is counted as either odd or even.

To make a geomantic figure, four lines are required. If, for instance, the first and third are even, and the second and fourth odd, the resultant figure will be:

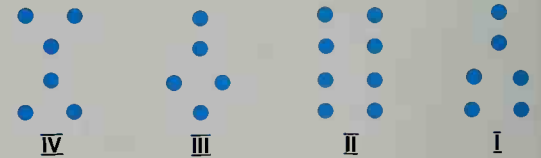


Below: how the geomantic figures are traditionally interpreted in the four main methods – the European, which uses Latin designations; the two West African systems of *fa* and *djabe*; and the *sikidi* of Malagasy

Altogether, there are 16 of these figures, each with its own name and significance, as detailed in the accompanying table.

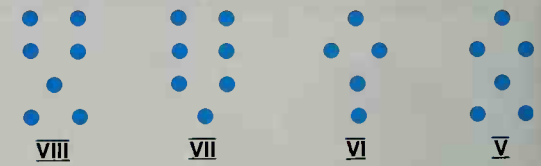
The meaning of the figures				
Figure	Latin name	Fa	Djabe	Sikidi
	<b>Puer</b> Yellow; rash, inconsiderate	<b>Lete</b> Abscess	<b>Kaoussadji</b> Long Life	<b>Alakarabo</b> Leads to danger
	<b>Amissio</b> Loss	<b>Tche</b> Pearl	<b>Marili</b> Sickness	<b>Adalo</b> Tears; protection against enemies
	<b>Albus</b> White; wisdom	<b>Touloukpin</b> Unripe papaya fruit	<b>Baiala</b> Family	<b>Alohomora</b> Favourable to thieves
	<b>Populus</b> The crowd	<b>Yekou</b> Spirits of the dead	<b>Djamaha</b> The crowd	<b>Asombola</b> Plenty
	<b>Fortuna major</b> Good luck	<b>Houolin</b> Pointed shell	<b>Adouhi</b> Victory over an enemy	<b>Adabaray</b> Fire
	<b>Conjunctio</b> Joining together	<b>Holi</b> Removal of an obstacle	<b>Dam'hi</b> Success	<b>Alatsimay</b> Protects thieves and enemies
	<b>Puella</b> Girl; pretty face	<b>Toula</b> A firing gun	<b>Nagiha</b> Soon	<b>Allikisy</b> Good fortune in love; riches
	<b>Rubeus</b> Red; passion, vice	<b>Ka</b> Canoe	<b>Oumra</b> Marriage	<b>Alabiavo</b> Riches, jewels
	<b>Aquisitio</b> Success, gains, good fortune	<b>Fou</b> Blowing the fire	<b>Kali</b> Good fortune on the right; bad on the left	<b>Alihotsy</b> Lightness of spirit
	<b>Carcer</b> Prison, delay, confinement	<b>Di</b> Resistance	<b>Sikaf</b> Law, command	<b>Akikola</b> Protects vagabonds
	<b>Tristitia</b> Sorrow, melancholy	<b>Aklan</b> Porous stone	<b>Mankuss</b> Death	<b>Betsivongo</b> Obsession, tears
	<b>Laetitia</b> Joy, health, beauty	<b>Abla</b> Connection	<b>Laila</b> Riches	<b>Alahijana</b> Strength; happy marriage
	<b>Cauda Draconis</b> Exit, lower kingdom	<b>Gouda</b> Evil gods	<b>Sehili or Haridja</b> Serious intentions	<b>Karija</b> Fate
	<b>Caput Draconis</b> Entrance, upper kingdom	<b>Sa</b> Between the thighs	<b>Raia</b> Health	<b>Alakaosy</b> Evil fate, disputes, war
	<b>Fortuna Minor</b> Less good fortune; external aid	<b>Losso</b> Riven tree	<b>Sapari</b> Journeys	<b>Soralahy</b> Pride, domination
	<b>Via</b> The way, journeys	<b>Gbe</b> Language	<b>Dariki</b> Children	<b>Taraiky</b> Loneliness; death

In Africa, these figures are interpreted singly, or in pairs. In the European tradition, the procedure is more complicated. In the first operation 16 lines are produced, and these are used to generate four 'Mother' figures. Suppose for example that the four following Mothers are produced:



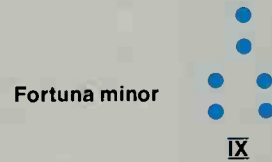
These are respectively: Fortuna Minor, Populus, Puer and Conjunctio.

From these four Mothers four Daughters are produced, by adding the four lines horizontally, from right to left:



These are, respectively, Amissio, Puella, Tristitia and Albus.

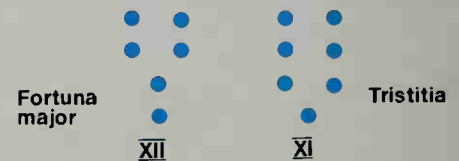
Now four Nephews must be produced. The first Nephew is obtained by adding together the first and second Mothers, and marking the sum as before, with one dot for odd and two dots for even. So, from the first two Mothers, we get:



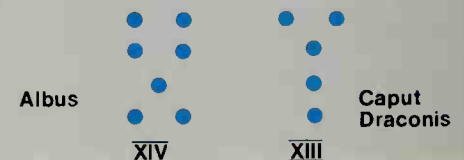
And from the second two Mothers:



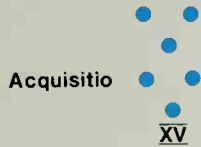
Similarly the third and fourth Nephews are formed by adding together the first and second, and the third and fourth, Daughters:



From the Nephews, two Witnesses are obtained by the same process of adding together:



And finally, a Judge is obtained by adding together the lines of the two Witnesses:



The final pattern of 15 geomantic figures will provide the answer to one of 16 questions:

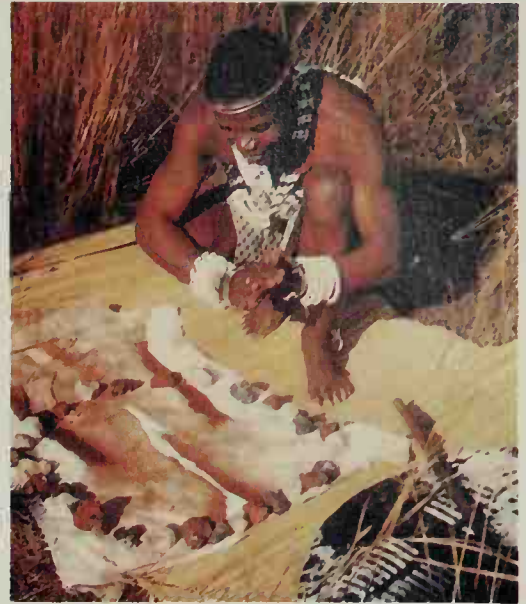
1. Will he have a long life?
2. Will he become rich?
3. Should he undertake the project?
4. How will the undertaking end?
5. Is the expected child a boy or a girl?
6. Are the servants honest?
7. Will the patient soon recover?
8. Will the lover be successful?
9. Will the inheritance be obtained?
10. Will the lawsuit be won?
11. Will he obtain employment?
12. How will he die?
13. Will the expected letter arrive?
14. Will the journey be successful?
15. Will good news arrive soon?
16. Will the adversary be overcome?

It can be seen that these questions cover most common preoccupations; with experience, the analysis of the geomantic pattern can be applied to other, rather more specific questions.

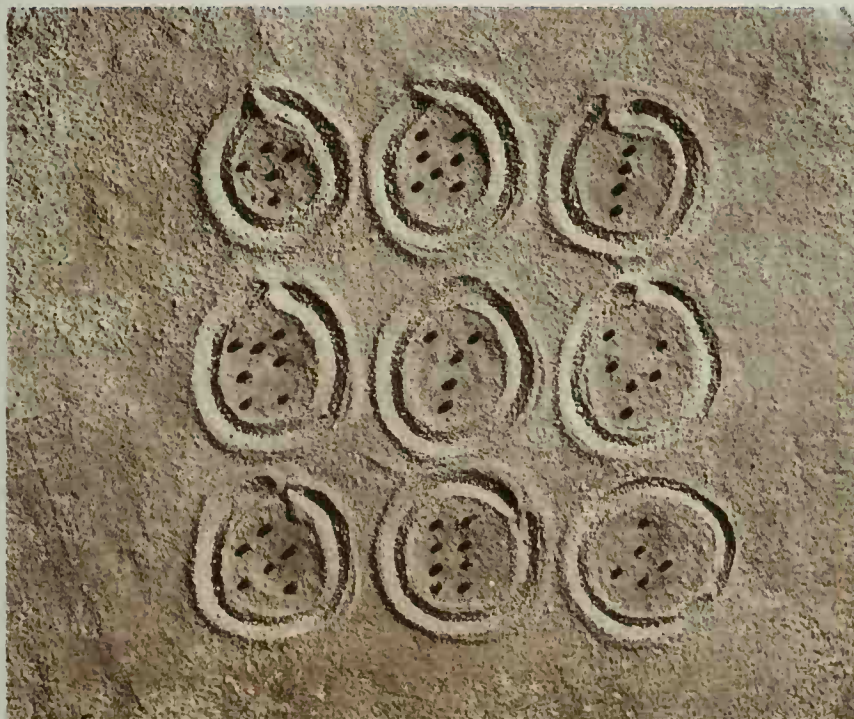
How are the figures interpreted, and how is the question answered? Let us suppose that the example above was obtained in answer to the question 'Will the lawsuit be won?'

In this case the Judge is *Acquisitio*, which signifies success, and the two Witnesses are *Caput Draconis* and *Albus*. These are all

Right: a South African witch doctor casts and reads the 'wise stones'



Below: on the west coast of Africa, in the geomantic method known as *fa*, palm kernels are passed from hand to hand for a few moments. Those that end up in the left hand are counted and the geomantic figures are then formed from them



fortunate omens, and the implication is that wisdom will prevail and the lawsuit will be won with honour. We can investigate the progress of the lawsuit by considering the pattern of figures from the beginning. The outcome of the suit depends upon others (*Fortuna Minor*), whom we may suppose are the jury (*Populus*), likely to behave capriciously (*Puer*), but finally reaching a common verdict (*Conjunctio*). Perhaps the possibility of losing the suit (*Amissio*) is concerned with a girl (*Puella*), who can be the cause of sorrow (*Tristitia*) unless wisdom (*Albus*) prevails. The representative (*Fortuna Minor*) of the girl (*Puella*) could be a danger (*Tristitia*), but good fortune (*Fortuna Major*) will be the final outcome.

**Open to interpretation**

Geomancy is the most primitive of all the methods of divination, but this example shows clearly how adaptable it is as a means of interpretation. Because of the sequence of operations by which the Judges and Witnesses are obtained, there are only eight possible Judges – *Acquisitio*, *Amissio*, *Fortuna Major*, *Fortuna Minor*, *Populus*, *Via*, *Conjunctio*, *Carcer* – and each of these Judges has a possible eight combinations of Witness, this figure being doubled due to the fact that each Witness may stand on either right or left of the Judge. Altogether, therefore, there are 128 possible configurations of Judge and Witnesses, each of which can be an answer to one of 16 questions.

Methods of divination to be considered in succeeding articles are far more complex. In the *I Ching*, for example, there are 64 basic figures; while in the use of the Tarot cards there are a minimum of 22 cards, which may be disposed in an almost infinite variety of ways.

# I Ching: enquire within

**One of the oldest and most flexible of divinatory methods is also the most fascinating. BRIAN INNES continues his discussion of divination with a brief look at the Chinese Book of Change**

CONFUCIUS SAID: 'If some years were added to my life, I would give 50 to the study of the *I Ching*, and might then escape falling into great error.' That was in 481 BC, when he was already nearly 70 years old, and had written a series of commentaries on the text of the book the Chinese call *I Ching*, which means 'the Book of Change'.

The *I Ching* is one of the oldest and most respected oracle books in the world. In its present form it can be traced back at least 3000 years – and even at that time it was already considered venerable, being based upon more primitive forms of oracle.

The Book of Change draws its basic philosophy from the ancient Chinese faith known as Tao. The word 'tao' is most usefully translated as 'way' – as in the Christian expression 'I am the Way, the

Far right: K'ung Fu-tzu, the great Chinese philosopher known to us as Confucius

Below: a romanticised Western view of the ceremony involved in consulting the *I Ching*: the sticks are being passed through the smoke from an incense burner, while the enquirer makes his kowtows before them

Truth, the Life' – but no English word provides a really satisfactory equivalent, and even in Chinese it is susceptible of a variety of meanings. Indeed, as one Chinese inscription puts it: 'the Tao that can be put into words is not Everlasting Tao.'

Taoist writings are full, in fact, of negative definitions: 'power and learning is adding more and more to oneself, Tao is subtracting day by day; rigour is death, yielding is life; as laws increase, crimes increase.'

To the Taoist sage the world is not made up of discrete particles of time and space: everything is part of everything else, and reality consists of ceaseless change. The river that one paddled in yesterday is not the river one swims in today; and so the Universe is seen as a moving pattern in which nothing is permanent. So the *I Ching* is different from other oracle books: it does not regard the past, the present and the future as fixed; instead, it treats time and fate as dynamic and flowing, never the same from one moment to the next. The advice that one obtains by consulting the *I Ching*, therefore, is of possibilities: if you act in a particular way it is likely to result in such-and-such an outcome.

As a tool of divination, the *I Ching* is very similar to geomancy in principle (see page 731); but the divinatory figures that are generated are composed of six lines instead of four, and therefore there are a possible 64, rather than 16, figures. Moreover, where the







Below: the philosophy of Tao contains a strong sexual element, and intercourse is regarded as the interchange of yin and yang between the two partners. The cup represents Autumn Days, the last of the Thirty Heavens and Earth postures: 'The lord Yang lies on his back, his hand at the back of his head, and lady Yin sits on his stomach, but turning her face to his feet'



Witness-Judge procedure of geomancy results in only 128 different interpretations, each of the *I Ching* figures contains within itself 64 possible variations, and can generate at least one further figure: the total number of interpretations, therefore, is:

$$64 \times 64 + 64 = 4160.$$

Taoist philosophy classifies all the energies of the Universe under two headings, yin and yang. Yin is passive, watery, pertaining to the Moon, essentially female; yang is active, fiery, pertaining to the Sun, essentially male. The lines that make up the divinatory figures are described as either yin or yang lines; a broken line represents yin, a continuous line yang.

The six-line figures are known as hexagrams. Each can be regarded as made up of two three-line figures called trigrams. Since each line of each trigram can be either continuous or broken, the number of trigrams is  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ . And since each hexagram is made up of two trigrams, the number of hexagrams is  $8 \times 8 = 64$ .

The traditional way in which these figures are generated is long and complicated. A bundle of 50 dried yarrow stalks is required; yarrow was used because it had a certain holy significance to the Chinese. One of the stalks is set aside, and is not used in obtaining the hexagram; there is some dispute among Western writers as to whether the fiftieth stalk plays any part in the tradition of the *I Ching* or not.

The remaining 49 stalks are then separated into two piles. After this, the procedure is as follows:

1. One stalk from the right-hand pile is placed between the little finger and ring finger of the left hand.

2. Stalks are removed four at a time from the left-hand pile until four or less are left. These stalks are placed between the ring finger and the middle finger of the left hand.

3. Stalks are removed four at a time from the right-hand pile until four or less are left. These stalks are placed between the middle finger and the index finger of the left hand.

The stalks held between the fingers of the left hand will now total either 5 or 9:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 + 1 + 3 &= 5 \\ \text{or } 1 + 3 + 1 &= 5 \\ \text{or } 1 + 2 + 2 &= 5 \\ \text{or } 1 + 4 + 4 &= 9 \end{aligned}$$

These stalks are then put aside, and the process is repeated with the remaining 40 or 44 stalks. At the end, the stalks held between the fingers will total either 4 or 8:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 + 1 + 2 &= 4 \\ \text{or } 1 + 2 + 1 &= 4 \\ \text{or } 1 + 4 + 3 &= 8 \\ \text{or } 1 + 3 + 4 &= 8 \end{aligned}$$

This pile is also set aside, and the process repeated with the remaining stalks. Once more, the stalks held in the left hand will total either 4 or 8.

There are now three little piles: the first contains 5 or 9 stalks, the second and third

each contain 4 or 8. There are therefore eight possible combinations of these three quantities. These provide a yin or yang line:

$$\begin{aligned} 5 + 4 + 4 & \text{ --- } \bigcirc \text{ --- Old yang line} \\ 9 + 8 + 8 & \text{ --- } \times \text{ --- Old yin line} \\ 5 + 8 + 8 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \text{ Young yang line} \\ 9 + 8 + 4 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \\ 9 + 4 + 8 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \\ 5 + 4 + 8 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \text{ Young yin line} \\ 5 + 8 + 4 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \\ 9 + 4 + 4 & \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \end{aligned}$$

The 'old' lines are also known as 'moving' lines: an Old yang line is seen to be changing into a Young yin line, and an Old yin line into a Young yang line. Each of the four types of line is also given a 'ritual number':

Old yin line	6
Young yang line	7
Young yin line	8
Old yang line	9

So far, only a single line has been generated. This is drawn as the bottom line of the hexagram, and then the procedure must be repeated five times more, the lines being drawn in ascending order.

Producing a single hexagram, therefore, can take five minutes or more. Those who let the *I Ching* govern their lives have developed a simpler and quicker method that requires only three coins. Chinese coins traditionally had an inscribed face and a blank or 'reverse' face – the side of a modern coin that gives the value is considered the inscribed side: if the blank face is given the value 3, and the inscribed face the value 2, tossing the three coins will provide a total of 6, 7, 8 or 9 – and so, taking this as the ritual number, the first line is obtained. It is possible, in this way, to obtain the hexagram in less than a minute.

What follows the obtaining of the hexagram? The texts of the *I Ching* are of several different periods and different kinds. First comes a description of the hexagram itself, in terms of the two trigrams of which it is composed; then comes the Judgement, which is said to have been composed by King Wen, the founder of the Chou dynasty (c. 1100 BC). This is a rather brief analysis of the hexagram as a whole.

### 'The superior man'

The next text, the Commentary, is traditionally attributed to Confucius, although it is improbable that he himself wrote it. This is generally longer than the Judgement, and takes note of the significance of the individual lines making up the whole hexagram. The third text, the Image, is succinct: it describes the kind of action that the sensible person – referred to usually as 'the superior man' – should take. This text has also been attributed to Confucius.

The final group of texts were composed by King Wen's son, the Duke of Chou, who destroyed the Shang dynasty in 1027 BC. These were written about 40 years after Wen's text: they are brief and rather cryptic, and they deal with the occurrence of Old

yang and yin lines within the hexagram.

One or two specific examples will illustrate the nature of these different texts, and the way in which they are interpreted.

In hexagram 63, Chi Chi – Climax and After – the upper trigram is K'an, which symbolises dangerous deep water, the Moon, the winter season, the north, the middle son, an ear, the 'element' wood and the colour red; the lower trigram is Li, representing fire, the Sun, summer, the south, the middle daughter, the eye, and the colour yellow.

The text of *I Ching* describes Chi Chi as being an evolutionary phase of hexagram 11, T'ai, which means Peace. Hexagrams are read from the bottom, and the 'strong' positions are considered to be lines 1, 3 and 5. In T'ai, lines 1, 2 and 3 are occupied by yang lines, while lines 4, 5 and 6 are yin; in Chi Chi, the yang lines have migrated upward to their appropriate positions, displacing the yin lines to position 2, 4 and 6. Thus, says the text, everything is in its proper place. But although this is a very favourable hexagram, it still gives grounds for caution: for it is when equilibrium has been reached that any sudden displacement may cause order to revert to disorder.

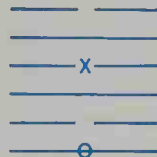
The Judgement on Chi Chi reads: 'After the climax there is success in small matters. Righteous persistence brings its reward. Good fortune in the beginning, but disorder in the end.'

Now comes the Commentary. 'Chi Chi indicates progress in small matters. The

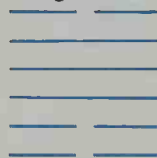
proper position of the yang and yin lines shows that righteous persistence will be rewarded; the weak line at the centre of the lower trigram indicates good fortune in the beginning, but the way peters out, efforts come to an end, and disorder returns.' This is one of a number of cases in which the Commentary seems to add very little to the Judgement, but in other cases it can be of considerable value in elucidating the often obscure phrases of the Judgement.

The verses of the Duke of Chou refer to the occurrence of 'moving' lines, the Old yang and Old yin lines. The bottom line of Chi Chi is a yang line: if it is an Old yang line, with a ritual number 9, then the verse for that line should also be read.

These Old lines are also moving into Young lines. Suppose, for instance, that the hexagram Chi Chi was obtained as follows:



When the old lines have changed into their opposites, the hexagram will be:



This is a very different hexagram. It is 62,



Above right: how the sticks are held between the fingers of the left hand

Above far right: in this porcelain dish the shepherdess, a yin symbol, is surrounded by two male and one female sheep: these sheep represent the trigram Tui, or Joy

Right: an example of an English translation of the text of the *I Ching*, giving the Judgement, the Commentary and the typically cryptic verses written on the individual lines

### 63 Chi Chi Climax and After

#### The trigrams:

above: K'an dangerous deep water  
below: Li fire, brightness

This hexagram represents an evolutionary phase of hexagram 11, T'ai, Peace. The strong yang lines have moved upward into their appropriately strong positions, displacing the yin lines into their proper weak positions. Everything is in its proper place. But although this is a very favourable hexagram, it still gives grounds for caution: for it is when equilibrium has been reached that any sudden movement may cause order to revert to disorder.

#### The Judgement

After the climax there is a success in small matters. Righteous persistence brings its reward. Good fortune in the beginning, but disorder in the end.

#### Commentary

Chi Chi indicates progress in small matters. The proper position of the yang and yin lines shows that righteous persistence will be rewarded; the weak line at the centre of the lower trigram indicates good fortune in the beginning, but the way peters out, efforts come to an end, and disorder returns.

#### The Image

Water over the fire, the image of Chi Chi.

The superior man, accordingly, gives due thought to the misfortunes to come, and takes precautions in advance.

#### The Lines

In the bottom line, NINE signifies:

Like a driver who brakes his chariot,  
Or a fox with a wet tail.  
No blame.

In the second line, six signifies:

She loses her carriage curtain.  
Do not run after it.

For in seven days it will be recovered.

In the third line, NINE signifies:

The Illustrious Ancestor  
The emperor Wu Ting  
Attacked the country of devils.  
Three years he took in subduing it.  
Small men are not fit for such enterprises.

In the fourth line, six signifies:

The finest clothes turn to rags.  
Be careful all day long.

In the fifth line, NINE signifies:

The neighbour in the east sacrifices an ox.  
But it is the neighbour in the west,  
With his small spring sacrifice,  
Who is blessed for his sincerity.

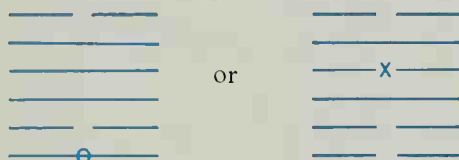
In the sixth line, six signifies:

His head is in the water.  
Misfortune.



Hsiao Kuo. The Judgement, Commentary and Image for this second figure should also be read for interpretation, but since the lines have now moved the verses of the Duke of Chou are not significant.

One can go further: if the lines are moving independently of one another, there are two possible intermediate hexagrams between Chi Chi and Hsiao Kuo. These are:



The first is 49, Ko; the second is 39, Cheng. Reading the texts for these two hexagrams, but remembering that only one can be the true intermediate, may help in the interpretation.

One has to be very careful in trying to present an imaginary worked example of the use of the *I Ching*: too often, indeed, one finds that the hexagram obtained is Meng:

I do not seek out the inexperienced; he comes to find me. When he first asks my advice, I instruct him. But if he comes a second or a third time, that is troublesome, and I do not advise the troublesome. . . .

As an experiment, I asked the *I Ching* 'whether it would be wise for me to finish this article tonight'. The hexagram I obtained was 20, Kuan:



Kuan signifies contemplation: 'the worshipper who has washed his hands, but not yet made the offering'. The upper trigram of Kuan is Sun, representing wind and gentleness; the lower trigram is K'un, the Earth, the passive. The Image of Kuan is the wind moving over the Earth. 'So did the kings of

old visit all parts of their kingdom, to see their people and give them instruction.

There is an Old yin line in the second line, which signifies:

Contemplation through the crack of the door

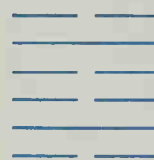
Is sufficient only for a housewife and the Old yang line in the sixth line signifies:

Contemplating himself

The superior man is without reproach.

It seems that *I Ching* is advising me not to continue with the article until I have had time to think about it some more; it also suggests that my time would be better occupied in ascertaining whether the editorial staff have any problems.

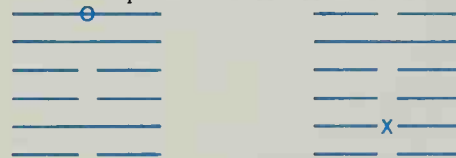
Now the moving lines must be allowed to develop, and the resultant hexagram is 29, K'an:



This is one of only eight hexagrams in which the trigram is doubled. In each trigram a strong yang line has plunged into the deep between two yin lines, as water lies in a deep ravine. The Judgement reads: 'Abyss upon abyss, danger piled on danger. But if you are sincere there is success locked up within.' The Commentary continues the theme, and the Image of K'an is: 'The water flows on and on to its destination; the image of the abyss upon the abyss. So the superior man walks in eternal virtue, instructing others in the conduct of their affairs.'

The last part of this text clearly relates to the advice given above - although the warnings of danger seem unnecessarily strong in such a minor matter. Can the intermediate hexagrams throw any light on the matter?

The two possible intermediates are:



These are, respectively, 59, Huan, and 8, Pi.

Huan signifies dispersal, and the advantageousness of travel. In the sixth line, the Old yang line signifies:

He disperses bloodiness  
Keeping evil at a distance  
Departing without blame.

Pi, on the other hand, is the image of holding together; it signifies those who follow the lead of the superior man.

It was only a light-hearted question, and it deserves a light-hearted answer: 'The *I Ching* has told me that it is time for me, and my staff, to stop work and go home!



既濟

Is it possible to read an individual's future from a pack of Tarot cards? In his continuing series, BRIAN INNES describes the most popular method of divination, explaining how the cards are consulted and how the significance of each one can be interpreted

THE DIVINATORY methods so far considered are aleatory – that is, they are based upon what seems to be a random selection of identical elements. The word 'aleatory' comes from the Latin for dice-player, and of course one of the simplest of divinatory methods consists in the throwing of one or two dice.

However, numerous experiments in psychokinesis have suggested that an experienced dice-thrower can influence the results of his play; and it may well be that the subconscious mind, or some transcendental aspect of it, is able to calculate the implications of the number of geomantic marks being made, or, as in the *I Ching*, yarrow stalks selected, before the hand has completed its movements.

It is certainly worth postulating that the mind, being in some kind of telepathic awareness of all the interpretations available, in some way selects the most suitable answer



## Coming up trumps

to the question that has been posed, and then subconsciously causes the appropriate figure to be generated.

Some process of this kind seems to be at work in divination by means of the Tarot pack, which is probably nowadays the most popular of all methods.

The use of a pack of cards for divination is definitely not aleatory, since each of the elements selected is distinct, and has a particular significance all its own. There are a number of packs of specially designed cards available for divination – the French firm of Grimaud, for example, market such sets as the cards of 'Mademoiselle Le Normand', or 'The Parlour Sybil' – but most diviners are able to make do with an ordinary pack of playing cards. And in this respect it is important to remember that the Tarot pack is also an *ordinary pack of playing cards*. Although some of the images of the Tarot pack may appear bizarre to north-western Europeans familiar only with the standard 52-card bridge and whist pack, they do not embody an intrinsic occult significance. For 500 years, the Tarot cards have been the standard pack for a variety of common card games that go under the generic name of *tarok* or *tarocchi*.

There are very many ways of 'consulting

the cards', and there is no reason to suppose that any one way is more correct or successful than any other. All that is important is that the practitioner should be completely confident about his or her method and the way in which the cards are to be interpreted. The easier methods make use only of the 22 trumps, which have been given by occultists the impressive title of Greater Arcana; the distinctive images of these cards are of great help in attaching significance to each, and in remembering what that significance is.

More complicated methods employ all 78 cards; but here even experienced practitioners find it necessary to resort to textbooks to remind them of the accepted significance of the numbered suit cards.

Ideally, to make consulting the Tarot a true divinatory method, each practitioner should decide exactly what meaning to attach to each card – even if this departs widely from what is commonly held to be the meaning, it should not affect the process of divination in any way. In practice, it is common to consult a textbook on the subject; although this may provide a rather stilted, formalised interpretation, it makes divination by Tarot very much easier.

The same kind of divinatory process can of course be carried out with a pack devoid of

The first mention of playing cards occurs in records for the years 1377 to 1379; by the end of the 15th century (above) they were widespread in Europe

Opposite: stages in the development of the images of two representative Tarot cards, Strength (above) and The Fool (below). The packs represented are, respectively: one attributed to Bonifacio Bembo, executed about 1480 (left); the 'Swiss' pack published by Müller since the late 18th century (centre top); a modern Italian pack of traditional design published by Modiano (centre); the Grimaud 'Marseilles' pack, from a 17th-century design (centre bottom); pack designed by the occultist Oswald Wirth, late 19th century (top right); a Spanish pack of early 20th century design (centre right); and pack designed by another occultist, A.E. Waite, and published at the turn of the century (bottom right)

Tarot trumps, such as a common 52 or 56 card pack, but in this case the interpretation is commensurately more difficult.

The ways in which the cards are used in divination are of two kinds: either a select number of cards is chosen for interpretation, or the complete pack is disposed according to a formula, producing a pattern of distribution in which the position of the card determines its part in the divinatory process.

As in all other methods of divination, the process comprises a questioner, who asks for advice by proposing a particular question, and the diviner, who interprets the answer. The cards may be dealt out either by the questioner or by the diviner – no two authorities agree on this, and it may also depend upon the particular method employed – but it is essential that both should concentrate fully upon the question. As with the *I Ching*, a frivolous question, or one that is idly put, will provoke an answer that may be equally facetious or, possibly, quite frightening in its implications.

One example must suffice to show how the Tarot cards are laid out in a pattern, and how they are then used for divination.

The questioner in this case is a mature but



still-young woman, who has been married for several years; she has a full-time professional job. Due partly to the tastes and partly to the particular ambitions of her husband, she finds herself compelled to live in a district that she finds unpleasant. Should she endeavour to make her present home as pleasant as possible, or should she try to persuade her husband to move elsewhere?

The particular arrangement of cards used is one known as the 'Celtic cross'; only the 22 Tarot trumps are required for this.

1. A card is chosen to represent the question; this is known as the significator. In this particular case The Star, representing 'new beginning; pleasure; salvation', was the card selected.

2. The questioner shuffles the remaining cards, cuts them, and places them in a pile some way to the left of the significator.

3. The top card of the pile is turned over from left to right (so that it remains as it was in the pile, either upright or reversed) and placed directly on top of the significator. This card represents the present conditions in which the questioner lives or works. The card is The World. In spite of the nature of the question asked, it therefore would appear that the questioner is on the whole satisfied



change; it brings knowledge of the future and new understanding of the past; it advises the questioner to face up to whatever change may come.

These first six cards drawn have presented a picture of the questioner and her problem, as well as revealing some small details that she did not provide. The final four cards, which are placed one above the other to the right of the table, supply the divinatory advice.

1. The first card represents the present position of the questioner, and may answer the question directly. It is Death – not to be taken literally, for this card represents change by transformation.

2. The second card represents people and factors that may have an influence upon the answer. It is the Wheel of Fortune which, though it also signifies change, counsels prudence.

3. The third card reveals the inner feelings of the questioner, which she may well have kept hidden. It is the Moon, reversed; this suggests very strongly that the questioner does not really want to make the change that she has said she is considering.

4. The final card represents the end result of everything indicated by the preceding cards. The Pope is the representative of the firm foundations of our lives, the concepts of natural law and justice. This card, appearing in this position, suggests that the questioner and her husband have a mutual sympathy and understanding; their marriage appears to be a successful one; and it would be dangerous to threaten its stability by pursuing the change that was the subject of the question.

The account book of the treasurer to Charles VI of France records a payment in the year 1392 to the painter Jacquemin Gringonneur for three packs of cards 'in gold and various colours, of several designs, for the amusement of the said King'. The three cards illustrated here – Death (left), The Sun (right) and The Fool (below right) – are from 17 that survive in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and that were long believed to be the original Gringonneur cards. They are now, however, thought to be from the 15th century and of Italian origin

with her lot, and feels a sense of achievement in her work, and perhaps also in her home.

4. The second card is placed across the first, to represent any immediate influences that may affect the interests of the questioner. The card is Temperance: whatever decision is reached, it is likely to be controlled by reason.

5. The third card is placed above the first group of cards, to represent the ultimate aim of the questioner. This is the Fool, reversed, which confirms the previous card. And since it is reversed, it signifies the opposite of luck or fate, and implies a rational outcome.

6. The fourth card is placed below the first group to represent the influences from the past that have affected the questioner and the question she asks. The Empress tells us that she is a woman of considerable understanding and intuition.

7. The fifth card is placed to the right of the central group to represent the recent past. The Hermit suggests that the passage of time has brought wisdom and further understanding.

8. The sixth card is placed to the left of the central group to represent influences that may come into play in the near future. The Hanged Man represents adaptability and

#### A brief summary of the symbolic significance of the Tarot trumps

1 Magician	Man in search of knowledge; the answer he seeks
2 Woman Pope	Intuition, inspiration; subconscious memory, lack of foresight
3 Empress	Human understanding, femininity, sensuality, beauty and happiness
4 Emperor	Masculinity, independence, creativity, action
5 Pope	Advice: justice; healing
6 Lovers	Choice, decision
7 Chariot	Achievement, success; danger of defeat
8 Justice	Caution in taking advice; control of one's fate
9 Hermit	Time; wisdom; withdrawal
10 Wheel of Fortune	Change; prudence; the eternal return
11 Fortitude	Strength of purpose, coming danger
12 Hanged Man	Adaptability; desire to learn; violent change and sacrifice
13 Death	Change by transformation, rebirth
14 Temperance	Moderation, mercy; modification
15 Devil	The adversary; caution
16 The Tower	Punishment; pride; divine inspiration
17 The Star	New beginning; pleasure; salvation
18 The Moon	Uncertainty; changeability
19 The Sun	Splendour, health, wealth, affection; treachery
20 Judgement	Punishment or reward; final achievement
21 The World	Fulfilment, completion on a material level
0 The Fool	Fate; luck; the end



Above: how the Tarot cards are laid out in the spread known as the 'Celtic cross'. The significator card is The Star; laid on top of this is The World, representing the present condition of the questioner, and Temperance lies across both. Subsequent interpretation is explained in the text

A pattern of Tarot cards, however many have been laid out, is obviously very different from the pattern of dots obtained in geomancy (see page 731), or the pattern of lines in the *I Ching* (see page 736). Each of the cards has its own significance, and the position of each in the pattern also has a particular meaning. The Tarot cards must be read like the pages of a book: if we consider only the 22 trumps, there are over a thousand million million million different sequences. Add to this the incalculable number of groups of two, three, four or more and you will see that a combination can be obtained that will represent every conceivable situation – and that still leaves another 56 cards that can be used in interpretation



# On the other hand...

The lines of the hand are as individual as personality – but is there a connection between them? And can a diviner trace a person's destiny in his or her palm? BRIAN INNES concludes his series on divination with an analysis of the practice of palmistry

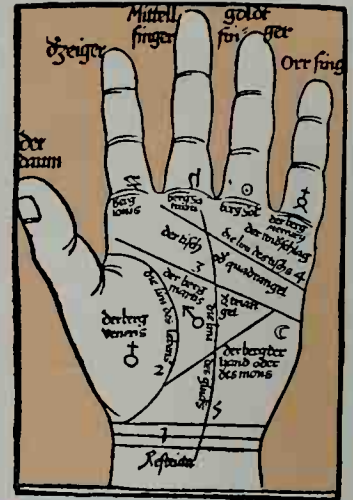
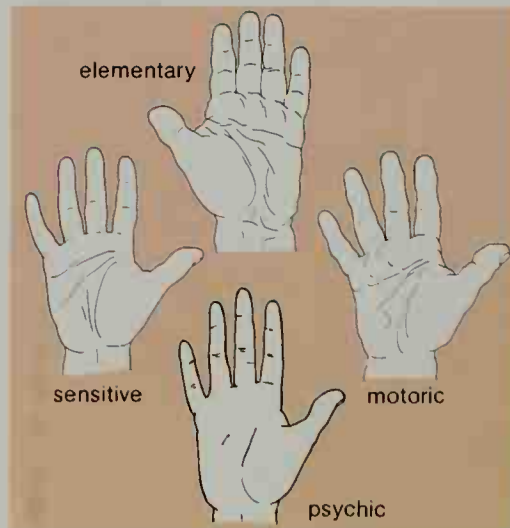
DIVINATION IS a means of answering questions and giving advice on what future action should be undertaken by the questioner. It works best with intense concentration of both practitioner and questioner, apparently by providing some kind of telepathic insight into the nature of the problem, the personality of the questioner, and the probable outcome of any given action.

To obtain the necessary concentration, almost all practitioners require some object on which they can focus their conscious faculties, in order to give the subconscious a free rein. Certain practitioners make use of something like a crystal ball, or a pendulum; but greater success seems to be achieved if the object on which attention is focused has some direct physical relationship with the questioner: playing cards that have been shuffled and cut by him or her, or some other kind of object that has been handled.

So far, all the methods of divination described in these articles – geomancy (see page 731), the *I Ching* (see page 736) and the Tarot (see page 740) – have required a

personal involvement on the part of the questioner, but the means of divination has always been physically divorced from him or her. There remains one major divinatory method that requires the closest co-operation of the questioner, because the object being consulted is part of the human body itself. This method is cheiromancy, more popularly known as palmistry.

There are many who would not regard palmistry as a divinatory method at all. Since the law recognises the uniqueness of the human fingerprint, there is every reason to suppose that the palmprint is just as individual. We recognise a particular dog or cat



Above left: palmistry has a long and venerable history – and remains popular today

Top: a diagram from Bartolomeo Cocle and (above) from Jean d'Indagine illustrating the ancient association between parts of the hand and the planets

Left: the four basic shapes of the hand according to Carl Carus. The 'elementary' hand is typical of the manual worker; the 'motoric' is large and strong but flexible, and is found among businessmen and craftsmen; the 'sensitive' hand, typical of writers and artists, is not as strong as the 'motoric' but is full of energy; and the 'psychic' is long and soft, indicating a personality that is sensitive and intuitive





Earth

Air

Fire

Water

by the distinctive pattern of its coat, and we could similarly recognise a person by the pattern of their palmprint. Since it is well-known that animal coat patterns are affected by many factors – the climate, the time of year, the health and genetic background of the individual – it is at least arguable that the human palmprint similarly has something to tell us about the individual.

One palmist, in fact, has claimed that he read a young man's hand, saw that there was a strong indication that he might commit suicide, and suggested to him that he should have psychiatric help – and that six months later the lines of the young man's hand had changed out of all recognition.

There is some scientific evidence that the occurrence of abnormal lines on the hands may be related to certain hereditary diseases, such as heart defects or those related to chromosome deficiencies. In traditional palmistry the so-called 'simian' line – in which the Head line and the Heart line run as one – is held to be an indicator of 'degeneracy'; now a group of doctors in New York has reported that this line often occurs in mongoloid children or in those whose mother suffered an attack of rubella (German measles) during pregnancy.

Above: the 'Earth' hand is square, with short strong fingers and few lines; the 'Air' hand has longer fingers and finer lines; the fingers of the 'Fire' hand are short with many lines; and the 'Water' hand is narrow and delicate, with a mesh of fine lines

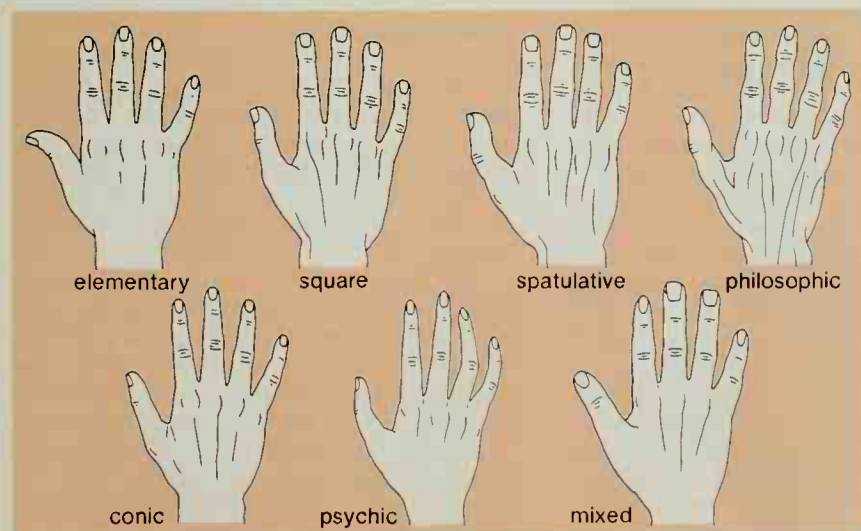
Below: the 'elementary' hand is typical of primitive people; the 'square' hand indicates a practical nature; the 'spatulative' hand denotes excitability; the 'philosophic' hand is self-explanatory; the 'conic' hand indicates someone who prefers pleasure to work; the 'psychic' hand speaks for itself. But most hands fall into the 'mixed' category

Right: the mounts and fingers

Whether or not there is any validity in this suggestion of a direct connection between the human metabolism and the lines of the hand, there is no doubt that the commonly accepted significance of the lines and parts of the hand must be based upon many centuries of empirical observation. Cheiromancy is recognised in the Bible, as in Proverbs 3:16: 'Long life is given in her right hand. In her left are riches and honour.' Or in Job 37:7: 'He seals up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.'

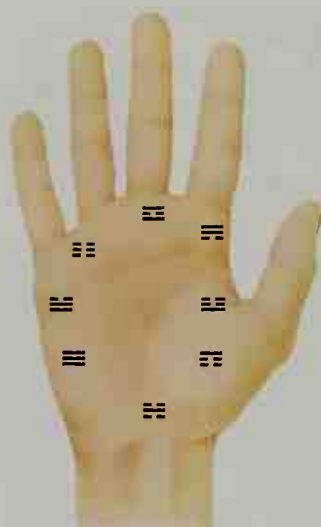
Indeed, in this second verse, we can detect the old magical element in cheiromancy, the belief 'as above, so below'. It is quite possible that the first palmists believed the lines of the hand to be some sort of map of celestial motion, rather as if the subject's horoscope had been printed there.

But whatever credence we may give to the interpretations placed upon individual lines



of the hand, there are other tenets of palmistry that are borne out by both popular and medical belief. Palmists place great importance on the form of the whole hand: its shape, its moistness or dryness, its relative fleshiness, the length and shape of the fingers, and the relationship of the thumb and fingers to the palm. And isn't this just what we all do – even subliminally – when we judge an individual's personality, and even the state of their health, from the touch of their hands?

There are a number of different methods



Above: the eight 'Palaces' of the hand in the Chinese system. Clockwise from the Mount of the Moon, these are: Ch'ien, for spiritual force; Tui, for sexual delight; K'un, for passivity; Li, for social and financial standing; Sun, for mental capacity; Chen, for energy and vitality; Ken, for obstinacy; and K'an, for difficulties to be faced

Above right: lines of the hand according to present-day practice

Left: classification of hand shapes on astrological principles. The Lunar hand is soft, with many lines: it indicates a restless but easygoing nature. The Mercurial hand, with its long finger of Mercury, denotes intellectual ability and quick wits. The Solar hand, with strong, short fingers, indicates ambition and trustworthiness. The Venusian hand, with its prominent Mount of Venus, is a sign of a cheerful and extrovert personality. The Martial hand has a very developed thumb and denotes courage and energy. The Jupiterian hand, with its thick and heavy fingers, is a sign of even temper and generosity. A long finger of Saturn characterises the Saturnine hand, indicating patience and shrewdness. The Earth hand is thick and firm, denoting a generous, slow but sure personality – and a loyal friend



of classification of the basic shape of the hand. The German Carl Carus proposed four types, which he named 'elementary', 'motoric', 'sensitive' and 'psychic'; the Frenchman Casimir d'Arpentigny increased this to seven, the 'elementary', 'square' (or 'useful'), 'spatulative' (or 'necessary'), 'philosophic', 'conic', (or 'artistic'), 'psychic' and 'mixed' hands.

Under the pseudonym of le Comte de St Germain, a late-19th-century writer expanded these to 14, including such oddities as the Congenital Idiot's hand and the Brutal Murderer's hand. In the 20th century, however, the tendency has been to reduce the number of shapes once more to four; a popular classification has been into Earth, Air, Fire and Water hands.

**Astrological magic**

Classifications of this kind have a certain natural logic to them; it is when we come to the fingers and the 'mounts' of the hand that astrological magic begins to take over. The mounts are the fleshy areas of the hand around the central palm, and each, with its related finger, is associated with one of the planets.

It is interesting to note that the fourth finger, which is associated with Apollo or the Sun, was long believed to have a vein running through it that connected directly to the heart, and it is for this reason that wedding rings are always placed upon this finger.

And so we come to the very complicated markings that appear all over the palm, the wrist and the fingers, and that no two people possess identically. There has been a great

deal of argument among palmists as to the relative significance of the lines on left and right hands respectively, which can differ quite markedly. The commonest (and perhaps the most sensible) theory is that, in a right-handed person whose lines will obviously be affected by the work they do throughout their lives, the lines of the left hand represent the destiny to which they were born, and the lines of the right hand represent what they have made of their life.

The lines of the palm are divided into principal and subsidiary lines. The 15th-century writer Jean d'Indagine recognised only four principal lines: the mensal, or line of Fortune; the line of Life, or line of Heart; the Middle line, which represented the subject's career; and the line of Liver, or Health line.

Indagine's near-contemporary, Bartolomeo Cocle, added a further line, the line of Fate, running from the wrist direct to the finger of Saturn; and later 17th-century

#### Further reading

Muriel B. Hasbrouck, *Tarot and Astrology, Inner Traditional* 1987  
Lori Reid, *Palmistry*, Sterling 1990

Below left: a female hand that is both 'psychic' and a typical 'Water' hand, with lunar characteristics. This is a sensitive, changeable person, but the well-developed finger of Jupiter suggests good judgement. The line of Life is strong and well-marked. Although the line of Heart begins quite strongly from below the Mount of the Moon of Mercury. It seems as if this person had no one on whom to direct her affection until later life; there is only one 'line of Marriage'. The line of Head begins strongly on the Mount of Jupiter, indicating an ambitious character, but it breaks, revealing inner conflict. The line of Fate begins strongly at the wrist but stops on the line of Heart, perhaps indicating that emotional problems will interfere with her career

Below: hand of a young man before and after psychiatry. The deep line on the Mount of the Moon has almost vanished and the many lines under the finger of Apollo have become one strong line

form of the subject's hand, the relative size of the fingers, and the implications of the various lines, he will turn his attention to the many smaller marks that can be found on the palm surface and on the fingers. He will look particularly for marks in the form of a star, a cross, a square, a circle, a triangle, a tripod or a spearhead. 'Islands' or spots that break up the lines also have their significance.

Palmistry, like astrology and geomancy, is also practised in China; although it is interpreted very differently, the readings obtained nevertheless correlate very closely with those arrived at by Western methods.

Chinese palmistry divides the palm into eight 'Palaces', which are designated by the eight trigrams of the *I Ching* (see page 736). The procedures of Chinese palmistry are thus quite closely related to the initial stages of Western palmistry, in which particular attention is paid to the shape of the hand; considerably less attention is devoted to the significance of the individual lines, which are seen as defining the areas occupied by the eight Palaces.

With this brief description of the techniques of cheiromancy, we come to the end of our consideration of the principal methods of divination practised throughout the world. But there remain perhaps hundreds of minor methods, either peculiar to a particular region, or of such inscrutable complexity that they are understood only by their practitioners.

There are hundreds of textbooks from which the eager enquirer can learn the practice of divination by horoscope, geomancy, the *I Ching*, Tarot cards or palmistry. Those with developed clairvoyant faculties may try 'scrying' with a mirror, a bowl of water or a crystal ball. The businessman who wants advice on his investments, or the general who has hopes of becoming the ruler of his country, no longer expects the diviner to:

Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten  
Her nine farrow; grease that sweaten  
From the murderer's gibbet throw  
Into the flame.



writers identified more lines according to our modern nomenclature.

The subsidiary lines, which do not appear on every hand, are the Girdle of Venus, which runs from between the third and fourth fingers to between the first and second fingers; the line of the Sun, which runs from near the wrist to the finger of the Sun; the line of Mars, which runs round the Mount of Venus within the line of Life; the Via Lasciva, which runs parallel to the line of Health further toward the outside of the hand; the line of Intuition, which curves round the Mount of the Moon; and the line of Marriage, which curves across the Mount of Mercury. The Bracelets, which run across the wrist, are taken as indications of the constitution of the subject.

When the palmist has considered the



 THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES –  
The Externsteine, near Paderborn, Germany

