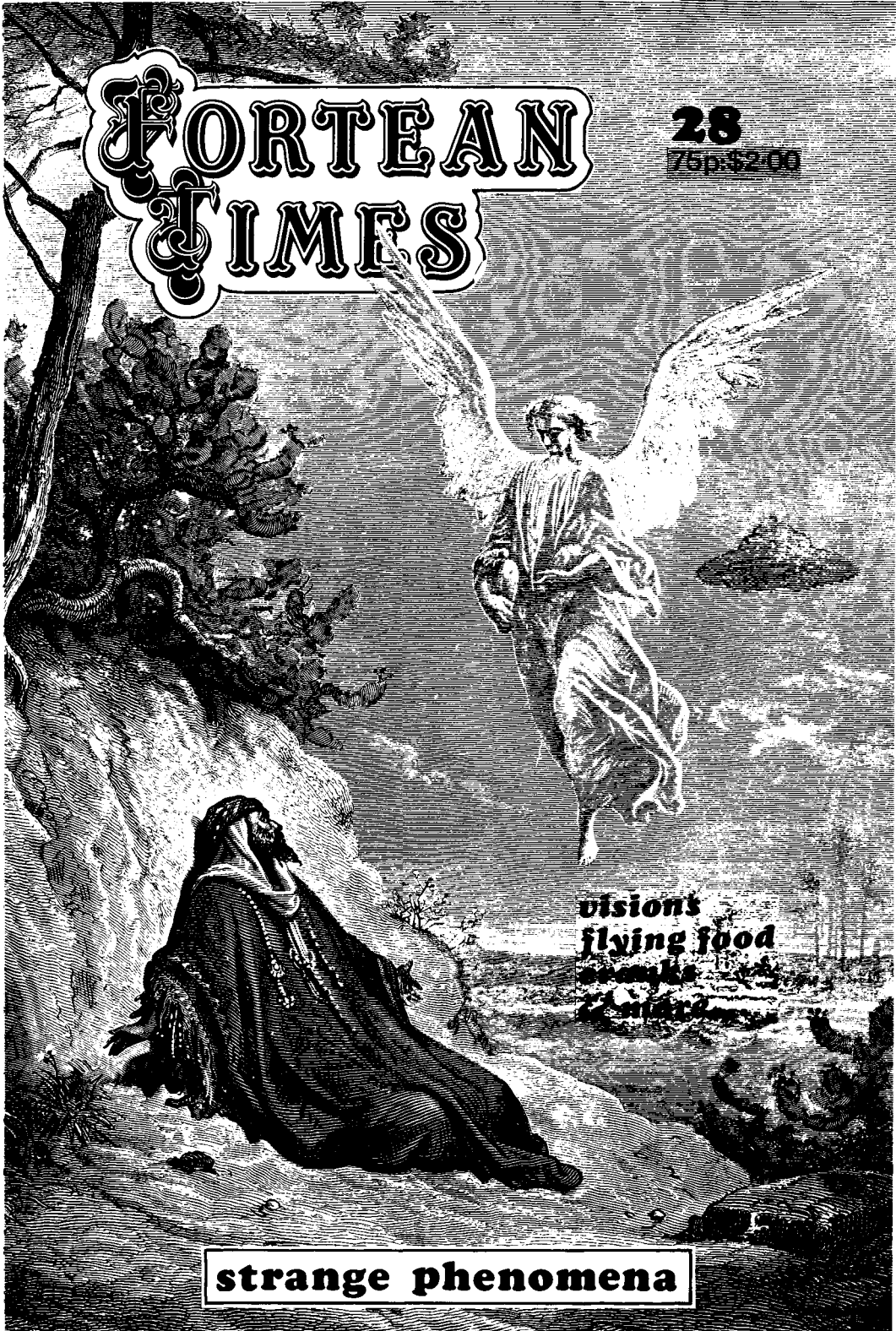


# FORTEAN & TIMES

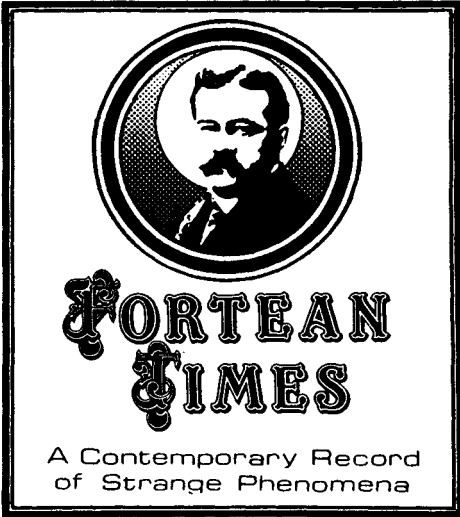
**28**  
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visions  
flying food  
examples  
& more

**strange phenomena**



# EDITORIAL STUFF



The time has come for us to stop talking about our 'Great Leap Forward' and do it! This will be the last issue in the present format - to wait until the next new year would lose this opportunity; nor could it be taken up with this issue. From next issue (FT29) we will be a larger and more professional format, typeset throughout, better graphics, layout and legibility.

Our goal is to create an attractive and informative magazine, not only to lure more readers, advertizers, newsstand distribution, but to give reader and contributor alike the sense of appreciation we feel their respective efforts, and the material itself, deserves. We all want FT to continue, but not at the expense of the worrying, bodging, corner-cutting, penny-pinching inadequate budgets on which we have (against odds) survived our first five years. We believe that interest in Fortean affairs has never been higher and still rising, and that given the proper format the market could sustain our dream of a well-funded and sound journal in our subject. Stability can only come with a larger circulation and we believe we've proved we can do it. Help us, nurture us in the difficult initial stages, and we'll give you a damned fine Fortean journal - an FT you can be justifiably proud of.

Compromises will have to be made. A proportion of the contents will have to be aimed at introducing the general reader or newcomer to Fortean mysteries. But we don't intend to lose the flavour of the FT you know and love. If we make a profit, so much the better - it would be plowed back into improving the mag, paying writers, and even funding special research, projects or publications.

We are under no illusion about the difficulties, but we're game if you are! FT staff have put their own money up, but it's not enough - we need more capital, if you'd like to invest with a loan or donation. Otherwise, do all you can to bring in new subscribers. Your sub will be extended by 1 issue for each one you personally bring in. Write for our new expanded illustrated blurb - out soon. Lobby newsgents and distributors. Give gift subs. We're putting a lot into this behind the scenes - and we're sure you're with us. Excelsior!

Other editorial stuff:

- Truss Fund . . . . . 15
- Index, INFO & Corliss . . . . . 8

**FORTEAN TIMES** is a non profitmaking quarterly miscellany of news, notes and references on current and historical strange phenomena, related subjects and philosophies. Formerly *The News*. Affiliated to the *International Fortean Organisation* (INFO), and the *Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained* (SITU), and other Fortean journals in continuing the work of Charles Fort (1874-1932). **SUBSCRIPTION** information and other details can be found on the back page.

**Edited and published by** Robert JM Rickard  
**Associate Editors:** Steve Moore, Paul Sieveking.  
**Contributing editors:** David Fideler, Phil Ledger  
**Heading art by** Hunt Emerson

FORTEAN TIMES, c/o Dark They Were & Golden Eyed,  
 9-12 St Annes Court, London W1, England.

## FT 28 - WINTER 1979

BVM's, AFTERLIFE & ANGELS ..... 3  
 KHOBALUS *Robert Forrest* ..... 9  
 SHOE-SNATCHERS, SKIRT-SLASHERS etc .. 11  
 LONG DELAYED MESSAGES ..... 13  
 FLYING FOOD ..... 16  
 REVIEWS ..... 21  
 I CHING NUMEROLOGY *Steve Moore* ..... 33  
 A HEALING TOMB *Peter Ratazzi* ..... 38  
 CURSES & BAD LUCK ..... 42  
 A CE3 IN LEEDS *Nigel Watson* ..... 44  
 RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS ..... 45  
 MORE OUT OF PLACE WILDLIFE ..... 48  
 LETTERS ..... 51



## OUR LADY OF BAYSIDE, NY

The BVM continues to visit New York, as she has done regularly for the last 8 years, making the visions of Veronica Leuken among the longest continuous visitation on record, whether recognized by the Church or not. We last heard of Mrs Leuken - an otherwise ordinary 50-ish housewife and mother - when her regular vigils on ground opposite the church of St Robert Bellarmine, in Bayside, Queens, had attracted such large followings, with pilgrims coming from all over the States, Canada, and abroad, that fights broke out between the devout and the irate, local citizens who protested about being besieged in their own homes - see FT15p3f. It seems the BVM couldn't fight City Hall, and conveniently intervened with a 'revelation' that the site of the vigils should be moved to Flushing Meadow Park, near a Vatican-shaped pavilion where Paul VI gave a blessing in 1965.

Veronica's experiences began while she was driving in 1968, when, as she prayed for Robert Kennedy - whose assassination had just been announced - a powerful scent of roses filled her car. Later she had visionary encounters with St Terese of Lisieux, who gave way in turn to the Mother of Christ herself in June 1970. At the mass vigils, Veronica is the only one privileged to see and hear, and while a continuous Rosary is chanted (BVM's orders) Veronica articulates the messages for the benefit of a tape-recorder, interspersed by her own end of the celestial conversation and descriptions of the figures, movements, dress etc. Here is a typical scene described in recent literature from the group that has formed around her:

"Our Lady is coming down now from the right side of the sky. I didn't see her standing over, high by the trees. Now She's following, going across the sky to Jesus. She's going over to His right side. And over on the left side I can see Michael spreading his wings now. He's covering, like a protective shield, the

whole sky over Our Lady's statue. He surrounds the whole grounds here with his being. There is no human way to explain the immense size of Michael... And also I can see now in the background behind Our Lady and Jesus many angels. I can see - not their faces; it's hard to describe the tremendous light - but the figures; they're clothed in white gowns."

The group, who call themselves the "Faithful and True Roman Catholics" hold their vigils on the eves of 28 major feasts in the Roman Catholic calendar, and depending upon the humour of the Almighty, Veronica may see, in addition to the regular appearances of St Michael, BVM and her Son, hosts of shining angels and glorified nuns, such luminaries as Sts Joseph and Bernadette and the Apostles, and perhaps vivid scenes of the coming catastrophic "Chastisement" of this sinful Earth.

In the past the BVM has encouraged pilgrims to bring and use their cameras but despite this approbation none of the many photos that have resulted are overwhelmingly convincing, except of course to the converted. One of my sources is a gently ironic article by Philip Nobile in the New Yorker for 11 December 1978. Nobile decided to attend a few of these vigils that Fall, and describes the crowds as mostly middle-aged women with a few men and children. "The majority appear to be simple Catholics, perhaps more devout than usual, from the lower middle class." Many have brought Polaroid cameras along, in the belief that a long exposure will give the BVM the opportunity to write messages using the trails of light from candles, car headlamps, street lights and the lights of planes coming into La Guardia airport. The photo below is typical of this kind of effect and is said to be the writing of Jacinta, one of the four children involved in the BVM visions at Fatima, Portugal, in 1916, who died in 1920. The BVM later revealed that a careful scrutiny of the picture

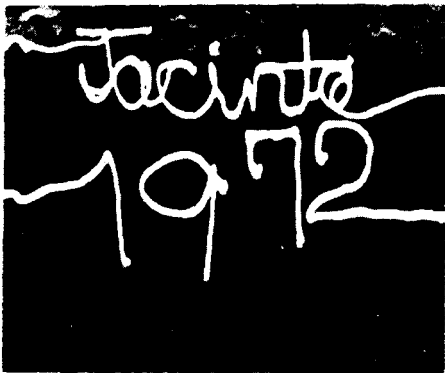
from all angles would disclose the date of the "fiery Ball of Redemption" which will wipe out three quarters of the Earth's population. (Further details of the prophetic visions are transcribed in Grave and Urgent Warnings, etc by C Marystone - reviewed in our paperback section this issue).

Nobile said he was shown whole albums of similar photos, each of which held some special significance for the faithful. One lady had a set showing Veronica's 16yr-old-son lying in his coffin after he was killed in a shooting accident. She told Nobile: "See the top photo? It was taken with a flash. The boy is laid out in the coffin. But look at the other photo. It's dimmer because the flash didn't go off. But notice how the boy is floating above the empty coffin wrapped in a shroud.' I examined the set closely. 'The boy isn't floating in a shroud in the second picture, and the coffin isn't empty,' I said, trying not to hurt her feelings. 'This second shot was just taken at a different angle, farther back, so that more of the silk lining is shown falling down the side of the coffin. The boy is still lying in the coffin, only he appears higher compared to the angle of the first picture.' I placed the photos side by side to demonstrate the difference. She was speechless, as was the small gathering around us."

It is easy to talk of gullibility, but the problem is more complicated than that. All of us have certain levels of suggestibility - indeed it is the very cement that binds together the common consensus of reality - for without it we would have no agreement on the

meaning of symbols, and thus means of communicating. For the role of suggestibility as one of the great shaping forces of society see that neglected work The Crowd (1897) by Gustave Le Bon. He showed that a crowd may be distinguished from a random group of people by their peculiar mental or psychical alignment - and the characteristics of this hypnoid state (ie like a hypnotically induced state) include a diminished individual consciousness with an increase in collective consciousness (ie a reversion to a more archaic level of consciousness); a loss of critical faculties and everyday values; and heightened suggestibility. The very act of being in a crowd becomes a trigger for this state in which the crowd as a whole can be swayed by the most preposterous notions - a fact orators and dictators have not been slow to take advantage of. We have no space to go into the subject but as I hope to show in a forthcoming book, a knowledge of these factors, among others, is essential to the proper analysis of Fortean and UFO phenomena, indeed all phenomena with intensely subjective experiential states. For now we only note that if Nobile's assessment was correct, then the vigil 'crowd' had created their own little bubble of belief about those photos, and his needle of rational analysis was enough to pop it - assuming of course that their speechlessness was due to the shock of waking up and not to anger at his impiety! This in no way denigrates the religious basis of their belief (which remains valid) nor their psychological need to believe (a subject we need to know a lot more about.) More examples of minority consensus belief below.

That said, there is no doubt people see things - it is only the physical and objective evidence that is ambiguous. This itself might be our single most important clue to the triggering of these kinds of experience. Again from Nobile, we learn that there is a strong tradition at these vigils of "heavenly doves" associated with the BVM apparitions at Bayside and Flushing Park, as there was at the visions at Zeitun, in Cairo (1968). (There are other similarities between Bayside and the visions at Fatima and Garabandal, Spain (1961) as several critics have observed.) On the evening of 2 October 1978, Nobile attended a vigil at the Park. "As I stood at the edge of the crowd examining a rosary that allegedly turned from tin to gold overnight, I heard a chorus of ahs. 'Look at the sky - see the doves,' said the man with the golden beads. I



A Polaroid picture taken by a Mr Eanzenberger at the Bayside shrine on 14 September 1971 - from Hartfield Courant (CT) 30 December 1978.

looked up and saw 5 luminous discs darting across the sky. They were like beams of light banked against the clouds, only no beams seemed to be coming from the ground. The discs disappeared simultaneously in a matter of seconds. 'They are spiritual doves,' a Puerto Rican in a white beret hastened to inform me. 'But sometimes they could be regular doves from a nearby pond ((!)) that are supernaturally inspired to fly by. It's a little treat that the Blessed Mother gives us.'" Spiritual doves, real doves, UFOs, telepathic hallucinations, meaningful coincidences - the versatility of belief is impressive - yet none of these explanations really, finally, explains anything. That's what's so damned fascinating! Incidentally, Nobile checked with La Guardia, but no UFOs had been reported - not that that particularly means anything.

The other aspect of the 'Bayside' visions of interest to us are their revelations. The prophecies, admonitions, messages and sermons in the BVM's locutions - Jesus himself doesn't speak but plants the words in Veronica's mind - have all the flavour of old-time fire and brimstone, aimed at all the corruptions of the modern world, especially that "cesspool of perversion" New York. But they also contain many themes of modern paranoia fascinating to contemporary folklorists, psychologists, ufologists, conspiratorialists and Forteanes alike. For example, in September 1977, BVM warned that there was a genuine vampire on the loose in NY, who sustained humanoid form with the vital blood of others. Other messages spoke of hordes of hellish homosexuals sodomizing young boys; Satan as the 'Son of Sam'; an impostor Paul VI; John Paul I poisoned with curare. Top cardinals of the Curia (Villot, Benelli and Casaroli are vigorously named) are accused of worming their way to power in the Vatican with the aid of the Devil, and using an Italian actor (who had undergone plastic surgery at their request to look like Paul VI) in a plot to supplant Paul, who was kept prisoner in a secret cell. The BVM is credited with exposing their plan by causing a curious double exposure of a "miraculous photo" of Paul VI, taken during an audience in Rome. The group's advertisement in the Hartford Courant Connecticut, 30 December 1978 (Cr: Phil Ledger) adds that the BVM has identified the twin evils: that the rock music business is under the control of an international group of "Wicca" who consecrate each LP to Satan; and that the Illuminati are alive and well and own all media

in order to pervert youths through drugs and "school systems". Powerful stuff! But after the mass destruction of the misled (as Nobile refers to the Jonestown massacre) who's laughing any more? The "end days" might well be here!

## DO YOU BELIEVE...?

In a major Gallup Poll in the USA, released on 25 May 1978, many Americans put their vote where their beliefs are. 57% said they believed UFOs were "real" (whatever that may mean), 3% up on the same question in 1973. Not much of an advance, but this is supposed to be an age of scientific rationalism (we are always being told), and skepticism went down by the same amount to 27%. For some discussion of these and allied statistics see Jerome Clark's column in UFO Report September 1978 (Cr: RF Landro)). However, belief in other aspects of the "supernatural" increased considerably, making belief in UFOs quite unremarkable. One in ten believed in witches; one in nine, ghosts, two thirds of whom claimed to have seen one. Two in five believed in the existence of devils and angels; while one in eight reckons the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot exist.

Like Fort before us, we note the use of the word 'believe'. Our position as Forteanes is to "substitute acceptance for belief" - but of course some of us are also human. In the end it comes down to faith or belief for most people. Many scientists believe faith is the province of religion, but they're wrong. They couldn't proceed if they didn't have an equally fundamental belief that the 'laws' of science are consistent in all time and space. Faith is an absolute factor - with all the qualities of an extremity - leaving no room for doubt. You have it or you don't - and it comes and goes with devastating swiftness. Faith is the unconditional acceptance of dogma - and it is dogma in science or religion that draws the lines and decrees what is acceptable. Working covertly or openly it is also one of society's shaping forces, like suggestibility, and with the same qualities, including a hypnoid component of diminished critical faculties, intolerance of 'opposition', etc. Us doubters are all the time up against a paradox barrier: I may know what I mean, but that may not necessarily be the same thing you think I mean, or even the meaning you attach to the same words. How much simpler it is simply to relinquish the Babel of analytics and simply believe. Everyone knows what his symbol means to him and within limits is quite flexible in his

belief. Belief, however is not the same as understanding - and I for one would like to understand the intricacies of an event in which apparently objective lights in the sky are seen by some as "doves", by others as UFOs, and by still others not seen at all.

Another example is the convergence of BVM visions with 'white lady' type apparitions. Within 2 months of moving into 14 Airth Drive, Mosspark, Glasgow, the Burns family were quickly rehoused (a few hundred yards away at 14 Arran Drive). In compiling a dossier of unusual lets or transfers by Glasgow's housing department, Councillor James Dunachie discovered the strange reason. It seems that no sooner had they moved in than they were persecuted by strange phenomena - noises, doors opening and closing, and apparitions. Their recorded complaint, according to the housing department, is that "a supernatural presence was affecting the family's health." Of central interest to us is that the neighbours recalled that the family, obviously shaken, said they had seen "visions of the Virgin Mary". And one member of the housing staff claimed the house "had a history of poltergeist activity" - although the latest tenants of the house have had no problems. Anyone familiar with the history of religious visions will know that visionaries are frequently the focus of poltergeist-type attacks, which in the religious context are seen as the work of the Devil. It is rare indeed to find a case that explicitly links BVM and poltergeist activity outside religious contexts, and even rarer to find ghosts being confused with BVM -- always assuming of course that the Burnses were not using their description carelessly (though even if they were, that would be interesting in itself).

As the papers picked up the story Mr Joseph Burns apparently had second thoughts - as though wishing to avoid involvement in a controversy of religion or local politics. He claimed that he was rehoused because of damp and the kitchen floor subsiding; and that all this fuss about visions was "rubbish". He also denied calling in a local priest for a service, but Monsignor Brendan Murphy, of the Cardonald parish of Our Lady of Lourdes - how appropriate! - remembers otherwise. He thinks his blessing worked 'successfully, since there has been no recurrence. We wish we knew more details about this interesting case, and hope an interested reader could look into it and send us a report. Glasgow Evening Times 14 December 1978, Glasgow

Herald 15 December 1978 (Cr: R Watson).

Another area of apparitional experience in which the frames-of-reference of different witnesses condition their interpretations of that experience is in sightings of 'little people'. On FTy p10, we told of a mother whose two children complained several times of being woken up from their sleep by a large-headed dwarf who wanted to play. Was this a case of fairy-contact, or the phenomenon of childrens' 'invisible playmates'? Or was it hypnagogic imagery - the hallucinations of faces or fragments of scenes etc, often very vivid, which intrude on the twilight state between waking and sleeping - yet another hypnoid state? Perhaps one child followed the other, competing for attention as children do, after being startled by a particularly vivid image? I'm not saying this is the answer, but it must rate a consideration. Reverse of some kind is a pretty constant factor in visionary and apparitional phenomena... For all we know the lady in Rowley Regis, whose mince pies were snatched by winged dwarfs (see the last story in our 'Flying Food' section) may simply have had a vivid daydream triggered by being momentarily dazzled during undemanding and routine kitchen work!

The Blade (Toledo, Ohio) 14 December 1976 (Cr: Dave Fiderer) tells of a policeman who went to the aid of a man in obvious mental distress. The man claimed he was being persecuted by "invisible dwarfs" in his kitchen and cellar. The kindly cop did not arrest him, or turn away, but went into the house. He said: "I told the one dwarf in the kitchen to leave, and then went to the cellar to tell the others... They didn't put up much resistance and left." The man was so relieved he thanked the officer profusely, satisfied the little pests were gone. To judge such stories against a black-white conception of sanity-insanity is itself a form of madness. Hallucinations are as much a part of normal and even mystical life as they are of insanity. It is much more productive to think not of sanity-insanity but of a whole range of different states of consciousness (see Hallucinations reviewed in last issue's hardbacks) in which hallucinations form an integral part of the normal (to that state) modes of perception. There are no easy answers. Consider people who hear voices. Socrates, the model of rational man, had his dæmon which gave him useful information. However, some are ordered to kill their own children, blaspheme or commit weird crimes, while others, like George Fox,



she recalls, "He was caught in mid-motion in a state of suspended animation." He remained that way while Kihief and three other beings - "apparently females with darker skin, eyes and hair" - talked to her in sing-song tones. "He is not the winged creature kind of angel that we see in religious paintings, but an angel as I have come to understand them - higher intelligences from other dimensions." After this statement it should come as no surprise to many of you to learn that Francie is none other than the wife of Brad Steiger. Reader's of Steiger's own writings will recognize in these angels cousins of the UFO-entities, complete with time-distortion, selective perception, special mission to one who can see them truly, and lectures on the spiritual destiny of man, higher dimensions and the follies of modern materialism, etc. Some UFO writers have gone to the other extreme and linked UFO phenomena to the activities of demons (who, of course, were angels before the Fall).

### THE VIEW FROM PARADISE

The following story sheds little light on the gloomy prospects of Iran today, but it has some interest for us.

It is said that on 13 December 1978, the Ayatollah Qomi, of the city of Marshad, burst into his mosque weeping with

emotion, declaring that he had just had a visitation from the Imam Reza. Reza is one of the 12 Imams who succeeded the Prophet in the 7th century, and has become a 'patron saint' of the holy city of Marshad, being buried there after he was poisoned by Harun al-Raschid, the Caliph of The Thousand and One Nights.

The Ayatollah Qomi told his helpers that in the vision the Imam Reza denounced the Ayatollah Khomeini, exiled in Paris and recently triumphantly returned to Teheran - that he was the enemy of Islam and Iran and must be destroyed; and that the Shah must continue to rule. After the short period of shock it seems the people of Marshad, who not long before were chanting Khomeini's name, were quick to demonstrate and smash shop windows. Like all Islamic countries, where the traditions of prophecy and astrology are strong, it seems old men's dreams are still potent portents for potentates in peril. The report in the Daily Mail 14 December 1978, added that when the news of the vision reached the holy city of Qom and Teheran itself, there were further riots. Since then we have not heard any more of possible splits between the Ayatollahs. The prospect of civil war is bad enough, but the increased fanaticism of a civil religious war is too awful to consider. RJMR



The wags in Waukesha, Wisconsin, put up this sign to warn of unidentified leaping things - see p50 for details.

### INDEX, INFO & CORLISS

We regret that the Index 1976 will have to be mailed out with the next issue, and not this one as planned, due to considerable pressure on our time. Fear not! All those who returned their vouchers will get their indexes - eventually!

We also regret that, effective immediately, we will not accept any orders or money for the INFO Journal or for the Corliss Sourcebooks. This is not intended to reflect upon them in any way - it is simply that the paperwork involved is becoming too demanding and our time very limited. We will continue to endorse both INFO and the Sourcebook Project and will carry their advertisements. Payments will have to be made direct, or through another agency. Meanwhile all orders received here up to 1st Feb 1979 will be processed; orders arriving after that will be returned to the sender. If our plans for development succeed then it may be possible to offer these and other reader services once again. We'll keep you informed.



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# KHOBALUS

by Robert Forrest

A friend of mine - a no nonsense, nuts-and-bolts materialist and Ph. D. chemist - scorns the idea that ghosts exist. Or Flying Saucers, for that matter. As to the possibility that people 'see' elementals in the region of ley-lines, well, you might as well tell him that the moon is made of Danish Blue. Yet he maintains a sincere belief in the Law of Universal Cussedness - that if a thing can *possibly* go wrong, it *will*. His slice of bread will always hit the floor buttered side down, and the queue at the Post Office in which he happens to be held up by a little old lady with some deviously insoluble problem, at the expense of all the other queues, which seem to empty at double the normal rate.

Whether the Universal Law of Cussedness is any more than a mode of perception is, of course, debatable. As are other curious 'laws' of Nature, or Laws of 'Perception', as the case may be.

One of these - and it is one that gives me great amusement - I call the Atomic Physicist's Dilemma. The game consists of juggling extremely obscure equations, introducing negative time, zero mass, and velocities greater than light, and thence predicting the existence of elementary particles which are more elementary than any hitherto known elementary particles. The Atomic Physicist then retires to his High Speed Betatron (or Gammatron or Zetratron, etc) or in the case of Quarks to the top of a hill, and, with disturbing frequency, and usually after a prolonged wait (like a Post Office queue, see above), discovers his predicted more-elementary-than-elementary particle. And what *particularly* amuses me about this Caucus Race is that many of its participants find ghosts a subject for mild amusement . . .

Now here's a thought. These particles of theirs - and I am willing to admit that, like dreams, in some curious way they 'exist', though not necessarily within our everyday frames of reference, since our ideas are governed by reference to a material world, and the last thing these particles are is surely to goodness material - these particles of theirs, suppose they are so flimsy that they appear only in response to the wishes of those equation-juggling physicists? I for one would like to see Uri Geller meet the Betatron . . .

But if obscure phenomena can somehow appear in response to the human will, then equally mysterious is what Arthur Koestler calls the 'Ink Fish Effect' - the tendency for certain obscure phenomena to evade investigation.

Koestler records evasive poltergeist activity [1], as indeed have many ghost hunters. F. W. Holiday records the evasiveness of the Loch Ness Monster (*Nessiteras Rhombopteryx*, as it is now known) as far as its apparent camera shyness goes [2]. And the refusal of various psychic faculties to operate under observation has long been known.

Why do not sub-atomic particles refuse occasionally to appear? Perhaps they do, but it is just that we never hear about them. After all, I cannot imagine that *Scientific American* would devote much space to the fact that I have never seen an elemental, not today, nor yesterday. (Though it must be admitted that the *New Scientist* did report at length on the non-conclusiveness of tests on Uri Geller, but I suspect that this had different motives).

Then there is the principle of Synchronicity - Jung's concept of meaningful coincidence. As Gustav Jahoda pointed out [3] it was fortunate that Jung chose the epithet 'chance grouping' as his term for 'fortuitous happening', as the term 'meaningless coincidence' rings somehow false. Every pattern is in some sense a 'meaning' when the mind comes to perceive it, and Mr Fortgibu's encounters with plum puddings [4] are surely to goodness as staggering as Jung's scarab-beetle case [5]. The following case (which I insert as it is now almost totally forgotten) does not conform to Jung's 'archetype activation' criterion for synchronistic activity, any more than Fort's 'multiple deaths' in *Wild Talents* do, and yet I cannot see for the life in me how such a case can be relegated to the realm of serendipity, whilst the scarab case becomes dignified with the title 'synchronicity'. It is from the old journal *Knowledge* (vol 1, p 270):

"The case actually occurred in France in 1794, and its details are sufficiently well known to obviate the necessity for their repetition here. Charged with robbery and murder, the innocent Lesurques was recognised, identified, and sworn to as the real culprit by various disinterested witnesses. Notwithstanding strong exertions which were made to save his life, and, despite his previous high moral character and probity of conduct, Lesurques was sentenced to death and executed. Soon afterwards, the real culprit, a man who bore the closest possible likeness to Lesurques, was brought to justice. It was then seen that the similarity in features, stature, build and manner was so close as to have deceived the witnesses who gave evidence at the trial. On these grounds alone, and as a matter of common recognition and identification, the unfortunate resemblance of Lesurques to the real culprit had unwittingly

led them into a 'Comedy of Errors' which resulted in a legal tragedy as its denouement. But more extraordinary to relate still is the incident well nigh unparalleled in the annals of coincidences, that Lesurques was marked by a scar on the forehead, and by another on the hand, whilst the real criminal likewise possessed similar markings."

If some 'principle' (law is such an inappropriate word here!) operates behind 'coincidence', then it is as meaningful as a child doodling on a piece of paper. Occasionally it may produce a scarab beetle at the right time, but it is just as likely to produce a grasshopper at the right time [6], or, for that matter, a plum pudding at the right time. Or, dare I say it, a sub-atomic particle at the right time.

But the law of Cussedness (a corollary of which is surely the Ink Fish Effect) and the principle of Synchronicity might only be whims of a higher 'law'. The word 'law' is again inappropriate. 'Factor' is better. I am talking now of another source of great amusement to me - the 'Absurdity Factor'. The Universe is playing with us. Or perhaps the game is two-sided. But no matter how hard we try to be 'grown up' in this universe, there is a streak of childishness in the game.

Jacques Vallee did a splendid job of collecting material relevant to this in *Passport to Magonia*. UFOs that make noises like sewing machines. Gnomes that dress Elizabethan style and poke about the roots of trees like traditionally industrious fairies. Boggle-eyed UFO pilots who come all the way from Ganymede to 'utilise the western hemisphere', eat pancakes, or request a bag of fertiliser.

FWH Myers recorded a similar 'meaningless' streak in encounters with ghosts [7], and Dennis Bardens has recorded a sublimely ludicrous case [8].

(I would here like to record my similar experience of 'encounters' with so-called ordinary people. But that is another matter.)

It makes one think that the 'meaningful' encounters - whether with ghosts, UFOs or the contents of coincidences - are only successful shams. That perhaps Jung's scarab only chanced (!) to be 'meaningful', in Jung's sense, because it was a part of a scheme that delighted in producing scarabs when scarabs were the, locally, 'in thing', just as grasshoppers were a locally in-thing somewhere else, or plum-puddings were a locally in-thing elsewhere again. The simple delight in producing patterns for patterns' sake - admittedly a meaningfulness of a sort, though hardly of the significance with which Jung seems to have been preoccupied. A delight in producing patterns because patterns are 'nice'. Because patterns are 'fun'. Kammerer's 'Serial Wonderland Universe' seems more appropriate than Jung's 'Synchronicity', with all of its part-time significance.

It almost appears as if the Universe is a living thing, and it likes to play with people occasionally. Who knows - perhaps the way it has made us hare round in ever-widening circles, on this mad-cap quest for order and significance that Man finds so compelling, is the Universe's biggest laugh ever.

The Greeks had a name for the god who delighted in perplexing people. They called him

Khobalus. We in the twentieth century have a lot of fanciful terms for this or that effect - like synchronicity cussedness and neutrino. And yet I cannot see that we have progressed much beyond the ancient Greeks. We have a lot of fanciful words. The Greeks had one. Khobalus. How clever of them to fit all that into just one word...

In the spirit of Charles Fort, the author reserves the right to classify the above article alongside Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, Gardner's *Fads and Fallacies in the name of Science* and the complete works of Lewis Carroll. Q.E.D.

#### References:

- 1) Hardy, Harvie & Koestler: *The Challenge of Chance* (Hutchinson, 1973)
- 2) FW Holiday: *The Dragon and the Disc* (Futura, 1974) p 184ff.
- 3) G Jahoda: *The Psychology of Superstition*: (Pelican, 1970) p 120ff.
- 4) Camille Flammarion: *The Unknown*. (Harper, 1900) p 194ff.
- 5) CG Jung: *Synchronicity* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955) p 31.
- 6) as 1). p 185-6.
- 7) FWH Myers: *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (Longmans, Green & Co; abridged ed, 1907) p 215-6.
- 8) Dennis Bardens: *Ghosts and Hauntings*. (Fontana, 1967) p 145.

[Editor's note - when we received this article from Bob I thought that his title was a clever pseudo-Greek for "cobblers" - I really should have known better! Bob sent the following clarification: "I had assumed that your interpretation of the name was an expression of opinion about the article, so I laughed along with you and left it at that. It never entered my head that the god Khobalus was so obscure that very few people would have heard of him, and that you might assume I had made the name up! He - or perhaps I should say 'they' - did exist, and I first came upon him/them in J Harland & TT Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk Lore* (1882) p 16: 'The English Puck (the Lancashire Boggart), the Scotch Bogle, the French Goblin, the Gobelinus of the Middle Ages, and the German Kobold, are probably only varied names for the Grecian Khobalus, whose sole delight consisted in perplexing the human race, and evoking those harmless terrors that constantly hover round the minds of the timid.'"]

\* \* \* \* \*



"I'll swear he knows we haven't got a camera"

Weekend 17-23 December 1975



From our 'Compulsions' file comes a sundry selection of snippers, slashers, snatchers and scratchers, who have pursued their strange work over the last few years.

## SNATCHERS

A phantom spectacles snatcher was busy in Glasgow in 1975. On 21 July, teenager Alex Campbell was standing outside his home in Dalmally Street, Maryhill, when a man driving a yellow Avenger pulled up to ask directions. He wrenched Alex's glasses from his face and drove off. Five similar thefts had been reported in the city that year. Daily Mirror 22 July 1975. Three months later (?) another specialist began his work in the Thornton Heath area of South London. The Sunday Mirror 4 January 1976 said the police were "closing in" on this snatcher. In three months he had whipped glasses from eleven short-sighted women who couldn't give an in-focus description. But a witness, with good eye sight, who saw the latest incident involving a 15yr-old girl, was able to give some sort of description. By April, however, he (or another?) had claimed five more victims - all Asian women - and had taken to wearing a black plastic bag or cardboard box on his head. London Evening News 5 April 1976. He struck about 30 times in the Norbury, Croydon and Norwood areas in 1976 - by 1977 he started using violence, holding a knife to one woman's throat and thumping another from behind. A police spokesman said: "He must have a drawer full of spectacles at home. Heaven only knows what he does with them." Sunday Mirror 10 July 1977, Daily Mirror 4 August 1977.

16 January 1978 - a youth approached pedestrian Frank Dolman, in Chippenham, Somerset, and swi-

ped his trilby. Further west, the phantom hat snatcher of Torbay, who has been busy for three years, struck at least 24 times by March. His targets were all women, with ages between 33 and 85. Sometimes he settled for scarves or turbans. Back in 1923 chauffeur Henry Hall of Harringay was done for stealing 164 ladies hats from the milliner who employed him. Easier work, but not so adventurous! Bath Chronicle 17 January 1978; Daily Mirror 22 March 1978; Daily Telegraph 30 November 1923.

8 September 1977 - a new hunt for the elusive scarf-snatcher of Paignton, Devon, who had struck at least 25 times in a year. Once he yanked a handful of hair from an elderly woman's head along with her scarf. Daily Mail 9 Sept 1977.

Shoes seem to be very popular! In the closing months of 1978 the high-heel hijacker of Seattle had been giving police a headache - was it mugging, sex-crime or assault? The victims were always young attractive women wearing heels at least 8cm high. In September he laid in wait in bushes - by November he was bolder, grabbing shoes just as they were raised off the pavements. Sales of flat shoes and sandals were booming. In 1913 a slipper-snatcher haunted New York. In 1924, London tramdriver John Pitman, 31, was caught in the act. Several incidents had preceded. When asked why he did it he said: "I don't know. I am very sorry. I am married." Then, in 1929, shoes were snatched in Stockholm - only small dainty shoes. Reveille 15 September 1978. (Cr: Nigel Watson); Sydney Sunday Telegraph 19 November 1978 (Cr: Ion Will); Daily Express 23 April 1913, News of the World 25 May 1924, Star 20 November 1929 (Cr: G Ives).

Always odd shoes...as Fort said: "If Jack the Slipper-snatcher were in the secondhand business, he'd have manoeuvred girls into having both feet in the air."

## SNIPPERS & SLASHERS

23 June 1977 - Graham Carter, a bespectacled school careers officer aged 23, was apprehended in Oxford Circus, London, after cutting a hole in Rosanna Reeves' dress. For six months he had prowled the Picadilly, Oxford Circus and Green Park underground stations, cutting out neat squares from expensive clothes and exposing the bottoms of at least 18 girls. He produced a diary logging these low-down deeds. One girl had walked almost the length of Oxford Street before anyone told her what had happened. But the case was far from closed - police received more complaints while their culprit was in custody. Said Carter's lawyer: "There is certainly one other person, if not more, doing this sort of thing."

Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Sun 5 August 1977 & 2 September 1977; + unnamed US paper (Cr: AB & PR)

28 November 1978 - Stephen Jordan, 26, a motor mechanic from Woking, Surrey, with a marriage on the rocks, was in court admitting 9 snipping incidents at Earls Court station, London, between 6 September and 3 November 1978. But who was doing the snipping between the arrests of Carter and Jordan? Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, 29 November 1978.

Going back in time in our file we find a slasher of child's boots in Portsmouth in 1901; a dress snipper who worked the upper decks of London busses in 1910; back in Portsmouth again for a dress-snipper in 1923 - and the cases of Stanley Scaife, Sheffield, 1932, who fastened to women's clothes pieces of copper wire attached to cotton wool soaked in sulphuric acid; and of Sidney Eastbury in Birmingham, busted in 1926 and 1935, who escalated his snipping into the world of art by throwing a mixture of chocolate and oil. Anon clipping 1901; News of the World 4 November 1910 & 1 February 1926; Daily News 7 November 1923; Reynolds' News 31 January 1932; Star 5 March 1935 (Cr: G Ives).

An interesting early case of an

elusive 'Jack the Cushion-ripper' arose in 1921. Despite the vigilance of inspectors and plain clothes police he managed to slash 40 seats on the 'K' and 'S' bus lines. London Evening News 11 Mar 1921. (Cr: G Ives)

In February 1927, labourer James Leonard was "smartly punished" for slashing dresses in Halifax, Yorkshire, over a six month period. He had worked the theatre and bus queues, and was fingered, finally, when his peculiar nose was recognised. In 1938 an epidemic of slashing spread from Halifax to Bradford, then to Wigan, Brentford, Settle, Sale and Glasgow. Police believed that apart from the original slasher and his 13 victims, "an accumulation of incidents" had been attributed to a bogey man. At the height of the epidemic, boys in a Sheffield school took to slashing girls in the playground. News of the World 20 February 1927 Reynolds' News, 4 December 1938.

## BITERS & JABBERS

From the Middletown, NY, Record for 23 April 1978 (Cr: AB & PR) we have a report of a man with a taste for fingernails. On 16 April a young man walks into an office, in Monticello, NY, admires the receptionist's long fingernails, takes her hand, bites off her thumbnail and walks out. Four days later he strikes again, asking a woman for the time. After admiring her nails he takes her hand and attempts to put it in his mouth. When she objects he tells her: "I just wanted to touch it to my teeth." Which brings us to the case of Rosana Vigil ((the Rosannas are for snatching, eh? Ed.)) in Denver, whose mouth was pried open by a man in the street who snatched her false teeth. Mrs Vigil, 60, told police: "He said, 'There ain't no gold here, so here's your teeth', and he gave 'em back." New York Post undated (Cr: AB & PR). Back in 1942, a bogus dentist plyed his trade in Nottingham. His first victim was Mrs Mable Foulkes. He put her in a chair, opened her mouth and no sooner had he told her one of her molars needed attention than it was jerked out. "Isn't it a beauty?" he exclaimed before dashing away. Sunday Dispatch 21 June 1942 (Cr: G Ives).

More than a hundred women were cornered in Paris lifts in 1976 and jabbed in the breast with a fish-hook. No attacks in the winter, but by April 1977 the jabbing recommenced. Daily Mirror 6 April 1977.

21 September 1978 - Tokyo police arrested a 26yr-old draughtsman for scratching 12 young women on the face with a tiepin, on commuter trains. He said he was furious and exhausted from going to work on crowded trains, and it helped to dissipate his gloom. Police later said he was a manic-depressive who had been under treatment since his arrest last December

for assaulting two young boys. Straits Times, Singapore, 21 & 22 September 1978 (Cr: Ion Will). In 1924, a Greek named Setano was arrested in Paris for stabbing two young men with a tie-pin. The Daily Mirror for 18 March 1924 said: "He is thought to be the pest, till now undetected, who has been active in Paris for years."

Finally, ears...The Sydney Daily Telegraph 1 November 1978 (Cr: Ion Will) reported that Aboullah al Shirap, 52, a wealthy Arab stockbroker, had bitten off a girl's ear in a London flat. 'Ere, 'ere!  
PS



### QE2'S MYSTERY MESSAGE

In FT26p47 we mentioned the mystery radio signal received by the QE2 ocean liner. It was in an obsolete code and seemed to have been sent out by the old liner Queen Mary more than 11 years before. Since then we have had further details which clarify earlier incomplete and in parts inaccurate information.

Alan Holmes, radio officer on the QE2, in the Atlantic bound for America, was on watch when he received a morse message: "GKS GBT QSI AREA 1A". Recognizing that it was coded in a procedure no longer in use, Holmes deciphered it as a routine position check from the old liner Queen Mary to the Portishead Radio, at Burnham, Somerset. There is a double curiosity here - not only the coincidence that the QE2 had inherited the GKS call sign from Queen Mary before the code was discontinued, but that the Queen Mary was pensioned off over 11 years previously, sold to the City of Long Beach, California, as a floating conference center. When the news leaked out, Alan said in media interviews that he believed the signal was bounced back off something in space, perhaps 5 light years away.

On BBC TV, 11 August 1978, a spokesman for the Station manager smirked dismissively at the idea of a long delayed signal, saying (in roughly these words) that it was inconceivable that a message from his station could have left the Earth at just the right angle to hit a planet, or whatever, and then return to enter Earth's atmosphere to be received by the very ship that had inherited the old call sign. Pressed to explain he said: "I just don't believe it!" (Cr: John Michell). However, the Station manager himself, Donald Mulholland, said, in an interview with Hello World, the house magazine of the Post Office External Telecommunications Executive, that as far as he was concerned, "The most likely explanation is that someone was hoaxing Mr Holmes." What a thoroughly uninspired and unimaginative response from those whose daily business is radio transmission, and who must frequently come face to face with anomalous phenomena (as we shall shortly see!) In the same article Alan Holmes said he was fed up with justifying the event... "If I'd been alone on watch, I'd never have mentioned it... I was not alone in the radio shack at the time, and the message

really did come in. I was listening out on a frequency used for radio telephone calls. I can't explain it." He had doubts about being the victim of a hoax. "(If it was a hoax) it's an elaborate hoax, rather difficult to lay on, and hardly worth the bother of laying on. The hoaxer would have had to know exactly what frequency we were listening out on, and when." Hello World Autumn 1978, p4 (Cr: Michael Goss).

Other possibilities have been mooted: transmission by UFO, or some freak of preservation that cannot be accounted for with present knowledge. We find an intriguing detail mentioned in the BBC report cited above - that shortly after the receipt of the message "a mysterious blackout silenced all messages to and from Atlantic shipping for a time." Since we don't know the actual date and time of the arrival of the message - the reports only say "earlier this year" - we cannot pinpoint any correlating phenomena or reports.

Curiously, in the same issue of Hello World (p11), is a description of another freak transmission, this time from the fishing vessel Kitty in the North Sea, which broadcast on the international distress frequency (2182kHz). Normally this carries only a few hundred miles, but the message was picked up by Awarua Radio (callsign ZLB) some 10,000 miles away on the New Zealand coast. The report says Awarua then heard the German coast station Norddeich Radio dealing with the emergency, and Oban Radio dealing with a French ship off NW Scotland. Unfortunately no date is given.

## ECHOES OF OLD BATTLES

The notion of picking up ancient undecayed transmission reminds me of Wellington's radio, in the Perishers strip in the Daily Mirror - no matter what station he tuned in he got the relief of Mafeking, and likewise his old phonograph would ignore your selection and belt out 'The Dardanelles'. Can EM waves sidestep in time? There have been cases like the QE2 story which appear to suggest that, and data on apparent temporal teleportations are of great interest to us. Just lately it's been message time-jump time... <sup>^she</sup>

In the Daily Express for mid-August 1978, appeared a letter from a Mrs Helen Griffith, who said that while crossing the English Channel in 1977 "heard" the sounds of a World War 2 sea battle. It may indeed have been since there is a strong tradition on the French coast that on the anniversary of the 19 August 1942 storming of Dieppe, the phantom

sounds of the battle can be heard in an eerie replay. The phenomenon was studied by the SPR in 1952 - and a useful summary appears in the Readers Digest Strange Stories: Amazing Facts (1975) p384f.

Anyway...we were unable to clip Mrs Griffith's letter, but we did catch another letter which referred to it. AJ Peterson, of Crayford, Kent, wrote that while his son was with the British Army in Borneo, 10 years ago, his patrol of the Green Howards picked up a radio message they couldn't decipher. "Back at base they handed the message to Intelligence who found it was in a long discarded code...a message sent during an action in the last war." Daily Express 22 August 1978 (Cr: Mrs L Chibbett). Makes you wonder just how many similar stories are lying around untold...and if there is the faintest echo of truth in these anomalous sounds then many branches of science will have to do some rethinking!

By far the biggest such story - it even made headlines - alleged that sounds from World War 2 sea battles are echoing around the North Atlantic. The US Navy has a network of super-sensitive hydrophones, called SOSUS - Sound Surveillance System - buried on the ocean floor, and linked to land stations scattered along the coasts where armies of listeners compare the incoming sounds with computerized libraries of submarine sounds and engine noises. According to a privileged report in the US News and World Report (cited in the Telegraph as the primary source of the story) strange and unaccountable faint sounds have been picked up since SOSUS was installed in 1952. It was suggested these sounds, like distant explosions and cannon fire, were being perpetuated by freak conditions under the sea in much the same way as a coil immersed in liquid helium becomes 'superconductive', losing all resistance and allowing any current to flow virtually unobstructed for a very long time. One expert on undersea surveillance though the cause might be the known existence of deep channels which "act like huge natural telephone cables. Sound seems to be able to travel along them without deterioration in the signal. The sound goes back and forth, losing hardly any of its strength..." Strange currents and temperature conditions seem to create these 'deep sound channels', but there is a snag to this theory, as this expert admitted: "Not all sounds are 'stored' in this way for years. The sounds apparently have to have occurred at the right place...but how sounds get into this 'system' remains

a mystery." It is well known that the sounds of undersea earthquakes and volcanic activity can carry extraordinary distances in the sea, and some critics have indeed explained these sounds this way. But the SOSUS experts could hardly have overlooked such an obvious explanation (if relevant) before coming out with this remarkable theory. They also admitted to being baffled by a "crying baby" sound, despite extensive analysis. They are definite that it is not caused by "a marine creature or some underwater natural phenomenon." The account in the Mirror spoke of a theory that the sound was "trapped" after a child drowned in a sinking boat - but where they heard this is conveniently unreferenced. Generally reaction from the Admiralty, and Britain's Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, is doubting - the main criticism being that sound travelling any distance through water would soon dissipate. Conditions would have to be anomalous indeed. Daily Telegraph 13 November 1978 (Cr: Anthony Roberts, Valerie Martin, Richard Cotton); Daily Mirror 3 January 1979; Weekend 10 January 1979.

### VOICES FROM OTHER WORLDS

An alternative theory that occurred to us was prompted by the receipt of an article by Alan Cleaver on 'Electronic Voice Phenomena' (EVP) - to be printed next issue. EVP includes weird and often coherent fragments of human speech found on a tape recording, which were not apparent to the ear during recording. Perhaps, we wondered, the sophisticated microphones on the ocean floor manage to pick up sounds from other times when certain anomalous conditions coincide? This is a variation on the theory that specific places or stones can record violent events in their vicinity, to be 'decoded' by a human sensitive sometime in the future, who then sees a ghost or a vision. Perhaps not!

Our final item complicates or clarifies the mystery - according to how convinced you are about any of the cases. Eleven-year-old Tracy McCarthy was listening to a tape of home-recorded music. During a take of Donna Summer singing 'I Feel Love' the music suddenly gave way to "a crashing noise", followed by the chilling sound of screaming men. As men seemed to groan in pain and a boy whimpered, an eerie voice called out clearly: "Is there anybody down there?" Then a muffled voice mumbled some thing about dead bodies and the music returned. Tracy was shocked, and told her parents, who heard the disaster-scenario for themselves. Since then 'recording experts' are mentioned as having analysed

the tape in a fully equipped studio and confessing to being baffled - if it was faked they could not detect it. Tracy's mother Joyce said, at their home in Whiteheath, Birmingham: "We recorded the music some time ago and there was nothing like that on the tape. We have played it dozens of times before without hearing these dreadful noises. The ghostly voices suddenly appeared - the mystery has completely baffled us." Since the sounds were highly suggestive of a subterranean disaster, and there were several coal mines in the area in the last century, 'someone suggested it might be some ghostly recording of a mining accident. Sure enough one was found - the Black Bat mine, quite near the McCarthy home. It was closed in 1883, five years after several men and boys died in a roof fall! The report is slanted towards linking the two events - but this raises a lot of complicated questions. But how did the sounds get on the tape in the first place? EVP? Sunday People 8 October 1978.

### IT'S CERTAINLY NOT GREEK...

While we're on the subject of mystery messages, here are a few linguistic spanners in the cosmic works...

A note in the Sunday Times 5 February 1978 (Cr: Ion Will), announced the launch of a 16yr project to compile a Sumerian dictionary, translating the world's oldest recorded language (it says here) from tablets at Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia. Apparently some of the ancient phrases are making the good professors hot under the collar...after weeks of analysis one still comes out as: "He put a hot fish in her navel." Just for the halibut, eh?

Not that it's much good trusting complex syntax etc to computers, as is the trend today. One Finnish computer programmed to write poetry came up with the immortal words: "The green elephant makes love to jumping horses." Daily Mirror 5 July 1977. RJMR



### TRUSS FUND...

Our sincere thanks are expressed to the following for their helpful donations: Lionel Beer; Ros Croson; RD Churchward; Alan Gardiner; Mrs PD Hall; Olive Oltcher; Richard Palcanis; Paul Pinn; John Peldyak; Bob Skinner; Mike & Linda Ward in memory of George F Haas; PJ Williams.

# STRANGE TALES



Over the last few years of collecting notes on all kinds of falling and flying objects, substances and animals, we have accumulated quite a few on aerial edibles. On FT15p17 we told of a string of sausages high among a tree's branches which seemed to have fallen from the sky...now head for cover as the phantom food flinger strikes again...

## CHICKEN SURPRISE!

On several occasions a country school at Wokingham, Berks, was the target of UFOs - unidentified flying omelettes. Children would be sent scrambling for cover as eggs fell out of the sky to splat on the playground, and mothers, taking their kids to school, have seen eggs hitting cars, fencing, and even trickling from rooftops. Mrs Ann Norman, of Wokingham, said: "They must drop from high up because they make a terrific noise when they hit the ground." The mothers suppose they are being dropped from a light aircraft, and have named the phantom bantam the Rhode Island Red Baron - but a Civil Aviation Authority spokesperson, at Heston, Middlesex, didn't think too much of the idea. Plane noises have been heard sometimes when eggs have been seen falling, but no one can link the two definitely. These bombardments, which ceased suddenly, occurred in early December 1974. We note the school's name is Keep Hatch! If these events were an elaborate practical yok no one could say what anyone would have gained by going to so much trouble. Sun 12 December 1974 (Cr: Anthony Smith).

Then a silence until 1977. It may be that our hoaxer (if that's what he, or it, is) went into retirement, and thirsting once more for the thrill of terrorizing mortals, began creeping around Abingdon, Oxfordshire, with an armful of six-packs. In mid-1977 he struck regularly on Tuesdays and Thursdays, usually restricting himself to West St Helen Street, over several months. James Heast of Glendale Electrical Services said they had been hit about 36 times in five

months; and once a woman standing outside the estate agents next door was hit on the head. The estate agent's secretary said the phantom even worked nights, smashing eggs on parked cars. Shell-shocked shopkeepers, tiring of the hard rain, got up their own vigilante groups, but to no avail. The Abingdon police, though, claimed to have a suspect...but we never heard anymore about the affair. Perhaps some reader could look into it? London Evening News 9 September 1977.

Such cases are always interesting if only for their similarity to poltergeist-type incidents in which people are bombarded with stones or refuse, and to the so-called 'phantom sniper' cases of mystery bullets or wounding without any apparent penetration of the clothing or room etc. On its face value the evidence points towards some teleportive force. But none of this will convince the hardened sceptics, unlike the similar phenomena of falls and poltergeist outbreaks - but its that similarity which catches our interest, and we suspect that below the prankish appearances laid on by the Cosmic Trickster lies yet another clue to the mysterious forces of our existence. What can you make, for example, of the woman who found a perfect but cold fried egg beside her on her bus seat (Sunday People 9 July 1978)?...or of the unwrapped frozen chickens that appeared in the Centurion Inn, at Vicars Cross, near Chester? Landlord Les Brooke found first one in his bar, the next day two more still frozen, and the following weekend three laid out in a triangle in the pub car park. Whether or not the first appearances were the product of teleportation or absent-mindedness, we have some doubt about the continuing incidents, because the fowl fusilier has taken to making phonecalls. At first he just clucked into the phone; later he announced himself as the Chicken Man and said he'd leave more chicken surprises. After a few silent days he called again to say he'd been ill (chicken pox?) but had managed something. The Brookes



opened their door and found a giant tin of peas. We suspect the demon distributor might be found among the Centurion regulars, elaborating an earlier mystery. Reveille 24 March 1978. For more of people who really dress the part, see our 'Strange Behaviour' section this issue.

## DINNER'S ON THE HOUSE!

A particularly good case of aerobatic eatables was announced recently in the Sunday Express 3 December 1978 (Cr: Janet & Colin Bord, Richard Cotton), but we also have notes from the Guardian 11 November 1978 (Peter Rogerson) and the Niagara Falls Review 16 Dec 1978 (Cr: Dwight Whalen). A torrent of trajectorial treats, including black puddings, eggs, bacon, bread and tomatoes, have been hitting the doors of four old people's bungalows at Castleton, Derbyshire. Apparently the benevolent bean-feast bungler began his bombardment in late 1977 when a variety of fresh groceries, including legs of mutton, hit doors, windows, walls, and landed in the gardens. Like the chilled chicken chucker and the ethereal egg ejector, the source of these cometary comestibles has eluded the grasp of the local police, despite the almost nightly watches mounted by the village bobby, Norman Young. The matter has even been raised at a local council meeting. Councillor Charles Lewis said: "It's annoying. The culprits are either raiding a deep freeze or have got a supply to be able to do it. Once a full 1lb black pudding was hurled. There have been entire loaves of bread, and a dozen large eggs at once." Mr Fred Robinson, 74, of Weaving Avenue, said: "Black puddings, bacon, tomatoes and eggs have all been thrown at my house. The attacks were irregular. Every other night...then nothing for weeks on end. But he hasn't struck since the police were brought in. We hope it stays that way." Mrs Ethel Bramley, said: "It's unreal, weird! If people want to give us food why not wrap it up and leave it on the doorstep?" Another added: "There's not much you can do with an egg once it has hit a door!" Police admitted that they had failed to trace the ghostly grocer - there have been no reports of thefts of quantities of food, especially black puddings, and no one has been seen buying large quantities...but we suspect that such searches may be a waste of time anyway if the stuff is coming down from, you know, up there!

The Daily Mirror for 8 November 1978

told of a rain of sloshy mashed potato over houses, cars and gardens in Kings Avenue, Kings Lynn, Norfolk. As with many reports of strange events, if there is a terrestrial, practical and halfway sensible cause, it is located pretty quickly - unlike the genuine mysteries which drag on until the press tire of publishing half-assed theories to explain-away the enigma - in this case a production fault at the nearby Dorney Foods factory resulted in granules of mashed potato being blasted out through an extractor fan. When William Bankes' car was hit by something from the sky on a motorway just 2 miles from his home in Ainsdale, Lancs, his inclination too was to explain it naturalistically. In a fleeting glimpse he thought it was a housebrick - there was no time to swerve so he braked hard and covered his face with his arms - then there was "a tremendous bang like an explosion. But despite the noise no damage was visible from the driving seat, so I got out to look at the front of the car. I was astounded to see, there in the road, the remains of a large frozen carrot, diced into tiny squares by the radiator grill, which with a headlamp surround was smashed. "I shudder to think what would have happened had it come through the windscreen," said Mr Bankes, adding a guess that it must have been falling around 50mph. As he looked at the damage, he says he heard a flock of geese overhead, and speculated that one of them must have dropped the carrot since he knew of complaints of carrot fields being ruined by wild geese. These points were confirmed separately: the Wildfowl

## THE UFO EXAMINER

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Trust said flocks of pink-footed geese numbering up to 6,000 were known to be in the area; and the National Farmer's Union said there had been scores of reports of geese devouring carrot crops; then "physics experts" at Manchester University agreed that a carrot dropped by a goose at 100ft would hit the earth at about 50mph. I don't know how convenient all this strikes you as being, but I'm astonished! I know what an "expert" would say to me if I pestered him with questions about geese dropping carrots! Still...as far as everyone in the story is concerned, the case is solved and closed. But I wonder... Sunday Express 7 January 1979 (Cr: Janet & Colin Bord, Lionel Beer).

We also have a note, missed at the time by Fortean mags, that Stanley Morris, of Louisville, Kentucky, rushed into his backyard after hearing a noise like an explosion. He found it littered with bags of cookies - there were more on his garage roof and in neighboring gardens. They contained no writing or numbers or any means of identification, and, inevitably, were thought to have been dropped, or spilled, from a plane. I find that explosive noise interesting, since one often finds similar sounds associated with other kinds of falls. St Louis Post-Dispatch, Missouri, 10 November 1965.

### TAKE ME TO YOUR LARDER!

Finally, I was intrigued by one of the current crop of UK UFO reports, which may be related to flying food phenomena as reasonably as carrots to flying geese or black puddings to invisible and unfindable marksmen. Mrs Jean Hingley, of Bluestone Walk, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, reported a close encounter to the local police. She said when she opened her back door..."there

was a blinding light" and three little green men with wings went past her into her lounge. "They had horrible waxy faces, like corpses." Jean offered them coffee - well, what would you have done? - but instead they asked for a simple glass of water. How often that detail recurs in close encounters, I leave to UFO researchers to calculate! Then, on their way out, they picked up a plate of Jean's mince pies, and said they'd be back sometime. Meanwhile keep your eyes peeled for a report of a fall of mince pies! Daily Mirror 6 January 1979 (Cr: Dave Baldock, Doc Shiels). RR

### getting cross

Sometimes we can only shake our heads and wonder at the bizarre behaviour of religious devotees...still more so at the grotesque example of families and onlookers as they witness their loved ones immolating themselves.

Take, for example, the case of Eliana Maciel Barbosa, a 16-year-old Roman Catholic girl living in Rosario Do Sul, Brazil. For six months she had been tormented with nightmares and "evil visions". Medical tests proved negative so she concluded that her soul had been possessed by demons and evil forces. Finally, she had a dream in which a kindly old man "who looked like God" appeared to her, and told her how to drive out the demons. Yes, you guessed it: he told her to crucify herself. So on Friday 9 February 1978, she dragged a 44lb wooden cross, 9ft tall, up the 450ft high Picucho Hill, in an arid, unpopulated part of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, was duly strapped to it, and hung there until the following Monday night.

We could understand this if it were simply the lone delusion of a hysterical girl, but this self-torture was carried out with the full knowledge and assistance of her family. Indeed, her father was arrested afterwards for slashing her wrists and feet with a razor; and that after the police had refused him permission to actually nail her to the cross. And as for the crowds...

The whole thing was like a circus, it seems: 20 chartered buses running in 5,000 people, many of them maimed and crippled, dabbling themselves in the girl's blood and praying for a miracle; to the accompaniment of crying beer and hot-dog vendors, preying on the faithful. Whether Eliana was actually cured, we know not...but by the time she descended from the cross, she was being proclaimed a saint throughout Brazil.

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A personal Calvary . . . Eliana Barbosa and onlookers during her three-day self-crucifixion

Chicago Sun-Times, Washington Post, 14 February 1978, Sun, 15 Feb 1978, Guardian, Rand Daily Mail (SA) 16 Feb 1978, Sunday Times (SA), 19 March 1978. (Cr: Mark Hall, Chris Holtzhausen, Ion Will)

If the crowd came hoping for a miracle in Brazil, in the Phillipines it seems they are more hardened to such scenes. We have an unfortunately unnamed UPI clipping of 1977(78?) (Cr: Kurt Lothmann) showing Juanito Piring, a former convict, being crucified, with nails this time, for the twelfth year running, "to make up for his sins". He got the crowds all right...but this time it was a jeering, unruly mob of 10,000.

The English, of course are much more practical about such things. Or would be if they were allowed to get away with it. Stuntman Eddie Shingler was intent on spending Easter 1976 nailed to a cross in Nottingham, and he was up to his tricks again in January 1978. But on both occasions police warned him that whoever drove the 7-inch nails through his hands and feet would be prosecuted for assault; so, after gaining some valuable publicity, the 61yr-old stuntman called off his attempts. But more practical? Well, not only did Eddie want to "prove the power of God";

he wanted to charge £3 to watch him being nailed up, and 50p to see him hanging on the cross! Daily Mirror, 13 Apr, 1976, Sunday People, 18 April 1976 (Cr: Nigel Watson), Sunday People, 15 Jan 78.

## the 'muti' man

Not the phantom cattle-slayer of the American plains, though the name is suggestive: a "muti" man is a South African ritual murderer, and one of them was stalking Pretoria between 1974 and 1978. During that period, he attacked 12 girls aged between 7 and 10, all African except one who was "coloured", killing 9 of them. The victims had their throats cut, sometimes with the lid of a tin can, and pieces of skin cut from their bodies, usually from the thighs, though two had their tongues removed and flesh cut from their faces. The police were baffled and even called in local sangomas and witch-doctors to help, eventually bringing in "Mpapane", the most powerful sangoma in in the Transvaal, with his 10 assistants. But his powers failed too, and even when they gathered the parents of the dead children together and administered a special potion, they were unable to visualise the face of the killer. That was in September; but we're pleased to rep-

ort that by November an arrest had been made. After another girl had been found with her throat cut, a man was held, and reported to have been carrying a human windpipe. And that, thankfully, is the last we've heard of him. Pretoria News, 9 January 1978, Sunday Express (SA) 10 September 1978, Rand Daily Mail 30 Nov 1978. (Cr: Chris Holtzhausen.) **SM**

## wizard pranks

A few more tales from the Dark Continent: In Togo, Adjata Koffi, 30, was arrested for beheading a man with a machete, and attempting to do the same to a woman, who received critical injuries. He was attempting to protect a new church from evil. Sun-Herald (Sydney) 15 October 1978 (Cr: Ion Will). This, of course, is an ancient ritual under a thin Christian veneer (extremely thin, in fact!) but we have purer tales of witchery...

A court case in Accra, Ghana: Mrs Selina Laryea, 67, sued Nii Djan for defamation when he called her a witch. Seems that Djan's grandson, Alfred Odatrey, is a schoolboy wizard, and he claims Mrs Laryea made him one. She put some drugs in his eyes, it seems, and he began to see fellow witches who at first sight appeared like white sheep. After that, he began "flying" nightly to "witchery banquets" near his school. And if he was left without money for his fare home, he simply flew. Though, if that was the case, we wonder why he used public transport in the first place. Neat trick, though! South China Morning Post 25 October 1977 (Cr: Guy Audebrand).

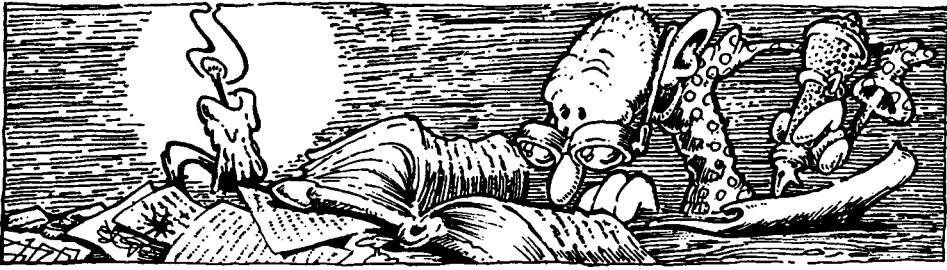
And finally, another goody from Accra: Togbui Siza Aziza, a Togolese jujuman, was placed in a coffin; the lid was nailed down; the coffin was lowered into an ordinary grave, piled with concrete slabs, a layer of mortar, then more concrete slabs. Aziza is a member of "Afrika Adzeu", a group which promotes African mysticism, and says he can spend 7 days underground; but in this case he settled for 3 hours. His wife sat at the head of the grave with a bowl of herbal mixture, which could be seen to stir several times, while Aziza's voice could be heard clearly from below ground. After two hours twenty minutes, as the crowd began panicking, he agreed to come out. The ground shook, and suddenly Aziza burst through the mortar, shoving concrete slabs aside. Not only that, but the lid of the coffin was still nailed down, a cloth and some "mystic equipment" were still inside. He also achieved

something else remarkable: emptying an entire football stadium while the match was still in play, when rumour got round that a dead man had risen from the grave. Aziza says he has had supernatural powers since childhood, vanishing when he was one year old and returning when he was seven, emerging from the village dumping pit. He claims to understand the language of animals, and to be able to cure a wide variety of diseases, usually after meditating underground.

Pretoria News (S.A.) (Late 1974 (?))  
Cr: Chris Holtzhausen) **SM**



Covered with earth and mortar, Aziza climbs from the grave, watched by an incredulous crowd.



## REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

We welcome books and journals for review or exchange on all topics of related interest. The details and contents of journals are given in the next issue after receipt, and the return favour in their pages would be appreciated.

### hardbacks

Mysteries by Colin Wilson (Hodder & Stoughton, 1978; £9.95, pp667, index, bib, notes) - The World Atlas of Mysteries by Francis Hitching (William Collins, 1978; £6.50, pp257, index, bib, maps, photos, illos) -- The recent flow of books relating to Fortean interests continues unabated. On the whole they tend to be both better written and better researched than the 'first generation' (the ancient-astronaut & Atlantis lives! type) which opened up the market. The new generation of books seem more willing to acknowledge the pioneering work of small magazines (most of those in our review section are represented, including FT) and the lone unknown researchers - eg: Wilson makes central to his thesis the sexual theory of evolution (unpublished) by Charlotte Bach, and the book on alchemy by Mary Ann South, both relatively unknown but very influential in their fields; while Hitching airs the little-known work of a French philologist on the alignment of towns with similar names, and the radical work of the scholarly 'Velikovskys groups' whose re-examination of the ancient history of the Middle East, for example, has been virtually ignored by the Establishment. If this is a trend it bodes well for the like of ourselves.

Wilson's long promised 'sequel' to The Occult proves to be as thick and encyclopedic as its predecessor, and follows much the same format. In his familiar rambling conversational style we are whisked headlong through dozens of summaries of books, theories, potted

biographies and anecdotes in search of a theory which will encompass the diversity of paranormal phenomena. I have always found Wilson eminently readable, and Mysteries is no exception - and I for one truly admire and appreciate the immense amount of work that must have gone into the condensation of so much information on this scale. But if Mysteries has the good points of The Occult it also has the latter's failings: over simplification, contentious interpretations of ambiguous material, and the tendency to weight the evidence in favour of his beloved 'Faculty X' theory. But I cannot blame him for this - it would be a dull book indeed without his driving opinion, which at least provides a perspective to the long and winding galleries of exhibits he has us tramp.

Unfortunately, the cover blurb carries the ambitious claim - that Wilson had set out "to write the Principia of psychic science, to explain all paranormal phenomena..." Leaving aside our own doubts that it is all explainable (or even part of it), or that explanations are necessary let alone desirable, he has set himself an impossible standard - whereas Isaac Newton was writing for the savants of his day, Wilson seems to be writing for an interested but relatively uninformed general reader (for whom, as one reviewer put it, "it is necessary to write of 'the poet Blake', 'the philosopher Bergson', "etc). Nor is Wilson any nearer his sought-after paradigm at the end of this book than he was at the close of The Occult - but again, no blame, since the journeying is fun even if the destination remains elusive - since the inherited premise (that Man has superhuman capabilities) is not materially improved upon along the way. This is ironic because at one point Wilson berates Charles Fort for having made "no attempt to present a coherent argument" (p200), and for failing

to offer a new paradigm (p203). Familiarity with Fort's writing will show that his thesis is concisely formulated in chapters 1 and 3 of The Book of the Damned - and that Fort's notions of the 'Dominant' of an age foreshadows Thomas Kuhn's use of the word 'paradigm' in his model of 'scientific revolutions' by over 50 years. In Mysteries, what passes for a "comprehensive theory" is rather a collection of attempts to make sense of the variety of 'alternative' or 'fringe' explorations of paranormal phenomena - it is too wide a spread of the shotgun to discern a definite hit, and too fragmented to be consistent.

The book itself will not disappoint his fans. A long discussion of Tom Leithbridge's own wide-ranging works is followed by assessments of ancient-astro-naut theories, Stonehenge, the 'Sirius Mystery', leys & feng-shui, ghosts, and ancient triumphs of navigation and surveying. There is a fascinating section on alchemy and its various schools and practitioners; a recurring theme of a "ladder of selves"; a review of scientific thought as the 'History of Human Stupidity'; and long sections on 'Faculty X'; archetypal psychology, hypnotism, revelations, dreams, 'life-fields' and other enigmatic forces, astral projection, precognition, sleep, sexual energy, evil, poltergeists, our need for stability, UFOs, monsters, states of consciousness, survival of death, and other subjects too numerous to mention.

The book is amiable and absorbing - however some of it evokes deja vu, being familiar from Wilson's previous writings. At nearly £10 it seems exorbitant, but otherwise well worth your while.

Where Wilson's book is one of eclectic speculation and synthesis, Francis Hitching's Atlas is more empirical and impartial. By testing the various solutions and theories associated with specific mysteries against each other, Hitching performs the valuable exercise of aiding the general reader to become more critical about the controversies and contradictory evidences involved, some due to scholarly differences of opinion, some to a division between the Establishment view and a new view, some to outright hoaxers, and some to a head-on collision of fact with outdated theory. Of course Hitching, like Wilson, has his preferences, but they don't get in the way: "Research on the Atlas showed time and again that after conscientiously examining the whole spectrum of possible solutions, it was the unorthodox that made best sense of the unexplained." (p7). What emerges is a refereshingly

critical guide to the 'alternatives' for "anyone uneasy about established views."

The biggest stumbling block for works of this kind is that so much of the subject matter lies in the past, remaining ambiguous even to the 'experts'. Even when you have something tangible - like the enigmatic 'writing' on stones found at Glozel, France - it is impossible to escape opinion, and therefore controversy - the French declared the site genuine, the British archeologists said it was a hoax and banned its discussion from the pages of Antiquity! With rifts like this in the Establishment, one is forced to question whether the 'official view' of history, animal and geological evolution, the nature of so-called primitive cultures, etc has any right to exclude aspects it finds embarrassing or for which it cannot account. Many of these sensitive areas, which bridge the Establishment and the unorthodox fringe, like the Glozel scandal, are fairly presented here, and the reader is left to make up his own mind, or not, as he wishes.

Also commendable is the way a great amount of information is presented visually, in maps (eg the early claims to America; long-distance migration; the European distribution of Holy relics, etc), charts (eg a comparison of the conventional and the Velikovskyan chronology for Biblical history; types of sea-serpents; leys & alignments; maze patterns; stonehenge, the Gt Pyramid and other sites; etc), and tables (eg a list of feral children; Plato's description of Atlantis; 10 ways the dinosaurs may have died out; 15 theories about the Mary Celeste; Velikovsky's astronomical predictions; etc). Major topics also include: evolution & Darwinism; catastrophist geology; aerial phenomena (inc. ice falls and UFOs); 'myths' of early history (eg the Deluge, who was Homer? and Noah's Ark); unknown energies; early civilizations and anomalous technology; some errors of von Daniken; appearances of monsters and disappearances of people; searches (eg the Holy Grail, King Solomon's Mines, and Shangri-la). As in other works of this scope (including Phenomena) errors are bound to creep in - the most serious being two conflicting dates for the Antikythera 'computer' (p 125); and the references in text and caption to Doc Shiels' Nessie photos when those shown were taken by 'Mary F' of the Cornish sea-serpent Morgawr (p 198).

Nevertheless, the Atlas provides a good basis for the newcomer to Fortean mysteries to thread his way through the

maze of claim and counter-claim, hoax and whitewash, theory and fact. It is extensively illustrated and has an excellent reading list. (Coming out in USA in May, at \$16.95). **RJMR**

**Miracles and Pilgrims:** Popular Belief in Medieval England, by Ronald Finucane (JM Dent, 1977; £6.95, pp 248, index, notes, photos) - **Miracles** by Geoffrey Ashe (RKP, 1978; £4.75, pp206, index) -- Finucane examines 9 medieval miracle cults (7 English, 2 French) that were established between 1066 and 1300, around the tombs of saints. Despite the considerable effort that has gone into researching the book and sifting through contemporary records of about 3000 miracle cures, the book never really comes alive. We are given tantalizing glimpses into the popular mind of the time but the opportunity to develop insights into medieval man's belief in magical forces slips away. An example - in referring to the group of illnesses we'd today call mental aberrations, he mentions that an account might claim the victim slept out in a field, and "during sleep the victim was accosted by field or forest spirits which dwelt in the region." Such accounts, however, are very rare, but he knew of one, "...from Wulfstan's Collection, where three forest fairies interrupted a cleric's journey through a dark wood." That's it, apart from an obscure source reference that even a researcher would be put to some trouble to find. Similar references to miracles and all kinds of strange phenomena ab-

ound, but Finucane (unfortunately for us) is more concerned with the memorabilia of shrine records, their administrations and the arbitrary investigations into the claims of cures by shrine officials, and the etiquette of the pilgrims (horrible scenes of cripples crawling around tombs, while others, presumably from a mixture of exhaustion, expectation and emotion, vomit over the tomb itself.) This dry approach has its lighter moments and the descriptions of "pious theft" (the unscrupulousness of the monks in hoarding relics, or stealing the relics of other shrines to improve their own business) verge on farce. He notes that as the original pure church spread out from Rome into a pagan and barbarian world, it had to make compromises (like incorporating pagan festivals, or taking over holy sites), and one wonders how far this contributed to the emergence of the importance of relics and miracles. On the other hand we know from the history of spontaneous radical movements and folk traditions that miracle healers and healing sites have always held important positions in the lives of early man, yet there is little light on it here. Just why medieval man was so ready to accept even the most preposterous 'miracles' without much desire for proof is only asked, not answered.

Geoffrey Ashe's book, on the other hand, says much about the numinous side of the miraculous, and suggests that the popularity of miracles might be linked with the emergence of the cult of the Virgin Mary. Tales of Mary's mirac-

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les, many of which seem quite outrageous to modern sensibilities, were very popular throughout medieval Europe both as an oral tradition and as a devotional device for sermonizing. They suit her elevated character too, since she alone stood directly between the Godhead and mortal sinners, and more than the saints had power to alter the course of divine judgement. Nor is Ashe blind to the BVM as the modern symbol of the eternal feminine. No book on miracles could avoid an attempt to define the term - but whereas Finucane seems content with the conventional understanding of "contrary to nature's course", Ashe goes back to its Latin root (mirus: wonderful) with a bold redefinition of a miracle as an exceptional and ordained source of wonder. In this way he is able to compare and discuss Christian miracles with those of other religions, notably Hinduism, Islam, Confucianism and Taoism - though these sections are lamentably brief. Ashe also argues that a belief in miracles is not a 'primitive' trait but based on an orderly conception of the cosmos which offsets the exceptions. Ashe proposes a novel theory for the Turin Shroud image, but anyone hoping for a juicy detailed discussion of stigmata, levitations, bilocations, miracles of multiplication, talking, weeping and moving statues, intervention in nature, etc, as I was, will be disappointed, for although these things are mentioned, it is in passing and briefly, like Finucane. After a quick account of the theological role of miracles, a whole chapter is devoted to those of the BVM, and another on the visitations at Lourdes (1858) and Fatima, Portugal (1917). (An astonishing omission is that Ashe barely mentions the numbers and influence of BVM visions in this century alone!) In slightly more detail than his references to miracles in other religions he gives a chapter to Tibet's folklore and lamas, but as a basis for the familiar theory of tulpas or materialized thought-forms, which the final two chapters elaborate into a model or paradigm for "magic". Thus in a few thousand words he adds as much to the subject as Colin Wilson does with his "quarter of a million words" in Mysteries (see above). Despite the impression that Miracles has been assembled from left-over chunks of Ashe's previous two books, The Virgin, and The Ancient Wisdom, it is well worth reading. RJMR

PSI and The Consciousness Explosion  
by Stuart Holroyd (Bodley Head, 1977;  
£4.95, pp235, index, bib) - Explor-

ations of Consciousness edited by  
Dennis Milner (Neville Spearman, 1978;  
£5.50, pp439, indexes, bib, notes,  
photos, illus) -- Stuart Holroyd

hacks his own path through Roszak country: the biofeedback business, 'executive ESP', hawkers of astral charms, bio rhythm computers and make-people-obey-you-through-psychic-power courses etc. He is quite critical of the commerciality of the 'Aquarian Age' - what Robert Ornstein has called 'Tantrum Yoga' - the relinquishing of responsibility to a machine, a guru, a formula, a pill, while other psychic salesmen appeal to a gullible public's worst nature. Just take a look at the ads in Fate sometime (or any other psychic mag) and wonder where we are going. Genuine or not, the 'Aquarian movement' has certain themes which overlap with contemporary work in parapsychology. Holroyd identifies these as: 1) altered states of consciousness (ASCs); 2) a positive attitude toward the unconscious; 3) open to exotic cultural influences; 4) body and sensory awareness programmes; 5) the development of a field theory (dowsing, life-forces, 'vibrations', planes of existence, psychotronic power etc). Detailing specific confirmatory experimental and anecdotal evidence he leads into a re-assessment of what we know about telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis. There are many omissions, but these are sufficient to show the 'state of the art', and to discuss their implications for science and Western culture. He comes to the conclusion that there has been a subtle but major paradigm shift, a far-reaching change in man's consciousness. But Holroyd is no naive dreamer who neglects difficult questions for glossy answers, and his deceptively modest book is essential and rewarding reading.

Dennis Milner's substantial book is a more specific proof of the same thesis - that the development and acquisition of psychic powers should be accompanied and consolidated by an equivalent evolution of consciousness. Milner is one of a group who met to explore their common interest in the "metaphysical understanding of nature". At one point they decided they all needed a direct experience of expanded states of consciousness, and embarked on a series of experiments based on the techniques described by GM Glaskin (Windows of the Mind, Wildwood House, 1976; also in paperback). One member performs a series of mental relaxing exercises designed to stimulate his powers of visualization. Soon he is in a deep reflective state, describing



his inner experiences in terms of scenes or symbols, or voyages through vivid landscapes. He is guided by another member who questions him, extracting descriptions for the taped record. Using this simple procedure, the group developed a programme of exploration - each symbol, description and experience then subject to extensive analysis. What emerged was an astonishingly coherent and very detailed cosmology, with insights into nearly every branch of the physical, biological and mental sciences. Under Milner's skilful exposition, the unfolding of this knowledge seems natural, orderly and progressive in its drive toward a creative synthesis of mystical, rational and imaginative thought, and done without any significant reference to an external source of information. If, as they satisfactorily demonstrate, all this knowledge is latent in each one of us, it gives a whole new insight into the history of human invention and culture. For its sense, discipline and encouraging vision, I have no hesitation in recommending this book to anyone.

RJMR

The Cycles of Heaven by Guy Lyon Playfair & Scott Hill (Souvenir Press, 1978; £4.95, pp368, index, refs, photos, illos) -- This collaboration with biophysicist Scott Hill takes Playfair in a somewhat different direction to that of his earlier works on psychic phenomena. And without denigrating those books the change is to be applauded, for he and Hill have produced a book which may well become a standard reference in the study of cycles and cosmic influences. It is a work of considerable scope, deeply researched. The reference list has almost 350 entries, a very large proportion of which are scientific papers of very recent date, from a multitude of languages and apparently unconnected fields, including material from Eastern Bloc countries, unknown or neglected in the West.

The authors have done a remarkable job in comprehending this data and assembling it into a coherent pattern, beginning with a study of the Earth and its relationships to the sun and planets, and the gravitational and electromagnetic influences upon us. And those influences are all pervasive, affecting virtually everything from earthquakes to emotions. From there they move on to discuss internal cycles (biorhythms, biological clocks etc) and external cycles (sunspots, lunar phases, etc), Kirlian effects, bioplasma, man's 'energy-body'...drawing a picture of man totally indivisible from nature, immersed in a

web of cyclical and energetic influences. Science appears to have discovered Fort's 'Continuous Universe'. An excellent reference book. SM

Ancient Man: A Handbook of Puzzling Artifacts, by William R Corliss (Sourcebook Project; Box 107, Glen Arm, MD 21057, USA, 1978; \$15.95, pp786, indexs, illos) -- Some libraries and potential purchasers of the invaluable sourcebooks tend to be put off by their loose-leaf ring-binder format (intended to facilitate the accumulation of material under each heading). For this and marketing reasons Corliss has brought out a jumbo selection from several different sourcebooks on the themes of ancient man, his engineering, tools, symbols and writing, plus relevant data from the fields of geology, anthropology, biology and folklore. These notes consist of quotes and illustrations from original sources, some modern but mostly rare or out-of-print. Thus invaluable fundamental data is given under such topics as: standing stones; graves and mounds; ancient forts; walls and ditches; stone circles, alignments and henges; pyramids; unusual buildings; planning; roads; canals & dams; mines & quarries; stone artifacts; out-of-place artifacts; high-technology artifacts; pictographs, drawings, effigies, mosaics; symbols & notation; fossil human footprints; fossilized technology; curious human skeletons; white tribes; linguistic oddities; plant evidence for early American contacts; little people & giants; discoveries of America before Columbus, etc.

An essential book for all libraries, especially the Fortean's. (For more info on the sourcebooks, see the ad in this section.) RJMR

The Ghost of Flight 401 by John G Fuller (Souvenir, 1978; £4.50, pp319) -- In 1972, Flight 401 crashed in the Florida Everglades - the world's first Jumbo air disaster. Within months there were reports of phantoms of the dead crew being seen on the other planes of the same airline - to the extent that planes were being grounded because no one would fly them. Rumours of these psychic skyjacks reached Fuller, and another moneyspinning milestone of investigative journalism was born. A TV film of the book (starring Ernest Borgnine) has already been seen in the States, and is soon to be screened by the BBC.

Fuller, known for his books on the Hills UFO abduction, and Arigo the Brazilian psychic surgeon, is eminently readable; even if the book does seem a

bit padded. There is a long and overly detailed account of the crash and subsequent events; then a section on the sightings and Fuller's own investigations; followed finally by Fuller's personal discovery of the wealth of material on the problem of life after death (he started out a self-confessed skeptic), culminating in the contact of a dead 401 crewmember via a ouija board. A worthy, if pricey, read. RJMR

## paperbacks

The World Before by Ruth Montgomery (Sphere 1978; 85p, pp222) - Grave and Urgent Warnings from Heaven by G Marystone (Box 41112, Minillas Station, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00940, USA, 1978; no price, pp418, notes) -- Evocative stuff by Ruth Montgomery, being a psychic history of the world from its creation up to the second coming of Christ, here declared for the next century. Naturally it concentrates on the more exciting material, like 5 gardens of Eden, Mu (Lemuria), 2 great cataclysms and an axial tilt shift of the planet. It seems a mixture of Velikovskyan cataclysms, Brinsley le Poer Trench's Sky People, Edgar Cayce and Lob-sang Rampa...with St John's Revelations thrown in for good measure. Ms Montgomery's method is to meditate first thing each day with her finger resting on the typewriter keys, then, according to her, her Guides take over, drawing on material from the 'Akashic record'. Word clues like that, plus locating her Atlantis in the southeastern USA (like Henrietta Mertz in her excellent works) and many other details of her ancient world clearly suggest the possible origins of much of the material. She herself admits to reading The First Sex by Elizabeth G Davis prior to the essay on the division of the sexes by her Guides. So much seems cribbed from Edgar Cayce (the seer of Virginia Beach) that she complained of this to her own Guides. Quick as a flash they reply that: "all sources with access to the Akashic records will naturally report the same truths." Naturally! Be that as it may, some may take it at face value - secret conclaves meeting on Atlantis to plan the destruction of the dinosaurs; the creation of the earth by The Force (Ye gods?); a slave class of biological monsters; a giant crystal undersea off Bimini; the original sin was sex with animals; spirits teleporting to Mars; that the world's leaders are reincarnated Atlanteans etc etc. She ventures prophecy too; including a woman PM for Brit-

ain, and another shift in the earth's axis by the turn of the century. Her Guides are nothing if not quirky, favouring the death penalty, and stamping out roaches, which they say, have been interfering in mens' affairs far too long! Still, this kind of book has a long and respected tradition, from Enid Blyton (who worked the same way) through works of all shades of creative and mystical inspiration, to the Koran (dictated to Mohammed by an archangel).

Interestingly, one of Ms Montgomery's prophecies refers to the Second Coming of Christ being preceded by the return to Earth of the Virgin Mary - however it is not clear if a bodily visitation or an apparition is meant. Mr Marystone's thick book is a very detailed compendium of "grave and urgent warnings" about the coming "Chastisement" of mankind - many of them compiled from recent visions of the BVM (including Fatima, Garabandal and extensively from the Bayside visions - see also our 'Visions' section this issue). Since my knowledge of Biblical prophecy is limited I cannot comment, but it does look thorough. Mr Marystone concurs that the end will be presaged by UFOs, Fortean phenomena (like rains of blood, etc), great quakes and weather chaos, and such astronomical portents as Velikovskyan collected from records of earlier catastrophes. He originally intended a single work to extract all the known prophecies relating to the present era, both in the Bible and since - but there were so many the project has expanded to 3 volumes already, of which this is the first. It is impossible adequately to summarize or assess the scope of such a work in so short a review, but it is truly impressive, and one can only hope that it has a wider circulation (it seems to be a small private printing.) Although aimed at the "religious man", whose criteria are different from those of the skeptic, Mr Marystone is to be commended for including detailed notes, references and lengthy quotes of relevant data. He has also transcribed the divine locutions of the Bayside visions. RJMR

Mind-Reach by Russell Targ & Harold Puthoff (Paladin, 1978; £1.50, pp 230, index, notes, photos) -- Sure to become an important sourcebook on their experiments with a range of 'sensitives' and types of phenomena or abilities. Subtitled "Positive proof that ESP exists", the book also counters the rather negative arguments of the critics of ESP research, and Targ & Puthoff prove,

as much as anything can reasonably be proved, that man's perceptions are not limited to his sensory organs, nor the conventional understanding of space, time and energy. The experiments are bold (eg a clairvoyant journey to Jupiter), the writing lucid, and the subjects both human (Ingo Swann, Geller, Pat Price, Hella Hammid, Duane Elgin, Phyllis Cole and Marshall Pease) and interesting (out-of-the-body, remote viewing, precognition, telepathy and psychokinesis). Particularly exciting are the long discussions of remote viewing and its implications, split-brain phenomena, and shifting paradigms, and above all their clarification and correction of the attacks on their work with Geller (by Randi et al). RR

Beyond and Back by Ralph Wilkerson (Gorgi, 1978; 85p, pp237, notes) - Ralph Wilkerson is well-known in the USA - he blows his own trumpet loudly enough - as founder of the Melodyland Congregation, California, where he regularly preaches to crowds of thousands. At these meeting people are encouraged to stand up and tell their stories, and frequently some have told of dying and returning to life again after a trip to heaven. Wilkerson has collected many of these 'returned to life' anecdotes and added others from different sources in an unfortunately florid style which will put off all except the committed Christian. Each story gives him the opportunity to moralize and preach. Remarkable claims: Jesus went to church, God wipes out your memories in Heaven so you won't pine for any loved ones in Hell, dining and seeing the sights of the City are listed among the attractions of Heaven, and Heaven itself is called "the planet Heaven in the outer galaxy"! And describing waking up in Heaven after dying he says: "Imagine...feeling a touch and taking hold of a nail-scarred hand." Or the divine purpose behind the sterile precautions of the space programme is because God wants to keep germs and pollution out of Heaven. Meat for some... RR

Alternative 3 by Leslie Watkins (Sphere, 1978; 95p, pp239) -- This book already has a cult following which implicitly believes that the prime forces of our existence are vast and secret conspiracies. This book plays on those fears - openly - and they love it! It was conceived as a TV documentary and networked by ITV at 9pm Monday 20 June 1977. It was intended for showing on April 1st, and said so in the credits,

but got delayed. It began in the usual way of documentaries - evocative scene setting - examining the strange disappearances of young scientists, tops in their fields. The fields of weather control, and all the sciences related to space colonization. The tack shifted to outline all the weather chaos of 1975/6 (remember?). Facts and figures were presented which suggested a huge conspiracy between the space programmes of USA and Russia. The climax was an interview with an American astronaut, allegedly invalidated out because something he had seen on the Moon sent him loony for a while. This was nothing less than a fully operational base, built by the Americans and Russians before the first 'public' landing there. Allegedly decoded video records showed not only a Martian landing but some form of life moving under the dust. This space conspiracy was in fact a venture years more advanced than the feeble plodding explorations of space the public had been lead to believe were going on. In fact the Conspiracy had been faking the disappearances of leading young scientists and shipping them to the Moon and Mars to terraform the Red planet. It was brilliantly done - a mixture of fact and imagination, and based just enough on ambiguous real events to make it all plausible. It had me gripped, but I believed then (and now) that it was a superb fiction, with the employment of convincing po-faced actors as the scientists and astronauts etc. In the days that followed, it was Welles' 'Martian invasion' panic (1938) all over again - see the letter columns of the papers then for voices of panic, terror, dismay, anger and denial.

Now comes the book of the documentary. It's all true! claim the authors. They say they were pressured into showing it on April 1st by the powers that be, out of fear of mighty reprisals. Panic was elevated to paranoia-conspiracy-cult proportions by the rumour that the entire first printing of Alternative 3 had been variously, bought-up, destroyed or mysteriously swiped from the Sphere warehouse. Well here it is, released again, and despite a world-dominating all-powerful conspiracy. Looking at it this closely one can see the sources - Fortean-type newsclippings on disappearances, UFOs, weather freaks etc, and some pretty half-baked UFO books. Nevertheless this is skillfully written (with several disguised bows to SF and Illuminatus!) Buy it - and leave the shop furtively! It just might be true! RJMR

# journals

Pursuit 44 (Fall 1978) - part 2 of Larry Arnold's study of fiery phantom ships; R Anjard on early colonization of the Americas; report on a Bigfoot conference; and an appraisal of Bigfoot biology by R Walls; G Eberhart on the early knowledge of Greenland; a suggestion for solving the Bermuda Triangle enigma; a splendid note questioning the basis of Freud's influence; a short account (with full page pictures) of the Doc Shiels Nessie photos (by your Ed); polluted rains; synchronicity experiments; thoughts on Canadian Bronze Age fragments; plus some notes. Pursuit has evolved into a fat, sleek and substantial journal - published quarterly by SITU: (Membership Services: RFD 5, Gales Ferry, CT 06335, USA) - \$10/yr (overseas \$12.50; airmail \$15.00).

ARB - special non-linear issue 23 - David Fideler's parting shot before taking up the cross of a more active writer/researcher (and joining PT). This special issue contains an article by Loren Coleman on anomalous panthers and pumas; Dave himself summarizing recent kangaroo activity, and monkey escapes; Martin Riccardo discusses vampires as a living (!) tradition; plus other notes on mystery animals and weird behaviour. Sure to become a collectors item, despite its usual Fortean value, because of the special 'mutant' envelope it comes in. \$1.50 from Michigan Anomaly Research: 303 East Fulton, Apt 2, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, USA.

Lantern 23 (Autumn 1978): East Anglian witchcraft; the legend of Black Toby (ghost of a negro drummer hanged for rape); UFO notes and gleanings from backfiles of local papers; plus the supplemental journal of the East Suffolk & Norfolk Antiquarians (Spellthorn) - 24 (Winter 1978): the phantom house of Bradfield St George; roadside & cross-road burials; Spell thorn; and gleanings from local newspapers. Lantern published quarterly by BSIG: 3 Dunwich Way, Lowestoft, NR32 4RZ. UK sub £1/yr; over-sea rates on application.

Journal of Meteorology (Nov 1978): blizzards and snowfall freaks, sea damage in Dorset, weather disasters for August 1978 (extracted from Lloyds List) - (Dec 1978): correspondence on a fall of 'star jelly' in Cambridge, weather disasters from September '78, and records of extreme conditions. Indispensable to the Fortean interested in weather anomalies. JMet: Cockhill House, Trowbridge

BA14 9BG, Wiltshire. Write for details. (The Dec issue has the index for vol 3).

Zetetic Scholar 1 (1978): As he explains in his editorial, Marcello Truzzi helped to found the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims for the Paranormal in order to establish a proper dialogue - claimants for the paranormal had publications arguing and defending their cases, it was time, they thought, for a forum for the defenders of the orthodox position. They published a journal called The Zetetic which attracted immediate criticism (from all quarters) for its bigoted hostility towards all aspects of the unusual. Mr Truzzi left to establish his own voice because he did not feel it served the true spirit of inquiry to take sides on an issue. The Zetetic Scholar, he assures us, will not confuse skepticism with dogmatic denial, and wishes only to see that the proper rules of evidence and procedure are maintained during the debate itself, both for and against. We sincerely wish him the best of luck, and if the first two issues are anything to judge by, he has succeeded admirably. Even if you don't agree with ZS's form of skepticism, Truzzi's editorship will enhance our studies in many ways, not the least being his talent for compiling valuable and critical bibliographies. No 1 contains 5 bibliographies: on the debate 'Pseudoscience or Science Revolution'; books that 'debunk' the claims for the paranormal; Uri Geller and the scientists; 'Debunking Biorhythms'; and a random selection of books on the Occult and Paranormal. Also included are articles on Carlos Castaneda, 'Skepticism, Science & the Paranormal', 'On the Extraordinary: an attempt at Clarification'; and one on solar and economic periodicities; plus book reviews. No 2 has a review of 'Anomaly Literature'; Michael Persinger on UFO experiences; and a philosophical examination of scientific procedure by WT Rockwell. Bibliographies include: vampirism; scientific studies of astrology; the Velikovsky debate; and more random books on the Occult & Paranormal. Plus interesting depth book reviews. ZS is highly recommended to all committed Fortean - \$10.00/yr (3 issues) - ZS: Dept of Sociology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, USA.

Newsletter - news and notes of any interest relating to Loch Ness and mon-

We would be obliged if readers writing to addresses or answering adverts found in our pages would say they saw the information in Fortean Times. It helps us spread the word, and judge the effectiveness of these services.

ster hunting - edited by Rip Hepple, at £1.75 or \$7.00/yr. Ness Information Service: R Hepple, Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham.

Specula - journal of the American Association of Meta-science and vehicle for the application of 'Many Worlds' physics theory to paranormal phenomena. No 3 (July-Sept 1978) has a paper on 'The Transmutation of Species'; and considerable discussion of psychotronic physics and warfare application, UFOs photography, and Bigfeet, and Tom Bear-den's forthcoming book The Excalibur Briefing; plus reports on lectures and activities. \$15.00/yr; overseas rates on application. Specula: AAMS, Box 1182, Huntsville, AL 35807, USA.

EVP Newsletter - devoted to discussion of 'Electronic Voice Phenomena' - No 9 included a plea for cooperation among researchers, letters and an EVP bibliography - No 10 had an analysis of Jurgenson's work & results by Prof Hans Bender; letters - No 11 continues Prof Bender's important article. Published monthly; £1.20 - overseas rates on application. EVPN: 12 Lime Tree Ave, Bilton, Rugby, Warks CV22 7QT. Editor Alan Cleaver will have an introductory article in the next issue of FT.

Forgotten Ages - new to us but now in its 6th issue - an intelligent and witty mag on the historical aspect of ancient mysteries. No 6 discusses a 'Fashion Show - 15,000 BC'; the 'Brotherhood of the Tat', the GT Pyramid and the mysterious Egyptian 'Hall of Records'; the 'Piasa Bird' and the Ica stones; and ancient use of lightning rods. \$3.00/yr (12 issues); from JR Jochmans, Box 82863, Lincoln, NB 68501, USA. Much of it will tickle a Fortean's fancy.

Journal of Vampirism - quarterly of the Vampire Studies Society - poems, news, notes and book reviews on the subject; but serious scholars may prefer to sink their fangs into the bibliography and articles. \$6.00/yr (sample #2); from VSS: Box 205, Oak Lawn, IL 60454, USA.

Stigmata - news, notes and reports of the continuing mutilation phenomena (mainly but not exclusively in USA) and field investigations - a thorough and important archive of data. The last issue will be published in July 1979 (#1) so order it, or inquire about back issues to Project Stigma, Box 1094, Paris, TX 75460, USA.

Catastrophist Geology - devoted to the study of "discontinuities in Earth

history" - serious, scholarly and informative forum for this neglected subject and its implications - much of Fortean interest. Issue 2:2 (Dec 1977) (the latest one we have) contains: fossil cemeteries; criticism of the US Geological Survey's attitudes towards Fortean phenomena (eg quake lights, dowsing, etc); quake lights; neocatastrophism (ie discontinuities in geological and animal evolution); gravity & geomagnetic reversals; plus bibliographical and other notes. The price of \$3.00 per year (2 issues) may be out of date. Write for details to Johan B Kloosterman: Caixa Postal 41.003, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

SIS Review 3:2 (Autumn 1978): a retrospect by the 'Old Man' himself, Velikovskiy; isotope decay constancy; an alternative to the ejection of Venus; a critique of Velikovskiy's new book Ramesses II and his Time; Horemheb's place in Egyptian history; dating Merenptah; plus intelligent comments and book reviews. The SIS members' newsletter Workshop contains more informal material, including 'Angels & Catastrophism', and 'King Solomon's Mines?' The Review is quarterly -- write to the Secretary: 6 Jersey House, Cotton Lane, Manchester M20 9GL.

New Horizons - journal of this well respected Toronto-based psychical research Foundation - 2:4 (Sept 1978): Can humans detect weak magnetic fields? (No, or not very well, suggest two experiments): Mackenzie King & Survival; Two cases of Xenoglossia ('speaking in Tongues'); the problem of assessing UFO reports. For further details write, New Horizons Research Foundation: Box 427, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 2L8. Much interesting material.

Chaos 2 - Mr X's serial on Fortean source material: including original accounts of 'light wheels' under the sea; strange meteorites, and meteoric stone showers of India, and a letter from Fort to the NY Times 1925 on the subject; an extensive listing of showers of blood by X; fire-prone Elizabeth Barnes of 1820; Carl Pabst with transcriptions of Fort's own notes, some a record of the writing of LO!; Charles Darwin's note of rains of dust on ships in mid-Atlantic; not a rain but a downpour of Black Ants; plus other shorter pieces. Essential to serious Fortean, and worthy of your support regardless. Canada \$15.00 per year or C\$2.00/US\$2.00/£1.00 for single copies. Or write for details to X: Box 1598 Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 5C8.

MUFOB 11 (Summer 1978): Nigel Watson on the remarkable case of Paul Bennet (witness of UFOs, entities, angels etc); 'Are UFO witnesses public property?' asks Farry Tokarz; Paul Screeton finds curious details of a 1909 airship; plus book reviews, notes and part 16 of Peter Rogerson's catalogue of 'Type 1' UFO records. No 12 (Autumn 1978): re-examining UFO statistics; more on Paul Bennett, percipient extraordinaire; airships & panics by Roger Sandell; Peter Rogerson on UFO etiology, plus pt 17 of his catalogue. Quarterly £1.25/\$3.00 (air) per year.

Journal of Geomancy 3:2: a Cambridge 7 church ley; Heinsch on the rediscovery of pre-Christian geomancy in Germany; proceedings report; Greek dragons; Ron Anjard on Kenyan stones; and more. 60p per issue or £3.00/yr, quarterly - from Institute of Geomancy: 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD.

NEARA Journal; a journal devoted to New England antiquities, and apart from regular features and discussions of new findings (stones, sites, artifacts etc), includes an open-ended series of early notes on American antiquities researched by the unsung hero of backfile safaris, Ron Dobbins. Quarterly: \$10.00/yr. Write to NEARA Treasurer, Laura Linder: 12 Elizabeth Court, North Kingston, RI 02856, USA.

Minnesota Archeologist - many items relative to the ancient culture of the region, but particularly recommended is the long article by Mark A Hall on Big-foot stories & sightings in South Dakota. Minnesota Archeological Society: Building 27, Fort Snelling, St Paul, MN 55111, USA.

Flying Saucer Review 24:3 (Nov 1978): UFOs that mimic; landings & encounters in Yugoslavia, British Columbia; Buckinghamshire, Tasmania, South America, Merseyside, Staffordshire, & Firth of Forth; plus account of woman's third encounter, a case of rabbit-snatching, a wave of Russian sightings, and the attitude of the Ministry of Defence. PSR Publications Ltd, West Malling, Maidstone, Kent.

The Visual UFO Book & Publication Catalogue - a well-illustrated listing of new, old and rare material on UFO & Fortean topics, including backissues of many mags reviewed in FT. Unfortunately no price is mentioned; but write to them, perhaps even send \$6.00 for the Page Research Newsletter. UFO Information Network, Box 5012, Rome, Ohio 44085, USA.

Awareness 7:3 (Autumn 1978): VI Sanarov on European UFOs 1720-1721; Allen Greenfield on the 'Real Issues of UFOlogy; the Ark of the Covenant; 'Coincidence?', or a new approach' by Jenny Randles; JB Delair on 'Another UFO Kidnapping?' (the Australian pilot case); list of reports, etc. Consistently useful contents. For details, write Membership Secretary, Contact (UK): 28 Lodden Ave, Berinsfield, Oxfordshire. The UFO Register 8 (1977): a Danish airship of 1908; 1954 flap in Costa Rica; part 6 of Lucius Parish's 'Catalogue of Historical UFO Reports'; part 3 of a 'Provisional Catalogue of UFO Photographs' by Delair, Cox & Twine. Available to Contact members - see above address.

Earthlink - journal of Essex UFO Study Group - 2:4 (Autumn 1978) has items on the Australian vanishing pilot, a review of the USA cattle mutilations, and some weird new events at Warminster, use of hypnotism in investigating abductions; etc. Quarterly: £2.50/overseas £4.00 - singles 62p/£1.00. Write EUFOSG: 16 Raydons Rd, Dagenham, Essex RM9 5JR.

Wark - a review magazine for fantasy literature, films etc, comix and u/g mags, fanzines, semi-prozines etc, and letters. No 13 inaugurates a Fortean mag review column by Joseph Patchen. 3 issues for 90p/\$2.00 - cash or POs only (Hmmm this is catching on!) Apply to Rosemary Pardoe: Flat 2, 38 Sandown Lane, Liverpool.

The Ley Hunter 83: John Barnatt on stone circles; Derbyshire mounds by TA Matthews; Don Robins on 'Scientists in leyland'; 'The Margate Grotto' by Valerie Martin; JH Fidler on multi-dimensional leys; mysteries in SW USA by Ron Anjard; plus leys, letters, reviews, & regular columns. Bimonthly: £3.00/£3.60 Europe/\$9.00 overseas airmail. TLH: Box 152, London N10 1EP.

Picwinnard - a journal of Wessex leys and folklore - No 5: Glastonbury, mid-summer lore; Cornish language; ghosts; Wessex Fortean; and more. Bimonthly: £2.00. Write: Vince Russett, Hythe Bow, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3EH.

\* NEWSLETTER \*

...an informal postal exchange for studies in parapsysics and the esoteric arts, founded 1944, Non-sectarian, non-demanding. For an introductory leaflet, send a stamp to NL, 40 Parris Wood Rd, Didsbury, Manchester M20 0ND.

Conspiracy Digest - everything you've always feared about those big time conspiracies is paraded through the pages of CD, while readers and contributors throw rocks or praises, or dig up a few skeletons for their own. Good fun for paranoids. \$6.00 per issue to Alpine Enterprises, Box 766, Dearborn, MI 48121; USA.

Alpha - as we go to press the first issue of a new professional newsstand magazine on the paranormal arrives. Edited by Roy Stemman, it will have a heavy parapsysics/parapsychology bias. This issue has items on psychic surgery; Geller and Prof John Taylor's retraction of his endorsement of Geller-effects; premonitions, automatic writing; and the Australian pilot who saw a UFO and vanished.; plus more. Bimonthly at 60p a time. Nicely produced and we wish them success. Alpha: 20 Regent St, Fleet, Hants GU13 9NR.

\*\*\* \* \* \*

We regret that a number of hardbacks, paperbacks, pamphlets and journals (many of them from overseas) have had to be held over for review next issue -- Ed.

## other

### THE WARP

Latest from the Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool is The Warp, a cycle of ten plays about alternative cults and culture from 1958 to 1978, produced by that theatrical wizard Ken Campbell (who brought us The Great Capers and Illuminatus!), in collaboration with poet and truth-seeker Neil Oram, who said: "I spoke, Ken typed, and we wrote 40 pages a day." The plays, performed one a night (2-13 Jan 1979; ICA Theatre, The Mall, London), and then all together as The Decathlon in three 18½ hour bouts of solid theatre, and 4 Demi-Decathlons (18-21 Jan), constitute a highly enjoyable circus of anecdotes, UFOs, conspiracy theories, sermons, melodrama, farce, music, and bawdiness which left me mel-

low and exhausted. Said the Financial Times (that other FT): "It makes the rest of our so-called experimental theatre look positively wan." And the Guardian: "Seldom in the history of theatre has so much been exposed by so many."

The play's opening came in the middle of multiple UFO sightings from New Zealand, Poland, Israel and Britain - and an encounter with 5 darkish skinned beings in pink suits who emerged from a landed UFO near Johannesburg. (Daily Telegraph 5 Jan 1979). (( And about the time of the close of the cycle of plays, Kerry Packer's cricket team comes onto the field, in Australia, in astonishing pink suits...Ed))

One theme of The Warp is that there are astral conspirators - Controllers - and their human agents, who prevent us from making life meaningful and "giving birth to ourselves" by thinking with our whole being. Hero Phil Masters is played with fantastic memory, skill and endurance by Russell Denton, who appears in virtually all 200 scenes. His part is eight times the length of Lear, and surely earns Denton a place in The Guinness Book of Records. Masters tends to see the universe in Manichean terms - a straight fight between Dark and Light forces. He explores Scientology (we learn a lot about auditing techniques), and the teachings of JG Bennett, Krishnamurti, Buckminster Fuller and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, all of whom appear in the plays (no, not in person!)

All kinds of visionary eccentrics and contactees appear (based, incidentally, on real people every one), like John Thrusman who tells us that Lafayette Ron Hubbard is a reincarnated captain of a flying saucer, who is gathering together his original crew to take off once more in a cosmic posse to smash the Controllers; the Yorkshire greengrocer (great performance by Jim Broadbent), who had visions of Ramana Maharshi and encountered lots of humanoids, and two men in a 40s black limo-sine; orator-tramp Billy McGuinness, who is God come to collect overdue royalties

### UFOs AND SPACE AGE PUBLICATIONS

UFOs AND THE CHRISTIAN, by Eric Inglesby. This book is the first of its kind by a Church of England clergyman linking UFOs with the end of age battle £2.70

TIME TO BE TOLD, by John B. Middleton. Interesting chapters on UFOs, the Bible, man and an explanation of the inexplicable. £1.30

PSYCHIC MAGAZINE, Special Uri Geller edition illust. 90p

THE NEXT 10 THOUSAND YEARS, by Adrian Berry. A vision of man's future in the universe. Paperback £1.25 £5.50

CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE, by H. Von Ditfurth. A unique exploration of the cosmos. £1.55

PLEASE EXPLAIN, by Isaac Asimov. The myriad mysteries of the universe revealed. Non-fiction by a well-established writer of science fiction. £1.05

THE NIGHTWALKERS, by Kurt Glemser (booklet) 90p

SOCORRO SAUCER, by Ray Stanford £1.05

MESSAGES FROM THE STARS, by Ian Ridpath £1.10

1979 YEARBOOK OF ASTRONOMY, edited by P. Moore. £5.50 (Paperback £3.40)

OMENS OF AWARENESS, by David Tansley £5.50

THE ROOTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, by Jeffrey Mishlove £6.99

SITUATION RED: THE UFO SIEGE, by Leonard Stringfield £1.10

Prices include postage and packing. Dollars acceptable, plus bank charge \$1.00. \$2.00 = £1.00. Booklists sent free with order. 20p if sent separately. Prices and availability subject to change. Enquiries should include s.a.s. Write to: Miss S.R. Stebbing, 87 Seisaa Avenue, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 8SD


on the Bible (another great performance, from John Joyce); King David bearing messages from Orion and roaming the London streets in search of "blueprints"; a Yorkshire electrician who encountered children with enormous heads, a "flying mini" and was pursued repeatedly by two beings with huge eyes in 18th century costumes or gaberdeen macs, who eventually allay his terror by telling him telepathically that he is one of them; a man who had been taken aboard a UFO and forced to make love to a beautiful woman covered in large freckles; and a host of telepaths, weirdos, saints and psychos. In fact, the wealth of splendid characters make up for the frequently clichéd dialogue - dozens of heads "explode into light", hundreds of things are "amazing" and so on. And the closing chapters smack rather of Peyton Place... but that's how it was, I guess...

I lost count of the numbers of cups of tea consumed: the thought makes my bladder ache. The company of actors, both professional and 'unknowns', were fantastic - particularly those mentioned earlier, and Bill Nighy, David Hatton, Maria Moustaka, Maggie Jordan and Mitch Davies, who can look completely Chinese or Turkish, and whose portrayal of the paranoid poet Marty Mission was arguably the most delightful of all.

The ten sets for The Warp, hurriedly got together in 3 days, work brilliantly. They were built around the walls of the theatre, with a pit covered in peat in the centre for the audience - a scaffolding structure overhead for the band. The action moved around from one set to another, with the audience scrambling off each one as it became illuminated. The audience was led a merry dance of real 'participatory theatre', and the overall impression is a fine bacchanalian whirl, well representing this Fortean round we inhabit. The band gave a fine performance with lots of songs, weird electronic noises, and overture and underture for each play. At one point, just as the hero heard a siren and thought Armageddon was imminent, the whole scaffolding somehow went live and some musicians got nasty shocks, narrowly escaping electric death. There is a curious prediction from one character about mass suicide rallies, written more than a month before the Jonestown People's Temple Cyanide Jamboree of 18 Nov 1978. The whole uproarious event came to a glorious climax 7 minutes before 10 on the first morning of the Year of the Goat - and outside, hundreds of people in 17th century armour were marching down the Mall. What a lovely world...

Paul Sieveking.

*'Famous Sayings of the Sixties' No. 538...*



CHESTER P. HACKENBUSH  
*se3:*  
 'LO, IF YOU'RE INTO NEW LANDS, THE WILD TALENTS AT DTWAGE HAVE ALL THE DAMNED BOOKS YOU COULD WANT'

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# TALES FROM THE YELLOW EMPORIUM



## PLUM BLOSSOM I NUMEROLOGY

Our subject matter this issue is rather technical and specialised and relates to a rather obscure mathematical aspect of the great Chinese classic, the *I Ching*. To those readers who are totally unfamiliar with the work, I can only offer an apology and refer them to some basic texts [1,2]; space is too limited for a comprehensive exposition. However, I will try to keep things as logical and simple as possible.

Plum Blossom I Numerology (hereafter referred to as PBI), is a numerical method of obtaining I Ching hexagrams without the use of coins or yarrow-stalks, and is attributed to the great 11th century mathematical genius, Shao Yung. 'Plum Blossom' means 'of multiple application' (as numerous as the plum blossoms); 'I' means 'changes' as in *I Ching*. The system was, as far as I know, first introduced to the west by Sherrill & Chu [3], and their book contains numerous examples of its extremely diverse application.

It is with the use of PBI in relation to date and time that we are most concerned, however. And perhaps we could best illustrate its use with an example . . .

## TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE

- 16 SEPT 1978

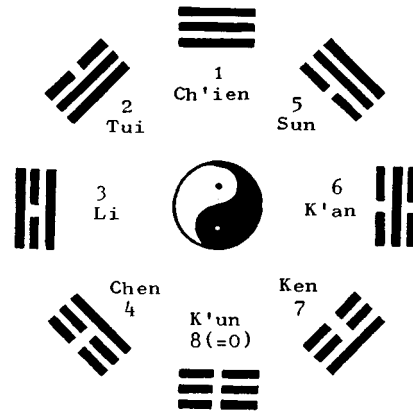
The object of the exercise is to obtain an explanation for a portentous event, according to the time it took place. Purely at random, I decided to use the total eclipse of the moon as an example partly because it is an 'event' in itself, partly because of its possible relation to the succeeding Iranian earthquake, and also because, interestingly enough, it fell on the Chinese Moon Festival.

The eclipse took place on 16th September 1978. Lasting from 17-20 to 20-48 (GMT): totality from 18-24 to 19-44. Full moon was at 19-01, and this we can take as the median point.

Our first task is to convert to Chinese time.

1978 is attributed the Horary Branch number of 7 (See [3] for more details of this). 16th September is 15th day of the 8th month in the Lunar calendar. The Chinese day is divided into 12 'hours' of 2 hours each, starting at 23-00 on the 'previous' day. 19-00 hours falls 'on the cusp' of hours 10 and 11, so we shall look at both hours.

The eight trigrams of the I Ching are attributed numbers in this system, according to Fu Hsi's arrangement, thus:



To obtain the upper trigram of our hexagram, we add the numbers for the year, month and day, and divide by 8:

$$7 + 8 + 15 = 30 \div 8 \text{ rem } 6.$$

For the lower trigram, we add the number for the hour to this, and again divide by 8:

$$30 + 10 = 40 \div 8 = 5 \text{ rem } 0.$$

These remainder numbers give us the trigrams from Fu Hsi's arrangement (0 = 8). To obtain the controlling line, we divide the final number (from the bottom) of the line. Thus our

first hexagram looks like this:



By repeating the process, but using hour 11 instead of 10, we obtain:



In this system, the attributes of the trigrams and their positions are given at least equal emphasis the line and overall judgements, and it is the trigrams we shall use here. The lower trigram is considered to be 'inside', the upper 'outside'.

For hour 10, we have the trigram *K'un*, meaning both the earth and the dark yin principle, 'inside' the trigram *K'un*, meaning the moon... a perfect symbolic representation: the Earth is 'inside' the moon (ie, between moon and sun) and makes it dark. The overall hexagram is No 8 (Holding together), and when the controlling line changes, it becomes No 45 (Gathering Together).

A total lunar eclipse is a good example of the old established Chinese principle of enantiomorphic reversal: when the darkness reaches its greatest extent, it turns into its opposite, and the light begins to reappear. Curiously, the 'turning point' of the eclipse (19-01) falls almost exactly on cusp of the hour (19-00). And in progressing to the next hour, the 8th trigram is replaced by its opposite, no 1. This is *Ch'ien*, meaning heaven, and the light yang principle. So at virtually the same moment as the eclipse begins to wane, the darkness is replaced by its opposite... the returning light principle. The hexagram is No 5 (Waiting), but when the controlling line is changed it becomes No 11



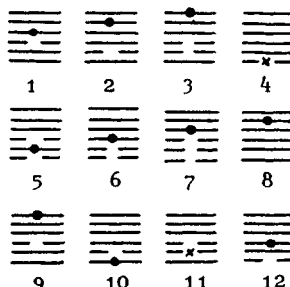
And here we see the strong light principle of *Ch'ien* 'inside' and pushing out the weak dark principle of *K'un* - movement in a hexagram is always upwards. As the judgement to 'Peace' says: "The small departs, the great approaches".

I find all this quite staggering: a perfect 'casebook' example. However I must also point out that this is worked out on 'standard' time (GMT) - observed from other parts of the world with different time zones the results would not be the same. Also having worked out similar auspices for the other three eclipses of 1978 - 2 solar, 1 lunar - the results are not nearly so impressive... in fact, apart from one or two interesting facets, they are not impressive at all. Call it a massive coincidence if you will... I content myself with having demonstrated how the system works.

## DEVELOPMENT OF PBI CYCLES

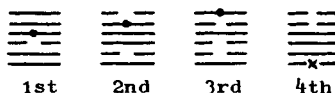
So far go Sherrill and Chu, but they make

no attempt to apply this method to more than a single hour on a single day (not even taking two in tandem as we have done above). However, if we now work out the PBI omens for a whole day, we see an interesting cycle developing. For simplicity's sake, I take the Lunar New Year (1st day, 1st Month) of 1978 for my example. So the upper trigram is  $7 + 1 + 1 = 9 \div 8 = 1$  rem 1. Now, taking each hour in turn, we arrive at 12 hexagrams, thus:



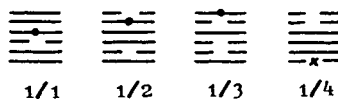
It will be noticed that the upper trigram remains constant throughout the day, while the lower trigram moves sequentially through the 8 trigrams, starting with that following the upper trigram in the sequence. The last 4 hexagrams repeat the first 4, but the controlling line, moving on a cycle of 6 rather than 8, has progressed 2 places. This is a standard pattern for all such daily cycles. We might say that the upper trigram controls the day, the lower trigram the hour.

If we now work out hexagrams for the first hour of the succeeding days ( $7 + 1 + 2$ ,  $7 + 1 + 2$ ) we can see another cycle developing:



The upper trigram controlling the days also runs through the sequence in order, while the lower trigram for the first hour is that which will become the upper trigram on the following day. The starting position for the controlling line also moves on one step with each day.

And if we take the hexagram for the first hour of the first day of each month, we get:



The same cycle developing once more. Thus we have cycles of hours, days and months, like interlocking rings, in cycles of 8, made more flexible by the controlling line which, moving on a cycle of six, modifies the overall meaning of each hexagram, still further. When we come to years, however, we come to a halt... for the Horary Branch numbers attributed to the years run in an arbitrary rather than linear sequence (eg:

1977 is 2, 1978 is 7).

Do these cycles have any significance beyond being merely pretty mathematical sequences caused by the addition of 1 every time? I frankly do not know. I have compiled and watched cycles for whole days and found them generally meaningless. On the other hand, when I have had occasion to take a PBI reading with regard to some event that might be conceived of as portentous, the result has frequently been relevant, to say the least, as in our lunar eclipse example above. It is as if the omens are 'logged in heaven', but must await some meaningful event in the sublunary world before they can themselves become meaningful.

However, if the reader will bear with me, I have one more example, in which a daily cycle can be used, both to demonstrate the flexibility of the system, and to provide another 'meaningful coincidence' . . .



## THE DEATH OF CHUKO LIANG

Chuko Liang (181-234 AD) was one of the most important characters of China's Three Kingdoms period, and his name will undoubtedly appear in this column again. Sage, statesman (Prime Minister of Shu), inventor (the multi-shot crossbow, wooden automata, etc), general (master of occult strategy based on the 8 trigrams) and supposed founder of one of Taoism's heretical magical sects, his reputation has expanded to legendary proportions.

Details of his death in the 8th month of 234 are sparse, however, and no historically verified date has been available to me. Ssu-ma Kuang [4], summarising official historical documents and usually so precise with dates, records laconically: "In this month Liang died, with the army."

We do have a date and some details from *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* [5], Lo Kuan-Chung's historical popularisation of the 14th century. This is the 23rd day of the 8th (lunar) month, at night. This date may be more symbolically than historically accurate, for the 23rd of the 28 lunar asternisms is *Kwei* (The Ghost). Possibly this date is novelistic invention then, or possibly we have another meaningful coincidence.

Chuko Liang appears to have been chronically ill, and in his final years travelled around in a wheeled pushcart or primitive wheelchair. The *Romance* mentions coughing blood as one of the symptoms of the disease, so it sounds as if he suffered from tuberculosis of the lungs. Again according to the *Romance*, he spent his last day in a coma, waking at evening and, rather than resting, insisting on an inspection tour of his camps and military positions. This he made in a 'small carriage' (whether this is identical to the wheelchair is unclear), before the cold autumnal wind forced him to return to his tent. There, after making final arrangements and looking at the stars, he died.

The only problem is that *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not considered in academic circles to be more than 70% factual. Lo Kuan-Chung drew on official histories, secondary written sources, popular cycles of legends, and, doubtless, his own novelistic invention. All of which makes Lo Kuan-Chung an unreliable authority doesn't it? Perhaps . . .

234 AD corresponds to year 51 in the sexagenary cycle, and so from Sherrill and Chu [3] we can work out that its yearly horary branch number is 3. And from there we can work out a PBI for the day. However, as Chuko Liang apparently spent the day in a coma, we need really only concern ourselves with the last two 'hours' of the day, from 7 pm to 11 pm. These give us this result:



Firstly, we see that the trigram controlling the day is Tui, which refers to illnesses of the chest [3]. For hour 11 we have hexagram 28 (Preponderance of the Great), imaged as an overloaded roofbeam or ridgepole. The lower trigram is *Sun* meaning wind, and one is tempted to see an attack of chest difficulties brought on by the wind. The hexagram as a whole also refers to illness of the lungs [6]. The judgement on the 3rd line reads: 'The ridgepole sags to the breaking point. Misfortune.' When the line changes, the resulting hexagram is 47 (Oppression, Exhaustion), which is also the first hexagram for hour 12.

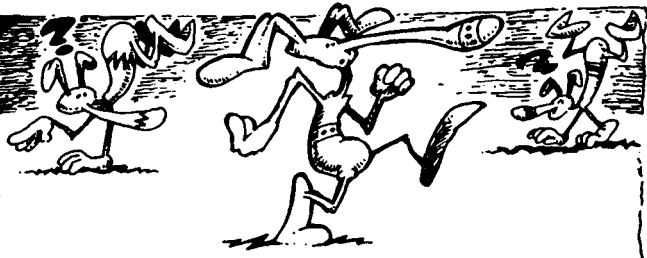
Hexagram 47 as a whole also refers to illnesses of the lungs and chest [6]. The lower trigram is *K'un*, which, apart from referring to the moon, also means water, an abyss, and danger. The controlling line is in the 4th place which, in the anthropomorphic structure of the hexagram refers to the trunk (the 1st line refers to the feet, the top line to the head, and so on). When the line changes, we have hexagram 29 (The Abysmal): doubled danger. And what does the controlling line say? "He comes very quietly, oppressed in a golden carriage. Humiliation, but the end is reached."

I leave the reader to make up his own mind. Personally, I'm on Lo Kuan-Chung's side . . .

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- 1) Richard Wilhelm/C Baynes: *The I Ching* (RKP, London, 1951).
- 2) Hellmut Wilhelm: *Change* (RKP, London, 1961).
- 3) WA Sherrill & WK Chu: *An Anthology of I Ching* (RKP, London, 1978).
- 4) Achilles Fang (trans): *The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* (Harvard University Press, 1965): 2 vols, translated from Ssu-ma Kuang: *Tzu Chih T'ung Chien*.
- 5) CH Brewitt-Taylor (trans): *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (CE Tuttle, Vermont & Tokyo, 1959); translated from Lo Kuan-chung: *San Kuo Chih Yen-I*.
- 6) GG Melyan & WK Chu: *I Ching: The Hexagrams Revealed* (CE Tuttle, Vermont & Tokyo, 1977).

# BEHAVIOURAL CURIOSITIES



## MAD MASQUERADES

We've always had a soft spot (in our heads?) for bizarre behaviour - mix that with fancy dress and you find antics that are both funny-ha-ha and funny-peculiar! And it's strange how most of it involves a strong anti-social bent. Just recently, in late December 1978, a handful (and I say that with foresight!) of French gangsters dressed up as Muppet characters, broke into a sanatorium at Nancy and relieved patients of their worldly cares to the tune of £16,000. As they fled in their stolen car, Kermit le Frog, Fozzie and pals were actually waved through traffic by bemused gendarmes on point duty, and enthusiastically cheered on by passers-by. Curious that; breaking into a sanatorium - it kind of restores one's sense of proportion. (News of the World 31 December 1978). In 1976, a man about to give evidence in Brighton County Court on a prosecution of squatting was dismissed for wearing a battery operated flashing red clown's nose (Sun 16 December 1976) - and in 1977 a modern-day bird-man was prosecuted for repeatedly buzzing a back garden, in Durban, South Africa, in which a blonde lady was sunbathing in the nude. As he shouted down: "I'd like to sleep with you!" the outraged woman tried to hit him with a broom - but he was out of reach. I'm stretching, too, to include the hang-glider he was wearing as a fancy-dress, but the incident is not without relevant humour (Sun 23 March 1977). In Bergen, Norway, last February, unspecified nuisance of another sort was caused by two characters dressed as Jesus and the Devil. After complaints from local citizens, the Devil was arrested and fined,

but being no less a man of principle than his friend, refused to pay up on the grounds that he had been discriminated against, while 'Jesus' went free. As if that were not ironic enough, the report in the Sun (Sydney, Australia) 17 October 1978 (Cr: Ion Will) said the two had been on their way to a debate to protest about local priests practicing exorcism on a girl believed to be possessed by "a devil's ghost" (sic). It was also mentioned that the 'devil' who got nabbed was a member of the Norwegian Association of Heathens. Anyone know anything about this group?!

## MONKEY SUITS

Then we have some monkey-business...When a gorilla escaped in a Tokyo zoo, terrified crowds were evacuated and a marksman called to fire a tranquillizing dart. When the animal had collapsed the zoo authorities found it was a man in an ape-skin, who later admitted he had been sent in secret to test the zoo security. Boy, is he glad they didn't use real bullets! (Reveille 19 March 1976. Cr: Nigel Watson). That puts me in mind of a similar but more recent incident - I blush to admit I've mislaid the clipping! In this case, as a publicity stunt, a man in a gorilla suit was to burst out of a specially prepared cage to frighten the tourists...only one man - he might have been a Japanese, getting revenge on monkey-nuts no doubt - picked up an iron bar and bent it over the head of the surprised joker. If this sort of thing goes on in real life, I'm inclined to sympathize with the man who went on trial for murder in Lagos, Nigeria. He told the court that he shot his companion by mistake, thinking he was a

gorilla! (Daily Mirror 23 May 75). When residents of Byron - a small community near Flint, Michigan - saw an 8ft hairy giant lurking behind their apartment building making growling noises, they were sure it was Bigfoot and called the police, who chased the creature into woods where they lost it. After much talk of armed hunting parties in the woods, a rather contrite prankster went to the sheriff's office in Corunna and confessed that he hired the suit to play a trick on friends (Detroit News, Michigan, 2 September 1978. Cr: Mark Hall). More sinister is the report in the Houston Chronicle, Texas, 19 July 1978 (Cr: Mark Hall), that two Bigfoot costumes and three pairs of giant feet were stolen from a hotel in Hood River, Oregon, in use by Alan Landsburg Productions, who were on location with their drama-documentary Monster Hunt (which, we understand from Bigfoot News Sept 78, is to be released soon). For what it's worth, we note that a year before the theft of the Bigfoot-kits in Oregon, a gang wearing monkey masks began terrorizing courting couples on the edge of Epping Forest, Essex (Sun 6 July 1977).

### DON'T FORGET THE BUNNY MAN!

Company director Michael Douglas-Smith was driving home from from a fancy dress party when a car screeched to a halt beside his, and he was dragged into it by 3 burly men. Mr Douglas-Smith was dressed as a fairy at the time, and whatever it was they wanted they changed their minds, quickly dumping him on the road and speeding off. Later the 3 men were charged with assault at the Old Bailey - one said: "There was a bit of confusion". (Weekend, 29 June 1977). At times we all feel like stragglers in some comic fancy dress ball and we don't know the rules or the judges. I guess the man in the duck suit in Seattle failed the test. He was advertising a local radio station but was attacked by another player wearing a driving cap, who pulled off the duck's bill and beat him with it. The socio-spacetime ruling is clearer now - at that time in Seattle it was peaks, not beats! (London Evening News 19 Sept

1977). On the other hand barman John Collins could have been hosting one of the judges, in his Missoula, Montana, bar, without knowing it. He ejected the man, "dressed in an insect costume", from the bar in the early hours of the morning - however this barely objected to being shooed away, returned and swatted Collins, then buzzed off. When police arrived all they could find were a pair of wings flung into a corner! (The Australian, early November 1978. Cr: Ion Will).

Now for one of my favourite tableaux...A bus travelling down a dark stretch of road near Yately, Hants, pulls in at a request stop. Conductor Bill Perry nearly drops his ticket machine as the door opens to reveal the imposing figure of a 6ft man wearing a leopard's head mask and leopard-skin gloves with long pointed claws. Bill managed to ask him if he wanted to get on, but the Leopard Man spoke not, and lifting his arm in a gesture both imperious and menacing, merely pointed at Bill. The bus was off down the road before the doors had time to shut! (Daily Mirror 30 October 1967. Cr: Anthony Smith). Finally, I come to a note which says 'Don't forget the Bunny Man' - see Fate (UK Edition) August 1971, p36. He was first seen by a young couple parked in a wood in Fairfax County, Virginia - they were rudely interrupted by the astonishing sight of an obviously angry man in a bunny-suit hacking at their windows with a hatchet. It was believed the Bunny Man was protesting about new housing developments in this Washington suburb, because he was discovered by a security guard, two weeks later, chopping at a porch post on one of the unfinished houses. "You are trespassing," he announced to the startled guard. "If you come any nearer I'll chop off your head." Then he bounded back into the woods. He was last seen by 3 children in Seat Pleasant, Maryland, on their way home from school, who told of seeing a man on the street "with his bunny suit on, with a hatchet."

...and believe me, there's lots more stuff here on bizarre behaviour, but we'll dip into this dippy data again sometime soon. RJMR

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We are very pleased to present the following extract from Peter Ratazzi's scholarly and fascinating guide to some of the less well known backwaters of Europe and their mysteries. In *Strangest Europe*, 1968, born of Mr Ratazzi's

gentle but relentless curiosity and his notebooks, kept during more than 30 years of travelling byways, is full of Fortean titbits. A limited number of copies are still available, at £2.25 plus postage from Mitre Press, 52 Lincolns Inn Fields, London WC2.

# HEALING WATERS FROM THE TOMB

by Peter Ratazzi

The River Tech, originating close to the Spanish frontier, tears brusquely through the Valley of Vallespir towards the Mediterranean and is bridged a few miles north of Le Perthus by the highway running from Narbonne to Barcelona. A secondary road from the intersection at Le Boulou accompanies its torrential waters for thirty miles back into the hinterland before ending in a cul-de-sac. Along the rocky, Colorado-like route lies Céret, the Mecca or Barbizon of Cubism, whose Provençal-Catalan air attracted Picasso, Max Jacob, Bracque, Manolo, Kisling and Juan Gris. The Museum of Modern Arts in the Carmelite convent contains some of their works. Next are the small towns of Amélie-les-Bains, a spa at the foot of a Vauban fortress, and Arles-sur-Tech, producing the first and finest apples of France.

Arles-sur-Tech grew around the abbey of Saint Mairie, founded by Charlemagne in A.D. 778 - the year of the merciless rearguard action near the clefts of Roncevaux where, at the opposite end of the Pyrenees, the emperor lost Roland, Oliver, and other knights battling Basque partisans. Sheltered by the commanding summits of sacred Mount Canigou, magnetic peak of Roussillon lifting glaciers like frozen white flames skyward, Arles-sur-Tech is a pleasing place, enjoying the mildest climate, a folkloric centre set in a European Hindustan.

Local Holy Week celebrations are obviously related to those in Malaga and Seville. Processional altars aglow with candles and ornate floats sway slowly above the Stations of the Cross parade. Anonymous penitents move rhythmically to the accompaniment of litanies and the mournful roll of muffled drums. Dressed in black robes and pointed hoods slitted for the eyes - costumes of the type worn by faceless escorts who walked alongside the barefoot chain-dragging miscreants to the scaffold - a column of repentant sinners crowds the plaza on Maundy Thursday. Backs are bent under the heavy *Croix des Opprobres*, some carry the sunburst of diamonds and the host of thorn-crowned waxen-faced figures with flowing locks and tears of pearl.

On other occasions the mood is gay. Mid-summer Night Beacons are the signals of regional rejoicing. Mules are blessed. It is Muleteers Festival, alive with rousing Sardanas music and fraternal Catalan ring dancing. Miradors are fest-

ooned for the Cascavellada, and ancestral *festa mayor*, when revellers fight their friendly Battle of Flowers in fancy clothes, bear masks and espadrilles.

The present abbey and cloisters in graceful Provençal style date from the 11th - 13th centuries and shelter a splendid wooden altar-screen, gilded statues of the Persian princess Abdon and Sennen, and painted silver bust-reliquaries containing relics of these saints, who were martyred under the Christian-baiting Roman emperor Decius in A.D. 251. The entrance to the church is embellished by a Romanesque Christ in majesty and the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet - the Alpha and Omega of the Apocalypse.

To the left of the central doorway and behind an iron railing stands a consecrated tomb. The discoloured, marble coffin - above which appears the wall effigy of Guillaume Gaucelme, Seigneur of Taillet (d. 1210), and with arms crossed over his chest - is attributed by archaeological experts to the fourth century. It bears Christ's monogram incircled by a wreath and may be read as IX (Iesus Christos) or XP, the Greek Chi-Rho symbol, the Christmon, or the Labarum: the standard of Constantine. When surrounded with a ring or wreath the impression is that of a wheel. The *Signum Dei* of early Christianity stood for the founder of the religion as well as for universal peace - Pax. Two faded paintings of the Holy Monogram have been found on the garden tomb at Calvary-Golgotha. They incorporate the Alpha and Omega, and indicate that the sepulchre was identified in olden days as the Tomb of Jesus Christ, the First and the Last.

Although antiquarian sarcophagi (literally: 'flesheaters' supposed to consume the body within forty days) are not common in France, or anywhere else, there are still some on view. Several in Paris museums are Christian and show the Chi-Rho cipher. A few good ones may be seen in the southern parts of the country. The cathedrals at Auch (Gers) and Rodez (Aveyron) have perfect specimens from the fifth and sixth centuries. So has the crypt of St. Seurin, Bordeaux. Pagan and Christian sarcophagi discovered in and around Arles (Provence) are now in the archaeological museum of Marseilles. The local church of St. Victor has one said to enshrine

the relics of Lazarus.

On the face of it, the heavy austere stone chest at Arles-sur-Tech seems in no way dissimilar to other sarcophagi of the same period. However, there is a difference that is unusual. It is associated with a riddle which has baffled generations of townspeople for the last thousand years. A riddle, by the way, not mentioned anywhere in the 1023 pages of the *Guide de la France Mystérieuse*. Apparently it hides some kind of spring bringing forth a pure, transparent and always fresh liquid of medicinal properties. Between 80 to 150 gallons of the tonic are siphoned by means of a small pump into bulbous phials every year. The little vessels holding the fluid are kept by young and old, and are also in demand outside Arles-sur-Tech, because the contents are believed to be efficacious in treatment of illness.

Mysterious healing water from the tomb!

A closed, free-standing tomb whose theoretical maximum capacity has been estimated not to exceed 44 gallons!

Of course, there is a traditional tale. The relevant legend begins ten centuries ago when anthropoid apes infested the intensely folded ranges of the *montanyas regaladas*, and from where the ferocious mammals descended to the muletrails of the Vallespir and penetrated sporadically into Arles-sur-Tech. These gorilla-like simians—representations of which can be studied on an archivolt of the abbey—had a taste for tender flesh, particularly that of young children. Neither physical defence nor invocations could halt the scourge. From time to time infants continued to be snatched and eaten. As a last resort it was decided to send the abbot to ask the Pope for advice as to how it could be brought to an end.

One night, during his long journey to Rome, the people's emissary had a vivid dream in which the Persian martyrs, St. Abdon and St. Sennen, told him where to unearth their bodies so that their mortal remains, once transferred from the environs of the Eternal City to the Pyrenees, might protect and free the population from the persistent calamity. Having been granted

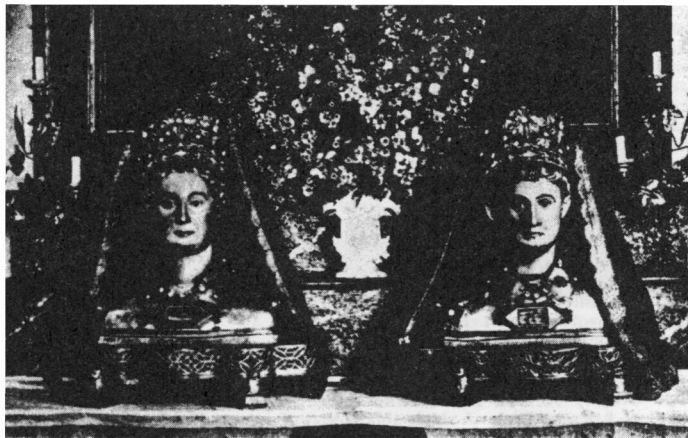
permission by the Holy See to disinter at the spot revealed to him, the pilgrim obtained relics from the neglected graves and placed them in a casket. In order not to draw attention of potential robbery the precious case was put into an ordinary barrel topped up with water and, in due course, shipped to Catalonia.

Disembarking with the timbered container on the coast of Roussillon, the faithful voyager engaged the services of a Spanish mule driver and they set out through the savage land in the general direction of the River Tech. When they came to a narrow track, in an area marked by vertiginous cliffs and obsolete iron mines, the mule refused to go on. To change his four-footed friend's mind, the Spaniard let out a string of invective which fairly horrified the good abbot. Before he had recovered from the shock, the stubborn animal had disappeared over a precipice. Now the muleteer, too, was speechless. Never, in those parts, could there have been a mishap so untimely and undeserved.

Utterly dismayed, the two men parted and wandered homeward on forlorn and separate paths. But after many hours the abbot heard a tinnabulation in the far distance and when he arrived at last in his native town, stirred by joyous peals, he saw that the mule with the treasure had got there before him. *Pater, Ave, Gloria Patri*, the ecclesiastics and people of Arles-sur-Tech had understood the meaning of the event. It was a triumphant return and the happiest day of his life. Thanking God, the abbot poured the water from the barrel into the old sarcophagus and placed the casket in the chapel.

After a week or two the abominable simians began to leave the district. By the end of the season the dread menace lurking in the mountains was banished and the children were secure. Then something else was noticed. Persons in a poor state of health who had touched the water in the oblong receptacle felt stronger. Some patients drank a little of what they considered to be a miraculous cordial, and others added drops of the seemingly invigorating water to lotions. Invalids recovered. The cleansing, forti-

Painted, silver reliquaries (15th century) containing the relics of the Persian martyr-princes, St. Abdon and St. Sennen, in the Abbey at Arles-sur-Tech.



fying liquid gained popularity and, inexplicably, the tomb did not run dry.

A report set out in a municipal record takes over from the legend in 1794. That year the weighty lid of *la Sainte Tombe* had been upheaved by members of the Republican army of the Pyrénées-Orientales on their way to Spain. The sarcophagus had been emptied and filled with refuse. After cleaning the heavy box several women observed that linen cloths used as dusters became moist when in contact with its walls and bottom. The immense lid was put back in position, but within a month it was noted that ten inches of the aperient had gathered. In the presence of clergy, lawyers and councilmen the complete hard-limestone body was then examined at great length and the inexhaustible chest suspended in the air. No double bottom, no leads, pipes or holes were detected. The supporting bars were thoroughly inspected and proved to be non-porous. Throughout this testing, which lasted for a number of days, the coffin continued to secrete elixir.

Since those days the local position has been watched night and day during irregular but protracted intervals. More recent investigation has shown that the coffin's water level does not correspond in parallel fashion with atmospheric conditions. Furthermore, it has been established that the water tapped from the sarcophagus is of another composition than the water filtered to the town, but precise chemical data do not seem to be readily obtainable in a place blessed with the rich golden light of the lazy southern life. A scientific analysis, especially if the amounts of trace elements such as arsenic, flourine and strontium, is required, is a complicated and quite costly undertaking for the individual outsider. Moreover, a laboratory would need at least 1 litre, which is far more than anybody can reasonably expect to collect. The minute ration actually dispensed to any genuine applicant might be sufficient, however, to determine the quantity of total solids, which would indicate if the water had been more or less distilled. It seems just possible that the tomb is in a damp corner and subjected to fairly large temperature changes which could cause condensation. If this were the case, since if is of marble, the water would contain small amounts of calcium bicarbonate and nothing else. In any event, humidity cannot possibly account for the large supply drawn off each year. It should also be borne in mind that the compact capacious sarcophagus is located in the luminous Pyrenees, the driest districts of France.

The region of Arles-sur-Tech is quite likely to have mineral springs - Ax-les-Thermes with much sulphur and flourine in its sixty warm streams rising from the ground not being too far away - but this is really nothing to do with the annual 80 to 150 gallons of 'miraculous.' Sceptics have suggested, of course, that churchmen might have replenished the drink off and on, but it is highly improbable that the abbots could or would mislead the inhabitants for a thousand years. The abbots and priors of Roussillon and Cerdagne have always occupied a special status. Pope Gregory XI was in his earlier years an abbot of Arles-sur-Tech. A single abbey, that of

St. Michel de Cuxa (most of whose capitals were acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and adorn 'The Cloisters'), possessed thirty lordships as well as legal titles in 200 other places. Similar rights and responsibilities were exercised by the Abbots of Corneilla de Conflent, Arles-sur-Tech and St. Martin du Canigou.

Of all the stories of miraculous healing waters - from sacred wells enclosed by chapels of granite to the hidden Fountains of Youth - this is the most remarkable. One thousand solid old Gold Francs, deposited decades ago by an intrigued notary of Arles-sur-Tech for the benefit of any person able to explain the phenomenon satisfactorily, still lie locked in the abbatial safe and await their claimant. "The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious," opined a physicist and Nobel Prize winner. "It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true science. He who knows it not, and can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead."

*La petite Reine du Vallespir* and the whole area from Font-Romeu to colourful Collioure of the sardine boats belonged for hundreds of years to Spain, until Louis XI, the first French nationalist, secured its cession from John II of Aragon. Since the transfer, in 1468, there exist the Two Catalonias, and French culture has merged agreeably with Spanish tradition. Fittingly, the popular, quotidian signal is "Aqui, Radio Andorra!"

For centuries July 30 has been a day of patronal feastrites at Arles-sur-Tech. The procession of the shrines of St. Abdon and St. Sennen then precedes the distribution of water from the sanctified sarcophagus, and this prayer: *Dieu tout puissant, qui avez lavé le monde dans les eaux du déluge et qui régénérez les ames dans les eaux du baptême, daignez, par la vertu que vous avez communiquée à cette eau dont notre foi nous inspire de faire usage, purifier notre ame de ses souillures et guérir notre corps des es infirmités. Nous vous le demandons au nom et par mérites de vos Saints martyrs Abdon et Sennon. - Ainsi soit-il.*

Occasionally letters with foreign stamps reach the abbey. They refer to cardiac, intestinal or rheumatic ailments, and correspondents request the curative agent. Tiny plastic bottles are mailed in reply. Some have arrived in England and America. Under the printed words *Nature de la Marchandise* on accompanying standard export forms the typewriting declares *Eau Miraculeuse*. One wonders what customs officers who deal with a variety of imports in this technological era have made of it before putting the rubber stamp of approval on to such packages.

On the site where Roman imperialists founded Arula on the Tech to the glory of Nature, *jeux de boules* in the *Boulodrome* by the Hotel de Ville now absorb the attention of citizens.

Agave, cork-oak and cactus; cherry, mimosa and peach-tree grow under the warm sky as in the years of early undertokens when - with animated Perpignan, the Vermilion Coast and Balearic Isles - Arles-sur-Tech belonged to the quaint, short-lived Kingdom of Marjorca.





A Catalan priest siphons the healing water from the mysterious 4th century sarcophagus with

Christ's monogram (just visible on the right side) at Arles-sur-Tech.

PETER RATAZZI 1968



## JINXES

29 January 1978 - Alice Hicks of Youngstown, Ohio, died under mysterious circumstances. Her neighbours thought she was a "witch". Detective Mike Gilboy removed a six-inch doll wrapped in ribbon from her house - its head was turned backwards, there was a 2" needle in its chest and a thorn pierced its back. The day Detective Tony Cafaro put a piece of paper in Gilboy's desk, where the doll was kept, he slipped on some icy steps and broke his tail bone.. Detective Joseph Fajack, who rode to work with Gilboy, got sick for the first time in 12 years. Detective Clarence Greene caught pneumonia; Lieut. Don Mallese came down with flu for the first time in 20 years; and Patrolman Sam DuBose, who took home some of Mrs Hicks' voodoo books to read, had to have all his top teeth removed. Gilboy himself almost choked on a pepper seed stuck in his oesophagus a week after taking the doll. The next day he pulled a shoulder muscle...and a month later had a double hernia and torn groin muscles. In March he caught Russian flu. Then he was shoved into a swimming pool, breaking his neck and back. On 10 June Detective Steve Krispli moved the doll from Gilboy's desk to an evidence locker, and four days later was hospitalised with severe chest pains. Lieut Sabatino finally burned the doll on 16 June. "My feeling was that this had gone on long enough," he said. National Enquirer, 15 August 1978.

In the summer of 1977 airline vice-president Ralph Loffert, of Buffalo, NY, his wife and four children visited the Hawaiian volcano Mauna Loa. While there they collected some stones from the volcano despite a warning

from the natives that this would anger the volcano goddess, Madame Pele. Shortly after they returned home Mauna Loa erupted. Within a few months Todd, 10, developed appendicitis, had knee surgery and broke his wrist; Mark, 14, sprained an ankle and broke his arm; Dan, 11, caught an eye infection and took to wearing glasses; while Rebecca, 7, lost two front teeth in a fall. In July 1978, the Lofferts sent the stones to a friend in Hawaii who was asked to return them to the volcano. The disasters continued - Mark hurt his knee, Rebecca broke three more teeth, Dan fractured a hand bone, while Todd dislocated an elbow and fractured his wrist again. Mark then confessed he had secretly withheld 3 stones. They were returned to Pele and the trouble ceased. Grand Rapids Press (Cr: Davie Fideler) Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch (Cr: Loren Coleman) both 31 October 1978; Sunday Express 3 December 1978 (Cr: J & C Bord, Richard Cotton); Week-end 10-16 January 1979.

In June 1977, Terry Barlow's wife accidentally disturbed a robin's nest in their garden, killing two of the young. Since then Terry's father died, and his sons Mark, 17, and Simon, 12, ended up side by side in hospital after separate accidents. Someone was thrown through Terry's shop window in a street brawl, which also damaged his car. His aunt had a heart attack, and as he was attending to that thieves broke into two flats he owned and swiped the electricity meter money. The next day his wife's antique shop was burgled of £800 worth of goods. In April 1978 a lorry knocked down his garden wall. Terry, 44, a local councillor and heating engineer in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, said: "It's got to the stage where I'm wondering what will happen next." Sun

17 September 1977; Daily Express  
10 April 1978. (Cr: Colin Mather).

## TALES OF WOE!

In some cases no specific cause for a run of bad luck can be attributed. Perhaps someone (or something) up there (or wherever) is trying to get a message through to the hapless victims...

Roy Reep, 67, of Gastonia, California: - at 3 his brother accidentally shot him in the face; at 9 he cracked his skull; at 11 his father accidentally hit him on the head with an axe; at 13 an operation for sinus trouble revealed two teeth lodged in his nose. Later in life he fractured his pelvis and hips, and punctured his kidneys and bladder in a car accident. He was also shot in the chest by his alcoholic wife; burst a vein in his eye during a cataract operation leaving him blind in that eye; diagnosed a diabetic, and suffered a nerve injury to a hand. Rand Daily Mail (S.A.) 11 July 1977. (Cr: Chris J Holtzhausen).

Brian Chellender, 29, bricklayer of Bournemouth:- his latest reported exploit was bending down to pick up a pin for good luck, whereupon he was knocked unconscious by a falling brick. He reckons the trouble began when he was born on a Friday the thirteenth. As a boy he had a bad bicycle accident, was knocked out by a golf club and attacked by a man with an axe. He was stabbed at a fairground, pinned down by a 55-ton motorway earth-mover, trapped under a garage door, stunned by falling metal on a building site (he took his hat off in the heat to cool down), scarred for life by steam and rammed by a rowing boat off Bournemouth Pier. He is very well-known at the hospital. Daily Mail 24 Apr 1973; Weekend 13 June 1973.

Albert Goodwin, 53, of Peterborough: - he has broken both feet, fractured three fingers, dislocated his neck, fallen through a factory roof and been machine-gunned during the war. In December 1973 he was convalescing from an accident in his home, having just broken both wrists. Albert is a safety officer! Daily Mirror, 17 December 1973 (Cr: Bob Forrest).

Philip Ellis, 24, of St Albans: - He was knocked down by a Land Rover. While leaving hospital he

was hit by a bus. A bridge he was crossing collapsed, dumping him on a passing car below. He has crashed in a glider, and in May 1978 he suffered a broken arm after being hit by an express train as he crossed a track. News of the World, 7 May 1978.

Nate Brown, 43, of Charleston, West Virginia: - Shot nine times; stabbed 15 times; knocked down by a car, a truck and a train. Carlisle, Cumbria, Sunday Sun 5 Dec 1976 (Cr: Peter Hope-Evans)

Sometimes the jinx falls more on those around the walking disaster area. Take Dr Max Benis, a specialist in allergies, who has been in the right place at the right time on at least 19 occasions to help people in distress. Wherever he goes people begin to drown, fall off high rocks right at his feet, choke on their food in the same restaurant, or touch live wires. Says the Daily Mail 6 December 77: "Not many of the victims seem particularly grateful to Dr Max."

Or consider Martha Matikia, a beautiful Bulgarian. A violent storm caused Martha to meet Randolph Eastman, and American touring near Sofia, in 1935, when he sought shelter in her house. They married within a week - two months later Eastman was struck dead by lightning, leaving Martha with £20,000. She bought her parents a new house and married Charles Martaux. While on holiday in Spain he was killed by lightning. In her sorrow she became ill and returned to Sofia where she was treated by a famous German doctor. On her recovery they went to Berlin, where they married. She left him when she found out he was a Nazi, but he pursued her. Near the French border his car was struck by lightning, killing him. Weekend 31 March 1976 (Cr: Anthony Smith). For other lightning freaks see last issue.

We have lots more on damned bad luck, but alas no room here. PS

### NEWS CLIPPINGS

If you see anything of interest to FT readers in your reading, professional or scientific journals, or local newspapers, please clip it out, or make a note of it, add a note of the source, date, and your name . . . then send it to us. It all helps and there are surprisingly few duplications. Some readers have offered to scan their regular reading matter, and if you would like to do the same, please contact us for suggested periodicals not being covered by others.

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# STRANGE ENCOUNTERS IN YORKSHIRE

by Nigel Watson

A more than superficial look at the UFO literature reveals that UFO encounters are far stranger than mere lights in the sky and visiting spacemen.

A recent investigation by Graham and Mark Birdsall, area investigators for Contact International (U.K.), illustrates the kind of ufological scenario we are confronted with.

Their report deals with the sightings and experiences of the Ledger family, which took place in and around Clover Field, Leeds; this field being in the vicinity of Kirkstall Power Station, and located between Kirkstall road and Stanningley road, west Leeds.

The first sighting occurred at 2.0 a.m. one morning, in the first week of June, 1978, when Mr Barry Ledger (37) and his son, Reece (12) went rabbit hunting. They were walking towards Halfpenny Bridge, which leads to Clover Field, when they saw a stationary bright light ahead of them. The white light with a silver haze around it hovered about 2 feet above the ground. After they had seen it for a few seconds it shot away at a fantastic speed.

Three days later, Mr Ledger, his son, and daughter, Tracy (14), were out hunting at 2.30 a.m., in the same locality, when they saw at the far end of Halfpenny Bridge, a rugby-ball-shaped object. This appeared to be 20 feet in height and 30-40 feet in length, and was hovering only a couple of feet above the ground. They watched it at a distance of 100 feet for about 30 seconds until it 'simply disappeared.'

The next day Mr and Mrs Ledger were walking through the field when, at the same spot where he'd seen the object the previous night, they found a cluster of 5 or 6 holes in the muddy ground. In all they found 5 such clusters in the vicinity.

During the next week Mr Ledger, Reece and Tracy, visited the field again at night time.

On this occasion they didn't see anything but instead they heard a whispering sound, so close to them that they were 'frightened to death' of this disembodied emanation.. Ten days after the original UFO sighting, father and son were yet again hunting for rabbits at 2.30 a.m. in Clover Field, when they saw a light in the corner of the field, which disappeared after 30 seconds.

By now Mrs Barbara Ledger was fearful for the safety of her family. So on their next rabbit hunting trip Mrs Ledger, Nellie their hunting dog and a friend, Eddie, attended the proceedings. On this visit they heard a loud screaming sound which seemed to emanate from the top of Kirkstall Power Station. Mr Ledger's hair stood on end, the children were terrified, and

Mrs Ledger claimed that: 'It sounded like something in pain, (it was) terrible, and I couldn't sleep that night, I'd never heard a sound like it in my life'.

The Ledgers were back in Clover Field, two nights later. First they heard the rustling of leaves, then their dog Nellie began to whine, which made Mrs Ledger turn round and look upwards. On doing this, she saw a monstrous shaped-object, which appeared to be 5 times bigger than their dog, swoop 1½ feet above her head. The 'bird' appeared to have no feathers, but instead had over-lapping scales, on the surface of its wings and body. Mrs Ledger thought it looked mechanical and added that their dog jumped up at it as it flew over them.

The 'bird' or 'flying cross' landed on the ground ahead of them, close to the footpath. Their dog ran towards the object which began to wobble from side to side. It came towards the dog and then it suddenly vanished into, proverbial, thin air. Although the Ledger's could see nothing, their dog persisted in snapping and howling, as if something were still there. After this, the Ledgers had to have their dog destroyed by the RSPCA, because she began to go berserk at the sight of birds, and she would also attack cats and dogs.

A few days afterwards, Mr and Mrs Ledger were walking through the field when they found a heap of 5 dead, young starlings. The birds had no marks on them and rigor mortis had not set in, indicating that they had only been dead for a few hours. Looking around they discovered a total of 6 piles of dead birds, all separated by a distance of 12 feet from each other.

After an interval of 3 weeks, the bizarre happenings in Clover Field had ceased - but after this period, Mr Ledger, Tracy, Reece and Eddie, who were out rabbit hunting, were yet again confronted by the unknown.

This time Mr Ledger saw a strange light near his son, Reece. 'I haven't a clue where it came from', said Mr Ledger, 'it was suddenly there. I'd no idea how long it was there, for all I know it could have been an hour... it hurt my eyes I recall, yet I couldn't look down, we more or less came around to see the light had gone...

'It was then that I noticed I no longer had my rifle... I couldn't understand it at all, so we walked around searching for it, and I found it laid in the grass some 30 feet away from where I had been stood'.

Tracy and Eddie witnessed the light along with Mr Ledger, but surprisingly Reece, who was closest to the phenomenon, claimed that he saw nothing untoward.

As a result of this encounter, Mr Ledger

discovered that his wrist watch had gone haywire, and Eddie vowed that he would never return to the field.

On subsequent visits Mr Ledger has noticed that the wildlife in the area has diminished, but no more unusual events have been reported, by the Ledgers.

It would be simplistic and naive to take this report of these strange happenings at face value. From an objective point of view we might argue that the Ledgers' strange experiences can be explained in a perfectly rational manner. For instance, we could speculate that their UFO observations were nothing more than the lights of trespassing poachers - these and subsequent (mundane) triggers, inaugurating strange mispersuasions in the minds of the Ledger family.

The rationalistic explanation is valid to a certain extent, but it does ignore the question of

how such 'ufological fantasies' are triggered off, and to answer this we need to know more about the witnesses involved (still a neglected area of study despite the popularity of Keel's writings). Also many elements of the Ledgers' story - such as the dead birds, winged object, time lapse etc. - are prevalent in the Fortean literature, which indicates that such 'mispersuasions' are archetypal in nature. Indeed, within just the ufological context, we are confronted with a wealth of subjective and symbolic information which is worthy of more consideration than it has been given in the past. It is fortunate that more ufologists are beginning to realise this.

*[We are pleased to announce that Nigel Watson has agreed to do a regular column of comments and notes on the Fortean aspects of recent UFO sightings, encounters and reports, beginning next issue - Ed]*



## FINDING THE FAMOUS

There have, of late, been a number of excavations, and subsequent controversies, concerning persons of ancient fame; perhaps the most notable being the alleged finding of the body of St John the Baptist at the St Makar Monastery, in the Natroun Valley, about 60 miles north-west of the Egyptian capital of Cairo. The details are extremely confused, and we have only reportage of reports in two Egyptian newspapers, Al Ahram and Al Akhbar, but I'll piece together the story as best I can.

According to the traditions of the Coptic Church, the body of St John, along with that of the prophet Elisha, was brought from Palestine to Alexandria in the 5th Century, and then secretly removed to the monastery in the 11th. This story seems to rest on oral tradition and two 15th Century manuscripts.

Earliest reports speak of two coffins being found in 1976, below a church within the monastery, which as a whole dates back to 360 AD. We first hear that only one of these had been opened, and had been found to contain the bones of Elisha, while the monks assured

the reporter from Al Ahram that the second contained the remains of St John. This story soon changed alarmingly.

We are next told that a cave was found beneath the church, containing several undecomposed bodies, but this then changed again. The final version, as I understand it, is that the cave contained the bones of 14 people, and the skulls of 13: thus, 'obviously' the 14th man was St John. A wooden coffin was also found, which contained an undecomposed body, though no identification has been provided for him; except that he was not St John, for he had retained his head. Father Youhanna, the second most senior monk at the monastery, refused to say how the identifications had been made, but it is apparently customary for the monks to collectively fast and pray for long periods, until "heavenly secrets" are revealed to them.

All of which is very well, but the Roman Catholic Church also claims to possess the bones of St John, at Genoa, Italy. These were looted by one Gulielmo Embriaco from the city of Mira in Turkey, during the First Crusade, around 1100. The Genoese stole the bones,

thinking them to be those of St Nicholas, but the citizens of Mira told him they were St John's. "So much the better!" he replied. Such is the way Ecclesiastical history is written, and I confess myself sceptical of anyone claiming to have received the body of St John, except six (or perhaps five) feet of his native soil. Story compiled from London Evening News, 13 Nov 1978, Daily Telegraph, Toronto Star, The Australian, 14 Nov 78, Guardian, 15 Nov 78, Bangkok Post, Toronto Globe & Mail, 20 Nov 78. (Cr: V Martin, V Thomas, D Whalen, I Will).

However, it should not be thought that I doubt the sincerity of the Coptic monks; but it seems to be a function of the human mind to make such assumptions as soon as any evidence, however fragmentary, appears in support of tradition. Schliemann, for all his brilliance as an archaeologist, was mistaken in thinking that he had found the remains of Agamemnon at Mycenae, and perhaps the same charge of assumption could be levelled at Manolis Andronikos, who claims to have found the tomb of Philip of Macedon (see FT 26). While Andronikos has undoubtedly found an important tomb of the right period, and has adduced some weighty evidence, his claim to have found Philip remains, at present, not proven.

Where religious considerations enter in, the situation is muddled still further. The alleged tomb of Christ at Srinagar, Kashmir, has received much coverage (Telegraph Sunday magazine, 4 June 78, Niagara Falls Review, 14 Oct 78 (Cr: D Whalen) and the book Jesus Died in Kashmir by Faber-Kaiser, reviewed in FT 26), but its contents can only remain a matter of conjecture while the Moslem Ahmadiyya sect refuse to allow the coffin to be opened. Their faith should, after all, be strong enough to be put to the test.

On the subject of the famous, I mention in passing that excavations continue at the tomb of Chin Shih Huang Ti (259-210 BC), the first unifier of China, at Lintung County, near Sian. Here, at least, there is some certainty that the right tomb has been connected to the right man, but I intend to give this much greater coverage in my oriental column next issue.

## THE WAY WE LIVED THEN

An expedition of Egyptian and American archaeologists and geologists, led by Mr Farouk El Baz, returned from a two-week expedition to Egypt's Western Desert with a rather remarkable tale which has received surprisingly little coverage. That area of the desert they toiled through has not been explored in recent memory and, it seems, they will not know exactly where they were until they have referred to photographs taken by a satellite which tracked their progress. But they started from Kharga Oasis, 520 km south of Cairo, headed south-west toward Bir Tarfawi and Bir Misaha Oasis, then west to Oweinat Mountain, covering 1600 km in all.

Somewhere along the way (the location is not given) they accidentally stumbled upon a "ghost city", a "cave-like" community dwelling, previously covered by the dunes and uncovered again by the wind. Within, they found hand-axes and spear-heads, petrified ostrich eggs, remains of a giraffe and cave-drawings indicating the area once had enough rain for grass to grow and cattle to graze. There were also traces of a 200 sq-km lake.

But perhaps the most remarkable part of this tale is the date El Baz attributes to the finds: 200,000 years ago. While this date, if true, will doubtless be eagerly seized upon by those who advocate the possibility of lost super races in the dawn of time, I admit I have a mistrusting soul: to me, 200,000 seems a remarkably round number, and I'm willing to entertain the possibility that perhaps an extra '0' has been introduced into the reporting (though there is nothing to support this). But what niggles most, perhaps, is that nowhere in the clippings to hand is there any mention of how this date was ascertained, nor the names of any of the "prominent" scientists (except Mr El Baz). We must await further developments. Sunday Express, 22 Oct 78, Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Oct 78, Pretoria (S.A.) News, 30 Oct 78. (Cr: P Rogerson, C Holtzhausen, V Sumegi).

Whatever we may think of the above, it certainly makes Engla-

nd's oldest house a mere piker by comparison: an oval dwelling on a hilltop at Romsey, Hampshire, containing seeds radio-carbon dated to 6590 BC. Guardian, 8 Nov 78. (Cr: P Rogerson).

And some other antediluvian dwellings: In West Ukraine, Soviet archaeologists have found 4 oval huts, connected by a series of passages, made from mammoth bones and animal skins, 40,000 years ago. National Echo (Malaysia) 8 Dec 78. (Cr: I Will). Still in the Ukraine, a town of 700 acres, 1,500 buildings, some of them two-storeyed adobe constructions, built by the Tripolye culture, c. 3000 BC. Omaha World Herald, 17 Sept 72 (Cr: J Swatek). On the Mississippi River, evidence that the Indians lived in permanent houses and kept dogs, 9,000 years ago. D. Mail, 29 June 77. And at Rome, traces of a settlement existing 500 years before Romulus and Remus supposedly founded the city. London Evening Standard, 29 July 77.

And that touch of 'earlier than you think' leads us conveniently to our next section...

## ANCIENT TECHNOLOGIES

We seem to have accumulated a quantity of material from communist countries, so, taking the Soviet Union first:

Central Kazakhstan: the 2,300 yr old skeleton of a young woman unearthed, and found to have had her amputated left foot replaced with bones taken from a sheep. She survived several years after the operation. World's first transplant? Observer, 24 Jan 71.

Bones excavated at Mezin, near Chernigov, in 1908, from a 20,000-yr-old Paleolithic dwelling, have been identified as percussion instruments. They are mammoth bones: two lower jaw-bones, a shoulder blade, a thigh bone, a fragment of pelvic bone and a fragment of skull, all painted with geometric patterns in red ochre, and struck with 'hammers' made of deer antlers and mammoth teeth. Stone-age rock? Novosti Bulletin, 24 Sept 74.

A Sarmatian burial mound of the first century AD, near Novochoerkassk, in the Northern Caucasus, contained a copper mirror which appears to have been machine worked and incised with circles of "astonishing accuracy and finish".

It was in a case bearing similar designs, covered with a substance like glass. Soviet Weekly, 3 July 76 (Cr: RG Twine).

And from China: they struck oil first, it seems, 2,000 years ago, on the Yu River, in NW China. A contemporary historian (unnamed) spoke of a stream with fat on its water, which could be picked up; turned yellow, then black, and coalesced into ointment called 'stone paint'. When burnt it gave out bright flames. Sunday Times, 15 Dec 74.

The invention of papermaking, normally attributed to Tsai Lun (or, in the new phonetics, Cai Lun) in 105 AD, has been pushed back by excavation at the Ejin River in Kansu (Gansu) province. Two pieces of paper were found, the earliest being dated before 52 BC. Beijing Review (formerly 'Peking Review') 5 Jan 79.

A double-edged steel sword, excavated from a tomb of the late Spring and Autumn Period (approx 500 BC) at Changsha, Hunan Province, has pushed back the date of the first known steel-making in China by at least 200 years. Peking Review, 1 Sept 78.

And the ancient Tanzanians were no slouches when it came to steel making either, it seems. Reconstruction of smelting furnaces made by the Haya tribe, dating back 1,500 to 2,000 years and similar to those in use until the beginning of the 20th Century, has shown that they produced a temperature of 1,800 degrees C. This was at least 360 degrees hotter than anything known in Europe at the time, and the steel produced was thus of a considerably higher quality. The Star (S.A.) 27 Sept 78. (Cr: CJ Holtzhausen).

Excavations at Ban Chiang, Thailand, have turned up bronze artifacts dating back to 3,500 BC, 500 years earlier than any previous finds, which is something of a blow to the theory that bronze metallurgy began in the Middle East about 3,000 BC, and diffused from there. And also a blow to the notion that S E Asia was a backwater that only derived its culture from China. Evidence shows a flourishing permanent community, with excellent pottery, bronze work, and rice cultivation. Sunday Times, 17 Aug 75.

Archaeologists working at the Franchthi Cave, in the Argolis peninsula, Greece, have found evidence that seafaring began in the Mediterranean as early as 9,000 BC, 2,000 years earlier than previously known. Daily Telegraph, 27 Oct 78.

### OTHER RECENT FINDS

A brief round-up:

The perfectly preserved bodies of six eskimoes, and their animal skin clothes, 500 years old, from a grave at Umanak, western Greenland. Melbourne Sun, 16 Sept 78. (Cr: H Thomas).

A Scythian gold statue from the first millenium BC, the first 3-D statue from the period, showing a wild boar thrusting its tusks into a hunter's leg. Site unknown. Sydney Sun, 15 Nov 78. (Cr: I Will).

A 45-foot long oaken boat, from Graveney, Kent, dated to 939 AD, the earliest boat so far discovered in England. London Evening News, 12 July 77.

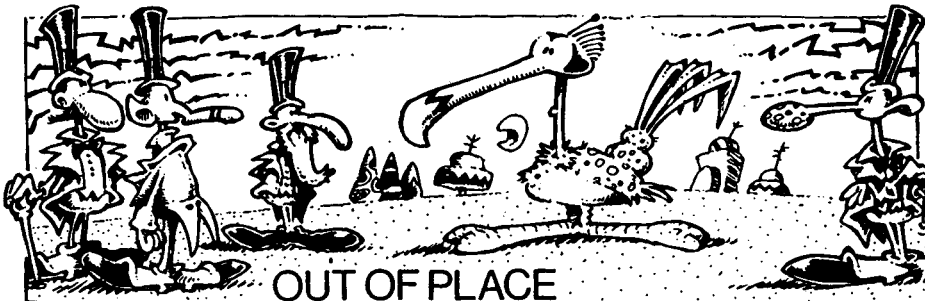
A 13th century manuscript,

"Elucidation of the Astronomical Sphere", by Ubaidula Ash-Sheria, found in the archives of the Tajik town of Ura-Tyube. It contains theories about the formation of the universe, as well as astronomical data. Soviet Union No 335, Feb 78. (Cr: I Will).

Islamic glass, beads, pottery and traces of ships found while repairing a reservoir in Hong Kong, indicate foreign trade with south China in the 9th Century was much more extensive than previously thought. Denver Post, 18 Dec 77. (Cr: TR Adams).

A wooden bridge unearthed near Amphipolis, Greece, believed to have been built by the Spartan General Vrasidis, 424 BC. Sunday Express, 24 Dec 78. (Cr: C Hall)

A Roman temple, thought to be the largest in Britain, and four times as big as previous discoveries, at Northwood Farm, Hayling Island, Hants, believed to have been built on an earlier Celtic sacred site. The News (Portsmouth) 8 July 78. (Cr: N Maloret). SM



### LARGE CATS

Our last note on the elusive "small lioness or puma" that has left sporadic tracks and mangled carcasses in the Scottish Highlands, from Inverness up to the northern coast of Sutherland, was back in early February 1978 - see FT25 & 26. At 10am on 27 November 1978, a plasterer called George Gillanders, of Dornoch, spotted what he believed

was the 'puma' between the hotels at Aultnagar and Invershin, in Sutherland. He said: "It was quite near the road bounding away from me. It was black all over and just a bit bigger than a Labrador, but it was definitely cat-like." Aberdeen Press-Journal 1 Dec 1978 (Cr: Jake Williams). Since then (ie about two days later) it was blamed for the killing of two sheep, and a third mis-

sing, from a flock high above Loch Shin, near Lairg, in central Sutherland. One of the sheep was partially eaten and had its ribs crushed, obviously by a powerful animal. This was the first such depredation since those of the previous winter (see FT25 & FT26). Glasgow Herald, and Daily Record, both 30 November 1978 (Cr: Jake Williams, J Lang.)

Sightings of the Scottish 'puma's' older southern cousin, the 'Surrey puma' seem to be getting fewer as the years go by. Let's hope that 1979 has more to offer than the few sightings last year (see FT25p33f) - for now we record a 'puma' scare in the are of Faversham, Kent - no dates are given but we guess the sightings occurred in the early days of January this year. A "large mysterious black animal" was seen by lecturer Peter Latham, near his house in



Boughton Street; and later his neighbour, Mrs Bernadette Kiely, found "unusually large paw marks" in the snow; and two local boys out ferreting said they saw a "big black creature" in the woods. Sunday Mirror 14 January 1979.

In the USA, mystery cats have been as mischievous as in previous years but also less frequently. On 23 Jan 1978, a woman in Loxahatchee, Florida, saw a lion outside her window - or thought she did! She called the nearby Lion Country Safari park to let them know. The lady who took the call at the park called a friend at a Loxahatchee grocery store - that friend called other friends who then did likewise and within a very short time the whole community was on alert. Three police patrol cars were sent to the area but they failed to pick up the scent. There were no lions missing at the park, and two residents who had lions as pets could account for theirs. When the tension dragged on for a bit people began to believe there was no lion, that the original caller must have been mistaken, or that it had left the area. An interesting little illustration of rumour...then the story fizzles out! Palm Beach Post, Florida, 24 January 1978 (Cr: Udo Schlegel).

A similarly inconclusive tale comes from the Millstone Road area of West Virginia. On 17 September 1978, Sam Tubaugh left his TV to go out of his front door, and in his yard, about 10ft away, he saw a large black animal which he first thought was a dog. He made a noise to scare it away and as it ran he realized it was a large cat-like animal. There was a light in the yard, and he thinks the animal was black, about 2ft tall "or more" and had a long tail. About the same time, or a little later, 2 local boys met it while they walked along the road - they too believe it was a large black cat with a long tail. The sightings caused the usual excitement; and the animal was blamed for the weird screeching noises some folks heard at night, and for the disappearance of neighbour Marcena Denny's chickens. The fuss was even compared to the 'Mothman' flap of nearby Point Pleasant (see the writings of John Keel) in the 1960s... and speaking of monsters, we note that Tubaugh was watching King Kong - he wonders if it was the panic-screams of crowds in the film that attracted the creature? As news spreads there are two developments. Firstly Mrs Denny sees a dog taking one of her remaining chickens and calls the County Dog Warden who manages to track and capture the canine culprit. The dog was undoubtedly wild, and black

and brown, but nevertheless in the minds of many people the mystery was solved! The other development was equally predictable and unsatisfactory to Fortean. Ray Knotts, a biologist with the McClintic Wildlife Station at Point Pleasant, visited Tubaugh to examine some traces - the tracks he dismissed as not cat-like, but various scratches and other marks could well have been made by a large cat...but no, he said: "There is no such thing as a panther in the United States...no wild mountain lions in West Virginia for over 75yrs.." but they do tend to range in colour from tawny yellow to chocolate brown. Since I don't want another rap across the knuckles from John Michell (see 'Letters' this issue) I point out this is the opinion of an 'expert' toeing the official line, and as such is traditionally in conflict with eye-witness testimony. For further discussion see Loren Coleman's account of black panther sightings in Ohio, in Fate November 1977. This story came from the Point Pleasant Register, West Virginia, 18, 20 & 21 September 1978 (Cr: Tom Adams).

Curiously, less than a month later, the rare Eastern Cougar, long thought to be near extinction in Ontario state, was seen at least twice. In the second week of October, provincial police constable Art King saw one emerge from trees on the Bruce Peninsula while he was parked on a township road NE of Wiarton. He described it as about 30" high, around 200 lbs, and brownish-orange with a lighter coloured stomach. Like the Millstone Road incident above, there had been rumours of a creature haunting the area for at least a year. About a month later an animal, described simply as "a cougar" was seen by an award-winning outdoors writer (it says here) John Kerr, on the banks of the Saugeen River. Casts of the pawprints were obtained by Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources, who now confirm the cougar's presence. Niagara Falls Review 17 October 1978; & the St Catharines Standard 17 November 1978 (Cr: Dwight Whalen).

Sightings of Thylacines - or the Tasmanian Wolf, as it is better known - are continuing in the coastal regions of southern Australia, but the situation is horribly mixed up by the persistence of the Australian press in confusing the Thylacine with the 'Tasmanian Tiger', a large marsupial cat widely believed to be extinct. And to make matters worse there have been sightings of large black panther-like cats in south western Australia (particularly New South Wales) and accompanying reports of savage sheep depredations. We'll cover these stories

soon - in the meantime we're trying to locate an Australian naturalist (with Fortean inclinations) who could clarify and perhaps even tabulate the marsupial mysteries of the Land of Oz for us.

## KANGAROOS & WALLABIES

A kangaroo was spotted in the fields of Bedfordshire, about mid-April 1978, by two ambulancemen on their way to a call. They reported it to the police, and the investigating officer caught up with it at Hockliffe, near Dunstable - but it got away by bounding over the fields. As usual, when the news reached the papers, the reporters ring around the local zoos, and as usual none of their animals are missing. Each time we get a report like this, I'm sorry to say, we are also given a lot of garbage which is supposed to pass for intelligent, informed and even witty comment from the zoo people - but, also usually, it is none of these things. The data I've just given you came from the London Evening Standard 20 April 1978 - and I'm sure that simply because the story was regarded as a light 'filler' they didn't bother with such heavy boring details like names or dates! We as Fortean and newspaper readers ought to do something positive, soon, about the declining standards of British newspaper reporting especially in the 'popular' papers - any ideas? But back to the zoos' comments - Whipsnade Zoo staff are cited as cynically stating such stories usually start "about pub closing time" when in this case the witnesses were public officials on duty during an afternoon! Also, the reporter was told that "no-one here" had heard of kangaroos running wild in Bedfordshire, and that it is more likely to be a wallaby. That last detail is correct: not only is the UK an ideal habitat for the wallaby, it is well known that there are at least 2 breeding colonies in England - besides, in my experience, escaped kangaroos are soon recaptured; wallabies it seems are more wily. Someone at the Woburn Abbey wild life park "denied any knowledge" of wallabies or kangaroos. They can't mean that they're entirely ignorant, and

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A small footnote for marsupial kind. According to recent intelligence, kangaroos got their name when Cap'n Cook asked an Australian native about those strange animals he saw bounding through the undergrowth. The Abo replied "Kangaroo..." Which, we are reliably informed, translates roughly as, "What the hell are you talking about?" Love it. -- Ed.

yet I find it hard to believe that they are unaware of the 2 feral colonies and the small number of escapes each! If this truly reflects the knowledge and opinion of these people it is pathetic! Here's something for them to consider... Sun 9 Nov 1977: a wallaby escapes from Cambridge University's animal research unit at Madingley (and that's not far from Bedfordshire!) - as far as I know it's still living in nearby woods (Cr: Paul Screeton). Sun 18 March 1978: a wallaby that escaped 2 years previously from a country park on the Isle of Wight was thought to be returning because she is lovesick, since a wallaby has been seen near the male wallabies. No one is quite sure if it is the same one or appearance of another (Cr: Nigel Pennick). Daily Mirror 10 August 1978: that a wallaby that escaped from Windsor Safari Park, Berks, on 30 July was recaptured on 9 August by 2 policemen at Forest Road, Winkfield. (Story also appeared in the Daily Telegraph.) And speaking of those wild wallaby colonies a note appeared in the Guardian 17 August 1978, that the directors of the Riber Castle Wild Life Park, near Matlock in Derbyshire, believe that one of the reasons the feral colony which has survived in the Peak District since 1939 have dwindled in numbers (apart from the devastating winter of 1962/3 which reduced their numbers to single figures) is their reduced hardiness through inbreeding. So they have selected a strong and virile young wallaby and released it near the known herd in the hope of revitalizing their genes. We would like to have seen more than one released, but we hope it works anyway.

Meanwhile, in the USA, kangaroos struck again in a repeat of the 1974 flap in Illinois and Indiana - see FT9p18f. These latest sightings began on 7 April 1978, this time in Wisconsin, in a suburban area west of Waukesha, and several undescribed incidents were enough to get the subject discussed on TV on the night of Saturday 8 April. Lance Nero, of Brookfield, was one of those who got a laugh from the airing - but as he had breakfast the next morning (9th April) he saw two animals that looked like kangaroos cross a road from a wooded area, hop across a field and another road. His wife also saw the animals - and later a Waukesha County Sheriff's Department officer took pictures of the tracks, which are said to be consistent with the notion of kangaroos. The next sighting was at 6.15pm on 12 April, by the Haesele family as they sat down for dinner in their Mt Vernon Drive, Waukesha home.

Jill Haeselich said she only saw it out of the corner of her eye but her husband Peter and his mother had got a good look at it about 50ft from their diningroom picture window. Peter ran out of the back door and saw it jumping off southwards over the hill. All of these reports mentioned that it was between 3-5ft tall, the colour of a deer and very fast. The next day (13 April) William J. Busch was driving on Highway 83, just south of Highway 18, at about 4.45pm, when a large weird animal "which may have been a Kangaroo" flashed across the road 15ft in front of him. He doesn't insist it was a kangaroo, but it had short front legs, very long back legs and looked about 3ft tall - it seemed to be hunched forward as it scampered across the road, but it definitely was not a dog or a cat, he's certain. On the 16th, at about 3am Mr & Mrs Greg Napientek were driving on County Trunk A, just east of Waukesha, when they saw an animal in their headlamps - it reared on its hind legs and hopped away. Greg said: "We got pretty close, within about 30-35 yards." His wife thought it might be a deer "...until it stood up on its hind legs (and jumped over a ditch). I've seen deer before. I know what a deer looks like...I know it was a kangaroo." The Napienteks added that they only learned of the other sightings after they told friends of their experience. Meanwhile the Sheriff's Department was at a loss...the only zoo in the area with kangaroos (Milwaukee County Zoo) had none missing and no-one was known to have one as a pet. Since that date 'What made Waukesha famous... has bided its time - it may be still out there, but it's more than likely the harsh winter has killed it by cold or pneumonia, since kangaroos like warmer climes than wallabies. We are intrigued by another detail (which seemed to have evaded comment by local police and naturalists), that the first sighting distinctly mentioned a pair of kangaroos - is it too much to hope for little bounders this spring? Sources: Waukesha Freeman 13,14 & 17 April 1978 (Cr: Tom Adams); Milwaukee Journal (Wis) 13 April 1978 (Cr: Mark Hall); San Antonio News (Texas) 14 April 1978 (Cr: Tom Adams); Ypsilanti Press (Mich) 17 April 1978 (Cr: Jerry Clark); Houston Post 21 April 1978, the source of the photo (Cr: Kurt Lotmann); Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City) 25 April 1978 (Cr: Tom Adams); Daily Press (Newport News, Virginia) 25 April 1978 (Cr: Gary L Abbott). See also the penultimate issues of Dave Pidelers' ARB for additional coverage.

RJMR



## THE VANISHING NORFOLKS

Patricia Villiers-Stuart, London:

I was reading with great gusto the story of the disappearing regiment (FT 27pp35-38) because that area belongs to my earliest memories. Alas I have only negative evidence; although I knew personally some of the people involved it was the first time I have ever heard that the disappearance was attributed to supernatural causes.

When I was a child we lived in Norfolk and my father, who fought in the campaign, had friends in this regiment. He was a captain in the Royal Fusiliers. During the war my mother and I had our portrait painted by Mark Milbanke, the brother of the Sir John Milbanke mentioned in the story, and I remember meeting him several times later on. My father's family came from Ireland and had a distinct liking for the supernatural, and I feel very surprised never to have heard this interpretation of the story before.

I do know that my father felt the whole campaign had been terribly bungled and considered that both the Norfolks and the ANZACs had a justifiable grievance. I would certainly tend to agree with Paul Begg's rather sober assessment of the whole story. Congratulations on a super edition of FT. Such a good collection of book reviews.

(( You might like to know that the 'Vanishing regiment' and many other famous and infamous stories of disappearances have been given the benefit of Paul Begg's "sober assessment" in a book by him, Into Thin Air - to be published this March by David & Charles - Ed.))

## MYSTERY TRACKS

LR White Atkins, London:

Your footnote (FT26p44): "As a last thought, we realise that cats walk with their claws retracted - a curious and puzzling detail!" (The evidence of claw marks on the tracks) may not be so puzzling if we remember that the heavier

the "cat" or whatever, and the more slippery the snow it was walking on, the more it might extend its claws!!

## ATTACKS BY CONDORS

John Michell, Somerset:

I write to complain that false statements by supposed experts quoted without correction in your mag have caused me to look foolish in respectable company. At lunch recently with Bruce Chatwin - author of In Patagonia, a book of interest to Porteans for its descriptions of South American strange and not-so-extinct creature lore, and of Bruce's quest for a slice of Giant Sloth skin - I quoted, from FT24p10, the information supplied by a "condor specialist from the National Audubon Society, California" to the effect that all the 40-45 remaining condors are in California and that it is not in their nature to swoop on people. Bruce contradicted this from a terrifying experience of his own, mentioned briefly in his book (p140). The details are interesting in the light of the recent 'Big Bird' attacks in Texas and Illinois (FT24).

"...Two condors dived on me. I saw the red of their eyes as they swept past, banking below the col and showing the grey on their backs. They glided in an arc to the head of the valley and rose again, circling in an upthrust where the wind pushed against the cliffs, till they were two specks in a milky sky.

The specks increased in size. They were coming back. They came back heading into the wind, unswerving as raiders on target, the ruff of black feathers ringing their black heads, the wings unflinching and the tails splayed downwards as airbrakes and their talons lowered and spread wide. They dived on me four times and then we both lost interest."

This took place in Patagonia, disproving all the points stated by the Audubon "expert". Familiar features of the 'Big Bird' attacks and sightings, which occur in the above account, are: huge size, red eyes, grey colour, rigid wings and rapid gliding. Compare the summary of 'Mothman' cases in John Keel's Strange Creatures form Time and Space: 10ft wing span, glowing red eyes, most people described it as greyish, wings did not flap in flight...incredible speeds.

Of course to suppose that condors travel secretly over thousands of miles to swoop on mid-Americans is one of those explanations which, as Fort would say, needs to be explained itself. And there are many cases which no condor theory could ever be forced into fitting. But

there are many more condors about than your Californian expert admitted, and they do swoop down on people.

(( Thanks John...but I won't accept responsibility for the pronouncements of so-called experts. They're the experts - we'll quote them. However I should have qualified the quote by putting 'expert' in quotes itself. I used his statement because it was typical of some of the ex-cathedra judgements on the 'Big Bird' happenings made by careless 'experts' at the time. The motto, regrettably, is: Caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware! Ed))

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# FORTEAN TIMES

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