

Exploring the world of the unexplained

# Paranormal

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*Nick Redfern examines all the theories*

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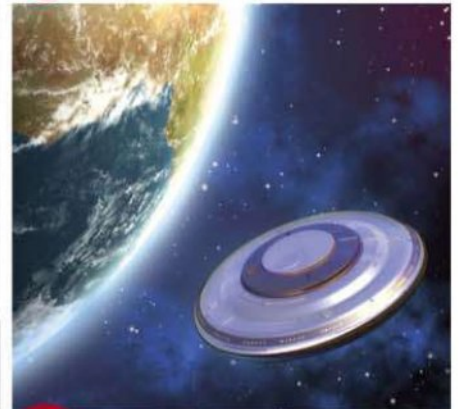
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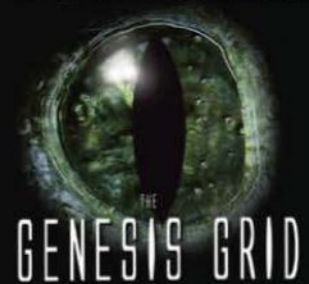
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**GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

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

**EDITOR**

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

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

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

**ART EDITOR**

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

**WEB EDITOR**

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

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Maria Da Silva, Tim Downie, Mark Fraser, Richard Freeman, Mike Hallowell, Andrew Hind, Dr Bridget McDermott, Steve Mera, Nick Parkin, Nick Redfern, Dr Karl Shuker, Paula Thornton, Barbara Wadd, Nigel Watson, Peter Underwood.

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

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

**ACCOUNTS & ADMIN MANAGER**

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

**ACCOUNTS**

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

**ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES**

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

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**

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

**ADMINISTRATION**

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

**CIRCULATION & PROMOTIONS**

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

**SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUES**

Telephone: 01778 392468 subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

**PUBLISHER**

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

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

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

**PRINTING**

Warners (Midlands) Ltd.

**DISTRIBUTION**

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

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# Exploring the world of the unexplained Paranormal



## EDITORIAL Anon and on and on



Recently I've started receiving anonymous letters. Actually, booklets: stapled together, close-typed pages without an author credit and without an accompanying letter, return address or indeed any clue as to who sent it.

Nor is any explanation offered as to why I should read it. The reason, however, is fairly apparent. It's because an article was printed in the magazine which suggested that alien invaders may not be the only explanation behind UFO sightings.

The booklets are all about alien contact and the world governments' covert chumming up with extraterrestrials and the like. Not that I've read them, just glanced through them. I noticed that on two occasions several names had been underlined: writers who have apparently cast doubt upon such assertions (although not necessarily in the magazine) and are therefore the enemies of Truth. The intention, I think, is to warn me about associating with such villains and not to listen to their rotten fibs.

The other day I also received a CD-ROM with a plain white label and again without any covering note or other clue as to its sender. I don't know what's on it but my Spidey Sense tells me it's almost certainly full of Evidence about Aliens. I have no intention of loading it because for all I know it's carrying a virus (Alien, possibly).

The only other occasion I've received anonymous warnings like this was many years ago when I'd written about some witchcraft legends for a local newspaper. I'd pointed out that the unfortunate women who had been burned as witches in ages past had almost certainly been innocent victims of a religious mania. A couple of days later I received a glossy leaflet luridly 'exposing' secret Satanic cults and the dangers of witchcraft

Again there was no accompanying note, no polite request to read the literature, but at least I knew where it had come from: the Reachout Trust. The so-called 'Trust' (it actually consisted

of just one member) later became notorious as the engine behind the Satanic Abuse scares of the 1980s. This one woman succeeded in convincing a major children's charity and the police that Satanic child sacrifice was taking place in the UK. The result was that several blameless families were torn apart by misinformation and, ironically, religious mania.

At least in the case of the UFO extremists - which is what they are - I can see that their anonymity may be due to a genuine fear that They might be out to get Them, and for all they know I might already have been Got At.

### 'The intention, I think, is to warn me about associating with such villains and not to listen to their rotten fibs.'

The irony is that I'm open-minded about the whole thing. As is Mr Nick Redfern, who has written widely on the UFO phenomenon and is the author of our cover story this month: 'What is a UFO?' Nick can't be expected to answer that question definitively, but he has highlighted all the main theories - yes, including the Extraterrestrial one, still the most popular explanation.

Unlike my anonymous friends, I am open to a wide range of opinions, and would be delighted to learn yours on the subject of 'What is a UFO?' and also, 'What is a Ghost?', a question we pondered a couple of months ago.

Don't forget, if you'd like to give your opinions on *Paranormal Magazine* and offer suggestions for any changes you might like to see, you're welcome to do so by filling in our reader survey at [www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk/readersurvey](http://www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk/readersurvey). But please - don't do so anonymously!

**Richard Holland, Editor**

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Tell the editor about your own experience with the paranormal and let him know your views on the magazine. Email editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or write to Richard Holland, The Editor, Paranormal, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ



# Paranormal News

The latest from the world of weird

## Horror house on the market

[Source: Mail Foreign Service, May 25].

**FOR SALE: Des. Res. Boathouse. Secret room. Some slime on walls. Minor levitation. Occasional demons. Immediate possession likely. All a mod con.**

**A**s haunted houses go, you couldn't get much more infamous than the house that inspired the 1979 film *The Amityville Horror*. The Dutch Colonial pile went on the market in May and could be yours for £800,000 (\$1.15 million).

In 1974 six members of the DeFeo family were shot dead in the house as they slept. The eldest son, Ronald, called police to report the crime but later confessed, stating: 'Once I started, I just couldn't stop. It went so fast.'

He was convicted of the murders, aged 23. Just over 12 months later, the house, 112 Ocean Avenue, in the leafy New York suburb of Amityville, was bought by George and Kathleen Lutz. According to Jay Anson's 1977 book, *The Amityville Horror: A True Story*, the couple with their three children moved in in December 1975.

At about \$80,000, the house must have seemed a real bargain given that it boasted six bedrooms, a swimming pool, boathouse on the adjacent canal and, of course, distinctive character. But, allegedly, these period features weren't the only things distinctive about number 112. After just 28 days the Lutzes left, claiming to have been terrorised by a series of strange, paranormal events.

To begin with, George and Kathleen experienced nothing out of the ordinary but, speaking about their brief tenure subsequently, they reported that it was like they 'were each living in a different house'.

Allegedly George began to wake up at about 3:15 every morning and would go out to check the boathouse. He would later learn that this was the estimated time of the DeFeo murders. Kathleen started to have vivid nightmares about the killings and discovered the order in which they occurred,

and the rooms where they took place.

She also discovered a secret room (about four feet by five feet) hidden behind shelving in the basement. Its walls were painted red and the room did not appear in the blueprints of the house. The room came to be known as 'The Red Room' and had a profound effect on the family dog, which refused to go near it.

**'After just 28 days the Lutzes left, claiming to have been terrorised by a series of strange, paranormal events.'**

The family also reported odd noises, red eyes peering at them out of the darkness, inexplicable marks - including bite marks - appearing on their bodies, and their young daughter began to talk to a 'friend' no-one else could see: a weird, pig-like creature with red eyes, whom she named 'Jodie'. They also said they found hoof-prints, like those of some enormous pig, in the snow outside the house.

Following the release of the 1979 film of the book, starring James Brolin and Margot Kidder, the house became so well-known that the couple who had bought it in 1977, James and Barbara Cromarty, changed the address from 112 Ocean Avenue to 108 Ocean Avenue in an attempt to protect their privacy. They lived in the house for a decade and reported nothing unusual.

The real estate listing claims the house has an 'interesting history'!

Ronald DeFeo remains behind bars, serving 25 years to life for the murders.



### Paranormal Shorts



#### DOG V MONSTER

Swedish reader Mike Eriksson has told us about an odd incident involving the aquatic beast said to live in The Great Lake (Storsjön). According to local newspaper ÖP, Harald Tirén's pet dog has sniffed out the monster more than 50 times over several winters, where he has detected it lurking below the ice.

Noticing the odd behaviour of his dog, Mr Tirén claims to have glimpsed the beast himself and has even managed to grab footage of it moving under the ice with his camera. Not only that, but he thinks Storsie - as the creature is known - is repending favourably to the presence of his dog. [SOURCE: Mike Eriksson, June 2010]

#### UFO AWARD

A British police officer who has made a study of strange lights in the sky since seeing a UFO in his teens has won an award for his commitment to ufology.

Gary Heseltine, 49, from Scunthorpe, Lancashire, runs the profuspolicedatabase.co.uk, a growing database of hundreds of UFO sightings reported by police officers. Mr Heseltine, whose fascination with the subject began after spotting a mysterious bright light at the age of 15, picked up the 2010 Disclosures Award in Washington DC for his website.

He said: 'Winning the award was a total surprise. It's also a terrific boost for my database as it puts me on an international platform.' [SOURCE: Telegraph, May 20]

#### CYBORG CHIP

A tiny new transistor has been hailed as bringing 'humans and machines one step closer to merging'.

Aleksandr Noy has developed the nano-sized device along with colleagues at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories in California. He said: 'Our devices make a bridge between the biological world and the electronic world. In effect, we made a biological protein talk directly with a nanoelectronic circuit.'

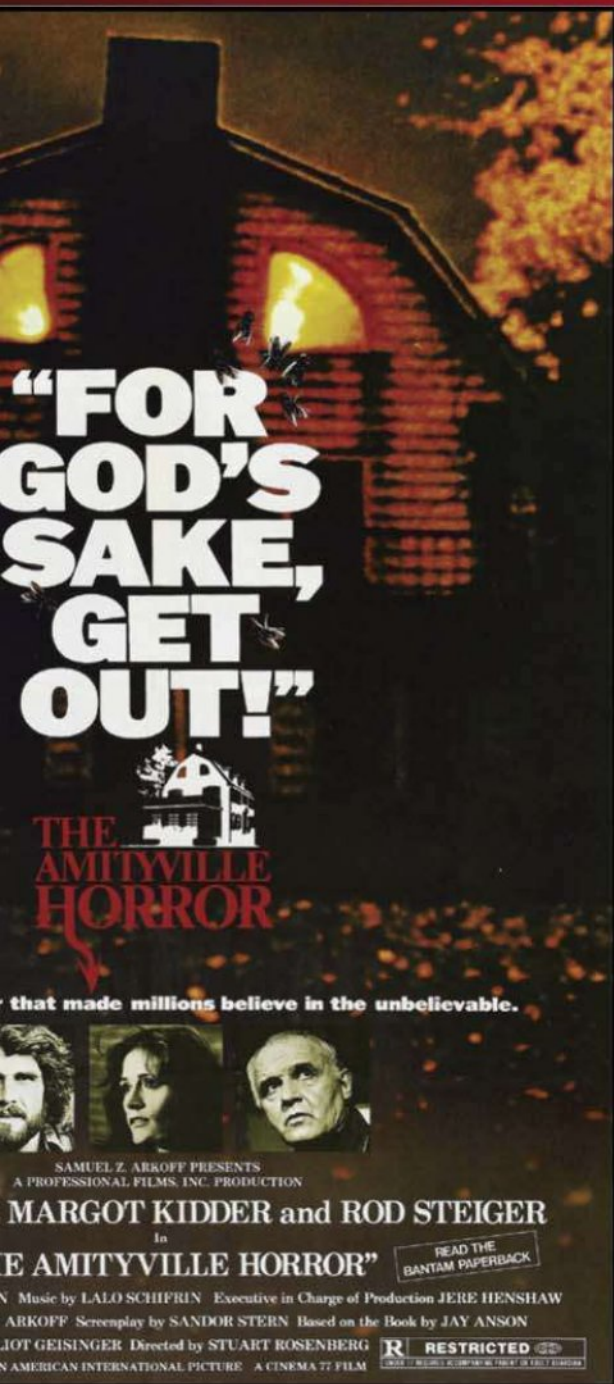
Noy says that getting a biological molecule to control the electric current in a transistor is a first step toward computers that would interface directly with the brain, resulting eventually in mind-controlled prosthetics and typewriters. [LiveScience.com, May 20]



## UFO hacker's extradition saga rolls on

Gary McKinnon, who is accused of hacking into US military files in search of evidence for extraterrestrial activity, has fought long and hard to avoid a trial in the States, but one after the other his appeals have been rejected. Now, his seemingly certain extradition has been halted once again. The Home Secretary has postponed a judicial review hearing into his extradition 'so that the issues surrounding the case can be considered'.

[SOURCE: STV, May 20]



# HAUNTED RADIO TUNES INTO PAST

Old radio set spurns modern music. Plays Glenn Miller tunes and broadcasts from wartime. [SOURCE: STV, June 4]

**A** 70-year-old Pye valve wireless kept at a museum in an old aerodrome has been mystifying staff by picking

up vintage broadcasts featuring Winston Churchill and playing wartime melodies. And it isn't even plugged in.

The old radio forms part of the period trappings at Montrose Air Station, which was Britain's first operational air field, established in 1913. It is now a heritage centre. The aerodrome has a long history of paranormal activity. It is said to be haunted by the ghost of Lieutenant Desmond Arthur of the Royal Flying Corps, who was killed when his biplane crashed. After an inquiry in 1917 determined that the crash was the fault of poor repairs rather than Arthur's incompetence, his troubled spirit is said to have moved on.

Nevertheless, heritage centre staff still glimpse ghostly figures from time to time, as well as hearing mysterious footsteps and seeing door handles being turned by invisible hands.

There is no electricity supply at the centre, which makes the behaviour of the weird wireless doubly strange. It is kept in a room re-creating the look of the air station in the 1940s. Every so often, it will start

playing vintage tunes by the likes of Glenn Miller, and the distinctive voice of Winston Churchill has even been heard declaiming from its speaker. The broadcasts can last for up to half an hour.

Staff have examined the radio but when they took its back off they found 'nothing but cobwebs and spiders'.

Treasurer at Montrose Air Station, Bob Sutherland, is one of those who have heard it play. He told Scottish TV: 'I have heard it playing Glenn Miller. The volume was very low but the music was quite identifiable. I recognised the song as *At Last*'.

He continued: 'I was a wireless operator with the RAF and know a bit about them. We have also had our resident radio expert, Ewan Cameron, look at it. If we had a powerful transmitter in the area the radio might pick up Radio One or something, but we don't. The aerial is out, anyway. It would probably explode if it was switched on.'

The wireless was donated by volunteer Marie Paton, 67, whose father bought it secondhand in 1962.

She said: 'I thought someone was playing a prank on us but I heard it myself last Saturday. It is very faint and you have to put your ear to it, but that's what it's playing. It's a bit scary.'

## UNFAIR GAME

Recently we reported in Paranormal News on the threat to species of monkey from traditional sorcerers and healers killing them for their body parts. Now we learn that one of Africa's largest birds of prey is similarly under threat, thanks to football.

According to Mark Anderson, of BirdLife South Africa, sorcerers have taken to smoking the brains of the rare Cape Vulture because they believe this helps them to predict the future. If they can accurately predict the outcome of matches in the World Cup, held this year in South Africa, they could make a lot of money.

[SOURCE: Telegraph, June 8]

## SERPENTLY NOT!

The Royal Navy has denied holding a database of reports made by personnel on sea serpents and other monsters of the deep.

A marine biologist inquired, as a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, whether the Ministry of Defence held records about 'abnormally large or dangerous sea monsters' that had not been revealed to the public. But an MoD official replied that the Navy 'does not maintain any form of central repository' on the subject and that there seemed to be no requirement for seamen to even note such encounters in their ships' logs.

Any such reports are likely to be haphazard and hard to locate in Navy files. [SOURCE: The Telegraph, May 16]

## CURSED CASH

A self-styled psychic has been arrested over claims she told clients evil spirits were 'haunting their bank accounts' and that they should therefore hand over their money to her, to free them from its curse. Nancy Marks, of Lafayette, Colorado, is believed to have made at least \$290,000 (£201,000) this way.

According to a woman named 'Linda', who called in the police: 'For each evil spirit that was supposedly around me, she told me a certain number of thousands of dollars I needed to bring to her. She told me if I didn't give her more and more money, something terrible would befall my mother.'

[SOURCE: 109.com, May 19]

## M-WAY DRUIDS

A team of druids have been thanked for using their powers to make road accident blackspots safe. Austria's motorway authority hired the druids to drain 'negative energy' from the blackspots in a secret scheme.

Chief engineer Haralds Dirnbacher admitted: 'We were really sceptical at first and didn't want people to know what we were doing, so kept it secret.'

But after the druids used their dowsing rods to restore the 'terrestrial energy' at one location, the fatal accident rate fell from an average of six per year to zero. The druids have now been invited to do their stuff at blackspots nationwide. [Orange.co.uk May 19]



# Call to keep kids away from Ouija boards

**A campaign has been launched to ban the sale of Ouija boards to anyone under the age of 18.**

**I**s it a toy or is it a tool? Is it just a game or can it act as a bridge to the spirit world? Ashley Redfern, of the Worthing and District Paranormal Society, has no doubts on the matter – a Ouija board is a tool and something to be treated very seriously indeed.

Because of the potential harm he believes can come from casual use of Ouija boards, Mr Redfern wants to prohibit their sale to minors.

Mr Redfern said: 'It is seen as a lot of fun but we paranormal professionals and enthusiasts know just how potentially harmful the Ouija board can be and has been to many. The Ouija board is a powerful tool which should only be used by those with the knowledge and experience to use it.'

'Children are more susceptible and manipulative due to their age, therefore more likely to fall victim to Oppression or even worse, Possession, through use of a Ouija board.'

Mr Redfern told *Paranormal Magazine* he knew of several cases involving the negative effects of Ouija boards, including a personal experience of his own when he was aged 13. He and five other friends started playing with a board when something alarming happened.

He said: 'About five minutes into the session, for apparently no reason at all, my friend's girlfriend pulled out a comb from her hair which had a plastic yet sharp spike on the end, and stabbed her boyfriend in the arm. Then she casually walked out of the room.'

'She was found later in some woods by the police. She said she did not know how she got to the woods and claimed she just woke up there. When she was told what had happened, she swore never to take part in a Ouija board session again.'

Mr Redfern is calling on the support of paranormal professionals, enthusiasts, groups and shops selling Ouija boards.

He said: 'We have already seen some well-known toy shops selling Ouija boards exclusively aimed at children, including a pink Ouija board for girls which comes with its own planchette. There is no legal or leading body in the UK for the

paranormal and so I believe that it is up to us to set an example to the younger generations.'

'I am not out to spoil anyone's fun but I think that because of paranormal TV programmes, the younger generation are getting more interested in ghosts, which is great, but they should be made aware of the risks involved.'

'I have decided to launch a pilot scheme in my local area of Worthing, West Sussex, as my society can act as the representative organisation for the scheme. I am asking all of the shops locally who sell Ouija boards to become part of the scheme by refusing to sell them to under 18s on their premises. If the pilot goes as well as I hope, I intend to promote the scheme across the country.'

We asked one of our advertisers, Aubrey Evans, of paranormal suppliers Tranquil Light, who kindly donated two Ouija boards for a recent competition, what he felt about the campaign.

'I think it has its merits,' he told us. 'Ouija boards tend to be sold as games but we've all heard stories of things going wrong if they're not used properly, so I can understand the concern. Fortunately, it's not an issue which really affects us, because our customers tend to be people already fairly knowledgeable about the paranormal and the correct use of a Ouija board.'

'I would offer one word of warning to the campaigners, though. The trouble with telling kids they can't have something is that then they all want it, and they can always find ways of getting it. Tell them a Ouija board is a powerful, potentially dangerous, thing and you give it some glamour – they'll all want one then, and you'll just increase demand.'

To learn more about the campaign, visit: [www.worthingparanormal.org](http://www.worthingparanormal.org)

**DANGEROUS?:** Campaigner Ashley Redfern wants shops to stop selling Ouija boards to children.



## DEAD MINK SPARKS MONSTER MEMORIES

**Canada has just experienced its own version of the Montauk Monster (remember that?).** [SOURCE: The Star, Toronto edition, May 2010]

A weird creature was found washed up on the shores of Big Trout Lake in northern Ontario. Like the Montauk Monster it had a furry body and a bald head, with a hideous, snaggle-toothed face. And like the Montauk Monster it turned out to be the decaying remains of an ordinary mammal that had been in the water for some time – in this case it was a mink. What makes the Ontario case interesting, however, is that before the dead critter was identified, it stirred local people's memories of a little-known legendary creature that was

said to live in the vicinity of the lake. 'The elders used to see it a long time ago,' the manager of Sam's Store in Big Trout Lake told the *Toronto Star* newspaper. 'No one has seen one for 40 years or so. The elders have a word for it: omajinaakooos. In English, it means "the ugly one."' John McKay, 65, said he remembered his grandfather talking about the creature, and that it fed on beavers and otters. Before its rapid identification as a dead mink, rumours very like those which surrounded the Montauk Monster started circulating. It was

suggested that it was some sort of specially created hybrid creature. Not only that but the two nurses who discovered the 'monster' were said to have been suddenly posted elsewhere, and their colleagues at the nursing station in nearby Kitchenuhmaykoosib were refusing to talk to reporters. According to the *Star*, they said: 'We work for the federal government. We're under a gag order.' Meanwhile, oblivious to all the fuss, perhaps The Ugly One is still out there, snuffling around in the woods by Big Trout Lake.



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## Another new theory to explain NDEs

**In Near Death Experiences, patients who have been revived when close to death have described walking towards a bright light or a feeling that they are floating above their body. But what is the cause?** [SOURCE: TimesOnline, May 30]

**D**octors believe they may have solved the mystery of so-called near-death experiences. A study of the brainwaves of dying patients has showed a surge of electrical activity in the moments before death which the researchers suggest may be the cause of near-death experiences.

Some of those who have experienced NDEs believe their experience to be a religious vision or confirmation of an afterlife. However, the scientists behind the new research say this is not the case.

Lakhmir Chawla, an intensive care doctor at George Washington University medical centre in Washington, told *The Times* newspaper: 'We think the near-death experiences could be caused by a surge of electrical energy released as the brain runs out of oxygen.'

'As blood flow slows down and oxygen levels fall, the brain cells fire one last electrical impulse. It starts in one part of the brain and spreads in a cascade and this may give people vivid mental sensations.'

Monitoring brain activity, he noticed that just prior to the moment of death there was a burst in brainwave activity lasting between 30 seconds and three minutes and similar to that seen in people who are fully conscious. Soon after the surge stopped, the patients were pronounced dead.

In Britain, NDEs are being studied by the Awareness During Resuscitation study, known as Aware, led by Sam Parnia, an intensive care physician. Mr Parnia is treating Mr Chawla's conclusions with caution. He points out that there is no proof that the electrical surge observed by Mr Chawla is linked to a near-death experience.

'Since the patients all died, we cannot tell what they were experiencing,' he said.

Read more about Aware and further research carried out on NDEs in 'Back From Beyond' starting on page 36.



## BALL LIGHTNING IS 'ALL IN THE MIND'

**Physicists in Austria claim to have solved the mystery of 'ball lightning', glowing spherical apparitions which have baffled science for centuries.** [SOURCE: The Register, May 19]

According to Josef Peer and Alexander Kendl, of the University of Innsbruck, there is in fact no such thing as ball lightning. They say that powerful magnetic fields created by ordinary lightning affect the brains of humans nearby so that they see things which aren't there.

According to their calculations, a certain type of long-lasting repetitive lightning strike emits magnetic fields similar to those used in transcranial magnetic stimulation – a medical technique used to hotwire activity in the brain. The idea is that the right kind of lightning strike affects people's brains, accounting for reports of mysterious 'ball lightning'.

Scientists have struggled to explain just how these strange glowing spheres would be generated and sustained: it now appears possible that they aren't, in any physical sense.

Mr Kendl said: 'An observer located within a few hundred metres of a long lightning strike may experience a magnetic phosphene [an artificially induced image in the brain] in the shape of a luminous spot.'

The Austrian research is due to be published in the journal *Physics Letters A*.

## RING, RING - YOU'RE DEAD!

**Like a plot from a Japanese horror movie, news has broken that a certain mobile phone number may be cursed. Bulgarian phone company Mobitel has learnt that everyone issued with the number has died over the last ten years.** [SOURCE: MailOnline, May 26]

The number is 0888 888 888 – and Mobitel say they will never issue the number again.

The first person to be assigned the number was a former CEO of Mobitel, Vladimir Grashnov. Mr Grashnov died of cancer in 2001 aged just 48, while bizarre rumours circulated that his cancer had been caused by a rival company poisoning him with radioactive material.

The number then passed to Konstantin Dimitrov, who was assassinated in 2003 aged 31. He had his phone on him when he was gunned down in a Dutch restaurant. Mind you, Mr Dimitrov was a mafia boss, so assassination attempts could be considered an occupational hazard.

The jinxed number was then assigned to Konstantin Dishliev, who was also shot while eating in a restaurant, this time in 2005 and in the Bulgarian capital Sofia. Mr Dishliev was also a shady character, however, an estate agent who ran a secret cocaine-trafficking operation. He was a clear target for rival drug dealers.



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## GHOSTS

**MIRROR IMAGE:** A couple claimed they took a photograph of "a weeping girl" in the mirror of their hotel room in Watford, Hertfordshire, and then fled from the building in terror. They said: "The girl had curly locks and a check dress, and was crying." After the hotel owners saw the picture they locked the room so that nobody else could stay in there. A guest said: "The couple went to reception and were hysterical. The man said he wanted to get out of the room ASAP. They were upset and said the image of the child was crying and it was moving in the mirror." Investigations by UPIA revealed that the photograph was a hoax manipulated by the iPhone application 'Ghost Capture'. (Source: *The Sun* 6<sup>th</sup> May).

**PARK AFTERLIFE:** Paul Reed was walking his dog Harry through Kelsey Park in Beckenham, Kent, when he saw a ghost behind a park bench. He said: "Harry wasn't his usual self. He was cowering back towards me and I must admit I was shocked when I saw the ghost appear before my eyes. Another walker said the ghost could belong to a woman who was buried in the park in the late 19th century." He describes the apparition as being a "woman dressed in Victorian clothing." Harry the dog would not move from the spot while the phantom was present. A local said a woman who used to walk in the park loved it so much, she was buried there, and could be the phantom that Mr Reed and Harry saw. You can see the pictures at <http://hauntedbritain.blogspot.com> (Source: *The Telegraph*: 14<sup>th</sup> May).

**CCTV SPOOK:** Staff at the New Lanark Mill Hotel in Lanarkshire, Scotland, are convinced they have caught the ghostly resident that has been causing odd disturbances over the years on camera. General Manager John Stirrat said: "We were routinely reviewing CCTV footage taken in the early hours of May 12th in our rear car park, an area that was formerly stables. Between 0130 and 0300 in the morning, we were startled to see, quite clearly, a mysterious ghostly shape in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen which came and went. At one point it disappears through a door, without opening it, and reappears. No staff, guests or members of the public were outside at the time, so it is definitely not human or a trick of the light." (Source: *Scottish Television News* 26<sup>th</sup> May).

**DID YOU SPOOK MY PINT?:** CCTV footage captured a pint of beer being thrown through the air at the New Inn in Gloucestershire. According to the Gloucestershire Active Paranormal Society the premises have been host to several paranormal manifestations over the period of a week. These include "ghostly footsteps, rattling doors, and the spirit of a young girl," who converses with the landlord's daughter. Lyn Cinderey, from GAPS, said: "There were a few people in the bar, and four people saw

this glass - a full pint - just lift up and fall on the floor. The glass didn't even break. The rest of us looked around and heard the thud. We just couldn't believe it." (Source: *BBC* 30<sup>th</sup> May).

**STAGE FRIGHT:** According to recent investigations by the Everything Paranormal of New England group, the Hackmatack Playhouse in Maine, is haunted by a "singing woman, and a very angry Native American." The group's founder, Renee Alling, assured staff and customers that the spirits were not there to harm anyone. Photographs of orbs have been taken and alleged contact with the Native American has taken place via rapping and tapping. (Source: *fosters.com* 10<sup>th</sup> May).

**SPIRIT HAVEN:** The first Christian Church of Rialto, California, built in 1906 is said by some to be a haven for spirits. Parapsychologist Tom Hagman believes the kitchen of the church "is a portal for the ghosts, where they come and go." Among the spirits that allegedly haunt the premises are "a girl with hair down to her shoulder," a man and two women, but no descriptions of them are given; and the ghost of Kiristina Henriksson, who in 1967 at the age of 12 died of leukaemia. The building was named after her. Mr Hagman said: "There is a long-time energetic environment that has been built here from the years and years and years of people praying for souls. So they find their way here." (Source: *CBS2* 15<sup>th</sup> May).

**CABIN FEVER:** In the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia sits the Corbin Cabin, which is reached after a half-mile hike, built in the late 1920s and now said to be haunted by the residents of its former owners. Paranormal investigators recently hired the cottage to record any paranormal activity that they may come across while there. Mrs Corbin died in the cabin during childbirth. Her ghostly tortured screams can be heard after she has been seen walking around the cabin. [Read more about the ghosts of Virginia on page 46]. (Source: *PR.com* 17<sup>th</sup> May).

**HAIR PULLER:** The Palmer House Hotel in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, is according to the owners "the most haunted hotel in the nation." Built in the 1900s, owner Kelley Freese said: "As the first building in Sauk Centre to have electricity, it was a destination for many." Freese believes some of these guests never left. "The activity has really been intense in the kitchen, and there's a man that walks around in the dining room that several of us have seen. You go there only to find nobody's there." Photographs with unidentified entities have been taken and one ghost has the particularly nasty habit of pulling hair. (Source: [www.unexplainedresearch.com](http://www.unexplainedresearch.com) 22<sup>nd</sup> May).

**HOTBED:** What is said to be the ghosts of an elderly man and woman have been seen walking arm in arm along the hallways of the Clay County Courthouse in Liberty Square, Liberty, Missouri. Other strange occurrences have recently been occurring,

such as water taps being turned on, doors opening of their own accord and the sounds of a baby crying. In fact the whole area seems to be a hotbed of paranormal activity with many businesses claiming to have a ghost, according to Beth Meyer, the owner of Ghost Tours of Missouri. (Source: *Liberty Tribune* 28<sup>th</sup> May).



## UFOS

**ALIEN SCARE:** Footage of a UFO hovering over Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire was taken in May and posted on You Tube. It shows the UFO over the Merlin's Cave Pub for several seconds "before being chased away by what looked like two military jets," reports the *Buckinghamshire Advertiser*. The paper recently received more video footage of an alien in a garden shed! Apparently the jets caught the UFO but the alien occupant is on the run in the Chalfont St Giles area. The witness reported seeing the alien to the police, he said: "I have not got a clue what it is but it sure as hell scared the living daylights out of me. I did report it to the authorities, who told me I must have seen a deer." (Source: *Buckinghamshire Advertiser* 13<sup>th</sup> May).

**25 LIGHTS:** A group of Scottish students watched more than 25 orange lights over the town of Foyers for a half hour, the witnesses are adamant that they were not Chinese lanterns. One of the students said: "They came out from behind some trees and went across the sky all equally spaced. It was so systematic. These lights went on for about half an hour. They just appeared one after the other until there were 25 of them all in a straight line. There was no sound and the night was still, there was no wind. At one point, two of them almost collided into each other, but then moved off in separate directions." (Source: *Highland News* 20<sup>th</sup> May).

**WONDERMENT:** Richard Barr filmed "strange lights" over his East Belfast Home on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, and told local papers of his "wonderment" at seeing the objects. He said: "My first impression was that it was a plane on fire and I looked at my mother and she thought the same thing. We went outside and the orange light got smaller and smaller and disappeared. Four others [orange lights] then came across the sky and seemed to form a sort of a pattern. They hovered there for a while and then they disappeared. The third time we saw three triangular lights in the sky and my mother got the camera and recorded them." (Source: *The Belfast Telegraph* 20<sup>th</sup> May).

**SILVER THING:** On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May anglers at Dyffryn Springs saw a silver "thing" zigzagging in the sky near two conventional craft, in the middle of the afternoon. The witness reports: "It then shot off in a straight line faster than anything I have ever seen. It was not a plane as the zigzag was as if it was looking at the planes. I called to my son and mate but they could



not see where I was pointing due to the sun. I don't know what this was but it sure wasn't a plane nothing could fly that fast. I looked up all day and nothing flew that way all flight paths were left to right." One the same evening (Source: [www.uk-ufo.co.uk](http://www.uk-ufo.co.uk) 22<sup>nd</sup> May).

**OVER THE OCEAN:** On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May at 10.30pm a witness saw three reddish lights out at sea while travelling along the sea-front at St Leonards towards Bexhill. He said: "They did not have navigation lights, did not flicker or blink but were steady lights; two were higher in the sky than the third. The right hand top sphere suddenly dashed off to the left and joined with the other top sphere and continued for some time until it zoomed off and disappeared. A few moments later the lower sphere did the same thing. These were definitely not Chinese lanterns as I have seen one of these lights before and it flew right over head and could be seen as a triangle." On the same evening two witnesses saw an orange light flying over Stalybridge, Greater Manchester. One of the witnesses reports: "My husband thought it may have been some sort of UAV checking the ash in the atmosphere as it went across Stalybridge in a straight line but then suddenly vanished." A week later the witnesses saw six of these lights heading in several directions. (Source: [www.uk-ufo.co.uk](http://www.uk-ufo.co.uk) 22<sup>nd</sup> May).

**ORANGE LIGHTS:** Similar lights that "definitely weren't Chinese Lanterns" have been reported by witnesses from as far afield as Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Bude, in Cornwall. (Source: [www.uk-ufo.co.uk](http://www.uk-ufo.co.uk) 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May).

**SHAPE SHIFTER:** On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May a man was checking his barbecue in Salt Lake City, Utah, when he happened to look up into the sky and noticed a large black object. He reports: "At first I thought it was a hang glider because it appeared to be shaped like one, then I thought it was an airplane. It was changing shape as it was slowly flying above my neighbourhood. When it was heading west at an angle I saw wings or spiky points in the back and it was like it was shape shifting." (Source: MUFON 9<sup>th</sup> May).

**SILENT TRIANGLE:** At 10.15pm on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May witnesses in Ohio went outside and saw lights coming towards them in the sky. One said: "I thought it was a plane, but the lights looked weird, so I [used] the binoculars and found ... a triangle-shaped object. It had two blue lights on the back, and one red light in the front. None of the lights were blinking. I watched it as it came closer; it was coming straight towards me. When it was almost on top of me, it made an abrupt 90-degree turn and went flying rapidly in the other direction. I lost it in some trees. It didn't make any noise at all." (Source: Internet mailing list, anonymity required 26<sup>th</sup> May).

**FLARES:** Astronomers and police say flares seen across a 360km-long stretch of the Top End coast of Australia's Northern Territory were probably caused by a meteor shower. But local ufologists claim otherwise. Darwin-based UFO expert Alan Ferguson said: "This all sounds like UFO activity. Meteors usually just flash across the sky

and leave a tail. But UFOs will stay in the same spot and wobble up and down and side to side [with] fast movements. That's how they work." (Source: NT News, May)

**UFO BASE:** Recent sightings in Sierra de Los Padres, Argentina, have led local UFO researchers to believe that there is an alien base in the area of Mar del Plata. George Brown the leader of 'Code UFO Group' has conducted an extensive study of the area, and has recorded objects "that move at the speed of light" taken over 500 photographs and made audio recordings of the crafts leaving their nest." (Source: [popularonline.com](http://popularonline.com) 10<sup>th</sup> May).



## CREATURES

**LEOPARD CHASE:** Two 15 year-old girls claimed that they were chased through the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, by "a big black leopard" in early May. Kim Howells and her cousin Sophie Gwynne were walking through woodland when they saw an animal lying under a tree. Ms Howells said: "I saw something out of the corner of my eye and at first I thought it was a log or something. We carried on walking but then I looked back and it was sitting up looking at me. It was definitely a big cat. Sophie was asking what it was and then we looked behind us and it was about five metres away, following us. I didn't know what to do so we cut through the brambles and just started running." (Source: Daily Mail 20<sup>th</sup> May).

**CAT SNAPS:** There has been a spate of large black cat sightings in the Devilla Forest in Fife, Scotland, recently. Bob Wallace of Big Cats in Britain has set cameras in the area. A ten-year old boy was terrified after seeing "a panther" near a local school in Dunfermline, and police wildlife liaison officers have forwarded several reports from the area. There has also been a trigger camera picture taken of what shows a large black cat with a long sweeping tail in the N East of Scotland in May, by a Big Cats in Britain representative. The location and picture have not yet been released. (Source: Big Cats in Britain June).

**PANTHER ATTACKS:** Loren Coleman reports on his blog Cryptomundo that he was recently contacted by Steven Streufert telling him about a series of Black Panther sightings in Willow Creek, California. Mr Streufert said: "The Dept. of Fish and Game rejected the idea as ludicrous, and assumed it must have been a bear. They say one has to attack before they will take action. But adults and the children have seen them on multiple occasions, both black and normal colorings. It is a bit scary to have cougars lurking on the edge of the playground, but black ones are even stranger." (Source: Loren Coleman at [www.cryptomundo.com](http://www.cryptomundo.com)).

**BIGFOOT PIX:** Chris Bennett, Brandon Lang and John Gray of the Kentucky Bigfoot Research have just released pictures taken recently of what they believe is Bigfoot. Mr Bennett said: "The subject appears to me to be female, however the sex cannot be determined 100% in whole by the picture only so it will probably remain a debate to viewers.

I can judge who is female and who is male because I get to see the creatures up very close at times and they have very different 'features' between the male and female. My thoughts about this one being a female come from the shape of the head, face and oh yes, the breasts." The pictures can be viewed at [www.bfrpky.com](http://www.bfrpky.com) (Source: <http://cryptozoologythetruth.blogspot.com> 20<sup>th</sup> May).

**GATOR SCORES:** In early May authorities in Arlington, Texas, have been searching for a mystery animal believed to be an alligator in a shallow pond in Hamilton's Confederation Park. Students first reported the creature to the local authorities who have so far failed to catch the animal. Mike Bass, assistant director of community services, said the city's efforts have occasionally been hampered by the media and crowds who have gathered for a gator sighting, only to scare it away. "Every time he feels imposed upon, he goes below the water," he said. "These guys can stay under for up to six hours." Reports of an alligator in D.W. Field Park off Oak Street in Brockton, Massachusetts, brought officials to the area in search of the creature. Catherine Williams, a spokesman for the state Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs said: "We haven't confirmed the sighting. We're continuing to look at it and investigate it. Anytime that humans come into contact with wildlife it's important to keep your distance." In 2005 officials captured a 52 inch alligator from near-by Stump Pond in Middleboro. (Sources: Fort Worth Telegram 7<sup>th</sup> May Patriot Ledger 1<sup>st</sup> June).

**FISH ATTACK:** An unknown fish has bitten a child in Hardy Lake, Scottsburg, Indiana, while she was swimming in a roped-off area of the lake. Five-year-old Loralye Daubaugh was bitten on the thigh. She said: "It felt like someone was pinching me." Loralye is now said "to be doing okay" after her injuries. It was later learned that this was not an isolated incident; another child had also been recently bitten, causing severe bruising. Speculation by locals is that it could be "anything from a carp, to a bowfin to a bass, or a giant catfish guarding her nest." (Source: WHAS11 1<sup>st</sup> June).

**REAL MONSTERS:** An 8.2ft long, 250lb catfish has been caught by angler Roberto Godi, on the River Po at Mantova, in northern Italy. Several anglers had to help Roberto land the record fish. Roberto was pleased that the fish was returned unharmed. It beats the previous record by 5lbs. In May a Chinese fisherman caught what he thought was "a cross between a dinosaur and a turtle" in Weishan Lake, in southern China's Anhui province. The creature was later identified as a snapping turtle usually only found in America. (Source: Daily Mail 4<sup>th</sup> June - The Telegraph 24<sup>th</sup> May).

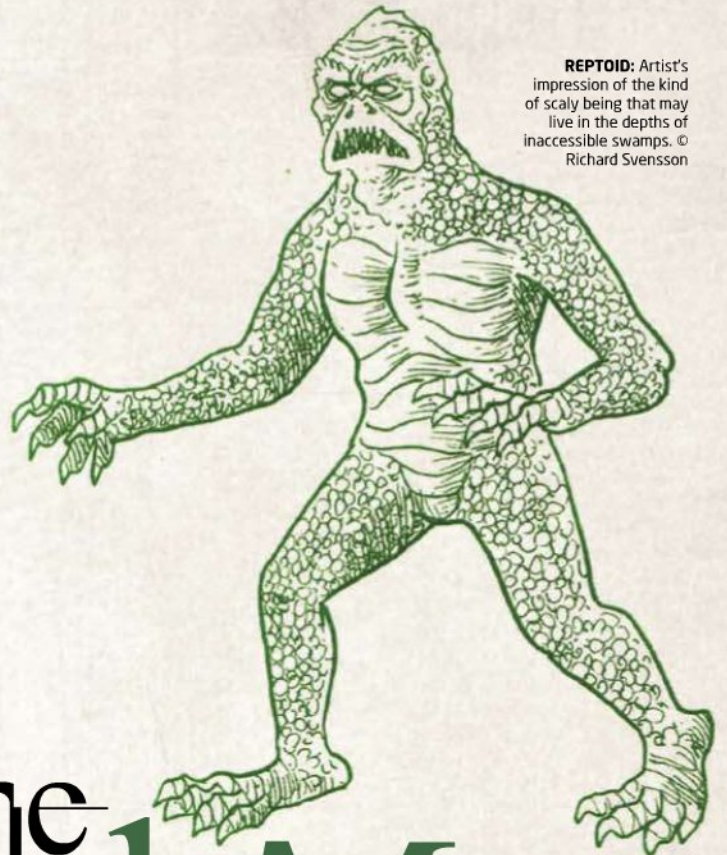
Sightings  
is compiled  
by MARK FRASER  
of the research  
organization  
Big Cats in Britain  
([www.bigcatsinbritain.org](http://www.bigcatsinbritain.org))







**REPTOID:** Artist's impression of the kind of scaly being that may live in the depths of inaccessible swamps. © Richard Svensson



# Lairs of the Lizard-Men

In swampy corners of North America lurk hideous scaly or slimy beings seldom seen but invariably hostile to humans: so the testimony of numerous terrified witnesses would suggest, at least. **KARL SHUKER** dons his waders and goes in search of the 'reptoids'.

**WHEN A SHAKING, PETRIFIED** 17-year-old called Christopher Davis arrived home in a hysterical state with his car's roof bearing several long deep scratches, his father was naturally shocked, but was even more so when his son, after finally calming down sufficiently to speak, told him a truly incredible tale of what he claimed had happened earlier that night.

According to Christopher, at 2 am on June 29, 1988, he had pulled up near Scape Ore Swamp, just outside the South Carolina backwater village of Bishopville in Lee County, in order to change a tyre. But while he was replacing the jack in his car's boot, he saw something very tall, just over 2 m in height, racing towards him at speed across a field. As it drew nearer, Christopher was amazed and horrified to discover it resembled a huge bipedal lizard,

with humanoid form but covered in green wet scaly skin, sporting just three fingers on each hand and three toes on each foot, every one tipped with a 10cm-long black claw, and glaring at him with slanted glowing red eyes!

Terrified, Christopher jumped into his car, but as he tried to slam the door, the creature – soon to be dubbed Lizard Man by the media – grabbed its mirror in an attempt to wrench the door open. As Christopher accelerated and drove off, his saurian attacker hurled itself onto the roof of the car, clinging on as the panic-stricken teenager drove madly through the swamplands, swerving wildly at speeds of up to 65 km/hr in a desperate attempt to dislodge it. Happily for him, however, the creature quite literally outreached itself when it stretched its arm down to

**Left WHO KNOWS?:** Are we sharing our planet with reptilian humanoids? This creature is a Silurian, an intelligent survivor of the dinosaur age, which featured in a recent *Doctor Who* adventure, *The Hungry Earth*, written by Chris Chibnall (in fact, they were created by writer Malcolm Hulke and were first tackled by the Doctor back in 1970). © BBC / Adrian Rogers





**MOVIE MONSTER:** The archetypal reptoid is the Gill Man from Jack Arnold's 1954 film *Creature From the Black Lagoon*. The iconic make-up was by Jack Pierce.

therefore, especially after certain later reports were exposed as definite hoaxes, Lizard Man faded from the headlines and into local folklore, but remains one of the most bizarre unidentified entities ever documented – a thoroughly surreal mystery that today is still resolutely unresolved.

**THE REAL CREATURES FROM THE BLACK LAGOON?**

One of the most famous of all movie monsters is the scaly amphibious entity that appears in the cult American sci-fi/horror flick *The Creature From the Black Lagoon*, which was originally released in 1954 and went on to spawn two sequels. Its eponymous Gill Man with a penchant for abducting buxom brunettes was thankfully confined to the swamplands of the silver screen, but there are a number of modern-day claims on file concerning real-life encounters with mysterious amphibious beings that bear much more than a passing (not to mention alarming) resemblance to it.

Undoubtedly, the most frightening of these took place on the evening of November 8, 1958, and featured Charles Wetzel, who was driving his Buick along the road bordering the Santa Ana River near Riverside, California, when someone – or something – suddenly leapt in front of his car and stood there, staring directly at him. Wetzel was astonished and terrified – for good reason.

According to his subsequent testimony to the police and other investigators, the entity was bipedal and at least 2m tall, sported a round pumpkin-like head lacking a nose and ears but possessing a projecting beak-like mouth and a pair of bright fluorescent eyes. It waved its extremely long arms so animatedly that its entire body rocked from side to side, and stood on a pair of legs that splayed out from the sides of its torso like those of a reptile (rather than emerging from beneath its torso like a human's do), and was covered in leaf-like scales.

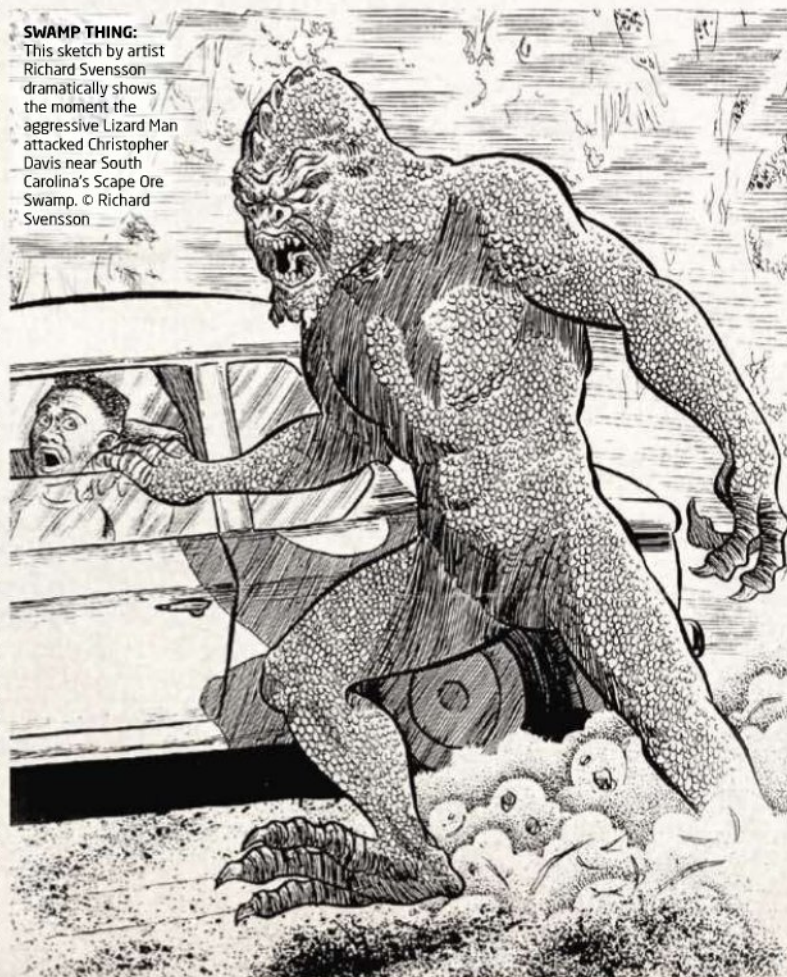
And as if this vision of horror was not enough, the reptoid then

'The reptoid emitted a high-pitched gurgling scream, clawing madly at the windscreen as it strove to reach Wetzel.'

grab at the windscreen, because it lost its grip on the roof and fell off the car, to be left far behind as Christopher sped on to his home.

When the story broke, Lee County's sheriff, Liston Truesdale, interviewed Christopher and also researched his background history, subsequently confirming that he accepted his story and had found him to be a very clean-living boy never linked to drugs or drinking. Moreover, in the weeks that followed, many other sightings of Lizard Man were reported in the same area, and by people again claimed by Truesdale to be of reputable status.

Nevertheless, apart from some very large three-toed footprints of dubious origin turning up in the swamp and soon dismissed by police, no physical evidence for Lizard Man's existence was forthcoming. Eventually,



**SWAMP THING:** This sketch by artist Richard Svensson dramatically shows the moment the aggressive Lizard Man attacked Christopher Davis near South Carolina's Scape Ore Swamp. © Richard Svensson



**WILDERNESS:** The wood-bound waters of Thetis Lake in British Columbia, scene of a famous monster encounter.



**MONSTROUS FIB?:** The Thetis Lake encounter is a classic of reptoid lore but considerable doubt has been passed on it in recent years. © Richard Svensson



opened its beak, emitted a high-pitched gurgling scream, and raced directly towards Wetzel's car, its long arms reaching across the bonnet and clawing madly at the windscreen as it violently strove to reach Wetzel. The petrified driver was armed with a rifle but did not dare to shoot at the creature because the bullets would have destroyed the windscreen – the only barrier separating him from his frenzied saurian aggressor. Instead, he swiftly accelerated his car and ran the reptoid down, feeling its substantial body scraping the undercarriage as he drove over it and away with all speed.

Laboratory tests later confirmed that something had indeed scraped off the grease from the undercarriage of Wetzel's car, and several very prominent claw-marks sweeping across the windscreen were readily visible. Although a police search armed with bloodhounds failed to locate the monster's body, Wetzel never recanted or changed his story.

Almost 20 years later, in 1977, Alfred Hulstruck, a highly respected New York State Conservation naturalist, made a startling announcement concerning a hitherto unreported reptoid from the Southern Tier region of New York State, stating: 'A scaled, man-like creature... appears at dusk from the red, algae-ridden waters to forage among the fern and moss-covered uplands.'

Outside North America, humanoid lizard-men have been

'A humanoid form covered in green wet scaly skin, sporting just three fingers on each hand each tipped with a long black claw.'

reported as recently as 2003 from Italy's River Po and River Pijava, with plaster casts of their alleged hand and footprints having been made by chemist Sebastiano di Djenaro. Similar entities have also been reported from large ponds or lakes in Poland.

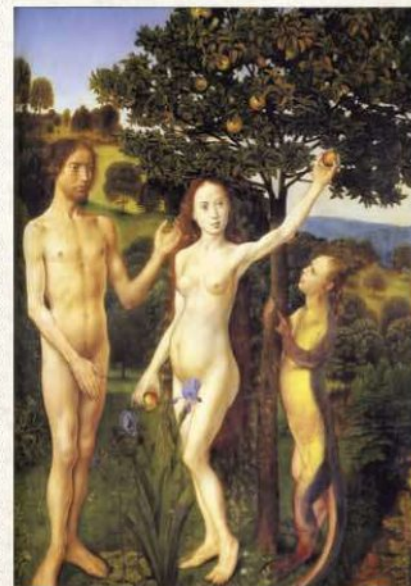
#### THETIS LAKE - THE TRUTH AT LAST?

The most famous case featuring a Creature of the Black Lagoon lookalike has recently become the most infamous, due to a shocking yet surprisingly little-publicised revelation. It all began on August 19, 1972, at Thetis Lake, near Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, Canada. This is where two teenagers, Gordon Pile and Robin Flewellyn, claimed to have seen emerging from the lake a bipedal creature covered in silver scales and bearing six razor-sharp spines comprising a central longitudinal ridge running along the top of its head. Upon seeing the youths, the reptoid lost no time in chasing after them, approaching so closely that it supposedly cut the hand of one of the youths with one of the spines on its head.

Four days later, during the afternoon of 23 August, a similar scenario was reported from the

opposite shore of the same lake by two more teenagers, Russell Van Nice and Michael Gold, who watched the reptoid emerge and then re-enter the water a short time later. Afterwards, they provided a detailed description of it, which corroborated and added to that of the previous youths.

Using this description, a sketch published the following day by a local newspaper depicted the scaly entity with a powerful muscular chest, two three-pronged flippers



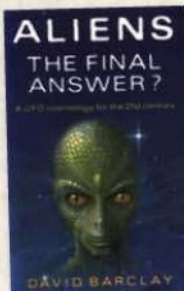
#### ADAM AND EVE AND THE REPTOID

Reptoids may feature much further back in humanity's history than is readily recognised – back as far, in fact, as Adam and Eve! According to the Holy Bible, after the serpent had tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, it was cursed by God to crawl on its belly in the dust forever more, just as all snakes do today. This clearly implies that before it was cursed, the serpent must have been very different in form. And sure enough, according to a Jewish religious text called the Haggadah:

...he [the pre-cursed serpent] had the most excellent qualities, in some of which he resembled man. Like man, he stood upright on two feet, and in height he was equal to the camel!

Several Old Masters portrayed the serpent in its original, pre-cursed form alongside Adam and Eve as a bipedal entity with scales and sometimes a long tail but otherwise very humanoid in form. Perhaps the most famous of these paintings (reproduced here) is 'The Fall of Adam and Eve' by Hugo van der Goes, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish artist, who portrayed the pre-cursed serpent as a human-headed, web-footed lizard – a veritable reptoid, in fact!





**ARE REPTOIDS MODERN-DAY DINOSAURS?**

If the dinosaurs had not become extinct during the late Cretaceous Period 65 million years ago but had survived right into the present day, how would 65 million years of continuing evolution have transformed them, morphologically speaking?

One popular school of speculation (as espoused, for instance in David Barclay's controversial 1995 book, *Aliens: The Final Answer?*) is that at least one dinosaurian line may have paralleled human evolution, ultimately yielding scaly but highly intelligent bipedal reptiles, which if descended from a carnivorous lineage of dinosaurs would also be highly aggressive.

In other words, the outcome would be entities bearing a scarily close resemblance to descriptions of modern-day reptoids. Just a coincidence?

for feet, clawed humanoid hands, six spines on top of its head, a huge pair of pointed ears, a very large pair of flat fish-like eyes, and an equally fishy mouth.

Apart from a bizarre attempt by the area's police to 'identify' this entity as nothing more startling than an escaped 1m-long South American tegu lizard – a species notable for NOT walking bipedally, for NOT possessing ears, a spiny crest on its head, or flippers for feet, but for possessing a striped body and a very long tail (features conspicuous only by their absence from the eyewitness accounts of the Thetis Lake reptoid!) – nothing more was seen or heard of this lake-dwelling nightmare... until last year, that is.

In 2009 Canadian writer-illustrator Daniel Loxton, who edits the *Junior Skeptic* insert section of the highly-acclaimed quarterly science-education magazine *Skeptic*, decided to reopen this mystifying case. What spurred him on was his discovery that the very weekend before the first alleged reptoid sighting at Thetis Lake back in August 1972, *Monster From the Surf* [also known as *Beach Girls and the Monster*], a low-budget 1960s sci-fi film featuring a scaly Creature From the Black Lagoon-type of monster, had been screened not once but twice on local television in this same area of British Columbia. Furthermore, the monster in it perfectly matched the descriptions of the Thetis Lake creature that had been given by the teenagers claiming to have encountered it.

Determined by now to solve this case once and for all, Loxton succeeded in contacting one of the original eyewitnesses, Russell Van Nice (the first time any investigator had done this), who swiftly confessed that their story was a hoax, that they had indeed



**FROG MAN:** A policeman encountered a grotesque being with a frog-like face at Loveland, Ohio. As he approached it, it clambered over a roadside barrier and vanished into the dark. © Richard Svensson

watched the film on television and had then simply pretended to have seen its monster in real life. True, the testimony of the earlier pair of teenagers has not been exposed as a hoax, but as their description of the Thetis Lake reptoid also corresponds perfectly with that of the monster in the film, it is evident that this case can no longer be taken seriously.

Yet even without the backing of its most widely-publicised case, the mystery of amphibious reptoids reported across North America remains – thanks not only to those

other cases documented here but also to a number of additional ones on file. Prominent among these is an extraordinary case reported from Loveland, Ohio.

**HAS THE FROG-MAN OF LOVELAND HOPPED OFF?**

Bearing in mind that its two separate eyewitnesses were both police officers, the so-called Loveland frog-man has attracted more than a little curiosity down through the years. At 1 am on March 3, 1972, as policeman Ray Schocke drove along Riverside

'He initially thought it was a dog - until the creature stood up on its hind legs, revealing itself to be a grotesque entity with leathery skin and a frog-like face.'



**BIG MISTAKE:** One early 'explanation' of the Thetis Lake monster was that it had been a tegu lizard – even though this animal bears scant relation to the teenagers' description.



Road towards the Ohio town of Loveland, his car's headlights illuminated what he initially thought was a dog - until the creature stood up on its hind legs, revealing itself to be a grotesque 1-m-tall entity with textured leathery skin, a frog-like or lizard-like face, and weighing about 27 kg.

After briefly staring at him, the creature leapt away over a guard rail, and moved down an embankment into the Little Miami River. As soon as Schocke reached his station and revealed what he had encountered, fellow officer Mark Matthews drove back with him to look for evidence, but all that they found were some scrape marks leading to the river.

On or around March 17, however, while driving alongside this same river just outside Loveland, Matthews himself saw something. Lying on the road ahead was what seemed to be a dead animal, but when Matthews got out of his car to pick it up and put it in the boot, the 'carcase'



**HIGHLY EVOLVED:** If the reptoids exist they may be descendants of the dinosaurs, which have evolved along similar lines to mankind. This life-size figure is based on research theorising how, if the dinosaurs had not become extinct, an intelligent saurian might have developed. © Mark North

'Suggestions (include) evolved dinosaurian descendants, or reclusive life-forms perhaps allied to the equally elusive merfolk and possibly even the bloodthirsty chupacabra.'

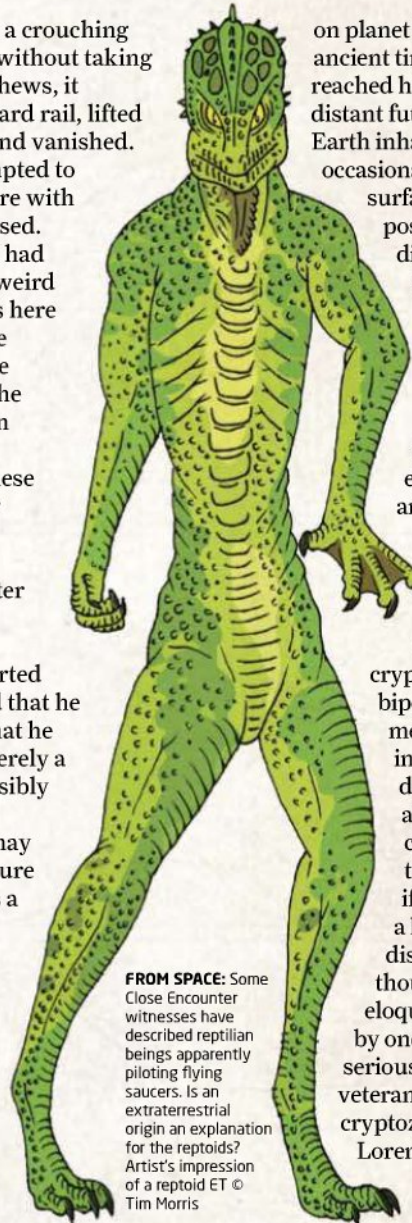
raised itself into a crouching position. Then, without taking its eyes off Matthews, it moved to the guard rail, lifted its legs over it, and vanished. Matthews attempted to shoot the creature with his gun, but missed.

Because there had been reports of weird frog-like entities here in the past, some researchers have suggested that the officers had been subconsciously influenced by these when observing whatever it was that they had seen. Also, in later years Matthews claimed that the media had distorted his account, and that he felt sure that what he had seen was merely a large lizard, possibly an escaped pet.

Of course, it may be that the creature he had seen was a totally different one from the entity spied by Schocke. In any event, nothing resembling a frog-man has been reported here in recent years, so whether it really was just a case of mistaken identity after all, or, alternatively, Loveland's most mystifying visitor has simply hopped off to somewhere else, is still unknown.

**A REPTILIAN RIDDLE**

Suggestions as to what these reptoids might be are as varied and certainly as exotic as the entities themselves - everything, in fact, from extraterrestrial or interdimensional reptilians that have either been secretly residing



**FROM SPACE:** Some Close Encounter witnesses have described reptilian beings apparently piloting flying saucers. Is an extraterrestrial origin an explanation for the reptoids? Artist's impression of a reptoid ET © Tim Morris

on planet Earth since ancient times or have reached here from the far-distant future, or Hollow Earth inhabitants that occasionally come to the surface, to evolved post-Cretaceous dinosaurian descendants, or reclusive native life-forms of undetermined taxonomic status but perhaps allied to the equally elusive merfolk and possibly even the bloodthirsty chupacabra.

Far beyond the fringes of accepted cryptozoology, these bipedal reptile-men remain an inscrutable enigma, defying all attempts at explanation or classification. Yet their very existence, if genuine, remains a highly disturbing, disconcerting thought - as eloquently summarised by one of their few serious investigators, veteran American cryptozoologist Loren Coleman:

'Are these beasts future time travellers lost in some time/space

warp? Or infrequent visitors? Or do you feel more comfortable with the idea there is a breeding population of scaly, manlike, upright creatures lingering along the edges of some of America's swamps? Something is out there. That's for sure.'

Amen to that - but just what is that something, and is there anyone brave, or foolish, enough to go out there and find out? That, perhaps, is the biggest unanswered question of all! ❁



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



# Gloom town

**ANDREW HIND** and **MARIA Da SILVA** visit the former mining town of Cobalt, in Canada, formerly the richest producer of silver ore in the British Empire. They too were able to mine a rich seam - or should that be scream? - of ghost stories. The photographs are copyright the authors.

**HISTORY IS EVERYWHERE IN** Cobalt, a small one-time silver boom town in northern Ontario, Canada. It's in the head frames that rise up from the rock like silent sentinels. It's in the gaping adits and dark depths of mine shafts, from which so much valuable silver was extracted in years long past.



If countless stories are to be believed, history also lives in the form of ethereal spirits and other mysterious monsters which lurk among the shadows of this hauntingly beautiful landscape. Cobalt has recently been named the most historic town in Ontario. Some would argue it may also deserve a nomination for most haunted.

Dan Larocque is among them. Dan serves on the board of the Cobalt Mining Museum and operates Rockhound Adventures. A font of knowledge about local history, his mind is full of facts, not flights of fancy. And yet, he's certain that Cobalt is richly haunted.

'Go up to the Nipissing Mine site as night begins to fall and look out over the town,' he says somberly. 'There's something creepy about

it, an otherworldly presence tied to the town's tragic history.'

That history began in 1903 when the discovery of rich veins of silver led to a Klondike-like rush that saw wilderness give way to a Wild West boomtown overnight. Fortunes were made here, and from 1904 to 1920 Cobalt was the richest silver producer in the British Empire. That's the glittery side of the story. Dig a little deeper, delve into the dark recesses of the past, and another image emerges. It's an image of fire wiping out rough-hewn shanty streets, cholera killing hundreds due to poor sanitation, and of almost countless deaths and debilitating injuries in the choking dust of unsafe mines.

After the mines dried up Cobalt atrophied, but did not die. Neither

**CREEPY COBALT:** The former silver mining town in Ontario, Canada, as it is today and as it was in its heyday of production.





did the spirits of the past move on; instead, many linger amidst the haunting head frames, the darkened mines, and the weathered boom-town era buildings.

#### RIGHT OF WAY MINE

The rust-streaked head frame of the Right of Way Mines rises from the rock like a ghostly headstone to a dead industry. It's a local landmark and a tourist attraction, through which local historian and rock-hound Dan Larocque occasionally leads tours. The Right of Way Mine is also frightfully haunted. Dan will personally vouch for it.

'During the winter my nephew and I came to the head frame to shovel snow for a tour bus that was due by later that day,' Dan explains, relating one of several unsettling experiences at the mine.

'My nephew wanted to see inside the building, so I took him in for a look around. When we got to the top floor, something started banging on the roof so loud dust and loose nails began falling down on us like rain. I looked out the window to see if anyone was out there, maybe throwing rocks, but there was no one.'

'Suddenly, big, heavy chains that descend down the shaft started rattling and swinging back and forth. These chains are thick and really

heavy – they lifted cages capable of holding over a ton of weight – so you could imagine how hard it would be to cause these chains to rattle.

'Then a warm, thick cloud of steam or fog started rising out of the hole leading to the mines below. It swirled around in front of us and then, just as suddenly, it seemed to get sucked back into the shaft and was gone. Poof, just like that, it disappeared.'

Dan believes the explanation for what happened that day lies within the Right of Way Mine's troubled history. During its 50 years of operation, 27 men died in the mines. Most of the bodies were unrecoverable because of cave-ins and flooding, the tunnels becoming their subterranean crypts.

Is it any wonder then that many people who visit the head frame note that it radiates an unnatural eeriness and an undefined sense of loss and sadness? Many people who take pictures here find strange things when they later review the photos later – ethereal orbs, swirling misty shapes, dark shadows where none should exist.

At the Right of Way Head Frame, it seems the unnatural is the norm. It's a place where the weight of the dead miners is heavy in the air, almost tangible in its intensity.



**GHOST GUIDE:**  
Dan Larocque runs Rockhound Adventures which takes visitors on tours of the mines. His experiences have led him to be convinced that Cobalt is a remarkably haunted town.

"AS NIGHT BEGINS TO FALL, LOOK OUT OVER THE TOWN. THERE'S SOMETHING CREEPY ABOUT IT, AN OTHERWORLDLY PRESENCE TIED TO THE TOWN'S TRAGIC HISTORY."

#### COLONIAL MINE

One of the highlights of any trip to the community is a guided underground tour of the Colonial Mine, arranged at the Cobalt Mining Museum. Here, you grope your way through absolute darkness, guided only by the narrow beam of a flashlight, ☉





'LISTEN CAREFULLY AND YOU MAY HEAR LONELY SOUNDS OF HAMMERING DRIFTING UP FROM THE DARK, EMPTY TUNNELS.'

watched from above by the occasional roosting bats, as you experience first-hand how miners worked... and all-too frequently died.

Listen carefully and you may hear lonely sounds of hammering drifting up from the dark, empty tunnels that have long been played out and abandoned. It's said that these are the work of tommy-knockers, spirits of wicked or selfish miners who lurk within the all-encompassing shadows, endlessly toiling in an effort to recapture a sense of their former lives. Miners believed that to hear the knocking was a portent of death.

A disturbing account tells of a tour participant who kept hearing low, whispered voices coming from the darkness behind the group. It happened repeatedly. He alone heard them, unintelligible cries that seemed to come from a far way off, deep in the tunnels. Once, when he quickly turned his flashlight toward the sound, he was sure he saw a fleeting glimpse of a dark mass standing motionlessly in the middle of the tunnel.

Could it have been a trick of the light or an imagination gone wild? Possibly. Or could it have been a tommy-knocker, the ghost



**UP FROM THE DEPTHS:** At the Right of Way mine Dan Larocque and his nephew had an alarming experience.

of a long-dead miner haunting the mines where he gave his life in the vain pursuit of riches?

#### SILVERLAND MOTEL

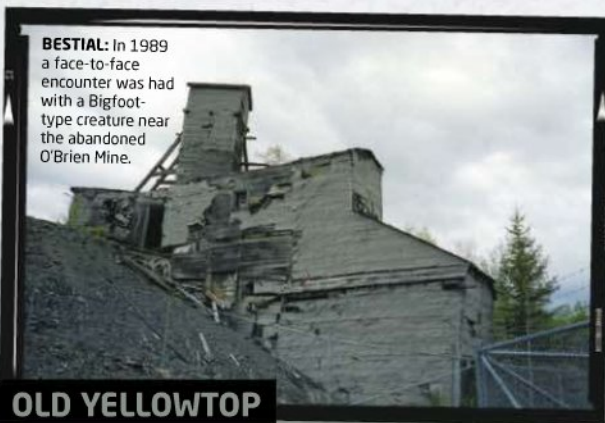
The Silverland Motel stands in the middle of Cobalt, situated along a street that a century ago was humming with excitement and enterprise, but which today is so quiet it seems as though an almost deathly hush hangs over it. The Silverland Motel is a great place to get a peaceful sleep, as long as you don't mind sharing your accommodation with a ghost.

The Silverland Motel began its existence not as a place of hospitality, but rather as a bank. In 1907, the Bank of Ottawa opened a branch on this site in a wood-frame building. On August 9, 1913, a fire destroyed the neighboring Prospect Hotel and spread to the bank, gutting its interior so thoroughly that when the

smoke cleared and the ashes cooled, all that remained was the vault. A new, brick bank – what is today the Silverland Motel – was built around the vault and so stoutly constructed it survived several subsequent fires that razed much of Cobalt's historic neighbourhoods.

Much of the building's original character has been retained, the century-old vault included. Perhaps that's why the resident ghost, whom the owners affectionately call 'Hermie' and which many believe to be a former bank employee, remains behind? Rumours suggest the spirit may be that of a teller or manager who died in the 1913 blaze, but we haven't had the time to dig into records to determine whether there is any truth to this.

As the owners will freely explain, 'Hermie' is friendly but mischievous and has the run of the building. Only rarely seen, he most often resorts



**BESTIAL:** In 1989 a face-to-face encounter was had with a Bigfoot-type creature near the abandoned O'Brien Mine.

#### OLD YELLOWTOP

Not all of the creepy residents of Cobalt are restless dead. An elusive beast known as Old Yellowtop, the region's version of Bigfoot, has been seen by reputable witnesses many times over the past century. Several detailed reports even date to decades before the Bigfoot craze began in the 1950s.

The first recorded incident dates back to September of 1906 when a crew constructing the head frame of the Violet Mine saw an ape-like being emerge from the forest. The anxious men, who were all certain it was not a bear, watched the creature for several long minutes until its shape blended with the trees. The men were shaken by the experience.

Countless other sightings occurred over the ensuing century, and yet still some doubters insist on labeling the Bigfoot a myth. Emile, however, knows better. An elderly gentleman who has spent all of his life as a prospector and miner in the

rugged wilds of northern Ontario, Emile has a rich vein of wilderness experiences to draw upon. But no life lesson could have prepared him for what he saw near the abandoned O'Brien Mine site back in the autumn of 1989. His face, as craggy as the landscape he prospects, is dead-pan serious as he recounts the tale.

'I saw this creature running on two legs across a clearing. Its fur was the colour of a bear, but no bear can move like that. I could see it in the bush, watching me, and it made a sound like an owl – woot, woot. We watched each other for what seemed like a few minutes, and then it turned and disappeared.'

It's might sound like a far-fetched story, but when we part ways Emile's handshake is firm enough to squeeze ore from a rock and leaves no doubt in our minds he saw exactly what he described. There's something in the woods around Cobalt, of that he is certain.





**WHO'S THAT KNOCKING?:** In the depths of the Colonial Mine Tommy-Knockers have been heard, echoes of long-dead miners.



for townsfolk. They were an accepted part of the community and provided a valuable service, so the residents were stunned to hear that one night the entire family suddenly vanished without a trace. The mystery deepened when it was discovered they had left food on the table, the lamps on in their shanty and all their worldly possessions still perfectly in place.

Some speculated they were victims of murder and that their bodies were disposed of by being thrown into an unused mine shaft. What was the motive? A popular theory at the time was that they had somehow crossed a Triad gang and had been killed as punishment. The only thing certain is that whatever their fate, it must have been tragic enough for the entire family to return as ethereal figures floating silently down the streets at night.

Perhaps they are trying to lead us to the answer that would lay the mystery and their spirits to rest once and for all? ☉

**"THE LEAD GUY LOOKED UP AND THERE WAS SOMETHING FLOATING TOWARDS HIM. IT GRABBED HIM BY THE THROAT AND STARTED CHOKING HIM."**

to playing pranks - moving items, nudging people awake, walking across the floor in the middle of the night. Dare you spend the night?

**FRASER HOUSE**

The foreboding Fraser House, built in 1909, was once one of Cobalt's most impressive buildings. Originally a stock exchange (oddly enough with a munitions factory in the basement), it later became a hotel and then, as the town's fortunes flagged, a seedy tavern and hostelry. It currently lies abandoned and empty, and a malicious poltergeist lurking within apparently likes it this way.

A brutal drunk named Hermiston, who under the influence hurled insult and abuse upon anyone in his presence, died in the Fraser House during the 1970s. He stumbled up the stairs in a drunken stupour and suffered a heart attack outside his room on the third floor. His body lay there until found more than a day later. It's believed Hermiston's ghost haunts the building, stalking unwary intruders and on at least one occasion physically attacking a human being.

'The attack came in the autumn of 2008 while a crew of workers was in here cleaning out debris,' Dan Larocque relates as he leads us through the cavernous halls. 'As they were moving their equipment to the next floor, the men felt a cold draft coming down the stairs. The lead guy looked up and there was something floating towards him.

It grabbed him by the throat and started choking him.

'The other guys tried to help him. Whatever it was let go, went shooting back up the stairs, then down the main hall growling and slamming doors and blowing sheets off beds before vanishing. These are big guys not really afraid of anything, but they were pretty freaked out when they came running out of there. The guy that was attacked had visible hand marks on his neck.'

Current plans call for the Fraser House to be renovated in coming years and become a culinary school, subsidised housing and a new museum. One wonders what Hermiston will think of his solitude being intruded upon?

**CHINESE LAUNDRYMEN**

One of Cobalt's greatest unsolved mysteries continues to haunt the community - literally, if reports are to be believed - to this very day. Mining camps were surprisingly multicultural, with countless nationalities represented. Cobalt was no different, and in addition to countless British, French, Finnish and Italian residents, one could also find a small number of Chinese immigrants.

One family fresh from Asia made their living doing laundry



**Andrew Hind and Maria Da Silva** are freelance writers from Bradford, Ontario, with a special interest in history and the paranormal. In addition to writing for a number of periodicals, they are the authors of seven books, including *Ghost Towns of Muskoka* (Dundurn), *Ghosts of Niagara-on-the-Lake* (Dundurn), and the forthcoming *Cottage Country Ghosts* (Ghost House Books).



**HORROR HOTEL:** The decaying Fraser House Hotel is one of the most haunted locations in Cobalt. It is believed that the malevolent spirit of a man named Hermiston possesses the place, terrifying people who venture in.





**CANNIBAL GOD:** 'Saturn Devouring His Children' by Francisco Goya.



*Men will make arrows of copper  
Men will crave blood for bread*  
(The prophecies of Neferti)



# Food of the gods: Human blood

Egyptologist **Dr BRIDGET McDERMOTT** examines the age-old practice of human sacrifice and blood-letting to appease divine and devilish forces.

**BLOOD-LETTING HAS BEEN** irrevocably associated with religious and erotic imagery. The act has a strong emotional resonance that is linked to important cultural and social ties. Blood, and its intense, vibrant colour, creates a stain that is both shocking and immovable – it is a symbol of permanence and suffering. It has therefore been used in contract-making since the beginning of time. Blood is seen as a symbol of family, racial purity and female fertility.

Most importantly, in the ancient world, it was viewed as a cosmic food. Here, human sacrifice is regarded as the theft of the divine life-force, for blood is created by, and therefore the possession, of the gods. It is a sacred fountain that binds us to the divine – indeed, the word ‘sacrifice’ means ‘sacred’, and in this way the elixir of blood has connected us with the gods from the beginning of time.

Themes of blood sacrifice or cannibalism are often associated with the ancient world. Although we imagine such urges are primitive and archaic, we should look more closely at our own society. Flesh-consuming werewolves and blood-drinking vampires have never been more popular and our passion for this richly visceral subject is very much alive. Even in modern times, the cutting of the flesh still produces feelings of sexual and religious ecstasy.

Christian theology has placed enormous emphasis on the power of symbolic wounds. Tears of blood and stigmata are both striking images of religious devotion.

The eating of Christ’s body and the drinking of his blood are an important element of the Catholic mass. In medieval England, love, drunkenness and ecstasy were strong Christian themes; popular images of saints include those who filled their chalices with blood from the dying body of Christ.

Images of blood-drinking and flesh-eating stretch further back. We find it flourishing in the myths of the ancient Greeks, who celebrated the mystery cults of Dionysus by amalgamating blood sacrifice and flesh-ripping with wine, sex and regeneration. Clearly, our strange relationship with these cosmic foods is deeply imbued in the psyche and the subject was as popular in ancient times as it is today.

We can trace the symbiotic relationship between blood, flesh and religious ecstasy to an even older period. The ancient Egyptians hid things well, concealing their ‘dark side’ behind imagery that is predominantly aesthetic. Although we are thrilled and moved by the charm and beauty of ancient Egyptian art, we are in fact, seeing only what the Egyptians wanted us to see. They were the original inventors of public relations and were reluctant to invoke themes of death, dismemberment and violence. However, the reality of everyday life in ancient Egypt was very different from the scenes we find in their public monuments and private tombs.

The Egyptian world was subject to environmental disorder, illness and violent death. In ancient Egypt, when one created an image, one

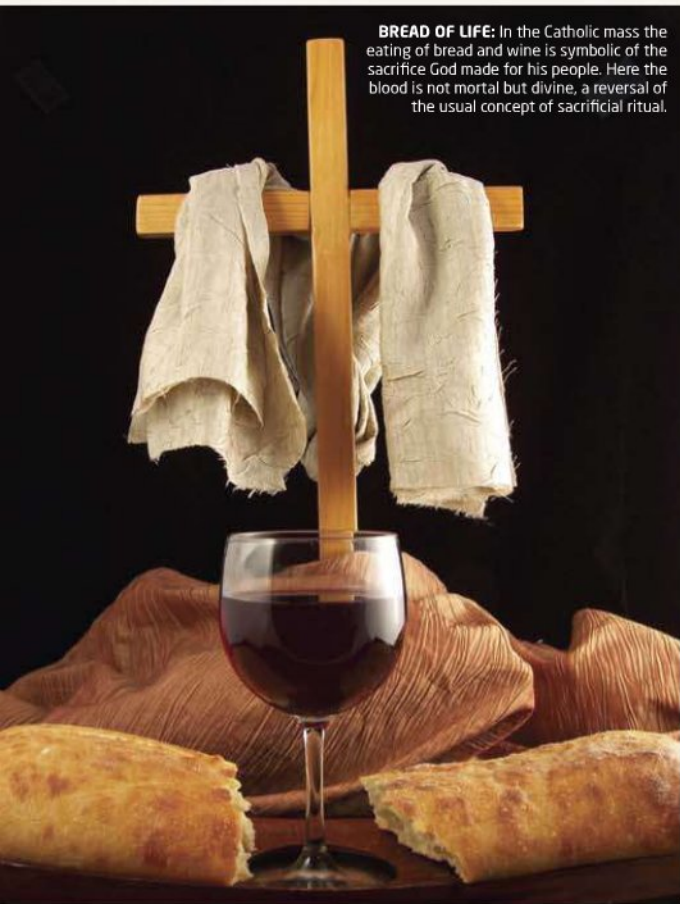


**HUMAN SACRIFICE:** Many cultures in history have seen the offering up of a human life as a sacred act. The Meso-American Aztecs are among the best-known ancient culture which routinely practiced human sacrifice.



**BLOOD-LETTING:** The spilling of blood and the slaughtering of livestock has been part of religious belief for millennia, as this mosaic from Classical times demonstrates.





**BREAD OF LIFE:** In the Catholic mass the eating of bread and wine is symbolic of the sacrifice God made for his people. Here the blood is not mortal but divine, a reversal of the usual concept of sacrificial ritual.

could activate that icon through magic. For this reason, the Egyptians portrayed youth, health and vitality on the walls of Egyptian tombs and temples. We rarely see age, sickness or deformity and because of this, we often fail to recognise the gritty, primitive and violent elements that lie at the heart of Egyptian society and its rituals.

Human sacrifice was practiced from the earliest period. Small funerary labels, which resemble stone beads, are decorated with violent images of ceremonial murder. Often, we are presented with a kneeling man who is shown bound at the ankles and wrists. His throat is about to be cut, probably by a priest or holy man, and the blood is collected in a bowl that is held beneath the head of the dying figure. Human sacrifice can also be determined in early royal burials where large groups of animals, women and retainers were buried with the dead king. We do not know if these people were buried alive or if they were forced to take poison.

Even at this early stage in their history, the Egyptians placed great importance on the treatment of the body; in death, the knitting together of bones and flesh was regarded as

## 'Human sacrifice was practiced from the earliest period. Small funerary labels, which resemble stone beads, are decorated with violent images of ceremonial murder.'

ritually important. However, recent research has shown that some individuals were decapitated, after having had their throats cut. Other cadavers show signs of butchering. The practice of cannibalism – often associated with the early formation of city states – could have been common during these archaic times.

However, physical evidence of human sacrifice is rare. Some believe that the mummy of a particular individual, often described as 'the screaming man' was the victim of a sacrificial rite. The contorted features of the mummy suggest an agonising death; furthermore the body itself was wrapped in a sheepskin, a substance that was abhorrent to the ancient Egyptians.

The subject of flesh-eating and blood-drinking is an important theme in the texts inscribed in the first pyramids:

"The king is he who eats men and lives on gods  
 Lord of messengers who sends the word  
 Grasper of the top knot, Kehau, lassoes them for the king  
 The snake "Raised Head" guards and restrains them  
 "He who is upon the willows" bind them for him  
 The slayer of the lord cuts their throats for the king  
 And will extract for him what is in their bodies.  
 For he is the messenger whom

the king sends to restrain  
 It is Shezmu who cuts them up for the king  
 He cooks them in his dinner pots  
 The king eats their magic, gulps down their spirits ...  
 Those who are in the sky serve the king  
 And the butchers' blocks are wiped clean for him  
 With the feet of the women.'

Cannibalism is recognized but rarely documented in ancient Egypt. Some historians, both ancient and modern, believed that during times of famine, when the river failed to flood, the Egyptians were forced to eat the dead, the living and even their own children.

The ancient Egyptians had a very realistic grasp on death. They were familiar with the horrors of decay and mutilation: human flesh was vulnerable, animal attacks were common and many people were eaten by crocodiles or hippopotami. Human remains were affected by the heat and had to be buried quickly. Therefore, in order to enable the survival of the spirit in the afterlife, they sought elaborate ways to preserve the human body.

The mummification process was an expensive, time-consuming practice, and here the removal of organs and cleansing of blood was a holy act which required ritual observations and the chanting of spells. The first cut of the body



**THE SCREAMING MAN:** The mysterious Ancient Egyptian mummy of 'Unknown Man E' was the subject of a recent National Geographic Channel documentary. Was he the victim of human sacrificial ritual during the reign of the Rameses dynasty?



**WARRIOR KING:** On the left-hand side of the entrance way into the former palace of Rameses III can be seen a typical smiting scene, in which the Pharaoh grabs the hair of captured enemies and prepares to smash their skulls.



was seen as a desecration and it was performed by a scapegoat who would cut the first wound in the abdomen of the deceased. Afterwards he would be stoned or chased from the mortuary. He was seen as ritually unclean. After mummification the body was placed in a coffin known as a sarcophagus – which means ‘flesh eater’.

As the city states began to develop, the mass killing of royal women and subordinates ceased. During this time, executions continued but the practice was also frowned upon. In one famous story, called *The Tales of Wonder*, the magician Djedi is called to the palace to entertain the king. The king longed to see him bring a dead man back to life. He asked: ‘Is it true, what they say, that you can join a severed head?’

Said Djedi: ‘Yes I can, O king, my lord.’

Said his Majesty: ‘Have brought to me a prisoner from the prison, that he be executed.’

Djedi protests: ‘But not to a human being, O king, my lord! Surely it is not permitted to do such a thing.’

Of course, in reality, few would question the king, but here we see execution being discussed with clear, moral tones. From this

## ‘With the killing of foreigners ... there was no morality and “ceremonial murder” became the most iconographic image of Egyptian kingship.’

period onwards, human sacrifice becomes easier on the eye. How? With the killing of foreigners.

Here there was no morality, and ‘ceremonial murder’ became the most iconographic image of Egyptian kingship – it can be seen everywhere.

The traditional smiting scene shows Pharaoh grasping the hair of prisoners as he smashes them over the head with a mace or sword. In doing so, the king is offering up rivers of blood for the benefit of his gods. Ritual execution of foreigners may have replaced the killing of Egyptians, for foreign blood, albeit impure, was still connected to the cosmic cycle; furthermore, the blood of traitors was said to give rise to a lake of flames.

The Egyptians also sacrificed a great number of animals, mainly bulls, goats and birds, which were garrotted on a daily basis and used as offerings. The ecstasy of slaying is a theme that is apparent in many ancient hunting scenes. The hunt, often a metaphor for war, was a celebration of bloodletting: the

king is seen as both warrior and hunter, his prowess is celebrated as the bringer of death and divine deliverance.

Egyptian gods and goddesses had dual natures and were capable of both good and evil actions. Most were linked to the earth and the populace appealed to them for the successful yearly inundation of the Nile. The floods were essential to the survival of the populace. In a hymn to the god of the Nile, Hapy, we hear how prayer and sacrifice went hand in hand:

‘When you overflow, O Hapy, sacrifice is made for you; oxen are slaughtered for you, oblations are made. Birds are fattened for you, game is snared for you, we wish to repay your bounty.’

The gods were responsible for food production, indeed, their divine secretions became essential ingredients of the land. Their tears, blood, semen and flesh would cause plants to grow, insects to chirp and even instigated the birth of the honey bee. ●







**DEVOURER OF HEARTS:** The main reason to keep the gods happy in Ancient Egypt was to ensure a smooth transition into the afterlife. After death, the soul went through a number of trials, including the weighing of the heart to determine whether a good life had been led. If not, it was eaten by the god Ammut. This frieze showing the gods judging a recently mummified body was photographed by the editor in the depths of the Catacombs in Alexandria.



**THE FIRST VAMPIRE?:** The goddess Hathor depicted at Hatshepsut near the Valley of the Kings. The goddess of love, Hathor had a much darker side, too.

## 'Into the 19<sup>th</sup> century people ate the remains of ancient Egyptians in order to cure numerous ills, such as headaches, dyspepsia and fever.'

● Blood sacrifice was also seen in Egyptian myth. Hathor, the goddess of love, sex and music, was both beautiful and ruthless. She is possibly the first vampire in history.

Hathor was the daughter of the sun god Re. She learnt that the populace had turned their backs on her ageing father. Hathor was angered by their plotting and decided to take her revenge. She went to the desert, where she raged like a lioness. The evil ones were unable to escape her wrath, and after she had slaughtered the many, she drank their blood.

Then Hathor, the unmerciful, rampaged through the villages and towns, killing every man, woman and child. Re heard their pleas, he became witness to the screams of the dying and felt compassion for the children of his tears. But he remained silent. When darkness came, Hathor returned in triumph. Her father welcomed her and tried to quiet her hunger, but Hathor had tasted the blood of men and found it sweet. She longed for morning when she could return to complete the slaughter of mankind and avenge their treachery.

The sun god devised a plan to thwart her. He ordered his attendants to the city, telling them to run swifter than the shadows, to bring back all the ochre they could find. Re ordered the High Priest to pound the ochre and produce a red dye and set the slave girls to brewing vats of beer. Just before

dawn the red dye was mixed with the beer so that it resembled blood. Hathor returned drunk without having been aware of men, and was welcomed in peace by Re.

The offering of blood or flesh was often deemed necessary in order to conduct magic or communicate with the beyond; the cosmic foods were needed to appease or satisfy the gods. In this way, the Egyptians made offerings to secure victories in battle.

Most importantly, the Egyptians needed to control the demons and spirits of the underworld, which were a violent and warlike race. In order to navigate the underworld and unite with Osiris, the deceased had to familiarise themselves with the chaotic forces of the caverns, where acts of mutilation, slaughter, bloodshed and cannibalism were practiced on an unprecedented scale. For this reason, the Egyptians needed the *Book of the Dead*, which contained a series of spells designed to curb the onslaught of these murdering hordes.

In the hall of judgment the heart of the Egyptian was weighed on a scale. If it was found to be evil, the head of the deceased would be devoured by Ammut (eater of hearts), a ferocious entity who was shown as a composite of man-eating animals: crocodile, leopard and hippopotamus. Furthermore, those who were judged unfavourably were condemned to eternal damnation, where they would walk on their

heads, eat their own excrement, be burnt in ovens or swim in their own blood. Finally, Shezmu, the god of the wine press, would squeeze any remaining blood from their veins.

Considering the ancient Egyptians' concern over ensuring their bodies were preserved for eternity, it is ironic that they themselves became food for the masses. The trade in mummia (ancient Egyptian mummy parts) was a thriving concern from the 16th century onwards, being sold as a medicine in European cities. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare describes the selling of mummia by apothecaries. The practice continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century when people ate the remains of ancient Egyptians in order to cure numerous ills, such as headaches, dyspepsia and fever. Mummia was even found in royal circles, having been sent on one occasion to Queen Victoria.

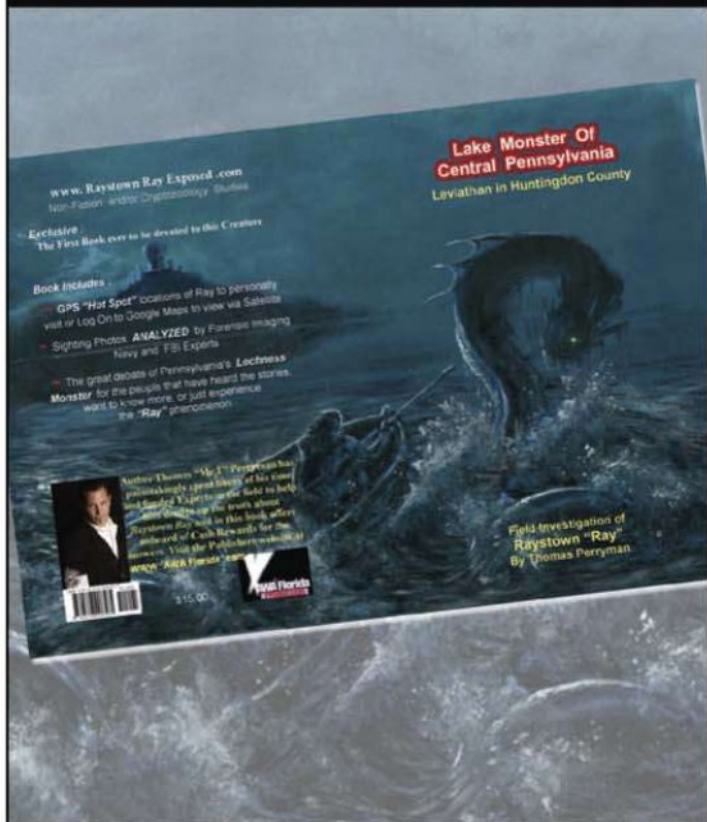
As we have seen, the fascination with flesh-eating and blood-drinking has made a clear transition from the ancient to the modern world, although they remain taboo subjects. The fascination embodies not only our primitive desires but also our hidden and often uncomfortable relationship with acts of defilement and destructiveness.

Sacrifice is at the root of our society, and its 'sacred' connotations have provided an important legacy that still has a significant effect on our history, our myths and our religious yearning. ☘

**Bridget McDermott** studied Egyptology at the universities of Liverpool and Manchester. She undertook a PhD, writing a thesis on ancient Egyptian warfare that focused on soldiers and their weapons. She has a special interest in the anthropology of human aggression and is currently researching the military activity of the Amarna period.



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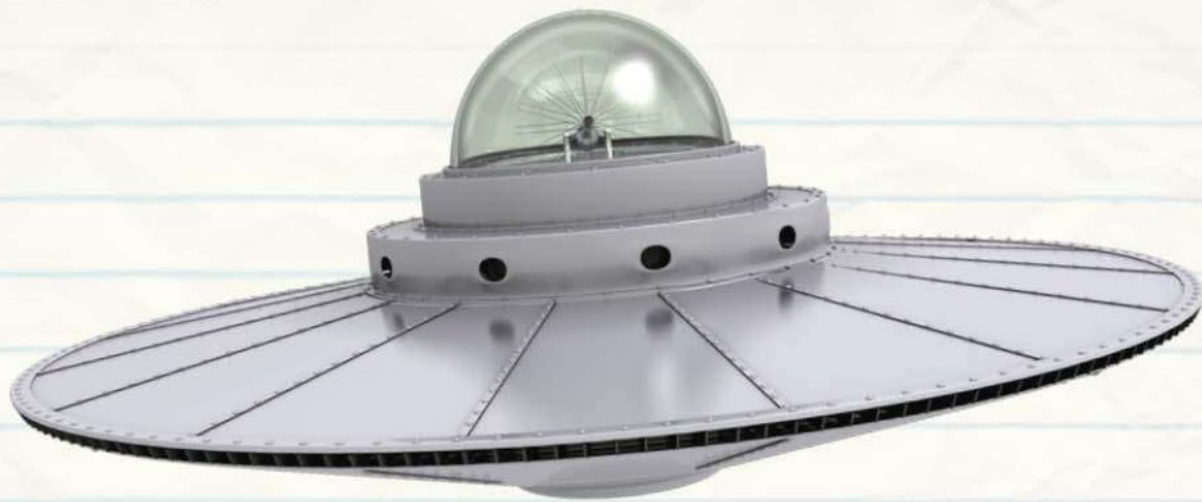
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# The only way to travel

The flying saucer is so iconic it's no wonder engineers have been trying to build a practical one for decades. **NIGEL WATSON** reveals the history of saucer technology and interviews British boffin John Searl, who has been developing flying saucer prototypes for more than 60 years.

**TRYING SAUCER:** The Canadian-designed Avrocar was funded by USAF but the project never really got off the ground - that is to say it did just about get off the ground but was unnervingly wobbly once in the air.

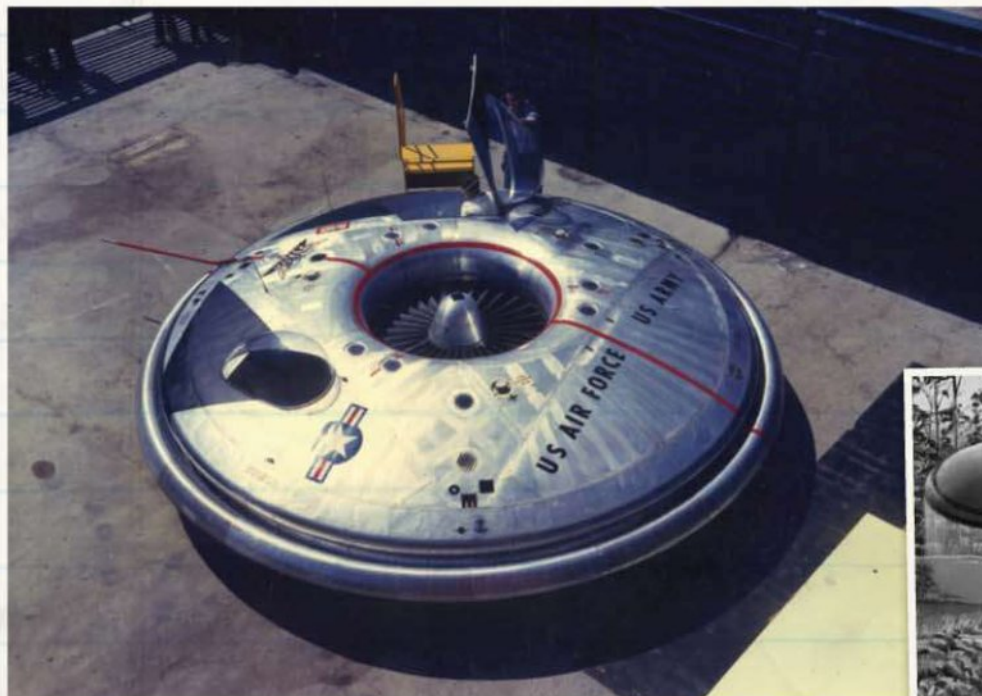
**UFO SIGHTINGS AND ENCOUNTERS** have inspired people throughout the world to plan and build their very own flying saucer vehicles. The classic spinning-disc flying saucer, beloved by Hollywood in the 1950s, presents a vision of a stream-

lined, pollution free craft that can soundlessly execute high-speed turns, steep dives, incredible bursts of acceleration and the ability to hover and make vertical landings and take-offs.

The aliens, or whoever pilot these craft, seem to have created

a fantastic flying machine, that screams the future potential of a technology that is free of the oil and gas giants, electricity companies and the geo-politics and greed associated with them.

Turning this stuff of dreams into working reality, at the drawing board and in workshops down here on Earth has produced much sweat and frustration. A radical saucer-shaped aircraft was designed by Charles H. Zimmerman way back in the 1930s. The V-173, nick-named the Flying Flapjack, first rolled out onto the tarmac of an airstrip in 1942, and was described as a twin-engine 'queer, saucer-shaped object on two long, stilted legs'. A revamped XF5U-1 version, with



**FLIGHT OF FANTASY:** The US military had high hopes for the Avrocar. They believed it would form a fleet of airborne Jeeps.





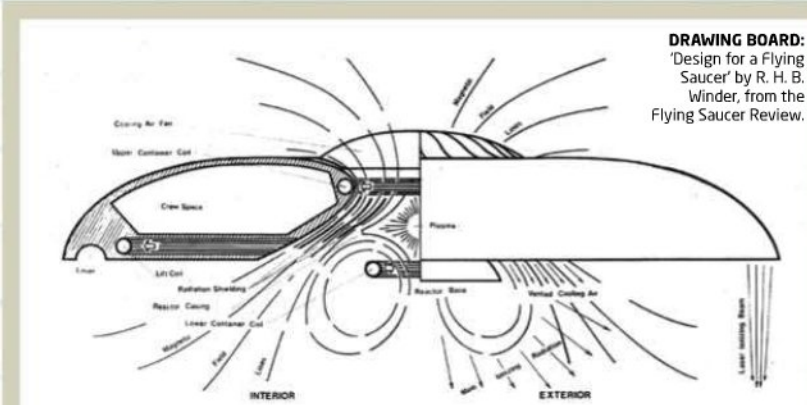
**HALF BAKED:** The front cover of the May 1947 edition of *Mechanix Illustrated* predicted big things for the XF5U-1 'Flapjack' but the project was cancelled shortly after inception.

more powerful engines, was tested for the US Navy in June 1947, but it was almost immediately cancelled.

Significantly, the May 1947 edition of *Mechanix Illustrated* (displaying the Flapjack on its front cover) warned its readers: 'Don't be amazed when one of these days you hear a whistling sound from the sky and see a blurred, circular object scaling across the heavens at a speed never before attained by man! It will be the Navy's Flapjack, the XF5U-1, breaking through another frontier in aviation's history.'

Obviously not knowing about this warning, bathers at Long Island Sound on the following month saw a slow-moving silver and yellow disc they thought was a flying saucer. Instead, it was the last public flight of the Flapjack. It makes you wonder if this exotic aircraft was the real cause of Kenneth Arnold's sighting of a fleet of 'flying saucers' on the 24 June 1947. Who knows?

A more radical design was the Canadian Avrocar that was funded by the USAF in the 1950s. It was based on a concept outlined by Henry Coanda, who noted that if air flows around a disc, it will cause it to fly upwards, due to the discrepancy of the air pressure above and below the disc. To exploit the 'Coanada Effect', the disc-shaped Avrocar featured a 1.5 metre central fan driven by three gas turbine engines. Its designer, John Frost, had hopes that this might become the equivalent of a flying jeep.



**DRAWING BOARD:** 'Design for a Flying Saucer' by R. H. B. Winder, from the *Flying Saucer Review*.

Figure 2. 1. Proposed fusion powered hydromagnetic aircraft.

to the carrier and will probably be required to contribute to its propulsion. At the outward end of the journey it may also have to go in search of propellant for the carrier's return and must, itself, be capable of using natural propellant.

It should now be clear why the problem is not just a matter of designing something like a lightweight helicopter for ferrying a spacecraft's crew during their investigations. We need a powerful versatile workhorse, independent of home supplies of propellant and economical in its fuel consumption. Fusion reactors offer fuel economy at high power, and hydromagnetic propulsion offers the versatility. What seems to be the best combination of the two looks very much like a flying saucer. We shall now consider it in detail.

Figure 2. 1 illustrates the proposed design. It is exceptionally powerful because it is intended to contribute to the propulsion of its space carrier. It has also to be capable of seeking and transporting heavy supplies of propellant to the carrier for the return journey. Its outstanding feature is its hydromagnetic propulsion system, based on a strong and extensive pulsating magnetic field.

**Lift Coil**

This is the coil that compresses and ejects ionised air from the region beneath the machine in order to generate a propulsive jet. The way in which a pulsed magnetic field can do this was discussed in the first article of this series: the method of ionising the air will be dealt with later.

We arbitrarily assign a diameter of 100 ft. to the coil and, less arbitrarily, a central field strength of 100 k Gauss, pulsing to 200 k Gauss. The strengths chosen are a rough compromise between various

conflicting factors, notably the need to provide high values for applying adequate forces to ionised air whilst remaining within the foreseeable capacity of superconductors.

The corresponding electrical currents in the coil will be 250 and 500 million Amperes respectively. If the coil were to be made from the Niobium Tin compound mentioned before, it would weigh about 250 tons. The immense bursting forces applied to the coil by its field, coupled with the reaction from the propulsive jet, will demand an extremely strong supporting structure weighing, perhaps, another 250 tons. It is indeed probable that the whole aircraft structure will be largely determined by the demands of coil support. It would seem reasonable to allow about 1000 tons for the total all-up weight.

In order to produce the greatest possible extension of the lift field, the coil must have the maximum diameter permitted by the geometry of the aircraft. On the other hand, the area presented at right-angles to the direction of motion must be minimised in order to avoid excessive drag. These considerations, coupled with the need for a strong structure, indicate a circular construction with the lift coil around its periphery. In certain circumstances it might prove desirable to locate the coil outside the main body, in a kind of equatorial ring, but in the present design, as shown in Figure 2.1, the coil is placed just inside the rim of a disc-like craft.

**Reactor**

In order to produce a symmetrical zone of ionising radiation beneath the craft, the reactor must be located on the axis of the machine, preferably with its base protruding slightly. It requires full peripheral shielding for protection of craft and crew, together

**'Bathers at Long Island Sound on the following month saw a slow-moving silver and yellow disc they thought was a flying saucer. Instead, it was the last public flight of the Flapjack.'**

In 1955 the USAF announced Project Silverbug that would produce a supersonic saucer craft, based on the Avrocar research. Unfortunately, the two Avrocar prototypes built for testing purposes proved to be unstable and unable to adequately direct the thrust from the fan. The USAF finally cancelled the project in 1961.

Although projects like the Avrocar floundered, private inventors have never given up. Often they are rather colourful characters who promise all manner of wonderful flying machines based on 'new' scientific principles and innovations.

One such inventor is John Searl, who has been obsessed with building a free-energy machine since he was a boy in the 1930s, and is still working on this project!

He attributes his determination and inventing skills to his childhood. Not only was he deaf but he was neglected and abused. The result of this pain and isolation was that he became a self-educated lateral thinker. Unburdened by dogmatic facts, he used his innate curiosity to consider impossible ideas and concepts. For him nothing is impossible, it is just a state of mind.

The key to his inventions are two recurring nightmares he had as a child. He would wake ●

**PATENTS PENDING**

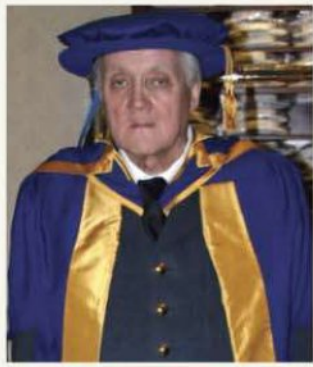
There are a great many patent applications for flying saucer-type vehicles.

One surprising application was made by the British Railways Board in 1973. It consisted of a nuclear-powered space vehicle designed by Charles Osmond Frederick. A pulsed laser would trigger thermonuclear reactions that are then directed beneath the craft by superconducting magnets. It was an ambitious project that never got beyond the drawing board - and would it ever have run on time anyway?

The design was very similar to that proposed by R. H. B. Winder in a series of articles for *Flying Saucer Review* in 1966. He noted that it would be capable of high acceleration and performance capabilities far beyond those of conventional aircraft. He thought that it would easily be able to shoot into outer space, but it would need a different form of propulsion to operate in this environment.

Winder noted that a 100ft-diameter craft of this type would create the physiological effects reported by UFO witnesses - such as vomiting, superficial burning and distortion of perception. By implication, UFO sightings are caused by similar machines that have already been built by either human or alien agency.





**AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SEARL**

**Nigel Watson:** Where did your two important dreams come from? Your own unconscious? Or might they have come from an outside agency of some kind?

**John Searl:** From my own unconscious.

**N.W.:** Can you simply explain how your SEG works?

**J.S.:** It is a linear motor operating on a magnetic bearing.

**N.W.:** Were you frightened about what you might

unleash with your first energy machine?

**J.S.:** No, I was not frightened at any time, just excited.

**N.W.:** Did your levity disc testing cause the Warminster UFO scare?

**J.S.:** In reality I feel that I have to take credit for the Warminster affair due to Arthur Shuttlewood: that local reporter was the main reason for these events.

**N.W.:** Do you regret the publicity you got for your ideas in the 1960s and 1970s?

**J.S.:** No, the publicity brought in the money that kept the work going.

**N.W.:** Are you currently planning to build any SEG flying or power-plant machines?

**J.S.:** We are re-designing the SEG for mass production mode as stated on the last two months of radio interviews and also an I-G-V (Inverse Gravity Vehicle) is being studied.

**N.W.:** Are your ideas patented?

**J.S.:** It is a know-how which you never patent, as the patent officials inform us, unless you are not interested in the planet; if not then I could file the patent then and there as they watch the live demo.

**N.W.:** Why do you think scientists are critical of your ideas?

**J.S.:** All inventors suffer the same problem. Scientists belong to yesterday, inventors belong to tomorrow: without them it would just be one long day with only season changes like all the rest of the animals.

**N.W.:** Do you think your machines will ever be built and used for high-speed transport as you suggested in the 1960s?

**J.S.:** The SEG will be in mass production before I die and I am 78 years old, as there is no problem with the technology; it is the people where the fault lays.

**N.W.:** Will anyone or any organisation take on your work for future generations?

**J.S.:** Work will continue now to the end of time.

**N.W.:** What do you think about the UFO subject and alien abductions? Are they the work of other humans/governments or of aliens from outer space? Are UFOs powered by similar technology to yours?

**J.S.:** I cannot comment on UFOs as I have never seen one, but assuming they come from a distant galaxy, they would have to use a similar system. If there are Aliens then it has to be us - *Homo sapiens*.

**PUBLIC EYE:** A newspaper cutting from the early days of John Searl's work, in which one of his prototypes has been superimposed.



'His work culminated in 1956 with his so-called Levity Disc. When it flew it gave off a glow and the force from it knocked birds from the sky and caused roof tiles to ripple.'

up screaming and as a 'cure' his foster parents would try to beat the 'Devil' out of him.

The first dream consisted of him playing Hop Scotch when a huge roller, similar to that of a Steam Roller, comes towards him and divides into two. The second had him going up a very long ladder

to a loft. Opening the loft hatch he finds himself in the centre of a burning ring.

From the Hop Scotch dream he realised that everything from DNA to relativity can be explained by the law of squares. The second showed that he would be able to release a great force of energy if he used his knowledge properly.

This eventually led to his Searl Effect Generator (SEG). At its simplest, it uses a ring of cylindrical electromagnetic rollers (inspired by his first nightmare) that spin around a magnetic circular plate (that featured in his second nightmare).

He built his first model based on these principles on his landladies' kitchen table, in 1946 when he was only 14-years-old. As it started up, its temperature quickly dropped and then it shot up and went through the ceiling - it literally wanted to fly.

After working as an apprentice electrical engineer and a stint in the RAF, Searl was able to return to his inventing again. Funded by a terminally ill man in the West Midlands, he built six 3-foot diameter discs, which shot off into the sky. Searl was disappointed

**INVENTOR:** John Searl has been designing and building flying saucer prototypes since he was 14 years old. He believes his experiments in the 1960s may have been responsible for the Warminster 'thing' - the UK's most celebrated UFO flap.







**PRODUCTION LINE:**  
The M200X, a disc-shaped flying car which is expected to go on sale this year. © Moller International

**THE FUTURE IS NOW**

Since 1974 Paul Moller has been trying to build various types of flying cars that would take personal mass transport into the sky.

One of his projects is the M200G Volantor, a 10ft-diameter craft that would carry two passengers. Using conventional Wankel engines powering ducted fans, it would be able to make vertical take-offs and landings. Reaching 10ft above the ground, it could travel horizontally at a speed of 50 mph. It was priced at \$100,000.

There are plans to sell a M200G 'neuro' single-seater disc-craft this year. They will have a top speed of 100 mph and be capable of reaching 2000 ft. However, to retain its status as a flying car rather than an aircraft it will be restrained to a flight height of 10ft. Only 40 of these will be made available at a cost of \$90,000 to \$140,000.

A more advanced M400x Skycar using similar principles, but able to carry up to six passengers and able to fly at 300 mph at an altitude of up to 36,000 ft, is another of Moller's projects.

For more visit the Moller International website at [www.moller.com](http://www.moller.com)

that he was unable to recover them but his sponsor encouraged him to 'make people look up'.

Moving to Maidenhead, Berkshire, Searl tested 41 model flying craft that incorporated gyroscopes and radio control systems. He called them Inverse Gravity Vehicles (IGV). Using an isolated field his work culminated in 1956 with his so-called Levity Disc. When it flew it gave off a glow and the force from it knocked birds from the sky and caused roof tiles to ripple. Apparently, his flying experiments triggered the whole Warminster scare of the 1960s.

He claims that his most successful test flight was made on June 30, 1968. On this occasion the craft rose to an altitude of 15 miles high and within three minutes it crossed over Cornwall. Using a network of radio

hams he was able to use them to send coded radio signals to the craft to tell it to return to base.

By the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Searl concentrated on his next step forward, which was to build 'Demo One'. This would be a manned

**'He thinks the power behind his machines, the Searl Effect Generator, is the solution to cleaning up our planet and supplying cheap zero-point energy to everyone.'**

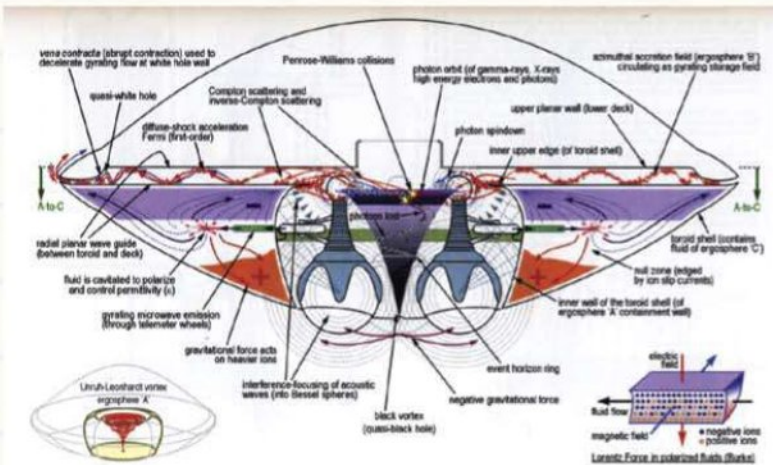
craft that would have one pilot and carry two passengers. It would be 90ft in diameter and weigh 90 tons.

In 1978 he told the *Daily Express* that through his National Space Research Consortium (NSRC): 'I expect to be setting out on the maiden voyage of my levity disc before the end of 1978. Or certainly during the first half of 1979.'

This didn't happen, partly due to lack of funding. This did not stop him from dreaming of a 2000-seater levity disc aircraft that would criss-cross the globe in a matter of minutes. Announcing these schemes to the media quickly made him the subject of mockery.

Throughout his life, Searl has had to meet with scepticism and criticism from the media and scientists. Yet he still thinks that the power behind his machines, the Searl Effect Generator (SEG), is the solution to cleaning up our planet and supplying cheap zero-point energy to everyone.

Like most flying saucer inventions, it depends on theories, concepts and technology that are not currently accepted by conventional scientific opinion. Only time will tell if a SEG or a similar saucer-inspired invention will change our world. ☪



**IMAGINATIVE:** Ufologists have also considered the way in which flying saucers might work. This complicated diagram comes from Paul Potter's book on putative alien technology, *Gravitational Manipulation of Domed Craft* (Adventures Unlimited Press, 2008).



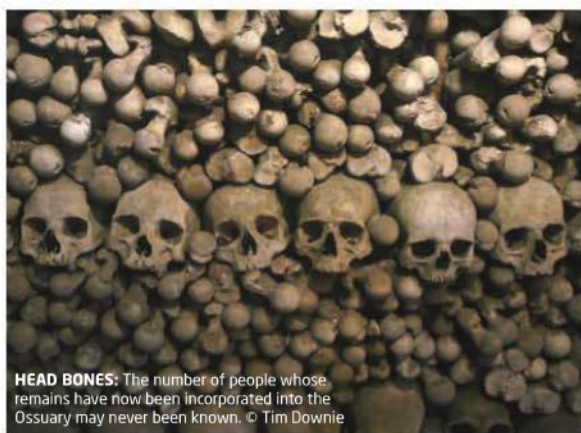
**Nigel Watson's** books include *The Alien Deception*, *Portraits of Alien Encounters* (1990), and *The Scareship Mystery* (2000). He is a long-time contributor on the subject of UFOs for numerous publications, including *Fortean Times*, *Wired*, *History Today*, *Magonia* and *Flying Saucer Review*.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

For more information on flying saucer projects, visit: [www.laesieworks.com/ifo/index.html#lib](http://www.laesieworks.com/ifo/index.html#lib); [www.unrealaircraft.com](http://www.unrealaircraft.com); and [www.ufohowto.com/index.htm](http://www.ufohowto.com/index.htm). To learn more about John Searl visit his official website at <http://swallowcommand.com/index.html> or check out the John Searl Story DVD by writer/director Bradley Lockerman and available from [www.johnsearlstory.com](http://www.johnsearlstory.com)









**HEAD BONES:** The number of people whose remains have now been incorporated into the Ossuary may never be known. © Tim Downie

# Them bones, them bones

**TIM DOWNIE** has just returned from one of the spookiest places on Earth - the Sedlec Ossuary, near the town of Kutná Hora, in the Czech Republic. Tim shares the experience with us.

**THIS IS SACRED GROUND.** The jumbled, tightly packed, almost chaotic graveyard that lies in front of me has been the resting place of the pious for centuries.

People came from all over Europe to this Cistercian Monastery east of Prague. What brought so many was the earth itself. Eight-hundred years ago the Abbot returned from Jerusalem with a jar of dirt, gathered from Golgotha. This 'Holy Soil' was sprinkled over the Abbey grounds and soon word travelled fast. But with the coming of the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the Hussite Wars of the 15<sup>th</sup>, this tiny graveyard could hold no more and soon became clogged with bodies. The blessed

ground that had brought so many here was now rejecting them.

Today, though, it is something very different that draws people to Sedlec.

A deep chill grips you as you step out of the sunlight into the dark chapel. Then suddenly your eyes adjust and you notice that flanking both sides of the entrance are two enormous chalices made entirely of human skeletons, surrounded with garlands of skulls fanned with haloes of hip bones. But this is just the beginning.

In 1870 a local woodcarver, Frantisek Rint, was commissioned by the Monastery to create something wondrous out of the



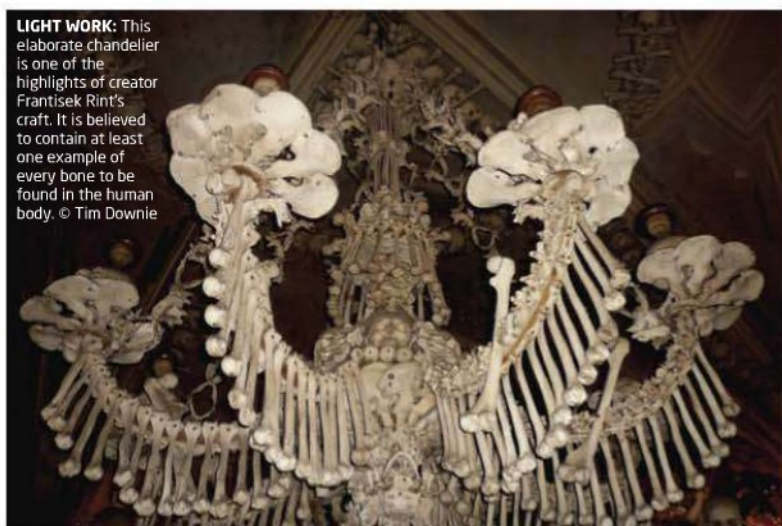
**SKULL AND DEXTERITY:** The skulls and other bones of the long dead have been worked with extraordinary skill in Sedlec's 'Bone Church'. © Tim Downie

**'A local woodcarver was commissioned to create something wondrous out of the thousands of bones that had lain untouched for centuries.'**

thousands of bones that had lain untouched in the Ossuary for centuries, and what he created is simply awe-inspiring. Hanging from the ceiling of the central nave is an enormous chandelier said to contain at least one of every bone in the human body. On another wall, there is the coat of arms of the Schwarzenberg family, complete with a bone bird pecking out the eyes of a Turkish soldier, and everywhere the garlands hang, looping their way out from every darkly shadowed corner.

The air is heavy, oppressive; everywhere you turn you are greeted with the dry, empty sockets of the long dead. No part of this chapel has been left untouched, undecorated. It's hard to take it all in; it's hard to believe that this place contains over 60,000 bodies.

The question that comes to me is why? Why did the Monks want this macabre spectacle? My question was answered by one of the modern Cistercian Monks and it was simple: it is to show people that one day, every one of us, will die. Life is a gift to be cherished because soon, like the people in this tiny room, we will all become bones. ☛



**LIGHT WORK:** This elaborate chandelier is one of the highlights of creator Frantisek Rint's craft. It is believed to contain at least one example of every bone to be found in the human body. © Tim Downie



**Tim Downie** started writing in 2008 with his first commissioned theatre piece, *The Dead Moon*, for the Aldeburgh Festival. His theatre work includes: *The Curse of Elizabeth Faulkner*, *The Revenge of Anubis* and *The Executors*. Recently he's completed the screenplay for *Little Bees*, scheduled for production in Autumn 2010, and a new comedy for Radio 4 starring Stephen Mangan and Julian Rhind-Tutt. In 2009 Tim was one of the winners of the New York Screenwriters Challenge and the Atlanta Film Festival for his screenplays *The Robin Wins*, *the Spring* and *The Automata Circus*.



# BACK FROM BEYOND

In a Near Death Experience (NDE) people who have been revived from clinical death report journeying in the spirit towards an apparent afterlife or are able to accurately describe procedures that went on while their bodies lay in the hands of medics. It is one of the very few paranormal phenomena being studied by science. **NICK PARKINS** interviewed the scientists involved in NDE studies to find out what they've learnt.



**INTO THE LIGHT:** A common motif of Near Death Experiences is the existence of a tunnel of light down which the consciousness travels. Sometimes previously deceased loved ones are waiting at the tunnel's end.



**FOR MILLENNIA PHILOSOPHERS** have waxed lyrical as to the possible existence of the immaterial mind and its relationship with its material bedfellow, the brain. Descartes's idea of the mind or the soul's connection with its body by way of the pineal gland or 'third eye' has long been usurped by traditional scientific theory. Here, the mind is illusory, a by-product of electrochemical activity. When the brain dies, the mind goes with it: there can therefore be no afterlife.

For this reason science also dismisses the experiences reported by some of those who have returned from a state of near-death as being down to a range of possible neurophysiological factors, such as the hallucinatory effects of ketamine and morphine; oxygen starvation; neurological abnormalities; temporal lobe dysfunction; endorphin release in response to a dying brain; and a patient's expectation at the onset of death. In short, near-death experiences (or NDEs) are subjective, fantastical delusions.

For supporters, NDE is far more than the sum of its parts. Out-of-body sensations and the feelings of

joy and separation often go hand-in-hand with a journey through a tunnel of light to the awaiting embrace of deceased family and friends. Such experiences can be revelatory, imbued with rich spiritual significance – and believers say science simply isn't equipped to understand to understand them.

Nevertheless, some scientists are doing their best.

**OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE (OBE)**

Studies of non-local consciousness have been the focus of US government-sponsored activities known as 'remote viewing'. Nevertheless, despite intriguing evidence, OBEs and other forms of non-local consciousness fail to square in conventional scientific circles and, as an intrinsic part of the NDE, are often dismissed as wishful delusions partly created by an overly medicated, oxygen-starved brain.

For example, Dr Michael Persinger, affiliated with the Behavioural Neuroscience Program at Laurentian University, floats the idea that OBEs are no more than illusory artefacts that may owe their nature to a specific transient

state of the brain's temporal lobe. Other NDE researchers argue that while such factors are capable of impacting on brain activity and affecting conscious experience – such as the hallucinatory effect of hypercarbia (high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the blood) causing a sense of bodily detachment – they are not always present or indeed correct.

Such factors also fail to explain how many NDEs often combine a feeling of profound 'separation', with the witnessing of events that can later be verified as true.

An international consortium of multidisciplinary scientists and physicians, known as The Human Consciousness Project, are presently conducting a world-first large-scale scientific study into the relationship between mind and brain during clinical death. Headed by clinicians in the fields of psychiatry and respiratory medicine, the project is led by Dr Sam Parnia, a world-renowned expert in the study of the human mind and consciousness during clinical death, with Dr Peter



**RESEARCHER:** AWARE team member Dr Peter Fenwick.

**'AWARE SEEKS TO VERIFY THE TRUE NATURE OF THE OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE BY DEPLOYING TARGET IMAGERY THAT CAN ONLY BE VIEWED FROM ABOVE.'**



**NOT JUST BOSCH?** An early example of a 'tunnel of light' motif can be found in Hieronymus Bosch's 'Ascent of the Blessed' painted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**THE GOD HELMET**

Conventional science has long held that spiritual experiences simply reduce to the mysterious workings of the physical brain.

Dr Michael Persinger, affiliated with the Behavioural Neuroscience Program at Laurentian University, believes NDEs are no different. His research, that centres around a less-than-conventional line in headwear, nicknamed the 'God Helmet', was said to induce in eight out of ten subjects the feeling of a 'presence' or 'being' beside them.

The converted snowmobile helmet contains solenoids placed in position over the temporal lobes, stimulating these regions by way of weak but complex magnetic fields, producing what in some subjects are described as spiritual experiences.

This process supposedly replicates spiritual NDE which, Persinger claims, is an artefact of micro-seizures that occur within the deep structures of the temporal lobe; the interpretation and extent of which maybe explained by a person's ingrained beliefs and possible sensitivity to magnetic disturbance. He claims it is no coincidence that similar experiences are often reported in cases of temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE); a condition that may leave the sufferer especially sensitive to magnetic fields.

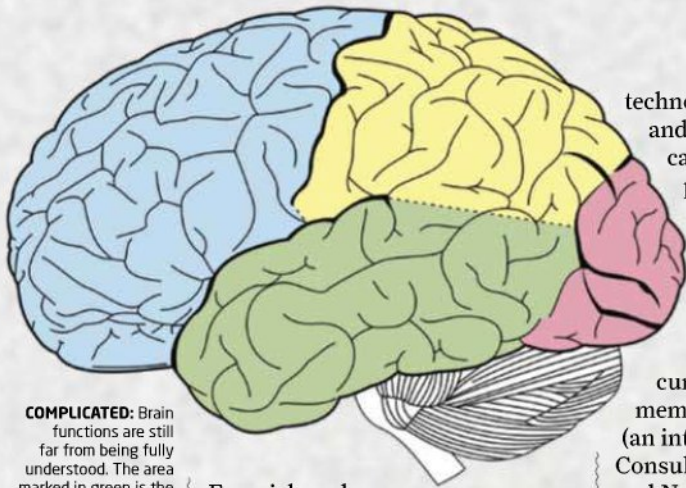
Persinger's primary studies, performed under stringent double-blind conditions, were published in major refereed journals. As is the nature of mind-brain dynamics however, these claims remain shrouded in doubt. In response, *Neuroscience Letters* recorded a Swedish team of scientists that attempted to replicate his study under double-blind conditions. This method, which aimed to curb any bias by way of controller or subject from influencing the outcome, failed to verify the effect.

For Persinger it was hardly surprising: 'They did not replicate our procedures. The computer programs they utilized distorted the presentation of the magnetic field patterns. It is relevant that our patterns responsible for the "sensed" effects in humans also produce clear analgesia (the absence of pain while conscious) in rats and evoke reliable changes in molecular pathways in cell cultures; neither of which were pursued or tested by the Swedish researchers.'

**GOD HELMET:** This converted snowmobile helmet is credited with generating quasi-spiritual experiences. © Noa Gang & Bryce Mulligan.







**COMPLICATED:** Brain functions are still far from being fully understood. The area marked in green is the temporal lobe. The rare condition known as Temporal Lobe Epilepsy has been linked to Near Death Experience by some researchers.

**ASLEEP BUT AWARE:** A remarkable number of patients have reported being able to watch surgeons operating on them while they've been unconscious or even clinically dead. The AWARE scientists in Swansea, Wales, are attempting to prove that such experiences are genuine rather than imaginary.

Fenwick and Professors Stephen Holgate and Robert Peveler, of the University of Southampton.

Most intriguing of all, the study sets out to gauge what remains to this day as the most well-documented yet contentious phenomenon of the near-death state – the out-of-body experience in which unconscious patients claim to have witnessed procedures taking place on their own bodies, overheard technical conversations between surgeons and the like, while apparently floating above them.

AWARE (AWAREness during REsuscitation) employs the latest

technologies to assess brain state and consciousness during cardiac arrest; seeking in the process to objectively verify the true nature of the out-of-body experience by deploying target imagery that can only be viewed from above.

One case, reported by current AWARE project team members Dr Penny Sartori (an intensive care nurse) and Consultant Neuropsychiatrist and Neurophysiologist Dr Peter Fenwick, occurred as part of a five-year prospective study, in which symbols on cards were placed on cardiac monitors alongside the patients' beds, that was carried out at the ITU, Morriston Hospital, in Swansea, South Wales.

One patient, recovering after major bowel surgery, suffered complications and, having fallen unconscious, was in need of emergency care. Upon waking, he excitedly scribbled, unable to speak: 'I died and watched it all from above.'

Though not clinically dead, the patient had fallen deeply unconscious and whilst unable

to relay the symbol on display, was nonetheless able to recall a concerned-looking physio nervously poking her head round the screens to check on the patient's condition. In addition to a number of actions of the operating room staff that were later confirmed to be true, the patient recalled feeling perplexed as to the 'long pink lollipop' drawn from his mouth that was later explained as a long suction catheter and pink oral sponge.

Sartori cautions that generalities are often explained by a patient's prior knowledge of resuscitative procedures and the construction of mental models based upon residual sight, sound and tactile stimulations; that said, the ability to recall the use of a long suction catheter (in preference to the Yankauer sucker of normal procedure) offers a tantalising taste for those who attest to a non-local nature of mind.

For the scientists, however, that isn't enough. The procedures must be tweaked, tested and retested. In hindsight, the placement of the symbol-specific card was wrong, admits Dr Fenwick.

'If you leave your body and look back, you are only interested in



**'REYNOLDS, WHILE UNDERGOING AN OPERATION TO REMOVE AN ANEURYSM, WAS ABLE TO RELATE PROCEDURES GOING ON AROUND HER, DESPITE THE COMPLETE CESSATION OF HEART-BEAT AND HER HEAD HAVING BEEN DRAINED OF BLOOD.'**

**TEMPORAL LOBE EPILEPSY (TLE)**

The spiritual-religious NDE is frequently claimed as being no more than the result of temporal lobe dysfunction. According to Dr Emily Kelly, co-author of *Phantoms in the Brain*, it has even become a part of medical tuition that a patient with epileptic seizures originating in this part of the brain can have intense, spiritual experiences during those seizures.

Kelly (from the Department of Psychiatric Medicine, University of Virginia) points to a roll-call of religious thinkers and seers who, it has been suggested, were weighed down by debilitating seizures rather than being enlightened by spirit. From Muhammad to St Paul, Joan of Arc to Van Gogh: all were targeted in an attempt to illustrate brain disorders that promote, intensify or alter religious experience, offering clues to a neural basis for the spiritual nature of humanity (Saver, J.L. & Rabin, J. (1997): 'The neural substrates of religious experience', *Journal of Neuropsychology and Clinical Neurosciences*.)

Kelly, however, disagrees. She suggests that in only two of the 15 cases highlighted by Saver and Rabin is a medical diagnosis of epilepsy certain and of these it remains unclear as to whether one of them, the Russian author Dostoevsky, was a temporal lobe case or indeed even the sufferer of the experiences he describes.

It seems TLE cannot at this time be used as an explanation of spiritual awakening in legendary figures from the long dead past. Neither, too, with NDE, it would seem.

The often fuzzy, unreal, fearful feelings of detachment encountered during TLE are far from what Fenwick describes as the classic 'clear, lucid and non-confusional' NDE during cardiac arrest. These highly-structured elements, by contrast, seem to seriously question temporal lobe dysfunction as a systemic cause of NDE.



**"IF SOME PEOPLE'S ACCOUNTS DURING CARDIAC ARREST CAN BE PROVEN CORRECT... THIS WILL LEAD TO SOME SUPPORT FOR THE HYPOTHESIS THAT BRAIN AND MIND ARE DIFFERENT."**

your body, not what the doctors have put out [for you] to look at. In the AWARE study we have therefore changed the position; placing the cards above the head of the bed so that if you are [floating] on the ceiling and look back then you will be able to see them, as well as your body.'

Traditionalists claim that unconscious memories may simply explain the unintentional cold-reading a patient encounters when attempting to make sense of a hallucinatory out-of-body experience. Throw enough ectoplasm out there, they argue, and some of it is bound to stick.

While the Swansea study is far from completion (with some two to three years remaining), Fenwick has heard from a sufficient number of patients to help him form the view that gathering information while unconscious is indeed possible.

**THE TWILIGHT ZONE**

For AWARE, proving the non-local essence of mind is just one part of the puzzle in attempting to unlock the nature of consciousness. In addition to deploying cards, the study employs the latest in scanning technologies to assess the brain state during cardiac arrest.

According to Fenwick, 11 seconds after the heart stops beating, the EEG flat-lines, perfusion (degree of blood flow) is significantly reduced and consciousness is considered absent.

'There is no respiration, heart rate, or brain stem reflex; which means no gag reflex and dilated pupils,' explains Fenwick. In short, the patient is no longer alive. However, a five-minute window exists after this point during which the person may be revived before irrevocable damage to the brain is certain.

Fenwick believes that if

the study is able to tie in a patient's purported OBE to this twilight period, through the sighting of cards and convincing descriptions of resuscitative procedures, this should 'make it logical for us to say that the NDE occurred during [the patient's] cardiac arrest.'

This after-life experience would mirror the anecdotal account of Pam Reynolds, who while undergoing a pioneering operation to remove an aneurysm experienced an OBE in which she was able to relate procedures going on around her, despite the lowering of her body temperature to 60 degrees and a complete cessation of heart-beat, breathing and her head having been drained of blood.

According to Persinger, however, the line is more blurred: 'An EEG is of very little use for registering activity in those areas of the brain that store memory, the hippocampus [located in the medial temporal lobe]. You have to insert electrodes deep into the brain in order to see that activity.'

Here the brain can be the cause of experience even when clinical attempts fail to show it is active, he suggests, but Fenwick disagrees.

'Ever since the 1960s it has been known that

if you implant electrodes deep into the brain when the cortical activity falls silent there is no deep activity present,' he

argues.

'You cannot have partial consciousness,' Fenwick insists. 'Consciousness only appears when huge numbers of cells in different systems within

**UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE**

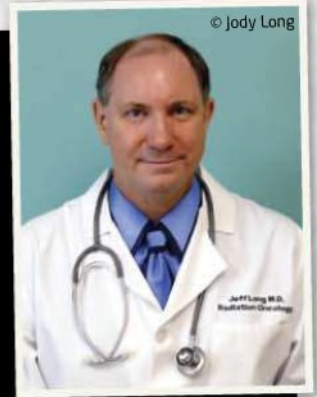
Unlike Persinger, Dr Jeffrey Long (pictured) ideals that ingrained beliefs, acquired knowledge and wishful thinking do not affect the inherent nature of NDE. Long, a radiation oncologist by profession and author of *Evidence of the Afterlife: The Science of Near-Death Experiences*, has researched over 2,000 case studies and cites nine lines of irrefutable consistent core elements such as the seeing of light, life reviews and reunion with deceased family and friends.

'There is no evidence to support the concept that pre-existing cultural beliefs affect the [core] content of NDEs.'

This, Long claims, remains the same regardless of age, religious belief or prior awareness.

'There is no difference in the content of NDEs of very young children, aged five and less, and older children and adults; even in those that did not know about NDE at the time of their experience.'

According to Long, NDE may not even be recognized until afterwards when the subject is flicking through old family photos, and discovers that a being they met during their NDE was a deceased relative they had never seen in their earthly life.'



© Jody Long

the brain are active. The whole brain has essentially to be working before consciousness can arise.

'If some people's accounts during cardiac arrest can be proven correct then they are apparently conscious when they have all the clinical signs of death: that is no respiration, heart rate or brain stem reflexes, together with a flat EEG and poor brain perfusion.

'If [our study] can do this, it is interesting to science; we will have proved that the experience is occurring during the cardiac arrest and this will lead to some support for the hypothesis that brain and mind are different.'

Perhaps Near Death Experience is a misnomer, an acronym better suited to those who cling to the brain as the source of all consciousness. After clinical death, when the brain is dead, can the self take flight? If so, we need to ask: 'What is life?'



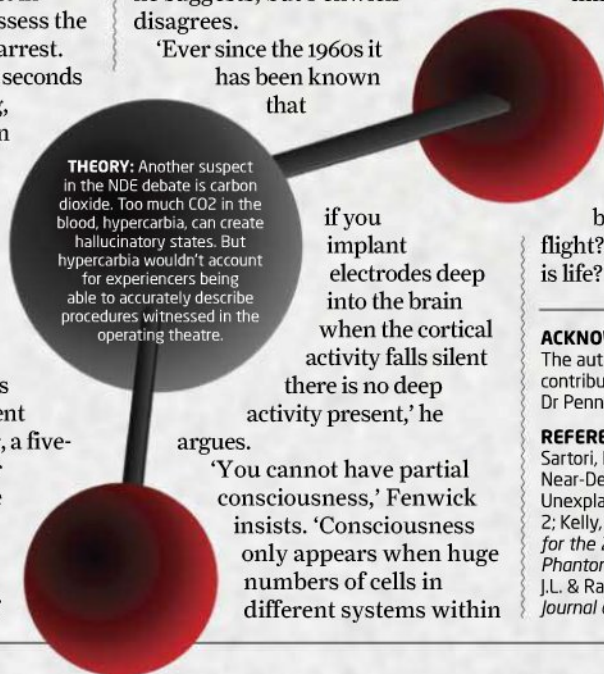
Nick Parkins is a freelance writer and researcher in the UK whose work appears in print and web-based publications. He has a postgraduate background in philosophy and oceanography. To read more of his work visit [www.1stword.eu](http://www.1stword.eu).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**THEORY:** Another suspect in the NDE debate is carbon dioxide. Too much CO2 in the blood, hypercarbia, can create hallucinatory states. But hypercarbia wouldn't account for experiencers being able to accurately describe procedures witnessed in the operating theatre.

if you implant electrodes deep into the brain when the cortical activity falls silent there is no deep activity present,' he

argues.

'You cannot have partial consciousness,' Fenwick insists. 'Consciousness only appears when huge numbers of cells in different systems within

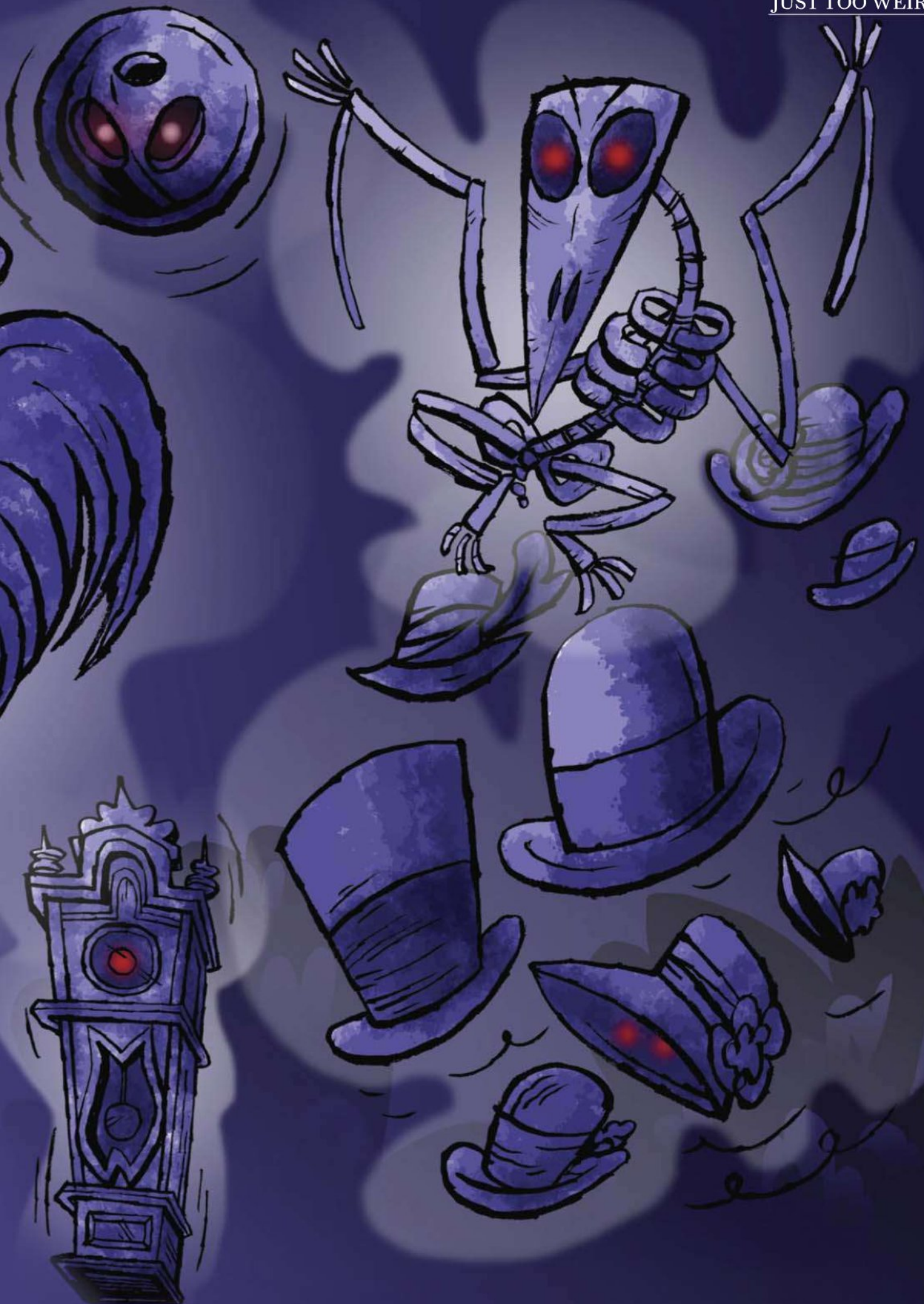




# Just too weird!

Sometimes one comes across a ghost story so bizarre it's difficult to credit it. But that doesn't mean it should necessarily be dismissed. We know so little about the supernatural that it would be arrogant to adopt a kind of unbelievability scale. We'd also miss out on a lot of cool stuff with that attitude! **RICHARD FREEMAN** has noted many weird tales over the years and offers his own assortment of the strangest of the strange.





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IN A RECENT ISSUE of *Paranormal* there was a thought-provoking article on the nature of ghosts [‘What Is A Ghost?’ by Dr George Stuart, in issue 48]. The idea of disincarnate human souls is far too a simple a solution to such a complex subject, as the article pointed out.

Certain ghosts by their very nature fly in the face of surviving soul theory. If apparitions were all grey ladies, monks, cavaliers or even black dogs then solving the riddle of what ghosts are would be much easier. But the weird collection of ghosts I have brought

**“I realised it was the sound of one of the wooden balls slowly rolling in the hall ... like something you would hear in a bowling alley.”**

together here would leave any researcher, however open-minded, scratching their heads in confusion. The following collection of freakish cases makes one wonder not just about the nature of ghosts but about the nature of reality.

We have all heard of haunted houses from castles and mansions to modern-day flats. Other buildings, from museums to bus stations, have been haunted, but how about a haunted lamppost? Few things could be less creepy than a lamppost but a haunted one has been recorded in the Lund Park area of Keighley, West Yorkshire. It was an old-fashioned concrete post which the witness used to pass by each night on his way to study with a friend during his university days in the 1990s. He said that a ‘thing’ like the silhouette of a tatty flag would be seen flapping about the lamppost each time he passed it. On closer inspection the long, ragged, black, flapping form would be nowhere to be seen.

On one occasion the thing’s appearance was accompanied by what sounded like a crowd of men roaring or cheering, despite the fact there was no one around. The sound seemed to emanate from above the lamppost. All in all, the case puts me in mind of a modern urban version of the classic M. R. James ghost story *Ob*

**‘Elliot O’Donnell was once told of a phantom grandfather clock that trundled around like an anorexic Dalek.’**



*Whistle and I’ll Come to You* with its ragged, flapping phantom.

It would be interesting to see if the lamppost, situated on a longish, sloping road, with houses on the left, and a park wall on the right is still standing, and if so whether its odd inhabitant is still at home.

There have been cases of allegedly haunted dolls and paintings but did you ever hear of haunted bowling balls? Back in 2005 a set of antique garden bowling balls were bought at a sale by a young lady in St George, Ontario, Canada. She placed the eight balls under a table on a hardwood floor, intending to buy a basket to display them in. That night she was awoken by loud noises from downstairs.

‘Then,’ she reported, ‘I heard a spine-chilling sound of something being rolled across the hardwood floor downstairs in the hallway. I realised it was the sound of one of the wooden balls slowly rolling in the hall. I realised the loud bang – that had awoken me was the same as if someone had dropped one of those wooden balls from about shoulder height – only something you would hear in a bowling alley.’

Grabbing an old canoe paddle for self defence, she crept down stairs to see one of the balls lying in the middle of the hallway. She gathered them all up and put them in her garage, where they stay to this day.





The renowned ghost hunter Elliot O'Donnell was once told of a phantom grandfather clock that haunted a garden of a house in London. Apparently it trundled around the grounds like an anorexic Dalek. In his book *Obsession, Possession*, he wrote about a run in with another animated grandfather clock while staying with lady friend over Christmas. On the landing, outside his bedroom was a large grandfather clock in a shadowy corner. One night the clock began to behave very oddly. He wrote:

'The night before my friend was taken ill its ticking became strangely irregular. At one moment it sounded faint, at the next, the reverse; now it was slow, now quick; until at length, in a paroxysm of curiosity and fear, I cautiously opened my door and peeped out. It was a light night, and the glass face of the clock flashed back the moonbeams with startling brilliancy. A grim and subdued hush hung over the staircases and landings. The ticking was now low; but as I listened intently, it gradually grew louder and louder, until, to my horror, the colossal frame swayed violently backwards and forwards. Unable to stand the sight of it any longer, and fearful of what I might see next, I retreated into my room, and, carefully locking the door, lit the gas, and got into bed.

'The following night the same thing occurred, and I discovered that certain other members of the household had also heard it. My friend rapidly grew worse, and the irregularities of the clock became more and more pronounced, more and more disturbing. Then there came a morning, when, between two and three o'clock, unable to lie in bed and listen to the ticking any longer, I got up.

'An irresistible attraction dragged me to the door. I peeped out, and there, with the moonlight concentrated on its face as before, swayed the clock, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, slowly and solemnly; and with each movement there issued from within it a hollow, agonised voice, the counterpart of that of my sick friend, exclaiming, "Oh dear! Oh dear! It is coming! It is coming!"

Half an hour later a black, faceless 'thing' slithered up the stairs and entered his friend's room. Soon afterwards she was found to be dead. O'Donnell believed the clock to be possessed by a 'death elemental'.

If a possessed grandfather clock is not weird enough for you, how about a haunted trampoline? In a strange story from the US a witness recalls disturbing events witnessed by a group of children. Michael, the little brother of the main witness, and her two friends Haley and Olivia, were all playing on a trampoline in their garden.

They were aged about nine at the time. Two of them were lying face down on the trampoline when they saw, beneath it, a flickering orange face with black hair and blue eyes. Their screams attracted the other children who also saw the thing.

Then the trampoline began to shake violently and the face began to scream. From behind a fence on a private property adjacent to the house they heard

**'The house was invaded by a swarm of phantom hats (which) seemed to come from all ages and styles, including Victorian top hats and bonnets, as well as modern hats.'**







**'In Japan there is a tradition of a monstrous phantom chicken. The Basan is a giant rooster that breathes out fire.'**

a mumbling sound. The kids ran and locked themselves indoors. In the garden the trampoline continued to shake, along with their swings and a see-saw. The trampoline looked as if some invisible person was bouncing on it.

Cranking up the weird level another notch: according to Jennifer Westwood, in her 1985 book *Albion, a Guide to Legendary*

*Britain*, a lane in Crowborough, East Sussex, is haunted by a ghostly bag of soot! The phantom supposedly attacks anyone who sees it, though quite how a bag of soot could do more than make you dirty, is hard to imagine. Apparently, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a farmer tried to stand up to the bag of soot but it chased him off!

The question as to why ghosts have clothes has been posed in the past. But what about ghostly clothes with no ghost inside them? During a poltergeist outbreak in Kilakee, Ireland, in the 1960s, furniture exploded, pools of glue manifested themselves and

the house in question was invaded by a swarm of phantom hats. The hats seemed to come from all ages and styles, including Victorian top hats and bonnets as well as modern hats. The swarm of hats vanished as quickly as it had come and no explanation for them was ever found.

From poltergeists to 'poultrygeists'. Back in my days as a zookeeper at Twycross Zoo, I heard a very odd story. There had been a poltergeist outbreak in the town of Coleville or Coleshill (after 20-odd years I can't recall which of these Midlands towns it was in). It centred on a supermarket. Pools of urine would form on the floor and items would be scattered about. Witnesses claimed to have seen the ghost of an oven-ready chicken waddling around in the store!

Odd as it sounds the above case sounds, it is not without precedent. Sir Francis Bacon once killed, plucked and gutted a chicken then packed it with snow and ice



on Highgate Hill in an experiment to see how long the cold could preserve its flesh. Since then the plucked, gutted chicken has been seen wandering up and down the hill.

A friend of my colleague Bob Mann, a Newton Abbot-based folklorist, once moved into an old house with a tumbledown, uninhabited chicken coop in the garden. He reported seeing transparent ghost chickens scratching around in the garden.

In Japan there is a tradition of a monstrous phantom chicken. The Basan is found in Ehime Prefecture, and is a giant rooster that breathes out fire. In the day it hides in bamboo groves and at night wanders around making an odd rustling sound that wakes up villagers.

**“Suddenly, right before us, stood a giant, glowing skeleton of what looked like a pterodactyl. It hung its head over the car as if to look at us through the windshield.”**

From Prague there is a story of a ghost turkey. A mill owner on Kampa Island loved to eat and his favourite food was turkey. He had fattened up three of these birds for Easter. Whilst he was fasting on Good Friday he was overcome with hunger and his will broke. He ate a whole turkey to himself. Soon after, he died of a gall bladder infection.

From the day of his death his spirit returned to the mill in the form of a huge turkey wreathed in flames. The bullets of hunter could not stop it and it chased off the guard dogs. A priest tried to exorcise the bird but was chased off with his cassock in flames. The ghoulish gobbler is still supposed to appear on the island on Good Friday.

I have left the best till last. For sheer weirdness nothing can match up to this next case. It occurred around 1994 at Moss Bluff, near the

town of Liberty in Texas. When you hear the story I'm sure you will understand why the witnesses want to preserve their anonymity.

While driving into town during a storm one night they came to a bridge across a lake. But something truly bizarre was blocking their way:

‘Suddenly, right before us, on that bridge, stood a giant, glowing yellow skeleton of what looked to be a pterodactyl! Its wings spanned out across the front of the car, about 20 feet on each side. It had a long, spine-like neck with a huge beak and hollowed out eyes. It was all skeletal. With its long neck, it hung its head over the hood of the car as if to look at us in through the windshield. With that neck, it began to bob its head, back and forth, from either side of the hood.’

They continued: ‘We were terrified! We were stopped at

this point, of course, and for approximately one minute, this thing appeared to us, bobbing its head over the car. We even had long enough to examine whether it was a trick of the headlights or something, but could only conclude that it was impossible, and right before us stood some sort of monster; the ghost of something out of this world.’

The entity vanished and they drove into town, crying in fear. Later, in order to get home, they had to re-cross the bridge. Fortunately, the thing did not manifest a second time.

Looking at these cases makes me wonder if we will ever truly understand the nature of ‘ghosts’. In a Lovecraftian manner, are our minds only perceiving parts of a whole too huge to grasp? Like the Indian story of the blind men and the elephant, are we all groping myopically at fractions of the total? ☉





**VIOLENT PAST:**  
Virginia saw some of the bloodiest battles of the American Civil War, so perhaps it should be no surprise that so many of its ghosts date from this period. This is the grand memorial set up to commemorate the famous Battle of Gettysburg.





# Virginia Creepers

The former Commonwealth of Virginia is one of the most historic of the United States. Resident **PAULA THORNTON** bravely goes in search of restless souls and the mysterious, murderous 'Bunny Man'.

**COLD HARBOR** National Battlefield Park is aptly named. Setting out on a frigid day in February, one exits the vehicle to discover that Cold Harbor Park is just that: cold. Specifically, it feels about 20 degrees lower in Cold Harbor Park than any of the surrounding areas. Attempts to obtain photographs were frequent, with the bittercold making for shaken pictures and short stays.

For most, the stay at Cold Harbor is not a short one; Cold Harbor National Battlefield Park is Virginia's own contribution to one of the Top Ten Most Haunted battlefields in the United States. The battle of Cold Harbor took place between May 31 to June 12, 1864, with

grim discoveries of remains of those gone uncounted in the first total. Visitors have encountered the spirits of long-forgotten men, spied unexplained lights and heard hoof beats and the booms of cannon fire. These phenomena persist at Cold Harbor to this very day.

Despite multiple visits to the location, neither the author nor any accompanying companions have witnessed paranormal phenomena. The camera did turn itself on and off three times after leaving the first visit, but upon the second it was realized this was caused by failing batteries, rather than spirits. One became excited at what sounded like distant cannon fire, but it was



**COLD HARBOR:** This military cemetery is the last resting place of soldiers who died during the American Civil War, many of whom are still unidentified. Perhaps it is the nameless dead who are said to wander among the headstones.  
© Paula Thornton

'Visitors have encountered the spirits of long-forgotten men, spied unexplained lights and heard hoof beats and the booms of cannon fire.'

General Ulysses S. Grant present and in command. While both sides fought bravely, a total of 16,000 men were found dead, wounded, or simply went missing.

As time went on and the area of Cold Harbor became farmland, the numbers of the dead only increased as farmers made more and more

merely a flag grasping at the wind.

Witnesses seem to most often catch appearances on camera near the walkway, and many return with interesting photographs. As 'the walkway' is so ill-defined, I decided to instead attempt to catch a different ghost on camera, that of the Garthwright House.

The Garthwright House is located across the street from the graveyard, and this is where, it is rumoured, a family once lived who tended to the graves. During the battle, the family, their home surrounded by fighting, took safety in their basement for a full ten days. This family had a daughter, a young girl most likely no older than six, who fell to her death from the second-storey window. Supposedly, she was laid to rest within the cemetery they cared for. As far as I could see, the cemetery seems to be designated for war veterans only (and, in fact, they still accept them), and while there are numerous unnamed graves, it is unlikely one is for the girl.

In life, she supposedly played in the graveyard, and in death, supposedly, still does. Further investigation found no new claims for a sighting of this spirit, and talking with park staff, no one could confirm or deny the events in the tale itself.

The land surrounding the



**ECHOES:** Virginia residents re-enact one of the many battles of the Civil War which, as at Cold Harbor, has left behind stories of soldiers' restless souls still haunting the sites of their death.



Garthwright House is also supposed to be exceptionally haunted. It is reported that some see people walking, hear ghostly voices, and even experience tactile phenomena (such as breath on the neck). While the area did give me the feeling of wanting to leave, there was, again, no such luck for this writer. Excitingly enough, I did catch sight of what I believed at first to be someone peering from the window, but as I approached the house it became apparent this was merely a reflection of the sunlight.

Tracking down specific witness accounts and events turned out to be a challenge. While it was easy to find persons discussing the fact the area was haunted, and even to view photographs of questionable lights and mists, getting information on a repeated sighting was not going to be found from the comfort of home. After visiting the park, and learning it's an arrestable offence to be found on the property after dark, I phoned up the park ranger. Ranger Mike Gorman was not only helpful, informative and pleasant, but excited by the idea of ghostly phenomena.

'I'd love to talk to one of the spirits,' said Ranger Gorman. 'It would answer a lot of questions for me.'

Ranger Gorman confirmed that battles did take place in the areas by the cemetery and Garthwright House, and mentioned that occasionally people reported

phenomena in areas that were not fought in. The 'walkway', as best could be described, is most likely a small bridge on a trail within the park. However, the Ranger himself has never been witness to the paranormal, and has worked in all areas of the park for some time. He also assured me – despite my own impressions! – that the temperature within the park does not remain abnormally cold.

Again, it seems as if finding hardcore accounts may be a long, tiring search. But I refused to feel discouraged: there are many other ghosts in Virginia.

In fact, some spirits took up residence in the most clichéd place imaginable: The Edgar Allen Poe Museum, which was originally the

patriot, and when the Revolutionary War began, he spent the majority of his fortune manufacturing ammunition to fight the British. However, due to the war, his export business suffered greatly, and in 1781, aged just 56, Col Lewis died, overcome with financial worries. He is still seen to this day, dressed as if it is 1776, sitting at a desk in an upstairs room, intensely studying papers, concern masking his face. His anxious footsteps are also heard pacing the downstairs hall. Occasionally, he rattles a doorknob or two to see if the room is free. It is believed that worry killed Col Lewis and his troubled spirit has yet to find peace.

Finally, mention must be made of the enduring legend of the Bunny

**“I'd love to talk to one of the spirits,” said Ranger Gorman. ‘It would answer a lot of questions for me.’**

celebrated horror story writer's own home. While the curator, Chris Semtner, is open to the idea of the building being haunted, he regretfully had to admit that, sadly, Mr Poe himself is not haunting his former home.

Witnesses have reported seeing a little boy, and the profile of a woman. The identity of both these souls seems to have been lost to the tides of time, as child death was so common during the 1800's in the area, it is nearly impossible to name the boy. The woman has only been glimpsed within a window, and, it is debated, this may have been nothing more than a trick of sunlight on glass (like my own experience at Cold Harbor). It would seem these spirits are rather kindly, and have rarely been seen (although they did once reveal themselves in a wedding photograph).

Another popular location for a haunting in Virginia, besides battlefields and historic houses, are plantations. Plantation life caused suffering for many souls, and it's no surprise so many should be haunted. Most plantation ghosts are of slaves who suffered a wrongful, often horrific death or who haunt out of anger for being enslaved. However, Kenmore Plantation in historic Fredricksburg is haunted by the man of the house himself.

Colonel Fielding Lewis and his wife had 11 children. He was a

Man Bridge. If the 'Bunny Man' sounds like a tame individual to you, you're in for a surprise...

No one is sure of the year it all began, but most seem to pin it to Hallowe'en night, 1901. Earlier in the week, a bus carrying inmates destined for a newly built lunatic asylum overturned. The charges scattered, and all but two were recovered and accounted for. The bus continued on, and local law enforcement continued a fruitless search for the missing inmates. All they came across were half-eaten rabbits, devoid of skin.

Within a week, they found one of the missing men, dead, a hatchet not far away, along with another rabbit. They assumed the other inmate, still unaccounted for, had either been killed by this one, or had perished to the elements. Either way, they foolishly relaxed their search.

On October 31, 1901, a group of Fairfax teenagers went to a bridge to enjoy a night of mild rebellion. As the night wore on, more and more teens drifted off back home. Just before midnight, there were only three or four kids left to suffer the horror that was to fall upon them. They were found the next morning, disemboweled, hanging from the bridge with their feet dangling in front of carts passing on the road running beneath.

The following year, townfolk of Fairfax warned their children of the

**Below ON REFLECTION:** Haunted Garthwright House overlooking the site of the Battle of Cold Harbor. Notice the reflection in the upper storey window, third from left – at first glance the author thought it might be a ghost peeping out at her! © Paula Thornton

**Bottom HOUSE OF HORROR:** The former home of the master of the macabre, Edgar Allen Poe, has its ghosts – although Poe himself is not among them. © Paula Thornton





previous year's events. Believing it to be a wild tale concocted to prevent a night of fun, they, of course, returned to the bridge. Another two lost their lives that night.

For a few years, people remembered the lesson and avoided the bridge. But, as time went on, children grew to teens and refused to believe what sounded like so much like a made-up yarn. Year after year, more children fell in bloody slaughter to what the townsfolk now named 'The Bunny Man'.

Finally, about 1970, the apparently ageless Bunny Man made a mistake, and left a girl alive. After a lengthy recovery, she was able to tell others the horror of what transpired. She said she was with a large group, at first, and all were determined to wait until midnight and witness the arrival of the supposedly mythical Bunny Man. As the night went on, laughter rang out, beer nicked from parents was passed about. With the zero hour approaching, however, more and more showed their true colours and left hastily, with excuses of homework or dinner.

By midnight, there was a total of just five teenagers left. The surviving victim was seated farthest from the mouth of the bridge: could that have been the key to her survival?

She reported that, at midnight exactly, a light like that of a lantern began to float over the railroad track on top of the bridge. It slowly bobbed its way to the middle of the bridge - where it suddenly went out. Then, impossibly quickly, the light reappeared under the bridge, except it was now so huge and bright, it completely lit up the tunnel, as if a car with its headlights blazing was passing through. For an instant she could make out at the centre of the painfully bright light - the Bunny Man.

Within seconds, laughter had turned to screams of terror, as a hatchet rapidly began to disembowel the teens. For whatever reason, when the monster reached the witness, he failed to use sufficient force to cut her deeply enough to kill her. It seems he was also lousy at tying nooses, for the girl awoke alive beside her murdered friends, hanging above the road.

According to local legend this witness still lives, recognisable as the sole survivor of the Bunny Man's attacks because she has never quite recovered from her ordeal. She spends all her time swinging on her



seat on her front porch, staring off in the direction of Bunny Man Bridge.

That, at least, is the story. But is it true? Not according to Fairfax County Public Library Historian and Archivist, Brian A. Conley, who has spent years conducting extensive research into the Bunny Man legend. Indeed, he has discovered that the same yarn is told about 14 different locations across the United States.

Nevertheless, there does seem to have been at least one genuine Bunny Man, but one who presumably took his menacing inspiration from the original legend. In 1970, a man in a white rabbit suit

bust you on the head.'

When Mr. Phillips went to retrieve his gun from his car, the Bunny Man ran off into the woods.

Both occurrences were investigated by the local police, but eventually the case was closed due to a lack of evidence. In the following weeks, 50 people called the police to report seeing the Bunny Man. However, many of the supposed witnesses turned out to be children, some of whom then claimed to have not only met the Bunny man but to have played with him! None could offer a description.

Nevertheless, public fascination with the events continued. By 1973,

**BUNNY MAN BRIDGE:** It is here, according to local legend, that many young revellers have been murdered by a bizarre and apparently ageless assailant. © Paula Thornton

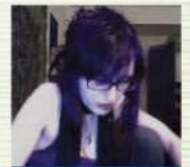
**'For an instant she could make out at the centre of the painfully bright light - the Bunny Man. Within seconds, laughter had turned to screams of terror.'**

threw a hatchet through the window of a car driving along Guinea Road in Burke, Virginia. USAFA Cadet Bob Bennett and his fiancée Dusty narrowly escaped injury. Although they glimpsed the 'Bunny Man's' face, neither could accurately remember it. They said he screamed at them as they drove past that they were trespassers, adding: 'I have your tag number!'

A week later, Paul Phillips, a security guard at a construction site in Kings Park West on Guinea Road, came upon a man dressed in a black, white and gray bunny suit, busily trying to chop down the front porch. The Bunny Man told him: 'All you people trespass around here. If you don't get out of here, I'm going to

University of Maryland student Patricia Johnson had written a paper that chronicled 54 different variations of the two events!

The Bunny Man aside, there's no doubt that Virginia harbours many spirits: too many, in fact, to even brush lightly upon every supposed haunted site in the state. Ghosts, spirits, souls - what have you - are treated with an air of common acceptance by Virginians, who seem to grow up with ghost tales. I have yet to hear anyone berating another for such a belief. Even the most sombre, sober people will admit to an experience with a ghost, or the willingness to encounter one. In historic Virginia, they have more chance than most. ☘



**Paula J. Thornton** was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1984 and intends to remain in the area until she is successful in alienating every other resident. She has a long-standing interest in the paranormal, particularly ghosts. Paula has also been observed in the wild, urban Richmond landscape drawing, writing, modelling, and mastering the art of being an outcast in society.





## MY BIGGEST FRIGHT

Way back in issue 42, Peter Hough wrote an article about a strange haunting which created pools of water, among other things ('Moist Haunted' we jokingly called it). During the investigation seasoned researcher STEVE MERA, a regular writer for this magazine, suffered a frightening experience – one that changed his entire outlook on the paranormal. Here Steve personally recounts what happened.

**HARD EVIDENCE:**  
The red mark found on Steve's back after the incident in the back bedroom.



# THE INVISIBLE ASSAILANT

Steve Mera is the chairman of MAPIT, Manchester's Association of Paranormal Investigation & Training ([www.MAPIT.kk5.org](http://www.MAPIT.kk5.org)), which was established in 1974. He is also the founder of SEP, the Scientific Establishment of Parapsychology, and has been involved in the scientific study and investigation of anomalous phenomena for around 25 years. He currently lectures and tutors on the British Investigators Training Course.



**'THE BREATHING GOT LOUDER AND NEARER; AND OUT OF SHEER PANIC I FORCED MYSELF TO TURN AND FACE WHATEVER IT WAS IN THE DARKNESS...'**

AS I SAT THERE IN THE DARKNESS I could hear it... at first quite faint but growing louder. It was now right behind me... the deep rasping breaths were just over my shoulder. I tried to gather the courage to turn and face this thing. My mouth had run dry, my palms were sweating. Oh well, hear we go...

I slowly turned to look behind me and that was when the unthinkable happened. It was so fast, I couldn't believe it! Crouched in pain, I ran, without a care for what people thought. I just had to get out of there.

Confused as to what had exactly happened, I found myself in the lounge. Something had lashed out in the darkness, it had attacked me, and I had the marks to prove it.

During an investigation in 1996 I had experienced something that was to change my opinion on the supernatural forever. On most occasions, an investigation

of supposed paranormal disturbances rarely amount to anything substantial. Over the last 20 years I have stayed over in many of the country's most haunted buildings in the hope of obtaining any scrap of evidence to support all the hype you read.

I wish I had a penny for every time I've been told that there's an apparition of a blue, grey or white lady. Tall tales are easy to come by, and they are usually supported by photographs of 'orbs' which often turn out to be nothing more than illuminated dust particles! Yes, I've heard it all before, that orbs are anything from the first stages of a manifestation to a demonic entity Hell-bent on destroying your soul.

So, you may ask yourself, why do I even bother spending my time sitting in cold, dark, damp places waiting to witness something truly unusual? Well, it's all because of what I experienced that night back in the August of 1996. For me, the



## 'SOMETHING HAD LASHED OUT IN THE DARKNESS, IT HAD ATTACKED ME, AND I HAD THE MARKS TO PROVE IT.'

incidents of that night hammered home the fact that paranormal phenomena really does exist; and since then dedicated my life in an attempt to find out how and why such phenomena can occur.

I cannot speak for everyone. For me it's worthy of as much investigation and research you can give it. I guess you would have had to have been there. Sometimes you really do need to see it to believe it. I did, and for the first time in my life I was truly scared.

I learnt of a family who were having strange outpourings of water in their prefab bungalow home in Rochdale. The Gardner family was plagued by the sudden appearance of water on their ceilings, doors and worktops. Rochdale council had dispatched investigators to the scene several times in hope of finding the problem, but it seemed they had drawn a blank.

I contacted the family and they agreed for me to visit and interview them. I quickly realised there was a lot more to it. Pictures had jumped off the wall in view of witnesses; objects were found to have been moved; strange odours of pipe tobacco had been detected; appliances found working on their own even when not plugged in; unusual sounds throughout the night and, of course, the water. There was evidence of water damage in almost every room.

Mrs Gardner agreed I could return armed with equipment and investigators. I had arranged for the Gardners to stay over at relatives... I arrived with four investigators and an array of equipment. Throughout the night we experienced things I'd only read in books: an apportionment of a small statuette, strange odours of tobacco and flowers, and further formings of water that seemed to intelligently make its way across the hallway ceiling. I was loving it... Excited at the possibility of what next might occur. However, as the night drew in a more sinister atmosphere fell over the home...

It was now around 3 am. I was sitting on the end of a bed in the back bedroom. Either side of me were investigators Carole and Val.

We sat in silence, listening for any little noise... A few minutes later a strange feeling came over me, an odd tingling sensation and a feeling of anticipation. And then a noise, quiet at first but getting louder. The sound of deep breathing from directly behind me.

A sudden coldness came over me. I was only laughing and joking an hour ago, but here I was absolutely terrified. I looked over at both Carole and Val. They too could hear it. I knew that being

### Spooky spills scar family from home



**IN THE NEWS:** A press cutting from the time of the Rochdale haunting.

the man, it would have to be me to turn round and see what it was; but I couldn't. Fear had gripped me so hard that I couldn't move. The breathing got louder and nearer; and out of sheer panic I forced myself to turn and face whatever it was in the darkness...

At that very moment I suddenly felt myself thrust off the bed as if something had hit me hard in the back. The only thought on my mind was to run out of there. I felt physically threatened. I rushed past Carole and Val holding my back. I found myself in the lounge fumbling for the light switch. Whatever happened had clearly left me in a state of panic. My heart was racing.

A few seconds later I tried to explain to my team what had

happened. The sudden feeling of being punched and an electric shock at the same time had left a nasty mark on my back. It was clear that it was starting to bruise.

I had to leave the building... I needed some air. As I stood in back garden I contemplated my future in paranormal research. I thought


I had been in acceptance that such phenomena existed but apparently not. I had been fooling myself! This was all a bit too real for me, but what was I to do? Rather than look foolish, I decided to carry on the investigation. But I did seriously doubt whether or not I should be doing this. After all, how can you protect yourself against something you can't see?

The whole experience had changed me. Over the following weeks I had come to accept what had happened and it gave me a new zest for knowledge and to further investigate the strange and profound. But I don't think I'd ever want to experience that feeling again. A feeling that now, while writing this still gives me a chill! ●

**DAMP SPIRITS:** Steve Mera examines one of the mysterious wet patches apparently controlled by a poltergeist.



# BEWARE THE BOLDON BRAG!

A dog, possibly a Weimaraner, is shown from the back, wearing a white dress shirt and a patterned tie. The dog is holding a newspaper in its mouth and appears to be reading it. The background is a bright, overexposed outdoor setting.

A few issues ago we were warning you to beware of the Kildgrove Boggart. Can there really be hostile paranormal entities lurking in the British countryside? Experienced investigator **MIKE HALLOWELL** is convinced of it, and fears the one haunting some fields near his home has even been known to kill - and may kill again. Here is Mike's full report of the research he introduced in 'My Biggest Fright' last month.



**SOME TIME AGO** I began work on a book. It concerned a young couple from Usworth, near Washington, in the county of Tyne & Wear, not far from my home. On the evening of January 30, 1909, Florrie Kay and William Shipley left William's family home and, after visiting relatives, walked to an area in West Boldon known as West Pastures. They were never seen alive again.

Shortly afterwards they were found dead, lying in the snow. Walkers nearby heard a number of gunshots. When they ran to the scene, they found the couple lifeless. A pistol lay nearby. The police were called, an inquest was held and it was determined that William had, in a moment of insanity, shot Florrie and then killed himself.

As I researched the case, I became aware of gross inconsistencies in the testimonies of the witnesses. It was apparent that William hadn't shot Florrie, but that both had been killed by an unidentified assailant. The press had labelled the killings as a murder/suicide, when in reality it was a double murder. In fact, there were distinctly paranormal overtones to the case. My feeling is that the deaths were connected to a violent, sinister creature called the Brag which was alleged to have

haunted the area for centuries.

I discussed the case with my good friends and fellow researchers John Triplow and Kelly Williams, who were fascinated and eager to visit the place, and so, on Saturday, January 16, 2010, we did just that, culminating at Quarry Path where the Brag was seen as recently as 2008.

#### WEIRD ENCOUNTERS

The westerly end of Quarry path joins Downhill Lane, and is guarded by a number of large boulders placed there to prevent motor vehicles accessing the site. Whereas an aerial view implies that the path is flat, almost from the start it inclines upwards as it snakes towards the site of an old quarry.

To our left, the incline had converted into a steep hill. John decided to walk to the top, something which Kelly and I felt disinclined to do. We stood on the path and chatted as John disappeared into the night, his footfalls becoming ever fainter. Maybe two minutes passed by, and as Kelly and I stood and talked, I suddenly heard a noise. It came from the right-hand side of the path, and sounded for all the world like a tiny kitten meowing.

'Did you hear that?' I asked Kelly. 'It sounded like a cat... maybe a kitten.'



**ON TRACK:** Mike Hallowell during his visit to Quarry Path. © Thunderbird Craft & Media

**'MY FEELING IS THAT THE DEATHS WERE CONNECTED TO A VIOLENT, SINISTER CREATURE CALLED THE BRAG WHICH IS ALLEGED TO HAVE HAUNTED THE AREA FOR CENTURIES.'**

'Yes, I did but I also thought I heard another sound... it was like breathing.'

'I didn't hear that, but I definitely heard a meowing sound. I think we need to be careful; the Brag sometimes masquerades as an animal before declaring itself,' I said, half in jest.

Then I heard the meowing noise again. I can't recall if Kelly heard it the second time, but it was distinct. Just then, we saw a faint, bobbing pinpoint of light at the top of the hill. It was John, carrying his torch. It took him a while to reach us. When he did, he said: 'I had a bit of a funny experience up there. I'm sure I could hear a cat meowing.'

'We heard it down here,' I said. 'It seemed to be coming from those bushes.' I pointed to the thicket on the right-hand side of the path. ●

**INVESTIGATORS:** John, right, and Kelly Triplow during the visit to West Pastures with the author. © Thunderbird Craft & Media

**DEATH SCENE:** The junction of Follingsby Lane and West Pastures, where the bodies of William Shipley and Florence Kay were found. © Thunderbird Craft & Media







**KILLING FIELD:** The field where the farmhands Snowden and Ridley were found unconscious. © Thunderbird Craft & Media



**HAVEN:** The inn where the two dying farmhands were taken shortly before their deaths. © Thunderbird Craft & Media

**‘JOHN SAID: “YOU KNOW, I HAD THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING WAS WATCHING ME BACK THERE.” “SO DID I,” I REPLIED.’**

‘That’s weird,’ said John. ‘When I heard it, it seemed to be coming from close to where I was... on the top of the hill.’

This concerned me even more, for the Brag has, by reputation, an ability to jump from one location to another – and back again – instantaneously. Sceptics may laugh, but I have personally interviewed people who have been absolutely terrified by such encounters. To be honest, I was glad when John and Kelly decided to head back down the path to Downhill Lane – and the car.

As we trundled down the sodden lane, John said: ‘You know, I had the feeling that something was watching me back there.’

‘I know. So did I,’ I replied.

When we got within 30 yards or so of the lay-by, I mentioned to John and Kelly how the presence of the Brag could – at least according to one tradition – be identified.

‘They say that if birds twitter or squawk at night, when they should be asleep, it’s a sign that the Brag may be around.’

No sooner had the words left my mouth when, from our right and out of the trees, came one of the weirdest noises I’ve ever heard. It sounded like a cross between a

squawk and a croak: eerie, animal-like, but from my perspective completely unidentifiable.

John and Kelly heard it too. The three of us stared at each other, open-mouthed. Kelly was the first to break the silence, saying: ‘Did you hear *that*?’

‘You know what?’ I replied. ‘I think we’d best leave.’

Once again we started walking towards the end of Quarry Path. John turned around sharply and looked behind him. Both he and I had heard the sound of something colliding with the pathway behind us. It sounded like a stone hitting the earth. We stared, but there was nothing to be seen. If something had been thrown at us, then we’d never find it. The end of the path was strewn with hundreds of stones, large and small.

‘That was weird,’ said John. And indeed it was.

On a previous visit to the area I’d photographed two strange, red lights which look like the eyes of an animal. By tradition the eyes of the Brag are red. Sometimes the Brag takes on a human shape, but displays the head of an animal such as a pig, horse or cow.

Recently John and I paid another visit to the site with a colleague, the photographer Gail Ward. We were walking down a deserted pathway, when Gail and I repeatedly heard a rustling noise emanating from the hedgerow, as if something was keeping pace with us. Then, as on

the previous visit, we were startled by a loud screech.

It was similar to the one we’d heard on our previous visit, only higher-pitched, much louder and far more protracted. It seemed to go on forever. John noted that it seemed to start at ground level and then rise up into the air. It was like no animal noise we’d ever heard before, and it certainly wasn’t a birdcall. It was sinister, menacing and malign.

We didn’t have our audio recorders running at that point, but later, when John was listening to a recording he’d made shortly afterwards, he heard a rasping voice whisper, ‘Don’t bother me!’

The voice didn’t belong to John, Gail or myself.

**WHAT KILLED RIPLEY AND SNOWDEN?**

One of the most chilling encounters from the Boldon area came to my attention a few months after my first visit. My suspicion is that the Brag may well have been at work.

In the early afternoon of Wednesday, April 8, 1857, the 18 year-old son of a local farmer called Snowden was working in a field not far from Quarry Path. He was accompanied by another man, named Ridley, a farmhand employed by Snowden’s father. Contemporary records state that Ridley was aged 35.

At some point a carter named Henderson drove past the two men as they went about their work and noted them both to be hale, hearty



and in good spirits. Fifteen minutes later, however, Henderson's attention was drawn by the sound of Snowden calling out to him. The carter drove towards the workers at some speed to see what the problem was.

On arrival he clambered down from his cart and, to his horror, found Ridley lying on the ground unconscious. There were blood marks on his face, and Snowden, he noted, had a dark discoloration around one of his eyes. He immediately tried to solicit an explanation from the younger man as to what had happened, but in vain. Snowden seemed incapable of giving any coherent account of what had led to the situation they now found themselves in.

Just then, Henderson noticed that the horses attached to his cart were becoming restless, something which he put down to the approach of a train on the nearby Sunderland-Gateshead railway line. This is rather odd, for the line had been there for some time and the horses must surely have been used to such noises. Nevertheless, Henderson went off to steady the animals, convinced that the two men had simply been fighting. Within minutes several other employees were passing and, seemingly concerned by something, made their way over to where Snowden and Ridley had last been

fleur de lis and lion—with the date, 1580, being very distinct, as also most of the letters of the superscription—  
 POSVI DEVM ADIVTOREM MET.

April 8.—A melancholy circumstance occurred at West Boldon, resulting in the sudden and awful death of a young man, aged 18, son of Mr. Snowden, farmer, and his farm servant, William Ridley, aged 35. Young Snowden and Ridley were employed in a field between Newcastle and Sunderland, where they were seen at work apparently nothing ailing a quarter of an hour previously by a carter, named Henderson, who had his attention called to the two poor fellows in consequence of young Snowden calling out to him to come to their assistance. Henderson immediately left his horses, and went forward and found Ridley with a mark of blood on his face lying on the ground insensible; he also observed a black mark round one of Snowden's eyes. He earnestly endeavoured to get an explanation from Snowden, but in vain. A passing train having called his attention to his horses he left them, under the impression that they had been fighting. Within a few minutes of Henderson leaving them, several persons hastened to the spot and found them both insensible. They were carried to West Boldon, but they had scarcely arrived before the vital spark had fled, and their bodies speedily became blackened all over. Medical gentlemen were called in, but, unfortunately, too late to be of any avail. It was supposed, from the fact of some of the root of the *Cicuta Virosa*, with teeth marks in it been found close to the spot where the men were lying, that they had been eating this poisonous substance, and so perished in the lamentable manner related. The occurrence caused an immense sensation and grief for miles around the locality. The *Cicuta Virosa*, or Water Hemlock, causes death by inducing paralysis of the muscles used in respiration.

seen. There they found both men lying on the ground unconscious.

The men were placed upon Henderson's cart and taken to West Boldon, where they were laid on tables at a local public house, which I have been told was the inn now called the Travelling Man. Within minutes of their arrival the condition of both men worsened. Two local doctors turned up but were too late to be of any assistance. The two farmhands were dead. Disturbingly, those in attendance noticed something distinctly odd; the corpses rapidly began to turn black.

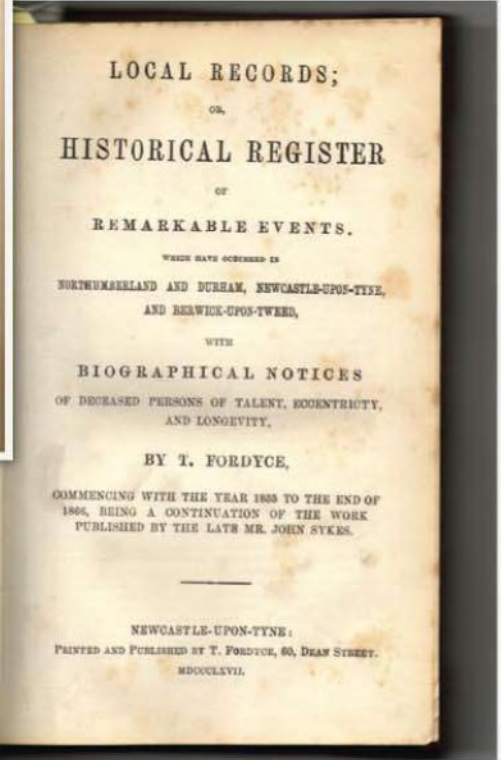
A search was carried out at the spot where the two men were discovered, and allegedly someone found pieces of plant material which appeared to bear human teeth marks. The plant

was none other than *Cicuta virosa*, or Water Hemlock. The root of the plant has a not unpleasant aroma similar to parsnips, but is extremely toxic, and the conclusion was that the men had eaten the plant and, within the hour, succumbed to its effects.

However, neither Henderson nor any of the other witnesses claimed to have seen signs in the victims of two of its most common symptoms, vomiting and seizures. It is also highly improbable that the farmhands would have been unaware of the dangers of eating hemlock, so the theory that the men were poisoned is simply that; a notion with no supporting evidence.

The number of inexplicable deaths that have occurred in the vicinity are disturbing, including several bizarre suicides near a local railway station. During my research I found that many of the deaths seemed to be connected with sightings of the Brag. One local doctor, sceptical about the existence of the creature, hanged himself after his first and last encounter and I cannot help but wonder if the demise of Snowden and Ridley somehow fell into that category also.

Like the other bizarre events at West Boldon, the mysterious deaths of the two men may never be solved. The Brag? Perhaps it still out there, waiting... ●



ARCHIVE: Fordyce's Local Records or Historical Register, which contains the record, reproduced here, of the mysterious deaths of the two farm workers. © Thunderbird Craft & Media

**'THE TWO FARMHANDS WERE DEAD. DISTURBINGLY, THOSE IN ATTENDANCE NOTICED SOMETHING DISTINCTLY ODD; THE CORPSES RAPIDLY BEGAN TO TURN BLACK.'**



CAPTURED: Two strange, red lights photographed at West Pastures; the eyes of the Brag? © Thunderbird Craft & Media

Read Michael Hallowell's extraordinary insights into the nature of dreams and reality in Bookend on page 82.





## Popular Haunts

This month we visit one of the most historic and beautiful buildings in London, a city overly blessed with historic and beautiful buildings. Our guide has earned himself a place in history, too – at least in ghost-hunting circles – PETER UNDERWOOD, who has been investigating paranormal phenomena for nearly 60 years.



**ABBEY HABITS:** The medieval cloisters, where ghostly monks have often been seen. One monk has even been known to speak to visitors in what sounded like Elizabethan English.

# Westminster Abbey

WESTMINSTER, LONDON

**THE PRESENT ABBEY** was founded by Edward the Confessor in 1049-65, and some of the original foundations have been discovered beneath the present structure in the Chapel of the Pyx (originally used as a treasure-house for the jewels and moneys of the Crown) and in the crypt beneath the Chapter House, known as the Confessor's Chapel, where the walls are 17 feet thick, Henry III rebuilt the entire

structure, and in 1269 the portion then completed was consecrated.

In 1303, thieves gained entrance to the treasure-house and carried away some millions of pounds in jewels and gold, but most of the treasure was recaptured from temporary burial in a plot of flax in the middle of the Great Cloister. The thieves were executed and then skinned, their skins being tanned and used to cover both sides of a door opening into the passage from the cloisters, a

doorway which the monks used to gain entrance to their dormitory, and so they were continually reminded of the theft and of what happened to those who committed sacrilege. This door still exists.

Some years ago, a policeman on duty one autumn night saw a man in ecclesiastical robes hurry towards the abbey entrance and disappear through the closed doors. As he approached the abbey to investigate, he felt a tap on his shoulder and saw, approaching through the evening gloom, a procession of black-clad figures, walking in twos. They were men with bowed heads, their hands clasped before them, but their feet made no sound on the stone-paved sanctuary. They passed close to the astonished policeman and, like the

**‘The cowed figure approached to within five feet of where they stood, and they noticed that his feet were an inch or so above the ground.’**





figure that had preceded them, they disappeared through the closed western doors of the great abbey.

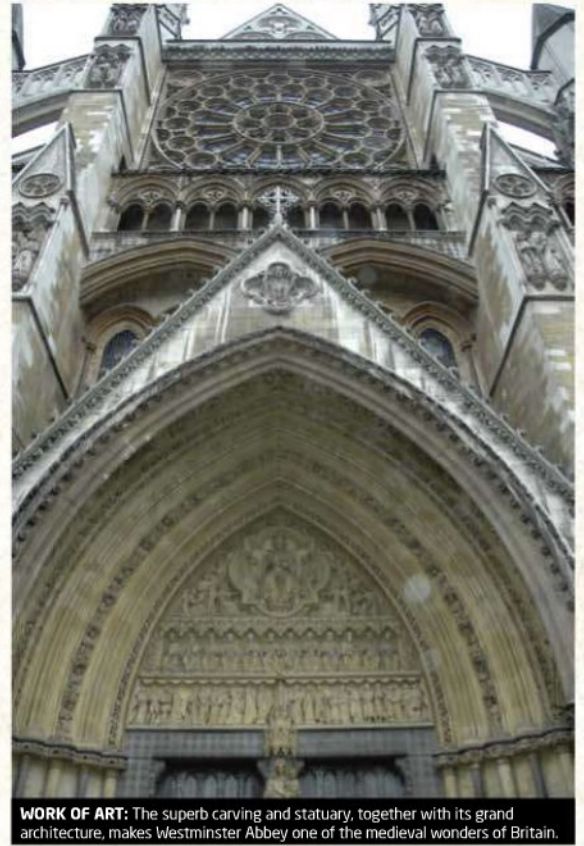
After a moment, the officer approached the doorway and heard 'sweet and plaintive' music from within the closed and unlit abbey. As he listened he was distracted by the sound of someone passing nearby and, when he turned to listen again, all was quiet within the historic building.

The best-known ghost of Westminster Abbey is 'Father Benedictus', a monk said to have been murdered when the thieves robbed the abbey in 1303, although there is no record of any monk being killed inside the abbey. Those who have seen the apparition describe the figure as tall and thin, with a prominent forehead, sallow skin, a hooked nose and deep-set eyes.

Among the witnesses were two young women who saw the form one Saturday evening in 1900. They were in the abbey for evensong and turning towards the south transept they saw a Benedictine monk standing silently watching them. His hands were hidden in the sleeves of his habit and his cowl was thrown back to reveal a domed head. His leisured gaze swept over the assembled congregation and then he slowly walked backwards, pausing occasionally to look contemptuously at some member of the public. At length he disappeared through a solid wall and one witness estimated that she had watched the mysterious and somewhat frightening figure for over 20 minutes.

Father Benedictus is said to often walk through the cloisters between five and six o'clock in the evening and occasionally he is reported to talk to people, before vanishing into solid stone wall. Some years ago, the figure was seen by three visitors who stated that the cowed figure approached to within five feet of where they stood, and they noticed that his feet were an inch or so above the ground — the stones of the floor of the cloisters having been worn down since the monk walked there in the flesh. On the occasions when the figure is reported to have spoken, he is said to talk in what sounds like Elizabethan English and he once said that he was killed in the reign of Henry VIII.

The unexplained figure of a khaki-clad soldier of the First World War, mud-stained and bareheaded with his eyes full of strange pleading, has been seen near the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. Sometimes he has been seen with outstretched arms as though imploring help or deliverance. One witness of



**WORK OF ART:** The superb carving and statuary, together with its grand architecture, makes Westminster Abbey one of the medieval wonders of Britain.

## 'The figure of a khaki-clad soldier of the First World War, mud-stained and bareheaded with his eyes full of strange pleading, has been seen near the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.'

this apparition told me that the figure seemed to be trying to say something but no sound of any kind accompanied the appearance, which lasted only a few seconds in the dying sunlight of a winter's day. The form has become known as the ghost of the Unknown Warrior.

A historical ghost haunts the Inslip Rooms in the deanery at Westminster Abbey where heavy footsteps have been repeatedly heard in the passage and on the stairs at dead of night. They are believed to be those of John Bradshaw, president of the High Court of Justice, who, during the Commonwealth, occupied these rooms. It was here that Bradshaw, having put aside all legal objections to the court, refused to allow Charles I to speak in his own defence and, having pronounced the death sentence on the king, finally signed the

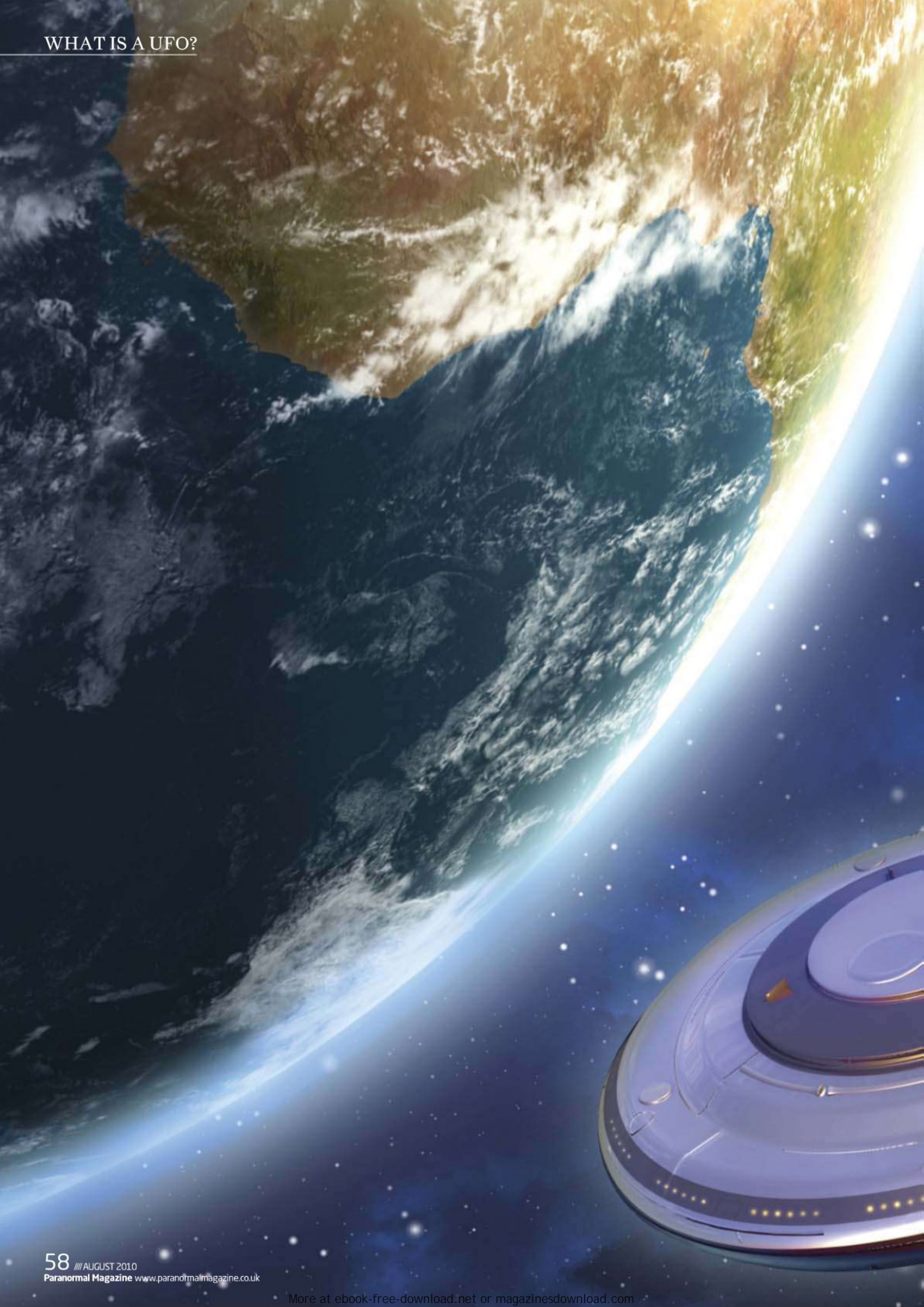
warrant authorizing the execution. Bradshaw's ghost has also been reported to have been seen here.

In June 1972, Dr Edward J. Moody of the Department of Anthropology at Lawrence University told me about the experiences of a film unit during filming in the crypt of Westminster Abbey, beneath Poets' Corner. Among other happenings, I was told about the curious behaviour of a certain door which would not remain closed but opened by itself time after time; there was an odd and peculiar noise which almost defied description but which was noticed by everyone present although nothing could be discovered that might have accounted for it; and there was the curious action of some of the lighting apparatus when lights switched themselves off three times in succession. ❁



This is an edited extract from *Haunted London* by Peter Underwood, recently published in a revised edition by Amberley (ISBN 978-1-84868-262-7). Visit [www.amberley-books.co.uk](http://www.amberley-books.co.uk)







# What is a UFO?

Recently we asked the deceptively simple question, 'What is a ghost?' Determining the precise nature of the UFO phenomenon is also not as straightforward as it might seem. We asked UFO expert **NICK REDFERN** to highlight the main theories seeking to explain the big questions: What are they and where do they come from?

**FOR MOST PEOPLE**, any mention of UFOs inevitably conjures up imagery of spaceships from other worlds, and alien abductions. However, the theory that UFOs originate in far-away galaxies is simply that – a theory. In fact, numerous suggestions have been made to explain the UFO presence that has, for decades, fascinated generations of saucer-seekers. In this article I explore the most significant

## EXTRATERRESTRIALS

The most prevalent and popular theory put forward to try and resolve the nature of UFOs is that

which suggests the phenomenon has extraterrestrial origins.

Alien abductions, threats from the notorious Men in Black, Contactee-style close encounters, crop circles, and accounts of crashed UFOs secretly held by the US Government are all seen as prime evidence that E.T. is among us. And, indeed, the outer-space theory has some notable supporters.

Born in Hereford, Texas in 1930, Edgar Mitchell flew as lunar module pilot on NASA's Apollo 14 mission to the Moon, spent nine

flying objects, or UFOs, recorded since the 1940s, belong to visitors from other planets'.

In an exclusive interview undertaken on October 10, 1998, from his Florida home, Mitchell told John Earls, of Britain's *People* newspaper, he was certain that extraterrestrial life is a reality, and believed that at least some of that life has visited the Earth.

'As a former astronaut, the military people who have access to these files are more willing to talk to me than to people they regard as mere cranks,' he said.

**"As a former astronaut, military people are more willing to talk to me than to people they regard as cranks. The stories I have heard from these people leave me in no doubt that aliens have already visited Earth."**

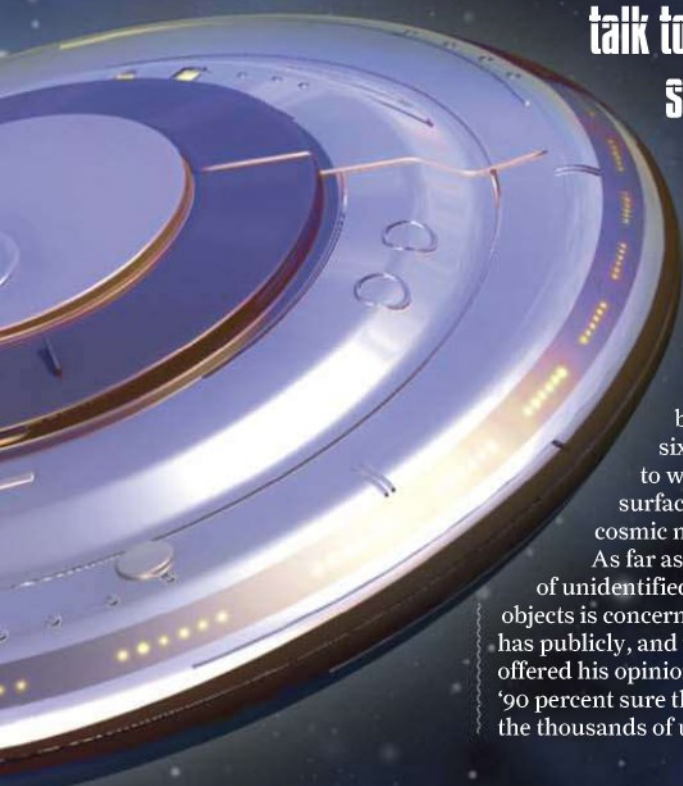
hours working on the lunar landscape in the Fra Mauro Highlands region, and became the sixth person to walk on the surface of our nearest cosmic neighbour.

As far as the controversy of unidentified flying objects is concerned, Mitchell has publicly, and very vocally, offered his opinion that he is '90 percent sure that many of the thousands of unidentified

'The stories I have heard from these people, who are more highly qualified than me to talk about UFOs, leave me in no doubt that aliens have already visited Earth.'

## HOME-GROWN ALIENS

One of the most thought-provoking theories offered in an attempt to provide an explanation for aspects of the UFO presence on our world suggests that the aliens are, actually, a very ancient and advanced body of people, closely related to the Human Race, who have lived alongside us in secret – possibly deep underground – for countless millennia. ● ●







**ALIEN LIFE:** Many people believe that the UFO phenomenon is an open-and-shut case, convinced that the world's governments have retrieved both alien spaceships and their non-human pilots. For many, an extraterrestrial origin is proven.

**“According to my father, these vehicles came from inside the planet. The civilization . . . exists in a vast, underground system of caverns.”**

For those who consider such a scenario to be too-fantastic-for-words, give careful consideration to the revelations of the writer-researcher E. A. Guest. During the period of his employment with the military, Guest's father received at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, a classified briefing on the famous UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico, in the summer of 1947.

Guest says that at the time of his father's briefing, the Air Force had come to the conclusion that neither the strange aerial device nor the bodies found in



**ASTRONAUT:** Edgar Mitchell aboard the Apollo 14 moon mission. Mitchell claims to have spoken to key military speakers who have met with extraterrestrials.

the desert outside of Roswell had alien origins. Rather, says Guest, 'According to my father, these vehicles came from inside the planet. The civilization... exists in a vast, underground system of caverns and tunnels beneath the southwest and is human. They went underground thousands of years ago.'

Guest was additionally told by his father that: 'Occasionally, they come and go, emerging in their vehicles, and occasionally they crash. They are human in appearance, so much so that they can move among us with ease with just a little effort. If you get a close look, you'd notice something odd, but not if the person just passed you on the street. I believe that the ET hypothesis has been used by the "aliens" themselves, since it is most readily embraced by people who have had encounters with them.'

**GREAT BALLS OF FIRE**  
US military files demonstrate that only two years after pilot Kenneth



**HIDDEN:** Do we share our world with a secret race of technologically advanced humanoids, living within the Earth's crust?



**BALL OF FIRE:** The rarely seen phenomenon of ball lightning - like this example which 'bombed' a church on Dartmoor in 1638 - quite possibly accounts for some UFO sightings



Arnold's now-legendary sighting of nine UFOs over the Cascade Mountains, Washington State, on June 24, 1947, the US Department of Commerce was focused on determining if some UFOs were evidence of ball-lightning. A technical report that was prepared on behalf of the Air Force's UFO research body, *Project Grudge*, in 1949, detailed the findings of the DoC's Weather Bureau in relation to ball lightning. The rare weather phenomenon, the DoC said, was... '...spherical, roughly globular, egg-shaped, or pear-shaped; many times with projecting streamers; or flame-like irregular "masses of light." Luminous in appearance, described in individual cases by different colors but mostly reported as deep red and often as glaring white. Some of the cases of "ball-lightning" observed have displayed excrescences of the appearance of little flames emanating from the main body of the luminous mass, or luminous streamers have developed from it and propagated slant-wise toward the ground.

'In rare instances, it has been reported that the luminous body

**"Research indicates that people who come into close contact with these charged plasma forms experience altered states of consciousness producing a host of strange visions [including] UFO abductions."**

may break up into a number of smaller balls which may appear to fall towards the earth like a rain of sparks. It has even been reported that the ball has suddenly ejected a whole bundle of many luminous, radiating streamers toward the earth, and then disappeared. There have been reports by observers of "ball-lightning" to the effect that the phenomenon appeared to float through a room or other space for a brief interval of time without making contact with or being attracted by objects.'

And the Department of Commerce was not alone in believing that some UFOs were actually evidence of unusual aerial phenomena of a distinctly natural, but highly unusual, nature.

#### **PLASMAS AND EARTHLIGHTS**

In May 2006, it was announced that after decades of secretly investigating UFOs, the British Ministry of Defence had come to the conclusion that aliens were not visiting our planet. The MoD's assertions were revealed within the pages of a formerly-classified document that had been commissioned in 1996 and completed in February 2000. Titled the *Condign Report*, the 465-page document demonstrated how British air defence experts had decided that UFO sightings were the result of 'natural but relatively rare and not completely understood phenomena' - such

as plasmas or earthlights.

UFO researchers Dr David Clarke and Gary Anthony - who were at the forefront of the effort to get the MoD to declassify the *Condign Report* - noted the following in relation to the secret study: 'Mr X [the title given by Clarke and Anthony to the still-unidentified MoD-sponsored author] goes even further by drawing upon the controversial research and conclusions of research carried out at Laurentian University by Michael Persinger. He finds merit in the theory that plasmas or earthlights may explain a range of close-encounter and even "alien abduction" experiences.

'The report says that on rare occasions plasmas can cause responses in the temporal-lobe area of the human brain, leading observers to suffer extended memory retention and repeat experiences. This, the report's author believes, may be "a key factor in influencing the more extreme reports [that] are clearly believed by the victims".'

Dr Greg Little, commenting on such unidentified balls of light, says: 'Persinger's primary interest has been in the nearly unbelievable effects the plasma's magnetic field has on human consciousness... Persinger's research indicates that people who come into close contact with these charged plasma forms experience altered states of consciousness producing a host of strange visions: UFO abductions, apparitional phenomena, sightings of improbable creatures e.g. Bigfoot, fairies and alien-like creatures.'

#### **SECRET WEAPONS**

FBI files declassified under the terms of the US Government's Freedom of Information Act reveal that in the summer of 1947, Special Agent S. W. Reynolds spoke to a lieutenant-colonel with Air Force Intelligence who was of the opinion that 'flying discs, were, in fact, a very highly

**TEST FLIGHTS:** Secret defence projects may be behind some sightings of unidentified airborne craft. The odd profile of formerly secret stealth planes like this one may well have accounted for many of the 'black triangle' sightings of the past decade or so.



**Nick Redfern** is a prolific writer and blogger on the subject of UFOs, cryptozoology and the paranormal. His books include *On The Trail of the Saucer Spies*, *A Covert Agenda*, *Body Snatchers in the Desert*, *Science Fiction Secrets*, and the latest, *Contactees*. Nick can be contacted at his website: [nickredfern.com](http://nickredfern.com)





**FUTURE FOLK:** A theory growing in popularity is that the so-called aliens are evolved human beings from the future who are returning to our time either to improve their genetic stock, which has been ravaged by nuclear war, or to bring us guidance.

classified experiment of the Army or Navy'. He may not have been wrong. For decades, tales have circulated to the effect that military agencies have been secretly building flying saucer-style craft.

As Nigel Watson explains in his article earlier in this issue [pages 30 to 33], there have been numerous attempts to build saucer-shaped craft, none of which have been very successful. Champions of the ET hypothesis used the overwhelming failure of the best-known of these, the Avrocar, as evidence that UFOs

of *Physics of the Impossible*, and an expert on time travel says: 'If an astronaut were to travel near the speed of light, it might take him, say, one minute to reach the nearest stars. Four years would have elapsed on Earth, but for him only one minute would have passed, because time would have slowed down inside the rocket ship. Hence he would have travelled four years into the future, as experienced here on Earth. So a time machine that can take us into the future is consistent with Einstein's special theory of relativity. But what about going backwards in time?' He notes one of the biggest problems associated with this question: '...what happens if we kill our parents before we are born? This is a logical impossibility. It is sometimes called the "grandfather paradox".'

It's not impossible, however, that there may be answer to this conundrum. Kaku hypothesises: 'Your free will is not allowed to create a time paradox. Whenever you try to kill your

parents before you are born, a mysterious force prevents you from pulling the trigger.'

Or, perhaps, changing the past to influence the future might have another outcome, opines Kaku: 'The universe splits into two. On one timeline the people whom you killed look just like your parents, but they are different, because you are now in a parallel universe. This latter possibility seems to be the one consistent with the quantum theory.'

Kaku's words are made more thought-provoking by the fact that some researchers and witnesses to UFO activity believe the elusive craft may be piloted not by extraterrestrials, but by time-travellers from our distant future.

Dr Bruce Goldberg, who holds a degree in biology and chemistry, and who has penned more than 20 books, including *Past Lives, Future Lives*, says: 'There are many abductions on board UFOs and secret military bases that are conducted, not by aliens from our own time, but by us in the future. I refer to these time travellers as chrononauts.'

'These chrononauts originate from between 1,000 to 3,000 years in our future and from Earth. Through the use of hyperspace engineering, these time travellers have mastered the art of entering

**"There are many abductions that are conducted not by aliens from our own time but by us in the future. These chrononauts have abducted us in our past lives as well."**

cannot be secret weapons of the military. Others would disagree, however: FBI files of 1957 refer to a 1944 sighting at a military base in Germany of an unusual craft described as being '75 to 100 yards in diameter, and about 14 feet high, consisting of dark gray stationary top and bottom sections' - a classic flying saucer, in other words.

Similarly, a 1957 British Air Ministry report, classified secret at the time, stated: 'A review by the *Daily Worker* newspaper of a book recently published on German wartime weapons contained references to a German flying saucer which was flown at a speed of 1,250 mph to a height of 40,000 feet.'

And, of course, near-identical tales have circulated about fantastic UFO-like technologies being developed at the infamous Area 51, Nevada.

**TIME TRAVELLERS**

Professor Michio Kaku, author



**SATANIC:** Could the entire UFO phenomenon be down to demonic entities seeking to confuse and frighten us?





**ABDUCTION:** The claims of abductees would seem to confirm the extraterrestrial hypothesis but other researchers point out that the activity could just as well be carried out by time travellers or a secret race of people sharing our planet.

**'Leading figures within BUFORA became believers in the satanic theory ... that the source of UFOs "may be in malignant spiritual intervention".'**

including founding-president Graham Knewstub and chairman, Roger Stanway, became believers in the satanic theory for the UFO phenomenon. Certainly, Knewstub was very much to-the-point when he said that 'their source may be in malignant spiritual intervention'.

The story of Roger Stanway is even more alarming: shortly after coming to accept that UFOs were the products of the Devil, Stanway had an unsettling experience in the underground tube-station at Euston, London. He reported: '...as soon as I stepped onto the platform, I became alarmed to realize that there was, welling up within me, a very strong sub-conscious compulsion to throw myself onto the electric line... my legs became weak, my heart raced and I started to sweat profusely...I didn't dare move in case I could not prevent my legs taking me onto the line.'

Only when Stanway recited prayer from St John's Gospel did the darkness lift.

Similar observations were made in 1975 by the late UFO authority John Keel, author of *The Mothman Prophecies*. Commenting on the experiences of UFO witnesses in general, Keel said: 'Many, I found, suffered certain medical symptoms such as temporary amnesia, severe headaches, muscular spasms, excessive thirst and other effects, all of which have been observed throughout history in religious miracles, *demonology* [italics mine], occult phenomena, and contacts with fairies. All of these manifestations clearly share a common source or cause.'

Whatever the ultimate truth behind the UFO presence on our world, it shows no sign of going away any time soon. ☛

the fifth dimension and travelling back in time to our century. These chrononauts have abducted us in our past lives as well.

'The purpose of these time travellers is to facilitate our spiritual growth. They are us in the future.'

Similarly, in 1994, Jim Penniston, formerly of the US Air Force and one of the key witnesses in the famous UFO encounter at Rendlesham Forest in December 1980, underwent hypnotic regression as part of an attempt to try and recall more of what occurred during what may have been Britain's closest encounter. While under hypnosis, Penniston stated that our 'aliens' are actually visitors from the future – a future, Penniston added, that is very dark, in deep trouble, polluted, cold and where the Human Race is beset by reproductive problems. The answer: they travel into the distant past – our present – to secure sperm, eggs and chromosomes to try and ensure the continuation of the species.

#### **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE DEMONIC KIND**

Dr Nelson Pacheco – a former Principle Scientist with the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE), Technical Center – and Tommy Blann, a now-retired U.S. Air Force employee, said of the UFO controversy in their book, *Unmasking the Enemy*: '...we propose that the "reality" behind the UFO phenomenon...is due to a manifestation of non-human preternatural consciousness... the purpose being to slowly condition our minds through subtle deception to accept a false belief, while undermining our rational thought processes and our human spirit.'

Indeed, Pacheco and Blann were clear in their belief that UFOs have nothing less than demonic origins. And others concur.

Towards the end of the 1970s, a number of leading figures within the British UFO Research Organization (BUFORA),

**SOURCES:** *Physics of the Impossible*, Michio Kaku, Anchor Books, 2006; *The Mothman Prophecies*, John Keel, Tor Books, 2002; *Operation Trojan Horse*, John Keel, Illuminet Press, 1996; *Unmasking the Enemy*, Nelson Pacheco & Tommy Blann, Bendon Press, 1994; Dr Bruce Goldberg, com; 'Bentwaters Rendlesham Forest', [web.ukonline.co.uk/mi6/penniston.html](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/mi6/penniston.html); 'The British MoD Study: Project Condign', David Clarke & Gary Anthony, *International UFO Reporter*, Vol. 30, No. 4; 'Flying Saucery Presents...The Real UFO Project', [uk-ufo.org/condign/](http://uk-ufo.org/condign/); 'The Brown Mountain, NC Lights Videotaped', Dr. Greg Little, *Alternate Perceptions Magazine*, issue 70, July 2003; 'The Other Paradigm', E.A. Guest, *Fate*, April 2005; *Flying Saucers*, David Clarke & Andy Roberts, Heart of Albion Press, 2007.

**What do you think is behind the phenomenon of UFOs? Is there just one explanation or several?** Nick Redfern and the editor of Paranormal Magazine would be pleased to learn your views. Email: [editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk](mailto:editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk) or write to: Responses, Paranormal Magazine, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ.





## Unearthed

Sir H. Rider Haggard was one of England's great writers of fantasy. Celebrated novels like *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* have never been out of print and they made Haggard a household name in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His character Allan Quatermain was recently revived by Alan Moore in the graphic novels series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*; Sean Connery, no less, played him in the film version. A supernatural element features in many of Rider Haggard's stories. In his autobiography, written just before his death in 1925, he owned up to one possibly paranormal experience in his own life. It's an intriguing (and rather sad) tale suggestive of the possible psychic abilities of animals. The modest aspect of the story, and Rider Haggard's considered approach to it, couldn't be more different to the adventure yarns that made his name: it has a decided ring of truth about it. This account has been taken from the serialization of *Days of My Life* in *The Strand Magazine* in 1926.

# The strange case of Rider Haggard's dog

IN JULY, 1894, there happened to me a very extraordinary incident. The story is contained in a letter from me which appeared in *The Times* for July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1894, together with letters from various other persons testifying to the fact of the case. These letters and other matter were included in the *Journal of the Society for Physical Research* for October, 1894, from which I make short extracts relating the facts. Should anyone wish to study it in detail with the corroborating letters they are referred to that number of the Society's *Journal*.

### Letter to *The Times*

'On the night of Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, I went to bed about twelve-thirty, and suffered from what I took to be a nightmare. I was awakened by my wife's voice calling to me from her own bed upon the other side of the room. I dreamed that a black retriever dog, a most amiable and intelligent beast named Bob, which was the property of my eldest daughter, was lying on its side among brushwood, or rough growth of some sort, by water.

'In my vision the dog was trying to speak to me in words, and failing, transmitted to my mind in an undefined fashion the knowledge that it was dying. Then everything vanished, and I woke to hear my wife asking me why on earth I was making those horrible noises. I replied that I had had a nightmare about a fearful struggle, and that I had dreamed that old Bob was in a dreadful way, and was trying to tell me about it.



HAGGARD'S HOME: Ditchingham House, Norfolk, from which Sir H. Rider Haggard's dog was missed.

'In my vision the dog was trying to speak to me in words, and failing, transmitted to my mind in an undefined fashion the knowledge that it was dying.'

'On the Sunday morning Mrs Rider Haggard told the tale at breakfast and I repeated my story in a few words.

'Thinking that the whole thing was nothing more than a disagreeable dream, I made no inquiries about the dog and never learned that it was missing until that Sunday night, when my little girl, who was in the habit of feeding it, told me so. At breakfast time, I may add nobody knew that it was gone, as it had been seen late on the previous evening. Then I remembered my dream, and the following day inquiries were set on foot.



'To be brief, on the morning of Thursday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, my servant, Charles Bedingfield, and I discovered the body of the dog floating in the Waveney against a weir about a mile and a quarter away.

'On Friday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, I was going into Bungay when at the level crossing in the Bungay road I was hailed by two plate-layers, who are named respectively George Arterton and Harry Alger. These men informed me that the dog had been killed by a train, and took me on a trolley down to a certain open-work bridge which crosses the water between Ditchingham and Bungay, where they showed me evidence of its death. This is the sum of their evidence:-

'It appears that about seven o'clock upon the Monday morning, very shortly after the first train had passed, in the course of his duties Harry Alger, was on the bridge, where he found a dog's collar torn off and broken by the engine (since produced and positively identified as that worn by Bob), coagulated blood, and bits of flesh of which remnants he cleaned the rails. On search also I personally found portions of black hair from the coat of a dog.

'On the Monday afternoon and subsequently his mate saw the body of the dog floating in the water beneath the bridge, whence it drifted down to the weir, it having risen with the natural expansion of gases, such as, in this hot weather, might be expected to occur within about forty hours of death.

'It would seem that the animal must have been killed by an excursion train that left Ditchingham at ten-twenty-five on Saturday night, returning empty from Harleston a little after eleven. This was the last train which ran that

night. No trains run on Sunday, and it is practically certain that it cannot have been killed on the Monday morning, for then the blood would have been still fluid. Further, if it was living, the dog would almost certainly have come home during Sunday, and its body would not have risen so quickly from the bottom of the river, or presented the appearance it did on Thursday morning.

'From traces left upon the piers of the bridge it appears that the animal was knocked or carried along some yards by the train and fell into the brink of the water where reeds grow. Here, if it were still living - and, although the veterinary thinks that death was practically instantaneous, its life may perhaps have lingered for a few minutes - it must have suffocated and sunk, undergoing, I imagine, much the same sensations as I did in my dream,

and in very similar surroundings to those that I saw therein - namely, amongst a scrubby growth at the edge of water.

'I am forced to conclude that the dog Bob, between whom and myself there existed a mutual attachment, either at the moment of his death, if his existence can conceivably have been prolonged till after one in the morning, or as seems more probable, about three hours after that event, did succeed in calling my attention to its actual or recent plight by placing whatever portion of my being is capable of receiving such impulses when enchained by sleep into its own terrible position. ◉

**BOB IS FOUND:**  
Artist's impression of the moment Rider Haggard and his servant Charles Bedingfield see the unfortunate dog's body floating in the River Waveney.



'It does seem to suggest that there is a more intimate ghostly connection between all members of the animal world, including man, than has hitherto been believed.'



'On the remarkable issues opened up by this occurrence I cannot venture to speak further than to say that - although it is a dangerous to generalize from a particular instance, however striking and well supported by evidence, which is so rarely obtainable in such obscure cases - it does seem to suggest that there is a more intimate ghostly connection between all members of the animal world, including man, than has hitherto been believed at any rate by Western peoples; that they may be in short, all of them different

manifestations of some central, informing life, though inhabiting the universe in such various shapes.

'The matter, however, is one for the people who have made a study of these mysterious questions. I will only add that I ask you to publish the annexed documents with this letter, as they constitute the written testimony at present available in the accuracy of what I state. Further, I may say that shall welcome any investigation by competent persons.

'I am, your obedient servant, 'H. Rider Haggard.'

### ***The SPR responds***

The Editor of the *Journal of the Society for Physical Research* says:

'This case is one of very unusual interest from several points of view. It is therefore, specially satisfactory to have it so well authenticated, and Mr Rider Haggard deserves the gratitude of physical researchers for having collected all the available evidence so promptly and completely, and put it at the disposal of the scientific world.'

### ***Kinship with all animals***

This experience produced a great effect upon me and at first frightened and upset me somewhat, for without doubt it has a very uncanny side. By degrees, however, I came to see that it also has its lessons, notably one lesson, that of kinship, I might almost say the oneness, of all animal life.

I have always been fond of every kind of creature, and especially of dogs, some of which have been and are very dear friends to me. But up to this date I had also been a sportsman. Shooting was my principal recreation and one of which I was, and indeed still am, extremely fond. Greatly did I love a high pheasant, at which sometimes I made good marksmanship. But now, alas! I only bring them down in imagination with an umbrella or a walking-stick.

From that day forward, except noxious insects and so forth, I have killed nothing, and, although I should not hesitate to shoot again for food or for protection, I am by no means certain that the act would not make me feel unwell. Perhaps illogically, I make an exception in favour of fishing, and I dare say that if salmon came my way I might once more throw a fly for them. I do not think that fish feel much.

Again, harmful creatures must be destroyed, since man must live, and so must those that are necessary to his physical sustenance, such as sheep and cattle - that is until he becomes a vegetarian, as perhaps he will one day - a long while hence.

The publication of this 'Bob', correspondence in *The Times* brought me many letters of which the general tenor went to prove that similar examples

**'If the spirit even of a dog can live on after its mortal frame is destroyed and physical death has happened - then how much more a man!'**

**FAMILY MAN:** A photograph of Rider Haggard taken at about the time he was writing his memoirs. He is pictured with his eldest daughter, one of his grandsons and another pet dog - a spaniel.





**DOG'S AFTERLIFE:**

Is there a psychic connection between all animals, including man, as Rider Haggard believed? Did his dog Bob, for which he had great affection, communicate with him after his tragic death?



**'The manifestations exist – many can bear witness to them. But whence do they come? That is the question.'**

of such psychical or telepathic communications were by no means unknown, though none of these were quite so clear as that which I have set out above. Nor were they so well supported by evidence.

Moreover, it seemed almost certain that the dog Bob communicated with me after its death, which if it could be absolutely and finally proved, as it cannot, would solve one of the mysteries of our being, by showing that the spirit even of a dog can live on after its mortal frame is destroyed and physical death has happened. If a dog – then how much more a man!

None of these experiences of my correspondents went so far as this.

A number of these letters I sent to the Psychical Research Society, but a great bundle of them still remains which I have not the time to re-read.

**Sir Oliver Lodge**

On this point of the continuance of individual existence after physical death I once wrote a letter to Sir Oliver Lodge [famous physicist and champion of spiritualism]. I asked him whether he possessed such evidence as would satisfy a reasonable person, say a judge or a jurymen, of the fact of the continued existence of the individual after his physical death. He answered:-

'As to your question-it is not an

easy one. By scientific experience I have myself become absolutely convinced of persistence of existence, and I regard death as an important episode – the reverse of birth; but neither of these episodes is really initial or final. One is the assumption of connection with matter; the other is the abandoning of that connection.

'If it be further asked whether after we have abandoned matter we can, by indirect means, occasionally continue to act upon it – on the matter of the inorganic world or the matter of our friends' brains, for instance – I am inclined to answer, though now more doubtfully, that in my judgment that evidence points to the existence of some indistinct and undeveloped power of this sort.

'The simplest and best-developed variety of this continued inter-action with matter is on the side of telepathy. This is experimentally found existent between the living, and I have no reason to believe that this is the one mode of communication which survives the transition, and that under favourable conditions we can still influence and be influenced by the process of events and emotions here...'

**A hint of great marvels**

This is comforting so far as it goes, and of course extremely interesting. But after all we have here only the experience and the deductions of one man, who, brilliant and utterly upright as he is known to be, may still be mistaken like the rest of us.

The manifestations exist – many can bear witness to them. But whence do they come? That is the question. May not some power be mocking us that directly or indirectly draws its strength from our own vital forces and has its roots in our own intelligence, exalted in an access of spiritual intoxication?

Yet if so, this does not explain the 'Bob' incident, when I was seeking for nothing and had gone to sleep tired out with my usual day's work. Why in such circumstances should this dog have materialized itself in my slumbering brain and at the moment of its death, or rather, as I firmly believe, several hours after that event? Therein lies a hint of great marvels. ●



# Deathly DERBYSHIRE

**BARBARA WADD**, author of two volumes of *Ghost Walks in Derbyshire*, introduces us to some of the haunted locations in this scenic county in the Northern Midlands.





**IF YOU SHOULD BE WALKING** at twilight down Shady Lane, a dark and eerie stretch of road which passes Thornbridge Hall, near Great Longstone, you may meet a strange and unusual procession of twelve headless men carrying an empty coffin. Being intent upon their melancholy mission they will not acknowledge you or greet you in any way. But you should ask yourself, for whom is the empty coffin intended? For local legend has it that it is for the unfortunate walker who meets this strange funeral cortège.

This bizarre tale of supernatural phenomena is one of a multitude that the rich and varied history of Derbyshire has given rise to over the millennia.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Derbyshire Peak District was described by Daniel Defoe as a 'howling wilderness... the most desolate, wild and abandoned county in all England'. Today its gritstone crags, open moorland and the soaring pinnacles bordering its limestone dales still combine to form a landscape which is both beautiful yet forbidding.

From its villages, valleys and winding roads echoes of its colourful and often violent past resurface and around every corner stories of ghosts and hauntings, unusual happenings and

encounters to chill the blood can be related.

Many ghostly tales arise out of tragedy and the village of Eyam must surely rank high in this category. When the plague came to the village in 1665, the Reverend Mompesson persuaded the residents to halt its spread by isolating themselves in its environs. One can only imagine the suffering which followed as the disease raged for 14 months, claiming over 260 victims. ●





**OMEN OF DEATH:** Don't walk down Shady Lane when day is done - you may encounter a funeral procession carrying your own coffin! © Barbara Wadd



**TRAGIC REMINDERS:** Deadly disease carried from London arrived at what are now called The Plague Cottages, in Eyam, in 1665. Many of the village's ghosts date from the time of this tragedy. © Barbara Wadd

The Plague Cottages were where it first arrived at the house of the village tailor George Vicars, via a parcel of cloth from London. The cloth was damp and was hung in front of the fire to dry, thus releasing the plague-infested fleas. George was the first victim to die of a raging fever in September

Elizabeth moved to Sheffield. A blue lady has been seen in the vicinity of the graves and moving amongst them as if tending them, but when people reach the enclosure there is no-one there. To minimize cross infection, food and other supplies were deposited outside the village, at Mompesson's

**‘During the plague in August 1666, Elizabeth Hancock tragically buried her husband and six children in eight days. A blue lady has been seen moving among the graves as if tending them.’**

1665. The front bedroom of one of the cottages is haunted and a former resident had his sleep disturbed by the ghost so often that he finally refused to sleep there. Described as a pleasant faced lady in a blue smock, he would wake to find her watching him before simply fading away.

The Hancock family of Riley were farmers. During the plague in August 1666, Elizabeth Hancock tragically buried her husband and six children in eight days. The pain and heartbreak of having to do that is almost unimaginable and even now, many centuries later, this little cemetery situated in a field to the east of the village is a sad place to visit. The records show that after the plague

Well. Money as payment was purified by being left in vinegar-soaked holes. The ghost of a small boy is seen near this spot.

In the village churchyard, there is a Celtic Cross of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and on the wall an interesting sundial dated 1775. The tomb of

**HEARTBREAKING:** A ghostly lady in blue has been seen among the old graves at Riley. Is she Elizabeth Hancock, whose husband and all six children died of the plague in 1666? © Barbara Wadd





Catherine Mompesson, the wife of Reverend Mompesson, is just beyond the Celtic Cross. After rallying the villagers to contain the plague, the Reverend sent his children away but tragically lost his wife. She died on August 25, 1666. Her ghost is said to haunt the Rectory and to wander between there and the church, pausing near the Cross. Persons staying at the Rectory have heard footsteps in the night as though someone were ill and needing attention.

The Miner's Arms is proclaimed to be the most haunted building in Eyam. Footsteps or running feet are heard upstairs and there have been strange occurrences in the bedrooms, causing some guests to leave hurriedly. One couple is said to have woken in the night to see the room filled with medical equipment from a bygone age.

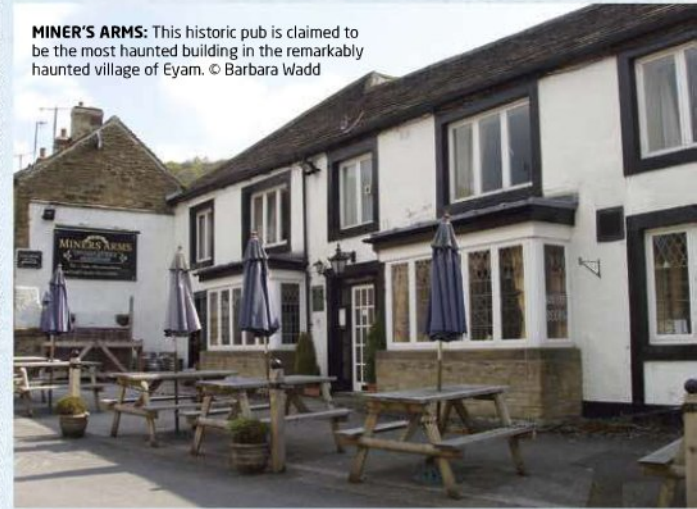
The wife of a former landlord, who was murdered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by being thrown down

the stairs, is also said to appear, dressed in an old-fashioned bonnet and cape. She was seen entering the building after it was renovated and wandered about as though confused before disappearing.

Another village with a crop of ghost stories is Winster and again tragedy features in its tales.

On Main Street lies Winster Hall, a three storey house with a parapet at the top. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the daughter of the house and the coachman fell in love but her parents, objecting to the match, arranged a 'better' marriage for her. The night before the wedding, the daughter and the coachman

**MINER'S ARMS:** This historic pub is claimed to be the most haunted building in the remarkably haunted village of Eyam. © Barbara Wadd



**'She saw a figure in a bridal dress coming down the stairs from the floor above. When the figure entered the room and was seen to be headless, the poor woman fainted.'**

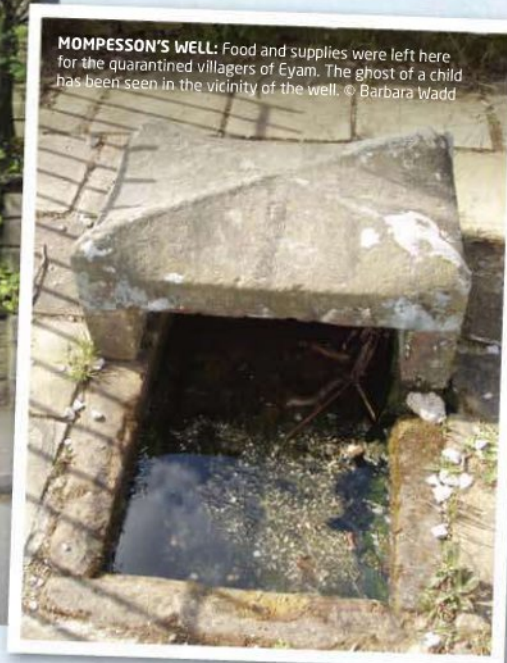
**DEATH PACT:** A couple forbidden to marry threw themselves off the roof of Winster Hall and their ghosts are said to still be seen performing this dramatic double suicide. © Barbara Wadd



climbed to the top of the building, swore to love each other forever, and jumped to their deaths. It is said that near Christmastime each year, the ghostly lovers repeat their fatal leap. They are buried opposite the door of Winster Church. The courtyard is haunted by the ghost of the tragic daughter and locked doors within the hall are found to be unaccountably opened.

Further along the road, on the right hand side there is the Market Hall, a 16<sup>th</sup> century building, where the upper floor is thought to have been originally

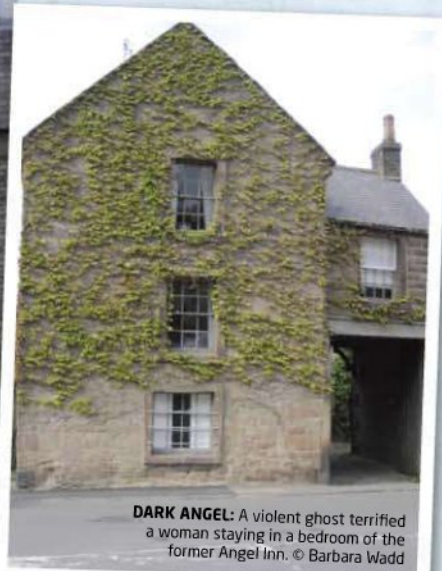
**MOMPESSON'S WELL:** Food and supplies were left here for the quarantined villagers of Eyam. The ghost of a child has been seen in the vicinity of the well. © Barbara Wadd







**GENTLE GHOST:** A charming spirit haunts the Miner's Standard pub near Winster - she can be heard humming nursery rhymes. © Barbara Wadd



**DARK ANGEL:** A violent ghost terrified a woman staying in a bedroom of the former Angel Inn. © Barbara Wadd

## 'If you have children with you, a small boy may join you in this area, taking your child's hand.'

timber-framed. A ghostly hooded figure has been seen kneeling on the pavement in front of it.

On the opposite side of the road is the former Angel Inn (three storeys with gable end and an archway). This was a former coaching inn of dubious reputation. The building is full of stories of doors opening and closing on their own and the sound of footsteps. A murder was committed in one of the bedrooms and a woman sleeping in it was woken by ghostly hands gripping her throat.

In another story, a woman, sitting before a mirror in a bedroom on the first floor, saw a figure in a bridal dress coming down the stairs from the floor above. However, when the figure entered the room and was seen to be headless, the poor woman fainted.

On the southern edge of the village on the B5056 you will find the Miners' Standard Pub, which has a resident ghost named Mary. She can frequently be heard moving about in the upstairs rooms and also singing nursery rhymes to her children. Her favourite is *Three Blind Mice*. A psychic visiting the pub was greatly affected by her and felt a pressing need to visit the cemetery in the village.

Derbyshire's many halls and castles are a rich source of supernatural activity. Hartington

Hall has been converted to a Youth Hostel. It is haunted by a young servant girl, who goes from bed to bed, peering at the occupants. Several people have woken to find her bending over them. She is said to be looking for her lost love, Bonnie Prince Charlie. He, supposedly, stayed at the Hall and having fallen in love with the servant girl, promised to return one day. Unfortunately, he never did, and she died of a broken heart and now endlessly wanders the house and garden, still seeking her prince.

Guests suffer a similar experience at the Youth Hostel at Ilam Hall which is haunted by a 'White Lady' who has the habit of waking up people who are staying there. She is also seen wandering the corridors and between the Church and the Italian Garden.

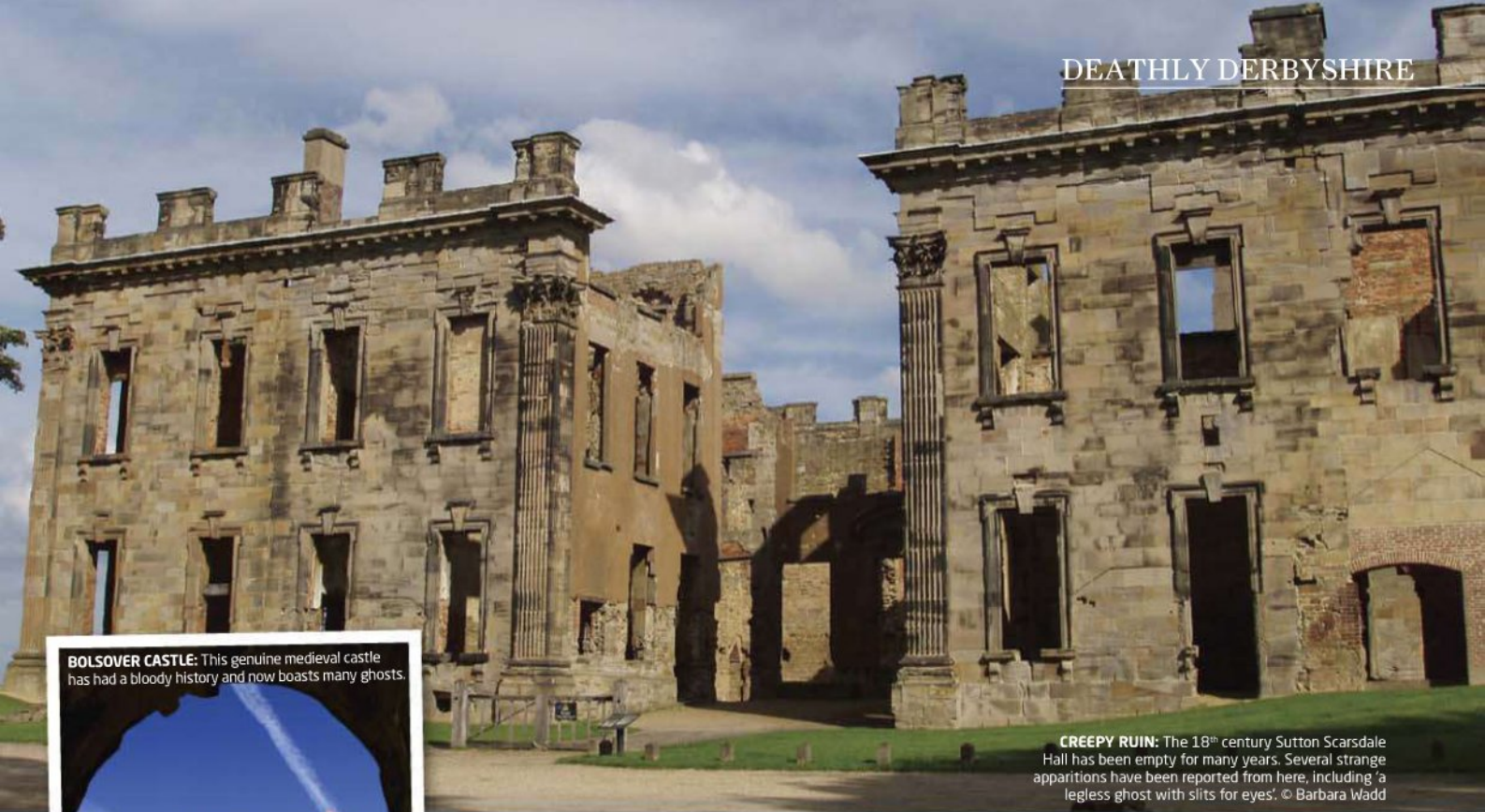
Whilst the exterior of Elvaston Castle dates from Victorian times, it is only the latest in a series of buildings which go back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The Institute of Paranormal Research has carried out an investigation in the building and their report makes fascinating reading on their website. Their researchers picked up a large amount of paranormal activity on the night they spent there. Of particular note was the 'Gothic' Room where a number of presences were felt to be moving around the room: it was as though some sort of ceremony was taking place. The view through a camcorder left within the room was found to have been tilted through 15 degrees over a period of one and a half minutes. This could not be explained by the tripod tilting because the



**ELVASTON CASTLE:** Many extraordinary events were recorded during a paranormal investigation at this Victorian building, which stands on the site of several much earlier buildings. © Barbara Wadd





**CREEPY RUIN:** The 18<sup>th</sup> century Sutton Scarsdale Hall has been empty for many years. Several strange apparitions have been reported from here, including 'a legless ghost with slits for eyes'. © Barbara Wadd

**BOLSOVER CASTLE:** This genuine medieval castle has had a bloody history and now boasts many ghosts.



axis point is within the frame. At a later séance in the same room another camcorder was again moved by unseen hands.

The 'Mirrored' Room had the presences of a 'terrified' maid and a 'strong' woman. While the researchers were in there, the door knob was rattled, although none of the rest of their party were anywhere near at the time. On a balcony running into the servants' quarters, one of the team felt as though he had been pushed sideways to the edge of the balcony. A little unnerving as there is drop of 25 feet to a stone floor!

If you visit Bolsover Castle you may find yourself being pinched or pushed along by one of its many supernatural presences and many visitors have reported being slapped, tickled or having their clothes tugged.

On the Terrace Range, Civil War soldiers may march up and down or you may hear the sound of tramping feet or phantom horses trotting.

In the fountain garden, a grey lady appears through an

**'She opened the oven door and thrust the bundle inside. As she did this a baby could be heard screaming.'**

archway and ghostly knights parade around the thick wall. If you have children with you, a small boy may join you in this area, taking your child's hand.

In the Little Castle, Sir William Cavendish's favourite was the Elysium Room and here people sometimes smell pipe smoke. A member of staff who joked about Sir William being a bit of a ladies' man was pushed on the stairs by some entity and hurt her ankle.

The wooden-floored room, last occupied by Mrs Robbins, a housekeeper in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, provides the most reports. Visitors sometimes have difficulty entering or exiting this room as the housekeeper has a habit of locking the door. They also experience strange mists and breathing difficulties and a feeling of claustrophobia.

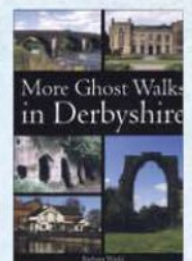
The kitchen is also a very haunted area and there is said to be a hollow space below it, which was once a church or a dungeon, although it has never been opened.

A medium staying the night at the castle reported many happenings, including one of the most frightening stories. She saw a young woman hurry through the kitchen with a bundle in her arms and go into the side room

housing the ovens. She glanced around then opened the oven door and thrust the bundle inside. As she did this a baby could be heard screaming. Then, as the screams faded, so did the ghostly woman and the baby that she must have burnt to death so many years ago.

On the other side of the valley across the M1 motorway stands the ruin of Sutton Scarsdale Hall built in 1724. For many years there have been tales of it being haunted. There have been sightings of a legless ghost wearing a white hood with only slits for eyes. People have also seen a grey figure walking towards the back of the church. Other reports are of phantom footsteps and voices, fleeting shadows and strange floating white lights at night.

Derbyshire's countryside is also host to some frightening apparitions. A phantom coach, driven at breakneck speed is to be seen near Ilam Hall. A headless horseman haunts the Manifold Way and is said to be 'an awful gory sight'. And lastly, a spectral black dog, with flaming eyes, huge teeth and a foaming mouth may be encountered on Stanton Moor, in an area which modern day witches report as having a strong feeling of evil. ☉



**Barbara Wadd** has a great interest in the ghosts and folklore of the Midlands counties. She has also been a keen Rambler for many years and was the walks co-ordinator of a social club for many years, as well as leading walks for her local rambles group. Barbara has written two volumes of Ghost Walks in Derbyshire and a third on Ghost Walks in Leicestershire, all published by Derby Books Publishing.



# experiences

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

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## The faces in the fog

One of our mediums visited St Nicholas's Church in Canewdon, Essex, a few months ago. She went after dark with her son and a neighbour. She took many photos at the site, but it wasn't until later that she noticed something strange in one of them.

The photo is covered in an orange mist, and there appears to be an outline of a lady keeling down in front of a small child. I took a copy of the photo and lightened it up slightly, which revealed images above this figure of several faces and a head and shoulders of a figure. Kay has assured me they look nothing like the other two people who were with her on that night (both of whom I also know).

Kay (the medium) had some trouble with her camera that night, and at one point couldn't turn it on. Later it turned itself on and started taking pictures with no intervention. I have to say that Kay is probably the least technical person I have ever met! She cannot remember if the photo in question was taken by herself or

when the camera went haywire.

The photo has been lightened slightly so the figures can be more easily seen. I can promise you that no trickery has been performed on the picture.

I know in the line of work you are in you must see lots and lots of supposed ghost pictures – so do I! But this one has really got me baffled. I get shown loads of 'orb' pictures by people convinced they are ghosts' but I know 99% are just dust, reflections or insects.

I would be very interested in your opinion of the photo, and that of your readers, especially anyone technically minded (the photo was taken with a Fuji digital camera). Perhaps after all it is just down to a common camera fault.

Incidentally, I have spent many interesting nights at the church yard in Canewdon. It has always been of interest to me and I have experienced some of the most dramatic paranormal events I have ever witnessed there.

**Steve Hill, co-founder Team Spirit**

## Invisible singer

Just 22 minutes ago I went to the bathroom to take a pee. The time was 03:00 am. I heard a humming [and then] a very weird sound, almost like it was trying to say a word. I couldn't actually understand but the more I listened the more the sound got louder and louder.

Eventually, after a few minutes I heard a woman singing at the bottom of the stairs. Because I live with five girls I thought it was one of them but the thing that disturbed me was that it wasn't in English, it was something close to Indian but the girls whom I share the house with are Chinese.

After this there were steps downstairs. So I went to check it out and what I saw didn't please me because there was no one to see. And now I am trying to sleep. I have a necklace with a cross on my neck while writing on this website.

**Cristian, Canterbury, via email**



## Phantom groper

I am 15 years old and want to share my experience with a ghost. I was out for ice-cream and my mom was getting me my shake. I was sitting alone at a table and all of a sudden I feel fingers wrap around my leg and lift it up. I look down and see my leg in the air but nothing there. The fingers unwrap and my leg falls.

I scoot over and again I feel fingers wrap around my leg and I look down to see my leg in the air. This time my leg is thrown down not dropped and my body jerks a little.

Now I change tables. Now straight in front of me I see a bloody scarred-up man that is a tad transparent and he says: 'Like how I lifted your leg?'

Then he smiled a devilish smile.... then he walks away and disappears. This is the first time I have met a spirit that was not kind. I have met one at my grandpa's grave and one in church.

**Chelsea, via email**

## The thing in the corner

I've just taken up drawing and was sat in my dining room late the other night. The room suddenly went freezing cold and my two cats started staring at the corner. So, already taking pics of my art, I took a shot of the corner with my Samsung camera phone.

When I looked at the photo below I was amazed at what I saw. But what is it? There's nothing in the corner of the room to cause a reflection. I don't have any pictures, mirrors or anything like that. My phone is new but the photo is blurred slightly as I had to get my



## 'All of a sudden I feel fingers wrap around my leg and lift it up. I look down and see my leg in the air but nothing there.'

friend to take a pic of the image on it with her camera (I can't upload it onto my computer).

It is an old cottage I live in (in the New Forest). It was an old police house. We have things happening here all the time. I often see things, hear voices and get distinctive smells, such as flowers etc.

**Georgie Roberts, Hinton, Dorset**

## My evidence for spirit guides

I'm an Electronic Engineer with 40 years experience, working for a major company in Stevenage, UK. Over the last five years I've been designing and manufacturing equipment for investigating the paranormal. I tend to look at most things with a scientific approach. That's not to say I don't have my own beliefs in things e.g. life after death. With over five years as a Technical-Paranormal Investigator, I've witnessed many strange and unexplainable happenings, not just at haunted locations.

This particular incident happened on the morning of Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 2007. While doing an investigation at a public library some two years earlier, a psychic medium that was present told me I had a Spirit Guide, which appeared to him as a

## Responses

### STAR LETTER

### Believe it or not - but I do

I love the magazine and think it's the best in the field. I would like to briefly give you my opinion on ghosts. Unlike Peter Underwood, I believe in life after death. I believe I will see my parents again and all my relatives. I cannot prove or disprove such a belief. Life after Death is a belief system. You believe or you don't.

I believe that most but not all, ghosts are spirits of the dead. I also believe in the 'Stone Tape' theory: that events so traumatic are imprinted on the ether and replayed at certain times. I do not believe that ghosts are projections from the subconscious because although I believe we all possess latent psychic powers, very few people, if any, can control them.

I have never seen a ghost but when my father died my mother saw him twice in the house - once standing behind me. When my mother died in January 2008 I had two strange events that I cannot explain. First when I was in the bathroom the door handle began to turn slowly. The only other person in the house was my brother and he was downstairs.

The second incident was also in the bathroom. I had the door wide open when there was a 'whooshing' sound and a gust of wind tore along the landing and blew the window wide open. All the windows and the front door were shut so where did the wind come from?

**Graham Miles, Birmingham**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mr Miles wins a *Paranormal Magazine* mug in gratitude for being the first reader to respond to our request for opinions on the theme: 'What is a ghost?' Don't forget, we will also be pleased to receive opinions on the subject of this month's lead article, 'What is a UFO?'







Japanese woman. This didn't really surprise me, and might even explain my interests in Chinese and Japanese culture, which I've had for many years.

Later, while talking to Sharon (a friend who joined me on many investigations) one evening and who is also a psychic person, I asked her, while in general conversation, 'How can you tell if you have a Spirit Guide?'

She replied, 'You simply ask them questions, like do something or move something, so I know you are there. Just ask this question before going to bed.'

This seemed straightforward enough, so that night, before going to bed, I said (only in my mind, apparently you don't need to speak out aloud), do something so I know you're here, and after that I went straight to bed. The next morning I got up as usual for work (I was on shift work at that time, so I was getting up at about 4.30am).

Before continuing I'd better mention that I have an automatic (battery-operated) motion-sensing light at the top of the stairs, for safety reasons. This light doesn't come on straight away, it has a few seconds delay. Anyway, I came out of the bedroom greeted by total darkness and closed the door behind me. As I closed the door, it didn't seem to shut fully. Even pulling harder, the door just wouldn't close. At this point the automatic stair light came on, while I was still looking at the door.

The sight that met my eyes was a blue pen, which I had been using downstairs the previous night, sticking out between the door and frame, just below the door handle. When I opened the door again the pen dropped to the floor.

As I went down the stairs, the light in the lounge was set on full brightness; I have a dimmer switch that controls this light. While watching television I never have the lights on full power, only when perhaps wrapping Xmas presents and things like that.

So, two things had happened that morning. Firstly, how could a pen suddenly get placed in between the door and frame? Secondly, did I leave the lounge lights on? I was the last person to go upstairs to bed and I know I turned the lights off, and anyway, the moment I came out of the bedroom, I should have seen the lounge light shining on the wall at the bottom of the stairs, but I didn't.

Now for the twist to this story: why place a pen in the door? It wasn't until several weeks later that it all fell into place. At work we have a card entry system, even on some internal doors as well. In the past I used to take my post to work and take it to our mailroom. This room requires a card to let you back out. From laziness, I would stick my pen in the door, stopping the door from closing completely, so I didn't need to go looking for my card.

Did my Spirit Guide choose this idea to get the message over to me? As for the lights being on full, I haven't got an

answer for that one, maybe it's because I never normally have them on full.

That, and one other thing that happened on an earlier date, has made me a strong believer in the fact that we all could have a Spirit Guide(s).

**Nigel Brockwell, Brotronics Paranormal Investigations**

## The man at the gates

A couple of months ago you published a picture of a strange dark mist caught on a photo taken by my son at the family home. The other picture I'd like you to look at is this one of my wife and boys taken at Erdigg Hall in Wrexham, North Wales.

If you look into the back ground you will see a man in a very dark outfit by the gates standing off the path. The build and the stance of the man in black looks like a butler from 1912 called William Wotton, whose portrait you can see in the house [and online at <http://is.gd/cFHRK> - Editor]. I accept that it could just be an ordinary visitor standing there but I'm sure I didn't see anyone at the time. I think his clothing is unusually dark and there is something eerie about the way he is on his own and staring across.

And if you move across the picture to just above my wife's right shoulder, you can just make out what looks like another man standing facing you in a blue top. It's as if he's not quite there and half his body seems to be missing.

**Daniel Cosgrove, via email**



## Somewhat alarmed

A friend, who is more like a sis, is staying with my husband and I, as she has housing issues. As a thank you, she gave my husband a clock-radio that she discovered outside a charity shop. The shop does not take electrical items. There was no fault with it, as she had it checked over. However, she wanted us to have it.

The next thing we know, the radio is turning on and off of its own accord without anybody touching the switch. The alarm is not set and it always seems to turn on late at night and shut itself off, after the national anthem. She said it did the same thing when she had it.

Also, one of my drawers of my jewellery box flew out and went into the middle of the room. I feel the two are connected. I bought a reputedly haunted doll, but I don't think it is connected to her, as it has only started since we acquired the clock-radio, which was on at the time when the drawer flew into the middle of the floor.

**Rachel, via email**

## What this katydid did

In my backyard one night in 1995 a green katydid about 2-and-a-half inches long displayed behaviour that I can only call paranormal. On being approached, it jumped on me. When I brought it inside the house and placed it on the floor, it would face me and jump on me, in a friendly manner.

Normally, insects would either ignore a person or try to flee, but this katydid seemed to sense that I was a friend. It neither tried to flee nor bite. It was my pet and friend for some 45 minutes. I decided to release it in my yard.

It's incredible because insects are not thought of as intelligent and they are mostly indifferent to people; they are very primitive. Yet this katydid showed curiosity and friendliness toward a human being, in this case myself. For some 45 minutes human and insect contemplated each other in friendship.

My favourite animals are dogs, parrots, parakeets, songbirds, pigeons, hyraxes, elephants, small goats, small antelopes, dolphins, whales and manatees. Among the reptiles I only like the friendly ones and the pretty ones. Katydids, skippers, most moths and butterflies are also endearing and there are some nice fish.

**Vicken Dimidjian, NYC**

# strange goings-on

**Paranormal Magazine** will be pleased to publish summaries of notable investigations by regional paranormal groups. Please contact the editor in the first instance with a short summary of 'where, when and what happened' by emailing: [editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk](mailto:editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk)

## Our adventure at the Ancient Ram Inn

**RICHARD WOOLLEY** of ghost-hunting group **Paranormal The Otherside** gives us the low-down on what happened on the night they visited one of the country's best-known spooky locations.

Paranormal The Otherside were kindly asked to join Astral Search UK on an investigation at the 13th century Ancient Ram Inn at Wotton Under Edge, Gloucestershire, which is reputed to be one of the oldest and most haunted houses in England.

On arrival we were greeted by owner John Humphries. John shared some of his experiences whilst living in the property, then showed us around this fantastic location.

My own paranormal experiences at the Ram began in the Witch's Room. Myself and my colleagues Neil Sinnett, Anthony Ledington, Andy and Samantha Bavington and Louise Homer all seemed to witness the floor vibrating rapidly. Neil and I also heard the sound of a cat meowing.

At the top of the stairs, I saw a heavy sword sway left to right, although there was no one at the time in that area. In the bar area Neil, Samantha, Louise, Anthony and I conducted some glass divination, during which I noticed (and the rest of the group heard) the stool I was

sitting on was being moved as if unseen hands were turning it around while I was sitting on it. Did I jump? Yes, of course I did!

My final encounter involved the 'Frank's Box', a controversial new tool within the paranormal field. Developed by a man named Frank Sumption, this box is also known as the 'Telephone to the Dead', and can allegedly communicate with the otherside. Neil and I used the Frank's Box in the bar area. I called out and received the word KITCHEN. We asked, is this were you want us to go? It said YES. We asked why and it said HURT. Neil opted not to go and I wasn't going alone - would you?

Overall, I thought this investigation was really amazing, with lots of bangs, rattles, meowing, a sword moving, and the reactions on Frank's Box, I feel this location warrants further investigation and I'm going back!

To learn more about Richard and the team, visit <http://paranormaltheotherside.webs.com/>





## Books



### Real Zombies, The Living Dead and Creatures of the Apocalypse

Written by **Brad Steiger**  
 Published by **Visible Ink**  
 Price: **£16.99 pb**  
 Reviewed by **Nick Redfern**

For just about as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by the world of the zombie. Well, one aspect of the zombie, anyway - its on-screen exploits. In fact, I think I have DVDs of pretty much every zombie movie ever made.

But movie monsters are not the only kind of zombie out there, as Brad Steiger shows us time and again. *Real Zombies* is an extensive and highly detailed study of the zombie not only in the movies, but also in folklore, legend, the occult, the supernatural, and - in the final chapters - in the field of conspiracy theories.

Tribal religions, folk-magic, sacrifice, the raising of the dead, and dark and disturbing real-life mysteries focused upon London's River Thames are only the start of the ominous story. Serpent gods, shadowy goings-on in New Orleans, Voodoo Queens, curses, possession and ritual magic all play significant roles in zombie lore and legend.

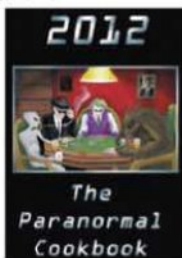
A thought-provoking part of the book reveals much pertaining to mind-control experimentation, LSD-based black-ops, Manchurian candidates and the disturbing scenario of jack-booted government types planning to microchip the populace.

All in all, *Real Zombies* is a superb, and arguably definitive, look at the zombie phenomenon in all its glory and from numerous perspectives. By focusing less on the Hollywood angle, but far more on the little-known - but in many ways more disturbing - aspects of the phenomenon, Brad provides us with a rare treat indeed.

Like a zombie itself, Brad's book grabs you by the jugular and doesn't let go!



Book, DVD & Game reviews from back issues can be found online at:  
[www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk](http://www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk)



### 2012: The Paranormal Cookbook

Written by **Shaun Belekurov**  
 Published by **JEC Publishing Company**  
 Price: **\$9.99**  
 Reviewed by **Mark Greener**

In *2012: The Paranormal Cookbook*, Shaun Belekurov seeks - and generally succeeds - to examine 'the convergence of reality and the supernatural' in paranormal manifestations as diverse as cryptids, MIBs and jinxed movies.

To illustrate his theme, Belekurov analyses numerous classic cases (including the Fox sisters, Mothman and Lycanthropy) and others less well-known (to me at least), such as South Pacific porpoise callers, skinwalkers and the ghost (or tulpa) that 'haunts' the former home of Walter Gibson. (Writing as Maxwell Grant, Gibson created the Shadow, one of the great pulp heroes.)

These vignettes are superb: informative, precise and entertaining.

Building on these examples, Belekurov articulates intelligent, subtle and eloquent arguments about the intersection of 'reality' and the supernatural. Belekurov ends by suggesting the paranormal's five 'core theories', such as 'synchronicity is the universe's road sign' and 'certain landscapes create monsters'. I'd like to see Belekurov develop these themes, each at chapter length.

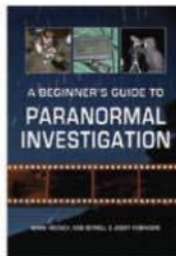
Occasionally, I felt Belekurov's arguments made too large a leap. Take his aside about stem cells when discussing lycanthropy. I'd find the point more persuasive if he'd explained how 'quantum non-locality phenomena, morphed resonance and sympathetic magic' interact with the sequential activation and repression of genes, epigenetic influences and growth factors that biologists know help determine whether a stem cell becomes part of your big toe, bone marrow or nose, before trying to link the idea with lycanthropy.

I also suspect several slips of the pen evaded proof reading. For instance, Belekurov writes that 'homeopathic healing has been around since the dawn of man' and then examines acupuncture, yoga and meditation. I think he means 'holistic'. Belekurov also writes 'according to ontological (bird) scientists', whereas I'm sure he means ornithological. If these aren't slips, Belekurov may need to expand and clarify his argument: I, for one, missed his point.

Nevertheless, the minor flaws don't spoil this thought-provoking, informative, and enjoyable book.



## DVDs/Blu-Ray



### A Beginner's Guide to Paranormal Investigation

Written by **Mark Rosney, Rob Bethell and Jebby Robinson**  
 Published by **Ambereley**  
 Price: **£14.99 pb**  
 Reviewed by **John Stoker**

This isn't the first guide to paranormal investigating but it certainly is one of the most comprehensive. The authors, who regularly appear on the television series *Spook School*, have produced a book for the complete novice so it's really a work that brings the subject down to basics.

Sometimes it's a little too basic. For while it's reasonable to assume a lack of knowledge on the part of the reader, is it really necessary to explain the meaning of the word 'objectivity'?

Quibbles aside this is a useful volume for those who wish to embark on their first vigil with advice on buying equipment, interviewing witnesses and recording paranormal activity. Added to this is a brief but comprehensive guide to the history of the paranormal so that the reader can see today's activities in their true context.

Another plus for the book is that it doesn't just cover the investigation of ghosts but also takes in such subjects as Cryptozoology and UFOs. It's also well illustrated with pictures of photographic anomalies and diagrams showing how and where to set up equipment. There are also examples of report forms which can be used on investigations.

The authors also warn the potential investigator to be patient and not to expect paranormal activity in every investigation. Just try sitting in a draughty old building for the night then emerging the next morning with nothing to show for you efforts apart from an appetite for breakfast. It's dispiriting to say the least. So patience is paramount.

But there does appear to be one way to guarantee paranormal activity which isn't mentioned in the book. Just take a television camera crew with you and strange things will happen. Perhaps ghosts have egos as well and can't resist a chance to make their presence felt on television!



### Alice in Wonderland

Directed by **Tim Burton**  
 Price: **£19.99**  
 Reviewed by **Fergus McShane**

There have been countless adaptations of Lewis Carroll's masterpiece of children's literature to date, and there will undoubtedly be many more to come. This one, however, sees us tumbling down the rabbit hole of Tim Burton's colourful vision of Wonderland.

When Alice returns to the world of her childhood adventure, she is reunited with a forgotten world, some old friends and an inevitable destiny to end the reign of the Red Queen.

Unfortunately for fans, the heart and soul of Carroll's original works are lost somewhere between the colourful twilight of Wonderland and the bland oddity of the characters. No characters develop more than one-dimension (even when displayed in unnecessary 3D) and there is very little to empathise with - even the White Queen who we should want to help (pivotal to the plot) seems completely vacant and dull.

Burton diehards will be infatuated with the neo-gothic, typically distinctive design as per usual. And admittedly the visual prowess on display is something that few directors could manage, let alone get away with. However, this is not enough to carry a film that is so befuddled it would have Lewis Carroll scratching his head at the sudden onslaught of action and a body-popping incident that is decidedly un-frabjous indeed.

*Alice in Wonderland* is typical of Burton's recent career. It looks fantastic and Burton clearly has the skill to match any cinematic visual artist. But this is juxtaposed with an emotionally vacant core, and an increasingly routine sense of 'that would be a good film for Johnny and Helena' thinking. Such a shame, as so much more could have been achieved with Carroll's classics.







**Doctor Who: Series 5 Vol 1**  
 Directed & written by: **Various**  
 Price: **£15.99**  
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

Now that David Tennant has moved on, it is up to newbie Matt Smith to fill the eccentric boots and now the bow tie of the infamous Doctor and try to win over his inherited viewers.

Containing the first three episodes of the never-ending saga, The Doctor, accompanied by the boisterous (and leggy) Amy Pond, must save the world in 20 minutes, uncover the horrors of a beast below a space city, and help Winston Churchill defeat the Daleks.

*Doctor Who* has become an institution of British television over the decades, so it is no surprise that the regeneration of the Doctor must overcome as many hazards and hurdles as the title character in each plot to be considered a success. And to this end, you ought to be very pleased.

I must admit that I am not a fan of the Tennant age. Far too many 'head flung back; eyes glaring down; nostrils flared looks' banded about to be believable. But thus far Smith has inhabited the role with the freshness and youth we expected, but also a level of maturity, seriousness and a most welcome darkness that was last seen in Eccleston's exploits.

One area that really needs improvement though is the shoestring budget. To carry on capturing new generations of *Doctor Who* devotees, there must be an increase in spending (on all BBC drama) so that the effects have a chance of matching the quality of writing. But bad CGI aside, this really is worth watching... and don't forget you can catch up on the whole series on BBC iPlayer.



**The Wolfman**  
 Directed by: **Joe Johnston**  
 Price: **£19.99**  
 Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**

The resurgence in classic horror monsters and creature features seems to now be petering out for vampires and zombies, so clearly it's time for werewolves with this remake of the 1941 archetype, *The Wolf Man* (ghosts coming soon!).

When his brother goes missing, Lawrence Talbot (Benicio Del Toro) returns to his home only to discover a grisly murder by an unknown beast. Bitten and infected by said beast, he must overcome his tortured past to end his nightmarish curse before destroying everything by the light of the full moon.

*The Wolfman* is a monster movie that should be applauded for the care and respect it has of its forebear. However, ironically this is also the aspect that ultimately fells the beast. As with any updating of an already worked feature, there is usually little need for it to have actually been made. And here it shows that all it can do is try to match the original rather than innovate on it or surpass what has come before.

Yes, essentially this is quite fun and entertaining. And the gloomy, gothic setting is a delight to behold with sombre light pouring through misty period landscapes to highlight a beastly figure scampering through a forest. But with a methodical pace and very little by way of thrills, chills or true suspense and a serious over-reliance on effects, this monster is all bark and no bite.

Worth a watch, but with a lack of suspense and empathy for any its characters, this is regrettably tame.



## Games



**Alan Wake**  
 Format: **XBOX 360**  
 Publisher: **Microsoft Game Studios**  
 Developer: **Remedy Entertainment**  
 Reviewed by: **Gary S. Darcy**

*Insomnia, Secret Window, Outer Limits, Alone in the Dark, Max Payne. Alan Wake* does not hide its inspirations but weaves them into a rich tapestry of storytelling and gameplay that results in a finished product that's easy to recommend.

*Alan Wake* is a flawed character who finds himself in a nightmare world estranged from his wife and his own identity. The fact that the sense of trepidation and isolation is maintained throughout the game is a credit to the narrative that drives each episode.

Set in Bright Falls, an idyllic mountain location for a writer who needs inspiration for a new novel, things soon change and *Wake* finds himself in a dark world where he must use a combination of light and weapons to overcome the inhabitants. The lighting effects complement beautifully designed scenery, viewed mostly in twilight and accompanied by sharp, shocking bursts of sound.

The developers have enhanced the overall experience by taking an episodic approach to the game, reinforced by an *Outer Limits*-type serial that plays on TV sets during gameplay. There are also elements of exploration with the option of finding pages of an old manuscript scattered throughout the game, reiterating the B-picture inspiration. It also gives the player further incentive to follow the story to the next episode with 24-grade cliffhangers.

*Alan Wake* may not be a long game, at around 12 hours, but what it packs into that time is such a rich, memorable experience that you will savour everything it has to offer. And that's a hell of a lot.



**Darkness Within 2: The Dark Lineage**  
 Format: **PC (PC DVD)**  
 Publisher: **Iceberg Interactive**  
 Developer: **Zoetrope Interactive**  
 Reviewed by: **Ian Bamford**

This new release from Iceberg Interactive takes H. P. Lovecraft's nightmarish themes and places it into a detective adventure game that will leave you hiding under the bed sheets through fear. As in the original *Darkness Within*, you play Howard Loreid but in this game you must uncover your own chilling past in order to escape the madness that consumes you.

With simple and intuitive controls, the cursor handily changes to the suitable icon (examine, take etc) when placed over a usable object. This aids investigation while not making progress too simple.

There are three main difficulty levels and individual hints can be tweaked. Novices can be led by the hand whereas wannabe Sherlock Holmeses can experience the true difficulty of detective work - along with the drug-induced hallucinations!

*The Dark Lineage* does have some annoyances, though. At times, the dialogue can be expositional and unnatural, with characters conveniently revealing important information unprompted. The underlining of text to reveal clues is rather hit or miss but this can be turned off to speed the game up. The biggest gripe is that it is occasionally unclear as to which puzzle needs to be solved.

That said, these minor drawbacks can be overlooked as the satisfaction of finding a clue or solving a puzzle makes it all worthwhile. After all, isn't it the sign of a good detective game when rewards are earned through hard work?

Turn off the lights and enjoy this creepy, spine-tingling adventure.



For a chance of winning a copy of *The Dark Lineage*, turn to page 81.





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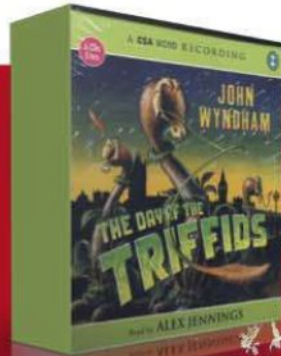
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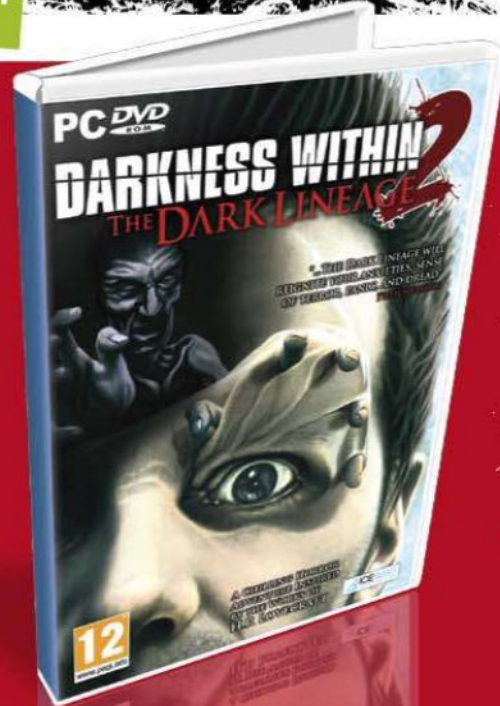
**WIN**Final date for all competition entries is **Monday, July 26.****Audio books:***The Midwich Cuckoos* and  
*The Day of the Triffids*

John Wyndham was one of the UK's most celebrated science fiction writers. After years of writing for various pulp magazines under different names, he relaunched his career after the war with *The Day of the Triffids*, a frightening tale of a world left blind and at the mercy of mobile, carnivorous plants.

It was an instant hit, and further exciting, imaginative novels followed in quick succession. The best-known of these is *The Midwich Cuckoos*, a suspenseful story of alien children born to human mothers. Both novels were successfully filmed, *The Midwich Cuckoos* as *Village of the Damned*.

CSA Word has produced box-set CD audio book recordings of both novels, compellingly read by well-known British actors Alex Jennings (*Triffids*) and Jeremy Clyde (*Cuckoos*).

Thanks to CSA Word we have a set of both John Wyndham audio books to give away. For your chance to win the set, log on to [paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions](http://paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions) and be prepared to answer this question:

**What is the name of the movie adaptation of *The Midwich Cuckoos*?****DVD game: *Darkness Within 2: The Dark Lineage***

*Darkness Within* is a series of scary adventure games inspired by the works of legendary horror writer H P Lovecraft.

In the newly released *The Dark Lineage*, the second in the series, players take the role of a police detective harried by paranormal forces. The game takes the player to places where the 'things' of the past still live, into crumbling mansions and snow-bound woods and through dark labyrinths of tunnels.

*The Dark Lineage* will see the conclusion to the saga which began with *In The Pursuit of Loath Nolder*. It is even more frightening and powerful than the first instalment, and has been given a 12 certificate. The game is in PC DVD-Rom format.

Thanks to Iceberg Interactive, we have FIVE copies of *The Dark Lineage* to give away. For your chance to win a copy, just log on to [paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions](http://paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions) and be prepared to answer this question:

**What is the name of the writer whose works inspired the *Darkness Within* series?****Exclusive binder**  
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# BOOKEND

## WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

By Michael Hallowell



**MICHAEL HALLOWELL** is a full-time freelance writer and paranormal investigator. He writes the UK's longest running paranormal column, *Wraithscape*, in the *Shields Gazette*. His books include *Invizikids*, exploring the nature of 'imaginary' childhood friends, *Christmas Ghost Stories*, *Paranormal South Tyneside* and, with Darren Ritson, *The South Shields Poltergeist*.

**Not that long ago I was diagnosed with the sleep disorder known as narcolepsy. Not satisfied with just that, I opted to go for a couple of bolt-ons to make the condition more interesting. By upgrading to Narcolepsy 3.0, I can now enjoy the intriguing side effects of cataplexy and Periodic Limb Movement Disorder. There's also a chance I might be suffering from a fourth disorder called sleep apnoea, but that's yet to be confirmed.**

Most people think narcolepsy simply involves the patient dropping off to sleep involuntarily at awkward moments, but sufferers know that the condition is rarely that simple. In my case, I also suffer from sleeplessness at night, and temporary states of paralysis during intense displays of emotion, laughter being the most common. If I laugh heartily, I fall over.

Weird, but interesting if you're an investigator of the strange and the bizarre like me.

Other symptoms include sleep paralysis – where the mind wakes up before the body, leaving sufferers in a terrifying state of immobility until the body catches up with the brain – and periods in which I can't tell whether I'm awake, or simply *dreaming* that I'm awake.

On the positive side, though, such experiences have made me think deeply about the nature of reality. The dividing line between the real world and the dream world is no longer sharply defined for many narcoleptics. The two states are simply different ends of an experiential spectrum, with a huge grey area in between.

As a paranormal investigator, I find this fascinating. If sleep disorders can expose us to a world in which reality and fantasy are no longer neatly divided, how can we determine which preternatural experiences are 'real', and which are simply creations of our subconscious? What if

there *is* no divide, and *all* experiences are a mixture of real-state and dream-state components? This might explain why some Fortean phenomena, such as UFOs and bizarre cryptids, have all the trappings of reality but never seem to leave solid, physical evidence behind. It isn't that they aren't real; they just aren't real *enough*.

I'm now beginning to suspect that when we dream we're simply going into a state which allows us to access a wider range of 'real' experiences than our physical senses normally allow. Those who have gone through the terrible experience of Alien Abduction, for example, may not be hallucinating; they may simply be accessing a wider view of the 'reality spectrum' during their dream-state.

My narcolepsy has made me think deeply about the whole issue of 'reality' and paranormal experience. True, I do now wonder whether some paranormal phenomena may not be as 'real' as we'd like to imagine, but the reverse is also true; what we blithely dismiss as 'fantasy' may actually be a form of reality that we just don't often have access to.

Western materialism has taught us to think of 'reality' as that which is solid, physical and true, and 'fantasy' or 'dreaming' as that which is insubstantial, ethereal and imaginary; two separate states which have nothing to do with each other and are mutually exclusive, ie *something is either real or imaginary, true or false*.

I don't think so. I now see all experiences as being on a sliding scale, with some simply being a little more (or less) real than others.

My narcolepsy allows me to explore that mystical realm between 'reality' and 'imagination' more easily than most, and although I hate the condition with a passion, I've come to see that I can actually use it as a navigational aid as I explore that weird landscape called the Unknown.

**'IF SLEEP DISORDERS CAN EXPOSE US TO A WORLD IN WHICH REALITY AND FANTASY ARE NO LONGER NEATLY DIVIDED, HOW CAN WE DETERMINE WHICH PRETERNATURAL EXPERIENCES ARE REAL, AND WHICH ARE SIMPLY CREATIONS OF OUR SUBCONSCIOUS?'**





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