



## INVESTIGATORS' BULLETIN

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### Split of Duties

We thought it might be useful to explain to you how we have split the running of ASSAP's Investigations Dept between us, so that you are clear who to contact with any enquiries.

Essentially, Bill deals with

- the receipt of new cases from members of the public and the allocation of them to AIs (Accredited Investigators)
- the provision of support and advice to investigators
- the receipt of investigation reports (other than those submitted in relation to applications for accreditation) and the judging of the winner of the Michael Bentine trophy
- the provision of some contributions for the Investigators' Bulletin

whilst Dylan deals with

- the handling of applications for accreditation from trainee investigators
  - the production and distribution of identity cards
  - the editing and production of the Investigators' Bulletin
- and, of course, deputises for Bill in his absence.

We are ensuring that one or other of us each year is part of the tuition team at Training Day. As members of the Executive, naturally we both attend the monthly Executive meetings.

### **Current Cases**

- In the case of tapping, unexplained footsteps and a child seeing an apparition with red eyes at a house in Norfolk which had been reported to us, we have struggled to find an investigator to take the case on, as AIs are thin on the ground in that part of the country; however, Mark Cave has now kindly agreed to look into the matter.
- Cherill Penton has been busy with several investigations: in Shropshire, a vigil at a hotel has been held, during which EVP was recorded, in the West Midlands, alleged paranormal activity at a block of flats is about to be investigated and Staffordshire seems to have been a real hotbed of activity recently, with Cherill looking into problems around a girl who has been using a ouija board, paranormal phenomena at a pub, multiple witness sightings of an 'Owlman / Mothman' and poltergeist incidents at a private house.
- OOP animals have been reported around the country, with Jim Leaver investigating big cat / dog sightings in Kent, Damien O'Dell 'pursuing' a big cat in Buckinghamshire, Chris Huff following up a wolverine sighting in County Durham and multiple witness sightings of 'the Beast of Lytham' being investigated in Lancashire by Stuart Leadbetter and Geoff and Helen Wilkins.
- In order to gain her accreditation, Tamsin Ashmore has written up a case that she and Bill have been investigating, involving mild poltergeist activity and some apparitions at a house in South Yorkshire: ITV has shown interest in this case and may feature it in a programme to be broadcast in October.
- Jean Porter has been examining a case of a lady in Derbyshire who

claimed to be repeatedly pushed about by a spirit, the finding being that she was actually suffering from a medical condition. Jean is intending to write this up for her accreditation project. This is one of a number of cases which ASSAP has investigated, where, despite an investigator meticulously and objectively uncovering a normal explanation for the reported phenomena, the client, at the end of the day, unfortunately refuses to accept the findings, persisting in his / her belief that spirits are responsible for the sensations experienced.

- Alan Clifford and Ian Percy are attempting to interview UFO witnesses in Warwickshire and Ian and Steve Hall are also investigating another UFO sighting in Dorset.
- Russell Beard has picked up a case of a domestic haunting in Worcestershire passed on to us by the British Paranormal Alliance.
- Susan Vousden has been to interview a lady in Essex who brought anomalous photos and film, together with details of haunting activity, to ASSAP's attention.
- We are currently trying to assign of an apparitional case in Rhondda Cynon Taff to an AI.

As you can see, there's plenty of investigative activity going on within ASSAP!

### **Contributions**

You are encouraged to send contributions for this bulletin to Dylan - especially ideas to help your fellow AIs make their investigations more effective.

## Report Writing

You will all know from having attended Training Day that ASSAP encourages investigators to produce reports on their investigations - but why? What should be included? Who should write them? And what happens to the reports afterwards?

Basically the whole *raison d'etre* of anomalous research and investigations is to add to man's knowledge and understanding of matters not yet explained by Science. However, if individuals have done their bit to throw even a little new light on the subject, this is of little use if that extra bit of knowledge is not recorded for the benefit of, and made accessible to, other interested persons. That is where the documentation of investigative cases comes in. Within the context of ASSAP, such documentation can take several forms - an investigation report (which should be produced for every case undertaken), an article in *ASSAP News* (if you feel a brief update on the highlights of a case would be of interest to other members), an article in *Anomaly* (if the amount and nature of phenomena and/or investigative tasks undertaken warrant a more in-depth write-up) or a feature on the Investigations page of ASSAP's website (if you consider a case to be of particular interest to the public).

A really significant part of any investigative case and the resultant report is the interview with the primary witness. It is worth taking a blank copy of the initial sections of the report template (see article below) with you to the interview, as a prompt for the relevant questions to ask, and this will ease completion of that part of the report later. Essentially, Sections 2 to 6 document the information provided to you by the witness.

Some sections will be inapplicable in some cases. For example, in Section 7, a write-up of a place-centred phenomenon might usefully include

- a plan of the premises and/or a map and/or an aerial photograph<sup>1</sup>
- details of the environment, including the geology and the presence / absence of underground water and of energy sources such as mobile phone transmitting masts, electricity pylons and electricity sub-stations
- aspects of the history of the site, such as previous occupants

whereas these would tend to be irrelevant in the case of a person-centred phenomenon. Be careful though: exclude the map and photograph if the location of the site is confidential. And don't jump too quickly to the conclusion that a phenomenon is person-centred. For example, only one person in a house may have reported seeing apparitions in his bedroom but if you find that there is an energy source close by, it is possible that it may be disrupting that person's sleep patterns and producing sleep paralysis and associated hypnogogic hallucinations.

Section 8 should list all the activities that you (and your investigator colleagues) have carried out. For each activity, either provide the details (e.g. in the case of a vigil) or cross-reference other sections of the report (e.g. for interview details). Photographic evidence may sometimes be appropriate to include here.

Section 9 should only include comments you wish to make about the witness if there is anything you have observed about him where you would

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<sup>1</sup> this may be obtained from <http://maps.google.co.uk>

not wish him to see those comments for fear of upsetting him. For example, he may have stated in the interview (and you will therefore have documented in Section 2) that he doesn't take drugs; however, you may have observed symptoms such as dilation of the pupils of the eyes which indicate to you that he probably does take drugs. If such a point is relevant to the investigation, Section 9 is the place to note it. Sometimes you will have made no negative observations about the witness - in that case, the Section may be omitted. In any event, Section 9 is **never** shown to the client.

Section 10 should comprise a discussion of the possible normal and paranormal options that might explain the phenomena and is the place to bring together your thoughts on how likely each option is to be true, deduced from all the information gathered during the investigation, noting the relative degree of evidence for each option.

Whilst a report written as per ASSAP's template is the preferred format, we would appreciate receiving a report in any format in preference to no report at all.

Having compiled the report, it is sensible to show it to the other investigators directly involved in the case and to invite constructive comments from them. The report (minus Section 9) is then shown to the client. Finally, as you have already attained your accreditation, you should send the report to Bill, who will acknowledge receipt of it and pass back helpful comments. In due course, Bill (or whoever is NIC at the time) will pass the reports to the Archivist, who will file them in ASSAP's archives. Should any members require access to any particular reports to help with their research, they should make their request to the Archivist (currently

James Clarke), although the key sheet will not be made available if the case is confidential.

We would encourage you to try to involve trainee investigators from ASSAP in your investigations and to give them the opportunity to take a turn at writing up a case, so that they can submit a report to attain their own accreditation (by sending it to Dylan), thus producing a bigger pool of AIs around the country.

### Tools for the Job

No - we're not talking EMF meters and thermometers here (hopefully something about those in a future issue). We're talking administrative tools. Please be aware of the availability of the following:-

- **Investigation Report template**
- **Key Sheet**
- **Vigil Event Sheet**

For those with a computer, these may be downloaded from the ASSAP website by logging in as a member (userid 'assap', password as per page 2 of 'ASSAP News'), selecting 'Investigations' from the left-hand menu to bring up the 'Investigations: Procedures for Members' page and clicking on the downloads link at the bottom of the page. Word, RTF and PDF versions are available.

Those without a computer requiring a printed copy of any of the above may obtain one by sending a large SAE to Bill with a request for the appropriate document(s). This method may also be used to request a blank **ASSAP letter heading** which may then be photocopied (e.g. for sending introductory letters to potential clients, requesting permission to carry out an investigation).