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Investigators' Bulletin

www.assap.org or write to:-

ASSAP, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3XX

Contacts:

William Eyre, National Investigations Co-ordinator

E-mail: investigations@assap.org Telephone 01246 413217

Cherill Penton, Deputy National Investigations Co-ordinator

E-mail: deputy.nic@assap.org Telephone 01543 685913

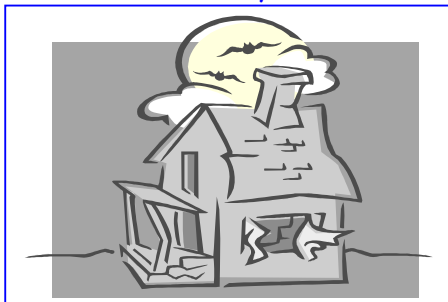
WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Calling all AAI's

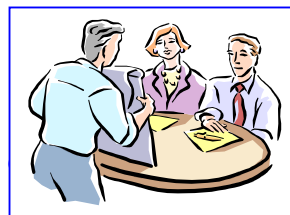
May I remind all AAI's that this Bulletin is written by you for the benefit of all AAI's both new and experienced!

If you have any articles you think would benefit other AAI's, please send them to Cherill Penton at the e-mail address stated above. This edition carries an excellent article, again written by Terri Settrington, about Migraine.

Any hints or tips that would help AAI's in their investigations would be most welcome! Thank you!



ASSAP's First Training Weekend



November 24th and the 25th saw the first ASSAP two training event.

This was held at Beaumanor Hall in Loughborough, Leicestershire and many of the attendees stayed overnight in the basic but adequate accommodation provided.

Nicky Sewell (secretary) and Dave Wood (Chairman) were responsible for the training which was well put together, well delivered and very informative.

Congratulations both on a job well

MIGRAINE

As an investigator and interviewer it is essential that you have an understanding of some of the more common societal illnesses. Migraine is a very common complaint most associated with the civilised world. Our life styles coupled with stressful working environments can be significant in triggering this debilitating condition. Along with the common symptoms of classic migraine a sufferer may experience a plethora of physical and psychological phenomena and because of this they may believe they are experiencing something that could be considered as 'above normal' especially during the auric first phase of classic migraine.

According to traditional classification schemes, the two most common types of migraine are classic, and common. In classic migraine, the headache is preceded by an "aura", which usually consists of visual disturbances (but can involve the other senses such as the sense of smell). Common migraine has no aura. Cluster headaches, which are perhaps the third most common type of severe headache, are also often referred to in text which discusses migraine (Solberg, 2007).

The signs and symptoms of migraine vary from person to person. Most obviously it starts as a dull ache in the head and/or neck, and building to extreme, throbbing pain. Pain is usually, but not always, confined to one side of the head, and persists for at least several hours (or longer). After the pain subsides, the migraine sufferer is commonly left feeling tired or drained, and occasionally elated.

Other characteristic symptoms: (may occur before and/or concurrently with headache):

- constipation or diarrhoea
- irritability
- nausea and/or vomiting
- sensitivity to light
- sensitivity to noise
- sensitivity to odours
- tender scalp
- visible enlargement of blood vessels
- neck and/or shoulder pain and stiffness
- extremity pain and/or numbness

During early onset most patients experience the familiar "aura" that signals the onset of a migraine: vision anomalies such as noticeable blind spots or inexplicable visible lights that range from a symmetrical circular design to random, floating or falling "light drops", auditory signals that resemble severe tinnitus, olfactory signals creating the sensation of specific smells that do not exist and excitation of the taste buds that create disagreeable tastes in the mouth (Doran, 2000).

It is important to explore the migraine history of your client, as a recently diagnosed client may not understand or have experience of the 'strange' phenomena that is all part and parcel of their condition's progression and may therefore misinterpret their experiences and report haunt type phenomena.

An aura (usually preceding pain in classic migraines): Can also be experienced as a result of epilepsy, an optical system disorder, or brain disease or dysfunction.

Auric symptoms can include:

- visual disturbance
- blind spots
- flashing lights
- tunnel vision
- visual and auditory hallucinations
- zig zag light patterns
- numbness of parts of body
- tinnitus
- speech disturbance, such as slurring
- sensory disturbances
- blurred vision
- olfactory hallucinations

Other common symptoms:

- abdominal distension
- chilliness
- peripheral cyanosis

- compulsion to yawn
- dry Mucosa
- oedema
- hyperhydrosis
- rhinorrhea
- polyuria
- intellectual disturbance such as confusion, loss of concentration, or increased ability to think prior to migraine onset.
- mood changes
- sensitivity to touch
- tremors
- vertigo
- tachycardia

Some famous people with migraine:

Thomas Jefferson, U.S. Grant, Woodrow Wilson, Lewis Carroll, Edgar Allen Poe, Virginia Wolf, George Eliot, George Bernard Shaw, Frederic Chopin, Peter Tchaikovsky, St. Paul, John Calvin, Julius Caesar, Queen Mary Tudor of England, Peter the Great, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Alexander Pope, Alexander Graham Bell, Alfred Nobel, Kareem Abduhl Jabar, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietsche, Sigmund Freud, Linnaeus, Blaise Pascal

(Source: Migraine: Winning the Fight of Your Life by Charles Theisler)



References

Margaret V. Doran (2000) The Mighty Migraine Physiology,

Found at <http://www.thestorypage.net/mmphys.html> Accessed 12.12.07

Ronda Solberg (2007) Migraine Faqs, part one.

<http://www.meldrum.demon.co.uk/migraine/faq1.html> Accessed 12.12.07

Produced by Terri Settingerton for the Investigators' Bulletin, December 2007.

The following article is for your information and is very important!

Renewal of Identity Cards

As most of you will be aware, in ASSAP the AAI identity cards have a specific expiry date, which falls at the end of March once every two years. Thus at the end of March 2008 all current identity cards will expire. This practice is so that the NICs can be assured that those members who are recorded as being AAIs are still actively involved in investigations and still willing to undertake cases involving spontaneous phenomena on behalf of ASSAP.

Enclosed with March's 'ASSAP News' you will find a renewal letter and proforma. If you wish retain your AAI status you are requested to complete the proforma, to provide a signature sample on it and to send it to the address on the letter by the end of March. The application should be accompanied by a current passport sized head and shoulders photo. These items may be sent either by post or by e-mail. Replacement cards containing an expiry date of March 2010 will then be sent out during April. It will be assumed that any members not applying for renewal of their identity cards no longer wish to be actively involved in anomalous investigations. Your anticipated cooperation with this renewal exercise is appreciated.

Michael Bentine Award

Congratulations to Caroline Pick, winner of the Michael Bentine Trophy for the best investigative report of the year, and also to Dave Taylor for his highly commended report. Watch out for further details in March's 'ASSAP News'.



The winner of the Michael Bentine Trophy, (pictured here), which is usually presented annually at the ASSAP Annual General Meeting (if the winner can attend), is also presented with a smaller 'keepsake' shield.

Current Cases

- Cherill Penton, assisted by other members of PASSA, has now organised two vigils at a mansion in Staffordshire. At the most recent of these, Simon Royce-Dexter spontaneously went into trance and made movements and utterances which only made sense when related to incidents from the building's past with which Simon, at the time, was unfamiliar.
- Stefan Lobuczek is contemplating what conclusions can be drawn from an investigation into a domestic haunting in Staffordshire.
- Cara Coles has requested an opinion from Craig Coomber on the nature of the anomalous image on a film taken in Hampshire.
- The owners of the tea shop investigated earlier in the year by Terry Hewitt (see issue 7) subsequently reported haunting phenomena at their house and so, after suitable questioning, Terry decided to organise a vigil there; however, little of interest transpired.
- It is a not infrequent occurrence (as our Media Support Officer, Carrie Searley, will testify) for the media to contact ASSAP with a lead that they think will make a good TV programme or newspaper article but where, in reality, they are expecting ASSAP to do their research for them free of charge! Such was the suspicion when a journalist contacted ASSAP about sightings of an outdoor apparition in Greater London, but Michael Lewis said he was prepared to do some investigative and research work on the matter provided the journalist also did some. Alas, the witness decided to remain anonymous, thus preventing an investigation of that particular sighting. However, in the course of pursuing this, the reporter did come across a pub reporting similar experiences and so Mike is looking into that.
- A resident in North Wales reported incidents involving a startled cat, a feeling of unease and a falling mirror. Kevin Griffiths-Boden took up the reigns and has asked the client to keep a diary of events.
- Simone Taylor (with mentoring provided by Cherill) has been to interview a householder in the West Midlands about a domestic haunting.
- A gentleman in Greater London has reported an ongoing series of unexplained pieces of damage occurring to the walls of his house. Chunks of wall have been gouged out, sometimes with the wallpaper still intact over the damage and sometimes with debris appearing on the floor below. Tom Hagan has been to visit the house and inspected the damage. Whilst the householder is minded to think that something paranormal is happening, ASSAP's current thinking is more along the lines of either dry rot and fungus having set in or another member of the family repeatedly and deliberately causing the damage.
- Michael Graham is looking into two UFO sightings in Cumbria.

- Simon Royce-Dexter is mentoring Cheryl Ward in respect of carrying out an investigation of a domestic haunting in Derbyshire. An interview has been carried out and a vigil is being planned.
- A lady in Greater Manchester requested help with dealing with apparitions in her house and so Julian Perkins was asked to make contact. However, the client then made it clear that she was only prepared for ASSAP to become involved if ASSAP could guarantee to end the phenomena! Clearly it is not part of ASSAP's remit to stop phenomena and there is no guaranteed way of achieving this anyway and so Julian correctly informed the client that ASSAP could not offer what the lady was after. The situation not infrequently occurs where there is an apparent conflict of interests inasmuch as the clients are interested in stopping what they perceive to be problematic phenomena, whereas ASSAP is interested in examining and understanding what is happening. More often than not, a middle road can be taken and the investigator can explain that a recommendation on dealing with the phenomena can only be made once the causation has been ascertained and that can only happen by undertaking an investigation. Such an approach can potentially lead to both ASSAP and the client gaining something from the investigation. However, the client in this case was clearly not interested in such a middle road approach.
- Stuart Andrews has submitted a report on a haunting at an inn in Devon.
- Dave Taylor has been examining alleged anomalous photographs taken at Wychbury Hill in the West Midlands. Expert opinion was sought from appropriate quarters and an excellent report drawn up describing the alleged anomalies and their most likely explanations.
- Peter Symonds has been asked to look into electrical anomalies reported as occurring around a gentleman in Dorset.
- Kieron Savill is about to interview a lady in Essex who has reported experiencing anomalous noises and electrical phenomena in her home.

IMPORTANT

We would like to remind all AAI's that all the documents you need for your reports and your actual investigations, i.e. Report Sheets, Code of Conduct and Insurance Disclaimer, can be found ready to download on the ASSAP website in the AAI section.

PASSWORD REMINDERS:-

The main ASSAP website (members section) can be accessed by using:-

username: assapmember

password: haunted.

The AAI section of the website can be accessed using:-

username: aai,

password: approved

Important - Update notification

Report Template

Please note that a new version of the ASSAP Investigation Report Template has been produced, which incorporates questionnaires designed to ensure that investigations are carried out scientifically and ethically. Whilst part of the purpose of these new appendices is to test understanding of material taught to trainees at the Training Weekend, they should also be found to be useful *aides memoires* for more experienced investigators and so AAI's are recommended to download the new version from the Members' Section of the website. It can then be stored as a .dot file in the folder of your computer where other document templates are held. For those without MS Word, an RTF version is also downloadable.

Also available in the same part of the website is a new document that provides guidelines on how to complete the report template, explaining what type of information should be documented in each section.

Any investigator with a computer but without Internet access can obtain these two new files by sending a blank floppy disc to Bill and any investigator without a computer can obtain a printed copy of the files from Bill. In both cases, please enclose an SAE.

Ask Another AAI

William Eyre would like to ask all AAI's:-

"Why is it such a common occurrence on vigils for the batteries in investigators' equipment to be drained unexpectedly"?

One of the most dramatic such incidents to be reported so far was the simultaneous flattening of fully charged batteries in a laptop computer, a camcorder and a walkie talkie in the kitchen of Woodchester Mansion during a March 2007 vigil organised by Caroline Pick.

If you have any ideas or comments about this subject, please contact Bill at investigations@assap.org or write to the NIC at the usual ASSAP address.