

May 2004

ASSAP

NEWS

NEWS

Not Out!

The One Hundredth Newsletter of the Association for the Scientific Study  
of Anomalous Phenomena

## Spirits High at Muncaster Conference

The paranormal conference held at Muncaster Castle in Cumbria and organised by Dr Jason Braithwaite of the ASSAP Northern Group last month has been hailed as a great success, both by the organisers and those attending.

A packed two days of talks included addresses from such luminaries as Prof Archie Roy and Tricia Robertson of the Scottish SPR, veteran UFO researcher Philip Mantle and ASSAP's own Rev Lionel Fanthorpe and Dr Hugh Pincott, but the undoubted star of the show was the MADS monitoring system developed by Dr Braithwaite (see AN 96 and Anomaly for further details of the MADS system).

Braithwaite commented: 'A big thank you to ASSAP for supporting the conference in terms of advertising and attending. We

had a great showing there from members and the executive. The event was such a success that we are planning another one in two years time.

'The MADS system was featured on BBC2's 'Working Lunch' programme the week after the conference. In fact it has now been recorded for local media and SKY Discovery as well. In fact I am rapidly losing track...'

A full conference report by Val Hope will appear in the next ASSAP News.



Lionel Fanthorpe looking jovial and Jason Braithwaite looking saturnine.

Photo: Peter Frost-Pennington

After the weekend Dr

# Editorial

## Sitting in the Dark

This is not the editorial I was expecting to write. I had thought to reflect in a fairly trivial way on a hundred issues of ASSAP News, the newsletter of an organisation dedicated to applying rational and scientific methodology to the investigation of unexplained phenomena. But then I came home to the power cut.

It is always a cold evening when the power fails and the visit from my neighbour with the information that the power would be out for at least six hours did little to raise either the temperature or our spirits as we settled down to an evening of candlelight. As the chill settled on the house and the silence outside began seeping in through window frames and under doors I suddenly began to realise where the stories came from: the lurker in the shadows; the hunter of the dark; the face in the forest; the spirit of the hearth and all the others.

Darkness is different by candlelight; more organic perhaps, certainly more alive. Shadows dance eerily and every nook and cranny hides a secret that only the deepest parts of our primitive hind-brains can recognise. And fear could be there too, if we invited it in.

And that is something that we always need to remember. One hundred issues of ASSAP News down the line and ASSAP is still, quite rightly, promoting the value of the scientific method in all we do. However, we should recognise that beneath the civilised exterior of a witness to something inexplicable or otherworldly, cowers the frightened soul of the hunter hunched before the dying embers, the family huddled in a storm-wracked hovel or the traveller holding a torch as a talisman against the encroaching dark. Too often our scientific investigation impinges on someone's primal fear and our rationality comes up against a subconscious desire, *need* perhaps, to accept the unexplained as just that. We need to exercise appropriate sensitivity to the fact that, deep down, the past is still with us and perhaps always will be.

Mike White

April 2004 – originally at least, by candlelight

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## **Send me something** - hello...

The deadline for the next ASSAP News will probably be around late May. If you would like to see your name in print you can send letters or articles to: Mike White, ASSAP News Editor, PO Box 230, PLYMOUTH, PL1 2ZR (please note the new PO Box!) or by email to [assapnews@assap.org](mailto:assapnews@assap.org) (you can pick your format as I am very accommodating).

# About ASSAP

ASSAP is an educational charity involved in the investigation of anomalous phenomena. We publish ASSAP News bimonthly and our journal *Anomaly* twice a year. ASSAP was formed in 1981 to bring together disparate strands of research and encourage a cross-disciplinary approach. We organize experiments and occasional study days through our publications and website. Our President is the well-known cleric and Fortean researcher the Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe.

For general enquiries, contact us at our PO box:

**ASSAP, PO Box 230, PLYMOUTH, PL1 2ZR**

Just prefix the address with the name of the office you want to contact. We will forward all mail to the individual officers. This way your letters won't go astray when one of us moves house or moves on.

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# The Executive

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## **SPECIALIST SUBJECTS - CURRENT OFFICERS**

**ALTERED STATES:** George Gregg

**CROP CIRCLES:** Gareth Goodwin

**CRYPTOZOOLOGY:** John Gledson

**DOWSING:** Martyn Taylor

**ESP:** Terry Hewitt

**FORTEAN PHENOMENA:** Justin Cowell

**HAUNTINGS & POLTERGEISTS:** Michael Lewis

**HEALING, RELIGION:** Michael J Rush

**LEGENDS, ANCIENT SITES, EARTH MYSTERIES:** Steve Parsons

**PHOTOGRAPHIC ANOMALIES:** TBA

**PK & PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP:** William Eyre

**UFOS:** Ian Percy

**NOTE: ASSAP has no corporate views. Views expressed are those of the authors and individual members concerned.**

Thanks to Jim Clark for proofreading this issue.

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| haunted |
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# The Fanthorpe Column

## The Muncaster Experience

Having been investigators of the paranormal for well over forty years, and having heard many outstandingly good lecturers sharing their expertise on it with great lucidity and helpfulness, we really have to put Dr Jason Braithwaite right at the top of the list. To say that his lecture at Muncaster on March 27<sup>th</sup> was excellent does Jason less than justice. The organisation of the content was brilliant and the delivery was of such quality that we could happily have listened to him all day. He was the jewel in the crown of an exceptionally good paranormal conference. (Our love of owls and the presence of the fascinating owls at Muncaster was, of course, an added bonus!)

From the point of view of ASSAP, the essential importance of Jason's work at Muncaster was his rigorous scientific approach to the phenomena consistently reported there. Of all the world's intriguing unsolved mysteries, the mystery of the human mind and brain is probably the greatest – and the one most worth investigating. Jason is a Research Fellow in the Behavioural Brain Sciences Centre in the University of Birmingham, and as such is particularly interested in external influences such as electro-magnetic radiation, which seem able to affect the function of the brain, and/or states of consciousness. By linking the scientific detection of such natural radiation fields with reports made by witnesses in the vicinity of such fields, Jason is making massive contributions to the scientific study of anomalous phenomena: all power to his arm.

For us, the questions that are most intriguing about work such as that being carried out so expertly at Muncaster, are whether the presence of particular electro-magnetic influences causes the human brain to see, hear, smell and feel things that have no tangible existence – or whether the electro-magnetic influences enable the brain to receive genuinely external and objective messages which it cannot receive in its normal state. Think of the analogy of the telescope, microscope or TV receiver. Distant stars are there. Microbes are there. The transmitting studio is there. Without the telescope, microscope and TV receiver, we can't experience them. What if the brain *needs* particular forms of electro-magnetic stimulus before it can experience beings from different time-frames, from other dimensions, or from the world of spirit?

The ASSAP input here is to suggest ways of devising suitable tests and experiments which will make it possible to distinguish between objective and subjective phenomena. There is a great deal of outstanding talent in ASSAP. The task, although a difficult one, is by no means beyond us.

President Lionel and First Lady Patricia

# Competition



Take a look at the above picture of Didcot Power Station illuminated by the sun shining through the clouds. Pretty, huh? It also forms the basis of a competition for this issue of ASSAP News.

I have highlighted a vertical and angled ray in the picture. Now, the ground-based distance between the rays' base (as taken from an OS map) is around 500 metres and the angle of intersection (a) of the two rays is approximately 30° so using simple geometry the length of the vertical line x (which is the distance to the hidden sun in the photograph) is given by

$$x = 500/\tan 30^\circ$$

or 866 metres. (If you don't believe me work it out for yourself.)

So, is this proof that the Flat Earthers are right and the sun is just a small dot orbiting the Earth? And if not, why not?

Small prize for the best explanation . Answer next time if anyone sends one in otherwise you'll have to wait...

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## Ghost Writing

No prizes for this one but who confidently stated that:

*'No ghost was ever seen by two pair of eyes?'*

The author of last issue's mystery quote was French intellectual Francois De La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680). Yes, I know, way too easy...

# Special Feature

## Orbs - The Sceptical Approach

- Dr Paul Lee

Since the introduction of domestic digital photography c.1995, it seems that the field of ghost research has become inundated with photographs of "orbs" - small spheres, of differing colours, sizes and opacity, reputed by some people to be the "Basic Spirit Form" (BSF), the first stage in a manifestation. These pictures first started to appear on the internet, on American websites, and usually chronicled intrepid adventurers' exploits in cemeteries at night - suitable places for ghosts, surely, and so the connection with spooks was made, and has been accepted nearly without question since. But people who have experience with photographic equipment dispute their supernatural origin.

Many of us believe orbs are bunkum, and experiments by Phil Walton of ASSAP and Philip Carr of the Ghost Club demonstrate that orbs can be replicated by introducing a fine, invisible cloud of small particles, such as water, dust - even cinnamon powder (!) into the air! Furthermore, researchers such as Troy Taylor of the Ghost Research Society have done their own work into this phenomenon, and others suggest that the lens of the camera may be at fault.

So, why are people so keen to believe that these blobs are anything to do with ghosts? Firstly, ghost hunters are not experts in their field or the use of their equipment and anything odd is deemed "supernatural". Secondly, it does give the orbster something to do: sitting for hours in darkened buildings is pretty boring!

So, why are there so many orb photos? Well, I have seen some on 35mm film, but most are digital. I found the reason for this on a vigil in Kent this Summer. My friends were taking dozens of pictures, one after another and would dispense with the pictures that didn't show orbs. At the end of it, they had three or four pictures. The small screen on the camera allowed them to veto the ones they didn't like. Some ghost groups simply take hundreds of pictures. 35mm film cameras can't allow such an immediate response as to whether to keep the picture or not. However, my friends did legitimately ask about photos showing just a single "orb": "You can't tell me that this is a single speck of dust".

Hence the reason for this article, to discuss the scientific merits of orbs. I have written to many digital camera manufacturers (Canon, Sony, Panasonic, etc.) and a few firms associated with imagery and photography (Kodak, etc.). Of these, Canon is the only one that has replied so far with an answer; indeed, it seems that they were getting such a large enquiry from people about "orbs" that they had produced a technical letter, to be dispensed, like a form letter (this is reproduced below).

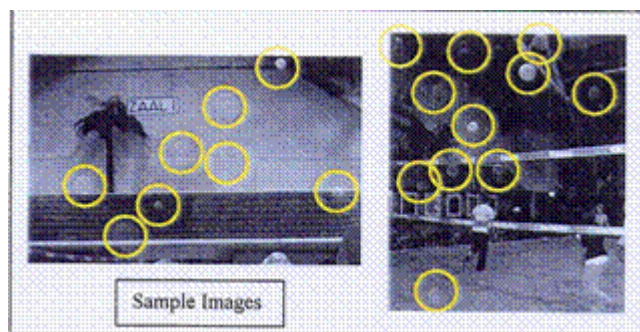
[To: Dr. Paul Lee](#)

We have checked your camera and are happy that the camera meets all design specifications.

The problem you have been experiencing is due to a phenomenon not associated with the camera. When a picture is taken and reviewed afterwards, circular spots may be noticed on the picture. The problem does not occur with every picture. Additionally, the spots are randomly positioned throughout the picture. Highest concentration is in areas closest to the flash unit when the picture was made.

The cause of the problem is common to a lot of digital cameras with small CCDs, not just the Canon digital cameras. Such digital cameras have a greater depth of field compared to 35mm cameras, due to their smaller focal distance. This in even higher degree when the camera is set to wide angle.

Because of the above, small dust particles, droplets of water, etc., drifting in the air close to the camera and not within depth of field for normal 35mm cameras, are within depth of field for digital cameras. Under normal circumstances this is not too big a problem, as these are very small. When flash is used, its light illuminates these dust particles or water droplets, and these therefore show up and are extremely obvious on pictures taken. The problem is worsened, because the flash unit is positioned close to the lens barrel.



Due to the setup and operation of digital cameras using small CCDs, there is nothing that can be done about this phenomenon. You can take some measures though, to prevent this problem from occurring as much as is possible.

- Switch off flash in environments where there are likely to be small dust particles or water droplets in the air. To compensate for this lack of flash, you can increase the ISO value on your digital camera if this feature is available on your camera.
- Use an external slave flash unit further away from the camera and partially cover the camera's flash. These units are not available from Canon, but there are third party companies producing such units. Make sure a slave flash unit is chosen which can also be set to synchronize with the second flash as used by Powershot cameras. With Powershot cameras, the first flash is used to measure, the second is the actual flash.

*[Paul's note: Try these and let me know if this reduces your "orb" problem.]*

*This sheet is Copyright Canon. No attempt is made to infringe copyright. All rights reserved.*

After an appeal on the rec.misc.photo and sci.skeptic newsgroups for someone to help explain the above in simple layman's terms - or even just to verify whether it is correct - I entered into very rewarding correspondence with a chap named Al Denelsbeck. This is part of what he has to say about "orbs":

I have, from time to time, evaluated photographs of various phenomena that have been touted as being from unexplained or supernatural origins, strictly from an amateur standpoint. These included mysterious objects in the sky, ghost and seance pics, and 'orbs'.

What you have been told regarding the mundane cause for orbs is perfectly correct, and extremely easy to duplicate. I even reproduced the effect unintentionally last weekend when shooting in heavy fog with a digital camera. You will also tend to see it with point-n-shoot film cameras that have a flash too close to the lens, the same ones that produce redeye so frequently. One person trying to convince a gullible audience used a lens spotted with water, reproducing the effect in the daytime. He aimed at a dark background and let a significant amount of diffuse light hit the lens directly. The defracted light became apparent, where in many circumstances it would have been overpowered by the brightness of a normal subject and simply been unnoticeable, except by close inspection, as a vague softness in certain areas of the photo. I also provided an explanation of a similar effect, flash-illuminated raindrops, to the webmaster of one 'mysteries' site, but oddly enough, received no response or saw any update to his text which claimed that no one had given any kind of plausible explanation.

*[Paul's Note: I asked Al to clarify some of the technical terms in Canon's dispatch. This is what he says:]*

'CCD' simply stands for 'charge coupled device', which is meaningless unless you're into advanced electronics - but all it refers to is the digital sensor that captures the image. 'Depth of field' refers to the amount of focus distance on either side of the focused 'plane' or any camera or lens. You might focus on an object six feet away, but objects at four feet (closer) and ten feet (farther) are acceptably sharp at certain settings and/or focal lengths. Digital cameras do have a greater apparent depth-of-field, mostly from using shorter focal lengths than film cameras to achieve the same photo.

You'll notice that, as something goes further out of focus, it becomes fuzzier, less distinct, and darker. So the lower (shorter) the depth of field on a camera, the less likely you are to see anything extremely close to the lens - it becomes so indistinct that it has minimal effect on the image. With greater depth of field, however, the focus becomes sharper, the objects brighter and more defined. Moreover, as I indicated above, you get a stronger effect when the flash sits very close to the lens, because the reflection of the light is more direct, not as scattered by the oblique angle of the light. Water droplets have an even stronger effect with such flashes, since you can get reflections from both surfaces - the closest one to you, and the back side from light passing through the droplet.

I have personally found, however, that to many people explanations such as this are quite unwelcome and may fall on deaf ears. There's just something too compelling about the supernatural.

*[Paul's Note: I then asked Al about those photos that only seem to show single orbs. If they are due to dust, where are all the others?]*

Not too difficult, really. A few days ago I was attempting to get some useful pics of soap bubbles in the air (which is a largely hit-or-miss enterprise). Despite producing a good cluster of bubbles before I hit the shutter release, some pics had very few bubbles, one had only one, some had none at all. That's what digital is for: cranking out lots of shots. And if you're trying for it, you can do it without much difficulty. Release your dust or water droplets (mist) and pause a moment while it almost clears the air - the stragglers will be the only ones caught on film. And creative cropping can produce a nice centered orb if that's what you really need. This is, of course, accounting for the people intending to produce the effect - those that get it accidentally, especially those that believe they caught something extraordinary, can simply be victims of random chance, or the coincidental placement of something in the frame dark enough to show the orb-producer. The frame might have several of them, but you can't see them because the exposure from the lighter background elements overwhelmed them. The amount of pixelation in the image can give some indication of whether the orb has been cropped or enlarged, since digital images always have set resolutions. If you're very serious about investigating them, find out what camera has been used, what resolution setting, and so on, and compare the image you're given (at high magnification). You can often tell if it's been messed with. And then there's the trick of altering levels (Photoshop, at least) to see what range the image has within it. I've found a cut-n-paste job because the original image had lighter 'blacks' than the pasted in bogey, which showed when I blew the levels out into extremely high contrast. It can also show near-invisible wires or background objects. Fun! And it really annoys the believers. But at the same time, it shows that a simple hoax can often be revealed with a modicum of effort.

*[Paul's Note: And, finally, to be slightly subjective(!), I applaud Al's closing remarks:]*

As I indicated earlier, don't expect it to be too convincing, though. It's been my opinion for a while now that the belief in anything supernatural or extraterrestrial fills a psychological niche in the mind of the believer, and thus removing the 'evidence' of such is resisted or outright ignored. I spent a bit of time on the various paranormal and UFO newsgroups - rational explanations are generally not greeted with huzzahs :-). Didn't look around too much, but the website of the ghost investigator was interesting. Very few proponents are concerned about the negative effects of ignorance when evaluating photos, so it was good to see someone who was willing to dismiss routine photographic effects. But I do wonder just where the cutoff line is, since I have yet to see anything remotely resembling 'convincing' for *\*any\** evidence of supernatural activity, so how do you decide what's acceptable? Have fun with it, and don't take it too seriously. There will always be an element of society that distances themselves from the rational.

Paul Lee is ASSAP's Technical Officer

## Tempus Fugit

ASSAP News was first published in October 1981 to coincide with the creation of the organisation under the editorship of Alan Cleaver (who, incidentally, was also deputy editor of *Psychic News* for a while). He was followed by Carowise who, in turn, succeeded by a team consisting of Chris

## Cross Correspondences?

With regards to the picture on the front cover and the 'Just a Thought' column [see AN 99], you might like to consider the following ideas.

As Dr Vernon Harrison says, you get better results when you're 'expecting' to see something than when you are not. This is magic, not the sleight of hand variety but creative visualisation - that is the creating of space in which something is allowed to form. This was why séances were such a popular medium for this kind of 'artistic endeavor' - either bringing through real ghosts (deceased life forms) or Tulpas (created caricatures of life as with the photo on the front cover, as opposed to another well known picture of a woman in the back seat of a car (as featured in *Fortean Times*/national newspapers) who looked 'real'). Tulpas are usually thought of as being demonic or playful and were once thought of as being created out of muslin or cheesecloth because of their clownish looks and texture. This again reflects what I said in the last issue about the previous one's coverage of The Irish Lane haunting - an energy given form by the 'observer effect', ie nothing turned into something by 'expectation'.

Tony Sandy

Following my last article about Spooks on CCTV for ASSAP News, I have been looking at the various ghost-cams available to view on the internet.

In the section on 'Weird Kent' ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/fun\\_stuff/weird/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/fun_stuff/weird/index.shtml)) there is a ghost-cam in a Welsh farmhouse and, in the Gallery section, there are several camera shots picked out by readers. Some look like hoaxes - images superimposed - though whether this is possible to achieve on web-cams I wouldn't know. A few are fairly vague shapes such as 'orbs' and 'mists'.

However, there are two spotted on different dates in the same room (looks like an attic). Both are exactly the same shape, in exactly the same place, at exactly the same time! It looks too good to be true.

The first is taken at 3.55.03 seconds on 25th November 2002 by Eric den Boer; the second is taken at 3.55.09 seconds on 14th November 2002 by 'Stephan'.

Perhaps you could publish this and see what other ASSAP members think?

Andy Owens

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to former ASSAP Equipment Officer Caroline Searley on the birth of her new son Daniel. Best wishes to both Carrie and Mike and welcome to our new potential member...

Wright, John Marten and Gordon Perkins.

This was a short-lived partnership and Val Hope subsequently took over and edited AN for the next dozen years until I stumbled into the job just in time for issue 94. It was during Val's tenure that the format of AN switched from the small multi-coloured A5 to the new shiny A4 pages you see today.

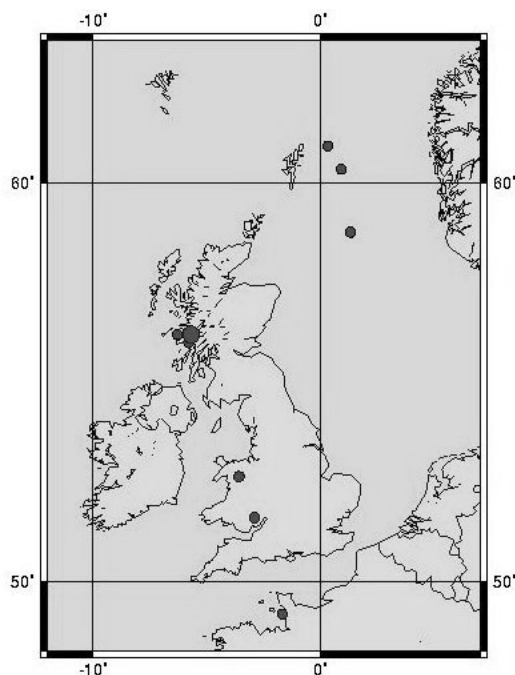
In the days of the old Soviet Union the two national state-controlled newspapers were called *Pravda* and *Isvestia*, names which translate as *Truth* and *News* respectively. This led to a cynical Russian saying which translates as 'There is no news in the Truth and no truth in the News'. Hopefully, ASSAP Truth, er News, will continue to provide both in copious quantities.

Anyway, the excuse for this piece is simply to offer a big thank you to everyone who has been involved with ASSAP News over the last 100 issues, whether as part of the production team or as a contributor. Onward to 200!

Thanks to Maurice Townsend for the scans of the covers for issues 1, 10 and 25, especially as I see his youthful visage peering out from issue 10...

# The Reference Spot

## Recent UK Seismic Activity



| Date       | Time  | Lat    | Long   | Depth (Miles) | Mag | Location             |
|------------|-------|--------|--------|---------------|-----|----------------------|
| 2004/04/15 | 05:31 | 56.287 | -5.766 | 8.2           | 1.3 | FIRTH OF LORN        |
| 2004/04/15 | 05:25 | 56.550 | -5.697 | 5.4           | 2.1 | ARDTORNISH, HIGHLAND |
| 2004/04/12 | 07:08 | 60.797 | 0.329  | 19.7          | 1.9 | NORTHERN NORTH SEA   |
| 2004/04/11 | 22:20 | 49.133 | -1.732 | 9.5           | 1.2 | OFF CHERBOURG        |
| 2004/04/09 | 05:40 | 60.321 | 0.884  | 20.9          | 1.1 | NORTHERN NORTH SEA   |
| 2004/04/08 | 20:53 | 51.837 | -2.940 | 20.0          | 1.3 | ABERGAVERNNEY, GWENT |
| 2004/04/05 | 05:11 | 58.899 | 1.268  | 20.0          | 1.7 | NORTHERN NORTH SEA   |
| 2004/03/29 | 01:51 | 52.868 | -3.619 | 11.6          | 1.1 | BALA, GWYNEDD        |
| 2004/03/27 | 01:48 | 56.488 | -6.336 | 8.2           | 1.0 | ISLE OF MULL         |

This data courtesy of the British Geological Survey  
 - more recent information is available from  
<http://www.quakes.bgs.ac.uk/recbrit.html>

## Solar Terrestrial Activity Index

### Lunar Phases

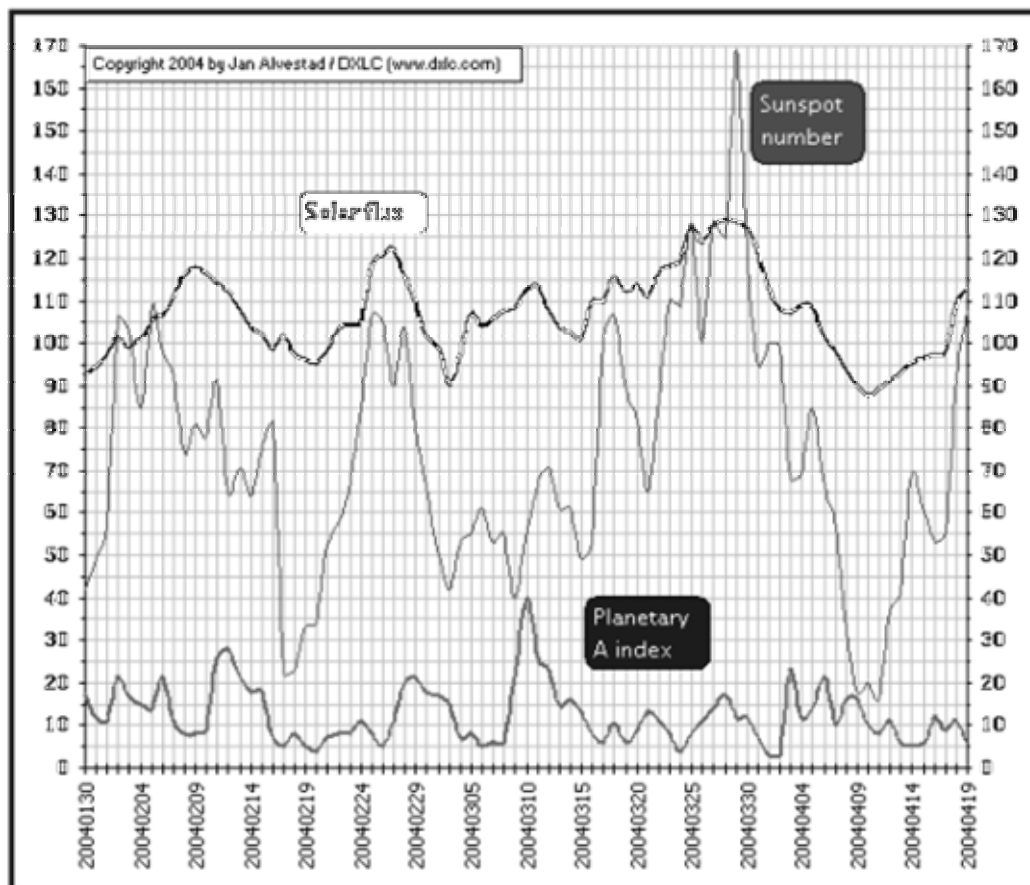
#### May 2004:

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Full Moon     | 4th  |
| Last Quarter  | 11th |
| New Moon      | 19th |
| First Quarter | 27th |

#### June 2004:

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Full Moon     | 3rd  |
| Last Quarter  | 9th  |
| New Moon      | 17th |
| First Quarter | 25th |

Summer Solstice/longest day this year falls on June 21st.



# What's On and Groups

If you would like your group or event listed here please contact us via the PO Box or send an email to [assapnews@assap.org](mailto:assapnews@assap.org). Please send details in as early as possible as many notices are received too late to be included.

**NB.** It will help event organizers if you enclose an SAE when sending for extra details. ASSAP accepts no responsibility for late changes to venues, speakers, etc.

## Alister Hardy Society (Chesterfield/Northern Group)

The group meets roughly once a month in Chesterfield, Derbyshire for informal discussions on all and any aspects of 'religious' experience. These aspects are often not explicitly religious, sometimes being labelled as 'spiritual', 'transcendental', 'psychic', etc. Past topics have included spirit communication via automatic writing and Near-Death Experiences.

If interested please contact Mike Rush on 07790 757955 or at [mike@oddcity.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@oddcity.fsnet.co.uk) for further info and details of the next meeting.

## London Earth Mysteries Circle (LEMC)

**May 11th** Hieronymous Bosch and the Cathar Otherworld

**May 25th** Spell Craft

**June 8th** Stonehenge: Celebration and Subversion

**June 2nd** The Gruesome History of Body Snatching  
LEMC meets in the Meeting Room at the Diorama Centre, 34 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1, beginning at 7.00 pm. Wheel-chair access. Fees: £2 for members, £3 for non-members, concessions £2.50. Tubes: Great Portland Street, Regent's Park or Warren Street. LEMC address for all communications: Rob Stephenson, PO Box 1035, London, W2 6ZX. Or email at [lemc@ic24.net](mailto:lemc@ic24.net), and visit the website at [www.lemc.ic24.net/](http://www.lemc.ic24.net/)

## CPSG (Chesterfield Psychic Study Group)

**May 14th** 'Working with Everyday Angels'. Talk by Alison Knox. Subscription £1.25.

**June 11th** 'Animals and Spiritual Belief'. Talk by Elissa Rattigan  
Chesterfield Psychic Study Group (CPSG) meets at the Community Centre, Tontine Road, Chesterfield. For further details, tel (01246) 221971 or visit [www.cpsg.co.uk](http://www.cpsg.co.uk).

## ParaScience

Meetings are held on the first working Monday of each month at Bebington Civic Centre on the Wirral, North-West England. Meeting commences 8:00pm. Further details from [www.parascience.org](http://www.parascience.org).

## BUFORA

All lectures are held in the 1st floor function suite of the Sols Arms public house, 65-68 Hampstead Road, Euston, London NW1 2PN - 3:00pm till 6:30pm. Tickets, which can be purchased at the door and include a mid-lecture buffet, are £5 for members, and £7 for all others.

Contact address: B.M. BUFORA, London WC1N 3XX.  
[www.bufora.org.uk](http://www.bufora.org.uk)

**Ghost Club:** All lectures take place at the Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF. This is at the southern end of Edgware Road and the nearest tube is Marble Arch - just 5-10 minutes' walk. Talks are free to Ghost Club members and £2.50 for non-members. The talks start at 7.00pm. Visit their website at [www.ghostclub.org.uk](http://www.ghostclub.org.uk) for details of future events.

**Parasearch** is a Midlands ASSAP regional group covering Worcestershire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands. For more details visit: [www.parasearch.org.uk](http://www.parasearch.org.uk), telephone 0121 550 8874 / 0776 1184837 or send an SAE to Parasearch, 15 Brier Mill Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3HA.

## SPI (Strange Phenomena Investigations)

Meetings are held at The Sols Arms, 65-68 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 2PN at 3:30pm. Admission £6.50 for non-members.

**May 29th** Prof. Chris French - 'Many Happy Returns, Reincarnation Claims in the Lebanon'

**June 26th** Andy Thomas - 'The Crop Circle Mystery'

For further details contact: Malcolm Robinson, 8 Hale Gardens, Ealing Common, London, England, W3 9SQ. Tel: 07949 178 835 or email [spi\\_spi@hotmail.com](mailto:spi_spi@hotmail.com)

**MARA** (Merseyside Anomalies Research Association) meets monthly (usually last Friday of month) in the Ship & Mitre Function Room, 7.30 p.m. onwards. The pub is in Liverpool city centre, at 133 Dale Street, near the Old Tunnel entrance. Parking opposite the venue. There's an admission charge of £2.50 to cover the cost. Contact MARA at 18a Parkfield Road, Aigburth, Liverpool, L17 8UJ.

Email: [tonyeccles@yahoo.com](mailto:tonyeccles@yahoo.com).

Or ring: Anthony Eccles on 0151 727 4057

**TEMS** is an ASSAP-affiliated social and research group for those living in the south-east, generally meeting in Hampton.

**June 26th** Field trip to Denham Country Park

For details of membership or the current programme call Ann Hopkins on 020 8542 3110 or Lionel Beer on 020 8979 3148 or write to TEMS, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY.

**Mercia Fortean** is a new group conducting investigations into Ghosts, Fortean Phenomena, Big Cats, Folklore, etc, in the Shropshire, Herefordshire & Mid Wales areas. Meetings to take place on the first Monday of the month. Details from Gareth Goodwin 07753 473028 or by email to [gareth@goodwin5918.freemove.co.uk](mailto:gareth@goodwin5918.freemove.co.uk)

## SPR (Society for Psychical Research)

**May 20th** Instrumental Transcommunication—Dr A Cardoso

**June 10th** Altered States of Psi—David Luke

Details from SPR at: 49 Marloes Road, Kensington, London W8 6LA. Telephone & Fax: 020 7937 8984

## Essex UFO and Paranormal Research Group

**June 2nd** Crop Circles - James Peters

**July 7th** Meditation and Karma - Mike Saunders

For details contact Keith on 01255 426274

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## Earth Spirit Moot

**May 29th-30th** Skipton Town Hall, N Yorks. Tickets and information from John Billingsley, 0142 882441

## Lancaster University Summer School

**July 26th-30th** Parapsychology and Haunted Houses. Course tutor will be one Dr Jason Braithwaite and the week covers various aspects of investigating hauntings as well as including access to Muncaster Castle and Irton Hall. The course costs £133 for the week and further details are available at: [www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/conted/summer\\_programme](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/conted/summer_programme). Alternatively, for enquiries or bookings, please contact the Department of Continuing Education, Lancaster University, Lonsdale College, Lancaster LA1 4YN. Tel: 01524 592623 or 592624.

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## Question

As I receive details of more and more local groups I am finding that space for listings of their events is rapidly being eroded. Would readers rather see a wider range of groups and contacts or pointers to events (which may be unfair to non-web users) or a more restricted groups list and more detailed events listing? If you do have a firm preference please let me know otherwise I'll just go ahead and do whatever I fancy (who said 'No change there' at the back?) - Ed