

NEWS

Issue 119: Summer 2007

Exploring Paranormal Cornwall

INSIDE

**3 News: The Paranormal
World**

4 The ASSAP Insider

**5 The President's Column:
Four Theories of Magic**

6 Paranormal Cornwall

**7 Paranormal 101:
Using Science**

8 The David Lowe Archive

**10 Interview:
Dr Simon Sherwood**

11 Spotlight on Groups

About ASSAP

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena was formed in 1981 to study a wide range of paranormal phenomena. These fall into the broad categories of psychic phenomena, earth mysteries, Ufology and Fortean phenomena. ASSAP holds no corporate views and the views expressed by individual authors are their own.

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Contact us at assapnews@assap.org

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Website Members' Area

The members area of the website is a fantastic resource, with forms and information for investigators as well as past copies of ASSAP News and Anomaly. Visit the website at www.assap.org and log into the members site:

Username: [assapmember](#)

Password: [haunted](#)

Are you on Email?

We like to keep in touch with members from time to time by email. If you haven't received an email from us please email your name and email address to chairman@assap.org so you can keep up to date!

Got a Case for Investigation?

Do you know someone who has had an anomalous experience of any kind that they would like to see investigated by ASSAP? ASSAP has a network of investigators all over the UK who are ready to help. Contact Bill Eyre on investigations@assap.org for more information.

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Contribution to our publications:

As well as our regular contributors columns ASSAP News accepts one-off or occasional contributions from any member to feature in our 'Focus On' pages.

If you have an idea you'd like to discuss please email us on assapnews@assap.org

Submission Guidelines: Please email, or use our postal address, 400-600 words and at least one photograph on a relevant subject. If you would like to write a longer article please email us on assapnews@assap.org to discuss.

Submission Deadlines: Submission deadlines are the end of April, July, October and January of each year.

Longer articles and reviews: These are recommended to be submitted to Anomaly – ASSAP's Journal. Anomaly deadlines are the middle of August and February of each year. Contact Anomaly by emailing anomaly@assap.org

Investigation Groups

Are you a member of an investigation group? Does your group have two or more ASSAP Accredited Investigators (AIs)? If so, why not become an ASSAP Affiliate Group.

Contact Lee Norton on groups@assap.org for more information.



Find Nessie - become a millionaire!



By Nicky Sewell

Bookmakers, William Hill, are offering a £1million reward to anybody who can find conclusive proof of the Loch Ness Monster during the Rock Ness music festival.

50,000 people will be supplied with cameras in attempt to capture proof of the elusive creature. Whilst there have been unusual sightings in the loch for centuries, it was a picture taken in 1934, known now as The Surgeon's photo, that really captured the public's interest. It was now been suggested that this photo was a hoax and explanations for Nessie sightings include trees, seiches and boat wakes.

Have you heard any news from the paranormal world you'd like to share with other members? Email us on assapnews@assap.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

Big Brother Psychic Twin Trial

UK Big Brother contestants Sam and Amanda recently passed a somewhat unscientific twin telepathy test. The footage looks very compelling, although theories of collusion and clever editing have flooded the Internet.

Crime on Harvest Moon

Brighton Police are deploying extra officers on 'full moon' nights following the publication of a study showing a correlation between violent behaviour and the phases of the moon (and paydays). No one has yet been able to explain the influence of the lunar cycle on human behaviour.

Werewolves in Staffordshire?

A strange creature, described by some as resembling a werewolf or a caveman, has been spotted on Cannock Chase. It has been suggested that wolves, although extinct in England for centuries, could make their home on the Chase. It has also been pointed out, however, that people have been known to walk and train huskies at the beauty spot.

Ghost stories bad for your health

A group of eleven school children were recently hospitalised for hyperventilation during a Saturday afternoon school trip in Kyoto. Doctors believe it may have been caused by anxiety resulting from the telling of ghost stories on the school bus.

Lights over Bangor

A group of strange orange lights have been seen in the sky over Bangor. Air traffic control received several reports of the lights being seen but it had no record of any aircraft in the area at the time of the reports.

It's the end of the world as we know it ... and I feel fine

Ranging back from 2800bc, nine apocalyptic dates have come and gone. 2007 has been prophesised as bringing the end of the world, but then so has 2012 and 2020. According to St Malachy there would be 112 popes between the 1100s and the end of the world. Pope Benedict XVI is pope number 111 ...

THE ASSAP INSIDER

What's going on in your Association?



By Dave Wood, Chairman

It's all change at ASSAP

Mike White was editor of ASSAP News for four years and I'd like to hail his great service over this time. Following the email questionnaire ASSAP News will be sent each three months, is increased to twelve pages; we have revamped the design and have invested the savings in the quality of ASSAP News.

That same questionnaire said that many of you appreciated the wit of the editorial column. The new editors, Wendy and I, don't quite have the wit of Mike (*Oi! speak for yourself! - Ed*) so you won't see it in future editions. I don't plan to make this column a regular feature, but will instead focus on the news of ASSAP. Although, to be fair, many of you didn't want to see ASSAP News focus on internal news – so this will be kept to one page – but a number of you were interested in the decisions the exec makes.

In recent months the ASSAP exec welcomed three new Affiliate Groups. Welcome to Leicestershire Paranormal Research Association, Staffordshire Paranormal Study Group and Open Minded Investigations. We look forward to working with you.

The research grants panel has also awarded a grant for an exciting new procedure to test Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP). Hopefully members will be able to read the results in future publications.

Much of ASSAP's work in 2007 has concentrated on ensuring ASSAP can keep going for many years to come. Much of ASSAP's running was down to a few key individuals, many of whom moved on or switched positions in 2006. The exec has been working hard to ensure ASSAP can thrive through good times and bad, and make sure our survival doesn't rest with a few key people.

Researchers Sought

ASSAP's National Research Coordinator Hugh Pincott, and his Deputy Maurice Townsend are now working on the long-awaited programme of systematic research in some exciting new areas. They would be pleased to hear from members willing to help organise projects and indeed take part in the actual work. Details of interests and experience to research@assap.org please, or via the Gloucester Street address.

"Of immediate interest we are looking for a keen, reliable member to act as a contact, monitor and mentor for a person who has reported a string of very vivid precognitions. Send details as above, please."

Come to Advanced Training Day!

Location: near Banbury, Oxfordshire

Date 11th August

Cost £12 basic

Book by: End of July 2007

Contact: chairman@assap.org

ASSAP is pleased to announce its first Advanced Training Day. The ATD is open to all members but is recommended for experienced investigators and those who have attended the Training Day.

ATD will be a great opportunity to learn advanced investigation methods, the scientific method, psychology and finding cases. We hope to book one or two specialist speakers to bring the event to life. ASSAP events are also a good networking opportunity for investigators and fun is always had by all.

These events are usually very popular, so please book early to avoid delay! Whilst the deadline is the end of the July bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis.

Some members might be disappointed to see that this event is held in 'the south' (again!). ASSAP used to have one annual training event, but now runs a calendar of three events a year: training day, training investigation and advanced training day. For this run to make sense we are aiming to hold all three events in a similar geographic location, so the people that came to training day can easily attend subsequent events. So ATD is being held near to the last two events.

However, we can assure you that 2007-8's three events will be held in the Midlands so a broader range of members can have easy access.

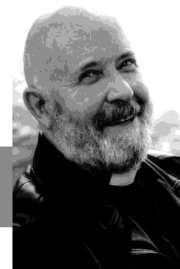


Training Day delegates at Bisham Abbey 2007

Photo: William Eyre

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The world according to Lionel Fanthorpe



The Four Theories of Magic

Our current commission for the Dundurn Publishing Group focuses on Santeria and similar religions that allegedly have intriguing magical aspects. Santeria, also referred to as Lukumi and Regla de Ocha, is best described as a fusion of Christian and Yoruba ideas, and is still flourishing in Cuba and Nigeria.

Some recent research work for this book took us to the Museum of Witchcraft at Boscastle because its founder, the redoubtable Cecil Williamson (1909 – 1999) had made a profound study of African magic and religion during his time in what is now Zimbabwe, but was then Rhodesia. The important, ancient and esoteric

knowledge that Cecil acquired there led him to the conclusion that whatever the real principles of magic were, they were *universal*: as applicable in the UK as they were in Africa.



Collection of magical and healing herbs from the

The Boscastle Museum is very well arranged, the displays are excellent, the exhibits are significant and we recommend it unreservedly to any ASSAP colleagues who have not yet been there. It is an ideal starting place for an open-minded, objective investigation into what magic *is*, whether magic is ever *effective* – and, *if it is, what makes it effective*.

There are four major theories of magic. The first suggests that when magical effects are brought about, they are caused by the mental powers of the person initiating them. This harmonises with mind-power theories covering telepathy, telekinesis and teleportation. Undoubtedly, the human brain with its 10^{14} neurones is capable of infinitely more than we imagine, but the jury is still out on whether it can produce some of the more spectacular effects that magicians claim to perform.

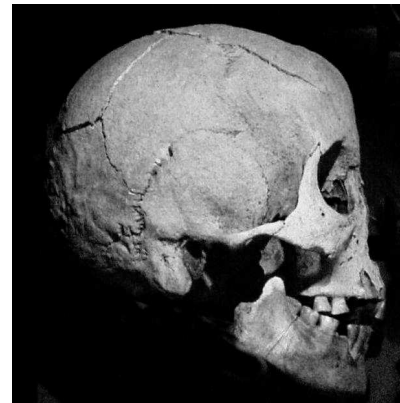
The second theory looks towards an appeal to externalities, paranormal entities and anomalous super-beings who *can* accomplish magical things – and will do so on the human magician's behalf, provided that certain conditions are met.

The third theory focuses on a concept of magic that parallels orthodox science.

Chemistry tells us that when sodium and chlorine meet, they combine to form sodium chloride – which improves the flavour of chips but which dieticians advise us to avoid. This

magical theory of properties and characteristics argues that mandrake roots, the skulls of dead people or animals, the administration of certain herbs and the recitation of particular word-formulas, will make things happen simply because the right combinations of these ingredients work naturally – just as sodium and chlorine combine naturally to form table salt. The scientific magician – like the scientific pharmacist – has to learn which combinations of ingredients do what.

The fourth theory embraces the concept of *sympathetic* magic – it can be referred to as the computer mouse and keyboard theory -- by touching



Skull from Bodmin Moor



Patricia in the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle

the right key, or clicking on the appropriate icon, contact can be made with the Internet, or with some desired programme. When Neolithic hunters painted edible animals on cave walls, were they attempting to employ this sympathetic magic? The Voodoo doll with pins in it is the dark side of this theory of sympathetic magic. Of course, it also has to be accepted that so-called magic is merely an illusion, like the tricks performed by expert stage conjurors – but our thirty plus years of research suggest that there is more to it than that.

All Photos © Lionel & Patricia Fanthorpe June, 2007.



Exploring Paranormal Cornwall

In this edition, ASSAP's Travel Correspondent Nicky Sewell casts her curious eye over the captivating county of Cornwall. Situated in the far South West of England, Cornwall is a popular tourist get-away spot, attracting over 5 million holidaymakers every year, but what does the county have on offer for those with a more Fortean interest? Read on...

Bodmin Gaol, nestled in the heart of Bodmin, was built in 1777 and hosted 55 hangings before its closure in 1927. Now open as a museum, it welcomes visitors 365 days of the year from 10am to dusk. Paranormal encounters aplenty have been reported at the site, both by day visitors and overnight investigators. Stone throwing, voices, grunts, touches and figures are among the phenomena reported by those brave enough to have visited ...

For those of us with an interest in **Arthurian legend**, you will feel right at home in Cornwall. A visit to Tintagel Castle will take you to King Arthur's alleged birthplace, with Merlin's cave beneath, and Slaughter Bridge in Camelford is where he reputedly met his downfall at the hands of Mordred. If you fancy sitting at the big man's table, it supposedly



The ruined naval gaol at Bodmin Gaol

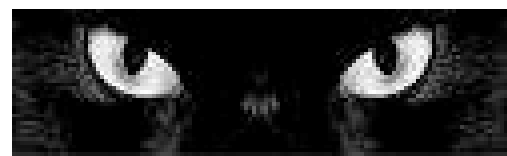
risers out of Bossiney Mound in Bossiney on 20th June each year, but if it is Excalibur you are after, make sure you visit Dozmary Pool. (*Watch out for the quicksand!* – Ed.)

Lanhydrock House, a National Trust managed property, boasts over 50 rooms open to the public, gardens and a church and it played host to the filming

of *The Twelfth Night* and *The Three Musketeers*. However, most visitors are unaware that it also has a history of hauntings. A grey lady can sometimes be seen in the gallery and the drawing room, a man has been seen walking in the grounds and during one group's investigation children's voices and a dragging sound were heard and light anomalies on video captured.

If your interests lie more within the realm of the occult, then make sure you pay a visit to **The Museum of Witchcraft** in Boscastle. It holds the world's largest collection of witchcraft related artefacts and memorabilia and has graced the town with its presence for over 50 years. It is open seven days a week from Easter through to Christmas.

No entry about Cornish forteana would be complete without a mention of the **Beast of Bodmin**. From the mid 1980s over 60 sightings of a big black cat like creature has been seen and caught on camera across Bodmin Moor. An official investigation was launched by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in 1995 but despite the existence of the creature being denied in their report, sightings continue until present day.



Would you like to see your town, city or county mentioned in this section?
If so, get in touch! E-mail us at assapnews@assap.org



Why use science to study the paranormal?

This is a series of articles examining the basic questions of paranormal research. Though primarily aimed at those new to the subject, some old hands may also find something of interest.

Q: ASSAP promotes the use of the scientific method to study the paranormal. Why?

A: People have been seriously investigating the paranormal for over a century but progress has, arguably, been practically non-existent. We still can't even agree, for instance, on whether telepathy exists, never mind say how it might work. One of the reasons for this slow progress is undoubtedly the fact that many people enter our field of research with pre-conceived ideas, as a result of what they've personally experienced or heard. Most paranormal researchers you meet fall into either the 'believer' or 'skeptic' camp. Both camps tend to be inward-looking and rarely do any research that goes outside their own 'world view'. This leaves vast areas of potentially important research completely unexplored. It is little wonder that progress is slow.

One way around this impasse is to follow the scientific method. The great thing about science is that it is purely evidence-based. As a scientist, you can believe what you like, so long as you follow the scientific method. Controversies are resolved by hard evidence rather than arguments.

Q: Surely an amateur can't do science. Don't you have to be trained?

A: Amateurs make important contributions in many sciences, such as astronomy and natural history. They can do useful work in the areas where academic budgets do not stretch. It is perfectly possible to educate yourself in the scientific method. It can be picked up from books and by mixing with scientifically-inclined or trained fellow researchers. The most important thing to know is that hard evidence ultimately decides everything! Scientific knowledge is frequently not obvious. You should always start with the undisputed facts, rather than making assumptions.

Just because someone claims to have seen a ghost it doesn't make it so!

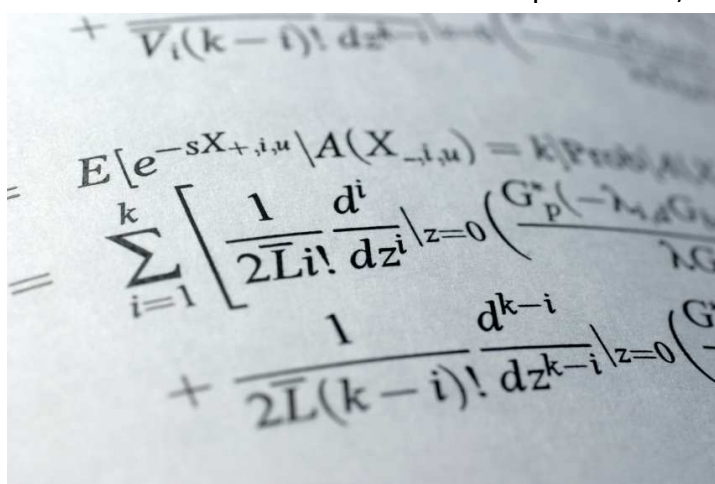
Q: But don't you need a lot of technical knowledge?

A: Science is more about method than knowledge. People can have a lot of technical knowledge but still investigate unscientifically. It is true that science builds on existing knowledge so

knowing some basic science is undoubtedly useful. However, all scientific knowledge is provisional – it can be overturned by new information. You should, therefore, concentrate primarily on collecting scientifically-credible evidence.

Q: Isn't the paranormal beyond science?

A: The paranormal is 'beyond normal' but not 'beyond science'. Paranormal research is, essentially, the study of unusual human experiences. Some of these experiences, such as misperceptions, are undoubtedly subjective. Others may have causes beyond the human mind. If we suppose, for the sake of argument, that the paranormal comes from somewhere 'beyond' (where we cannot investigate), it still has to interact with our physical world in order to produce an effect that can be experienced. This 'effect', whether it is a moving object or a hallucination, can be measured so it can be studied scientifically.



You don't need to be a scientist to 'do science'

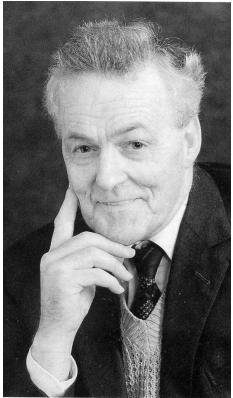
FOCUS ON

The David Lowe Archive



By Hugh Pincott

A collection of invaluable original material from a leading regressive hypnotist has been donated to ASSAP for the benefit of future research. Hundreds of tape-recordings - many of the old reel-to-reel type - share pride of place with slides, documents and other historical material now being catalogued for this unique archive.



David Lowe was arguably the most outstanding researcher of his generation into the phenomenon of regression to alleged previous lives. Several others made a quick quid on popular books or gee-whiz TV programmes, and while David also lectured and broadcast widely, he maintained his integrity as a researcher first and foremost. In doing so he achieved some of the most spectacular results of all.

Interest in hypnotic regression was spawned by *The Search for Bridey*

Murphy published in 1956, and gained momentum in the 1970s from Jeffery Iverson's TV programme and book on the Bloxham tapes. The next twenty years witnessed a plethora of similar books (see bibliography). David's own work spanned some 15 years during this period, and from the generosity of his widow Jill Widecombe-Lowe and daughter Deborah Banks, the original research material now forms ASSAP's *David Lowe Archive*.

Most workers of the period made their name from regressing one person to just one or two "previous existences", but ASSAP member David discovered several "star" subjects. [*To save space, I shall henceforth refer to "past lives" and similar phrases, without implying that these are in any way genuine or proven.*]

Life before life?

One of his stars, Joan Smith (pseudonym), eventually revealed 11 prior existences spanning 7 centuries:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1260-1309 | Marie of Roy, Scotland |
| 1329-1366 | Catherine Stockwell, neé Gillays, born in York, wife of a Bedale farmer |
| 1410-1440 | Morie of Ireland |
| 1450-1465 | Lileth Brynfruy of Pentorch (today's Pentyrch?) near Cardiff |
| 1515-1565 | Joanna Flint of St Mary's, Scilly Isles |
| 1595-1649 | Elizabeth Mary (Tessa) Cooper, Exeter |
| 1660-1712 | Ann Jarvis, born in Lavenham, Suffolk |
| 1729-1780 | Jane Adam of Kent |
| 1800-1825 | Caroline Driver of Hertford |
| 1830-1861 | Katerina Velosa, from near Venice, Italy |
| 1898-1919 | Eleanor Terance of Blackheath, London |

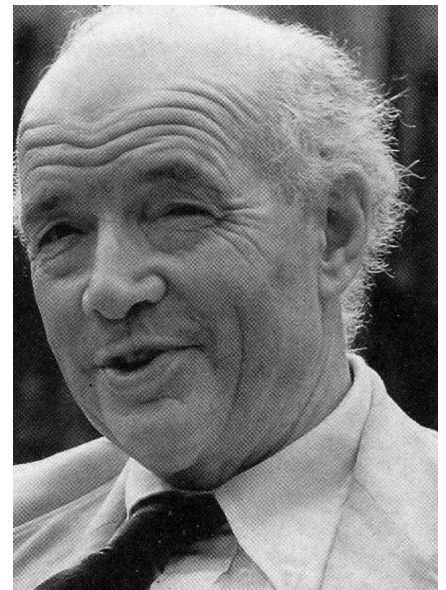
David spent a great deal of his time visiting the places revealed by the regressed subjects on tape, digging out the evidence to support their claims - often literally.

Several county archivists were so impressed that they arranged an "open door" testimonial that allowed David to access collections not generally available to the public.

ASSAP founder-member David Christie-Murray published detailed discussion of several of these existences in issues of *Reincarnation International* during 1995 and 1996. As with any aspect of the paranormal, revelations from regressed subjects were never 100% accurate: sometimes evidence was found to be false or non-existent; occasionally a subject failed to mention something he/she should certainly have known about. But if the entire knowledge-bank was subjected to statistical scrutiny, the overall level of uncanny accuracy would point way, way beyond chance expectation.

One of the main theories opposing previous lives (and there are several) is

cryptomnesia: our minds are like large sponges, absorbing through life "forgotten" details of books read in childhood, adverts ignored on television, headlines from someone's newspaper glanced at on the train, and so forth. All ready to form a coherent character when invited to do so by a hypnotist in sympathetic rapport.



ASSAP founder David Christie-Murray

One of the first questions a researcher asks is whether the subject could have had prior knowledge of the life and times investigated, had researched a "script" or previously visited the places described. Personal knowledge of many subjects would suggest this was unlikely in view of education, interests and lifestyle. One characteristic noted by several researchers is the spontaneity of much of the response, extra information being volunteered without being asked for. So bearing these and other caveats in mind, here is a taste of what the Archive contains. These are some instances I am acquainted with personally - there are many more!

Catherine Stockwell (see panel) revealed the highly unlikely presence of a portcullis in a Yorkshire church at

Bedale. David and I discovered it set into a groove between walls, and used as a defence in the middle ages. Rather more impressive was the stone carving described simply as "a medieval knight", lying flat with two dogs at his feet. Catherine had previously recorded on tape that this was in fact Sir Roger Martin - and she even named the dogs!



Bunnies in church

As a young girl, Catherine was very restless during long enforced church attendances. She described to David how she liked watching the rabbits. Rabbits in church? Yes, she replied, there are three - with only three ears between them! For an explanation look at the stained glass window in the above picture. In York Minster, no less!

I was present at a recording session when Catherine reported that a certain house had burned down, adding that "the alambic had caught fire". David looked at me mystified. "What's an alambic?" I shook my head: "No idea, but I know that an alembic is for distilling liquids." On return home that evening I consulted a rare historical dictionary. Yes, an alembic was a still, and derived from the Middle-English word ... alambic.

Joanna Flint from the Scilly Isles could sing beautiful melodic folk-poetry spontaneously, but no trace of its origin or confirmation has yet been obtained.

A character really to stretch credulity was Italian Katerina Velosa, who could not speak English, though she understood the hypnotist. Allegedly she talked only the native tongue of her locality near Venice in the 1850s, which has apparently been confirmed by an academic specialist, though I have not yet seen the testimony. Still, a bit of a push for a homely, suburban Essex housewife, who consciously knew no Italian of any sort.

A past life revealed by another star subject was equally impressive -and provided information of a very practical nature. Ruth from the 18th century described a large house in Hampshire where she used to live. An ornate room, a one-time private chapel, possessed much carved panelling. In the presence of its current owners David released a hidden catch, opening a secret



cupboard hitherto unknown to them. It contained some ancient papers - old title deeds of the property. (Fig 2)

Why and how?

I first met David Lowe when he joined the Society for Psychical Research in the mid 1970s. Learning of my interest

he invited me to witness his work and indeed collaborate where possible. Naturally I was at first extremely suspicious about how such extremely good information could be obtained so regularly without resort to fraud or collusion. As time went on I became convinced that David and his subjects had neither the time nor opportunity for prior research - a conclusion amplified when I accompanied him and other researchers around the country, from York and Bedale to locations in Essex and elsewhere. Regularly we would produce significant evidence, from old wells the farmer did not know existed, to the portcullis mentioned previously.

Despite his affable outgoing and businesslike nature, which stood his day job as a technical salesman in good stead, David was a very private person. Rarely did he ever talk about himself or his largely estranged family. For years I had been trying to answer the question of why he was obtaining so much better historical information using hypnosis than almost any other researcher. One day much later, he happened to mention casually that he was "sensitive". Sensitive? For almost four years he was merely a trained healer at The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain's London headquarters in Belgrave Square! That's all!

In the 1980s ASSAP established a comprehensive long-term research programme on hypnotic regression attempting to replicate David Lowe's work, which had groups meeting once or twice a week for three years. We commenced with about six possible explanatory models (ranging from fraud, cryptomnesia, spirit entities to past lives themselves), but rather than narrowing this range as expected, eventually we had to extend it to cover many new observations. Our fascinating results are reported in *Anomaly* and remain a milestone in this subject.

We had deliberately used as subjects, members of our own team possessing no obvious psychic traits. Had we appreciated David's late admission of sensitivity, perhaps we might have altered the focus a little. Certainly this is a factor future researchers should be aware of.

Next

Once all the existing Archive material has been sorted, digested and catalogued, we hope to produce a detailed guide or index. This will enable fast retrieval of information for educational and research purposes. One obvious application will be to assess the relevance of psychic sensitivity just discussed. ASSAP News will report regularly on new findings. The following extensive bibliography will assist members to investigate the phenomenon in some depth.



Fig. 2: The panelling opened to reveal ancient title deeds

References and bibliography

For the references and bibliography for this article please visit our website at:

<http://www.assap.org/memberarea/newsite/htmlfiles/members.html>

INTERVIEW

Simon Sherwood



Dr Simon Sherwood is currently Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Northampton, where he also co-ordinates modules in parapsychology. His writing, often concerning sleep-related paranormal experiences, has featured in academic journals as well as mainstream publications.

Can you remember what first piqued your interest in the paranormal?

Yes I had an experience involving an apparition of a Black Dog when I was a small child. I am still researching this particular phenomenon to this day (www.blackshuck.info) and it has undoubtedly influenced my career path.

Some view the commercialisation of the paranormal as a bad thing, others claim it to have had a mixed effect. What's your view on this recent mass marketing?

Whilst it may have increased public interest in and acceptance of parapsychology, which I see as no bad thing, activities designed for entertainment purposes are often inaccurately portrayed or misinterpreted as being serious scientific research. In addition, the commercialisation has meant that it has become much more difficult for serious investigative teams to gain access to some allegedly haunted locations, and this has potential implications for the advancement of our scientific knowledge.

How do you view the role of ASSAP in relation to this current climate?

I think that it is important for ASSAP to encourage a serious scientific approach to the study of anomalous phenomena and to point out how this differs from other approaches which have different objectives in mind. I have no objections to people undertaking activities purely for entertainment but it is important that they are not misled or claiming something to the contrary. Serious research can be fun too, of course!

Do you think it's possible for academic parapsychologists and local paranormal groups to work together effectively?

Yes. I'm a member of two investigation teams—ParaScience and PSI—and I regularly join them for investigations of allegedly haunted locations. I know of a couple of other academic parapsychologists who have also started to become more involved with fieldwork. I would like to see more academic parapsychologists engaging with fieldwork

as well as laboratory-based research. Although experimental research has become dominant within parapsychology these days, spontaneous case collections and fieldwork have become relatively infrequent and undervalued, even though all three approaches can make useful contributions. Apart from providing us with a more rounded set of research skills, I think greater involvement with fieldwork by academic parapsychologists might help to combat the image that some people have of us as being out of touch with the real world, stuck in our laboratories inside our ivory towers (actually our building in Northampton is on the ground floor only!). As far as I am concerned any theories and empirical results derived from laboratory-based work must also be able to explain and have some relevance to real world phenomena.



Recently, parapsychology has faced some fierce criticism from prominent members of the scientific establishment. How would you defend the subject against the accusations of people like Richard Dawkins and Robert Winston?

Generally speaking, informed and constructive criticism is and should be welcomed by parapsychology, which, like any area of scientific research, can only advance if its findings are peer-reviewed and challenged and new ideas and understanding are generated as a result.

Unfortunately, without reference to any particular individuals, some critics and criticisms are not particularly well-informed or constructive. A good example of how proponents and critics of parapsychology have worked together effectively is the paper published by Charles Honorton and Ray Hyman in 1986. It outlined their areas of agreement and set out agreed recommendations for the conducting and reporting of future Ganzfeld ESP research.

Are there any areas of study of particular interest to you at the moment?

Apart from continuing to collect cases of Black Dog apparitions, at the moment I am particularly interested in researching the characteristics of people who do and do not report apparitional experiences and the circumstances of their experiences rather than just focusing on the characteristics of the apparitions. I am also interested in the effects that environmental variables, such as infrasound and electro- and geomagnetic fields, can have on human experience.

What do you see as the greatest challenge facing modern parapsychology?

Probably acceptance by the scientific establishment, replication of findings, and funding.

Dr Simon Sherwood was interviewed by Matthew Hicks

SPOTLIGHT ON GROUPS

In the trenches with paranormal research

ASSAP Groups officer Lee Norton, says:



In order to drum up more support for groups and as this is my first groups page, I thought I'd tell you about my experiences regarding setting up Plymouth ASSAP.

First of all I put an advert in ASSAP News, asking if anyone would be interested in joining a Plymouth based group. This yielded Hugh Pincott and a chap who worked (and still does) in a recycling centre.

I then got hold of the membership list and contacted individuals who lived nearby. Other members were enticed by friends and word of mouth.

Since the first official meeting in Feb 06 we have conducted investigations, held mediumship study days, compiled local stories and folklore, researched orbs and telepathy and have also enjoyed a thriving social scene.

So, setting up a group is easy and fun! To make it affiliated, all you need is two AIs and enthusiasm. I believe that ASSAP groups are the lifeblood of this organisation. I will try to engender a sense of community between us; from GHANON to MARA and PARA.SCIENCE to PARASEARCH.

In each issue I'd like to feature one or two specific groups. Tell me what you'd like the membership to know about you. (Approx 200 words, maybe accompanied by an image/logo.) This could be about particular research / investigations you've been conducting or it could be a request for assistance. Over to you.....

ASSAP AFFILIATES

ALISTER HARDY SOCIETY meets roughly once a month in Chesterfield, Derbyshire for informal discussions relating to "religious" experience. Visit - www.alisterhardyreligiousexperience.co.uk

ANGLIA PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION SOCIETY (APIS)

Operates in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire area. Contact Paul Keech at apismail@ntlworld.com or phone 01234 771 351 or visit www.apisteamspirit.co.uk
Event 3rd APIS seminar: Sat 20th October, Weatherley Centre in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire.

CHESTERFIELD PSYCHIC STUDY GROUP (CPSG)

Offers a programme of talks by invited speakers on the second friday of each month at 7.15pm at the Community Centre, South Place, Chesterfield. Visit www.cpsg.co.uk or phone 01246 413217.

GHANON is a group covering Wirral, Cheshire and North Wales. Membership by invitation. Contact emailus@ghanon.org or visit www.ghanon.org or phone 0700 341 8495

LEICESTERSHIRE PARANORMAL ASSOCIATION (LPA)

Contact Ian and Vanessa Walker on info@leicsparanormal.tk or visit www.leicsparanormal.tk

LEICESTERSHIRE PARANORMAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (LPRA)

Contact Caroline and Margaret Pick on lpramail@aol.co.uk

MELTON PARANORMAL RESEARCH SOCIETY (MPRS)

Based in Leicestershire. Contact Christine Hankey on 07745 398 569 or email meltonparaclub@aol.com

MERSEYSIDE ANOMALIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (MARA)

Monthly meetings in Liverpool city centre. Contact tonyeccles@yahoo.com or write to 18a Parkfield Road, Aigburth, Liverpool L17 8UJ or phone 0151 727 4057

THE MIDLANDS GHOST RESEARCH SOCIETY (TMGRS) Operates in the Coventry area. Visit www.tmgrs.co.uk or email Amanda and Martin at info@tmgrs.co.uk

OPEN MIND INVESTIGATIONS (OMI)

Operates in the Kent and Hampshire areas.
Contact Cara via the website on www.omi-uk.org

PARA.SCIENCE Meet on the first working monday of each month at Bebington Civic Centre on the Wirral. (8pm) Visit www.parascience.org.uk

PARANORMAL AWAKENING SCIENTIFIC STUDY ASSOCIATION (PASSA)

Operates in the midlands area. Contact Stefan on 0121 353 7622 (admin@navigatortm.com) or Cherill on 01543 685 913 (susan.penton1@btinternet.com) or visit www.paranormalawakening.com

PARASEARCH operates in Worcestershire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands. Visit www.parasearch.org.uk or phone 07761 184 837 or send an SAE to Parasearch, 15 Brier Mill Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3HA.

PLYMOUTH ASSAP Operates in Plymouth, South Devon and South East Cornwall. Contact Lee at eustacetuttle@yahoo.co.uk

SPIRIT TEAM UK Operates in the Midlands, with meetings at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coventry. Contact Alan at enquiries@spiritteamuk.com or visit www.spiritteamuk.com

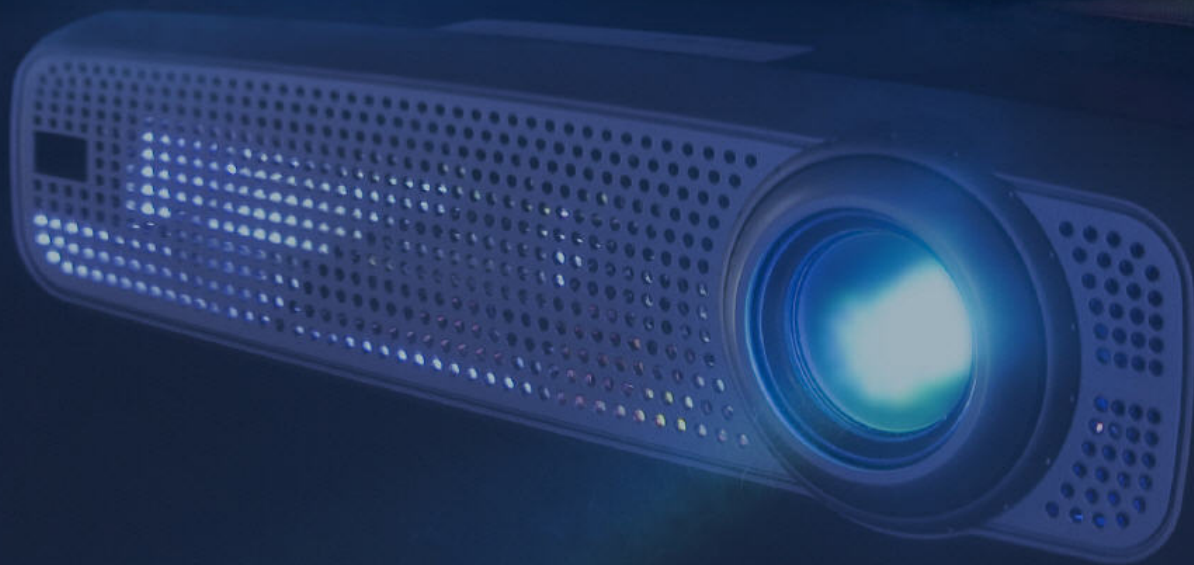
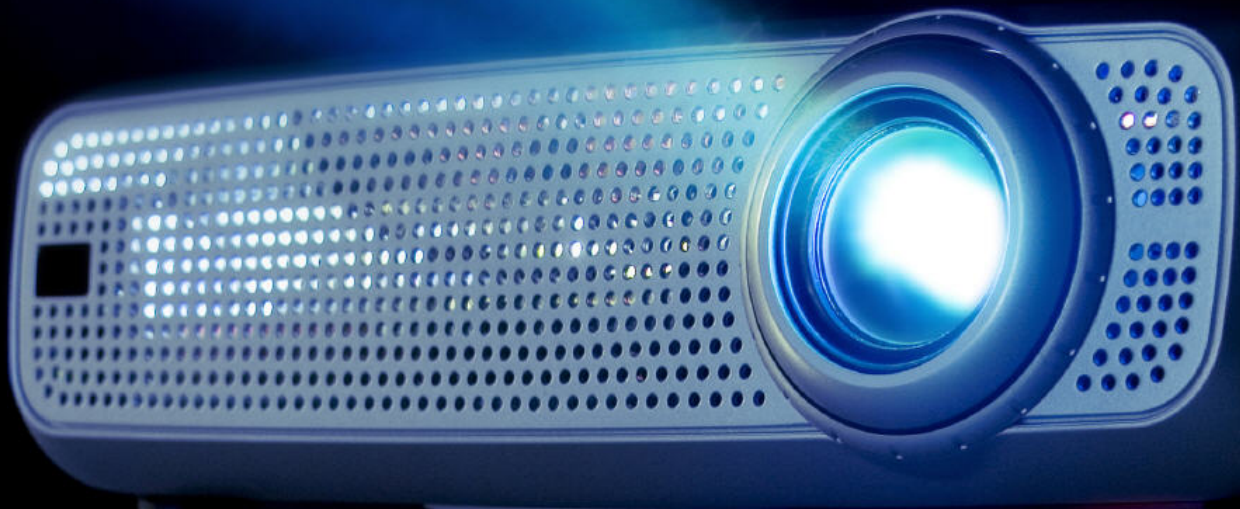
STAFFORDSHIRE PARANORMAL STUDY GROUP (SPSG) Monthly meetings in Stoke on Trent. Contact Terri at thespsg@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.spsg.org.uk

TEMS Operates in the South East. Visit www.temsgroup.org.uk or email infoenquiry@temsgroup.org.uk or write to TEMS, 10 Effra Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8PP

LIMITED SPACES

AUG 11th

Advanced Training Day



**ASSAP's first Advanced Training Day:
Take paranormal investigating to the next
level with a day of advanced methods**

Reserve your place now to avoid disappointment: see page 4