

NEWS

ISSUE 135 SUMMER 2011
30th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

ASSAP is 30

30 Year Special &
Seriously Strange

PROGRAMME

Welcome from the ASSAP Chairman



A very warm welcome to this special edition of ASSAP News. The edition marks ASSAP's 30th anniversary, as well as being the event programme for Seriously Strange (ASSAP's 30th anniversary event) and the first one-off edition of ASSAP News to be presented in full colour.

ASSAP turns 30 this month, on 11th June to be exact. A full 13 days before I, myself, turn 30. Whilst I will be drowning my sorrows ASSAP is gearing up towards it's most spectacular event ever. This edition also sees a celebratory look back through 30 years from ASSAP's Honorary President and Vice President - Reverend Lionel Fanthorpe and Dr Hugh Pincott.

The University of Bath, set in this beautiful historic city, will play host to Seriously Strange. The event sees nearly 20 of the most respected researchers of our age come together (all ASSAP members, old and new, of course!), with a range of experiments and research to watch or take part in, some surprises and of course a

big party! ASSAP has subsidised this event to allow a limited number of ASSAP members to attend for free. Make sure you go to assap.org/30 to book your FREE ticket early, to avoid disappointment. We hope to see you there.

Dave Wood – ASSAP Chairman

The ASSAP Board of Directors



Andrew Homer
Joint national
investigations and
groups co-ordinator
assapaai@assap.org



Ian Topham
ASSAP Heritage
Officer
assapheritage@assap.org



Carrie Searley
ASSAP Secretary
and Media Officer
assapmedia@assap.org



Nicky Sewell
Deputy Chairman
and Training
Officer
assaptraining@assap.org



Clare Lewis
ASSAP Events
Officer
assapevents@assap.org



Teresa Cox
ASSAP National
Research
Co-ordinator
assapresearch@assap.org



George Gregg
Joint national
investigations and
groups co-ordinator
assapaai@assap.org



Wendy Milner
ASSAP Treasurer
and Membership
Secretary
assaptreasurer@assap.org

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) is a UK-based, national registered education and research charity.

We exist to promote research and provide training on the many subjects comprising the study of anomalous phenomena. These include psychic phenomena, UFOs, Fortean and earth mysteries.

We are a registered charity (number 327422) and company limited by guarantee.

Our registered address (no correspondence) is Unit 36, 88-90 Hatton Garden, London, EC1N 8PN.

Correspondence to ASSAP, PO Box 371, Stroud, GL6 1EL.

Our general enquiries phone number is 0845 652 1648.

Our general enquiries email address is assap@assap.org

paranormal UFOs vampires psychology
ghosts seriously earth mysteries
psychic EVP hauntings
anthropology
cryptids
consciousness mediums

seriously strange

THE Paranormal Event of the Year
10-11 September 2011, University of Bath

**LIMITED FREE TICKETS
FOR ASSAP MEMBERS**



ASSAP has subsidised this event so you can come for free.

Go to the booking website to reserve your free ticket before they run out.

www.assap.org/30

0845 652 1648

Book Early - Don't Miss Out!

4 ASSAP is 30: A Retrospective

Michael Bentine (pictured) was ASSAP's first President. He was succeeded by Lionel Fanthorpe (inset) pictured presenting the Michael Bentine Shield for outstanding investigation report (picture credit Thames ITV)



PRESIDENT *on* PRESIDENT

ASSAP Honorary President Lionel Fanthorpe looks back on the life of past ASSAP President, the television star Michael Bentine.

As ASSAP's 30. Anniversary comes around, it seems right and proper to reminisce about my predecessor as President, the magnificent Michael Bentine. It is a very great honour to be ASSAP's second President, because of what ASSAP is and what ASSAP does – but that honour is greatly enhanced by following in such renowned footsteps as Michael Bentine's.

Michael was born on January 26, 1922. His dad, a brilliant aero-engineer, was Peruvian, and this caused some minor bureaucratic difficulties when Michael volunteered for the armed services in 1939.

The city of Cardiff seems to have some coincidental links with ASSAP Presidents – Michael was playing a leading role in *Sweet Lavender* here in Cardiff in 1940 – and we arrived here in 1979 when I was appointed Headmaster of one of the Cardiff High schools. Michael's acting career was going well. He was appearing in a Shakespearean play in Regent's Park in London, when two RAF Policemen arrested him on stage – complete with his doublet and hose costume. Technically, they were chasing him for desertion because his call up papers had been following the touring Shakespeare Company from one location to another for several weeks!

He played a vital part in security work during WW2, and served with M19 – helping various resistance movements and assisting prisoners to escape from occupied Europe. He took part in the liberation of Belsen, where he described

the unbelievable horrors there as “the ultimate blasphemy”.

His show business career after the war brought his outstanding offbeat humour to millions. He was a co-founder of *The Goon Show* and it is impossible to remember Michael without smiling once again at his superb jokes. He was also a best-selling author as well as a magnificent performer on stage, screen and radio. From an ASSAP point of view his treatment of the paranormal in *The Door Marked Summer* reveals so many excellent things about his psychic gifts and his objective, scientific, open-minded attitude to all things anomalous.

He was a scintillating genius, a superb actor, a brilliantly funny comedian – and an outstanding, all-round human being. ASSAP on its Thirtieth Anniversary is greatly enriched by its association with him.

Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe



Past Chairman Phil Walton interviewed by a film crew at UnConvention 2003

30 THE FIRST YEARS

Dr Hugh Pincott, ASSAP Honorary Vice-President, and ASSAP Director 1981-2010 selects highlights from ASSAP's first 30 years.

How do we best recall this formative period? By its gestation and birth? By its parents and midwife? By the research and investigations undertaken? By its charitable objectives achieved? Or by its members and their efforts? All are important.

Since the early 1970s, several researchers in various branches of anomaly studies (a name arguably coined by Hilary Evans) undertaking excellent work in their respective fields, felt the need for an umbrella organisation that crossed subject boundaries, comparing and contrasting in the hope of spotting common factors and revealing patterns. In 1981 several leading lights at the Society for Psychical Research who were forced off its governing Council for allegedly trying

to "popularise" the body, suddenly found time on their hands, and within months ASSAP was born. Its remit then as now included psychical research, ufology, earth mysteries and Forteanism - a much broader field than available in one place hitherto.

Some forty people - young and old - planned the enterprise: towering thinkers Hilary Evans and David Christie-Murray; top researchers Dr Vernon Harrison, Maurice Townsend and Bob Rickard down to humble administrators like me. Even serial revolutionary Mostyn Gilbert frequently lent a useful hand! Time-served experience mingled with youthful enthusiasm; new ideas from new people.

This was a breath of fresh air for many accustomed to claustrophobic secrecy: Executive and Secretariat meetings were open to all members and such transparency bode well for decades of

harmony between members of all persuasions. So how did we do?

Our major research thrust was masterminded by Maurice Townsend and incarnated as the *Merlin Matrix*. This was a large network of interlocking projects, each of interest individually, but so linked and overlapped that a revelation in one piece of research in one place threw light on a puzzle elsewhere. The *Matrix* still governs our effort today. It also meant ASSAP was in the vanguard of all new developments: geomagnetic haunting effects in Cumbria, earth mysteries in Oxfordshire, EVP in Bexleyheath or leading contributions to a UFO conference in France.

Without doubt the most dramatic project was the mid-1980s probe into alleged previous lives stimulated by deep hypnosis. Remarkable for several reasons, it offered evidence neither for nor against previous lives, but did

6 ASSAP is 30: A Retrospective



Maurice Townsend in 1987, the long-term investigation of Chiselhurst Caves

demonstrate several aspects of the human mind's astonishing power. For example the unlocking of latent artistic ability via deep-trance automatic drawing from a member hitherto distinctly ungifted in that talent.

Investigations are the other prong of our practical effort - looking into reported events from hauntings and poltergeists to UFOs and alien animals. Few cases can challenge the astounding Dover Castle vigil in 1991, where locked doors to an empty corridor banged and shook vigorously on several occasions, being recorded on both audio and video tape. An extremely rare occurrence of witnessing poltergeist activity as it happened.

District groups were encouraged from the very start. Varied in philosophy and activity, they certainly contributed to

the latter, have always been received eagerly by most members as a source of information and opportunity for collaboration. Early quality was often variable, but the power of modern technology now results in breathtaking appearance and content previously undreamed of.



Old and new: ASSAP Directors from the 1980s and 2010s taking over half the exhibition space at UnCon 2010

And lest we forget, a nice little earner for years was the spectacularly successful collection of books, entitled *The Evidence for ...* Series editor was Hilary Evans, and each volume was

the cohesiveness of the organisation, also assisting with regional meetings and roving presentations. While invidious to select names from so many, Dave Taylors's Parasearch and Steve Parsons' Para.Science have been particularly successful, with active local programmes.

If research and investigations are ASSAP's heart, then its publications constitute an effective nervous system. *Anomaly* and the *News*, particularly



Lionel Fanthorpe at the 20th anniversary in York, 2001

written by an ASSAP member being an acknowledged expert in that particular field. Subjects were: UFOs, Phantom Hitch-Hikers, Visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Alien Abductions, Life After Death, Mind Over Matter, the Loch Ness Monster, Bermuda Triangle and Bigfoot. Equally popular was *The Paranormal Investigator's Handbook* edited by Maurice Townsend and Val Hope. Time for updates and reissue, surely?

Unlike many organisations who merely shelter behind such status, we have never forgotten ASSAP is an educational charity. This aspect has been developed considerably in recent years with public meetings and establishment of the Vernon Harrison Bursary to assist needy participants who might otherwise not attend.

People are frequently claimed to be the most valuable asset of any organisation. That has certainly been true for ASSAP, which has been remarkably - almost entirely - free from frictions that have sunk many other bodies in similar fields. Five years ago an unfortunate onslaught from someone outside did polarise loyalties for a while, but wise counsel prevailed and valuable lessons were learned.

This will be the key to our success in the next thirty years. I am confident that research excellence and success will come uncalled for, as mutual respect and a bit of give-and-take, harnessing talent and ability, will provide the fertile ground to multiply our seedcorn manyfold.

THE SPEAKERS

All speakers are members of ASSAP, old and new



Dr Ciaran O'Keeffe *Paranormal TV*

Dr. Ciarán O'Keeffe provides a sceptical voice to various 'paranormal' shows (e.g. Living's Most Haunted, and Jane Goldman Investigates). An Applied Psychologist operating on the fringe of science, he's been involved in many unusual projects: the physiological effects of infrasound; ghost investigation of Hampton Court; an exorcism 'training day'; qualifying as a "Demonologist"(!); and lie detecting for the movie Spy Game.



Mark Pilkington *Mirage Men*

Mark Pilkington is a writer, publisher, curator and musician with a particular interest in the fringes of knowledge, culture and belief. He has written two books, *Mirage Men* (2010) and *Far Out: 101 Strange Tales from Science's Outer Edge* (2007), the latter collecting articles written for the Guardian newspaper. His writing has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *The Anomalist*, *Celeste*, *FHM*, *Fortean*

Times, *Frieze*, *Sight and Sound*, *The Wire*, *the Time Out Book of London Walks Vol.2* and *London Noir*. Mark also runs *Strange Attractor Press* and edits its acclaimed anthology, *Strange Attractor Journal*.



Paul Devereux *Earth Mysteries*

Paul Devereux is managing editor of the academic publication, *Time & Mind – The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* (www.bergjournals.com/timeandmind), a research affiliate with the Royal College of

Art, a Senior Research Fellow of the International Consciousness Research Laboratories (ICRL), Princeton, and the Director of the Dragon Project Trust.

He has written a great many articles for general publications and a string of peer-reviewed papers. He is author of 27 books, dealing variously with the anthropologies of consciousness, archaeoacoustics and other aspects of ancient sites, landscapes and lifeways, as well as anomalous geophysical phenomena and parapsychology. He lectures worldwide.



John Fraser *Ghost Hunting*

John's first investigations into the unexplained were in the 1980s when he joined when he joined a brand new organisation called 'ASSAP' a few months after it formed. He assisted Hugh Pincott and others in hypnotic regression

experiments which provided very interesting results. John moved on to the Ghost Club after swapping theories with Peter Underwood on the legendary 'Sandwood Bay' haunting, where he served for a number of years as Vice Chair (Investigations). He is currently serving on the Council of the Society For Psychical Research, and has recently published a book 'Ghost Hunting a Survivors' Guide' which looks behind the justifications for that age old fascinating endeavour to explain the strange phenomena known as 'Ghosts'.



Dr Simon Sherwood *Black Dogs*

Simon Sherwood is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Northampton where he specialises in teaching and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate research in parapsychology and the psychology of anomalous experiences.

He completed the Summer Study Program (SSP) in parapsychology at the Rhine Research Center in 1994 and gained a PhD in Psychology from the University of Edinburgh under the supervision of Professor Robert Morris at the Koestler Parapsychology Unit in 2001.

He has conducted surveys into hypnagogic/hypnopompic and sleep-related experiences and anomalous beliefs, carried out experimental Ganzfeld and dream ESP research, and collected reports of apparitions of Black Dogs. He has also been involved with the investigation of allegedly haunted locations.



Alan Murdie *Hauntings*

Simon Sherwood is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Northampton where he specialises in teaching and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate research in parapsychology and the psychology of anomalous experiences.

He completed the Summer Study Program (SSP) in parapsychology at the Rhine Research Center in 1994 and gained a PhD in Psychology from the University of Edinburgh under the supervision of Professor Robert Morris at the Koestler Parapsychology Unit in

2001.

He has conducted surveys into hypnagogic/hypnopompic and sleep-related experiences and anomalous beliefs, carried out experimental Ganzfeld and dream ESP research, and collected reports of apparitions

8 ASSAP is 30: Seriously Strange

THE SPEAKERS

All speakers are members of ASSAP, old and new

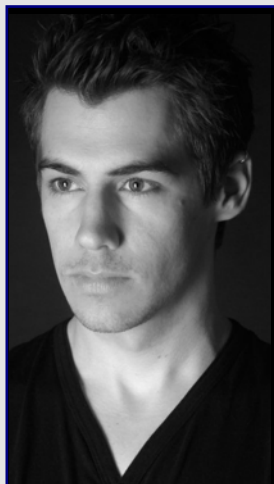


Steve Parsons

Infrasound and Hauntings

Qualifications gained as an Instrumentation Technician within the Petrochemical Industry provided Steve with essential knowledge about the measurement of environment processes including; temperature, pressure, flow and sound. After a brief but unsatisfactory time spent with a couple of local Ghost hunting groups he co-founded Para.Science. Steve can also draw upon an extensive media

experience and has appeared and advised on many TV and Radio programmes including those for the BBC, The Discovery Channel together many other UK and international broadcasters. He has also contributed to many books, magazines and journals over the years, working alongside some of the leading International Academic Parapsychology Departments.



Cal Cooper

Phonecalls from the Dead

Cal Cooper has a long standing interest in the history of haunted locations and the investigation of spontaneous cases. In 2009 he received the Eileen J. Garrett Scholarship from the Parapsychology Foundation and is the current student representative of the Parapsychological Association along side Evrard Renaud. Cal has written on numerous topics concerning parapsychology and has been involved in many projects including investigating purportedly haunted locations. He is involved in the media now and then as a representative for parapsychology. Currently, Cal is

based at Sheffield Hallam University reading for an Master of Research (MRes) in Psychology.



Dr Hannah Gilbert

Ghosts and Mediumship

Hannah Gilbert has a BA (Hons) in Anthropology from Durham University, and was awarded a PhD in Sociology at the University of York in 2010. Her doctoral project looked at experiences and representations of the spirit world in British spirit mediumship. She is currently writing a book about death, emotion and representations and experiences of the dead. In 2007, she and her colleagues in the Anomalous

Experiences Research Unit (AERU) at York created Exploring the Extraordinary, an interdisciplinary researcher network whose third annual conference is due to take place in York in September 2011.



Jack Hunter

Mediumship

Jack Hunter has a degree in archaeology and anthropology from the University of Bristol.

His undergraduate dissertation took the form of an experiential investigation into contemporary trance and physical mediumship at a private home-circle in Bristol. He is currently conducting research on contemporary

Spiritualism for his MLitt/PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol.



Ann Winsper

Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP)

Ann is an independent researcher who describes herself as a Psychical Phenomenologist, to reflect her research interests in how witnesses describe and interpret their apparent paranormal experiences. She graduated from Liverpool John Moore's University in 2010 with a

BSc (Hons.) in Applied Psychology. As well as being a member of ASSAP, Ann is an Associate member of the Parapsychological Association and a member of the Society for Psychical Research. Ann's recent work includes a study of reported time slip experiences, a survey of paranormal experiences, and an analysis of how paranormal experiences are interpreted and assimilated. Currently she is extending the work she did for her dissertation, looking at the effects of belief on response bias.



Trystan Swale

Crop Circles

A critical thinker with far too much time on his hands, Trystan Swale immersed himself in the world of paranormal and Fortean investigations for the best part of half a decade.

For his efforts he emerged with headaches, lots of enemies and a sideline in hoaxing.

He is the founder of the Righteous Indignation skeptical podcast and remains dedicated to

solving the mysterious case of the Wye Valley Duckman.



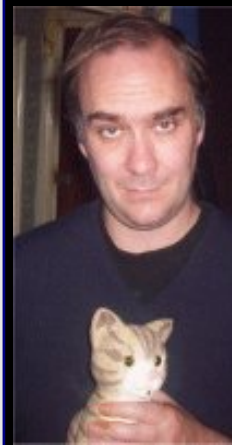
Paul Vella

UFOs or Bigfoot

Paul is an independent Forensic Computer Expert Witness by profession, specialising in criminal defence cases, but he also managed one of the world's most popular bigfoot websites www.bigfootforums.com until last year and co-hosts 'The Bigfoot Show' podcast.

He's made several trips to the United States over the years gathering evidence and is widely regarded as the most credible authority on the subject to be found this side of the Atlantic.

A natural sceptic, Paul errs on the side of caution when it comes to Bigfoot evidence and reports, but as someone who works with forensic evidence on a daily basis, he says that some of the evidence for the existence of Bigfoot is compelling but he will reserve judgement until he has seen one for himself.



Chris Jenson Romer

Ghost Hunting

Chris Jenson Romer has been involved in research in to the paranormal since 1987 when he had a strange apparitional experience at Thetford, Norfolk. Seeking answers he joined the Society for Psychical Research and has since been involved in a number of local groups, conducting a number of investigations and making a number of media appearances. He currently works as a writer for the roleplaying games market, and maintains a blog on Poltergeist phenomena at <http://polterwotsit.wordpress.com/>.

His major interests include attempting to bridge the gap between local ghost groups and the parapsychological community, and exploring the limitations of current models of apparitional experience.



Dr Sean O'Callaghan

Vampires

Sean O'Callaghan gained his PhD in Theology from the University of Liverpool. His PhD examined the interaction between Missiology and Christology in nineteenth and twentieth century British Theology. Sean continued to apply his PhD research to his interest in New Religious Movements and the emergence of new spiritualities and has written articles on several esoteric and

occultic movements. He co-moderated a web forum discussing esoteric issues for several years as well. He has written a book on world religions for Lion which was published in 2010. He is currently a visiting lecturer at the University of Lancaster, where he teaches on aspects of occulture and the relationship between religion and popular culture.



Val Hope

The History of ASSAP

Val missed out on the birth pangs of ASSAP in those heady days of 1980 and 1981, when a bunch of revolutionaries in the SPR wanted to do things differently and found themselves blocked.

Her first active engagement was stuffing newsletters into envelopes at the home of Dennis Bury in Crouch End, together with Alan Cleaver and David Salt. And then came that fateful meeting at BP in the City, with Hugh Pincott and Maurice Townsend, among others. From there it snowballed. Initially she found herself organizing ASSAP conferences, but her main role was editor of ASSAP News for 12 years, plundering her own life for copy. Now living a quiet life in Croydon, away from the ASSAP hustle and bustle, she still takes the odd photo of the ASSAP Blogger, but is content to sit back and watch everyone else do the work.



Dr Hugh Pincott

Consciousness

Dr Hugh Pincott is a chartered chemist by training and worked for 24 years in the oil and petroleum chemicals industry. Latterly he is a data processing quality manager, working under contract for several prestigious companies. Hugh's

paranormal career spans 4 decades, and he was once Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Society for Psychical Research. A founder member of ASSAP, Dr Pincott was on its Executive from 1981 to 2010, holding various positions including General Secretary, Chairman and National Research Co-ordinator. He is currently Vice-President. Hugh's research interests focus on altered states of consciousness, including mediumship and hypnosis. He led the 1980s team that undertook research into "past lives", with intriguing results. Currently Dr Pincott is an active member of ASSAP's Plymouth Group, which is working to drive similar studies forward.

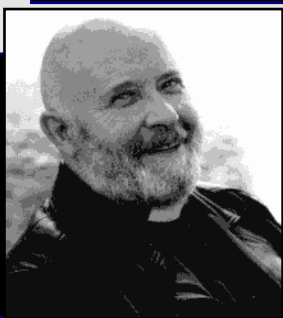


David Taylor

Werewolves

David is Chair of Parasearch which he founded in 1986 to investigate anomalous experiences in the Midlands. He is Editor of the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies journal and is Central England Co-ordinator for The Ghost Club. He is also on the the Editorial Board for ASSAP as well as being an ASSAP Approved Investigator. In 2009

he was awarded the Michael Bentine Memorial Shield by ASSAP. He is also member of the Society for Psychical Research, The Alister Hardy Society and the Churches Fellowship for Psychical & Spiritual Studies. David has appeared on television and radio relating to the paranormal and has lectured to a variety of organisations, including the National Trust, ASSAP, The Ghost Club and the Fortean Times UnConvention. He is author of two books on hauntings and apparitions and his research has appeared in a variety of books. In his presentation David will talk about the famous Hexham heads case and his research for a book on the subject.



Seriously Strange will be co-hosted by Reverend Lionel Fanthorpe, President of ASSAP, with members of the ASSAP Board of Directors including Chairman Dave Wood, Deputy Chair Nicky Sewell and others.

paranormal UFOs vampires psychology
ghosts **seriously** earth mysteries
psychic EVP hauntings
anthropology
cryptids **strange**
consciousness mediums 10-11 Sept

Live Research



ASSAP is famed for its range of fun, live experiments and research - at the last UnConvention half the floor space was given over to the ASSAP 'Paranormal Olympics'.

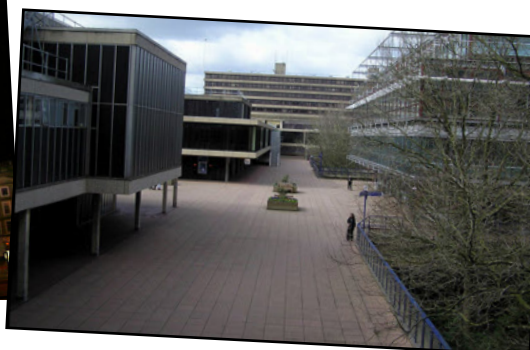
Take part or watch the live research, it will be bigger and better than ever before!

A great time

With a big party on offer or chill out in social areas you are sure to have a fun time. With amazing value campus accommodation from £21 (options include double, single, basic, en suite) and £2 parking for the weekend you don't need to worry about travel and hassle.



Bath: a beautiful



What's happening?

**Seriously
Strange is THE
paranormal
event of the
year - find out
what's going on**

**Cutting edge
thinking**

20 of the most noted researchers in the field today will be gathered together to explore the latest thinking in paranormal investigation and research. Be part of the keynote paranormal event of the year.



**THE BIG
SURPRISE**

The field of paranormal investigation is about to change for good, and this will have a huge impact on what ASSAP is and does.

We will be making the announcement at Seriously Strange and asking for your ideas about the big change and what it should mean for ASSAP and the paranormal community.

We will be talking with the wider paranormal community afterwards, as everyone is affected. But don't miss the chance to craft the change as it happens. Seriously Strange is THE place to be.

Don't Miss Out

historic, city setting



Bath city photos wikimedia commons: Nikater, Arpingstone, Rwendland, Rodw and Christophe.Finot

Thanks to those who helped

Including all those individuals and groups, too many to name, who have helped with setting up and promoting Seriously Strange.



So You Wanna Be A
Ghost Hunter

The Ghost Club



HAUNTED



paranormal site investigators[®]
PSY LAPIS

weird weekend 2011



parasearch



THE BRITISH UFO RESEARCH ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

02.07.2011

bufora

| CONFERENCE 2011 |

THE MYSTERIES, THE MYTHS
AND THE RUMOURS

GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Timothy Good, Nick Pope, Andy Roberts,
Tony Eccles and Mark Pilkington.

EVENT STARTS @ 10:30am - 07:00pm

Location: Newcastle upon Tyne

Venue: Victoria Room, The Royal Station Hotel
(adjoining Newcastle Central Station)
<http://www.royalstationhotel.com/>

Tickets: £25:00 with discount for early ticket booking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE EVENT CHECK THE WEBSITE AT: <http://www.bufora.org.uk/>