

ANOMALY

Journal of the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

Number 26

May 2000

ANOMALY is published twice a year. It is free to members. Single copies can be bought by non-members at £2.50 (including postage and packing - see last page for address details). PLEASE NOTE that the names of witnesses and places have been changed in line with ASSAP's Code of Conduct. The views expressed by individual authors are their own. ASSAP has no corporate views.

© ASSAP 2000
ISSN 0969-7713

Editorial Team: Maurice Townsend and Valerie Hope. Production: Vicky Knowles.
Front Cover Illustration: Andy Norfolk. Printed by March Press.

ASSAP is a registered charity (number 20102) and a company limited by guarantee.

Web site: www.assap.org

Phone enquiries: 01373-451777

CONTENTS

A University Column <i>by Chris Huff</i>	2
UnConvention Results <i>by Philip Walton</i>	9
Imprint on a Bed <i>by Stephen Hall</i>	20
Letter <i>from William Eyre</i>	31

A University Column

by Chris Huff

Universities with their shifting population of mainly young people inevitably give rise to rumours and legends. Chris Huff has investigated the stories of one such institution. One of the most intriguing findings was that various incidents seemed to occur directly above each other, forming a sort of vertical 'column' in one building. Perhaps such occurrences hold a clue to the nature of these, and maybe other, phenomena.

The holdings of Bridgeford University (*pseudonym*) comprise many buildings. This article sets out to document some of the phenomena that have been witnessed in them.

I have recently made the acquaintance of a former student at Bridgeford, who started her university education in 1993. Sheila (*pseudonym*) had an interest in the paranormal and either witnessed or was told accounts of phenomena witnessed by fellow students during her three years at the university. She is at pains throughout our communications to stress that *'some of the things have happened to me and some to others, but I don't believe any of them to be made up or particularly exaggerated'*.

At first, not spending too much time in halls, she didn't feel anything in the buildings, there being too many distractions for freshers. However, as time went by and the workload increased, Sheila started to frequent the buildings more and then she became aware of, as she puts it; *'one or two odd things'*. The paranormal events she related took place in a number of university buildings.

To earn enough money to survive today's education system Sheila worked as an assistant steward for two years in a college bar. This

involved often being on her own during the day and late at night in the bar. Sheila states *'The bar to me always felt strange when it was empty but I kind of put that down to the fact that your brain "thinking" that there should be people there and so making you think there is someone.'*

An incident in the bar, which happened late one night, was related to me as *'We were clearing up one night with the shutter [a security shutter on the bar itself - Ed.] down, it was about 2am. My best friend and I were clearing up. We had put all of the stools up on the seats so the cleaners could get round easily in the morning. Helen [pseudonym] was mopping up in the back room and I was behind the bar I heard someone setting down a stool (which we did when we were about to cash up) and I called to Helen and started to come round from behind the shutter. As I did the stool scraped back as if someone was standing up, this happened just as I was about to come round the shutter. As I got out, Helen was coming through the door at the other end asking if I'd called. She had also heard the chair scrape back. Needless to say that at 2am we didn't stay long enough to find out what "it" was that had moved the chair!'*

Building 1

Building 1 [pseudonym] is rumoured to be haunted by a handyman/caretaker, nicknamed Fred [pseudonym], who drowned himself. While a number of people are alleged to have witnessed the phantom, it has proved hard to pin anyone down that actually has. Sheila was housed in this property and recalls that it was never a nice place to be alone, although she cannot be entirely sure why. She notes that the building felt very oppressive, particularly the upstairs rooms in the main part. The staircase which leads to these rooms was also considered to be an uncomfortable place to be, particularly at night. The top staircase is particularly singled out as having a strange atmosphere, even during the hours of daylight. While Sheila cannot recall any witnessed phenomena at the house,

she comments upon the alleged haunting: *'People had seen "Fred" but nobody that I know, so I suspect he was exaggerated.'* A view with which I must concur.

Building 2

Building 2 [*pseudonym*] is a university residence which tends to be male only. Students, knowing of Sheila's interest in anything strange that went on in the college, told her a few tales relating to Building 2. One of these students related to Sheila that Building 2 had a *'funny feeling sometimes'*. He said that the main thing that happened was that you would look out of the window at night and you would see your own reflection and also that of somebody else. On turning around there would be nobody else in the room. The reflection was always stated to be nobody that the residents knew. Sheila adds *'they were all apparently shaken up about it so I did think he was telling the truth. He said that the cleaners were the ones to talk to because they knew more, but I never really got the chance.'*

Another report of an unexplained phenomenon that happened at Building 2 was obtained by Sheila from a friend who lived there in his first year. He replied, when asked if he knew of anything at the house, that he knew about the reflections and that he had also witnessed apparitions in the building. He had been standing with a friend in their room during the day when they both witnessed a group of two or three small children standing a little way from them. Unfortunately he did not specify what the children were doing as he watched. It was later discovered, after the history of the house was researched, that the room they now used as a bedroom was apparently once a children's nursery before it became a part of the university's accommodation.

Building 3

From accounts received, Building 3 [*pseudonym*] appears to be a very haunted building. Sheila stated that it felt like there was a 'column' of space within the house from the top storey to the ground floor which felt 'wrong'. There were three rooms on three floors encompassed by the column. The unease that was witnessed there was not constant, however, though it felt odd more often than not. The room at the top of the building within the column of space is reputed to have less of an atmosphere than the others, but more phenomena are alleged to take place there.

Sheila found out much more about the phenomena in the room after her boyfriend was allocated to it. One of the first experiences that she heard about (it was shared accommodation) was: *'One of the lads living there was lying in bed one night when he was overcome with fear. He felt someone was really close to him and watching him intensely. He stayed in the room, but put the feeling down to paranoia. The feeling didn't go away and he said he was convinced that any minute someone was going to jump on him and attack him. So much so that he slept with a knife that night.'*

About a month after the above account Sheila had stayed overnight with her boyfriend and relates: *'We hadn't been there long, just starting to relax, when Simon [pseudonym] leapt up shouting. He was really scared and white as a sheet.[You should know at this point that Simon is not given to being scared as a rule!]He was shouting and yelling. I asked what was going on and he said something had touched him. He had been lying with his arms stretched out above his head. I asked what he meant, what had touched him, and he said "fingers". I felt his hand and sure enough it was freezing and only over one patch, where he said the fingers had been.'*

About a year after the event described above there were again two lads sharing this room, big and 'hard' and not the types to believe in the paranormal, let alone be scared by it. Apparently they had just put out the lights when they both heard someone jump onto their floor over by the window. They said that it sounded *'as if someone had climbed in and jumped off the window ledge. Needless to say the lights came back on. They said that there was nobody there and the window was shut.'*

The room in the column directly below was occupied by a woman, Rona [*pseudonym*]. This room is alleged to have a very threatening feel to it through the day and night. Sheila commented that it was definitely more uncomfortable when you were on your own, although this feeling must be influenced by everyday fears and phobias. A tale related to me concerns the first night that Rona stayed in the room, the night before anyone else had arrived for the term. She had all of the copies of the keys to hand out the next day. Having had a strange dream, she woke up at about 3am hearing an odd noise and went to investigate. Having decided that the noise was the fridge, she then heard heavy, brisk footsteps across the hall and an unbelievably loud rapping on her door. Rona, knowing that she was the only one in the building at the time, thought that perhaps someone else had arrived and was coming to tell her they were there. She opened the door to find that nobody was there, then she searched around the building and even checked the front door, which was still double-locked. When she saw the caretaker the next day he had cryptically asked her how she'd slept. She replied that she had woken up in the middle of the night, whereupon he had questioned her about footsteps and knocking at the door. He said the same had happened to him the night before when he had used the room.

This is not an isolated incident. When asked, the occupant from the year before asserted that the same had happened to him on his first

night. Subsequently he had slept with the lights on for the whole first term because he had felt so scared.

The lowest of the three rooms is a library which does not feel comfortable at the best of times. Sheila attested: *'One night my friend and I were working in there. He decided to go upstairs and I stayed to work some more. About half an hour after he left I was working at a computer and I thought I saw the door in front of me open slightly. The door is very heavy and never opened in a breeze or anything (not that there was one). As I watched the door it opened as if someone had pulled it open to come through. Once again I did not stay around for very long. Another thing that used to happen in that room was that you would hear people walking around in the corridor above. This is of course fine in term time when there are people about, but when you are there in the holidays and you know that you are the only one in the building, it is a little more unnerving.'*

In another room in the same building a student and male friend of Sheila was lying in bed at night when he felt the presence of (but did not see) six men standing around him. He could hear them talking and from this he 'knew' they were monks. They were talking about how he was bravely ill and would probably not make it through the next week or so. After this event the presences are reported to have just faded away. This is an important witnessed phenomenon because the building is thought to be built on the site of a monastery.

Sheila has herself witnessed an apparition in this building. Her report of the incident is as follows: *'We were standing on the landing of the library stairs one day. I happened to glance up to the top just in time to see a really beautiful young woman walk past the top of the stairs and through a wall. She was dressed in a long gown, it was yellow with white lace. She had dark hair, which was swept up into a bun affair. When I saw her I was just amazed. We went upstairs just to check that it couldn't have*

been someone wandering around or anything, but there was nobody around and anyway, she had walked through the wall!'

Building 4

I am fortunate enough to know Beryl [pseudonym] who, while in charge of the cleaning team in Building 4 [pseudonym], witnessed a paranormal event. The top floor of the building had a reputation among the cleaners for being an eerie venue at night, some of them refusing to work on the floor at night. Beryl was working on the top floor between 7 and 8.30 pm, sorting out the cleaners' cupboard. The cupboard was a large walk in type, outside of which was a 1.5m tall artificial tree. This tree started to shake on its own, while Beryl was inside the cupboard. Beryl reported the occurrence as: *'I thought it was Jimmy [pseudonym] the porter larking about and shaking the tree until the leaves were rustling. I told him to pack it in, but when I came out of the cupboard there was nobody there. I went to Jimmy who turned out to be on the ground floor. He stated that he had not been on the top floor all night.'*

When further questioned, Beryl remembered that the tree started to shake only when she had entered the cupboard. It stopped rustling briefly when she shouted for the porter to stop larking about and then resumed until just before she came out of the cupboard. No similar phenomena have been reported.

The above recorded phenomena are, I suspect, but the scratching of the surface. The problem lies in getting the students to admit that they have witnessed anything out of the ordinary – in case their friends think them strange. Nonetheless the work of collating the paranormal events at the University continues as and when the cases present themselves.

UnConvention Results

by Philip Walton

Over the last two years ASSAP has been carrying out a series of large-scale experiments at the Fortean Times annual UnConvention. In this article the ASSAP Chairman, who organised the experiments, details how they were run and the results obtained.

Take yourself back to your school days, to those subjects that you sat through saying to yourself, 'why am I learning this? I am never going to use this when I leave.' The chances are that maths and in particular statistics are somewhere near the top of the list. Well, continue reading and I can guarantee you will be surprised that they are not as painful as you remember and, more to the point, those lessons will have turned out to be a good grounding in the study of paranormal phenomena!

In this article I hope to set out some of the work ASSAP members have undertaken. I will look at one or two of the experiments in some detail and work through the protocols and maths so that you can follow the procedures in the evaluation of your own results. Then, finally, I will examine an area of crossover in which the results of one experiment may be of use in a completely different area of research, a rare 'something for nothing' situation.

For the past two years members of ASSAP have run a series of ten experiments at the Fortean Times UnConvention. These have

ranged from dowsing, telepathy and remote viewing to psychokinesis (PK) and extra-sensory perception (ESP).

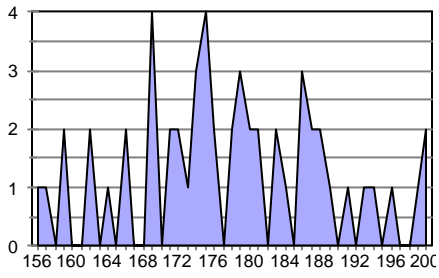
The experiments were conducted in both years over a weekend, with the results being presented to the audience at the UnConvention in the very last lecture of the second day. The ten experiments were not intended to give a definitive answer as to whether a person was, or was not, in possession of paranormal ability. Nor were they intended to answer the more general question of whether paranormal ability existed. To do that would have required far more controlled conditions than the ones available at the UnConvention. The experiments were merely intended to allow the public to have a go at such methods of investigation, to whet their appetite for further research and see how successful ASSAP could be at mass research.

Out of the ten experiments, four lend themselves to further study. These were two psychokinesis experiments (designed to determine whether participants could influence the fall of some dice to score higher or lower than expected by chance) and two experiments to study extra-sensory perception using Zener cards.

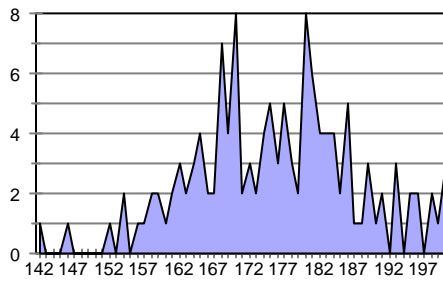
The Zener card tests took two forms. In one, cards were placed in envelopes by a human operator, overseen by another operator. In the other, a computer chose the cards and also evaluated the score. This variant was designed to eliminate possible telepathy with the operator.

In the psychokinesis experiments participants were asked to throw five dice ten times, recording the score on each throw and adding all ten throws together. On the 'high' score run the participants were asked to 'think high numbers' and visualise a high score. For the 'low' run they needed to visualise low numbers.

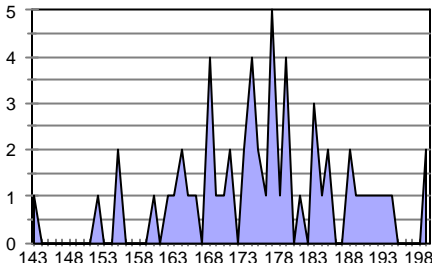
Dice 1998 Aiming High



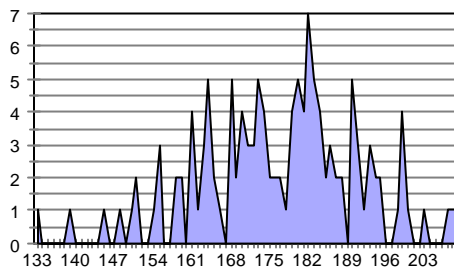
Dice 1999 Aiming High



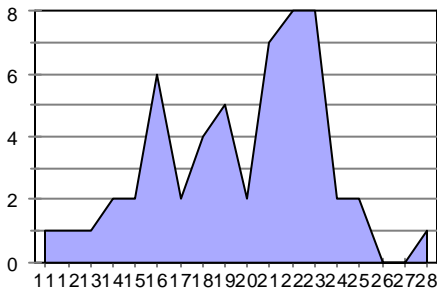
Dice 1998 Aiming Low



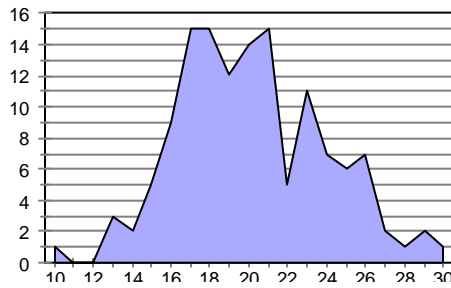
Dice 1999 Aiming Low



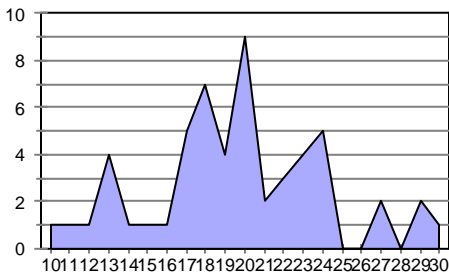
Zener 1998 Human



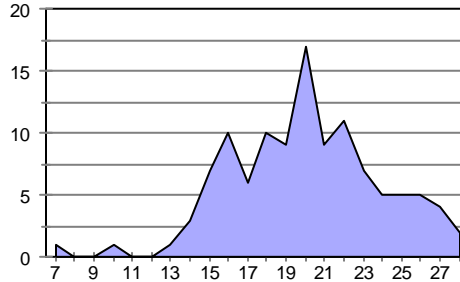
Zener 1999 Human



Zener 1998 Computer



Zener 1999 Computer



In the 'human' Zener card experiment (ie. with an operator) the participants were presented with four sealed envelopes with twenty-five cards in each, made up of five of each of the five classic Zener symbols (square, circle, wavy lines, cross, star). These had been randomised prior to sealing using standard random number tables (available from good book shops, also possibly on the world wide web). It is essential in any experiment involving chance that cards, or whatever the target is, are not merely shuffled, as this technique alone cannot be relied upon to produce a pure random order.

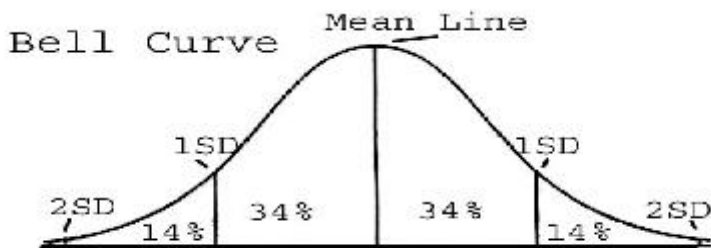
On the previous page is a series of graphs showing how many times, out of all the guesses by all the participants, a particular score appeared. The scores are along the bottom and the number of times they occurred up the side. Note how each graph tends to follow the same overall shape.

Calculating Results

Usually the following calculations would be carried out on an individual's score to ascertain whether there is anything out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, the number of runs that we could carry out at the UnConvention was insufficient, being limited in order to let the largest possible number of participants have a go at all ten tests.

The problem with looking at cross-population studies (ie. lots of different people instead of just one), such as the experiments described here, is the possibility of introducing the so called 'stacking effect'. This arises from the non-random nature of peoples' guesses, eg. favourite numbers, birthdays etc. This could skew a set of figures.

With any experiment designed to show the presence of ESP there must be a 'standard model' in the first place in order to show deviation from this standard model. If we look at the Zener card or dice throwing experiment the standard model, or spread of results expected due to chance alone, looks like this diagram:



It is called a 'bell curve' because of its shape. From the centre line, the 'mean', to the first lines on either side represents 34% of the expected results. This is called a 'standard deviation' ('sd'). Therefore from one of the lines to the other represents 68% of all results. The outer two lines represent a further 14% of the expected results from the mean, which is 2 standard deviations from the mean. These would include 96% of the expected results. A result which is further than 2sd from the mean line is said to be 'significant'. It suggests to a statistician that some cause other than chance may be involved.

The formula to use is:

$$s = \sqrt{\sum \frac{f(x - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

where **F** is the standard deviation, **Σ** means add a series of numbers together (derived from the following bit of the equation),

f is frequency (number of times a particular score occurred), x is the score in question, \bar{x} the mean and n the number of guesses.

There are many different ways to rearrange the above formula and many specific formulas that work only for a specific type of experiment. If it looks a bit daunting, don't panic! There is a worked example below.

The Zener card experiment is a 'forced choice' type of test. This means that you have to guess at the answer from a selection (the cards left in the pile). The dice-throwing experiment, although obeying the same law of distribution of results, is not a forced choice, (the next throw is not pre-determined in any way) and so the following formula will not apply.

$$Z = \frac{\text{actual score} - \text{chance average score}}{\sqrt{[N * P * (1 - P)]}}$$

where N is the number of guesses and P the chances of being correct by guessing. Z will be explained later.

A Worked Example: the Zener Cards

Working through an example:

Ž *Take the chance of being correct by guessing, which in the case of Zener cards is 0.2 (there are 5 types of cards so the chance of getting one right is 1 out of 5 which is 0.2 as a decimal)*

Ž *Take this from 1. This gives $1 - 0.2 = 0.8$*

- Ž Multiply this by the chance of being right by guessing so getting $0.2 * 0.8 = 0.16$
- Ž Multiply this by the number of guesses, which are 100 in the case of our Zener experiments ie. $0.16 * 100 = 16$
- Ž Take the square root of this number = 4 (so calculating the bottom term of the equation)
- Ž Now calculate the number of correct guesses expected by chance ie. 1 in 5 times 100 guesses or $0.2 * 100 = 20$
- Ž Finally, take your score away from the expected score for the size of the run and divide it by the bottom term derived earlier (ie. 4).

Let us see how this final step actually came out for the UnConvention experiments. For the computer Zener tests in 1999 the lowest score was 10 and the highest was 30. Both are the same distance from the mean and both would be equally significant scores statistically. It is just as significant to score very low as very high.

So, applying the final step of the calculation we get, for the highest score: $30 - 20 = 10$ which we then divide by 4 to get 2.5. Similarly, for the lowest score, $10 - 20 = -10$ then $-10/4 = -2.5$.

So what does this final answer actually mean? It is the amount of deviation from the standard model mean, often referred to as the 'critical ratio'. In some books it is referred to as 'z' or 't'. From this we can work out the probability ('p'), ie. the odds of obtaining that score by chance. To work out what the actual odds are for a particular result we can use a table like the one that now follows.

Critical Ratio	Probability	Approximate Odds
1.00	0.32	3 to 1
1.75	0.080	12 to 1
1.90	0.057	17 to 1
2.00	0.046	22 to 1
2.10	0.036	28 to 1
2.20	0.028	36 to 1
2.30	0.021	48 to 1
2.40	0.016	62 to 1
2.50	0.012	83 to 1
2.58	0.010	100 to 1
3.00	0.0027	370 to 1
3.30	0.0010	1000 to 1
3.50	0.0005	2000 to 1
4.00	0.00006	16667 to 1
5.00	0.0000006	1666667 to 1

Note that the critical ratio can be negative but produces the same result. It is the distance from the mean that matters and not its sign.

Any figure above 2.58 or below -2.58 (odds of 100 to 1) is considered significant, so the figures that we worked through (2.5) are just below the significant threshold and could be due to chance.

Above 3.30 or below -3.30 (odds of 1000 to 1) is a score of high significance and anyone scoring such a result would be considered of great interest.

There is a proviso. Obviously, if I guessed at just 5 cards, whatever the outcome the score would be meaningless. So, where is the line between too few calls and enough. If you take the result of the bottom line of the equation on p.14 before applying the square root instruction, then your sample is only valid if the answer is 9 or above (in our case it was 16).

Results of Dice Throwing Experiment

Taking a look at the results for the dice throwing, we were looking for a difference between the score for the low dice and the high dice experiments. If the dice had not been identical, there could have been a skewing of the results above or below the mean score. The reason for this effect is in the design of dice. If hollows represent the numbers, then the side with 6 hollows will be lighter than the opposite side with just the one and will tend to show a bias to 6 showing on top. The effect, although small, should be noticeable over a long run. It is therefore important to devise experiments that cancel it out, eg. trying to throw 7 or to have flat dice.

The results (total average scores) were as follows:

1998 Aiming High 177.6852	1998 Aiming Low 175.5636
1999 Aiming High 175.6894	1999 Aiming Low 176.5547

As can be seen from the above, although 1998 showed a trend of high being higher than low, the following year the trend was

reversed and as the score contained a larger pool of people, this makes the run a more reliable result.

Statistical Effects

In any experiment there may be effects that are due to errors in calculation or errors in method, but there may also be other subtle effects which could be due to ESP. It has been observed that, when conducting large test runs, the subjects' score may tail off; this could be due to tiredness or lack of concentration.

Other noted effects include negative scoring. If someone has a strong feeling that the test is not going to work for them and they are going to score badly then any 'bad' result will actually be as strong an indication of ESP as a 'good' score from someone claiming ability. Both would deviate from a score due to chance alone, as can be seen from the bell graph.

Other noted effects are:

* **Displacement**, *which is said to occur when a subject has a significant score on the card before or the card after the target card.*

* **Dispersion**, *which is when the subject scores particularly high runs and then particularly low runs in the same session, so the overall score is no different from chance.*

* **Reinforcement**, *which is said to occur when the guess is often successful if the same symbol occurs clustered together. So whenever two or more of the same symbol show there is a 'hit' with the second and third in the run.*

* **Salience**, *in which a person is said to score 'hits' only at the beginning or end of each run.*

A word of caution. Although these patterns of scoring are genuine, and I have witnessed such effects when evaluating subjects, their existence alone does not indicate ESP.

It is all too easy with hindsight to fit a pattern to a series of runs, when the truth is that they were nothing more than chance. If presented with random scores from a computer, you would be able to find such patterns. What you would not then expect is consistency.

So, if you notice after some runs that you think there is displacement, or salience, make a note and start a new set of runs. Do not add the first set to these, but look deliberately for the effect you saw. If it was more than a coincidence, the effect should manifest itself again.

At the beginning of the article I wrote of a crossover effect that could be useful in another field of research. It occurred to me while going through all the hundreds of forms that were collected at the UnConvention that the old Zener ESP forms might be of use in the study of Remote Viewing (RV).

One problem in RV is the possibility of archetype symbols contaminating the results. If, for example, when asked to think of a shape most people draw circles rather than squares, and the experimenter uses pictures containing circles more often than squares, you can see that the hit rate will be higher than chance, but not due to ESP.

Instead of throwing the finished forms away, we should record not only the hits and any patterns noticed but also the total of each symbol guessed. In Zener cards there is always the same number of targets and so the guesses for each over many runs should be the same.

This could also be achieved with colours, to see if there are preferences of colour, although the symbol would then have to be the same.

Imprint on a Bed

by Stephen Hall

Stephen Hall, our Deputy NIC, and Ian Percy (our UFO subject coordinator) have been investigating a haunting case for some time. It is their belief that it represents a recurrence of a known long-term haunting. Usually such cases produce odd sightings years apart and become the stuff of local legend. This case, however, seems to have flared up considerably recently.

On 28 August 1998 I was visiting my mother when she brought to my attention an article in a local paper dated 27 August. I subsequently wrote to the reporter who covered the story, to find out some more detail about these incidents. In the letter I offered my services and those of my associate Ian Percy to the farmer.

On 1 September I had a phone call from the reporter thanking me for my letter. He informed me that he had contacted the farmer and told him of our interest and my request for an interview. The farmer responded by saying he would be very keen to talk to us and passed on his telephone number so we could contact him. This I did the same evening. I spoke at length with the farmer, David Potter (*pseudonym*), about the incidents that had been occurring, then arranged for a formal interview at his farm.

Perceptual Factors

Mr and Mrs Potter are both nice, down to earth level-headed people, with, in my opinion, nothing to gain from making up stories about these occurrences. Both appear to be very intelligent, broad-minded and able to exercise rational thought and reason.

Mr Potter has always shown great interest in and enthusiasm for the case. He has at all times co-operated fully with the investigation, and both he and his wife have assisted us in every manner possible. All he really wants to know is who or what is causing the phenomena.

He also shows a great interest in the history of Bell Farm (*pseudonym*). The farm has formed an important part of local history, and Mr Potter has helped us greatly by putting us in contact with a local historian, who has provided invaluable information on the history of the farm.

Mrs Potter seems to be quite scared of the occurrences and, I think, wishes they weren't happening. She is naturally apprehensive and it is apparent that these incidents are causing her considerable stress and anxiety. Both Mr and Mrs Potter continue to feel uneasy in the house, despite our reassurances. Mr Potter is more able to accept what is going on, and while his wife tries to understand, she does feel somewhat apprehensive each time an incident occurs.

Incident Summary

Incident 1

On 18 August at 4.45am Mr Potter went out into his field, which abuts the Marchant (*pseudonym*) family burial ground, to check on some cows which were close to calving. He did not have his torch switched on at the time, but he had a strange feeling he was not alone in the field. One of the cows had already calved and Mr Potter switched on his torch to see where the cow was. He located the cow, but to his astonishment he saw two figures standing by it, just as if they were watching it calve. They were about ten paces away from Mr Potter. He thought one of the figures was a woman because she was wearing what appeared to be a long white gown

'coming off from her head about ear level', which appeared to be flowing. She seemed solid in appearance. The other was, he believed, a child wearing a dark outfit. He thought it was a young boy but could not be certain, as he could not see the child's face as it was slightly distorted. Mr Potter observed that it went very cold as he watched the couple, saying it was an indescribable sensation.

As he shone his torch on the couple the woman turned and faced Mr Potter, her eyes shone pink very brightly in a way he could not describe, which fixed him to the spot. He was unable to move. The couple moved across the field, and a cow which was lying down on the ground got up as if to move out of their way. Mr Potter then heard the graveyard's gates open and close. This really spooked him and he panicked, quickly leaving the field. He was still shaking several hours later. Mrs Potter commented that she had never seen him so frightened.

Mr Potter later checked the graveyard but found nothing, but he did notice there were a few children buried there.

Incident 2

On Friday 28 August at approx. 7.40pm several members of the Potter family were watching *Coronation Street* on television. It was still daylight at that time.

Mrs Potter went upstairs to the bathroom to take a shower. She closed the door behind her, but did not lock it. As she entered the shower cubicle and turned on the water, the room temperature in the bathroom dropped quite noticeably. Suddenly before her eyes the bathroom door swung open and the shower stopped working. Being somewhat shocked by this, she rushed downstairs to see if anyone had been up there, but no one had.

Incident 3

On 1 September the lights came on in an unoccupied bedroom. This was not elaborated on by either Mr or Mrs Potter at the time.

Incident 4

On 9 September Mrs Potter discovered what she believed to be the impression of figure lying on top of the bed in an empty bedroom. She could find no explanation of how it got there. It should be noted that the family has no pets.

Incident 5

On 10 September Mrs Potter noticed a strange smell in a small empty bedroom. She likened the smell to that of a sweet rose, but this later changed to a horrible musty smell.

Incident 6

On 29 September, at about 3.30am, Mr Potter was awoken by some noises in the house, but he could not be specific as to their nature. He did not investigate what these noises were, and appeared at that time to be unconcerned. He stated, though, that he could not go back to sleep afterwards.

Incident 7

On 1 October, at around 11.00am, Mr Potter was taking a battery out of his pickup in the farmyard directly outside his house. The wife of a friend was talking to him at the time. Suddenly they both heard what they thought was a young woman's voice saying 'Hello'. The voice seemed to come from one of the disused farm buildings in the yard, to the left of the house. They both made a

casual search of the area but could find no trace of the owner of the voice.

Incident 8

Between 9.30am and 9.45am on 3 November Mrs Potter was in the kitchen doing some washing-up when something caught her attention and made her look into the hallway. She then observed what she believed was a shadow of a person on the hall wall, moving to and fro at least twice. The movement of this shadow gave the impression that an object or 'something' had been hung over a banister at the top of a staircase and was swinging freely in front of a light source. The temperature dropped sharply while this occurred.

Incident 9

On 20 November the farm generator broke down. Mr Potter called in an electricity firm to fix it but, after a lengthy examination of the appliance, they could find no reason for the fault. The generator was housed in the same field where Incident 1 occurred.

Incident 10

On 30 November Mr Potter heard a number of footsteps in the large bedroom, going out onto the landing. Mr Potter could not remember the number of footsteps heard, or their duration.

Research Investigation Methods

On 6 September Ian Percy and I commenced our initial investigation. Firstly, after interviewing the witnesses, we took a tour of the site, paying attention to the bathroom, landing and bedrooms. We took photographs and temperature readings in various rooms. We then did a sweep with an EMF (electromagnetic field) meter, but got no unusual readings [*the meter measures varying magnetic fields in the 50-60Hz range with a sensitivity of 0-10 mG - Ed*]. At the time of our first visit, it was raining heavily and therefore we were unable to take photographs outdoors.

On a second visit, we took our investigation outside into the field where the apparitions were seen. We took a number of photographs of the field from various angles, and again took EMF readings. Again we had no unusual results. We then moved on to the neighbouring family burial plot.

The first thing we noticed was that the gate was in a very good state of repair, which we found somewhat unusual considering that the rest of the plot was in such a generally bad state. It appeared as if it had been freshly painted and oiled, even though we were led to believe that no one had paid any attention to it for a number of years. We also noticed that the gate lock opened very easily, as though it had also been freshly oiled.

We again took photographs, EMF and temperature readings but once again found nothing unusual. We took a note of some of the names on the tombstones, though some were, unfortunately, illegible.

Mr Potter informed us that he had heard (unsubstantiated) rumours that someone had been hanged over the landing banister. He also informed us that the activity seemed to coincide with an

elderly relative of the Marchant family requesting a visit to the graveyard. Mr and Mrs Potter believe that she wishes to be buried there when she passes on. It should be noted that this elderly relative had paid a visit to the graveyard, and from the conversations we have had with Mr Potter it would seem that these occurrences started at the same time as her visit.

While we were talking to Mr Potter he showed us a letter from a Richard Wyatt (*pseudonym*), an author with connections with the Marchant family. Mr Wyatt is running a project to restore the burial plot and has considerable information on the family. This is commented on in a leaflet that we were sent.

We left the farmhouse at about 9.15pm, by which time it had got dark. While we were saying our goodbyes at the side of the farmhouse in the garden, Ian and I noticed a sudden drop in temperature. It was unusual, as it was a very warm and mild night.

On 9 September we returned to the farm after Mr Potter had informed us of the impression on the bed (Incident 4). We again took photographs of the room, and we also took EMF and temperature readings, both of which showed nothing out of the ordinary. Mr Potter told us that he had arranged for us to interview a local historian the following evening. This person had a number of records and newspaper articles on the surrounding area.

On 10 September we returned to the farm where Mr and Mrs Potter informed us of the strange smells in one of the bedrooms (Incident 5). We checked it out but found nothing unusual at that time. We noticed no smells or unusual activity.

Following a brief conversation we then visited the historian, though, in all honesty, he couldn't tell us anything of great relevance. However, he did show us a very old local history book.

This documented the story of Luke Marchant's church apparition and elaborated on a number of details about the local area, which proved quite useful. I later found the story of Luke Marchant and his apparition in three of my own books.

On 4 October Ian and I visited the farm to interview Mr Potter on the voice in the yard (Incident 7). We couldn't come up with any explanation for the voice. Mr Potter informed us he had recently visited a garden centre and, while looking at some roses, he recognised the smell that he had smelt previously in the bedroom.

We then conducted a mini vigil with Mr Potter in the yard where the voice had been heard. The whole time we all felt like we were being watched. Half way through the vigil we all heard a strange electrical noise emanate from under my car. This happened twice, and we took photographs and readings. We also experienced noticeable temperature drops from time to time.

On 8 November Ian and I visited the farm to interview Mrs Potter about the events that occurred on 3 November. We made a thorough inspection of the house to try and find a logical explanation for the shadow. At first we could find no logical explanation but, on closer inspection, we discovered that the staircase had been altered, in fact reversed. We therefore concluded that, if the staircase had been in its original position, the shadow could have been caused by a large upstairs window throwing light across an object placed in front of it. We also established that, at the time the shadow appeared to Mrs Potter, the sun would have been in exactly the right place. We then began to think about this occurrence in connection with the unsubstantiated rumour of a hanging some time ago. The rumour suggested that a young, unidentified male person had been hanged in the house during the summer sometime in the first quarter of the 18th century. If this had occurred when the staircase was round the other way in its

original position, and if it had happened at the same time of day 300 or so years ago then, allowing for calendar changes and time differences, you would have got exactly the same shadow that Mrs Potter observed.

Investigators' Comments

I think that we have established that something paranormal is occurring in the farmhouse and surrounding fields and yards, even though we haven't seen anything first hand.

Mr and Mrs Potter strike me as nice, believable people, not prone to flights of fantasy. We should also bear in mind that other people have experienced phenomena there.

Update

Since this report was written there have been further developments in the case. These new events were actually witnessed by the investigators themselves, adding considerably to the strength of the case. Here is the additional material received to date.

7 February 2000

Ian and I visited the farm to do an interview with a local journalist. While at the house, we showed the journalist around the rooms where the events had occurred. We went upstairs at around 8pm.

We went into the small bedroom and, while in the room, we noticed that it was quite cold. This in itself was odd given that there was a sizeable radiator in the room and it was very hot. The temperature of the room did not reflect the fact that the radiator was even on. We also noticed a smell of flowers in the room. It is believed that this was the smell of roses that had previously been

reported. Ian and I, as well as Mr and Mrs Potter and the reporter, all observed this event.

During the course of our chat with the reporter, we moved on to the other small bedroom and it was here that I noticed a number of small 'greenish' lights in the corner, by the window and by the dressing table. Like the other small room, there was a sizeable radiator in the room and again it was very hot. The temperature of the room did not reflect the fact that the radiator was even on. Again we noticed a smell of flowers in the room, believed to be the same smell of roses that had been noted previously. Again, Ian and I, as well as Mr and Mrs Potter and the reporter, observed this event.

At one point during the subsequent conversation in this room, we noticed what appeared to be the imprint of a 'body' on the bed sheet. This was unusual as Mrs Potter informed us that she had recently made the bed and had straightened the sheets.

To test the theory that maybe something was there, we brushed the sheet flat, pulling it as taught as was possible. We then went back downstairs, and I was the last person to leave the room, noting that the sheet was still smooth. While downstairs we continued the interview with the reporter. The reporter left soon after.

At around 8.30pm, we heard what sounded like a soft shuffle coming from upstairs. We then proceeded to the small bedroom where we had seen the imprint on the bed and, on entering the room, we noted that it was now extremely cold. Indeed it was colder than it had previously been. I then noticed that there was an imprint on the bed sheet, in almost the same place as the first one we had seen.

After a couple of minutes discussing this with Ian, we decided to try and repeat the experiment. We brushed the sheet smooth again. Mr Potter and I went back downstairs while Ian went to the toilet. Mrs Potter was at this time waiting to use the toilet herself.

As Ian left the toilet, he felt a soft 'blowing' sensation on the side of his face. He did not communicate this to Mrs Potter, as she was already on edge following the events of the night. Ian then heard a soft shuffle again coming from the small bedroom and, on entering the room, he could clearly see an imprint appear on the bed before his eyes. He called Mrs Potter to the room to verify what had happened. The temperature of the room had by then plummeted to an all-time low. There was a very heavy smell of roses again.

26 February

A houseguest of Mr Potter observed what appeared to be a 'shadowy' figure (in the 'corner of her eye'), coming down the stairs. She did not see this 'person' clearly but she was convinced that it was male.

Letter

From William Eyre

J

John Radford posits in his letter to Anomaly (vol. 25) that it is most unlikely that we survive death. I would like to address some of the points he raises, in order to redress the balance on this issue.

He states that research has shown that memory, thoughts, etc. cannot exist without the presence of a physical brain. What research, I wonder? Presumably physiological research. Quite clearly looking for signs of neural activity in a dead brain would produce a zero result. If research is carried out which is designed to determine the existence or non-existence of aspects of the personality of a physically deceased person, clearly the research needs to centre around a communication mechanism divorced from physiology.

The conclusion of Mr Radford's syllogism that a soul requires a mind, a mind requires a brain and that therefore a soul requires a brain, is false, as the second premise is, I would suggest, false. That is to say, there is ample evidence through mediumship and out-of-body experiences that a mind can function without a brain and that the brain merely acts as the interface between the mind and the physical world.

The suggestion that an impaired brain, as in the case of an Alzheimer's sufferer, means that the faculty of thinking is permanently lost is on a par with saying that impaired physical eyes, as in the case of a blind person, mean that the faculty of sight is permanently lost. However, a colleague of mine who had been blind for a number of years related how one day, while sitting sleepily in the kitchen, he suddenly found that he could not only see his kitchen, but also saw deceased relatives whom he recognised at the kitchen door. His wife confirmed that the

description he gave of the detail of what he could see her doing in the kitchen at the time was precisely accurate. Surely he had slipped slightly out of his body for the duration and was seeing with his etheric eyes.

Mr Radford asks for incontrovertible proof of life after death. Perhaps he has not gone out of his way to seek this. Some of us have. While many examples of mediumship admittedly lend themselves to alternative explanations, I would be interested to know how he could explain one particular instance I witnessed of physical transfiguration, without recourse to the life-after-death hypothesis. This occurred during a seance at Clay Cross Spiritualist Church in Derbyshire, the medium (Mrs Pat Beckitt) being a woman of late middle age. One particular 'moulding' showed itself as a round, smooth complexioned face of a youngish man with very distinctively different eyes from the medium's. The communicator beckoned to the young woman sitting next to me, who approached him, in order that he could convey (using the trance mediumship method) a personal message to her. The incident became very emotional. At the conclusion of the seance, the young woman took a photograph out of her handbag and showed it to those of us sitting near her and the face we had all seen superimposed on the medium's face was the spitting image of the young man on the photograph. It turned out to be her husband, who had passed at the age of 30. One point to emphasize is that everyone in the Church saw the face.

He states in his letter that there is no scientifically acceptable evidence whatever. Has he not heard of the feasibility mechanism scientifically derived by Ronald Pearson and of the practical evidence scientifically derived by the likes of Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge?

The fact is that today's communication systems would not have arrived at their present advanced state had scientists not tenaciously got to grips with the mechanisms of radio. Similarly, life after death will never be proved unless scientifically minded psychical researchers tenaciously get to grips with the mechanisms of spirit communication made available

by Spiritualists. If this matter is left to the major religions, it will never be proved, as they are irrationally content to make do with mere belief in this area.