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Editor: Christian Jensen Romer and ASSAP

Editorial Board: Dr. David Sivier, Dr. Becky Smith

Proofreaders: Christian Jensen Romer, Graham  
Philpot and William Eyre

Front Cover: ASSAP

If you want to join the Anomaly team or write for  
Anomaly, please contact the team through  
[journal@assap.ac.uk](mailto:journal@assap.ac.uk)

**[www.assap.ac.uk](http://www.assap.ac.uk)**

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# **ANOMALY**

## **JOURNAL OF RESEARCH INTO THE PARANORMAL**

**Vol. 53, March 2025**

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Correspondence address: [journal@assap.ac.uk](mailto:journal@assap.ac.uk)

Registered address (no correspondence please):

63-66 5th Floor Suite 23 Hatton Garden, **London**, England,  
EC1N 8LE

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# The Vanishing House – A Ghost Story

Christian Jensen Romer, Nicola Talbot & Eric Quigley

## Abstract

*In the summer of 1989 Nicola Talbot (nee Jordan), Eric Quigley and I researched a book of Suffolk ghost stories, primarily through travelling around the county visiting towns and talking to people about their experiences and by visiting the county records offices and newspaper offices to consult historic records. Minimax Books took the book for publication, but the closure of the company left it out of print for thirty-five years, though I have made the manuscript freely available to other authors and researchers, and portions were made available on the web from May 1997 onwards. This was almost certainly the first source available on the web to mention the case and was written at a time when the authors had not seen the Wynne account. Given its importance as a source for modern understandings of the case, and its brevity but utility as an introduction to the mystery, we have reproduced it here. The text is taken from the 1997 version that was originally posted on the website of the Student Parapsychology Society at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (today the University of Gloucestershire) at [www.chelt.ac.uk/su/sps/house.htm](http://www.chelt.ac.uk/su/sps/house.htm).*

“Many, many years ago I wrote a book with Eric Quigley and Nicola Talbot (nee Jordan) named Spectral Suffolk about the ghost stories of that county.

ROUGHAM GREEN: We have all heard of haunted houses, but who has ever heard of a house that is a haunt! Yet for over a century this is exactly what has been occurring on the stretch of road between Rougham Green and Bradfield St. George. Our story begins in 1860 when a Mr. Robert Palfrey was out in the fields on a warm June evening, putting the finishing touches on a haystack. He shivered as the evening grew suddenly chilly, and then was shocked to suddenly see a large redbrick house with gardens in full bloom, where there had been no house a moment before.

The next sighting was in 1912 and happened to the great grandson of Mr. Palfrey, Mr. James Cobbold. While riding on a pony trap alongside the village butcher (Mr. George Waylett), both were startled by a sudden cool breeze and drop in temperature, along with a whooshing noise suggestive of air being displaced. The pony reared in panic, and the butcher was thrown to the ground. Any thought of helping him vanished from young James' mind as he saw a great three storey Georgian mansion, complete with grounds, where moments before there was only the fields. As he turned round to see what had become of George, the house was enveloped by a mist... and then simply not there. The butcher was unimpressed. "That's the third time I've seen that happen", he stated, and picked himself up out of the road.

Mr.Cobbold was to tell his story in the pages of the magazine *Amateur Gardening* in 1975 and stated that he knew of two more sightings from the previous ten years. Our next sighting however dates from an October afternoon in 1963 when a young schoolteacher and her teenage ward were exploring the countryside in the vicinity of Church Road. Walking down a path they came upon a greenish yellow wall to a large estate, and shortly thereafter passed the great iron gates. Making a mental note to enquire as to who lived at the grand house, they returned home. Over evening tea however, they were surprised to be met with a general shaking of heads. There

confused. In 1934 the story was featured on a BBC radio broadcast; and to this day, no solution has been found.

Mr. Edward Bentley was as a young man in the early 1940s and employed by Aubyn Davies, the fashionable gentleman's outfitters of Bury St Edmunds. In those days Mr. Davies himself ran the business and in the summer months after harvest time it was his habit to deliver catalogues of his clothes to all the houses in the rural districts surrounding Bury, as the worker's received a harvest bonus payment and often acquired new outfits then. On a hot sunny afternoon Mr. Bentley, Mr. Davies and another lad were making deliveries and driving down Southall Street when Edward spotted a large Georgian style house set back from the road. He called out to Mr. Davies, who reversed the car, and found... nothing. Ashamed, Edward put it down to a trick of his mind

until one day many years later when discussing these things, the authors related the story of the vanishing house. Edward pointed out the exact spot where the house was seen before, near Colville Grove...

The vanishing house sounds like it may have a prosaic explanation. In the 1950s, a similar example of phantom scenery was located by a diligent SPR researcher following up the case, down a slightly different road to that the witnesses believed they had followed. It is also worth noting that the house normally appears on bright sunny days, and this led experienced psychical researcher Tony Cornell to investigate the area with a view to establishing if there was any similar property in the area. As it happens a large house does stand relatively close as the authors ascertained by field research, but it does not correspond with the detailed descriptions of any of the witnesses. We have deliberately not given those details here, so that if anyone else sees the house we can establish its identity and the strength of their claims by comparison. Tony, who is still active today and is among Britain's best field researchers of the paranormal, could not find a solution.

This fascinating story does not appear in any of the standard books on British hauntings but in the few cases where it is mentioned one fascinating claim is usually repeated, namely that no building of the

nature described ever stood on the site. Yet this assertion is very doubtful, for it seems to stem from the fact that the excellent local historian Mr. Leonard Aves and Mr. James Cobbold were unable to find the house marked on a map dating from 1885, some 25 years after the 'ghost house' was first seen... I would refer the curious reader to maps extant in Suffolk County Record Office in Bury St Edmunds. The 1815 map of Southall Street left us unsure, but an earlier eighteenth century map seems to show a large house in roughly the right place. I say roughly because the family coat of arms could indicate the house stood anywhere in a three-mile radius, the map being more pictorial than diagrammatic. This offers superb possibilities for a fascinating piece of research.

The authors conducted their own enquiries. Firstly, we carefully examined the accounts and were delighted to find that the seeming contradiction in the colour of the house can be explained by the fact that Miss Wynne and her pupil were apparently on a footpath that ran along where we may presume the back of the estate was, and thus saw different terrain from the other witnesses. Our next move was to explore in detail the location. We swiftly discovered fragments of red brick and pan tile, although we felt they were

probably of comparatively modern manufacture and not that uncommon in any field. Then as we walked through a copse towards the road where most of the witnesses were, a realisation struck us. There is a path down the centre of the wood, and it is slightly lower than the sides, which appear banked. Furthermore, the largest trees seemed to stand on either side of the banks. We were in a long-overgrown avenue, like that described by Miss Wynne and her pupil! Frantically scraping away the earth bank we found underneath what was clearly a foundation of a wall, made of crumbling greenish-yellow brick. It is the author's intention to pursue our enquiries with the landowner this summer, and we would welcome any offer of assistance! Did a house really stand on this site in the early 1800's, as its architecture seems to suggest? We are still not sure, but perhaps the mystery is starting to unravel.

The Vanishing House offers an intriguing glimpse of a bizarre possibility. If the house really did displace air, it is presumably physically present. Is it, just possibly, usually outside time and space

as we know it, a kind of homely Brigadoon? The question it raises is obvious. What if we were to enter it? Where would we go when it vanished. Would we return many years in the future, or simply die of starvation in some unknown part of space? Are the inhabitants still living on within, aging only a few minutes each decade, waiting till they return to earth full time? Chris' facetious suggestion involves a doctor with a floppy hat, long scarf and strange metallic dog who drops in for a quick pint now and again!"

From here we may proceed to the testimony that brought the case to prominence in the years before the Second World War. The following article reproduces that account; following that we reproduce with kind permission the *Amateur Gardening* article from 1975 in full.

# Miss Wynne and Miss Allington's Accounts, from Sir Ernest Bennett *Apparitions and Haunted Houses* (1939)

E. N. Bennett

Miss Ruth Wynne wrote to me from Rougham Rectory, Bury St. Edmunds, on 11th March 1934 as follows.

*"In response to your wireless request for information concerning psychic phenomena experiences, I send you the following account of an odd experience in case it may interest you. I came to live at Rougham, four miles from Bury St. Edmunds, in 1926. The district was then entirely new to me, and I and my pupil, a girl of fourteen, spent our afternoon walks exploring it.*

*One dull, damp afternoon, I think in October '26, we walked off through the fields to look at the church of the neighbouring village, Bradfield St. George. In order to reach the church, which we could see plainly ahead of us to the right, we had to pass through a farmyard, whence we came out on to a road. We had never previously taken this particular walk, nor did we know anything about the topography of the hamlet of Bradfield St. George. Exactly opposite us on the further side of the road and flanking it, we saw a high wall of greenish- yellow bricks. The road ran past us for a few yards, then curved away from us to the left. We walked along the road, following the brick wall round the bend, where we came upon tall, wrought iron gates set in the wall. I think the gates were shut, or one*

*side may have been open. The wall continued on from the gates and disappeared round the curve of the road.*

*Behind the wall and towering above it was a cluster of tall trees. From the gates, a drive led away among these trees to what was evidently a large house. We could just see a corner of the roof above a stucco front in which I remember noticing some windows of Georgian design. The rest of the house was hidden by the branches of the trees.*

*We stood by the gates for a moment, speculating as to who lived in this large house, and I was rather surprised that I had not already heard of the owner amongst the many people who had called on my mother since our arrival in the district. This house was one of the nearest large residences to our own, and it seemed odd that the occupants had not called. However, we then turned off the road along a footpath leading away to the right to the church which was perhaps under a hundred yards off.*

*On leaving the church, we cut down through the churchyard into the fields and home, without returning to the road or to the farmyard. It was then drizzling rain. On arriving home, we discussed the big house and its possible occupants with my parents, and then thought no more of it. My pupil and I did not take the same walk again until the following spring. It was, as far as I can remember, a dull afternoon with good visibility in February or March. We walked up through the farmyard as before, and out on to the road, where, suddenly, we both stopped dead of one accord and gasped. 'Where's the wall?', we queried simultaneously. It was not there.*

*The road was flanked by nothing but a ditch, and beyond the ditch lay a wilderness of tumbled earth, weeds, mounds, all overgrown with the trees which we had seen on our first visit. We followed the road on round the bend, but there were no gates, no drive, no corner of a house to be seen. We were both very puzzled. At first, we thought that our house and wall had been pulled down since our*

*last visit. But closer inspection showed a pond and other small pools amongst the mounds where the house had been visible. It was obvious that they had been there a long time. Yet, we were both independently certain that we had seen house and wall on our previous visit, and our recollections coincided exactly.*

*I should mention that my pupil was neither imaginative nor suggestible, and that we were sufficiently good friends to permit*

*her to disagree with me firmly had she wished to do so . We then returned home, half amused, half bothered, and yet convinced that we had seen that wall and house on the occasion of our first visit. We mentioned the matter to my parents, who, though not altogether incredulous, thought that we must have been mistaken. They don't think so now.*

*Later, I made various tentative inquiries of some villagers who lived near the site of our mystery, but they had never heard of a house existing at that spot, and obviously thought my question a foolish one, so I let the matter drop. I have not yet succeeded in finding an 18th century map of that district, but I am convinced still that the house either once stood there, or else I shall meet it again somewhere else. I have often been past its site since, but I have never seen it again."*

The matter has puzzled me ever since and I would be grateful if any light could be thrown on the experience. I am not what might be called psychic and this is the only experience of the kind that I have ever had.

Miss Allington of Lady Margaret Hall Settlement, S.E. 11, the pupil alluded to in Miss Wynne's letter, wrote to me in February 1937 as follows.

*"I am sorry to say that the incident has become somewhat blurred by the lapse of time, but here is our experience as far as I can remember. Miss Wynne and I were going for the usual daily walk, and happened to choose a footpath*

*leading to Bradfield St. George. We were both new to that part of the world, and it was the first time we had taken this walk. We passed the church and Rectory, and came out on to a road, just an ordinary country by-road, and saw opposite us an old brick wall. Behind the wall could be seen trees, and obviously, a house. I can't remember the details of the house, but I remember discussing with Miss Wynne, who could be living there. Next time we took the same walk, we came to the road at the same spot, but no trace of the wall could be seen. I thought it very strange, but wondered if I had mistaken the spot, as we were comparatively new to the neighbourhood; but Miss Wynne asked me at once where the wall had got to, as she had evidently expected to see it there, as I had also. We never saw it again, and in the four years that I was in those parts, I got to know the country*

*well. There was quite definitely no wall in the neighbourhood like the one we saw, so it could not be a case of a mistake in our way."*

The vision of the Georgian mansion is unique in this collection and reminds one of the well-known 'Trianon' experience of Miss Moberley and Miss Jourdain. It may at first sight appear impossible that no recollection or tradition should exist to-day of an imposing Georgian mansion, had this formerly existed in a village. But the perpetual drift from the countryside to the towns, and the decimation of a whole generation in the Great War, are factors which have rudely shaken the former continuity of village tradition. Church registers and tombstones are often the only reliable evidence for the existence of houses and families in rural England which otherwise have lived without a history and perished without a memorial; and if research along these or other lines revealed the fact that a large house did once stand on the site indicated in the story the case would be one of singular interest and importance.

# Extract from Amateur Gardening, 20 December 1975 “A ghost story with a difference, from the Suffolk countryside, told by James Cobbold.”

“All the characters in this story are true; what really happened is open to your interpretation.

FOUR MILES southeast of Bury St Edmunds in West Suffolk is the large village of Rougham. Adjoining Rougham on its southern border lies the smaller village of Bradfield St George. From between these two villages, known as the Kingshall Street area, comes one of the most strange and weird stories of ghostly phenomena ever recorded. It concerns a house and garden that suddenly appears and just as suddenly and mysteriously disappears into oblivion again. As I was born and raised in the area, the story is an old one to me. But in 1968 a book was published by Fred Meuller, author John Harries, called *The Ghost Hunter's Road Book*. Among its tales is that from the district of my childhood. Briefly, this is John Harries' description.

In 1926 the BBC featured this story in a sound broadcast by Miss Wynn, the local school teacher, and one of her senior pupils, Ruth Allison. During a country ramble in the Kingshall Street area these two people came upon a house and garden and then, returning by the same route an hour later, there was nothing, simply nothing. The house, garden, everything had vanished without trace, leaving

just a country lane with tall hedges flanking arable fields. Mystified, they made enquiries. They could find no trace of any such property ever having existed there, nothing at all in parish records - but they did hear rumours.

I first heard this story about 1911 or 1912 from a little Rougham girl about my own age (12, I think). I laughed at her of course. Then I told my grand-mother, who kept a little general shop, what this little girl had said. Granny didn't laugh; she was very serious, and I am certain truthful, when she told me that while she was a young unmarried woman, this very thing had happened to her own father, Robert Palfrey. I would place the date at about 1860. According to her, Robert Palfrey was just putting the finishing touches to a haystack he was thatching; it was the end of a long hard day's work and no doubt he was tired. He happened to look over the narrow lane, and there stood a house and garden with roses and flower beds in full bloom.

He was a native, he knew those parts like the palm of his hand, and the whole thing had no business to be there; it didn't belong, and it hadn't been there 10 minutes before. He looked - the house was solid red brick, the flower beds were edged with the same red brick placed slantwise and half buried. There were two entrances, a quite small one about 4ft. wide and a somewhat larger one 9-10ft.; both had ornamental iron gates which were closed. He was puzzled, and not a little scared. Although it was a warm June evening the atmosphere had turned distinctly chilly, conveying the impression of something unreal.

When he arrived home, his wife and his elder son plus granny could all see Robert was not himself, "You look as if you've seen a ghost," said his wife. "Maybe I have," he replied, and then told his

story. "What about going back and having another look?" It was a light evening and off they all went to where Robert had been working. Nothing, apart from the freshly thatched haystack. Poor old man, he was laughed at and his story ridiculed. Of course it was! I also laughed when grandmother told me about it. But shortly I was to have my mind changed in no uncertain manner. I do not profess to be psychic, and I am still not a firm believer in the supernatural. But this did happen to me personally.

Next door to my grandmother lived the old butcher, Mr. George Waylett. I often used to go out with him on his Saturday delivery round through

Rougham and the Bradfields. My job was to look after the pony. We had just left one of his calls in Kingshall Street and were jogging along nicely towards Bradfield St George when "Whoosh"! There was a loud swishing noise as of air displacement, it became very cold (again the month was June), the pony reared and whinnied — it was more like a scream of sheer terror, Mr. Waylett was shot over the back of the cart; I very nearly went with him but I did manage to hang on. The pony bolted, but in those fleeting moments I most distinctly saw a double-fronted red brick house roofed with pantiles, three storeyed, of pronounced Georgian appearance. But it was those flower beds, a central oblong one flanked on either side by a circular one and smaller oblong ones in front of those three making six in all, and all of them were in full bloom. All this I can most distinctly recall.

Furthermore, it tallied to a T with what my great grand- father had seen, even to the edging bricks, the geraniums and pansies in the flower beds, plus rose trees. Having managed to stop the pony, I turned it round, for I feared for Mr. Waylett. Even as I did so, a kind of mist seemed to envelop the house, which I "Mr. Waylett was the

back could still see, and the whole thing simply disappeared — it just went. Fortunately, Mr. Waylett was not much hurt, but much scared, and so was I, and also that pony, which stood there with bulging eyes and would, not go near the spot. “That — house again,” said George, “that’s about the third time I’ve seen that happen.” But poor George had been the target for so much ridicule he wouldn’t talk about it for the simple reason nobody in the village would believe him. Despite this somewhat terrifying happening my curiosity remained intact, and ignoring a warning from George not to go near I scrambled through the hedge into the field where this house and garden had been so plainly visible. I expected to see at least crushing of the young spring corn where the house had stood. There was no trace; nothing but the vigorous young wheat, shortly to be in ear. I remember being just as scared at this sign of nothing as I had been of the actual phenomenon. Small wonder; after all I was only 12 years old.

Over the intervening years, I have heard from the local people many accounts of strong belief and just as strong disbelief. But the story persists to the present day. Only a few weeks ago a young man from the village told me that his father had seen the same happening at least twice during the past ten years. Like everyone else, he is reluctant to talk about it — ridicule is a strong prevention in such extreme cases as this. Furthermore, I have heard stories of horses exhibiting fright at this same spot for no apparent reason. Or might the reason be the extra-sensory perception animals undoubtedly possess? I remain puzzled, that being the way I prefer it.”

# THE ROUGHAM MYSTERY

Carl Grove

## INTRODUCTION

For one hundred and fifty years, the small Suffolk village of Rougham, lying four miles south-east of Bury St. Edmunds, has been the site of a curious phenomenon. Many people have reported seeing houses in places where no houses exist, and these buildings have subsequently disappeared. Most people with an interest in the unexplained — a term that I prefer to others such as "paranormal" — will be aware of this phenomenon, but usually only in the context of one particular case, the Wynne-Allington report, which dates from 1926. This case was one of the first of its type to be featured in a radio broadcast and a subsequent book, and the casual enquirer might be forgiven for considering it an isolated incident. It is not, and it needs to be considered in the context of at least twenty such cases reported not only in Rougham, but in a wider area in and around Bury. Such cases are now generally referred to as time slips, implying that the witnesses have in some sense gained access to a past period.

For many years the most famous such event known to most people was the Versailles case, which dates from 1901. Two English academic ladies visiting Paris apparently found themselves wandering the gardens of the famous palace in the time of Marie Antoinette, and later spent much time researching old documents and maps, subsequently publishing their findings in a remarkable

book, entitled *An Adventure*. [1] Considerable controversy around their claims has continued to the present day, and it is fair to say that no conventional explanation can be found that convincingly accounts for their experience. However, more careful analysis of historical records casts doubts upon the authors' own conclusions regarding the specific period that they visited.

I have been interested in the Rougham phenomena for several years, and particularly so because my wife used to live there and had a couple of similar experiences herself. On one occasion, while travelling in to work on a scooter, she saw men pushing a broken-down car a short distance ahead of her. They briefly went out of sight around a slight turn and when she reached it seconds later, there was no sign of men or car. Later she had another experience in the same place, this time involving an elderly lady cyclist.

We moved to Bury in 2003, and in one of my part-time jobs I later discovered that one of my co-workers was originally from Rougham, and that her husband had at least one witness to the mystery house in his family tree. In 2013 I decided to investigate the mystery myself. I was surprised how much information I was able to gather and was fascinated to find that evidence had also emerged suggesting, for the first time, that such events do not occur at random, but may be engendered by environmental factors that we do not yet understand.

Studies of cases in other locations, especially the extraordinary series of events that have been reported in Liverpool, have also confirmed that Rougham is by no means unique, and have suggested both a rational scheme for classifying types of time slip and led to some rather disturbing theoretical conclusions regarding such phenomena. I never guessed, when starting on this project, that I would be sucked into such deep water.

The research described here would not have been possible without the help that I received from a number of people, and I am pleased to express my gratitude to them. Phil Sage, the Rougham local historian, provided me with a mass of fascinating information based on his own researches. Many of the ideas developed in this report came directly from him. American researcher Naomi West sent me many case studies of time-related incidents involving people known to her, and in some instances puzzling experiences of her own. Chris Jensen Romer, the first person to find physical evidence of a large building in the major location for house sightings in Rougham, provided many useful leads and ideas. He also had a puzzling experience himself, right in the centre of Bury. Alan Murdie, an SPR member who was the last person to write about the Rougham case, also gave me lots of help and advice. Jean Deathridge, a researcher at the Bury Record Office, was the first person to find documentary evidence for at least one large house present in the area in Georgian times. The Record Office has opened a file on the mystery, and Jean and her colleagues have shown great interest in the topic. My local informants, Peter and Mary Cornish, are a valuable source of inside information about the local community. Thanks also to the *Amateur Gardening* magazine for providing me with a copy of the James Cobbold article; the British Society of Dowzers, especially the energy dowser Derek Woodhead. Maria Wheatley, one of the first dowzers to see a connection between earth energies and time slips, kindly briefed me on her complex energy classification system. James Two Hats, a Native American Heyoka, or seer, provided me with a mass of information about traditional approaches to time slips and other strange events, and forced me to consider a wider range of theories regarding the Rougham phenomenon. Cheryl Martin told me about her amazing experiences near a standing stone. Finally, I am more than grateful to two witnesses of the mystery house who were willing to tell me about their experiences: Jean Batram and Sandra Hardwick.

In this report I shall survey the vanishing house phenomenon in Rougham and place it in the context of similar cases reported elsewhere. Then I will discuss evidence of a link between such cases and certain little-understood natural energy forms. I shall also review theories about time-related phenomena and attempt to develop a classification system, which might be of use to other researchers. I shall also assess the significance of such phenomena in the wider context. This analysis points in a number of unexpected and somewhat alarming directions. Notes, references, and hyperlinks are indicated by numerals in brackets. This is the final version of a report that has already run through four revisions and includes yet more information from a variety of sources. My interest in time slips has not wavered, but the plan to produce a catalogue of all known cases has remained on the back burner, overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of reports - at least 500 and probably more. And it has become increasingly clear that time slips may constitute just one part of the more general Glitch in the Matrix phenomenon. Feedback on the report has been generally favourable, although a few people, influenced unduly by a very biased Wikipedia entry, have taken objection to my coverage of the torsion aspect. I can only say, "that's where the evidence takes me."

Finally, if anyone has had a time slip happen to them or someone they know, please send me an email!

[carlgrave@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carlgrave@yahoo.co.uk)

## **ABOUT ROUGHAM**

The village of Rougham lies a few miles to the south-east of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. Historically, it is probably typical of many East Anglian villages. There is much evidence of Roman activity and settlement, including the recent discovery of the burial site of a prominent Roman personage. The village church is a massive structure, suggesting that at one time the village was larger and wealthier, perhaps, than it later became. In common with other communities, the people resented the financial and other demands

of the powerful Bury St Edmunds Abbey, and after they refused to pay the Abbey's taxes monks took retribution by burning their houses to the ground, later using a clever piece of disinformation to claim that the attack was in response to an outbreak of plague. Satellite imagery on Google maps clearly shows the streets and buildings as ghostly images around the church. Resettlement took place further south and the nucleus of the village was then the north end of Kingshall Street, now the main road between Rougham and the nearby Bradfield St. George. Rougham airfield, lying to the north-west, played a major role in WWII, and afterwards mounted regular air shows and other events. The airfield is haunted, and the Tower Association is active in studying the phenomena. Not too much should be read into this activity: most English towns and villages have hauntings of various kinds and degrees. (However, later on we will see that Rougham perhaps has a greater variety of unusual phenomena than other places.) Agriculture is the basis of the local economy, and in many respects the village and its environs remain much as it was in the 1920s when the Misses Wynne and Allington set off on their famous walk.

The geology of the area is dominated by glacial deposition: this could be important in finding causal factors with regard to the alleged time slips. Obviously a glacier could pick up any and all types of rock on its journey south. In recent years, Bury has begun to encroach on the village, and the construction of the Moreton Hall estate led to the demolition of several old houses that were originally considered to be part of Rougham. New estates have been built in the north of the village and there has been sporadic building along Kingshall Street. The largest landholder is Rougham Estates, in the capable hands of the Agnew family since 1904. Google Earth has imagery for all of Kingshall Street and part of the road going on to Bradfield St. George. Google Maps also provides satellite photos of the entire area. Still pictures of the area are available on Google Earth or Geograph.

## THE WYNNE-ALLINGTON CASE

Early in 1926, a new rector and his family took up residence at Rougham Rectory. The Rev. Arthur Eckersall Wynne was born in Ballyfin, Ireland, on 13 June 1863. He and his wife, Constantia Agnes Wynne, had a daughter, Ruth Mary Wynne, born 13 June 1897 in County Dublin. They had previously lived at Rottingdean, Sussex. Ruth was a teacher; perhaps today we would call her a tutor, as she seems to have had only the one pupil, a girl called Evelyn Allington, born at Mutford, near Beccles, in 1912.

By October 1926, a pattern had developed: Evelyn's lessons took place in the mornings, and in the afternoons the two young ladies took long walks to familiarise themselves with the area. Thus it was that one autumn afternoon, they made the fateful decision to walk to the church at Bradfield St George. Leaving the churchyard, they headed south along a footpath which was pointing in roughly the right direction. Ruth Wynne later stated [2]:

*“One dull, damp afternoon, I think in October '26, we walked off through the fields to look at the church of the neighbouring village, Bradfield St. George. In order to reach the church, which we could see plainly ahead of us to the right, we had to pass through a farmyard, whence we came out on to a road. We had never previously taken this particular walk, nor did we know anything about the topography of the hamlet of Bradfield St. George. Exactly opposite us on the further side of the road and flanking it, we saw a high wall of greenish-yellow bricks. The road ran past us for a few yards, then curved away from us to the left. We walked along the road, following the brick wall round the bend, where we came upon tall, wrought iron gates set in the wall. I think the gates were shut, or one side may have been open. The wall continued on from the gates and disappeared round the curve of the road. Behind the wall and towering above it was a cluster of trees. From the gates, a drive led away among these trees to what was evidently a large house.*

*We could just see a corner of the roof above a stucco front in which I remember noticing some windows of Georgian design. The rest of the house was hidden by the branches of the trees. We stood by the gates for a moment, speculating as to who lived in this large house, and I was rather surprised that I had not already heard of the owner amongst the many people who had called on my mother since our arrival in the district. This house was one of the nearest large residences to our own, and it seemed odd that the occupants had not called. However, we then turned off the road along a footpath leading away to the right to the church which was perhaps under a hundred yards off. On leaving the church, we cut down through the churchyard into the fields and home, without returning to the road or to the farmyard. It was then drizzling rain. On arriving home, we discussed the big house and its possible occupants with my parents, and then thought no more of it.”*

Already, a certain confusion has arisen about where precisely the girls passed through the farmyard.

The area around Rougham (as it was in 1920-1 revision of the Ordnance Survey one inch map) shows the direction of travel heading down towards Moat Lane, which runs between Rougham and Rougham Green. Here there are two alternatives: one is to travel west along Moat Lane and then take another footpath directly to Bradfield. The other is to walk down Oake Lane. Both routes end by passing through a farm. Hall Farm in the first instance, Oake Farm in the second.

Phil Sage has consistently held that the two witnesses took the first route and hence that the site of the house does indeed lie in Bradfield St George. More recently, Chris Jensen Romer has claimed that the second route is more plausible, based on the fact that south of Oake Farm lies a wooded area, Colville's Grove, wherein he and his team found brick and tile fragments consistent with the ruins of an old house. Moreover, as we shall see, most

witnesses have seen mystery houses in the area near the Grove; none have reported a house actually in Bradfield St. George.

Miss Wynne continued:

*“My pupil and I did not take the same walk again until the following spring. It was, as far as I can remember, a dull afternoon with good visibility in February or March. We walked up through the farmyard as before, and out on to the road, where, suddenly, we both stopped dead of one accord and gasped. ‘Where’s the wall?’ we queried simultaneously. It was not there. The road was flanked by nothing but a ditch, and beyond the ditch lay a wilderness of tumbled earth, weeds, mounds, all overgrown with the trees which we had seen on our first visit. We followed the road on round the bend, but there were no gates, no drive, no corner of a house to be seen. We were both very puzzled.*

*At first we thought that our house and wall had’ been pulled down since our last visit. But closer inspection showed a pond and other small pools amongst the mo where the house had been visible. It was obvious that they had been there a long time.”*

Miss Wynne sent her account of the mystery house to Sir Ernest Bennett, who was presenting a programme on supernatural topics on BBC radio. He managed to locate Evelyn Allington, who confirmed her teacher's story. However, neither witness was able to explain exactly where they had seen the house, although they apparently became familiar with the area over the next four years, and often returned to that spot. This is an important factor, because many commentators on the incident have argued that the two ladies wandered miles across an unfamiliar countryside and were afterwards simply unable to find their way back to what was, in fact, just a normal building. [3]

It is clear that none of these sceptical types ever took the trouble of acquiring a map of the area. Had they done so they would have realised that, far from losing themselves in a vast terrain, the young ladies were walking a distance of only about a mile and a half as the crow flies. The church at Bradfield St. George is no longer visible from Rougham, thanks to changes in the tree line, but in 1926 there was no chance of getting lost on such a short outing. Why Ruth Wynne, a teacher, did not specify more precisely the location of the mystery house, or refer to a copy of the OS map herself, is somewhat puzzling?

Perhaps the reason why this particular case seems to have eclipsed all the other similar happenings around Rougham lies in the obvious intelligence and sincerity of the two witnesses. Their accounts, especially Miss Wynne's, are lucid, matter of fact, and patently sincere. They offered no explanations for what they saw, and no apologies for seeing it.

In the 1980s, researcher Chris Jensen Romer and his team mounted a major study of the vanishing house phenomenon in Rougham, and investigated the wooded area known as Colville's Grove. (Prior to the 20th Century, known as The Grove.) They found evidence that a large house had been built at that site: brick and tile debris, and also avenues of trees similar to that reported by the witnesses. [4] Had the two ladies come down Oake Lane they would have found that it ended in two spurs going left and right. At least one old map (1837) does show a track leading from the left hand spur to The Grove, although no house is shown there.

A somewhat older map, Hodskinson's Map of Suffolk, 1783, shows a dramatically different topography. Kingshall Street extends south only as far as Kingshall Farm and the road leading to Bradfield St George has also disappeared. Heathland extends over these locations. Most critically, there is no sign of Colville's Grove. It looks very much as if the Grove was planted at some time in the 30 years

between 1783 and 1813, as the grounds of a large house. Whether the house was built but destroyed within this period, or whether (perhaps for financial reasons), the project was abandoned, remains to be determined. Documentation does not appear to be available, and it is also puzzling that there is no local tradition about the affair.

Phil Sage has given me a few further pieces of information about the Grove. From his childhood, he recalls a time when there were a few large oak and other trees there. Why, or when they were removed is not clear. He also recalls that one elderly lady told him that when, during her childhood, she was driving the horse carrying harvested crops near the Grove, she was often warned away from the northern end, because there was a well there. The Colville name came in after 1837, presumably because its ownership passed to the Rev. N. Colville, who owned land in Rougham in 1844.

In 2013, I visited Colville's Grove myself, for a preliminary reconnaissance. Most of us have been in woodlands from time to time, but the Grove is something different. It is overgrown with every type of nettle, bramble, and thorn. Just moving around is a major undertaking. In the southern part, where I entered, the earth forms numerous mounds and ditches, very like the buried ruins of a large building. Heading north from the central part is a distinct avenue of trees; the south avenue contains a few newer trees in what would have been the driveway. There can be no doubt about their significance: nobody would consider planting two substantial avenues of trees leading just to a piece of derelict woodland. There must at one time have been a large building at that location. Perhaps not a stately home, but certainly a mansion of some kind

This evidence is convincing, but there are still reasons to doubt whether this is where Ruth Wynne and Evelyn Allington saw their Georgian house. Firstly, at the Colville's Grove location, there is a 200 yard field between the track near Oake Farm and the Grove.

When they returned to the location a few months later, they say only that they saw the same trees but no house.

Surely they would have mentioned the large field, with few or no trees, which would presumably have originally have been behind the wall? Also inconsistent is the implication that after seeing the house they went on past the gate and then found a 100 yard footpath leading to the Bradfield St George church. The latter point also raises problems even about the suggested Bradfield location. If the ladies walked left alongside the wall of the estate and then found a footpath, heading right towards the church, then the implication is that while on that footpath, the house and grounds would have been on their right. Did the wall continue along the side of that path? If it did, why did they not comment on this later? If it did not, what could they then see of the house? More unanswered questions.

More worryingly, having wandered the area trying to make sense of the whole thing, I can find no evidence of such a footpath, and if one had been there, it would have had to be much longer than a hundred yards. To reach the one footpath leading to the church, they should have turned right when leaving the farmyard! The only solution that resolves all these issues is that the witnesses must have followed the wall to the left until reaching the gate, and then decided to turn back. This makes sense in that the two ladies knew perfectly well that the church was somewhere to their right (the tower can be plainly seen from the north side of the farm buildings), and would therefore have continued in that direction until reaching the footpath. Had Miss Wynne written the words, "After examining the gates we turned back towards the church," no doubt would have attached to the matter.

Even though there remain question marks, the Wynne-Allington account is still of great significance. It is clear that the witnesses had absolutely no doubts that they were looking at a perfectly ordinary house surrounded by an old wall. There were no strange changes in

the atmosphere, no uncanny feelings experienced. In short, had they not chosen to retrace their steps the following year, they might never have realised that what they had seen was anything but normal. How often do visitors or newcomers to the Rougham area notice an attractive old house and see no reason at all to report it or make a fuss? And how often do Rougham residents see the house and have no desire to report it and open themselves to ridicule? The 20-odd cases that we know about may be just the tip of a very large iceberg.

Four or five years after the experience, Miss Allington left Rougham. Miss Wynne remained in residence. Phil Sage recalls that she took charge of the local Girl Guides at the same time that he was in the Scouts. Although he never had the chance to ask her about the house, he observed her to be a calm and sensible person, somebody not given to flights of imagination. I think that anybody rereading her account of the incident today would be inclined to agree with his conclusion.

## THE JAMES COBBOLD ARTICLE

In 1975, the gardening magazine *Amateur Gardening* published a short article [6] that dealt with the mystery house of Rougham. Its author, James Cobbold, was a local resident with an interesting tale to tell. Not only he, but also his great-grandfather, had allegedly seen the house. According to Cobbold (a pen-name), he had first heard about the vanishing house in 1911-12 from a girl of about his own age, 11 or 12. He had scoffed at her claims, which suggest, of course, that sightings of the house must have been fairly common at that time.

Later, discussing it with his grandmother, he discovered that her own father had seen it in around 1860. Robert Palfrey had been making a haystack on a warm June evening when he glanced over to see that a house had suddenly appeared on the other side of the lane (later Cobbold would locate it in the vicinity of Colville's Grove). It

was of red brick, and set in a garden with flower beds full of blooms, edged with red bricks placed slantwise. It had two wrought iron gates, one 4 ft wide, the other 9-10 ft. A sudden chill had developed. Palfrey went home (he lived, Phil Sage thinks, at the northern end of Kingshall Street) and told his young family about the house. Together they returned to the spot, but there was now no house to be seen.

Shortly after hearing this tale, Cobbold himself saw the house in one of the most dramatic sightings that we know about. George Waylett, the local pork butcher, was born in nearby Hesselton in 1851. He reared pigs, and as Phil Sage informed me, his mother used to hold the unfortunate animals while he cut their throats. Then he would bring the carcasses over to his shop in Rougham. Cobbold would accompany him on his Saturday rounds, making deliveries with his pony and trap. On another warm June day, Cobbold and Waylett were heading south down Kingshall Street when the house suddenly materialised with a loud swooshing noise. The pony uttered a kind of scream of terror and reared up, the butcher being thrown out of the back of the trap. Then it bolted, and eventually young Cobbold was able to bring it under control. In those seconds he had had a clear view of a double fronted red brick house, three storied, of Georgian appearance, and a garden comprising a large oblong flower bed flanked with two circular beds, and three smaller oblong beds in front, with pansies and geraniums all in bloom, all edged with red bricks placed slantwise, also rose trees. Then a mist enveloped the house and it faded away. Waylett scrambled to his feet and exclaimed, "That \*\*\*\*\* house! That's about the third time I've seen that happen!" Despite Waylett's warnings, the young lad could not resist entering the field and looking in vain for traces left by the mystery building.

The Cobbold sighting was given special attention by Andrew MacKenzie in his excellent book about time slips, *Adventures in Time* [7]. Basing his analysis upon research by the Bradfield St.

George historian, Leonard Aves (now deceased) and a private researcher, Capt. Armstrong (RN), MacKenzie stated that he estimated that the sighting took place in 1908, four years earlier than Cobbold's own estimate. Moreover, he said that Cobbold himself estimated the episode to last between eight and ten minutes. Both of these data clearly contradict the content of Cobbold's article. Are we to accept that Cobbold did not know his age or the date of his sighting at the time he wrote the article? It seems unlikely. And anybody reading that article with an open mind would clearly have concluded that the house would have been in view for no more than a minute or so.

When I consulted Phil Sage he came up with two interesting pieces of information that had never been revealed before. Firstly, he stated that Cobbold's real name was Palfrey, the same as that of his great-grandfather who had seen the house in the 1860s. This is problematical: if he was told of the story by his grandmother, she would have had to marry a Palfrey from a different branch of the family in order to pass the Palfrey name on to him — unlikely, perhaps, but not impossible. Secondly, he explained that Cobbold had not brought the terrified pony under control by himself; he had been aided by a nearby roadworker, who by a remarkable coincidence was also named Palfrey. Why did "Cobbold" (I shall continue to use his penname to avoid confusion) omit this latter detail from his article? If there had been a third witness to the incident it would have added considerably to the evidential value of the story. (In fact, it makes this the only three- witness sighting of the house!) The only answer must be that he wanted to keep the credit for regaining control of the pony to himself.

Following the first draft of this report, Phil located an elderly informant who said that Cobbold's real name had actually been Pat Long. Long had a local reputation as an expert with the catapult (much used by poachers in those days), and used to earn pints of beer giving demonstrations of his skill in local pubs. The Free BMD

site tells us that the only Pat Long born in Suffolk in the relevant period was Patrick James Long, whose birth was registered in the Stow South area (a district extending from south of Bradfield St George towards Stowmarket) in the December 1901 period. This date is consistent with the data in the article and makes more sense than MacKenzie's redating of the sighting. In the 1911 Census, Patrick Long, aged 9, is registered at Hessett, the home of George Waylett.

So it seems that Cobbold was born locally, as he claimed, and no doubt used to drive Waylett and his wares about regularly in the trap prior to the dramatic sighting of the house. This gives us a revised date for the incident of 1913-14. When I consulted the Free BMD site and the International Genealogical Index I came upon a minor puzzle regarding Robert Palfrey. At one stage Cobbold described his great-grandfather as a "poor old man." But Palfrey was born in Fornham All Saints ca. 1846 and died in 1868 at the age of 22! Assuming that his children were born while he was still relatively young (not unusual in those times), it makes sense to assume that his experience with the house happened rather later than 1860, perhaps nearer 1866-8.

Perhaps the most important piece of evidence to emerge from MacKenzie's study is the exact location of the house seen by Cobbold, and earlier by his great-grandfather: 30 yards into the field from Kingshall Street and roughly level with the north edge of the Grove. If you examine the 1837 map extract, you will see that a building and possibly a garden are shown at that location. As we will see later, several others have seen the house in exactly that position, which both adds weight to the reality of the phenomenon, and confirms that people do seem to be seeing a building that once existed. Unfortunately, there seems to be no independent documentary evidence about the name of the house or its ownership. The Enclosures map of 1813 shows only a small wood

at that place, so it must have been erected between 1813 and 1837, and demolished prior to the 1860s

## THE BENTLEY-DAVIES CASE

In the 1930s, Edward Bentley was working for the Bury St Edmunds men's outfitter Aubyn Davies, whose shop is still doing business today in St. John's Street. Bentley, a young teenager used to go out with his manager in the late Summer, distributing catalogues in the surrounding area. After harvest time, the farm workers had their bonuses and could afford new outfits. Davies was driving, and Bentley and another member of staff were delivering the catalogues.

It was a warm, sunny day. They were heading south down Kingshall Street, when Bentley suddenly spotted a house off to the right, and quickly told Mr. Davies that they had missed one. Davies glanced back and reversed the car, but there was now no house to be seen. Bentley put the affair down to a mental aberration, but years later, when discussing the incident with his nephew, Chris Jensen Romer, he realised that he must have seen the ghost house. He pointed out to Chris and his team the exact location of the house — near to Colville's Grove. [4]

## THE SANDRA HARDWICK CASE

Sandra Hardwick was born in Easton on the Hill, Northamptonshire, in 1962. In 1976, she was living in Rougham, her father having become Head Forester for the Estate. On a warm Summer's evening Sandra, then aged 14, went out on her bicycle to meet her friend Elaine and others at the local youth club at the North end of Kingshall Street. She had promised her parents to be back before dark, so at dusk she started back towards her home, Freewood Farm, to the east of Kingshall Green. There was no wind. She was approaching the two bungalows on the east side of Kingshall Street, when a house suddenly appeared on her right. It had become unnaturally quiet. The house was brightly illuminated, "like the sun had come

out on it on a bright summer's day." But it was now extremely cold. "I thought I was going bonkers. It was beautiful — thatched roof, windows open, and a garden with yellow and pink flowers, a fence and a gate." The curtains were blowing out of the open windows. But despite the beauty of the scene, Sandra was terrified, and she pedalled frantically away.

Even then, she was worried about how her parents would react to her experience. Her mother laughed when she related her story, but her parents could see that she was genuinely upset. Later, when the lady at the Post Office told them that other people had also seen the mystery house, they began to take it seriously. Sandra was interviewed by the historian Leonard Aves, whose attitude was openly hostile. "Are you telling me the truth, girl?" he demanded. Phil Sage was much more pleasant and receptive. [8] Phil told me that he interviewed Sandra and her mother soon after the event. Sandra had described the building as "a happy house." She noted that the house had disappeared by the time she reached the Baptist Church at the end of Kingshall Street. [9]

When I asked Sandra to specify the location of the house more precisely, she recalled that it was about halfway across the field towards the Grove, which is consistent with other reports and with the position of the house shown on the 1837 map. I asked if she was sensitive to unusual events, and she seemed to agree. She had herself seen some of the globes of light that others had observed in the area. Freewood Farm was haunted, and her mother had seen a figure walk past her sister's bedroom.

The Suffolk Journal [11] carried an article about Sandra's sighting and other strange events in the area. In it Sandra was quoted as saying,

"The windows were very small, but open with the curtains blowing, and it was a happy, carefree, friendly house. It had

a thatched roof, it was like a perfect country cottage that everyone wants to live in. But there was nobody there."

Sandra and her family had moved away in 1978, and subsequently she married and moved to Cardington. Shortly after, her father received a call from Yorkshire Television asking if she might be interested in taking part in a programme about the mystery, but she declined. Sandra is currently in poor health due to a genetic condition, but keeps in touch with affairs in Bury St. Edmunds through her sister, who had notified her when my appeal was printed in the Free Press. So she was not surprised when I eventually succeeded in contacting her on the phone. I got the impression that she was pleased that somebody was at last taking a serious interest in the vanishing house mystery. It was obvious to me, as our conversation continued, that I was speaking to someone who was totally sincere and reliable. She very kindly sent me a copy of the Suffolk Journal article, which up to now is the only published version of her account. There are some minor errors in that source, such as the assertion that Sandra was cycling home from school at the time of her sighting. I asked Sandra if there was any sign of a drive or path leading to the house and garden. She replied no: there was no obvious connection between the garden and Kingshall Street. This is interesting, because the small building shown on the 1837 map also lacks any sign of a track. Presumably at that time the occupants could access their home by just trekking across the meadow, which implies that, at that time, the field was not being used for crops.

## THE JEAN BATRAM CASE

On a cool but sunny Sunday afternoon in February 2007, Jean Batram and her husband Sydney (better known as "Johnnie"), a retired couple living in Great Barton, decided to go for a drive around some of the picturesque local villages. They headed south-east towards Rougham, which Jean had never visited before, and drove south down Kingshall Street. They had just passed the two

bungalows opposite Colville's Grove when Jean spotted, on her left side, a large Georgian house. It lay across a newly harrowed field, in front of some woods. She pointed it out to Johnnie, who glanced over briefly, and said that as it was such a lovely house she would take a closer look at it on the way back. After a pleasant drive they returned along the same route. But there was no house to be seen. Jean was puzzled and asked Johnnie if he was certain they had come out on the same road. Of course, he was certain. It is the only road running south from Rougham.

Jean became increasingly worried over the coming weeks. She felt that they should report the incident to someone, but Johnnie disagreed vehemently. He declared that he had no wish to be subjected to ridicule and would deny that he had seen the house himself. For eight months Jean agonised over the matter. Then, during a phone call to a friend of hers, Katarzyna Powell, she admitted that she had seen something very strange and didn't know what to do. To her surprise, Katarzyna replied, "Oh, you haven't seen the ghost house, have you?" Jean had had no idea that others had also witnessed the same phenomenon. Katarzyna went on to say that her daughter's boyfriend had also seen it, while out driving his van. Much against her husband's wishes, Jean then reported her story to the East Anglian Daily Times, and it was subsequently published. [12] When Phil Sage contacted her, she agreed to an interview. Phil told me that he was impressed by her account, but that Johnnie had been openly sneering at her throughout the meeting and completely refused to back her up. (Johnnie died in 2012).

After my appeal was printed in the Free Press, Jean was the first person to call me up. She was the one person I had most wanted to contact as hers is the most recent case, and like Phil, I felt that her story was extremely credible. The real problem was that while most other witnesses had seen a house on the west side of Kingshall Street, she had seen hers on the east side. Peter and Mary Cornish

had told me that there was a general disagreement amongst the Rougham community about which side the house appeared on, suggesting, perhaps, that other sightings on the east side had taken place but remained unreported. Mary's grandmother had always told her that the house was seen there.

I accompanied Jean and one of her sons to Rougham and she pointed out the place where she had seen the building. She was certain that it was a fairly large Georgian style house, and that it was standing somewhat to the right of Gypsy Lane, a narrow track which runs from Kingshall Street immediately south of the second bungalow. As Phil explained to me, Gypsy Lane is a Greenway, a path originally employed by monks to transport wood to the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds. The Lane is an area subject to unusual events: ghostly figures, strange lighting phenomena, and other interesting occurrences. On the next page is a photo I took at the location, and a copy bearing the "X" drawn by Jean to mark the exact position of the house.

Jean, although she was just recovering from an operation on her shoulder, kindly agreed to my taking a picture of her. This appears to be the first time that any of the house witnesses have been photographed.

I asked Jean to draw her impression of the house. I am impressed by this sketch because Jean has resisted the temptation to put in more detail than she could have had time to see, or to embellish the house with features (chimneys, for example) that one would expect to be present. In short, it is an honest attempt to express what she can remember. Next, I asked her to select one picture out of an array of 12 images of Georgian houses of various styles and sizes, and this is the one that she selected:

We know that there is a certain amount of evidence from maps and physical remains of some buildings in the vicinity of The Grove, or

even inside it. But is there any evidence that a building once existed at the place indicated by Jean on the other side of the street? There is indeed, and it is quite impressive. Firstly, here is some satellite imagery that clearly shows a discolouration in the field beyond Gypsy Lane in precisely that location:

Kingshall Farm, is the property of Rougham Estates. In the period prior to 1950, the tenant farmer was a Mr. Edgar, but in that year the tenancy passed to Sidney Bennett, and day to day running was then in the hands of his nephew John Bennett, who remained until 1972. Amazingly, Edgar had never used a mechanised plough, and when John Bennett commenced ploughing the area shown discoloured on the aerial photo, he dug up huge numbers of bricks. He used them for reinforcing gates and the owner of the second bungalow, Ted Rose, laid the remainder on his front drive. Presumably the yellow colouration visible today comes from mortar fragments still in the field [13], which also shows clearly a building of some kind at that location; and Phil Sage told me that he recalled a couple of farm worker's cottages being there in the 1930s.

So while there is no doubt that a building or buildings had been present on that spot, there is no evidence that it was a large Georgian house. (But it is worth noting that the bricks in the drive of the Roses' bungalow are of very good quality.) Like Sandra Newman, Jean regards herself as a sensitive person, and has seen at least three ghosts during her life. The question of the role of personal sensitivity in such cases would be difficult to resolve. Some witnesses — Cobbold, for example, who declared that he had no belief in "the supernatural" — would declaim any special abilities. People are notoriously poor at assessing their own personalities. Probably most people have unconscious psi capacity, but other elements of their make-up censor or inhibit its operation. One such element is scepticism, another might be fear of ridicule, another might be a belief system that rules out the possibility of such experiences. It is interesting that many noted psychics suffered head

injury, electric shocks, or other traumas prior to the emergence of their talent. In such cases it seems that the internal censor has been disabled by the trauma.

## OTHER SIGHTINGS OF VANISHING HOUSES

We have now examined the most important and detailed reports of the Rougham mystery house. In this section I shall deal with what might be termed the "hearsay" cases in the Rougham area, and also a couple of cases that surfaced following my appeal in the local newspaper but relating to other areas in the vicinity of Bury St Edmunds. Cobbold referred to the first time he had heard about the house, from a local girl of his own age. Presumably she had heard of a number of such incidents; shall we say a minimum of two. George Waylett had himself seen the house twice before the Cobbold-Waylett incident.

Richard Stainer, one of the callers who contacted me after my appeal, had retired to Bradfield St George about 20 years ago, with instructions to take lots of walks following an operation. On one of his strolls he met an elderly local man who informed him of a sighting that took place in the 1920s-30s. Two Bradfield lads had spent the evening in Rougham, and while cycling home down Kingshall Street saw what they described as "a priory" in the field opposite the Baptist church (i.e., to the south of Colville's Grove). They pedalled frantically home.

In Cobbold's article he cited two sightings reported to him by a young man whose father had seen the house twice between 1965 and 1975. Following my appeal, Monica Place wrote to the Bury Free Press with an account of a sighting by a co-worker, driving in to work along the road between Sicklesmere and Bury. She saw a beautiful historic house in a place where such a house did not exist. Monica Place described her as a reliable witness. This incident took place

around 1974. The writer was in the habit of visiting the Bury Record Office, and I asked the staff if they would kindly ask her to contact me; but it seems that she no longer goes in. Chris Jensen Romer reported that she was one of his teachers at school, and a very good one, so presumably the witness in this case was also a teacher. [14] Some time in the 1980s, Chris's mother told him that one of her co-workers at the local hospital had seen a mysterious cottage on the way in to work.

Another letter to the Free Press from a lady named Gillian Cooper is worth quoting in full:

Twenty-five years ago my husband and I were passing through Elveden from Thetford on the A11, very slowly due to masses of traffic, going towards the Mildenhall roundabout, when to our surprise, on the left in the vicinity opposite the high column, we saw a massive Georgian mansion complete with pillars and open iron gates, driveway ending up with a circle effect, and high steps going up towards the house on either side - a fantastic sight, 200 yards from the road. I remarked to my husband, 'we've never seen that before on this road,' and guess what, we've never seen it since, and we have driven that road many times over the years. Well, we both saw it. [15]

I have made several attempts to contact Mrs Cooper through the Bury Free Press , without response. This is unfortunate, because this is clearly a major incident, and the witness's description is quite detailed. There is a huge house in the area known as Elveden Hall, and Chris suggested that the witnesses might have made a simple mistake. On reflection, I discounted this theory for the following reasons:

- The description of the house seen by the couple is wholly inconsistent with the rather chaotic architecture of the Hall. There is

no mention of the most striking feature of that building, namely the huge central dome.

- The Hall has two separate driveways coming in and joining just before the front of the house, not one drive splitting in two.
- The Hall has no high steps, nor any steps at all to speak of.
- It is situated in the Elveden village centre, and is mostly hidden behind other buildings.
- It lies about 4 km from the War Memorial, the monument mentioned by the writer.

In April 2014, shortly after our meeting, Jean Batram returned to Rougham to post notices about a friend's missing cat. (It was found, safe and sound, seven weeks later.) Whilst so engaged she chatted with an elderly local man walking his dog, and casually asked him whether he had heard of the vanishing house. "Yes, " he replied, "but a lot of the people in Rougham say they've never seen it. I've only seen it twice ." It turned out that when he first saw it, he had assumed that it was newly built.

I have already mentioned the sighting by Jean's friend Katarzyna's daughter's boyfriend. I have tried to check into this, but Katarzyna has since died and Jean has no contact details for her daughter Samantha. However, she apparently lives nearby and Jean has seen her occasionally in Bury, so it remains possible that we might get a more detailed account one day.

Finally, another delightful story from Phil Sage. It seems that over the years, a prominent member of the local Church Committee had constantly derided stories about the mystery house and openly criticised Phil for taking an interest in them. Suddenly he became silent on the issue, and never returned to it. As a local shopkeeper informed Phil, this was because he himself had witnessed the phenomenon...

In all, there seem to have been at least twenty reports of sightings of the house since 1860. In my view, the number of sightings that have gone unreported in the same period is probably far greater. Almost everybody from Rougham knows someone who has seen the house, or knows of someone, but details are usually lacking. And visitors or people driving through may well have seen it (or one of the houses, for it is now clear that there are more than one) but thought it nothing out of the ordinary.

## OTHER HAPPENINGS IN ROUGHAM

The disappearing houses — and gardens — are not the only puzzling phenomena in the Rougham area. There seem to be several locations where strange things happen.

North of the village centre my wife, then Mrs Maureen Green, was riding her scooter into Bury to work her afternoon shift at the St Edmundsbury nursing home. It was about 12.45 pm sometime between 1980 and 1985. She had just passed the exit road from the A14 heading along Blackthorpe. when she spotted ahead of her three or four men pushing a Mini, which had apparently broken down. As she approached them they passed out of sight around a slight curve. A few seconds later, she followed them and had a clear view of the road ahead. But there was no sign of the car or the men. On another occasion, at the same time and place, she saw an elderly lady on a bicycle ahead of her, and the same thing happened. On a visit to the area, I determined that there was a gap in the hedge just beyond the curve. But the men would have needed to push the car up a steep bank to reach it and doing that in a few seconds would have been impossible. The lady cyclist could have lifted her bike up the verge and maybe just reached the gap and hidden behind the hedge before Maureen got there — although why she should want to do that is rather a mystery.

The slight bend is about 100 yards away. At 30 mph, just 6 or 7 seconds ahead.

One of the callers who replied to my appeal was a lady called Jackie Humfrey. She had not seen the vanishing house, but as she was leaving the A14 a few years ago (in the Blackthorpe area) she saw ahead of her a cyclist, wearing a beret, like a French onion seller. As she watched, he disappeared in a kind of blue light. Jackie is a very sensitive person, who has often seen ghosts and had other experiences relevant to the happenings in Bury, as we shall see later. Neither Jackie nor Maureen ever reported their experiences to anyone, and this is the first time that they have been published.

Also, in the Blackthorpe area, Joy Mara, a gamekeeper's wife, was in the kitchen with her two retrievers, when she sensed some kind of energy enter the room. The dogs bared their teeth and their eyes followed something that Joy could not see around the kitchen and into the next room. The sense of some dangerous presence then ceased.

Another focus for strange events is Gypsy Lane, the track leading off Kingshall Street immediately south of the two bungalows. The Rose family, who have lived in the second bungalow for many years, have had many occurrences to report. On one occasion, Edith Rose was crocheting in the living room that is right alongside the Lane. Suddenly half of the room became intensely black. When she placed her hand inside the dark zone she could no longer see it. It is very hard to account for such a phenomenon in any normal physical terms, and I had never come upon it before, although I have since found two similar cases. Another time, several monks were seen walking past the living room window. Shadowy figures were often seen coming up the front path, always at dinner time. The Roses' horse would refuse to walk past a certain point on Gypsy Lane. Often horses and ponies would break free and run off in a panic.

Bob and Win Barker, who lived in a house at the northern end of White Horse Lane, about 400 yards south of the Grove, often independently observed balls of light in their bedroom. The lights

would emerge from a wardrobe on the right of the room and travel to the left, about two feet below the ceiling, until it disappeared into another bedroom. The house has since been sold and I have been unable to find if the lights are still being seen. [ 11 ]

An elderly lady and her two daughters, who live in the main part of the village, have a good view of the fields leading up to the Church. On many occasions they have witnessed a strange arc of light come up out of the ground and form a kind of rainbow. The light persists for a considerable period, but they have been afraid to mention it to others. It was last seen in 2011. Years ago, when Rougham extended to what is now Moreton Hall, the railway line ran at ground level and there was a level crossing where today a small bridge exists. One of the callers responding to my appeal in the Free Press, a gentleman named Peter Webb, told me of a rather sinister experience that his father had at that spot. Cycling over the crossing one evening, Mr Webb had seen what looked like a body lying about 50 yards down the track. It seemed as if a terrible accident had taken place. Dismounting, he walked towards the body, only for it to disappear before he could reach it.

Phil himself had a most interesting experience in 1942. He and his wife had just moved into a cottage near the Bennet Arms in Rougham, and he was home on extended leave when one evening a noise on the stairs attracted his attention. His baby daughter was in her cot on the landing, about six steps up. Standing over her was an old lady, wearing a knitted hat. As he watched, with his eyes popping out, the figure faded away towards the window. He was reluctant to worry his wife by telling her about this but mentioned it a few days later to an elderly neighbour three doors away. "Oh, that's nothing to worry about," she declared. "That's just old Millie, looking after your baby. She's often around here."

One evening in the mid-1980s, a young lady called Caroline Boast was taking her younger sister Amanda on a drive to celebrate

passing her driving test. As they drove along Blackthorpe, a man clad in Victorian clothes, with a dog on a lead, stepped into the road. Perhaps 100 yards farther along, the same man and dog repeated the same sequence of movements. [Coincidentally, the girls' great uncle David Boast was gamekeeper at Rendlesham Forest and saw the descent of the famous UFO. His father George, the previous gamekeeper, once saw in the forest a strange vortex snapping off tree branches as it passed.]

## THE TIME SLIP PHENOMENON

I am not sure when the term "time slip" was first used, although the phenomenon has been recognised at least since the Versailles case, and many historical mysteries going back to Biblical times could easily be reinterpreted as varieties of the same phenomenon. The first book to deal directly (though not exclusively) with time slip phenomena was certainly Joan Forman's *The Mask of Time* [16]. The author brought together many new cases, mostly sent to her in response to a public appeal. The most striking incident to emerge was the case of Mr Squirrel, who in 1973 visited a shop in Great Yarmouth which he had heard could supply small envelopes for his coin collection. The interior of the shop seemed somewhat old-fashioned, as did the clothing worn by the shop-assistant. He was also puzzled by the complete silence inside. When he explained what he wanted, she produced a box containing plastic packets, commenting oddly that "We sell a lot of these to the men on the sailing-ships to put fish-hooks in." The price was a shilling — pre-decimal currency - and when he paid her with decimal coinage she stared at it with astonishment. Of course, when he returned the following week to buy more, the cobblestones that had been outside the shop had gone and the shop itself was totally different. It did not sell the plastic envelopes and the 50-year-old assistant denied that a younger lady ever worked there. Mr Squirrel was confused. Within a few days the paper bag containing the envelopes had disintegrated, and the envelopes had turned brown but still survived.

Joan Forman contacted the manufacturers who said that the cellulose appeared to have been made on one of their production lines, and that judging by its appearance it might be 10-15 years old. That type of plastic was first produced around 1920.

Andrew MacKenzie's *Adventures in Time* was the first book to be devoted entirely to time slip cases. In addition to a section on Rougham and a long account of the Moberly-Jourdain case, it contained a fascinating case from Suffolk. Three young cadets on a training exercise had entered the village of Kersey and found it to be as it was during the Middle Ages, when it had been ravaged by the plague. Research confirmed the presence of a butcher's shop at the precise place they claimed to have seen it, and other details in their story. Two of the witnesses were country lads, and both had known immediately that something was wrong. The third was a Cockney who seems to have assumed that this was just how country folk lived!

In her books *Time Storms* [17] and *Supernatural Pennines* [18] Jenny Randles includes a number of incidents that clearly fall into the time slip category. In recent years there seems to have been almost an epidemic of time slips. When I searched for them systematically online, I soon had nearly 500 pages of information, some of it rehashing older cases, but mostly new personal experiences. The internet has provided ordinary people with time-related experiences a great opportunity to come forward and put them on the record. Moreover, because accounts in books have been filtered by their authors to concentrate on the most exciting, most evidential, and least ambiguous cases, the tales on the net give us a far more valid sample of the whole range of experiences. Without doubt, the time slip capital of the world is Liverpool - to be precise Liverpool city centre, in an area around Bold Street. In recent years, the numbers of highly significant cases have grown exponentially. Thanks to local journalist Tom Siemen and also Parascience, a small research group [19], a body of data has been

formed which catalogues the evolution of a most remarkable phenomenon. Here is a selection of some of the most striking events:

- A young lady about to eat her lunch on a bench opposite Waterstones in Bold Street noticed that the ambient light level had suddenly dropped. The area suddenly seemed less busy than normal for the time of day. A smartly dressed man already on the bench started to chat to her casually. She noticed that he was dressed in clothes more typical of the 1950s. As he asked her a question, she leaned forwards to throw her sandwich wrapper in a rubbish bin, replying at the same time. When she sat up, he had disappeared. The sun was again bright, and the area crowded.
- Mrs S, taking her 4-year-old daughter in her pushchair for a walk in Thing wall, noticed that she was walking on cobblestones. Outside a cottage on her right side was an old man smoking a pipe; they nodded to each other as she went by. More old cottages. At the end of the lane, a little girl wearing old fashioned clothing gave her an odd look and ran into a cottage. Beyond the gate was a meadow, so Mrs S turned back, passing all the cottages and again exchanging nods with the old chap. Two months later Mrs S returned to show her mother the picturesque area, but the cobbles had gone, the old man's cottage was derelict, the other cottages had disappeared, and the "meadow" was an estate of bungalows. Eight years later, involved in a dispute over a footpath, Mrs S consulted the 1830 tithe map, and found on it all the old buildings she had seen. A pile of rubble she had also seen was found to be the remains of Thingwall Mill, which had been destroyed in a hurricane.
- 17-year-old Imogen went to the city centre to buy clothes for her older sister's new baby. A new branch of Mothercare had opened on the corner of Lord Street, and she went in and soon collected a number of excellent articles, all at bargain prices. But when Imogen tried to pay for them with her credit card, the shop assistant stared

at it suspiciously and went to get her line manager, who in turn examined it closely then declared, "We don't take these, love." Imogen wandered around replacing the clothes and went home to tell her mother what had happened. But her mother was certain that Mothercare had moved away, because her own bank, HSBC, had taken over the site. Neither would back down, so the next day they went there together... and of course, there was no Mothercare.

- In 2006, a petty thief named Sean was chased down Hanover Street by a security guard. He made the mistake of running into Brooks Alley, a dead end. Sean felt a sensation of tightness in his chest as he waited for the guard to enter the alley. But the guard did not appear, and Sean ventured back into Hanover Street. But things had changed. Clothing styles, background details, and cars were all old fashioned. Sean couldn't get a signal for his mobile phone. He realised that he was in a past time and began to panic. He ran back to the alley then walked to a news kiosk near Central Station and looked at the front page of the Daily Post. It was dated 18 May 1967. He hurried up the road and suddenly his mobile regained a signal. Now he was back in familiar surroundings, but at the other end of Ranelagh Street the people were still in 1967. Tom Slemen interviewed Sean four times, and he stuck to his story. The guard who had chased him into the alley said he had literally vanished into thin air.

To anyone who is perhaps unaware of the extent and strangeness of the time slip phenomenon, cases like the above will probably come as something of a shock. Either such events have been happening for the last century or more, and witnesses have been unable or unwilling to report them, or for some reason or other they are on the increase. If they are on the increase, then we need to make studying and understanding them a priority, because the effects of random incursions into the past could have unpredictable and serious consequences in the present and future.

## Theories of Time Slips

There are various possible explanations for the origins and nature of the events that we are studying, none of which are entirely satisfactory. In an attempt to be comprehensive I shall include some frankly implausible notions, but who knows which theory or combination of theories comes closest to explaining the facts? Is "time slip" the best general description for the phenomenon anyway? Not the least of our problems is that no-one knows what time is — we can measure it with great accuracy, use it in our equations, and spend our whole lives under its influence, without having the least idea about its nature or origin.

### Hoax

Occasionally, during my surveys of internet time slip data, I have come across a story that sounds dubious in some way. Most seem entirely genuine, although I don't want anyone to take my word for this — please download some of these data yourself and come to your own conclusions about them. While hoaxers may have some motive in putting over tales of alien abduction or the like, brief and ambiguous temporal anomalies don't seem exciting enough to gain the publicity that they crave. How often do such accounts make it into the national newspapers?

In Rougham, most witnesses are reluctant to come forward with stories that might bring ridicule upon them. The only story I have come across that is an obvious fake, is clearly a journalistic invention: the claim that the daughter of a Rector in the 1990s saw the house and then ran sobbing into the Bennet Arms. The current Rector tells me that his predecessor had no children at all! Later, Phil Sage indicated that this story had been current in the 1930s, applied to Miss Wynne. No doubt it remains in some newspaper file ready for future use. A YouTube video purporting to show the vanishing house is hopelessly unconvincing and barely deserves mention.

## Mistakes

People may enter an area new to them, get confused over their exact location, and when trying to retrace their steps, become convinced that the lovely house that they saw before has now mysteriously disappeared. In some instances, this explanation has been confirmed, but in most cases it is hard to justify. Moreover, in some cases, witnesses have returned to the place where they saw a building and found it in ruins. In Rougham, this explanation is clearly inadequate: the area is altogether too small.

## Hallucination

This can be caused by a variety of psychological states and factors — mental instability, drink, drugs, stress, sleep deprivation, and perhaps as yet unknown environmental factors. It is hard to see how this theory might apply in Rougham, especially since many witnesses were not alone. However, an SPR researcher, Guy Lambert, has proposed a combination theory for time slips invoking both ESP and hallucination. MacKenzie has discussed this in the following words (the emphasis is mine):

*“If we assume, as I feel we must, that all those who took part in the experiences related here were hallucinated, it seems that the trancelike state is often accompanied by feelings of depression, eeriness and a marked sense of silence... such experiences may be shared; a significant proportion of those given here may be classified as collective hallucinations.” [7, p.63]*

Aside from the unusual silence, which has (though rarely) been noted in Rougham, this set of symptoms clearly fails to apply to the vanishing house phenomenon. Lambert originally developed this approach in an analysis of the Versailles case, and even in that instance, it seems to me, the theory falls down. The two witnesses in that case were certain that the layout of paths that they

encountered during their adventures differed dramatically from that which they later found to be the contemporary layout of the gardens. If that is the case, how could they have followed the older routes in an ESP-hallucinated state without walking into walls, trees, and other obstructions? How, indeed, could they have crossed a bridge lying across a small ravine and pool, if it no longer existed?

In fact, I feel that only one of the incidents discussed in MacKenzie's book can be so explained — "A dangerous walk on the cliffs," [7, chap. 10] in which a man hallucinated a past view of cliff-top scenery and hence came close to falling off a ledge. (And in a separate phase of that case, the witness had walked across a bay which in contemporary time would have been submerged under a high tide.) In a modern city centre such as Liverpool, people wandering about in a trancelike state would soon get run over or otherwise injured!

### **Visions of the Past**

A. Through personal capacities such as clairvoyance and Remote Viewing (The US Army remote viewers were said to be able to view past events as well as present locations.)

B. Through the ability to read information embedded within the physical environment, also known as the Stone Tape theory (from Nigel Kneale's BBC TV play of the same name) or Psychometry. This information may relate to houses that once were known to exist in a given area, or to houses that somebody wanted to build at some time, but never managed to do.

C. Through telepathic contact with the minds of deceased people who live in the past or are reluctant to accept the fact of their passing.

D. Through electro-magnetic (EM) effects in the physical environment which affect the nervous system directly, either inducing hallucinations or blocking the working of the internal censor that was referred to previously.

E. Through access to memory of previous incarnations.

F. By identification with people in the past through some kind of telepathic process.

G. Through access to the so-called "Akashic Record," the occult notion that there is a kind of universal databank existing in another dimension.

### **Time Slip**

A spontaneous brief journey into the past, or (rarely) the future.

### **Time Warp**

Some kind of interaction between two different time periods. This explanation might, perhaps, fit the Moberly-Jourdain experiences, which contains elements of both present and past. Physical and visual interactions in the past and more subtle signals from the present.

### **Parallel Universe**

Glimpses of another dimension or parallel universe in which the house, or other feature, still exists in present time. Such occurrences are commonly referred to as reality shifts, and may be purely minor changes, such as a piece of furniture moving to a new position, or an ornament changing colour. Timelines Starfire Tor has developed a theory of time shifts, along with the notion that at critical times people can be shifted from one timeline to another. These are not parallel universes but individual lives differing in frequency from one to another, but all co-existing in a single universe. Someone might die in one timeline but continue to live in another.

### **Virtual Reality**

Brian Whitworth, a mathematics and computer science specialist at Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand, has argued that the

physical universe may actually be a virtual model, rather like *The Matrix* in the film of the same name, or a kind of illusion (as claimed by many mystics and sages). If this is the case, many inexplicable events might be the result of programming errors of various kinds — not just time slips, but those minor everyday puzzles (objects disappearing then reappearing, things moving by themselves etc.) now described by some theorists as "reality shifts," or more pointedly, "glitches in the Matrix."

## Types of Time Slip

In order to make a start in organising the mass of material now available regarding time slip phenomena, I have put together a simple classification system.

**Type 1** — A purely visual, hazy or blurred impression of a past place, structure, or event.

**Type 2** — A sharp, totally realistic image of something from the past. Witnesses can see it and be unaware that it is anything other than an ordinary perception.

**Type 3** - The witness enters a past environment and is able to move about within it but can make no physical contact with it. People in the environment seem unaware of the witness's presence.

**Type 4** — The witness seems to physically enter the past environment, can touch, pick up, and carry objects from that environment. The witness can communicate verbally with people in that environment and receive replies.

Clearly Type 1 is a default category, which could include retrocognition, waking dreams and visions, psychometry, and so on. But, taking the events at Liverpool as a model.

Types 2-4 may actually be stages in the development of an authentic time-travel experience. Events at Rougham have so far remained at

Stage 2, but one wonders what might have happened had the Misses Wynne and Allington decided to wander through the wrought iron gate and knock on the door of the Georgian house... (The witnesses of the Kersey time slip also still worry what would have happened had they knocked on some of the doors of the houses and shops in that village.)

My preliminary trials of the system have so far come up with the surprising result that Type 4 cases are no longer rare. In fact, they are now almost commonplace. It is also worth noting that a given case may begin by appearing to be Type 2, but then characteristics of Types 3 or 4 may emerge, depending on the actions of the witnesses. The only other findings of note, not particularly relevant in Rougham, are (1) the confirmation that time slips into the future are still extremely uncommon, and when they do occur they remain in the Type 2 class.

People are rarely seen. This is notable, because it shows that the classification of time slips into the past by the Society for Psychical Research as “retrocognition,” to contrast with precognition, is inappropriate. Time slips and visions of the future or past are two separate phenomena. And (2), even rarer are cases in which the witnesses, who may be distressed to find themselves in the wrong time, are given assistance by somebody who seems to be aware of their predicament and is able to direct them back to their own time.

Vanishing houses are by no means unique to Rougham, but it is clear that in terms of sheer numbers of sightings, this locality is in a class of its own. Now we have an idea where the Rougham mystery stands in relation to other time- related phenomena. But, as we shall see, in contrast to other cases, Rougham has also provided pointers in the direction of a possible causative mechanism involved in the generation of time slips.

## STRANGE ENERGIES

Most of the mystery houses seen in Rougham appear in the vicinity of Colville's Grove, either nearby at the end of Gypsy Lane, or in the same field, just in front of it. Phil Sage is firmly of the opinion that the Grove is the source of some unknown energy, and that it is this energy that is responsible for all the strange phenomena going on. Phil first encountered the Grove as a young man, when he decided to train as a game- keeper. His mentor, an older man with much experience in the field, took him to the Grove to catch rabbits. After a while, however, the old gamekeeper grew uneasy, and he suddenly said: "Come on boy, I want to get out of this place. There's something not right here." Phil admitted that he himself disliked being there. Later, when training dogs, he found that they all reacted with fear and aggression when he tried to make them enter it.

Perhaps because it was a blazing hot day when I visited the Grove myself, or perhaps because I am insensitive in some way, I didn't feel anything sinister. It is a physically demanding place, overgrown with everything thorny and brambly. It reminded me of how one might imagine the situation around the castle where Sleeping Beauty was imprisoned. But there was something a little odd, which only came to me quite recently. I can't remember hearing any birdsong while I was there.

Later on Phil was told by members of a family whose ancestors had lived near the Grove, three generations ago, that a witches' coven used to meet there. In the 1970s, Phil volunteered to help archaeologists search for Roman artefacts in the field near the Grove. (Oddly enough, I myself found a piece of stone and cement that I thought might be Roman at the edge of that field.) He was using a metal detector on a lovely afternoon in early summer, working his way along the western side of the Grove. He had already found several items. His headphones were set on "Deep Search," and suddenly he could hear a rushing noise. When he pulled them

off he realised that the sound was coming from behind him. He turned to see some kind of vortex, a circular motion like a wheel, sucking in branches and material, heading towards him. He didn't move. The vortex swept past him, and in that instant he felt terrible. It continued on and when it reached the end of the Grove everything just went quiet. Phil remained in a shaken state for some time afterwards. When I asked Phil if he thought it might have been attracted by his metal detector, he agreed that this was possible.

Later, two boys scrumping apples along a hedge in Bradfield St George, near where Phil believes the two ladies saw the house in 1926, heard a rushing wind and saw something similar whirling around with sticks suspended in it. It went past them. One wonders if the rushing noise, "as if of air displacement," heard by Cobbold, connects in some way with the vortex phenomenon. If so, is it the case that the vortex is a factor in the generation of a time slip? If it is, this is a significant clue. It also reminds us of the similar vortex seen by George Boast, the gamekeeper at Rendlesham in the 1930s.

A friend of Phil's, from Woodbridge, was a dowser, and Phil asked him to see if he could "pick up" any unusual energies around the Grove. What happened next, besides being a piece of high drama, eventually led to a breakthrough in my investigation. Phil's friend found three places near the Grove where very strong energy was emerging. At the third, and most powerful, his dowsing rod (a metal one) was thrown out of his hands and he became agitated. He had suffered from cardiac problems and had got a pacemaker; this was now going crazy. Phil helped him back to his car and placed one of his heart tablets under his tongue. After some coffee from a thermos, he slowly recovered. "Boy oh boy," he declared. "I had a funny feeling. It came up my detector. I'm not going there again!" By coincidence, Phil's friend later came across an old map (very expensive) in a shop in the West Country which showed the Rougham area. There was a dark mark within the Grove,

presumably a building. He tried, unsuccessfully it seems, to photograph it.

A few years ago, the couple who ran the Rougham post office/shop took a holiday, and it was arranged that another husband and wife team would take over while they were away. The wife had an interest in unusual phenomena, and heard about Phil's researches. One day she invited him to go into the back of the shop to discuss something. Phil was relieved that her husband was also there. It seemed that, having learned about the strange goings-on near the Grove, the lady wanted Phil to take her there for a visit. She had had some experiences of her own, so was clearly a sensitive. Her husband encouraged Phil to agree, and one evening they entered the Grove and followed a path through it. (By the time I went there, any signs of formal pathways had long gone.) The lady began to act very strangely; she was clearly disturbed. Something had badly affected her, and she was frightened and sweating profusely. She asked Phil to get her out immediately, but he was himself similarly affected. They managed to help each other leave the wood. "There's something here we don't understand!" she declared. Later she told him that she had once had a similar experience in the Falklands, when she had travelled with the UK armed forces as an interpreter.

Jackie Humfrey, another sensitive, who had had the encounter with the disappearing cyclist on the motorway exit near Blackthorpe, also had a similar experience in West Stow, to the NW of Bury. She explained, "The energy wells up from the earth, it drains you and takes you over." On this occasion all sound ceased and it seemed that time had stopped', she was paralysed for a while and felt sick and dizzy for hours afterwards. All these accounts lead us to some firm conclusions:

1. The Grove is at the centre of a zone in which some kind of strange energy holds sway. It can cause people to see visions of the past, but it can also be dangerous if approached in the wrong way, or at

the wrong time. It can make people feel sick, dizzy, and weak, sometimes for hours. Many animals are afraid of it.

2. This energy can be perceived by sensitive people, and detected using the methods of dowsing. Maybe the witch coven had detected it and were trying to employ it for their own purposes.

3. The energy seems to come up from the earth, and may manifest in the form of a vortex. But ghosts, shadows, and globes and arcs of light have also been observed.

These data suggest several possible lines of enquiry. The one that I guessed might be most productive was dowsing. In the event, it exceeded all my expectations.

## Dowsing

I had a basic knowledge of dowsing, gleaned from a few books that I had accumulated the over the years. As most people know, dowsing is a traditional method of finding water and other minerals hidden, sometimes deeply, underground. Dowsers employ a wide variety of aids, of which the best known are Y-shaped twigs, L-shaped wires, and the pendulum. The theory is that these tools amplify slight unconscious movements made by the operator in response to some subtle stimulus. But for hundreds of years the nature of this stimulus has remained a mystery. The assumption is that some kind of ESP is at work. If dowsing is a form of ESP, it must certainly be regarded as one of the most reliable manifestations of it. There is a clear parallel with remote viewing, the form of clairvoyance developed at the Stanford Research Institute and employed for military intelligence uses from the 1970s onwards. Both generate useful data, provided that the targets are clearly defined and objective feedback is available. Dowsers such as Evelyn Penrose [20], who was able to dowse using just her hands, or by map, have often made a good living by working for large mining corporations, locating deposits of valuable minerals. The US Army's

remote viewers reportedly generated a lot of useful intelligence about Soviet activities during the Cold War. And dowsing, under the name biolocation, was also used extensively inside the USSR.

In both cases though where feedback was unavailable, wayward results may be obtained. When remote viewers are asked to view UFOs or aliens, they often come up with rather nonsensical "findings." And when dowsers try to locate "earth energies," each individual expert comes up with results that are unique to him (or her). For this reason, the topic is highly controversial within the dowsing community. [21] One dowser whose findings have continued to command respect is Guy Underwood, who summarised his views in a very interesting book, *The Pattern of the Past*. Briefly, Underwood's contention was that dowsers are not detecting earth energy so much as distortions in that energy created by underground obstructions. Using an especially sensitive detector of his own design, he identified several basic patterns of what he termed geodetic lines.

The Water Line, comprised three narrow bands. The Track Line consisted of two parallel sets of three narrow lines, and Aquastats were made up of two groups of two triple lines. Various other more complex, and less linear, lines were also identified. What is of particular interest is the obvious connection between certain of these lines and various prehistoric and other locations (this correlation had been first noted by dowsers in the 1930s). Many standing stones, henges, and churches had clear and identifiable relationships to geodetic lines. [22]

Whether you call them geodetic lines, earth energy lines, or something else, something seems to exist that can be detected by the methods of dowsing. Phil Sage called me one day with a fresh piece of dowsing information. An article had just appeared in the magazine of nearby Rushbrooke parish. It seemed that one of these energy lines goes through Rushbrooke church, not far from

Rougham, and it is called the Mary line. Moreover, the Mary line continues towards Woolpit and might go near (or even through!) Colville's Grove. He gave me a reference to check out: a book by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst entitled *The Sun and the Serpent*. The book has been long out of print but I managed to get a copy. [23] The authors decided to use dowsing to survey the Michael ley line, which runs from St Michael's Mount in the SW of England to the East Anglian coast, passing through many significant sites such as Glastonbury and Bury St Edmunds. They began by detecting an energy line in the right position and heading along the bearing of the ley. But soon it began to diverge from the ley, and moved across the country in a serpentine fashion. At Avebury they found a second line of energy, of similar power to the Michael current, but of a more gentle, feminine quality; this they named the Mary line. Going back to the start they commenced mapping the Mary line as well. So at the end of their project, they had mapped two serpentine currents of energy winding their way across the country and contacting many prehistoric sites and various churches en route. Often they crossed, but unusually, in Bury, they approached each other and at a point in the Abbey ruins briefly "kissed," then moved apart.

It appears that Phil Sage, or his informant, was wrong in claiming that the Mary current runs down to Rougham — it is the Michael line. It skirts the Grove to the south but passes right through the site of the 1926 sighting in Bradfield. It also runs parallel to the Sicklesmere Road, where a house was seen by Monica Place's associate. On its way from Bury, the Michael current was said to leave the Abbey ruins, go through the Norman Tower, and on to a Masonic lodge in Charter Square. It so happens that one of my associates, Chris Jensen Romer [the editor of this journal], recently posted on his website an account of a strange experience he had as a teenager at that exact location. He was with a school friend between classes and saw a group of children in the uniform of his middle school, St

James, near the West Front of St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Among them he saw his younger self. Very soon he began to feel extremely ill: sick, dizzy, and a severe headache, so had to be sent home. Much later he decided that he must have experienced some kind of hallucination caused by an attack of migraine. It now seems more likely that he really did see his younger self in a classic time slip, and afterwards suffered the same symptoms that others have reported after an encounter with the mysterious energy source. [24]

After leaving the Bury area, the line goes through Woolpit, famous for the "Green Children" mystery.

The Michael current is said to pass through the Norman Tower on the right, and then crosses the road into Charter Square. After *reading The Sun and the Serpent*, I was left with extremely mixed feelings. On one hand, I felt that the authors' findings were important and seemingly relevant to the odd happenings in Rougham. Hamish Miller, in particular, was highly regarded amongst the dowsing community. On the other, I wondered whether other dowsers, independently following the same path (and unaware of the Miller-Broadhurst results), would come up with the same findings.

Moreover, I have a strong bias against the kind of New Age thinking that is continually expressed in the book. My view is that our remote ancestors possessed a natural sensitivity to all kinds of energies. Lacking our sophisticated thinking abilities, which in modern cultures generates a continuous mental noise, there was nothing to cloud their perceptions. Nor was there, it seems, any kind of cultural consensus that such perceptions were foolish, or not scientifically acceptable, or the work of the devil. They probably required no special tools to detect the earth energies, which they no doubt regarded as a natural part of daily life, and nothing remarkable. At some time they must have realised that the energies could be intensified or utilised in various ways by erecting stone pillars at critical points; and that perhaps a circle of such stones would focus

or concentrate the energy for particular purposes. Is it possible that through time slips associated with the earth energies, as seems to be the case at Rougham, they were able to meet and talk to their long-dead ancestors?

All over the world, cultures exist today with a concept of what are now called Subtle Energies. While there are various differences between the characteristics and uses of these energies, the pervasiveness of this concept is striking. We are most familiar, perhaps, with Chi (Qi or Ki), the Oriental notion of life force, particularly as manifested in the internal Martial Arts. [25] Using chi, the expert can overcome more powerful opponents, achieve physically inexplicable results, and even kill using the delayed action technique known as Dim Mak. He can strengthen weak and vulnerable parts of his body (the Iron Shirt technique) and even project chi into inanimate objects; one demonstration of this given by the Shaolin Monks involves impressing a small flat needle with chi, then hurling it through a reinforced glass fish tank containing water (but no fish). Knowing how quickly water slows even bullets fired at close range, this is a genuinely mystifying performance. The practice of Ching Gung is said to enable the martial artist to reduce his weight, enabling him to leap 10 or 20 feet in the air! And chi can also be used to heal, as is known through Reiki. It is worth noting that one American dowsing group states firmly that the earth energy is chi. Unfortunately, this group feels obliged to travel the world purifying corrupt or dark forms of chi by leaving crystals of various kinds embedded in, or stuck to, locally sacred objects or places.

Another subtle energy, although it is often described as a substance, is Baraka, the "special blessing" of Middle Eastern esoteric groups. This is associated with certain metals (copper, brass), plant products (cardamom seeds), and places. It can be stored for future use, and while the pyramid was once regarded as the ideal shape for this purpose, it has since been superseded by the octagonal form. [26] It may be a coincidence, but many of the churches laying in the path

of the Mary and Michael energy streams were found by Miller and Broadhurst to have octagonal towers or other features.

One physicist who has written extensively upon subtle energies is William Tiller. He has also developed various devices claimed to employ such energy. [27] Unfortunately, he is also a believer in New Age ideas, which makes some of his work rather controversial. Evelyn Penrose, the dowser, mentions in her autobiography that she once asked a noted Yogi about the great force emanating from the earth, and whether it could be used to kill, showing him "a quick, but simple gesture of one hand" by which she felt this could be achieved. He was horrified that she had gained access to what, for him, was clearly a terrible secret. [20, p. 181] So, if there is some mysterious energy source in Rougham, responsible for a wide variety of phenomena — including time slips — and we wish to identify it, there is no shortage of candidates.

## BREAKTHROUGH

Vincent Reddish, the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, ended a distinguished 40 year career in 1980 and retired to his home in Perthshire, where he planned to enter the tourism business. He had a property comprising several old stone cottages and outbuildings, surrounding a large courtyard, and a small plot of land. The winter of 1988-9 was exceptionally wet, and the courtyard became flooded. It appeared that the drain was blocked, but no plans were available to help him locate the pipe. Reddish asked his friend and neighbour, Clive Timson, to help him dig a trench across the yard.

Instead, Clive returned with a couple of L-shaped wires, and, holding one in each hand, walked across the courtyard. Suddenly the wires crossed. He dug a hole, and there, about a foot down, was the pipe. Although the astronomer had heard about dowsing, he had never seen it in operation. Clive explained that everybody in rural areas used it routinely to find pipes, wires, etc. (I doubt that the same is true in the English countryside, but I'm not sure whether this reflects

Scottish pragmatism or Scottish meanness.) Clive, in turn, was astonished when Reddish told him that scientists had no idea how it worked. When Reddish overcame an initial sense of unease and tried to dowse himself, he found that he could, indeed, find buried pipes, full or empty, and wires. This led Reddish to embark upon a series of systematic experiments, which he subsequently documented in a privately published book, entitled *The D-Force - A Remarkable Phenomenon*. I bought a copy years ago at a library sale, and after glancing through it, put it away.

When dowsing became a central issue in the Rougham study, I remembered it. [29] Reddish's first breakthrough came when he found he was getting inconsistent results for dowsing his main drain. At one particular point, under the branch of a large Rhododendron, the signal seemed to fade. At the same time, a weak signal could be detected 2 metres to each side. He tried again using a wooden stick supported above the drain. The signal disappeared. The same thing happened when he used PVC tubing, but not when he tried aluminium. Later, after a hiatus caused by two heart attacks, he resumed his experiments, and found the same effects for sticks and tubes laid on the ground over the drain.

Eventually, he found that the rods would rotate below an overhead power cable. It seemed that they responded to any straight edge (except aluminium) whether directly over it or under it. He went to get some plastic piping and laid it directly under the power line. The rods no longer rotated, but they now rotated about 3 metres on each side. He at last recognised that the signals from the pipe and the cable were interacting with each other and producing an interference pattern. More systematic studies showed that two interference lines could be detected each side of the pipe/cable pairing, at 3m and 9m approximately. Moreover, he found that the interference fringes would persist, weakly, for a few minutes after the plastic pipe had been removed. He also found that contact between the plastic pipe

and aluminium modified the effects for some time after the aluminium had been removed.

So Reddish - who had done no reading at all on dowsing before commencing his studies — had dramatically confirmed Underwood's findings. Firstly, he confirmed that what the dowser was detecting was the result of something (in this case, a straight edge) affecting the earth's natural energy. Secondly, he confirmed that earth energy comes in a wave like form. Thirdly, he could now explain, in principle anyway, the multiple parallel lines detected by Underwood. Presumably the extremely complicated patterns result from interference along a deep fault line, which would create many straight edges, two for each of the geological strata. If Reddish expected thanks from the dowsing community for having found solid evidence for their art, he was to be disappointed. The response was muted, to say the least.

Some were shocked by his discussion of possibly automating the detection process. Others failed to notice that he had found evidence that the turning of the rods was not due to unconscious movements but might reflect a real physical attraction between them. When I tried searching the internet for Reddish and dowsing, I found something very surprising. An article by science writer John Gribbin revealed that after the publication of his book, Reddish was approached by the Ministry of Defence and requested to continue his research. He was told about certain Russian research that appeared to link dowsing — or biolocation, as it was known in the USSR — with certain highly controversial theories about the nature of torsion fields. These fields have been accepted in the physics community ever since Einstein co-authored an important paper about them in the 1920s but work on them actually began with N. P. Myshkin at the end of the 19th Century, and Tesla ca. 1900. And research has continued in Russia from the 1940s to the present day. There is also evidence, that we will shortly examine, that German research into these fields was taking place near the end of WWII.

Only one UK energy dowser has incorporated torsion field theory into his work. [30] Torsion fields are formed whenever objects rotate, and the larger the objects and the faster the rotation, the more powerful the field. Many antigravitational devices are based upon spinning discs; it has been known for some time that gyroscopes lose a slight amount of weight when rotating (Professor Laithwaite famously demonstrated this at a Royal Institution lecture by picking up a heavy gyroscope that he could not normally lift, and also got a small boy from the audience to do the same with a smaller device. The Royal Institution were not amused, and refused to publish his lecture, although it is still available online.) Japanese researchers are now following up these leads, and companies such as Toshiba are very interested.

Atoms generate a magnetic field because of the movement of electrons around the nucleus, and a magnet (made up of atoms aligned to intensify the magnetic effect) also generates a small torsion field. Torsion waves **allegedly** have fantastic properties: travelling much faster than light, and also travelling both backwards and forwards in time. Torsion fields also seem to be a key element in the exploitation of the zero point energy which quantum theory predicts. Using his own torsion field generators, Reddish confirmed that he could detect the field using dowsing. By using a pair of generators, he was able to explain annual variations in the D-force as the interaction of the torsion fields of the Earth and the Sun. He also tested a wide variety of materials, finding (as he had shown earlier) that aluminium was non-reactive, and that water absorbed and re-radiated the earth energy field, thus explaining why it was so easy to find water by dowsing. Some substances, such as rubber and certain plastics, could shield the energy. The amount of water in the human body also explained why people are generally good at dowsing, and, Reddish thought, would have implications for the use of torsion fields in medical scanning.

Following this article, Reddish published a second short book, *The Field of Rotating Masses* (2010). He describes his confirmation of some of others findings, although emphasizing that their work lies within the area of Quantum Physics, whereas his remains rooted in the classical tradition. The fact that two totally different approaches to the subject have generated such consistent data suggests that torsion is a very real and useful concept. He also mentions preliminary research on the communication properties of torsion, employing the Morse code. Another unexpected finding that is difficult to explain was his accidental discovery that the dowsing response vanishes completely when the incident light level decreases. Vincent Reddish died in 2013. He was a real scientist, someone who came across a puzzling phenomenon and was determined to find out how it worked.

Whereas a majority in the scientific community either ignored the topic or dismissed it, Reddish tackled it directly using the skills in interferometry he had acquired during his career in Astronomy, and quickly developed many interesting data. He also drew upon his personal contacts in the field to put together a small team willing to learn dowsing and take part in the later experiments involving a comparison of earth energy levels in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Practically the only replicated finding in the work of previous Western scientific investigations of dowsing, the sensitivity of dowsers to small magnetic fields, is entirely consistent with a torsion interpretation: all magnetic fields have a torsion component.

## THE BELL

When Phil Sage began to talk about strange energy vortices coming up from the earth, causing either physical symptoms, or perhaps time slips, I was struck by a parallel between the situation in Rougham and allegations made about a highly controversial German wartime attempt to create a wonder-weapon, a device that could have turned the war in the Nazis' favour, even in 1945. This

device apparently generated torsion fields. Most of the evidence concerning this experiment comes from the pioneering work of the Polish military historian Igor Witkowski. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a huge amount of information held in classified files in Eastern Bloc countries became available for study. Over many years, Witkowski patiently gathered together explosive information about the aims and extent of German experiments. His major work, *The Truth about the Wunderwaffe*, was published in Polish, and most Westerners knew nothing about it until aerospace journalist Nick Cook began investigating antigravity research. Witkowski contacted Cook and told him about the Bell, a nickname for a large German device which radiated dangerous energies. Cook's book, *The Hunt for Zero Point*, details his discoveries. Since then Witkowski has continued his research, and a second edition of his book is now available in English. [31]

The basic story is as follows, but this is necessarily a simplification. It is well worth checking into the original sources, especially since I may be unconsciously distorting my account to make it connect with the Time Slip problem. In the closing years of the war, the SS succeeded in wresting control of almost all major German weapons systems and research from other organisations such as the army and air force. It ran a highly secret research organisation headed by Hans Kammler, one of the least known but most influential figures in Nazi history. It was Kammler who designed the concentration camps and organised them as a source of slave labour; Kammler who masterminded the construction of vast underground factories and research centres; Kammler who controlled the V-weapons; and Kammler who organised and ran the SS research centre based in the Skoda factory near Pilsen in Czechoslovakia. [32]

Among the many research programmes run from Kammler's black projects unit was one that started out in January 1942 under the code name Project Tor ("Gate") then split into two, Project Laternenträger ("Light-carrier/lamplighter") and Project Chronos.

Obviously a code name is supposed to be picked entirely at random, but history shows that for obscure psychological reasons many military leaders choose names that give an obvious clue to the true aims of the project or operation — "Desert Storm," for example. When the Metropolitan Police infiltrated gangs of football thugs, they called it "Operation Own Goal" — perhaps they assumed that they were dealing with individuals with such low IQs that they would never have spotted the meaning. In any case, many people have concluded that Project Chronos was, indeed, connected with time in some way. One of these sub-projects was said to be physics-related, the other medical-biological. Information about the basic structure of the project comes mostly from non-technical staff.

Low-level researchers and lab technicians, around 60 of them, were eliminated by the SS as the German defeat approached. But some of the top scientists were acquired by the US under Project Paperclip. Kammler was also taken to America. [33, 34] Head of the physics sub-project was Walther Gerlach, one of the world's greatest physicists; a pioneer of quantum theory, associate of Einstein, and expert on magnetism and plasma. (Gerlach was also the nominal head of the German A-bomb programme, although neither he nor any other scientists thought to be associated with that programme seem to have actually known much about it. Huge controversy exists over how close the Germans came to making nuclear weapons, or whether they did test a low-yield device before the end of the war.) [34]

Witkowski identifies this project with the "wonder-weapon" spoken about by Nazi leaders from late 1944. Whereas most important weapons projects in Germany were given the security rating "Important for the war," this was the only project officially described as "Decisive for the War." Central to the project was a device nicknamed "The Bell," although it seems that the official name is unknown. It was a roughly bell-shaped object, about 2.5 metres tall by 1.5 metres wide. Inside, mounted on a hollow axle about 1.5

metres long, were two metal drums about 1 metre in diameter, which revolved in opposite directions at high speed. When a test was being run, usually underground, inside a pool of water, a cylinder containing a mysterious substance was placed inside the central axis, insulated by a layer of lead. Witkowski believes that the serum was an amalgam of mercury. Pure mercury was placed in the drums. Tests, lasting no more than 1.5 minutes, comprised rotation of the drums, and then the application of high voltage via a connection at the top of the assembly. Two aims of the test were described (by the military witnesses) as "vortex compression" and "magnetic fields separation."

When running, the Bell emitted radiation which had a damaging effect on nearby electrical devices and, in the case of the first team of seven scientists, a fatal effect on most. Five died, suffering from symptoms of sickness, dizziness, lack of co-ordination, a metallic taste in the mouth, headaches, and muscle cramps. Symptoms that now seem rather familiar! A blue haze, enveloping the Bell, suggested ionisation. Test samples - animals, plants, and possibly human concentration camp inmates - all degenerated rapidly under the influence of the radiation. As the project advanced, adjustments were made that reduced the negative effects of the Bell. But its aims still seemed obscure.

There seem to be two theories about the aims of Projects Chronos and Laternentrager. As the leading expert on the Bell, Igor Witkowski has uncovered a lot of information that gives clues as to its methodology. In short, he believes that the Bell was intended to be the power unit of an antigravity device, a saucer-shaped vehicle which would carry a new generation of chemical weapons. Trying to summarise Witkowski's long and complex arguments is not easy, but the following points seem central:

1. Rotating masses generate an antigravity effect but attempts to create total weight loss had previously foundered because spins

speeds of 2 or 3 millions of rpm are required. (We now know that when electromagnetic components are involved, lower speeds will suffice.)

2. Noting Gerlach's expertise in certain areas, it may be deduced that by rotating the drums, the mercury would be pressed against the outer walls; and that application of high voltages would ionise the mercury and attract it inwards towards the axle of the assembly. By the law of conservation of momentum, the rotation of the mercury plasma would now increase dramatically, and vortex compression would occur. The magnetic fields around the mercury plasma would now separate from the external field, and a strong antigravity effect should ensue.

3. It is also known that the alleged aerial devices of ancient India, the vimanas, are said to have operated using a mercury based system. Many researchers interested in anti-gravity have examined the Sanskrit sources that refer to this.

4. Above ground near the final test area for the Bell (The Wenceslas mine in a secret underground SS research facility known as Riesa) lies a henge-like structure known locally as "the fly trap." As Witkowski observes, this has a large pool area surrounding it and an HT power supply and looks very much like a test rig for a flying vehicle.

5. Witkowski has found witness reports of strange flying objects near previous test sites (e.g. sightings of a barrel-shaped craft).

6. He has also found plans for the Nazi flying saucers that appear to show the Bell, or something very like it, as an integral part.

7. He has shown that part of the Riesa facility was devoted to chemical warfare production.

8. A website for the American branch of Gerlach's family, the Carlocks, states explicitly that Gerlach designed the flying saucer craft that were operational in the closing stages of the war.

9. There is evidence that prototype models using antigravity drives were acquired by the US, along with many of the scientists who had worked on them, and it is a strong possibility that at least some of these were based on the Bell, as well, perhaps, as the better known Biefeld-Brown Effect.

The alternative theory is that the aim of the project was not antigravity but time travel. As far as I know, this idea was first put forward by Nick Cook's scientific advisor, whom he describes by the pseudonym Dan Marcus. The evidence is patchy, but adding in what we now know about torsion fields and a possible relation to time slips makes it less implausible.

The most convincing single piece of evidence comes from the book by Henry Stevens, *Hitler's Suppressed and Still-Secret Weapons, Science and Technology*. Stevens is, like Witkowski, one of the world's leading experts on Nazi weapons research. When he began researching the German flying saucer programme, he found that he was coming across a mass of material about exotic weapons technology which indicated that Germany was significantly ahead of the Allies in many areas of science.

In the winter of 2002, just after publication of Nick Cook's book, a friend of Stevens revealed that his father, an engineer, had worked with a number of German Paperclip scientists at NASA's facility at Huntsville, Alabama. One of these, Otto Cerny, was Mr Rowe's boss, and around 1960-2 invited the Rowe family to dinner at his house. Greg had been 12-14 years old, and was a classmate of Cerny's son. [36] Before his work at Peenemunde, Cerny said that he had worked on "weird experiments on the nature of time." Pressed by Greg's father, he drew a henge-like structure, within

which a hoop of metal was supported. The hoop allegedly supported some kind of TV screen, and Cerny said that it was possible "to go back and witness things." Mr Rowe asked why it was not possible to go forward in time, and a complicated discussion ensued, after which Cerny started discussing a jet engine designed for an unmanned aircraft. Stevens checked into Cerny's Paperclip file, and found that all the names given by Greg for Cerny's family were correct, that Cerny was employed by NASA, and that his son was in the same grade as Greg. This piece of data seems to point squarely at the fly-trap structure near the Wenceslas Mine.

I emailed Igor Witkowski, describing the time-slip phenomenon at Rougham, and its apparent connection with torsion fields. He replied very politely. He was not at all sceptical about my research but was still convinced, for the reasons discussed above, that antigravity and not time travel was the aim of the Bell project. He admitted to being biased against such ideas. This bias became evident when I got a copy of his book and found that he had quoted Stevens' account about Greg Rowe's story in detail, but pointedly omitted the reference to time travel! [37]

Stevens also refers to information obtained by researcher Friedrich Georg from a young German soldier. In detention after the war, he had got into conversation with an SS man who told him of a secret facility in the Harz mountains where Hitler had built a time machine. But this machine was no longer accessible. (By that time, the Wenceslas Mine, its final location, had been evacuated and then flooded.) The Greg Rowe evidence worries me a little. Stevens describes Greg as a friend whom he met "as the result of a chance contact." Then in "a chance conversation" Greg mentioned that his father had worked with Paperclip scientists at NASA. The story then emerged through an exchange of emails. The possibility needs to be considered that Stevens' work is probably annoying the powers-that-be who would prefer that all this exotic antigravity stuff be kept hidden; that Greg Rowe's contact with Stevens was contrived; and

that his story was a piece of disinformation. How likely is it that a security-conscious man as we imagine Cerny to be would openly discuss such a highly secret project with an employee and his family? And the timing of this revelation — just after Cook's book was published — is also suspicious.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence for the time machine hypothesis. Not as strong as the evidence for antigravity development, perhaps. One scenario that might reconcile these alternatives is the following. Suppose the original aim of Project Tor was antigravity. When they started running the Bell perhaps they noticed that some of the personnel were reporting visions of past times, and decided to split the project into two, Laternenträger for anti-gravity and Chronos for time. I think Witkowski feels that the "biological" side refers to the attempts to reduce the radiation hazard from the Bell, but my feeling would be that this would have been a sub-project of the main one rather than a separate main project. Witkowski also reveals a new and surprising piece of information about the Bell Project. It seems that at one stage, the Bell was tested in the field, on a specially adapted set of railway carriages in the Opole region. Why would it be necessary to run tests of this kind? And as the most highly secret research project in the Third Reich, why take the risk of exposing it in this way? There must have been extremely pressing reasons for taking this odd course of action. Is it possible that the Bell was designed to use and amplify the Earth's torsion field? This might explain the water pools around both the Bell and the fly-trap. Were they trying to see how well it would work in the field because variations in earth energy might compromise the Bell's operation? [38]

### Plasma effects

Glowing balls of light, generally supposed to be stable plasmas, have been seen widely and are clearly a major cause of UFO reports. "Earthlights," as ufologists call them, are linked with certain

types of geology: areas of sandstone and quartz, and heavily faulted zones. The Pennines is such a region, and is known not just for UFO reports, but ghosts and other strange happenings including a few time slips. Nick Redfern has revealed declassified UK files dealing with Earthlights sightings in the henge structures at Avebury and Stonehenge. At Avebury, a lady reported approaching such a light, which then changed into a monstrous dragon-like creature. And at Stonehenge, which is near a military exercise zone, British soldiers frequently observed the lights entering the stone circle then ascending into the sky. If a soldier approached too closely his comrades would see, from a safe distance, that he became entranced. Subsequently he would describe some fantastic hallucinatory experience. It seems that it was these incidents that led to the Ministry of Defence's study, Project Condign, which concluded that UFOs were all caused by plasma balls (an example of the "one theory explains everything" syndrome!) [39]

What is somewhat disturbing about these plasma vortices is that at times they display something like intelligent behaviour. One very interesting piece of research by British writer Graham Phillips and his associates extended from the Middle East to a small English location, the Burton Dassett Hills, in search of evidence, supposedly brought back from the Holy Land by the Templars, of the Ark of the Covenant. The researchers found three gemstones that they believed could have been part of the breastplate of the Jewish High Priest. Hearing that the lights had recently been seen nearby, they decided to see if they could use the crystals to attract them. They each held one of the gems and tried to command the geoplasma to approach them. And in fact, following a number of loud explosive noises, a light did appear on the other side of a lake and head towards them, stopping a short distance away. Then it diminished in size and flew into the sky. [40] So we have a network of interconnections between earth energies, torsion fields, plasmas, ancient sites, and events of high strangeness such as UFOs, ghosts,

and — of course — time slips. If someone with a knowledge of advanced physics, and an open mind, was to take a look at these data who knows where it might lead?

## THE ENIGMA OF TIME SLIPS

Having assembled evidence both about the events at Rougham and what seems to be the major causative mechanism at work there, the Earth's natural torsion field, we need to face up to the most difficult task — trying to make sense of time slips. This is where it gets tricky. Joan Forman, in *The Mask of Time*, identified a number of factors that she thought significant for the cases that she had collected, but it is difficult to verify these today.

Some cases do exhibit strange feelings, coldness, and silence; but none seem to point to specific triggers for the experience, nor a silvery light, etc. Perhaps the time slips have changed, possibly due to alterations in cosmic factors that we cannot yet identify. Anyway, here are some elements of time slips that I feel would repay further thought and research.

### Evolution

If I was writing a science fiction novel based around these concepts, I would envision a huge burst of energy emerging from the earth in a roughly circular configuration, and everything inside the circle being transferred fairly rapidly to another time. If Hollywood tried to put it on film you can imagine how exciting the special computer-generated effects would be. The huge electrical discharges and heat generated by time travel in *The Terminator* films is a good example. An alternative concept of time travel, and a more familiar one, comes from H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. Here Wells tried to portray an entirely rational concept, that to reach, say, the year 3000, the traveller must pass through all the intermediate years one at a time (although possibly so quickly that only a blur is perceived by the participant).

The facts, however, are very different. The structure of a real time slip, in contrast to a fictional one, is perplexing. It is not at all what one might expect: it is non-dramatic. Sometimes it is preceded or accompanied by vague feelings of unease, or a sense of some sort of reality shift; less commonly, by an unnatural silence and/or drop in temperature. But most often, as at Rougham, and in many cases at Liverpool, the witnesses suddenly find themselves in another time. Often the change is so subtle, so hard to spot, that the witness may not know that something absolutely extraordinary has happened until it is over.

It is possible that such events happen at Liverpool (and other places) more often than we imagine, because if somebody travels back just a few days or weeks, perhaps, there will be few obvious cues that anything has actually taken place! It would have seemed intuitively correct to say that a vision (or "hallucination," as MacKenzie would prefer), of the past, is something altogether different from actually travelling physically into another time.

And yet the evidence clearly suggests a continuum leading from an initial visual perception towards complete integration into another time period. The various sensory modalities are engaged piecemeal. Sometimes the vague feelings come first. Next the visual sense, when the witness sees something that is totally normal in its appearance. Finally the auditory and tactile senses are brought into play. The witness is now visible to people in the past; he can communicate with them and a full interaction can occur. Objects can be touched, grasped or bought and sold. The transition is complete. There is no indication that the witness has passed successively through all the intervening years, as Wells suggested. The witness moves from one year to another almost instantaneously.

These phenomena seem to be telling us something vital about our own being and the nature of our reality. They seem to be pointing towards the virtual reality theory. If our perceptions, mind, and body

are transferred separately in stages to other times, and sometimes we don't even notice what's happening, our notions of what it is to be human may require drastic revision. Numerous mystical teachers have claimed that our senses cannot be trusted and that there is a deeper reality beyond the world that surrounds us, and it appears that they could be right.

## **Boundaries**

Notice, also, something significant about the borders of the area subject to the time slip. In Rougham, the house and its garden appears. Never the house on its own — a fact ignored by the joker who posted the You Tube video showing a rather insipid building superimposed unconvincingly on an empty field. And never, ever, part of a house! In the Wynne-Allington case, a brick wall with a wrought iron gate marked the boundary between one time and another. It seemed entirely natural. In Liverpool, an older shop appears in place of its modern equivalent: people never see half an old shop superimposed over half a new one. In the most dramatic case at that location, the witness, having exited the time slip, looked back and could see figures in the year 1967 still moving about at the other end of the road. He was in Hanover Street, they were in Ranelagh Street.

In short, boundaries to time slip events are set not by arbitrary physical factors but by features of human geography. All these considerations point to serious weaknesses in our physical theories as well as inadequacies in our understanding of psychology. Small wonder that few psychologists, and as far as I know only one physicist, have expressed any interest in such incidents. They prefer to speculate about the equations of Einstein rather than to confront phenomena that might suggest altogether new ways of looking at time and human existence. No doubt they have robust arguments to justify their timidity, but the detached observer can only conclude

that we have an example here of true believers reacting against some kind of heresy. If you can't dismiss it, then simply ignore it. [41]

If you wished to argue that no physical time travelling is involved, and the virtual reality model is wrong, you might suggest that the witness is actually viewing a mental reconstruction of the past, gleaned from some kind of ESP, then communicates telepathically with people there, who are themselves viewing a mental image of the witness. How solid objects can be handled by both parties, and even, in some rare cases, brought back to the present, would then require concepts of teleportation across time to be added to the mix. Admittedly, at the present stage it comes down to personal preference. But if the virtual reality theory is invoked, it can handle these multiple issues by saying that all the elements in the situation — time, space, and human identity — are in a sense illusions that are programmed separately; if a programming error occurs, it might easily lead to shops and their staff interacting with people from a different time, or objects from one time being moved to another. If time is not a real physical parameter, but an artefact of the running of a kind of computer application, there is no need for the witness to "pass through" the intervening years.

In Rougham there is rarely any kind of noticeable boundary between the house and its surroundings. This lack of an obvious discontinuity again suggests that, if virtual reality is true, there must be sub-programs operating to smooth over defects of this kind and make them imperceptible to witnesses, in the same way that you can use photo-editing software to disguise mistakes in your pictures. A similar type of sub-program must be running to ensure that the witness is returned safely to his own timeline, should a time slip occur due to some malfunction of the system. Perhaps, if it is not always possible to return a witness to the correct time, we might have an explanation for some of the time slips that also involve "missing time."

## Grandfather Paradox

Many people have argued that time travel is impossible, because it would generate absurd paradoxes. What would happen if you went back in time and killed your grandfather before he could become a parent? Would you suddenly cease to exist? Or would a separate time-line — in effect another dimension, or a parallel universe — be created? The answer of scientists who have looked into this question is that the present is now what it is as a result of all possible influences, including travel into the past. You might go back intending to murder your grandfather, but something would happen - must already have happened - to thwart your aim. For example, maybe your grandmother had a secret affair, and your real grandfather is someone else. [42] One of the reasons that Igor Witkowski rejects the idea that the Bell was some kind of time-machine is that this would hardly explain why the project should have been described as vital for the German war effort. But, as many observers online have not been slow to point out, the Nazis may have planned to go back and alter history in such a way as to ensure a German victory.

I have only come across one account of a deliberate intervention into the past, and it is highly thought-provoking. H. B. M. Dervish was a Middle Eastern seeker-after-truth who made contact with authentic esoteric teachers, and in the course of his journeys also met dervish groups who had, spiritually, lost the plot - however, they still retained sufficient knowledge to achieve some remarkable effects. One of these was based at a zavia (monastery) in the Yemen. To provoke a reaction during a discussion, he expressed doubt about the possible uses of Baraka to affect people's lives. In response, he was offered a demonstration. He was instructed to visit the market in a nearby town and to mentally choose someone who seemed poor. He walked to the market (which was quite a distance from the monastery) and picked an impoverished looking watch repair man. On his return to the monastery, he was not asked about

his choice but told to return immediately to the town. When he did, he found that the watch man had disappeared. It seemed that an hour before, the man's son had returned unannounced from South America, where he had made his fortune, and taken away his father to live with him. The author makes a curious statement at this stage. He asks if this means that the dervishes could actually change history, and the course of people's lives, and replies no. Lots of things influence people and many of these we don't even notice. And normally we don't reckon on "telepathic interventions reaching into the past." Whatever else may have happened, on this occasion the dervishes of the zavia certainly did seem to bring worldly success to one man and material improvement to another. If that is not changing the course of people's lives, what is it? [43]

Changing the past is one thing, but knowing exactly how to change it in order to get the required effect is something else. This requires special perceptions of the kind that most people - and probably all the Nazis — lack. In the Dervish account, the most amazing thing is really the timing. Making someone rich is one thing, but making him rich, and having him travel across the world to arrive at a small town in the Yemen at precisely the right moment to take away his father between the author's two visits to the town — most of us would think this very impressive. People sometimes speculate that if you could have gone back in time and killed Hitler while he was still an impoverished student, you could have averted the horrors of the Holocaust. Maybe a less violent way would be to go back and get some rich collector to promote him as the greatest artist of the age. Either way, there is no guarantee of success. Even in the simplest issues of everyday life, our plans are liable to go awry because we don't know all of the factors involved. Knowing how these factors interact and lead to future events is outside ordinary human knowledge.

## **The Witnesses**

Some of the witnesses to the house in Rougham are known to be sensitive — i.e. to various other-worldly stimuli. Unfortunately, we do not know enough about the other witnesses to be able to deduce whether they are more or less likely than the average person to display this kind of perceptiveness. Nor do we know about the witnesses to time slips at other locations. In one case, at Fotheringay Church, Northants, in 1974, one witness saw the church as it was then; the other saw it as it had been in the 13th Century. Jung, who had the famous experience at Ravenna, was a major visionary; but what role this plays in the development of such episodes is a mystery. (There is no evidence that the friend who shared his experience was a sensitive.) In the overwhelming majority of multi-witness cases all the participants see the same thing. This is an area of time slip research that is so far wholly unexplored. If it turns out that sensitive individuals are more likely to experience Type 4 time slips, this would imply that their special abilities are not limited to the purely perceptual domain. Somehow the initial perception can lead on to physical integration, with all that that implies. [44]

## Evidence

I have so far ignored the question of evidence. Clearly, many people are going to reject these accounts automatically. But they are usually the type of people who would refuse to accept any evidence for some unexplained phenomenon. What, in the context of time slips in general, and Rougham in particular, would constitute strong evidence? It is obvious that even bringing artefacts back from a previous time would prove nothing. If you went back 2000 years, say, and returned with some beautiful statue, which lacked all signs of age, it would be dismissed as a modern fake. If you brought back an old newspaper with no sign of yellowing, you would get the same result. If, like Mr Squirrel and his plastic envelopes, you found your newspaper aged rapidly, again it would have no evidential value. If somebody at Liverpool had a camera, or a mobile phone with built-in camera (and they virtually all do nowadays) and had the presence

of mind to take a picture or two during their experience, this would be of immense value — but as yet, nobody has. Nor has anyone tried to take a photo of the vanishing house — yet, anyway.

Attempts to take photos during a time slip have been generally unsuccessful: a film camera failed to wind on in one case, in two cases pictures showed only the contemporary scenery, and the batteries of a digital camera were drained in another. (When taking pictures with a new digital camera and a fresh set of batteries in Rougham 1 found that the batteries had failed after taking only about twenty pictures.) Perhaps the most valuable evidence would come from people who recall seeing the witness of a time slip years ago, perhaps because their appearance or behaviour was strange. If accounts could be found in Liverpool newspapers, say from the 1950s onwards, of such sightings, and it was subsequently possible to match these with the accounts of the time travellers of today, we would have fairly convincing evidence. If researchers there could also put appeals in the press or radio programmes, some response might be forthcoming. Just one verified case would justify the effort involved.

It might also be possible to find out the identities of the shop-assistants in, for example, the Mothercare case, and see if the witness might be able to identify them from contemporary (1980s) photos. In one recent American case a young time slip witness was given a lift by an older couple: when he met them a few days later they had visibly aged and claimed that the event had taken place several years previously. In another remarkable case in 1973 a young student sporting long hair and a beard who had been dared to spend the night in a haunted house encountered an elderly man floating over a staircase; the ghost seemed frightened and disappeared through a closed door. After hearing raised voices the young man fled. He had been unaware that in the 1930s the family living there had been driven out by a bearded "demon" with long hair and strange clothing!

There are also several cases on record in which young children saw their future adult selves, and then recalled this when, later in life, they observed a young child. If you went to the future, any artefact that you obtained, particularly something high tech, could be a decisive piece of evidence. But it is noticeable that visits to the future are not only rare, but virtually never involve interaction with people. Perhaps some embargo prevents the transfer of advanced devices, or sensitive information, to earlier periods. It is clear that if just a few serious researchers got together and made a systematic attempt to uncover such evidence from independent witnesses, the time slip phenomenon would stand on much firmer ground.

At Liverpool, Parascience claim to have details of a hundred cases, but have as yet published details of only five. Tom Slamen claims to have information about some 400 cases, and has published accounts of over 100; however, some of his later accounts seem increasingly suspect, and it has proven impossible in such instances to confirm the identities of the alleged witnesses. I fear that his commitment to writing over 30 books about paranormal Liverpool has led to him including some very dubious case summaries.

At Rougham, where sightings of the house or houses have never reached Type 4 levels, the best we can do is to attempt to identify the houses. For a while, the discovery by Jean Deathridge of a document from 1763 that mentions a Kingshall House in Rougham seemed to have settled the matter; but it has so far proven impossible to pin down its location (see the Appendices). All we can say is that physical evidence of brick fragments is present at two locations, and some maps show buildings at two sighting locations. The evidence is fairly solid but is not likely to convince the doubters.

## ROUGHAM IN CONTEXT

Rougham is not the only place where disappearing houses are seen. In many parts of the world — but mostly, it seems, in the US and the

UK — similar phenomena are observed. Where Rougham is perhaps unique lies in

- (1) the frequency of sightings: over twenty in a 150 year period;
- (2) the wide variety of other puzzling phenomena
- (3) the clear evidence of a correlation with earth (torsion) energy.

Here are a few examples of disappearing houses seen in other areas, ranging from one-off instances to more frequent occurrences:

- Discussing Rougham, Betty Puttock compares it with a little-known case from 1930s Swindon. A young girl cycling along Ermine Street was caught in heavy rain. Seeing a thatched cottage with a smoking chimney, she decided to knock on the door and ask for shelter. An old man smilingly let her in, although saying nothing, and they waited in a low-ceilinged room lit by a warm fire. Suddenly she was again outside, with no memory of how she got there. Later on she returned to the spot to find a derelict cottage in an overgrown garden. It struck her that although the storm had been raging outside, she could no longer hear the thunder while in the building. [45]

- Bachelors Grove cemetery in Chicago, Illinois, is a highly active area, and one of the most frequently observed phenomena is a disappearing house. This appears to be a small white two storey house with a porch, in the style of the 1850s-90s. A flickering light comes from a 2nd floor window; there is a swing on the porch, also wooden pillars and a picket fence. Sometimes it appears semi-transparent. It is seen at several different locations within the cemetery; on one occasion it appeared to recede as the witnesses approached. Evidence of buildings in the area from old records and maps has been located, but as in the case with Rougham it is hard to prove which of these is being observed. [46]

- Mrs C. P. Mahnkey of Mincy, Missouri, once spotted a small cabin on a ridge in the old McCann game park. Through binoculars, she could see smoke coming from the chimney. The next day, it had gone. Neighbours denied that such a building had ever stood there.[47]

- In the early Fall of 1971, three men working for a cattle feed distributor were sent to pick up an old feeder in a remote pasture near Ponca City, Oklahoma. It proved to be too heavy for them to load onto the truck, and as they left they saw a large two-storey white house nearby. Their boss promised to go and empty the feeder, after which they could return and pick it up. But when they did, the house was no longer there. There was no sign of any debris nor a foundation on the spot. Incidentally, this was one of the cases that I sent to Rougham witness Jean Batram (partly to reassure her that she was not the only person to see such things), and the website had illustrated the story with a picture of a white Georgian mansion which Jean said was almost identical with the building that she had seen! [48]

So Rougham is by no means unique in having a vanishing house, although it probably has more than most other places. But it has a lot of other strange phenomena to boast of, as we have already seen:

1. Globes of light, often seen in a house to the south of Colville's Grove;
2. A strange arc of light, often seen emerging from the ground, in a field north of Kingshall Street;
3. Powerful and often harmful earth energies, in and around The Grove, that can be detected by the methods of dowsing and influence sensitive people. Symptoms include feelings of nausea, dizziness, headache, general weakness, and disorientation, and may persist for several hours. In one case (in the area near the

Norman Tower, where the Michael energy line is said to run), an apparent time slip was concurrently experienced;

4. Strange localised vortex effects;

5. Apparitions and other phenomena in Gypsy Lane;

6. Effects upon animals, especially dogs and horses, in Gypsy Lane and The Grove;

7. Other time slip phenomena involving a vanishing car and bicycles, in the area of Blackthorpe in the north of Rougham. As if these were not enough, Phil Sage has now heard of two other examples of unusual events which add yet more dimensions to this complex narrative.

8. It seems that in 1949, Arthur Cornish, Peter's father, was cutting corn near Gypsy Lane, when he saw a black cat in the field where Jean Batram saw the mystery house. It ran into Tinker's Wood, at the back of the field. This cat was around four feet long.. Arthur's son, Bryan, told Phil about this after hearing of Phil's interest in the house. It seems that Peter was never told about it. Again, one wonders how many people see strange things in the area and even keep it from those close to them? Not the behaviour of publicity-seeking hoaxers. More recently, Phil says, two gamekeepers have seen the tracks of a large feline, perhaps a leopard, in nearby fields.

9. Sir George Agnew is currently engaged in writing a major history of Rougham, with the aid of Phil Sage and a researcher named Karen Murdock. Phil has known Karen for many years, following the foundation of the Tower Association, which monitors activity at Rougham airfield. Recently, Karen obtained some extraordinary information from a local resident known by the nickname "Bimbo." His real name, according to Peter Cornish, who was in the same class at school, is Derek Green. It seems that a dowser working on the field west of Colville's Grove detected a source of terrific energy

— as, of course, did Phil's friend. But in this instance, the energy accompanied a dramatic change in weather conditions. It suddenly became overcast and dark, and then it began to rain... fish. Mystery animals, usually but by no means always large cats, have been observed in many other areas. The usual explanation is that the cats have escaped from zoos, or been released from the collections of eccentric millionaires. This theory sounds plausible, but it is surprisingly difficult to confirm in most cases. And frequently, something about the appearance or the behaviour of the animals seems disturbingly abnormal.

Falls of out-of-place animals or objects are a rare but not unfamiliar phenomenon. They are named Fortean Falls, after the American writer Charles Fort, who was the first to catalogue it. [49] The general view is that the falling things must have been swept up from a nearby pond or lake by a passing hurricane or cyclone and then later dropped. But when there are no reports of hurricanes, it is hard to sustain this theory. Moreover, hurricanes usually sweep up everything in their path; how they could selectively pick up frogs, or examples of one particular species of fish, and then deposit them in what is usually a very small area, remains to be explained. Bimbo's story is certainly interesting if true, but it comes to us at fourth hand. If it is true, it raises fascinating possibilities. Could the earth's torsion field be the real source of Fortean Falls?

With so many varied and strange phenomena occurring in so small an area, Rougham is certainly unique. But other parts of the world have also generated a wide range of odd events. These are often referred to by researchers as window areas — in the sense of a window which provides access to other-worldly dimensions. It makes sense to review some of these areas briefly, with the aim of determining Rougham's place in the hierarchy.

## **The Pennines**

As Jenny Randles makes clear in her excellent book *Supernatural Pennines*, this part of the UK might well qualify as the most important window area in Europe. The geology of this region, comprising heavily faulted rocks with a high quartz content, of the kind implicated in the production of odd electromagnetic phenomena such as earthlights, is clearly a factor. And within the area local manifestations of these and other paranormal events can be defined, notably Rossendale-Todmorden, Wharfedale, the High Peak zone, and the Staffordshire moorlands. A few of the most bizarre events include:

- In 1982-3, in an area north of Bradford, many witnesses reported sightings of a huge bird-like creature that, from all descriptions, seems to have been a pterodactyl — a long extinct member of the dinosaur family. One witness at Pudsey reported that it had swooped down at him, in response to which he had thrown himself onto the ground. He had a close view of something with a wingspan of 8-10 feet and a reptilian head. It had a dark leathery skin, and its movement through the air was laboured and inelegant, quite unlike a bird.
  - One of the pterodactyl witnesses reported that back in 1972, coming home from school, he had seen a bright blue trident emerging from the ground. It was flame-like but more solid. Randles says "it was a sort of glowing energy that was 'bleeding' upwards into the air." At the same time the witness felt that everything had slowed down, as though time itself had almost stopped. It may be a significant coincidence that one of the patents for a torsion field generator applied for by the Russian researchers suggested employing, not a discoid or spherical spinning weight, but one shaped like a trident.
- [50]
- In the 1980s-90s, many people reported seeing wartime aircraft, mostly bombers, flying in complete silence in the same area. Another witness reported hearing her son returning home on his

motorbike, many years after he had moved away. She also reported many strange electrical surges that burned out lights and TVs, to the puzzlement of investigators from the power company.

- As was noted earlier, several clear cases of time slips have also been recorded. Most of these were Types 1 or 2 in our classification system. But it is clear that visions of pterodactyls and WWII bombers could also be time slips.
- Fortean Falls have also occurred, notably at Stainborough.
- In addition many UFO sightings, including close encounter cases and an alleged alien abduction, have been noted.
- More conventional ghost and haunting phenomena are also common.
- Also seen are earthlights, including some seen indoors, seeping up out of the earth.
- Big mystery cats, including black cats, which attacked humans as well as cattle and other animals, also made an appearance.
- Several people have been badly affected by contact with lights and other phenomena, exhibiting symptoms similar to those encountered in Rougham.

Although Randles is mostly inclined towards an electromagnetic theory for the Pennines phenomena, following the line that electrical interference in the brain can produce hallucinatory experiences, it is clear that there is a lot of support here for the idea that genuine time slips, engendered by torsion field energy, may actually be responsible. Jenny was well aware of the possible significance of earth energy and ley lines, but at the time she was writing her book, Reddish was still doing the research that would later establish torsion fields as the energy underlying dowsing, rather than EM fields. Clearly the two kinds of field must interact in very complex

ways. Hopefully someone, in Russia or the UK, is pursuing enquiries into this relationship. Jenny Randles tends to explain time slips using the stone tape theory, perhaps because no Type 4 cases have yet surfaced in the Pennines. It is worth considering Jenny's concept of "the Oz factor," an entranced mental state experienced by many witnesses of strange phenomena, especially UFOs, that is characterised by an uncanny silence, a sense of isolation (even in a densely populated area), and a sense of timelessness.

Clearly a few of the witnesses in Rougham have reported some of these reactions, but we need to be cautious in linking time slips with the Oz effect. If you were to travel back to the 1950s or 60s, perhaps, you would be in a period with less traffic sounds, less blaring car radios, and fewer people around you. It would seem a lot quieter. And if you realised that you were entangled in a truly bizarre and frightening experience, your mental anguish and high level of arousal would also lead to a sense of unreality and distortions in your perceptions. Such experiences have been reported by soldiers in battle, the victims of violent crime, and many others. The psychological issues are more complex than Jenny Randles has allowed.

### **Skinwalker Ranch**

This large (480 acre) ranch situated in northeastern Utah is famous as perhaps the most extreme example of a window area known. A huge variety of phenomena have been noted, but unlike the case in Rougham and other areas, these are rarely repeated in exactly the same way. With four major books and a large number of online sources to draw upon, it is difficult to select examples of Skinwalker activity that do justice to the incredible events displayed there. Here are a few:

- In 1994, Tom and Ellen Gorman (pseudonyms) took over the ranch, and were puzzled at the excessive security measures placed

there by the previous owners. Soon after, they had their first brush with the mysterious phenomena. A huge wolf, five feet tall, approached. It seemed tame, even friendly; but then attempted to take one of the ranch's prize Angus calves. Shots from a pistol and even a high powered hunting rifle failed to take it down, but did knock off a chunk of flesh. The wolf trotted away, but when Tom and his father and son followed they found that its tracks ended abruptly. The same, or another wolf, later approached Ellen's car and had to bend its head down to look into her car.

- Almost immediately more conventional haunting phenomena began inside the ranch- house; objects going missing and then being found in unlikely places. In one case a 70-pound post digger was found lodged up a tree. After groceries had been unwrapped and placed in fridge or cupboard, they would be found spread over the floor. On one occasion, they were found back on the kitchen table. Four large bulls went missing and were found inside a locked trailer, in an entranced state. 30 minutes after Tom's son had laboriously moved a ton of wood from one site to another, it had been returned, neatly stacked, to its original location.
- Cattle mutilations, often of a particularly gruesome kind, continued through the Gormans' occupation of the ranch. • Headlights, seemingly of trespassing vehicles, were seen moving around. But when Gorman tried to follow what seemed to be a four-wheel drive vehicle it rose over a fence and trees and flew off.
- Earthlights and a variety of luminous phenomena appeared. When three of the ranch dogs set off after some blue spheres their remains were later found as smears on the ground.
- UFOs, in a variety of shapes and sizes, were also seen. Strange dark fissures appeared in the sky; in the evening they would appear blue. On one occasion a black, triangular UFO emerged from such a fissure.

- In 1996, the Gormans sold the ranch to the National Institute for Discovery Science, a paranormal research organisation funded by Robert Bigelow, a Las Vegas millionaire. A team from NIDS including several leading scientists and also Colonel John Alexander, who had once run the US Army's INSCOM unit, began a serious investigation. They set up many electronic surveillance devices, but only recorded one significant observation: one of the special cameras taking still photos every second was vandalised and torn from its pole. The camera which should have been able to record who or what had done that damage had been unsighted by a group of cows at that instant. The damage, which included tearing multiple strips of tape, had been accomplished within a second or so. On another occasion, an observer viewing a bright UFO through an image intensifier saw that the light was actually the entrance to a kind of tunnel. He saw an ambling, Bigfoot type creature come along the tunnel then jump down to the ground. However, on the whole no solid evidence for the strange phenomena was collected. It was as though some intelligence was behind all the events, and was able to evade detection when it wished.

[51]

Rougham cannot compete with the high strangeness level at the Skinwalker, nor with the elements of threat, physical and mental, encountered there. Nevertheless, some features are common to both areas: the orbs and balls of light, the suggestions of time-related events, unearthly animals, haunting effects, and so on. Each window area seems to share some features with all the others, and also has distinctive characteristics unique to it.

### **The Bermuda Triangle**

This is one of the most famous window areas, albeit the most controversial. It is certain that a large number of aircraft and ships have gone missing in this area, but many cases can probably be explained in completely conventional terms. There is evidence, however, for abnormal electromagnetic activity which may interfere

with compasses and other guidance systems. Perhaps the most interesting case is that of Bruce Gernon. Gernon was a private pilot who often flew to Andros Island from the real estate company that he ran with his father in southern Florida. On 4 December 1970, Gernon, his father, and a business associate, Chuck Lafayette, took off at 3 pm from Andros airport in a new Beechcraft Bonanza A36 plane. As the aircraft climbed, many unusual cloud formations began to appear, and by the time Gernon had reached 11,500ft cruising altitude they filled most of the sky. A huge cloud was extending from ground level at the Bimini Islands up to 60,000ft, and when they entered it bright flashes of light forced them to turn left to exit it. It then appeared that all of the clouds had joined together like a giant doughnut, 30 miles across. The aircraft appeared to be trapped. Gernon continued:

*Thirteen miles later, I noticed a large U-shaped opening on the west side of the doughnut cloud. I had no choice but to turn and try to exit through the opening. As we approached, we watched the top ends of the U-gap join, forming a hole. The break in the cloud now formed a perfect horizontal tunnel, one mile wide and more than 10 miles long. We could see the clear blue sky on the other side. We also saw that the tunnel was rapidly shrinking. I increased the engine RPM, bringing our speed to the caution area of 230 miles per hour. When we entered the tunnel, its diameter had narrowed to only 200 feet. I was amazed at what the shaft now looked like. It appeared to be only a mile long instead of ten-plus as I had originally estimated. Light from the afternoon sun shone through the exit hole and made the silky white walls glow. The walls were perfectly round and slowly constricting. All around the edges were small puffs of clouds of a contrasting gray, swirling counterclockwise around the airplane. We were in the tunnel for only 20 seconds before we emerged from the other end. For about*

five seconds I had the strange feeling of weightlessness and an increased forward momentum. When I looked back, I gasped to see the tunnel walls collapse and form a slit that slowly rotated clockwise. All of our electronic and magnetic navigational instruments were malfunctioning. The compass was slowly spinning even as the airplane flew straight. I contacted Miami and told them we were about 45 miles southeast of Bimini, heading east at 10,500 feet. The radar controller replied that he was unable to identify us anywhere in that area. Something bizarre had happened. Instead of the blue sky we expected, everything was a dull, grayish white haze. Visibility seemed like more than two miles, yet we could not see the ocean, the horizon, or the sky. The air was very stable and there was no lightning or rain. I like to refer to this as an "electronic fog;" because it seemed to be what was interfering with our instruments. I had to use my imagination to feel our way west. We were in the electronic fog for three minutes when the controller radioed that he had identified an airplane directly over Miami Beach, flying due west. I looked at my watch and saw that we had been flying for less than 34 minutes. We could not yet have reached Miami Beach— we should have been approaching the Bimini Islands. I told the controller that he must have identified another airplane and that we were approximately 90 miles southwest of Miami and still looking for Bimini. Suddenly the fog started breaking apart, in a weird sort of electronic fashion. Long horizontal lines appeared in the fog on either side of us. The lines widened into slits about four or five miles long. We saw blue sky through them. The slits continued expanding and joined together. Within eight seconds, all the slits had joined, and the grey fog had disappeared. All I could see was brilliant blue sky as my pupils adjusted to the abrupt increase in brightness. Then, I saw the barrier island of Miami Beach directly below.

After landing the plane at Palm Beach, Gernon realised that the flight had taken less than 47 minutes. Normally it would have taken at least 75 minutes. Yet he and his passengers' watches agreed that it was exactly 3.48pm. Moreover, because of his attempts to evade the clouds, Gernon estimated that they must have travelled around 250 miles.

*"We had travelled through 100 miles of space and 30 minutes of time in a little more than three minutes."* The only attempt anyone has made to explain this in conventional terms is to suggest that the plane was aided by a strong tailwind. Apart from the high speeds required (100 miles in 3 minutes equates to 2,000 mph) the putative tailwind would have had to change direction several times to match the exact course of the plane! This seems unlikely.

After this experience, Gernon developed the idea of an electronic fog which can distort time and space for those who are caught within it. This agrees with Jenny Randles' time storms concept: both involve people entering or being engulfed in a strange fog. It also explains why so many planes might have gone missing in the area: with navigational equipment malfunctioning, and the aircraft perhaps having travelled hundreds of miles farther than one could have expected, searches for the missing aeroplanes would probably have been conducted in the wrong area. [52]

There are said to be around 100 window areas worldwide, but many are severely overrated. Based on a consideration of all factors, I would put Rougham somewhere in the top 20-30 rankings. If, one day, the house appeared to someone who had the nerve to enter the garden and approach the building, which has happened elsewhere, we might achieve a Type 3 or 4 time slip, and Rougham's strangeness status might rise dramatically.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Since about 1867, around 20 reported sightings of the disappearing house of Rougham have been recorded. Of these, most lack details and some may be unverified. At least six sightings have generated sufficient information to run an objective assessment.
2. Several different houses have been reported in three or more different locations. In some cases, physical traces of an old building have been identified in approximately the right position have been discovered. In one, possibly two cases, old maps have confirmed the presence of the buildings.
3. At least one old legal document has been found referring to a "Kingshall House," but so far it has proven impossible to locate precisely. Place-names have changed, and even some of the locations (e.g. Kingshall Green, which has occupied three different locations since the 1760s). A transcript of part of this document is in the Appendices.
4. The two most recent known witnesses of the house, Sandra Newman (Hardwick) and Jean Batram, have been located and interviewed. Their stories seem consistent and compelling.
5. Phil Sage has noticed that some strange energy is found in Colville's Grove, a wooded area that seems to have been laid out as the estate of a large house between 1783 and 1813. This energy is manifested in many ways, i.e.: (a) feelings of sickness, disorientation, dizziness, and headaches; (b) small but powerful vortex phenomena; (c) strange light phenomena; (d) by detection using the methods of dowsing; (e) through its effect on animals such as horses and dogs. It seems to be related to the vanishing house mystery and to time slips in general.

Other reports of vanishing houses have come from elsewhere

6. In the Bury area and from Elveden. So far I have been unable to contact the witnesses.

7. Other reports of possible time slips have been reported from the Blackthorpe area of Rougham and Bury town centre. Ghosts are often reported (and one has been photographed) at Rougham airfield. Phantom monks have been seen in Gypsy Lane.

8. It seems that the energy source in Rougham is the earth's natural torsion field. Torsion energy is a highly controversial topic in modern Physics. Energy dowzers claim that two major currents exist in the Bury area and that one passes through Bradfield St George.

9. Evidence exists that German (SS) researchers in WWII were working on a torsion field device to create antigravity effects. Some stories have linked this device with time travel.

10. It is possible that prehistoric obelisks and henges were built in areas of high earth energies, with the aim of harnessing them in some way.

11. Analysis of time slip events in other areas, notably Liverpool, suggests that only the Virtual Reality theory can account for the development and characteristics of Type 4 cases.

12. Still in the planning stage is a survey of Rougham by earth energy dowzers. I also hope to create a catalogue of time slip cases from all sources, and run a statistical analysis

We seem to have arrived at a point where earth energy — i.e., torsion fields — is seen to play a major role in a variety of puzzling phenomena, including time slips. Exactly how this energy source distorts time is unknown, and it may be that an exclusively physical explanation will continue to elude us. Theoretically, it is entirely possible that our world is an atypical time-bound segment of a larger timeless universe. The physicist Meted Saniga has drawn upon evidence from near-death experiences and unusual temporal experiences in developing a mathematical model of just such a universe. [53] However, a detailed analysis of the most extreme time

slips, those we have called Type 4, casts doubt upon any simple theoretical model.

The concept of virtual reality seems to be the only way of accounting for the transference of a human witness from one time to another. It appears that human beings are "real" at a non-physical level, but that our consciousness is locked into a Matrix-like simulation of reality. Elements that are simulated include the personal body of each participant, time, space, and other physical objects. Errors in the running of the underlying program can, it seems, result in the body of an individual being translated into the wrong time frame. The only way of reconciling these two major frames of reference, the physical and the simulated, might be to suggest that torsion fields act as an interface between the two. The psychometry or stone tape theory may be able to account for Type 1 time slips, and possibly some of Type 2. It might, in other words, explain the house sightings at Rougham (and elsewhere). But whether we really need to use both theories to account for what seems to be the early stages of a time travel episode is unclear.

Physicists used to follow Newton in conceiving of an objective, nuts-and-bolts universe, operating like a huge piece of clockwork. Time and space provided a universal, rigid framework within which all phenomena could be absolutely located. Human observers were merely a biological oddity and human awareness just an emergent phenomenon. But at the opening of the 20th Century, two dramatic theoretical developments threw the objective universe into the discard. Firstly, Einstein tried to account for physics' failure to detect the ether which had been thought to transmit light and other forms of radiation by assuming that all observers see light travelling at the same velocity ( $c$ ) whatever their location or movement. In order to achieve this he proposed that time and space are distorted around each observer. Why, and how, such a process should occur in an objective universe, has never been explained. What if there were no observers in the universe? Would automatic devices to measure  $c$

situated on bodies moving at various speeds continue to agree on the value of  $c$ ? If there were no observers, where would these devices come from? Relativity seems to be based squarely on the concept that observers occupy a privileged status in the universe. Secondly, quantum theory demonstrated rather clearly that the observer is intimately connected with the outcome of experiments at the sub-atomic level. Not only does the act of observation itself influence the results, but even the intention to observe in a certain way. It looks increasingly as though the material universe is in a sense secondary to the conscious beings inhabiting it. In such a universe the idea of time travel is not the absurdity that it would have seemed in a Newtonian cosmos. Nor is the concept of virtual reality.

### 3. CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS

The basic classification system proposed on p. 32 will probably require modification. During the course of transcribing over 150 time slip cases onto 3"x5" record cards I have come across a number that present features which appear to blur the distinction between Type 3 and Type 4 cases. At present both types involve the witness being in surroundings that are clearly not in present time, and are visually well defined. In Type 4 a physical integration has also occurred, such that visual, oral, and tactile contact with other people may take place.

Unfortunately, a number of cases have emerged in which interaction may occur, but the visual images are less than sharp. In one instance, the witness observed a past view of a small church in sharp detail, but the congregation, some of whom spotted the witness, appeared colourless and semi transparent. In another case, involving a near collision between the witness's car and a vintage car being driven by a man in period clothing, no sound was heard. In other cases, interaction may be partial and not complete.

In a well known Australian case, a man driving through a small outback town saw what he thought was an historical pageant. But the crowd, all in early Victorian costume, seemed to be unaware of his vehicle's presence — all, that is, except a small boy who didn't take his piercing blue eyes away from it. The witness's wife stirred from her nap, and as he was about to tell her what was happening he saw in his rear view mirror that the road was now deserted. In a disturbing Liverpool case, a man saw a tram materialise, heading right at him. He braced for impact, but it passed right through him. Another witness who saw the incident said that the road had transformed into cobblestones as the tram appeared. Here is a time slip where the participants must have been grateful that complete integration did not occur! Similarly, in a case in Leeds, a

witness in the process of unknowingly entering a time slip appeared to pass through a person in contemporary time without noticing. I have been provisionally assigning the classification Type 3+ to such incidents, as they contain some features characteristic of Type 4 but fall short of complete integration for all witnesses. The Versailles case would now fall into this category. Such cases are in no way inconsistent with the Virtual Reality interpretation of time slips. In a computer game such as Lara Croft, most of the background and buildings are simulated by a more or less static digital model, whereas the characters are programmed to be capable of more sophisticated behaviour, as they have to interact with each other, and some objects. This could explain why the background detail is described in these cases as sharp and clear (as are, of course, the vanishing houses of Rougham, at the Type 2 level) but the people may seem more vague or colourless, as a result of glitches. A purely physical theory would presumably predict that buildings and people should be equally well defined. Another problem revolves around the distinction between time slips and other phenomena.

In defining the "time slip" I have adopted some arbitrary exclusion criteria:

- Ghosts of the stone tape variety, where a person from the past may be seen repeating a short segment of behaviour, without recognising the presence of the witness nor being able to communicate with him/her.
- Ghosts of the "earthbound" type, where what is seen may be a genuine spirit, able to communicate with witnesses, often anxious to send a message to some family member or to resolve some unfinished business.
- Cases suggestive of past life recall, where the witness feels that he/she is an active participant in the past activities. This may imply reincarnation or identification with the mind of some person in the past.

- Cases of missing or gained time on journeys unaccompanied by any other significant features. There are many of these on record, and I regard them as a phenomenon in their own right; however, missing time can occur in time slip cases, presumably due to errors in the process of returning the witnesses to their own time, and such cases are included.

One reason why I have rejected these kinds of account is that they are so commonplace, in paranormal terms, that they would swamp the distinctive time slip features that we are seeking to identify. [54] In most other grey areas I have tended to include rather than exclude. These include both short term repetitions of events and cases where the witness seems not to have been returned to his or her own time, but where the slip is of very short duration. For example, in one case a witness left his girlfriend while she obeyed a call of nature, and wandered for 15 minutes in a small wood. When he emerged at a slightly different place, he saw himself about to enter the wood. He had presumably jumped back in time by 15 minutes. He sought out his girlfriend, who confirmed that he had only just left her. They hurriedly departed. In a number of other cases time slips may be accompanied by missing time of various durations; often two or three hours, but in some cases longer. In one US case two men walking in an area prone to weird happenings experienced both a time slip and spatial changes, then arrived back home 30 hours late. A real problem arises when we consider cases that seem to include both temporal slips and changes in physical features.

Sometimes people are not returned to the right place, and, more disturbingly, sometimes not even the right universe. There is no consensus on how to define these cases, and various terminologies have been employed: Starfire Tor, who has developed a complex theoretical system, talks about changes between timelines, which are defined as individual experiential processes taking place on a certain frequency. The witness who is

returned to a different timeline will notice disturbing changes in his or her life; they may be trivial (changes in someone's eye colour, a tree growing where there was no tree before) or major (a change in one's work or personal life, such as the reappearance of an ex-partner in place of the present one, even the return of someone who died in the original timeline). Such phenomena often follow a near escape from death.

Other researchers talk about different dimensions or parallel universes. And of course the versatile virtual reality model can explain all such changes in terms of program error. (Needless to say, a theory that can potentially explain anything is impossible to subject to scientific testing; but none of the theories so far advanced do much better in this regard!) While I would like to exclude such cases, they do exist and I feel they need to be included. My criterion is whether they involve a straightforward time slip; if they appear to do so they are included. [55] A further issue is whether or not evidence is available concerning the past time that was visited. If it is, then it is a definite time slip. If there is some relevant evidence (as is the case in Rougham), then it is included. But what if there is no historical evidence at all?

In one case an American family looking for winter firewood found a dirt road they had never visited before. They cut lots of fine wood very quickly. Before leaving they left a red handkerchief on a tree to mark the road; but when they returned, there was no road. (They did spend an hour searching along the road, in case someone had mischievously moved the handkerchief!) Was this a road that existed hundreds of years in the past, or one that will exist sometime in the future? Or a road existing in a parallel universe? If it was a time slip, then it was certainly a Type 4 — an interaction that left the family with a truck load of wood has provided solid

enough evidence. So I would give cases like this the benefit of the doubt.

Research is in such an early stage in the time slip arena that another researcher attempting to classify types of case might well come up with a totally different system, and a completely different sample of cases. I am not too concerned whose system we adopt provided that it does what it was intended to do and does not fragment the time slip corpus. As we gain an understanding of what is going on we will eventually be able to define types of time slip based on knowledge rather than guesswork.

## 5. ANCIENT SITES AND TIME SLIPS

The idea of a connection between time slips and ancient sites first came to me when I was researching *The Bell*. In the story told by Greg Rowe, Otto Cerny had referred to the henge-like structure within which the past could be viewed. I had originally taken this usage of "henge" as figurative, but with the realisation that earth energy was (a) a factor in the vanishing house mystery, and (b) associated strongly with certain ancient sites, especially stone circles, I speculated that maybe our remote ancestors had realised that time could be distorted in certain locations and built henge structures to trap or intensify the energies responsible. Since then, I have come upon a lot of evidence supporting this notion.

Time distortions do occur in the vicinity of neolithic structures, and native American sources claim that people have been aware of the time slip phenomenon and have employed stone circles to delineate them for many centuries. Moreover, modern energy dowsers have also noticed the connection, in particular Maria Wheatley, who is arguably the leading energy dowsing specialist in the UK. [56]

## **Time related experiences at ancient sites**

Here is a sample of cases that suggest a connection between time slips and ancient stone structures.

- American travellers Linda Smith and her husband visited the Nine Ladies stone circle at Stanton Moor, Derby, in the 1990s. Arriving just after 9 a.m., they were examining the structure when Mr Smith found an old monocle with a gold rim. In the centre of the lens was a bright green triangle, about 1/3" wide. When they returned to their car, they found it was 3.45 p.m., although they were sure they could not have spent more than a couple of hours in the circle. Shortly afterwards, the green triangle disappeared.
- Two couples were visiting Chillingham Castle in Kent. On a cold January evening in the 2000s, the husbands decided to walk into the woods to view a large burial mound located there. They encountered a high wind during their walk, which their wives had not experienced, and when they returned, they heard the castle clock strike 10 (an hour or more later than they had expected). They noticed that the clock was round, with gold numerals and case. But it was subsequently found that the clock was a black lozenge shape and was not working. Years later it was replaced by a round gold coloured clock.
- On a lane between Larkhill and Stonehenge, two soldiers, who were trained observers, encountered a strange amber light, which approached their car then moved away. As they used their equipment to estimate its distance, it disappeared. They drove back to their base and were informed that they had been listed as AWOL for two days.
- Maria Wheatley has noted several apparent time slips on a lane near the Rollright Circle: cases include the sudden disappearance of a car with two occupants, the appearance of a large cat, and an

old horse-drawn gypsy caravan that disappeared. That area of the lane shows high levels of radioactivity.

- A lady named Cheryl was visiting the Tregwehelydd standing stone at Llantrisant, Anglesey. She had been told of a tradition of circling the stone nine times, clockwise. After she did, her friend spotted a beautiful old abbey that neither had noticed previously. When they checked with the local landowner, they were told that there was no abbey there, just an old church. Returning to the stone, they found the abbey had disappeared. In a later visit the witness tried again and found that two buildings in the landscape had transposed themselves. When she went around the stone anticlockwise, the buildings returned to their normal positions.

- In October 1916, Edith Olivier visited Avebury on a rainy night. Driving down a long avenue lined by megaliths, she reached a high bank, and got out. She noticed cottages amongst the stones and a lively village fair in progress. She resumed her drive. Returning in 1925, she was informed that the village fair had been stopped in 1850 and the avenue of megaliths had been torn down before 1800.

### **Time Slips and the Vision Quest**

The Unexplained Mysteries site carried a fascinating forum dealing with time travel and time slips in 2009. One of the contributors to a very interesting discussion was James Two Hats (posting as Jimmy T), who had not only experienced such phenomena himself, but could explain how they fitted in with Native American thinking. His own time slip was one of the most dramatic and long-lasting on record.

During a vigil in a cave as part of his special "vision quest" he experienced many frightening confrontations with spirits, a storm of incredible magnitude, and finally a fall through the cave floor which ended in another time which he felt was around 10,000 years in the

past. Here he was given tuition in the old ways by a number of ancient masters. The slip lasted several weeks, and finally, armed with special meditative techniques and a new aim in life, he was returned to the cave at a time soon after the slip had begun.

During a long period of questioning by others in the UM forum, Jimmy T made several highly significant observations, including these:

1. It is accepted that personal perceptive abilities play a major role in the experience of a time slip.
2. Candidates for higher teachings in one particular area may be taken to a location where a lake once existed in the remote past. If they can see the lake, this is evidence of their perceptual skills. But the more advanced ones can not only see the lake, but swim in it, interact with it, just as witnesses in a Type 4 slip do.
3. In the old, pre-European settlement period, tribes who detected an area where powerful energies could be employed would mark the spot with a circle of stones.

I contacted Jimmy via his website and asked if he would comment on these matters. In the subsequent exchange of emails he very generously provided a wealth of information about his own experiences following traditional teachings, and kindly gave me permission to quote him extensively on many issues relevant to the time slip phenomenon.

Some of the assertions that he makes seem to confirm many of the hypotheses put forward (often on very slender grounds, I must admit) in this report. Others have come as a real surprise. They imply that for many thousands of years people have existed who not only understand the nature of earth energy, but know precisely how to employ it. He also has no hesitation in identifying it with Chi, the life energy of the Chinese, and similar formulations in other

cultures. It is clear that Jimmy is a natural visionary, or seer, someone who has always had the ability to see beyond what most of us regard as normal life. But, lacking a cultural base which accepts such things, he has had problems coming to terms with his special talents, and has had to struggle to interpret what he sees.

When I explained about my interest in time slips, he responded in this way:

*These things fascinate me and they are my life's work. I suppose that all I can do is talk to you about this and possibly something of importance will jump across. Be warned, however, I have been critiqued by mental health professionals who told me some twenty years ago that I would need supervised medication and would not be able to support myself. I decided then that I would choose the old ways, and the old ways have stood by me. I haven't supported myself exceptionally well but I did get by, and I have not needed pills. What people learn when they investigate the things you show an interest in, are not the things that help you get on in life. Those who succeed in this, look beyond the norm. It was this way even in the olden times. People like me were not normal, even in the old cultures. We wound up living outside the edge of the village, apart from everything, and people were afraid of us. That's me. In your terms, I'm Type 4, or something beyond that. I'm Heyoka. It's an old thing, talked about in many cultures, not limited to Native America. Here there were three tests given, if someone encountered the old spirits on vision quest and met the lightning, as I did. I knew nothing about that when it happened to me, simply followed messages I received in meditation... and because I followed these things physically, something incredible happened... I'm sure that I'm considered a fraud by current Native Americans, as I have seen discussions on forums*

*dedicated to the exposure of fake Indians that label me as such. It's not my fault that this happened to me without traditional guidance, and I'm not seeking validation. ...You can quote me if you want and use what I write in part or in total. I probably would not be a reliable expert witness in court, though, since I have so much of this in my life that people jump directly to concluding that I'm a nut case... I read the article that you wrote about Rougham... I'm familiar with many of the topics you wrote about, such as The Bell, but any success I've personally achieved in "high strangeness" has come from following the old systems that modern cultures do not take seriously and not from technology of any kind. I've regularly practised meditation nearly my entire life and I also practice chi gong and some of the Shaolin methods for generating and controlling energy... it's fair to say that I have perceptions and consciousness at levels most other people do not... I believe that anyone has this potential but few of us use it. The test of the lake had that purpose, to separate out those who have a strong natural talent for this. Other people would not see the lake at all and perceiving a timeslip event should be much that way, depending partly on the ability of the individual to release the dominant view of the world. Part of my reason for exploring the mystery places was to discover whether anything real in ordinary terms would result if I let the world slip now and then. I've also wanted to know whether other people share these experiences with me, or at least prove to myself that it's all a product of my own mind and harmless to others... I've read that in the old times, and possibly even now, certain shamans were able to use these high energy places as physical transportation. It was a high level talent few people acquired, but those who achieved it could teleport from one place of high energy to another. Often these*

*places were marked by circular structures, naturally occurring as trees or stone formations, but in some cases these energy vortexes were only specific places on a flat plain, for example marked by nothing but an odd sensation when you passed over them. People would mark these spots with circles of stones. A shaman could move instantly from one to another even when the two points were separated by hundreds of miles. To me this seems to be partly based on energy and partly on perception. Maybe the two different vortexes harmonize, overlapping in terms of force, and if you know the place you intend to go to, perceiving that place instead of your starting point puts you there... A similar effect might explain the timeslips, as harmonies of energy surges that occur in the same place but apart in time. Human perception might be essential to this, as a catalytic force. Houses might not appear if no one is there to see them. Without a mind present the energy might remain formless, a fog that comes and goes without incident. The lake you asked about is one of the sacred places of the Cherokee, in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina...*

Already, Jimmy has not merely answered some of the points that I raised in my initial email, but presented a model of the time slip process, tying together the elements of earth energy and individual sensitivity in what seems to me a very convincing manner.

As I was exchanging emails with Jimmy, I came across a case, another one from Liverpool, that seems to illustrate some of the possibilities. A young girl, travelling on a bus with her father and sister, sat by herself on the other side of the vehicle. Although it was a warm sunny day, she saw a sudden flash of lightning strike the pavement ahead, coming dangerously close to a woman

pushing a strange double pram of a type new to her. The woman hurriedly tried to cover her pram with a red blanket as a heavy downpour began. Then she glanced up and the little girl received a sudden shock. She looked across to tell her father and was surprised to see that it was still bright and sunny.

Twenty years later, she had just bought a modern double buggy and had got some red covers to use with it. As she left the shop a huge clap of thunder occurred and lightning struck the pavement not far from her. Hurriedly she tried to cover her baby with one of the red blankets. Hearing the swish of tyres on the wet road, she looked up and her eyes met those of her younger self on the bus. Rushing home she phoned her father to see if he recalled her experience on that bus... happily, he did.

It became clear that, in common with quite a few other Americans, Jimmy's service in Vietnam was a pivotal experience in his life. Having scored highly on a Remote Viewing test, his special abilities were recognised, and he was recruited into a highly secret operation that aimed to exploit them in the wartime environment. His memories of that period are confused and some of them are horrific. Clearly techniques were used to wipe his memories of some of the procedures and perhaps to implant false memories. A therapist who treated him for post traumatic disorder afterwards informed him that many other Vietnam veterans were coming forward with similar stories. Over the years, he has managed to sort out some of the true from the false, but clearly the whole experience had a devastating effect on him. He sought support from Eastern sources such as Chi Gong and Buddhist meditation. Eventually he decided to seek the answers in his own ancestral tradition. It was this decision that led to perhaps the most extraordinary time slip ever reported.

In the Unexplained Mysteries forum mentioned above, he gave a summary of the experience, but here is the complete story, as

Jimmy outlined in an email of 19 March 2015: That first trip to the past that I mentioned did totally change my life, and it began in the same way Streiber received the offer. In one of his early books he describes events at his cabin in upper New York... he was repeatedly drawn to spend time at night in a cliffside cave near his home. Other people also went there when they visited his cabin and sometimes reported strange experiences such as visions of celebrations with ancient or angelic beings. One night when he felt the call, he walked down to the cave with a flashlight in his hand and sat for awhile on a stone inside. He felt things shifting and the rocks around him appeared to glow, and this frightened him enough that he got up and went home...

*I had a place like this in my life also. Cob Cave near Jasper, Arkansas, in what is now Buffalo National Park. Many times I felt a need to go there, and I wanted to camp there but even when it was still legal to do this (when I was a teenager and before the National Park Service claimed the land) I didn't have the balls for it. The place scared me. There was a place on the trail to it where I always felt the air change from warm to cold, it was like crossing a line I couldn't see and it happened in any season. I tried to point out the spot to other people but I was the only one who felt it. The cave is a beautiful place with a creek and a waterfall on the open side, and it frightened me down to my bones. In 1990 I was going through some hard personal times and decided to take up some of the old Indian ways and get back into my meditation as well, to try to put my life on a better course. Part of what happened involved a resurgence of connection with that cave. I felt there was someplace I had to go, and that was how it started. It was a very odd feeling, and it came during a period when I was having bizarre nightmares about things that came through the wall to drag me away. I couldn't remember what happened in the dreams, would wake up horrified with only a blank space of memory to explain it, but it was ruining my ability to deal with the world since I got very*

*little sleep. I was terrified of the dark, couldn't step out the door at night, wouldn't look at a window at night because I felt something might look back. I didn't feel I could keep going unless things changed, and something changed them, or at least allowed me to change them. There was a place I needed to go, and if I stood still and turned a degree at a time I could focus on the right direction as though I was homing in on a beacon of some sort. I got out a map and tried to find what was down that way. Cob Cave rang up, felt like the place. I said to myself. Is it Cob Cave? and something else in my mind said, Yes. This startled and scared me, because I'm very aware that hearing voices is often a sign of mental trouble. I'm also a curious person, so I started a conversation that continued for several weeks, involved many other intelligences, and included demonstrations of what was possible. For awhile I could do remarkable things, step out of body at will and travel anywhere I chose. Then my abilities suddenly withdrew and the voices explained that it wasn't that simple. I'd have to learn and do things, it's not a gift. I was disappointed because I'd convinced myself that some sudden natural talent had emerged and I was a highly developed person of some sort. Apparently I was not, I just had potential and something was interested in me. Now I was getting skeptical, so I asked some more questions, wanting to know whether this was a deal with the devil or something similar. What would I need to do? If I wanted to learn these things? You need to go to Cob Cave, on the night of the full moon in April, and spend the night there. What will happen? You'll be tested. Is this dangerous? Yes. What are the chances of passing this test? We think you have about a 50/50 chance of living through it. What happens if I don't go? We withdraw the offer, then you'll forget all this and your life goes back to normal. They gave me some advice about how to live for the next month, that being the amount of time I had to wait, and then they stopped talking. So for about a month I lived a very clean life, ate only the old foods, and wondered if I was crazy or not. When the time came, I had to go, or I would have lost*

*all self respect. I took portions of the old foods as offerings, took a bottle of ginger soda, and a book of matches. I drove down to the cave trailhead and sat in my car until after closing hours, and walked up to it as the sun went down, managing to avoid any late hikers or rangers by dodging behind trees and fading into the shadows here and there. When I was sure everyone else had gone I went into the cave, barely able to find my way to the ledge at the back, and then I knew I was there for the night no matter what because it was too dark to find my way out. I'm going to skip a lot that happened, because most of the night was an effort to scare me badly enough that I'd go away. If I had, I'd probably have run and fallen in the dark and been killed somehow. There were many visions that dealt with the past and the horrible things that happened to the people who had once lived there. These turned out to be true enough, but it was a part of history that I hadn't known. Ghostly apparitions confronted me and attacked me, and if I disregarded them as just illusion they elbowed me in the ribs or stabbed me with sharp objects. An unexplainable storm came up and focused directly on the valley and the mountain above me, and even blew through the cave itself. I thought at one point I might be in a tornado and lightning hit the mountain nine times. Each time I could hear the rocks behind me crackling and popping as the charge dissipated and it was like the lightning was looking for me, getting closer to me with each strike. I truly thought I was going to die and I was lying back to the wall as low as I could get, up until it all struck me as funny and I sat up and started laughing and cheering on the storm, things swirling around me in the wind, rocks falling from the cave roof, lightning flashing and thunder booming and the creek roaring past in full flood, and I felt completely in harmony with all of it. Within moments it all stopped, and I assumed it was all over, maybe I even passed the test. I felt good, except for being hungry and thirsty and cold. It was in the forties maybe and I was soaked, hadn't brought much with me. I went to a larger flatter rock in a dry spot and laid down to try and sleep, since*

*I had about an hour left before dawn and I couldn't find my way out safely until then. It was a very uncomfortable situation and I was shaking with the cold so sleep was out of the question. I didn't have time for sleep anyway as it turned out. As soon as I shut my eyes I saw a strange light filling the the cave and thought hmm, maybe I'm wrong, maybe it's sunup. When I opened my eyes I saw the light filling the rocks themselves. It was like vertical bands of energy were appearing just within the surface of the stones and the cave walls, glowing slowly brighter until all the rock was exuding light. I had a strong feeling that something important was going to happen :-):-... My famous last words no one would have heard if I had failed the test were, Uhoh. What happened, happened instantly. Suddenly the rock around me wasn't solid any longer, a circular area around me didn't have rock in it any more and I had been depending on that rock for support. I scrambled for a grip on something but started falling like I'd jumped out of a plane, straight down, going through hoops of light that now remind me of what Black Elk described as the Hoops of Nations, hoops within hoops within hoops and I was flashing through them with a whoosh. After what felt like a long fall with a sudden right turn, I found myself standing in the cave unharmed, but things were very different. It was the same place, but it was daytime, maybe early afternoon from the angle of the light. Late summer by the smell of things, a crispness already in the air. Across the hollow that borders the cave I saw a red clay slope dotted with huge widely spaced evergreen trees, where I should have seen rocky steps cut into the limestone by the CCC, second growth oak and hickory forest, and a stand of slender pawpaws. It was how things should have looked there, ten thousand years before, and I began to worry about how I was supposed to get home because I didn't appear to be waking up. I pinched myself and it hurt a lot but accomplished nothing. Then I heard voices to my left, people talking in a language I did not know, and my first thought was that I'd somehow fallen back in time and now some Indian people were going to torture me to*

death. They turned out to be friendly, though, and I stayed with them for several weeks before they sent me back. When I came back, I was on that same stone I fell through, lying flat on my back and fully conscious, dry and warm even inside my boots. All this is a modern version of the Heyoka legend and since I am only part Indian and probably a rather small part, and I did not grow up on the Rez or receive traditional training, I get the respect of very few Indian people who don't know me personally. My vision quest was never verified, and actually I didn't even know I was on vision quest. To me, I was keeping a strange appointment. I learned later of the marking dreams you have afterwards, the ones that validate you, and I had all those that are public knowledge. I'll never know if I had the third, the one that's still secret. I also didn't know what I'd stumbled into. Heyoka are in direct contact with ancient shamans from the remote past. Storms and lightning mark their presence. It's not considered a positive thing, it's more like a burden and most Heyoka have developed strange abilities they don't quite control. Most had difficulty living normal lives, saw more of the spirit world than of this one, and many went completely insane. We do jobs for the Wakanyan, the Old Ones. We alter the course of history. We are really good at a strange kind of warfare, show up in impossible places and do impossible things. We always have good stories to tell even though we can't prove much of it. We're good to have around, because we can't be killed by lightning and storms always go around us. Storms have gone around me ever since, even my neighbours who don't know about this remark upon it, how the storms seem to always split in half now, and go around.

I wanted to quote Jimmy's complete story because it is one of the most remarkable time slip stories to be reported. Not so much because of the duration, nor even the distance back in the past - if you can go back 500 or 2000 years, then 10,000 isn't that surprising - but because it was clearly planned and executed using

heaven knows what techniques by people to whom plucking someone from the distant future is merely part of the repertoire.

This is perhaps the nearest we will come to understanding the knowledge and mindset of our most distant ancestors, because clearly the concepts of earth energy, of the use of these energies, and the employment of stone circles and perhaps other neolithic features to mark and maybe even modulate the energies for specific purposes, were common to both them and the Wakanyan. In fact, Jimmy informed me that the teachings he received from the latter were largely concerned with the detection and employment of energy sources. Having provided all this information, and a lot more on a huge variety of arcane topics, Jimmy began to express an interest in Rougham. During one of his out-of-body travels—which he says differ from both the commonly accepted occult form of "astral projection" and the target-driven activities of the Remote Viewers, by virtue of his need to leapfrog from one energy centre to another to get from A to B—he was diverted from Manchester, his intended target, and ended up at what he later identified as Gypsy Lane.

This led him to a period of high activity, of dreams, visions, and contact with a non-human intelligence that is somehow involved. He had three theories about what was happening with the vanishing houses:

1. The houses are employed as traps for the unwary.
2. The houses are used to camouflage some other phenomenon or activity.
3. The mystery is designed to attract interest from people who might be able to act as intermediaries in a two-way dialogue.

Eventually, he decided that the third idea is the correct one, and he has had further contacts with the intelligences, whom he has met before in his travels. Briefly, he claims that they are what folklore has called "faeries," "little people," "elves," and the like. His view is very much like that of Jacques Vallee, whose *book Passport to Magonia* pointed out the many parallels between the faerie people and UFO occupants. Jimmy has never read that book, and his views come from experience rather than scholarly analysis. And of course, in numerous tales about these entities, distortions of time abound. [57]

By another of those odd coincidences, as I was reeling from Jimmy's revelations, another time slip case emerged from the Spacetime Slips site. In the summer of 2014, an American lady called Mimi had visited (for the second time) the Isle of Lunga in the Hebrides. Leaving the main group, she had taken an hour and a half walk across the island then at 3.15 realised she had only half an hour left to get back to the boat. She hurried as best she could and was surprised to find a fellow passenger sitting near the landing area. When she checked her watch, it still read 3.15... Later when she told her story, the skipper remarked calmly that she must have walked back "in fairy time." He said it was nothing unusual. Nor did her Scottish lady friend who had originally invited her on the outing. In fact she seemed somewhat envious because she had never experienced anything like it herself, although it was not uncommon in those parts. So, the Rougham Mystery has still not been solved. There is still much to be discovered.

## 6. MORE ABOUT DOWSING

Following the completion of my Rougham study, I came across more evidence regarding the dowsing phenomenon and its investigation. Having already dealt with Reddish's second small book above, I will briefly summarise two very interesting documents, one a survey of previous Western research, and the

second a most significant contribution by a well known Fortean researcher, which appears to have been totally ignored both by scientists and dowzers. The paper by George Hansen (1882), is an excellent survey of dowsing studies conducted in the USA and Europe. [58] Hansen points out that there are three major theoretical approaches underlying such studies: the Inference hypothesis, that dowzers unconsciously process their surroundings using knowledge of geological and geophysical factors that may be associated with the presence of water; the Physical hypothesis, that they are detecting some kind of energy; and the Psychic hypothesis, that dowzers have some special ESP ability.

Most studies have focussed on the Physical model, whereas many dowzers — and almost all energy dowzers — prefer to think that they have special powers. The first relevant study, in 1884, was by SPR founder Sir William Barrett, who found that some people were sensitive to magnetic fields, and many such studies have subsequently found that dowzers exhibit such sensitivity. With hindsight, we can see that they may have actually been demonstrating sensitivity to torsion, rather than magnetism; it would be easy enough to shield the magnetic sources using layers of clingfilm, as Reddish did, and determine whether this is the case.

Very interesting findings were reported in the 1950s by Solco Tromp, a professor of Geology. Most of his results were published in Dutch, so Hansen's synopsis is most valuable. Tromp found that dowzers were not detecting magnetic fields per se, but rather changes in field strength as they moved through the area. Tests to determine whether dowzers could detect previously unknown subsurface variations obtained results that correlated significantly with subsequent soil resistivity surveys. Subsequently other researchers have confirmed that dowzers can be sensitive to extraordinarily small fields: notably Yves Rodard in Paris, US based Zabož Harvalak, and Duane Chadwick & Larry Jensen, also

in the States. A few other researchers have failed to achieve statistically significant effects.

Experimental work subsequently seemed to decline in quality. Many researchers have designed procedures that had little relevance to the normal activities of dowzers: detecting small buried objects or caches of water, and so on, betraying an ignorance not only of dowsing but of basic geology. A dowser for water would not be seeking small isolated pockets that would be useless to a community or farm requiring a permanent source. A large mining company would not want to hire a dowser who offered them a site containing only a handful of small lumps of ore. Many of the later studies employed non-dowzers as subjects, getting, at best, highly equivocal results.

When Ian Peglar, of the British Society of Dowzers, reviewed Vincent Reddish's first book, *The D Force*, in 2004, he was extremely critical of much of the astronomer's approach. One of his comments was this: The thing that bugs me most about the book is the suggestion that it might be possible to take the human out of the equation, and build a machine which incorporates L-rods. He seems to assume that the only function of the human brain in dowsing is to hold and balance the rods. Truly a "nutty professor moment." [59] He was unaware, when he made this rather nasty and unjustified remark, that just such a machine had already been constructed in the late 1960s. The respected Fortean researcher, Ivan Sanderson, describes some of his experiments with dowsing in his fascinating book, *More Things*. [60] After the first day of a meeting of dowzers and researchers that he had organised, the author realised that while there were proponents of various theories present — the inference theory, the parapsychological theory, and the physical theory, as discussed previously — nobody there had ever suggested that "the whole business is purely physical and need have nothing to do with any living thing, human or otherwise" (p. 146).

So he decided to make a rudimentary dowsing device, equipped with L rods supported in a variety of tubes, all pointing slightly forward to remain parallel unless acted upon by outside forces, and suspended from a small motor running along a long stretched cable. To the surprise of most of the experts present, the rods all crossed when passing over buried water, full or empty pipes, etc., in the same places located by the dowzers the previous day. Sanderson clearly relished the discomfiture of the onlookers who had been committed to "special powers," psychological theories, and so on. The one group who seemed unperturbed were the engineers, pragmatists who used dowsing in their work and didn't pretend to understand how it worked. [61]

The general consensus of the scientists was that some force was at work — possibly electromagnetic, although the majority felt otherwise. One asked a very pertinent question: if this force was pervasive, and could influence the movements of comparatively large rods, how is it that sensitive microbalances, present in many laboratories, always generated consistent readings? It would be interesting to compare the L rods with some of the small torsion detectors employed by Kozyrev in his experiments; also interesting to see if the L rods could be miniaturised and employed in a more compact apparatus. [62] What does all this evidence suggest?

Firstly, it is clear that dowsing is more of a purely physical process than most people imagine. The earth energy waves exercise a direct effect on the dowsing equipment. L rods, at least, seem to be able to operate without any human connection at all. Perhaps we should take note of some of the Eastern Bloc research which suggests that torsion waves interact with certain physical configurations. Some shapes — e.g. the pyramid — can operate as passive torsion wave generators. Maybe the shape of the L rods is a factor. Secondly, however, it is also evident that the brain of the experienced dowser is by no means an unimportant factor in the whole process. His or her knowledge makes it possible to

assess the implications of the rods' response, determine how strong the signal is, and predict what might or might not be under the surface of the ground. An inexperienced dowser might know that a pipe or structure is down there, something that may need to be dug out before construction begins, and this would be enough for his purposes. But he may not be able to distinguish between different structures, different metals, and so on. If the aim is to find ore deposits, he would be unsuitable for the job. Thirdly, we still don't know exactly how the energy affects the rods. Reddish found evidence that the signal comes up through the dowser's body and into the rods; but Ivan Sanderson's mechanical dowser was physically connected to a telephone support cable attached to wooden stakes some distance from the locations where the subsurface objects were buried. We have a general idea of the process now, but the devil, as usual, will be in the detail.

Finally, it is unfortunate that many of the leading dowsers, at least in the UK, are unduly receptive to New Age ideas and methods. This colours and distorts their thinking, and leads them into stereotyped responses to situations that may have a very different interpretation. To read some of their literature, you need almost to steel yourself to face the torrent of fanciful adjectives —

"profound," "holy," "mystic," "sacred," etc. applied almost randomly amongst the basic information provided by the authors, which usually proves to be most interesting and even significant. It is no wonder that the number of researchers following up their ideas and findings is so small. To take one specific example: in her book about Avebury, Maria Wheatley provides a lot of very valuable information about the famous stone circle and its surroundings, and the energy lines that interlace the monumental structures. However, discussing one very significant feature, its ditch, which in its day would have been extremely deep and filled with water, she remarks: "Undoubtedly, the ditch served a metaphysical purpose — separating the sacred enclosure from the profane outer

regions." [63, p. 4] Given the role of water in the absorption and storage of torsion energy, another, less romantic notion, might be that the ditch was intended to act as a kind of battery, retaining the energy generated by the whole structure. We might also consider the henge-like structure at the Wenceslas mine, which apparently would also originally have contained water. In other words, before leaping to conclusions about "sacred enclosures" and so on, we should begin by considering the basic physical facts and seeking a more pragmatic interpretation

## NOTES, REFERENCES, AND HYPERLINKS

1. Moberly, C. A. E. & Jourdain, E. F. *An Adventure*, 1911 and many later editions. Although most researchers refer to this as one case, there were actually three separate events, the first involving both witnesses, and the second, a few months later, experienced by Miss Jourdain on her own. Then, in 1908, while taking photos, Miss Jourdain had a brief view of a gateway melting away. The authors also found similar stories from other witnesses, including a family which had lived near the gardens for two years. After moving away they returned for a visit and it became clear that they had never actually seen the contemporary Versailles during their residency.

2. Bennett, E. *Apparitions and Haunted Houses*, 1939. Little information was given about the witnesses in this book and I had mixed results in tracing them. Ruth Mary Wynne was born on 13 June 1897 in County Dublin, and the census of 1911 has her and her family living in The Vicarage, Rottingdean, Sussex. The 1939 Register has her living, still with her parents, in Longmeade, South Cambridgeshire. She is there described as "Single, School

Principal, Retired, Incapacitated." She finally died in Liskeard, Cornwall, in early 1964. In contrast, Evelyn Allington was the only member of the Allington family born in Suffolk in 1912, and no further information is available about her - no marriage, no children, no entry in the 1939 Register, and no record of her death. Either she married abroad, changed her name or emigrated.

3. For example, John Fairley and Simon Welfare in Arthur C. Clarke's *Chronicles of the Strange and Mysterious*, 1987, declare confidently that "the solution to this mystery may lie in Miss Wynne's original account... did her unfamiliarity with the local landscape cause her to make a mistake on her return visit... leading them to confuse one location with another?" (p. 115).

4. Chris quotes on his website

<http://jerome23.wordpress.com/tag/rougham-green/> excerpts from the book that he and his team wrote in the 1980s, *Spectral Suffolk*.

5. Telephone interview with Phil Sage, 1 March 2014.

6. Cobbold, J. *The Disappearing Garden*. *Amateur Gardening*, 20 December 1975, pp.22-23.

7. MacKenzie, A. *Adventures in Time*, 1997.

8. Telephone interview with Sandra Newman (Hardwick), 5 May 2014.

9. Telephone interview with Phil Sage, 8 March 2014.

10. Telephone interview with Sandra Newman, 9 May 2014.

11. Wheatley, N. *The Disappearing Garden*. *Suffolk Journal*, June 1997, pp. 20-21.

12. Gooderham, D. "Ghostly mansion spotted in Suffolk." *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10 October 2007. Gives the basic facts about the Batram case but the background information is full of errors.

13. Email from Peter Cornish and telephone conversation with Phil Sage.
14. Bury Free Press, 7 March 2014.
15. Bury Free Press, 21 March 2014
16. Forman, J. *The Mask of Time*, 1978. Wikipedia tells us that the first recorded use of the term was an sf book by Philip K. Dick, *Martian Timeslip*, 1964. However, the site IMDB claims that it was the title of a 30-minute TV film broadcast by the BBC on 25 November 1953, written by the veteran sf novelist Charles Eric Maine, and produced by Andrew Osborn. *Timeslip* was also a serial produced by ATV in 1970-1, starring Cheryl Burfield and Spencer Banks as time-travelling teenagers.
17. Randles, J. *Time Storms*, 2001. A phenomenon rather unlike time slips, in that it involves sinister fogs, missing time, and strange lights in the sky. However, some very interesting time slips are included.
18. Randles, J. *Supernatural Pennines*, 2002. Includes several time slips, which the author tends to explain in the same way as MacKenzie. One is a case from WWI where a woman had a vision of people near a river, and 60 years later realised that they had been wearing the fashions of the 1970s.
19. I have made several attempts to contact Parascience, through their website and via text, without success.
20. Penrose, E. *Adventure Unlimited*, 1958. 21.  
<http://www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/dowsing.htm>  
<http://tomgraves.org/oa/tlh/113>
22. Underwood, G. *The Pattern of the Past*, 1969. Also see Ian Pegler's excellent article (2013)

[http://www.ianpegler.co.uk/VCG/Geodetic system.pdf](http://www.ianpegler.co.uk/VCG/Geodetic%20system.pdf) which gives a concise introduction to Underwood's ideas.

23. Miller, H. and Broadhurst, P. *The Sun and the Serpent*, 1989. If you are ordering this book, note that there is another book of the same title, about the history of Buddhist scripture. Lonegren, S. Spiritual Dowsing, claims that there are two major energy leys within the grounds of Versailles, but gives no details, and doesn't make the connection with the Moberly-Jourdain adventure. Noted British energy dowser Maria Wheatley makes a clear connection between time slips and earth energies in her article, "The Stonehenge landscape—a wider perspective." Maria's system is more complex than most other researchers: she regards the Mary and Michael lines as the result of geological faulting.

24. See <http://ierome23.wordpress.com/category/paranormal/where> Chris describes his amazing experience in Charter Square. Coincidentally, I currently work part time at St James school. Also, Chris's mother's coworker saw a vanishing cottage; his uncle saw the Rougham house; Monica Place, who reported the Sicklesmere Road case, was one of Chris's teachers; and his sister ran a hamburger stall at the Elveden War Memorial opposite the house seen by the Coopers. It is worth noting also that at Liverpool, witnesses have also reported seeing themselves, as well as friends and family at times when they are known to be elsewhere.

25. Barclay, G. *Mind over Matter*, 1973. A survey of sources on chi-related phenomena in the martial arts, very readable. For a comprehensive, first-hand, account see: Frantzis, B. K. *The Power of Internal Martial Arts*, 1998.

26. Amadeo, Ferruccio. "Peculiarities and use of the Sufi meeting-place." In Shah, I. (Ed.) *Sufi Thought and Action*, 1990. The Sufis are sometimes called "the Masters of Time." They claim that past,

present and future are constantly interacting, and that "effects" sometimes precede "causes."

27. Tiller, W. A. "What are subtle energies?" *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 1993, 7(3), 293-304. A difficult paper with no concession to those of us with poor maths and little knowledge of advanced physics. Tiller's website gives access to a lot of his papers.

28. See Krippner, S. "A first-hand look at psychotronic generators." and Baird, R. B. "Pavliita generators—Psychic discoveries behind the Iron Curtain." Easily found online. Pavliita claimed that he had used ideas from alchemical and magical documents to discover over 60 different types of biological energy in the human body, and to activate them in a variety of ways.

29. Reddish, V. C. *The D-Force—A Remarkable Phenomenon*, 1993. The discovery that the D force reflects the presence of straight edges, and even indicates the presence of edges no longer there obviously suggests a non-time travel explanation for sightings of the houses via a kind of holographic effect. The role of water in absorbing and diffusing the force may explain why the houses tend to be seen on dry, sunny days.

30. Gribbin, J. "What lies beneath." *Focus*, July 2004. Reddish and the MoD link. Many articles are available online, including: Nachalov, Yu. V. "Theoretical basics of experimental phenomena." Survey of Russian work on Torsion Fields. Fox, H. "Now come torsion fields." Includes reference to early study by Tesla. Quantem, P. "Torsion Waves." Vesperman, G. C. Torsion field physics and torsion field communications. Online monograph giving information about US research

31. Witkowski, I. *The Truth about the Wunderwaffe*, 2nd Edition. 2013.  
Cook, N. *The Hunt for Zero Point*, 2002.

32. Agoston, T. *Blunder! How the US gave away Nazi Supersecrets to Russia*, 1985. The author got his information from Voss, the head of the Skoda works during Kammler's tenure there, and kept his word not to publish the information until after Voss's death. Meanwhile, the US government had managed to keep Kammler out of public gaze, leading Nick Cook to conclude that he had been acquired under Project Paperclip. Kammler was the most important Nazi not to be tried at Nuremberg, and indeed, was mentioned only three times. The only thing known about him until the publication of this book was his role as controller of V-weapon attacks against Britain. Very recently, evidence has emerged confirming Cook's theory (see Note 34 below).

33. Hunt, L. *Secret Agenda*, 1990. The first book to expose the US Government's secret recruitment of Nazi scientists. Available online.

34. Hydrick, C. P. *Critical Mass*, 1998. (Published online.) Farrell,

W. Reich of the Black Sun, 2000. See also:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2014146/Nazi-nuclear-waste-Hitlers-secret-A-bomb-programme-mine.html> US Intelligence was aware of an alleged test in 1944, and were keeping close surveillance on the test area, although their assessment was that such bombs "were not a likelihood in 1945." (The Carlock family of Bakersfield, CA, relatives of Gerlach, claim that the test took place in March 1945.) After the war, two eye-witness accounts were obtained (one from a German pilot, the other from an Italian diplomat) of the test. 560 kilograms of enriched uranium was seized from a U-boat that had been bound for Japan as the war ended. At that time, the Manhattan Project had reportedly failed to enrich enough material to make an A bomb, and Farrell suggests that the uranium from the German submarine was used to help manufacture the bombs dropped on Japan. Witnesses reportedly observed Oppenheimer himself examining the cargo, and an ex Manhattan Project member stated

that the uranium was so pure that it only required one pass through their process to develop it to weapons grade. (See an excellent TV documentary: <https://youtu.be/nrPus3pylBo> ) The Japanese were said to have had their A-bomb facility in occupied North Korea.

The same article reports that Kammler had been interrogated by Donald Richardson of the OSS prior to his acquisition by Project Paperclip. The story was that he committed suicide whilst under house arrest, which seems unlikely, to say the least. Richardson was a special aide to President Eisenhower, which tells us that the Bell had attracted a lot of high-level attention. No doubt at some time in the future we shall find out what success the US had in its further development. Many believe that the strange acorn-shaped object that fell into woodland at Kecksburg, Penn., on 9 December 1965, and was recovered by a special army unit after a long flight across Canada and the US (making a turn before descending) was a Bell that had presumably broken away from the craft it was propelling.

35. <http://www.americanantigravitv.com/files/articles/The-New-Nazi-Bell.pdf>

36. Stevens, H. Hitler's Suppressed and Still-Secret Weapons, Science and Technology, 2007. An extraordinary survey of German advanced military capability, including German plans to A-bomb New York, the fuel air bomb, ways of stopping engines, and death rays.

37. Email from Igor Witkowski, 30 June 2014.

38. Many German dowsers were interested in earth energies, and it was known that the SS ran an Institute for Occult Warfare (IOW) that included top dowsers such as Ludwig Straniak (subject of a Wikipedia entry). SS men were routinely taught dowsing.

39. Redfern, N. *The Pyramids and the Pentagon*, 2012. This report carries the implication that perhaps henges were built to attract geoplasmas. For information about Project Condign, see: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.Uk/20121026065214/http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonl yres/7D2BII E0-EA9F-45EA-8883-A3C00546E752/0/uap exec summary decOO.pdf> (This link gives access to the Executive Summary of the project report.)

40. Phillips, G. *The Templars and the Ark of the Covenant*, 2004. It is impossible to give a concise summary of this fascinating piece of investigation.

41. Two leading physicists have failed to answer emails on the matter, even though one has expressed an interest in the topic of time travel. Brian Whitworth responded in a very pleasant and open-minded fashion, however.

42. Novikov, I. D. *The River of Time*, 2001. For a discussion of time travel paradoxes by a noted philosopher, see Le Poidevin, R. *Travels in Four Dimensions*, 2003.

43. Dervish, H. B. M. *Journeys with a Sufi Master*, 1982.

44. Jung, C. G. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1963. In 1933, Jung revisited Ravenna with a lady friend, after a gap of 20 years. In the Baptistery of the Orthodox, he was surprised to see a set of huge mosaics, that he hadn't remembered. There were four mosaics depicting Christ's baptism in the Jordan, the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, a third which might have depicted Naaman being cleansed of leprosy, and most impressive, a fourth of Jesus saving Peter from the sea, which prompted a 20 minute discussion about the symbolism of baptism. After they left and returned to Zurich, Jung asked a friend who was planning a trip to Ravenna if he could get some photographs of the mosaics. The friend reported that there were no photos available because there were no mosaics there. Jung later stated that this was one of his

most remarkable experiences. For many years, his lady friend refused to accept that they had not observed real mosaics.

45. Puttock, B. Ghosts of Suffolk, 1998.

46. <http://www.bachelorsgrove.net/bachelors-grove-paranormal-activity.html>

46. Winkle, Michael. J. Dream Houses. Online document.

47. <http://mysteriousuniverse.org/2012/11/cases-of-time-slips/>

48. Fort, C. H. The Book of the Damned, 1919.

49. Patent US6548752, "System and method for generating a torsion field."

50. Mungus, H. "High strangeness at the Skinwalker Ranch," Pts 1-4, UFO Digest (online magazine). See also Alexander, J. B. UFOS: Myths, Conspiracies, and Realities. Available online. The major book is: Kelleher, C. & Knapp, G. Hunt for the Skinwalker, 2005.

52. Berlitz, C. The Bermuda Triangle, 191 A. For Gernon's summary of his experience, go to: / <http://www.electronicfog.com/>

53. Bernstein, P. Physicist uses NDEs to clarify the nature of time. Vital Signs, 22 , (2), 2003. A summary of Metod Saniga's theory. For access to a lot of time related articles go to the Russian Institute for Time Nature Exploration.

53. On The Paranormalist website, the posting by John Carlson of one single instance of missing time resulted in a thread of over 220 pages, many responses comprising other personal experiences. And, of course, there are many thousands of more conventional ghost and apparition cases.

54. Some cases are so bizarre and so convoluted that any simple classification is out of the question. One striking instance that

occurred in the West Country in the 1940s involved spatial distortions, a strange obelisk or standing stone, a disappearing house, and missing time. The only explanation that comes to mind is some kind of experiment conducted with the two witnesses by extradimensional beings! I include such rarities by default.

56. Wheatley, M. *Divining Ancient Sites*, 2014.

57. Vallee, J. *Passport to Magonia*, 1969

58. Hansen, G. P. Dowsing, a review of experimental evidence. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1982, 51 , 343-367.

59. Peglar's review was on the British Society of Dowsers' website a few years ago, but has since vanished. When I searched for it on the site to put a link here, neither "Reddish" nor "torsion" elicited any results, which tells us a lot about the breadth of vision of British dowsers these days.

60. Sanderson, Ivan. "Mechanical Dowsing," in *More Things* (1969). I bought this book on Abe to view Sanderson's account of his own time and dimensional slip in Haiti, part of a later edition that comprised both *Things* and its sequel. The discovery of this chapter took me by surprise. It is yet another sad commentary upon the state of scientific research in the last four decades that nobody has attempted to replicate Sanderson's results, nor even refer to them in published papers. Reddish quite independently had photos taken of his hand positions while his dowsing rods were crossing, showing that unconscious manual movements could not account for their response.

61. The use of dowsing to get quick results as a cheap alternative to more elaborate mechanical ways of scanning for underground structures in various branches of construction and engineering is not uncommon. An engineer at Sanderson's meeting used it regularly. During WWII, heavy bombing in London levelled whole areas, and trying to locate power cables for repair work by using

maps, when all landmarks had been obliterated, was well nigh impossible. Luckily, the London Electricity Board issued dowsing rods as part of the standard equipment for their inspectors... (Personal communication from Ivan Tyrell, whose father was an LEB inspector.)

62. The use of torsion waves to provide a means of rapid communication — if the Russian theories about their superluminal velocity is correct — has so far stalled. It is easy enough to generate torsion waves; the problem is that detection is a slow process. Even using sensitive tungsten detectors which show variations in conductivity when a torsion wave hits them, the response is slow to develop and then slow to decay. Maybe communicating with astronauts many light years away would be possible, albeit a long drawn-out process using Morse, but the prospects for transmitting high frequency signals such as TV broadcasts, and receiving them in real time are currently bleak. A technological breakthrough is required.

63. Wheatley, Maria & Taylor, B. Avebury: Sun, Moon and Earth Energies, 2nd ed. 2014. Despite my reservations about the authors' New Age affiliations, a book that includes some valuable data regarding the energy bands that can be detected on the standing stones not only by dowsing but by EM sensors, and the relatively high levels of radiation within the circle. This and other useful books can be ordered from: <http://www.theaveburyexperience.co.uk/>

## USEFUL WEBSITES

- Time Slip Accounts is a site run by American researcher Naomi West. It includes cases taken from a defunct site, Time Slip 8888, via the Internet Archive, and many newer cases. Besides time

slips, it also deals with dimensional shifts and glitches in the Matrix type cases. Link: <http://www.timeslipaccounts.blogspot.co.uk/>

- Time Slips is run by Myosotis, and includes well researched accounts of most of the major cases. <http://time-slips.blogspot.co.Uk/p/time-slips.html>
- Spacetime Slips, the site of Anita Holmes, carries many cases of time and dimensional slips copied from other sources, well presented, <https://spacetimeslip.wordpress.com/>
- About.Com has an excellent paranormal section, including time and dimensional cases:  
<http://paranormal.about.com/od/timeanddimensiontravel/a/aa012306.htm>
- Above Top Secret deals with a variety of borderline topics and has many postings of time slips and similar cases. I introduced the first edition of this report here with a post titled "Vanishing Houses and Time Slips, <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/index.php>
- The Paranomalist, run by John Carlson, who has a special interest in temporal phenomena, contains time slip cases and many missing time experiences. Carlson is a sensible and knowledgeable researcher, and has attracted many excellent first-hand accounts. <http://www.theparanomalist.com/>
- Unexplained Mysteries has several extremely significant time slip threads. <http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/>
- Forteana, the new home of the Fortean Times forums, contains all of the original data including many time slip threads, <https://forums.forteana.org/>

# Appendix 1: ROUGHAM ESTATE DOCUMENT OF 1763 TRANSCRIPT

*The Manor of Rougham with the members thus enrolled At the General Court Baron of William Castle Esq and Elizabeth Long Widow Lord and Lady of the said Manor Holden in and for the said Manor on Monday Twenty fifth Day of February in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty and in the thirty third year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and so forth Before Neale Ward Gent Steward there amongst other Things.*

*Whereas the Court here held the second Day of July one thousand seven hundred and forty eight William Cropley Gentleman and Elizabeth his Wife were admitted Tenants for the Term of their Respective Lives with remainder to the Heirs and assigns of the said William Cropley, To one enclosure of pasture called Chowns formerly divided into four pieces containing together by Estimation twelve Acres and one Rood more or less lying in Rougham aforesaid near the Way called Kingshall Street on the part of the East and a Wood formerly of Thomas Tillott Gent and then on part of Langham on the part of the West one Head thereof abutteth upon free Lands late of Edward Crispe North and the other Head upon the Way leading from Kingshall Green towards Rougham Green South And also to two pieces of Land containing by Estimation seven Acres more or less lying in the Field called Kingshall Field near to the lands Late of the said Edward Crispe on the part of the said Close called Chowns in part and a Wood called Collins Wood in part towards the North and a Wood called Atkinsons Wood in part and the Lands Late of the said Edward Crispe on the part of the West and Kingshall Green on the part of*

*the East one Head thereof abutteth upon Collins Lane leading from Rougham Green towards Bradfield North And also to one Close of pasture called Ravelsew or otherwise containing by Estimation eight Acres more or less lying near the Lands formerly of Thomas Nunn and afterwards of John Doe Gent on the part of the West and Kingshall Green on the part of the East one head thereof abutts upon the lands late of the said Edward Crispe towards the North and the other Head upon the Kings Way towards the South And Also to one Close of Land called Scalding containing by Estimation four Acres more or less lying near Kingshall Green West and a Wood late of the said Edward Crispe on the part of the East one Head thereof abutting upon the Kings Way.the South and the other Head upon Land late of the said Edward Crispe towards the North And Also to one Close of pasture (formerly divided into three pieces) called Maltywards containing by Estimation nine Acres and two roods more or less lying near to the Capital Messuage called Kingshall House and the Lands late of the said Edward Crispe on three parts and Kingshall Green in part towards the South.*

## **Notes**

Kingshall House is described as close to Maltywards and north of Kingshall Green. The Maltywards were a notable family in Georgian times and may perhaps have owned Kingshall House. If Kingshall Green in 1763 coincided with its position in the 1783 map then the house would have been to the north of the Grove, and therefore not a contender for the vanishing house

# The disappearing house near Rougham and Bradfield St George, Suffolk: A sceptical appraisal

Fiona Lloyd

## Abstract

*I took O level geology in the 1970s. Being in Fishguard meant we could do amazing field trips just a few miles from the school. It was on one of these trips that I first saw the house of my dreams. A Georgian manor house, set off the road, surrounded by trees and next to a farm. It was near to Aberieddy somewhere along the coast road between Fishguard and St Davids. Over the years I tried to locate it whenever I was on that road. Sometimes I saw it, sometimes I didn't. I half thought I might have imagined it, and it wasn't the only such house in that area.*

*It was only many years later after going out in the car with my then husband to look for it, that I finally found out that it did exist and was indeed almost exactly as I always saw it in my memory – even though it has mostly been fleeting glimpses as we went passed needing to be somewhere else. I also found that I had never really understood which road, and which part of that road it was on, but I had seen it on many occasions. (The house is called Trevacwn and today it's owned by the actor Jerome Flynn.)*

*It's because of this that I was intrigued by the story of a couple of girls seeing a very clear solid Georgian house while out on a walk one day, and who were never able to find it again. This was*

*accompanied by a series of anecdotes of the house being seen by other people in the area, but with no real consensus as to where it was materialising. So I decided to analyse the possibilities of this “mystery” being just a simple case of misremembering and self-deception. The human brain is complex and creative and not wholly reliable.*

*I have used as the basis for my study a well-presented investigation by Carl Grove called “The Rougham Mystery” and have interrogated the elements used by him to compile this analysis. I’m not going to repeat the story here nor Dr Grove’s investigation. I will instead take the elements of the story individually and you the reader can read that investigation and apply my analysis to it.*

## 1: The timeline of the story in relation to colloquial belief

With many mystery stories attached to a location, there is a procession of recorded anecdotes or witness reports, which have developed into a general background belief, by the general public, about the “mystery”. For instance, the stories of lake monsters, such as the Loch Ness monster, can be traced back to some recorded event. The Loch Ness monster story involves the banishing of the monster by St Columba (that clearly did not have a permanent effect). There comes eventually a point after which the story becomes more widely known and repeated – and often mis-repeated and altered. After this point the story acquires a certain amount of legitimacy in the minds of the public. People will have the idea implanted in their minds and therefore will be more susceptible to believing they have encountered whatever phenomenon is the subject of the story.

I cannot find any report of the phenomenon of a disappearing house in or around Rougham, before 1934, which is the date of the

letter by Ruth Wynne to Sir Ernest Bennet in response to his Radio broadcast of the same year.<sup>1</sup>

I would have to conclude that this is the first report of the story. It is mentioned in a subsequent book by Sir Ernest called *Apparitions and Haunted Houses* (1939). It is most likely that it is the inclusion of her letter, and that of her pupil/friend Evelyn Allington, that gave this story its first circulation, and possible hint of plausibility and legitimacy. This tale in isolation, having been repeated by word of mouth and with increasing error and inaccuracy could easily lead to the development of a locally accepted “myth”. For a country village of the 1930s it would have made exciting news for someone local to have been mentioned in a book by a famous politician.

There is a second recorded report of the mystery house being sighted but this is in 1975, as a story sent to *Amateur Gardening*. By 1975 the retelling of the story involving the ladies Wynne and Allington would have had plenty of time to circulate and gain local verity. This 1975 report also claims to have another anecdotal family tale of the house being seen by the witness’s great grandfather. I will explain why I discount this later when I examine the witnesses and their credibility.

There are some repeated retellings of the stories in local newspapers after 1975, many of which seem to be poorly researched and full of errors. The idea that this phenomenon has been occurring since the time of the great grandfather of one witness lends the story the status of a well-known part of local history. However, there is no other evidence to suggest that any appearance of the house occurred before 1934 and it has, I feel, gained that reputation in more recent times. 1934 is a LONG time

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<sup>1</sup> There are earlier accounts, but they were not recorded or published until Mr Cobbold’s account in *Amateur Gardening* (1975) and therefore are subject to doubt.

ago to most people these days. A story repeated often enough can be unconsciously accepted as truth without examination.

## 2: The witnesses

Let me say at the start, I mean no offence to anyone named in this and hope I am not guilty of any sort of judgement of them as individuals. I am merely pointing out that as human beings there is more going on than simple statements would imply. People who may sincerely believe they are reporting facts can, if properly questioned, reveal other insights and other motivations and emotions which may influence their understanding.

The phrase “I saw it with my own eyes” speaks volumes. We are all prisoners of our own bodies. How we see and interpret the world around us is a very complex process and unique to each individual. How we describe our interpretation to other humans may mean something entirely different to us than to the person to whom we are describing it.

For instance “I saw the plane go down in the field next to the farm” implies the speaker is describing an actual fact. “I think I saw the plane go down in a field next to the farm”, is entirely different. The speaker is not sure, they only think they saw the plane go down, and the field is not specified. It is “a field” not “the field”.

Such clarity can only be defined in face to face discussion, enabling the minor details which pull together a full picture to be teased out. It enables the memory of the individual to be prompted to ask itself questions, which can bring out details dormant through lack of use. It can rerun events and point out inconsistencies which the speaker has not considered. It can weed out what has been added not from recollection but from information gained after the event. (EG “The car was a blue Morris Minor”. “Are you sure it was a Morris Minor?” “Well it was definitely blue, and all the other people said they saw a blue Morris Minor”)

This is why I can only interpret the statements and stories of the witnesses in retrospect, by asking myself the questions I would have asked them and trying to determine the most likely answers based on human beings in general. This whole “Mystery” is based entirely on personal witness statements. So far there is no firm evidence of anything.

The original letter from Ruth Wynne is quite straightforward and unadorned. It describes the walk one October afternoon in 1926 when the narrator was 18 and her charge/ young friend, was 14.

I cannot find any record of Sir Ernest having interviewed her in person. He did write to the younger woman, Evelyn Allington, who broadly agreed with the details. I cannot find any record of either woman having been interviewed by investigators at any time after this, or of having mentioned the episode to anyone other than Ruth’s father, then Rector at St Marys in Rougham, who also never recorded it in any fashion or mentioned it to anyone, and a few nameless “locals” who treated the question with apparent derision ( though why they would I don’t know) and certainly never mentioned tales of a disappearing house. Since the young ladies were keen to find out who occupied the property it is odd that there is no record, from other sources, of the matter being pursued locally and more importantly, there is no evidence ever mentioned of a local story of a “Disappearing house”. This further indicates to me that there was no existing myth at this time. Since the pair were new to the area it would have been likely that some local would have imparted that kind of fireside “ghost story” to them, if it was already well known locally.

The only mention of Ruth Wynne in her lifetime is from a local historian who knew her, knew of the story, but never asked her about it.

The two witnesses in this instance would seem genuine and totally truthful in their recounting of the incident. However, eight years had passed, and the human brain is not always one hundred percent

accurate. Miss Allington claims they were going to Bradfield St George at the outset, taking a path they knew led there though I would assume that if they were exploring a new area that might not be true. This is not exactly in keeping with Ruth Wynnes account. She also seems to have them approach the house and church from a different direction. There are many questions I would have liked to ask them had they been available. For example, “what time after lunch did you set off?”

It was October, mostly open farmland and they were not familiar with the area. Since it starts to get dark around 4pm and they had to return, did they factor in a return journey in the dark? Were there streetlights in 1926 Rougham Green and adjoining villages? They were setting out across fields so did they intend to return the same way? Having spent a lot of my life walking across fields in the country I know that it can be nigh on impossible to stick to a straight line when walking open land. Hedges, ditches, fields with animals, bogs and various other obstacles, force detours. Though they kept the tower of the church in Bradfield St George in their sights, timing their journey would not have been so clear cut. So did they make that walk in October? Or did her memory overlay a later walk? Perhaps the walk that led to the house started somewhere else? At a different time? She admits it was sometime before they again took the path where they expected to see the house. After making other such forays into the countryside perhaps the two convinced themselves this was the walk where they had seen the house but really had confused it with another walk. That happens a lot, even to people who are regular walkers in an area.

Having said that, two things give these accounts some veracity. Firstly there is no attempt to add convincing details. It is a straightforward description of a walk. Or at least of one section of a walk. Secondly the facts as remembered are corroborated by a second person – up to a point.

Despite many later searches, a house as described by Ruth Wynne has not been identified in the area. Not even the wall, although she describes a type of brick common to Suffolk.

A much repeated reported sighting by a witness originally identified as James Cobbold is to my mind probably the least believable. It appeared in *Amateur Gardener* in 1975. As previously stated the chances of the Wynne/Allington story being in common knowledge by then is very probable. I do not know. but I would assume, that *Amateur Gardener* paid for printing material, and such a piece would be something of a draw for readers. Reading about the background of Mr Cobbold, as discovered by Carl Grove, his reliability as any kind of witness is thrown into doubt.

1) His name was given at one point as Palfrey; the same name as he gives for his Great Grandfather – which makes you wonder how this was his maternal great Grandfather he was talking about. Cobbold is a pen name used for the story.

2) His name is actually Pat Long and at the age of 9 he is recorded as having been domiciled in the home of the Butcher Mr Waylett, who he was with at the time of the sighting. (Also, this asks questions about the domestic arrangements and familial ties.)

3) When interviewed ,after the article appeared, by local historian Leonard Aves, he changed several details of the story.

4) He has something of a reputation locally as a “colourful character”.

5) Descriptions he gives of his great grandfather do not wholly correspond with any historical person of that name.

It’s probable, if the facts are correct, that at the time the article was printed Pat Long was 75 years old. Several points lead me to believe this was a story he concocted purely for the magazine. It was titled “The Disappearing Garden”, not house.

He attempts to add weight to his story by adding in other witnesses, no longer alive to verify his claim. Firstly, the mention of being told about the house shortly before seeing it. Secondly the mention of his mother verifying the myth and tying it to his great

grandfather with a very detailed description of the garden. Thirdly the rather over the top exclamation by Mr Waylett that it had appeared to him twice before – yet he had not mentioned it to the boy who lived with him?

He gives great detail of the garden- which he describes despite what could have only been a glimpse while trying to regain control of bolting horses- right down to the brickwork edging the flower beds and the varieties of flowers in them, consistent with his mother's recollection of her grandfather's description.

These details are more consistent with a practised story teller than a person recounting a strange, possibly disturbing occurrence. I'm inclined to think he knew of the Wynne/Allington story but not in detail and concocted a story for the magazine using the basic idea but giving it all an emphasis on the garden to comply with the general tenor of the publication.

There is a possible sighting in the 1940s which I am not inclined to include except in passing, since it was only identified in retrospect as a possible sighting and then only at the suggestion of someone already investigating the case. Again only the witness thought he saw a house and not the driver of the car. Since the house was on the right and the passenger seat is on the left, the likely hood of the passenger seeing past the driver with any clarity is small.

Sandra Harwick aged 14 was out to youth club one night in 1976. The stories of the disappearing house or garden would be local news and gossip about then, since a local author had a story printed in a magazine. She had promised to be home before dark and it was now dusk. She claims to have seen the house appear, but her description of the house is totally different to all other descriptions.

Two possibilities suggest themselves. Firstly she was late home and with the idea of the house in her mind she claimed to have

seen it as a means to divert her parents from any remonstrations or questions about why she was late. Secondly perhaps she had been told the story at Youth Club and as she was heading home along the road which was implicated as the place of sightings she got spooked and her imagination got the better of her.

She was interviewed by both local historians. Leonard Aves was obviously not convinced of her honesty and openly asked her angrily if she was lying. Pete Sage was apparently more willing to give her the benefit of the doubt. I find her report very difficult to believe and not in keeping with the previous reported sightings, in that the house is entirely different. Once again there is no corroboration.

Finally we have Jean Bartram. My instinctual response to her account of sighting the house is that this is a matter of matrimonial disagreement. She reports that she saw the house while travelling south on Kingshall street. She mentioned it to her husband, who was driving, and said she would like to stop and get a better look on the way back. He does not acknowledge seeing the house either at the time or after. On the return journey there is no house. He is adamant that they took the right road. However she is obviously not able to identify their route because she asks him if he is sure he did, to which he responds "There is only one road running south from Rougham." I find that odd because I doubt many people could tell you which point of the compass they were travelling towards when passing a house they had not even properly glanced at. That is usually worked out retrospectively. Jean did not know the area.

I think this is a case of her husband not seeing anything and thinking he would humour his wife but not actually paying attention to where they were. Pure conjecture on my part but it seems likely he did not take the same road and then refused to admit his mistake. His wife would not let the matter drop and he became more embarrassed and angry that he would be found out for the lie. Especially when she later found that there was a story of a

disappearing house in the area. Wanting the attention and probably to get one over on her husband she gave the story to the newspaper. When they were interviewed by Phil Sage the husband was openly derisive and scathing of his wife's recollection. In short I think a simple mistake, that a man did not want to admit to, got blown out of proportion. I would be inclined to believe that as time went on Jean elaborated and shaped her story with more detail than had occurred at the time. It was on a different side of the road to the two other sightings reported on this stretch of road.

### 3: Where was the sighting and where did the house appear?

In the case of the last four witnesses the position of the house they claim to have seen could be physically confirmed by the witnesses themselves. Three claim it was on west side of Kingshall street about level with a copse of trees called Colville Grove. Due to the regular shape of the copse it has been speculated that this could be the site of a building no longer standing.

Such areas of timber have been part of the landscape for hundreds of years and, since timber is a valuable and useful commodity, planting a stand of trees for personal use or for sale is an investment undertaken by many landowners. By studying the air photographs of the grove it is clear that the whole square is planted with fairly straight rows of trees.

Investigators speculated that this area had a straight avenue planted into it, which would indicate a driveway and that rubble could be found on the site, indicating a possible demolished building. Both could be explained by the Grove simply being a timber source. To take out trees there would need to be a route by which a cart could be driven in to be loaded. The rubble could have been bought in to fill potholes.

The account given by Misses Wynne and Allington is not so clear cut. Neither woman was interviewed in person at any time. Neither gives an exact starting point for the walk, merely stating they went for their normal afternoon walk. Miss Allington states they “*happened to choose a path leading to Bradfield St George*”. The use of the word “*happened*” might indicate that they had no idea where the path would lead when they set out on it.

Miss Wynne states that “*..we walked through the fields to look at the church of the neighbouring village, Bradfield St George*”. Nowhere does she state it was their intention from the outset of the walk . In fact, the following sentence seems to indicate they only walked towards the church when they happened to see it. “*In order to reach the church , which we could see plainly to our right, we had to pass through a farmyard*”.

Miss Allington makes no mention of the farmyard and states “*We passed the Church and Rectory and came out onto a road...*”. This seems to contradict Miss Wynne who states that after seeing the house “*We turned off the road along a footpath leading away to the right to the Church which was perhaps under a hundred yards off.*” which puts them on the other side of the church.

When it comes to a description of the house Miss Wynne has a far clearer memory than the younger Miss Allington.

Miss Wynne says “*Exactly opposite us on the further side of the road and flanking it, we saw a high wall of greenish-yellow bricks. The road ran past us for a few yards, then curved away from us to the left. We walked along the road, following the brick wall round the bend, where we came upon tall, wrought-iron gates set in the wall. I think the gates were shut, or one side may have been open. The wall continued on from the gates and disappeared round the curve of the road. Behind the wall and towering above it was a cluster of tall trees. From the gates, a drive led away among these trees to what was evidently a large house. We could just see a corner of the roof above a stucco front in which I remember*

*noticing some windows of Georgian design. The rest of the house was hidden by the branches of the trees."*

So where the ladies saw the house is actually unspecified and has to be guessed at by means of interpretation of the small clues given in their text.

To begin with let us assume they started from their Rectory. In 1926 the church of St Marys in Rougham had no on-site rectory. The house named as such today was only a church cottage in those days. In 1926 the nearest "Rectory" was set in the building known as the Chantry, in Rougham Green. This might explain Miss Wynnes remark that "*This house was one of the nearest large residences to our own, and it seemed odd that the occupants had not called.*" This could either mean that they had been called upon by families of similar status socially to her father or that they had been called upon by occupants of similar size houses. The Chantry would fit the latter though I have not found any photos of it from 1926.

This is where things get slightly more interesting.

Landscape Archaeology, looking for the past in present day features, often pinpoints lost buildings by the routing of roads that needed to go around them. The roads often remain long after the buildings have gone.

The larger lines are probably old field boundaries but in the area, directly in front of where the ladies might have been standing, there are smaller squares not accounted for on the map above.

However, it is not conclusive that they took that exact path. There are other footpaths leading to Bradfield St George and some change in the path could have brought them along the side of the churchyard. Or perhaps they took a detour on the second attempt at this walk and did not encounter the house, but the memory of both routes they took has combined the two into one route with two results?

# Conclusions

Personally, I am convinced the “Mystery” began with the letter of Ruth Wynne to Ernest Bennet in 1934. I believe it only came to general public knowledge after that and after entering the public psyche was assumed to be the answer to common mistakes of place or memory and used by some for their own personal goals.

The fact that the house seen by the two ladies was never seen by them again is not so unusual. Memory can play tricks and repeated slight inconsistencies or additional information, can reinforce a picture that is not correct. They may well have encountered the house but not recognised it because it no longer matched their memory of it.

The Lidar might invite a further investigation of the area south of the road by Hall Farm though I doubt a Georgian house is what the ladies saw. This has been assumed from the mention of Georgian style windows. They saw very little of the house through the trees and Miss Allington could not recall any detail of it, only an assumption of a house at the end of a drive.

The only fragment worth pursuing would be the wall and wrought iron gates. Greenish yellow brick is common to Suffolk so I am surprised that they never found any in the area. A listing of Broom Hall on Freewood Street, on the opposite site of the enclosed space shown above, states that yellow brick is used in some buttresses.. In many respects Broom Hall fits their initial description, bar the wall and wrought iron gates.

A site visit and some useable maps might one day pin point the house that the ladies saw ( though it could have been a derelict barn or outbuilding which they assumed was a house). The wall and the gates might be the very misplaced memory that has evolved into this mystery. Sadly much detail that could have been the definitive proof or otherwise was never gathered and now any conclusion can only be conjecture.

# The Alleged Haunting of Luibeilt Lodge

by

Peter A. McCue

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout mountainous areas of the UK, one can find simple buildings that provide basic shelter for passing climbers and walkers. They're usually left unlocked and are available for anyone to use, free of charge. Known as 'bothies', they're typically very spartan. For example, they may have platforms on which users can stretch out their sleeping bags, but if a bothy is busy, a latecomer might have to sleep on the floor.

People have experienced anomalous phenomena at bothies. *Magic Mountains*, a book by the late Rennie McOwan, cites a range of cases. For example, one evening in the mid-1970s, a David Trainer was in the Corroul Bothy in the Cairngorms, cooking a meal, when he sensed a presence and heard footsteps approaching the hut. But no one came in, and when he went outside to look, there was no one about. Later that night, while he was lying in his sleeping bag, he again heard footsteps coming up to the door.<sup>1</sup>

Ben Alder Bothy (also known as 'Ben Alder Cottage'), which is beside Loch Ericht in a remote part of the Central Highlands, has generated reports of ghostly phenomena (McOwan, *ibid.*, pp. 136-44). For example, one night, when Robert Grieve (later *Sir* Robert Grieve) and a friend were staying there, they heard footsteps entering the room next door. But when they checked, no one was there. Later, they heard what sounded like heavy nailed boots pacing up and down outside; and during brief pauses, they sensed

that they were being watched from a window, although when they went out with torches, they saw no one. They bedded down again, but once more heard footsteps entering the room next door. After some aimless tramping sounds, there was a moment's pause, and then the sound of heavy furniture being moved over the floor, although there was no furniture in the room at the time. When Grieve and his friend went through to it again, it was empty. They retired for the night. There were further noises, but nothing untoward occurred. On a different occasion, Nigel Hawkins, a friend of McOwan's, also heard noises at the bothy that were reminiscent of furniture being moved about.

Two recent podcasts in BBC Radio 4's *Uncanny* series focused on accounts from a man called Philip Macneill. Among other things, he described ghostly experiences that he had had at Luibeilt Lodge, a former stalker's cottage in the Scottish Highlands.<sup>2,3</sup>

As the crow flies, the lodge is about six miles north-east of the village of Kinlochleven. The walking distance to Luibeilt is some 10 miles (around 20 miles for a return trip). The route starts with a rough, ascending mountain path that eventually drops down to join an estate road. This runs past Loch Eilde Mór and Loch Eilde Beag and then continues, as a rough track, to Luibeilt Lodge. The relevant Ordnance Survey map is Landranger 41, *Ben Nevis, Fort William & surrounding area*.

Macneill made six visits to Luibeilt Lodge between 1973 and the summer of 2021. At the time of the first one, in early February 1973, he was 18. The two-storey lodge was then intact. It supposedly functioned as a bothy. The building is now a ruin. (The photograph shown here was taken by me in March 2022.)



**Luibeilt Lodge/P.A.McCue]**

## **PHILIP MACNEILL'S STORY**

Macneill's home life wasn't happy. He and his father rarely spoke to each other. At some point in his teens, Macneill left home, got a job, and moved into a basement flat at 39 Gibson Street in Glasgow, which he shared with another climber, called Bill. (NB: There are *two* Gibson Streets in Glasgow, one in the Calton area, to the east of the city centre, and one in the West End, near the University of Glasgow. I think it was probably the latter where Macneill shared a flat.) He spent much of his free time out in the hills with fellow members of the Langside Mountaineering Club. Judging from a Facebook page, which I can't now find, he graduated from the University of Manchester in 1985 and lives in Derbyshire.



**Gibson Street in Glasgow's West End/P.A.McCue]**

### **First visit to Luibeilt Lodge**

On 2 February 1973, Macneill and a friend, Jimmy Dunn, got a train from Glasgow to Balloch, which is at the southern end of Loch Lomond. From there, they hitched a lift to Kinlochleven. They spent the night there before setting out for Luibeilt Lodge the next day, which was a Saturday, probably arriving just before midday. There was snow on the ground. When they arrived, no one seemed to be about. Leaving their heavy bags in an outbuilding, they reportedly set off to do some climbing, returning about 9 p.m. But this puzzles me, because it would be getting dark around 5 p.m. at that time of year; and climbing or hillwalking after dark in wintry conditions would be hazardous. At any rate, according to Macneill, they managed to get into the building via a window, and it was much colder inside than outside. They looked around the house, which seemed to have

been abandoned suddenly. A table was set for a meal, with unused Christmas crackers on it. Each of the bedrooms was furnished, apart from a small one above the living room. Within it, there was a dismantled metal frame bed lying against a wall. On the edge of the window-ledge of the unfurnished bedroom, there was a rock, which was bigger than Macneill's hand. This is ambiguous, but I imagine that he was referring to the window-sill *within* the room rather than a ledge below the outside of the window.

About midnight, Macneill and Dunn got into their sleeping bags in the living room. They blew out the candles that were providing illumination. Almost immediately, they heard footsteps from the empty bedroom above, and then what sounded like the dismantled bed being pulled away from the wall and being re-assembled. A little later, there were sounds suggestive of the aforementioned rock being rolled about on the floor of that upstairs room. Eventually, Macneill fell asleep. But at 4 a.m., the living room 'erupted' with the sound of things flying about. Macneill's heart was beating so hard that Dunn was allegedly able to hear it! Then, suddenly, the place fell silent. Macneill fumbled for some matches and lit a candle, but it went flying across the room.<sup>4</sup> Things in the room 'erupted' again. Macneill lit another candle. There was a set of bookshelves in a corner of the room, and he could see books 'fluttering', with some being thrown off the shelves. The noises then reverted to the bedroom above, with footsteps, like those made by hard-soled shoes, coming from the corresponding corner of it. Then, the two men heard the 'thing' walking about elsewhere in the building. The footsteps then descended the spiral staircase, the bottom of which was just beyond the living room door. Armed with an ice axe, which he held over his head, Macneill swung the door open, but he saw nothing. He slammed the door shut and reportedly heard the footsteps retreating up the stairs to the empty bedroom. He felt that the 'thing' was very evil. He and Dunn packed up their things and left the building via a sash window. Looking up at the window of the

room above the living room, they noticed that the olive-green curtains there, which had previously been open, were now closed.

## **Aftermath**

For six months after these experiences, Macneill slept with a light on. He became increasingly afraid of going anywhere alone, and, in many ways, he felt that he was being followed. He immersed himself in reading about the paranormal, to try to get a handle on what had happened. As noted, he was sharing a flat in Glasgow. In the kitchen, behind a picture, there was a small 'door'. When it was open, one could see a steep and narrow stairway going down to a sub-basement area. He and his flatmate, Bill, decided that Macneill would roll up the carpet and that Bill would 'sound' the floorboards. Beneath the carpet were pieces of newspaper, laid out in the form of a cross. In the middle of it, there was some red material that looked like blood. Macneill pulled the paper away to see a trapdoor in the floorboards. At that point, a light-bulb in the kitchen dropped from its housing and smashed on the floor. 'Freaked out', Macneill immediately left the flat through a window. He ran to a railway station and returned to his parents' home, where he burst into tears. His father attributed his son's experiences at Luibeilt to seismic activity, and the light-bulb incident at the Glasgow flat to something also prosaic. It's not clear from the podcasts whether Macneill ever went back to live at the flat.

Dr Ciarán O'Keeffe, one of two guest commentators taking part in the podcasts, explained that Gibson Street had been the setting for a poltergeist case in 1958. It was mentioned, in a tongue-in-cheek editorial article, in *The Glasgow Herald*.<sup>5</sup> The phenomena supposedly induced three American students to give up their tenancy of a flat there.

## **Second visit to the lodge**

In late August 1973, Macneill and a sceptical friend, David, visited the lodge, arriving around midnight. They had a meal and then bedded down on the living room floor. As they blew out the candles, there was a noise from outside, like a plastic sack containing rubble being dragged over rubble. The sound got louder and louder. It came up to the window and then stopped. Then, it was heard again, right outside the door of the living room. According to Macneill, his hitherto sceptical friend was 'absolutely freaked out'. Macneill reached out with his right hand and clenched his fist, leaving his thumb and little finger extended. His hand cast a huge shadow on the ceiling.<sup>6</sup> (I presume that illumination was being provided by candlelight and/or torchlight.) Whether or not it was because of Macneill's 'challenge', the noise retreated towards a nearby river, accompanied by a sound of rushing air. Macneill considered that he'd 'conquered it' and he felt 'absolutely alive'. But in the morning, there was no sign of anything unusual.

### **Third visit to the lodge**

Macneill spent another night at Luibeilt Lodge, in the autumn of 1975. He and some fellow climbers were there because the building provided a convenient place to stay, not because they were investigating ghostly phenomena. It seems that nothing untoward occurred, although there were scribbles on the walls and ceilings (e.g. 'This house is haunted'), suggesting – if taken seriously – that at least one other person had had a paranormal experience there.

### **Fourth and fifth visits to the lodge**

Dates aren't specified for these visits, and it's not clear whether Macneill was accompanied by anyone else. According to Danny Robins, who hosted the podcasts, 'only relatively small-scale phenomena' (unspecified) were experienced.

### **Sixth visit to the lodge**

This visit occurred in the summer of 2021, by which time Macneill and Danny Robins had been in touch with each other. Macneill took along an audio recording device, and two friends accompanied him.<sup>7</sup> Apart from hearing some rocks tumbling and almost feeling that there was a 'presence', nothing notably strange occurred. The lodge was now a ruin, and Macneill bedded down in a tent. This was his first visit to Luibeilt in 39 years. If so, his fifth visit must have been around 1982.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Danny Robins received an email from a Gavin Jamieson, who referred to an item in the 26 April 1890 issue of the *Aberdeen Weekly News*. (I wonder whether that should be the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal, and General Advertiser for the North of Scotland*.) It mentioned a deer stalker who'd lived at Luibeilt Lodge. His wife had found him hanging from a cross-beam. However, judging from another press report, the hanging occurred in a barn, not in the house itself.<sup>8</sup> The man concerned, named 'John Macalpine', was reportedly about 40. But I'm not sure that we can attribute Macneill's experiences at the lodge to a suicide that had occurred there more than 80 years before his first visit. Intriguingly, though, I came across a follow-up item on the Luibeilt case in which Danny Robins mentioned that a one-year-old child, with the same name as the suicide victim, was living at 39 Gibson Street, Glasgow, in 1851, and would have been 40 in 1890.<sup>9</sup> If this information is correct, are we talking about the same person, or is this merely a coincidence regarding two different people with the same name and age?

In July 2021, Macneill posted an item on a UK climbers' internet forum, asking whether other people had had odd experiences at the lodge.<sup>10</sup> A respondent noted that while camping nearby a few years previously, he had seen a tree doubled over just outside the building,

and that one of his companions explained that it was an old technique used to ward off witches and evil spirits.

In January 2022, I messaged Macneill, via Facebook, asking him whether Jimmy Dunn (present during Macneill's first visit to Luibeilt), David (present during the second visit), and Bill (Macneill's former flatmate) were still alive, whether he had their contact details, and – if so – whether I could seek their recollections of the events in question. I also asked whether the Gibson Street mentioned was the one in the Calton area of Glasgow or the one in the West End of the city. I received no reply.<sup>11</sup> But subsequently, I discovered that in another episode of the *Uncanny* series,<sup>12</sup> Danny Robins had provided the following additional information about the Luibeilt case:

- (1) Macneill informed Robins that he'd lost touch with Jimmy Dunn, and that the last time they'd spoken, Jimmy had said that he didn't want to talk about the 1973 incident again. However, Robins explained that if one types 'Luibeilt' into Facebook, the first post that comes up is from Jimmy's daughter, and it confirms that Macneill's story is true. (I tried that, but I couldn't find the post, which may have been deleted.)
- (2) Macneill informed Robins that David (whose surname was apparently 'Gracey') was never the same after their visit to Luibeilt, that he suffered from bouts of depression, and that he was found dead one winter's day (year not specified), 'having succumbed to hypothermia in unexplained conditions'. (I'm not sure whether this is a direct quote from Macneill or whether Robins was paraphrasing.) Robins added that Macneill had passed on an email that he'd received from David's nephew, John. It confirmed that David had told his family about his experiences at Luibeilt.
- (3) Robins explained that Macneill had received an email from a man who'd been friends with a couple who had lived at the lodge in the early 1970s. They'd dropped out of society and had been trying to raise their family there. The woman gave birth to another baby, at Christmas (in 1972, presumably).

But the local doctor had given them a stark choice. As Robins put it, it was either ‘to leave [Luibeilt] for their family safety, or the child would be removed from them’. The doctor presumably felt that a remote house, lacking electricity and other basic amenities, wasn’t a fit place for a baby; and this may explain why, when Macneill and Dunn visited it in February 1973, the house looked as if it had been abandoned suddenly. But the status of the alleged occupants is unclear. For example, were they squatters, or were they renting the house from an estate? If it was the latter, did they have permission to use estate roads to drive to centres of population to procure provisions? Of course, if the story about them is true, it would be interesting to know whether they experienced any anomalous phenomena during their occupancy.

#### **UPDATE (DECEMBER 2024)**

A further *Uncanny* podcast about the Luibeilt case was released in December 2024, titled ‘Return to Luibeilt’.<sup>13</sup> It describes a visit to the site made by Danny Robins, his co-producer (Simon Barnard), and Phil Macneill. The date of the visit isn’t specified, but it may have been in the autumn of 2024. The three men walked in from Kinlochleven and camped overnight beside the outbuilding where the deer stalker had hanged himself in 1890. Robins and Barnard shared a tent. Macneill was in a tent by himself. At one point, Barnard thought that he heard a sound like a woman’s cry or scream, although he conceded that it could have been an animal. Of course, if he knew the story about the stalker’s wife, Jane, who discovered her husband hanging in the barn, his experience could be attributed to imagination or misinterpretation of an ordinary sound, particularly given that Robins didn’t hear it. However, both Robins and Macneill thought they heard footsteps.

A man called John Beech featured in the podcast. He referred to what he and a friend, Colin, had experienced at Luibeilt Lodge one

stormy autumn night about 10 years after Macneill's first visit. As they were laying out their sleeping bags downstairs, they heard someone walking about upstairs. Eventually, Beech and Colin ascended the stairs to check the room concerned, but they noticed that there were no floorboards there, just joists. Downstairs, they set about preparing a meal. The footsteps from upstairs resumed. Then, a sheet of corrugated metal, which had been tied in place to cover a window space, suddenly flew halfway across the room.

In 2009, Beech and Colin were attending a dinner of the Lochaber Mountaineering Club when someone present recalled an odd phenomenon that a few of them had collectively witnessed at Luibeilt Lodge. The round handle of the main door started moving, as if someone were trying to open the door by pulling the handle rather than pushing it. The movement ceased temporarily. When it resumed, a member of the party opened the door, but no one was to be seen. The movement recurred. But, again, when the door was opened, no one was there.

The podcast also includes some information from Phil Macneill that wasn't mentioned in the earlier podcasts. It concerned a set of four coffee cups owned by Bill, Macneill's flatmate at Gibson Street. One of them went missing and Bill suspected that Macneill had broken it. During his first visit to Luibeilt Lodge, the missing cup allegedly appeared beside Macneill's head. However, the podcast doesn't explain whether Macneill managed to retrieve it and return the item to Bill.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

I don't know whether Luibeilt Lodge ever had any formal or officially recognized status as a bothy. The Mountain Bothies Association (MBA), formed in 1965, exists to maintain remote buildings for which the owners have little or no use, so they can be used to provide shelter for hill-goers.<sup>14</sup> I contacted the MBA, asking whether the

lodge was ever listed as one of their bothies. Neil Stewart, MBA's Publicity Co-ordinator, informed me that 'Luibeilt has never been in the care of the MBA and [...] we have no records of its history'.

I'm not sure that there was necessarily anything mysterious or sinister about the Gibson Street flat. The incident with the light-bulb may have been a psychokinetic effect unconsciously manifested by Macneill himself; and the fact that there'd been an alleged poltergeist case in the street in 1958 may be purely coincidental.

The testimony of John Beech suggests that there has been a 'place-linked' aspect to the Luibeilt phenomena. However, that doesn't exclude the possibility that Macneill unwittingly acted as a catalyst for manifestations during his first two visits to Luibeilt.

#### Notes

1. McOwan, R. (1996). *Magic Mountains*, Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing. Pp. 149-50.

2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0012rvw>

3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0013218>

4. One might have thought that it would be easier and more effective to use a torch in such circumstances.

5. Phillips, A., 'Ghosts in Gibson Street', *The Glasgow Herald*, p. 6, 14 July 1958, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=GGqVawPscysC&dat=19580714&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>

6. According to Macneill, this was a 'demonic sign', but it's not clear to me what induced him to use that gesture.

7. In the audio recording, there's a point where he refers to himself as being there 'alone', but that shouldn't be taken too literally – he'd reportedly gone out for a walk while his companions slept in their tents.

8. <https://twitter.com/gmbjamieson/status/1476305740369477634?lang=en-GB>

9. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0013zd6>

10. [https://www.ukclimbing.com/forums/hill\\_talk/haunted\\_luibeilt-737509](https://www.ukclimbing.com/forums/hill_talk/haunted_luibeilt-737509)

11. I also e-mailed Danny Robins, the podcast host, seeking clarification about which Gibson Street Macneill had lived in. I had no response.

12. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00138wy>

13. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00268vg#>

14. <https://www.mountainbothies.org.uk/>

# A Miscellany of Strange Events

Dr John C. Tate

Throughout a longish life I have experienced a number of events that may, or may not, defy 'rational' explanation. Let me say at the beginning that I am no expert on probability theory, and it is perfectly possible that most of what follows is explicable by chance. That said, when highly correlated events have deep meaning to those involved, it could be perfectly rational to assume that some other force was at work, witness psychiatrist Carl Jung's story of the scarab beetle appearing on his window at a key moment in a patient's therapy. It was Jung who coined the term 'synchronicity' when referring to such meaningful coincidences (Jung, 1952, 2011). Others have followed in this path, notably Arthur Koestler, well known for his view that there may be 'something else' involved in such events (Koestler, 1972). None, taken in the singular, would appear particularly significant but, as a whole, they could point to something more important. "Jack Hunter urges us to see the intricate and, indeed, weird interconnections between various paranormal events... this hints at a reality far stranger than most of our models" (Parapsychological Association, 2022). I leave it to the reader to be the judge. It may well be that I am particularly prone to these events or that they are common among the population and that I simply recognise them more than most. I will begin with a vivid memory of events when I was in the reception class at primary school.

## **A463 West of Gospel End Village, Staffordshire**

It was 11th November 1950 and I was in the rear of my parents' 1935 Ford 'Ten' travelling towards Wombourne. My grandmother lay critically ill with cancer and we were returning to the bungalow in Station Road with food and other supplies.

Just past the entrance to Baggeridge Colliery (I can, even today, identify the exact spot, so vivid is the memory), I asked my mother what the time was. The reply was “*Five past eleven*”. What prompted me to do this, I do not know. When we arrived we were greeted with the news that Grandma Maude had passed away at eleven five precisely. What is more, the grandmother clock in the oak panelled hall had stopped at exactly this time. These events are as clear in my mind today as they were back in late 1950, such was their emotional impact. Was this, I wonder, what William Peters terms a “fly by event”? (Peters, 2022)?

### Old Warden Aerodrome, Bedfordshire

One beautiful early autumn day in 1992 we were with friends at a vintage aircraft display by the famed Shuttleworth Collection, with aircraft such as the Bristol Box Kite, SE5A and Gloster Gladiator being displayed. Wife June and friend Lorna went for a walk around the craft market while Lorna’s husband Brian and I watched the flying. On the girls’ return, June stated that she had experienced a rather strange feeling when passing a stall selling raffle tickets for a flight in either a Miles Magister or a De Havilland Tiger Moth. The Magister flight was of no interest but she just ‘knew’ that she had to purchase a ticket for me for the flight in the Moth, because if she did, I was going to win. So convinced was she that she purchased a Tiger Moth T shirt for me as a memento in advance! Later on, the draw was announced. We waited with bated breath. When the draw for the Moth was carried out, the winner was announced but it was certainly not me. “*So much for your psychic powers*”, says I to June, but I was grateful for the shirt anyway. Five minutes later, the tannoy sprang into life stating that the winner of the Moth flight had chickened out and that this part of the raffle had been re-drawn – “*Can J. Tate please*”

*report to the control tower*". Now, there was small problem here because both our first initials are 'J' and June paid for the ticket despite the flight being intended for me. There was no real time for her to argue and I was soon donning a flight suit and being lifted into the front cockpit of the lovely camouflaged biplane. I still have the T shirt and it is more than just a souvenir of a great flight in an aircraft that had served in the RAF during WW2.

### Washington State and London, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005

June & I were staying with my cousin Liz and her husband Mark just outside the little town of Woodland in Washington State (deep in Bigfoot Country!). On the morning of 7/7 the 'phone rang, early - bear in mind we were eight hours behind the UK - it was the neighbours - a quarter of a mile or so away. *"Tell your English relatives that bombs have gone off in London"* - typical American thoughtfulness. We turned on the television. Soon afterwards the 'phone rang again - it was daughter Natalie back in Halesowen to say that she had had a garbled message on the answer phone from June's brother Stephen to say that he was shaken up but OK and was coming home. We did not know that Stephen was in London.

Then Stephen's daughter Heather 'phoned. Stephen had been going to a conference in London that day on dyslexia - he ran a charity in Birmingham helping such people, being badly affected himself. I do not know the details of his route but after getting off the train at presumably Euston, he went to get a tube train to his destination. There was a crowd on the platform and when the next train arrived, everyone surged forward waiting for the doors to open. Stephen was towards the front. Suddenly, an overwhelming sense of terror took hold of him. Something inside of him was saying *"Don't get*

*on that train*". He seemed to have little option being shoved by the crowd but, in a blind panic, he forced his way back and managed to get back onto the platform. As he said, he was in a bad way and just stood there, shaking (and thinking what an idiot he was, now having to wait for the next train). The train he had forced his way off was entering the tunnel when there was a terrific puff of smoke and a big flash, followed by the blast wave. I do not know the details of what followed, I am not sure Stephen did, as he found himself disorientated and wandering around London not sure what to do. Entering Russell Square he inadvertently walked into the carnage there, which did not help. Anyway, he did get home in the end.

This report is second hand as Stephen passed away with cancer in 2011. His daughter Heather, who has a PhD in physical chemistry (whatever that is) and is currently a Research Fellow in Bio-medical Sciences at Birmingham University, has her own views. All Dad had was an attack of claustrophobia, is her 'scientific' explanation, and then she usually adds a caveat that he did seem to be psychic, though she doesn't really believe in such things. Frankly, she confuses me!

June, Natalie and Heather can confirm the story - make of it what you will. I should add that the premonition, if that's what it was, only saved him for six years.

### Birmingham City Centre, June 2012

My cousin Major Frank Tate was killed on 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> September 1944 leading the breakout from the Bridge Too Far in Arnhem. I told his story in a local newspaper prior to the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration in September 2019 (Tate, 2019), prior to

which a fuller account had been published by my friend Dilip Sarkar MBE (Sarkar, 2018). Dilip's book was formally launched by the publishers at the Commemoration in Arnhem on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

No one really knew what had happened to Frank up until the 1990s. Then at my University I got lumbered with organising a field trip each year to Holland for our postgraduate and final year undergraduate students. This gave me the opportunity to visit the Arnhem together with the Airborne Museum and to cut a long story short I found out a lot, pretty quickly. Why no one else had not done this before, I really don't know. Fast forward to more recent times and things got a little weird.

In the summer of 2013 I had a medical appointment in the middle of Birmingham, was early and sat down in Centenary Square to kill time. Walking on and thinking that I had cut things a little tight time-wise, I approached the Hall of Memory built to honour Birmingham's dead in both wars. Suddenly, this 'feeling' came over me - I have got to go inside! This was the first time I had seen the place open. The pull was irresistible and, despite there not being much time, I went inside. I had had feelings like this before (and have since). Facing me were two plinths each with steps and a thick book, parchment pages, listing the dead in Victorian copper plate. I looked in the right hand one -WW2. There were probably six names per page and there in the middle of the open page (locked under glass) was my cousin's name! Chance again? Each book must have contained thousands of names & hundreds of pages, the WW2 one including those killed in the blitz. I jokingly told the curator that "*I have just had a paranormal experience*" and mused on probabilities again.

A friend, a devout Buddhist, later on told me about her experiences with a medium colleague. Intrigued, I paid this lady (June Ward) a visit out of curiosity. She blew my mind - a story in itself. June lived some way away (Walsall) and I thought I would follow things up with someone more local - Patricia Redmond ([www.patriciaredmond.co.uk](http://www.patriciaredmond.co.uk)). I now call her "*The White Witch Who Lives in the Castle!*" Despite my giving her only my first name, when she met me by the car she told me that I had recently had a near fatal illness & that I had attended Hales Owen Grammar School!! Both true. Anyway, when we settled down after coffee she immediately appeared to be in touch with my Mother - detail all frighteningly accurate. Then she said, "*There is someone called Frank who desperately wants to get in touch - he has asked your Mom to move aside*". The communicator was adamant that he was my cousin and that he had died violently in battle, with the medium being shown a map of NW Europe. The truth dawned. Then came the punch - (I have copious notes on this) "*He is telling me the word proud*". Yes, I thought, we are all proud of you, Frank T. "*No*" came the answer, "*He is saying he is proud of YOU*". The message went on that I was the only person who had ever bothered to find out the truth and that he and his men were acknowledging my efforts to discover their fate and tell their story.

Here we have two linked events - the Hall of Memory thing and then the medium - did Frank really want to get in touch, or is it all baloney??? I do not have any answers but I just had to go to Arnhem for the 75th Commemoration and a lot of good has now come out of our visit, including Frank's story being included in his old School's Roll of Honour (Brazell and Wood, undated), and the setting up a link between Gelderland schools and that attended by my grandson, with the latter

getting his photo in the centre spread of the Daily Mirror on 21st September 2019 to boot! Our family group had chosen him (as the latest 'Tate') to be its representative in a group photograph of relatives of those featured in Dilip's book. The 'Bridge Too Far' formed an appropriate background.

### Haden Hill House, Old Hill, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough

In the summer of 2015 June and I were having coffee one Sunday afternoon in the small restaurant in that part of the House open to the public. We usually did this following our weekly constitutional in the surrounding park. On the wall next to the door was a large scale very old map of the immediate vicinity and while we were waiting to be served I cast my local historian's eye over it. Now we had long-standing friends Glenise and Alan who lived locally in the area covered by the map. Some years before their house had suffered from serious subsidence requiring them to vacate the property while contractors put in some deep underpinning due to one side of the house tipping over as foundations on that side had partly collapsed. Underneath were discovered the remains of an old railway cutting, obviously inadequately filled in. The side of them was directly below the middle of the house. This problem had not been picked up by either the builders, planners or solicitors involved. Glenise and Alan were not happy bunnies.

On the said map was drawn the actual line of the railway – leading to a long defunct brick works. So much for planners' and solicitors' searches, I mused. I called over to June to come and take a look, and as I said the words "*Glenise and Alan's house*", the door next to the map opened and in walked Glenise and Alan, complete with grandchild. It was their first visit to Haden Hill House for several years.

## Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Dudley Metropolitan Borough

I am not quite sure of the date on this one – probably around 2011-2012. We were shopping at 'Merry Hell' as this icon of materialism is known locally, and were walking down a short corridor to the toilets. On the wall was (and still is) a mural painted by pupils at a local school in Pensnett. Now back in the early 1980s I used to take a young lad from Pensnett pike fishing. His name was Paul Bloomer. Inevitably we lost touch when he left school. Around a decade or so later, there was Paul on the BBC Regional News having obtained a degree in Fine Art and now being offered a place to study at the Royal Academy – a real success story for a local lad. I preened myself somewhat at having played a small part in his development.

On passing the mural I speculated to June that perhaps the school involved was the one that Paul had attended. It was strange how Paul came to mind at that moment. Now it should be noted that I had had no contact with Paul for probably three decades or so. When I got home, there on my email was one from Paul Bloomer! Paul was now living at Bigton in the Shetland Isles having married a Scots girl he had met at the Royal Academy. He had been searching for me for some time. Paul is now an accomplished artist and teaches Art at the University of the Highlands and Islands. His work can be viewed at: [www.kilmorakgallery.co.uk](http://www.kilmorakgallery.co.uk). We are now regularly in touch again – usually on angling matters. Serendipity or what?

## Talbot Hotel, Stourbridge, West Midlands

In March of 2018, along with my daughter Natalie, and her partner Ian, I went on a ghost walk at the Talbot, organised by HD Paranormal and led by Jayne Harris, no less. The Hotel was built in the 1630s as a residence for the Foley Family. The tour was fascinating, no more so than the exploration of the extensive tunnel system underneath. We conducted a number of experiments, to no avail, concluding with a Ouija board experiment in an upstairs room, which was draped in tapestries, adorned with paintings and containing lovely old furniture. Yes, the glass moved, but close observation by yours truly was not conclusive.

I arrived home late and the following morning June and I were in the dining room when there was, to me at least, the loud ringing of a telephone. It appeared to be an old fashioned bell type effort, very different from the buzz of our modern telephone, located outside in the hallway. It was also much louder. What surprised me was that June claimed not to have heard a thing. What followed could no doubt be put down to chance. The (new) hob in the kitchen was dead, an element in the (new) oven had burned out, the internet was down and our actual telephone in the hallway was dead as well. All discovered in a matter of a few minutes. Had 'something' followed me home after my encounter with the Ouija board, determined to make its presence known? The bill for the damage, if that is what it was, was well over £200, nearer £300 in reality. I shall discount the flat tyre on the car which occurred a day or two later. I just wish some mathematician, somewhere, could produce a chance probability figure for these sorts of occurrences. Is there anyone out there willing to have go? Come on you statisticians.

Birmingham University Library, the Algarve, Portugal and  
Booth's Bookshop, Hay on Wye

Here are some examples of the Library Angel at work. Well before the advent of the Internet, I had a postgraduate student, (now Dr) Emma Fieldhouse, working on a Master's dissertation. Her work included a number of Venn diagrams. Emma, being a rigorous sort of person, wished to properly acknowledge source. I could not help so she left spaces in the reference positions for attention later on. There were more important academic matters to be considered and there the (minor) issue rested, despite cursory searches in a number of published databases. One day, Emma went into the Library at Birmingham University to do some work and plonked herself into a study booth. There was a book on the desk, a history of mathematics. It was open at a page on mathematician John Venn.

In 2007 I was writing a book on angling and June and I were on holiday in the Algarve. Sitting in the hotel lounge, I amused myself by working on the draft of a chapter on paranormal experiences by fishermen, often in remote places. I had doubts about including this in the book but pressed on regardless. (Incidentally, some readers later regarded it as the highlight of the book). The story of one Alfred Burtoo came to mind but I needed to check the details of his amazing UFO encounter and the reference was back home in our local library. Behind me, twenty feet away, was a bookcase containing novels, which could be borrowed by the guests. Next morning June, a whodunnit addict, went to the case to change her book. Casting my eye across the shelves, I noticed a small, black tome that seemed familiar. It was Timothy Good's "*Alien Base*" (Good, 1999). Intrigued, I took it from the shelf and opened it – facing me on the page was the story of Alfred Burtoo! There were over one hundred books in the case and it was the only non-fiction work – when

thinking of Alf the night before, I had been within twenty feet of the reference and we were over a thousand miles from home. The next day, the book had disappeared. Earlier, when writing the first chapter, I wanted to check on Albert Oldfield's roach catches (Albert was very much in the angling news in the 1960s). Thinking that the monthly journal *Midland Angler* might be a place to start, I took one from the many on my file – it fell open and there was a piece on roach by Albert Oldfield.

Back sometime in the 'noughties' I was shown a book by the wife of a colleague that had intrigued her. It was Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln's "*The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*", (Baigent, et al. 1982), a previous best seller. I thought that it might be worth buying a copy but did nothing about it. Some years later, we were in the Town of Books, Hay on Wye and I thought I might look for a copy, as this was an obvious place to locate a book long out of print. I enquired at a number of bookshops, to no avail, and finished up in the lovely black and white building that was Booth's main outlet in the centre of the town. A cursory enquiry at the desk showed that nothing was on the computer system so I carried on browsing. Sometime later, Management had decided she wanted a cup of tea and, being up in the higher level, we walked towards the staircase that led to the foyer. On the left, at the top of the stairs, was a section on Gardening and Horticulture. On one of the middle shelves, a large book was precariously protruding from the rest. I do not to this day know why (it may have been that 'feeling'), but I walked over and tried to push said tome back into place. It would not budge. Removing it, I found the reason why, another book was behind it. I removed the offending book and was staggered to find that it was none other than Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln's "*The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*". Please do not ask.

Bed Four, Intensive Care Unit, Sandwell General Hospital,  
West Bromwich (and other locations)

In September of 2004 I was struck down with a bacterial infection and, me being me, the strain I had contracted almost inevitably proved fatal. Forty-four days in critical care, most of it in an induced coma, was an experience one really doesn't want. During this period, my ex-colleague and fellow economist Mike had come over to see me, not realising that I was connected to fourteen monitors, had been clinically dead twice and was totally out of things! Mike and I had been our university department's economics team for nearly thirty years and were pretty well synchronised as far as our subject went. Deep in my coma, I had the experience of meeting Mike who had a theoretical issue in economics that was bothering him. We sorted it, apparently. A couple of years later, we were at a social event and I told Mike the story. Now Mike is very much a man grounded in materialism, but he almost fell off his chair on hearing this. We were both A level examiners at the time of my illness and he had on his person a model answer sent to him by fellow examiners for comment. He was sure that our colleagues had not answered their own question correctly and sought my advice (he was right). The paper had not left his pocket the whole time and he had not even tried to mention it to me for obvious reasons. Telepathy or chance?

Hallucinations are weird experiences. I had many which I discussed with a consultant anaesthetist afterwards. Most were obviously caused by the drugs in my body but two stand out. One involved standing in a certain spot on the Lickey Hills, south of Birmingham and trying to launch a glider in a gale – a full sized one. The Bittell Reservoirs with sailing yachts were below. Some years later, we were walking on the hills, not a place we visit often, and came across this very

place. The psychological punch in my abdomen was a shock. This was the glider spot, seemingly identical to the one I 'imagined'! The recognition was instant and felt painfully. The second involved standing outside a fishing tackle shop near the east side of Bridgnorth Bridge. Every time we go near that part of the road, I get the same feeling – one of absolute unmitigated terror, so bad I avoid that particular place these days. In my coma, on the brink of death, could I have actually visited these two locations, I wonder, in an out of body experience? I have no idea, but the emotional reaction is immensely powerful.

### Clent Hills, Worcestershire

I will conclude with a story told to me by a couple of school mates, both of whom were in the professions and whose word I trust implicitly, having known them both for well over sixty years (sadly, one of them has recently passed on). We were all in the same year - the Class of '56 - at Hales Owen Grammar School, then in north Worcestershire. With us was a chap called John Smith, with whom I shared a bench in woodwork class in our first year. I lost touch with John, but a number of my compatriots did not. After leaving school, John apparently was something of a loner, never having married and with few close friends. He lived by himself and worked in the laboratory at Albright and Wilson's plant in Oldbury. Sadly, John died relatively young, of cancer and it was left to his remaining school mates to arrange his funeral and finalise his affairs.

The decision was taken to scatter his ashes in a beautiful and remote location on the local Clent Hills, a beauty spot belonging to the National Trust. It was a bitterly cold January day, year uncertain, when seven of our cohort met on the Hills

to say goodbye to their old school mate. Having surreptitiously executed their mission, the group stood in silence thoughtfully contemplating the scene. At this juncture, a lone walker approached and engaged the group with a casual greeting, expressing his curiosity as to why they stood in such a solemn manner. When told of the reason, the gentleman stepped back in shock. *“Until recently I was John Smith’s boss and possibly best mate at Albright and Wilson’s”*. To say that everyone was taken aback was an understatement. It was the first time that this person has visited the Hills in some years and as he said, he had felt a strange urge that morning to visit the Hills, despite the cold. That he should finish up in the correct place at pretty well the correct time must be one for Messrs Koestler and Jung. My school mates remarked that this person was the only soul that the group encountered on that unwelcoming winter morning - co-incidence, or something much more profound?

#### Final Thoughts: Para-statistics

In an earlier section, I have made a plea for statisticians to get involved with the chance element to all this. In a previous article, I have detailed another, possibly even more strange, event in the Society for Psychological Research's *Paranormal Review* (Tate, 2018). Are such co-incidences amenable to rigorous statistical analysis? Or, as my mathematician cousin Elizabeth feels, are at least some beyond mathematics and a matter for philosophy? Leo Ruickbie, Editor of the *Paranormal Review* had, at the time, been experimenting with adding the prefix 'para' to particular academic subjects (*para-sociology*, *para-geography*, for example) and I had added my contribution with *para-economics*, or *paranomics* (Tate, 2020, 2021).

So here is my plea for *para-statistics*. Take my experience back in 1950. I ask the time, my grandmother breathes her last and the clock stops, all at 11:05am. Three related, highly meaningful events happen simultaneously. Sure, this could be chance, but what is the probability of this occurring? Those with long memories may remember Aime Michel and the idea of 'orthoteny', involving flying saucer sightings allegedly being in a straight line between Bayonne and Vichy in France (the so called BAVIC line) (Michel, 1958). It was none other than Donald Menzel who had a go, convincingly in my book, at demonstrating the role of chance in this apparent alignment (Menzel, 1964). Chance probabilities of less than 0.05 seem the norm in the social sciences (i.e. 95% confidence that the effect is real); 0.01 generates more enthusiasm, though there is an element of arbitrariness in these cut off points. They are known as 'p' values. Physicists go for much lower figures, as discussed by Stuart Ritchie in a recent critical commentary on scientific practice (Ritchie, 2021).

Wouldn't supposed examples of synchronicity carry a lot more credibility with the wider scientific community if there was a generally accepted methodology to calculate 'p' values in relation to the sort of experiences cited above? Maybe there is. Probability theory has been in common use in parapsychology since at least the work of J.B. Rhine in the 1930s in relation to psychokinesis and things like card guessing but the author has only come across one example of its application in relation to the debate over synchronicity. In a Book Review by Chris Phillips in the *Journal for the Society for Psychical Research* (Phillips, 2021), while accepting that "*Estimating the probability of coincidences occurring by chance is notoriously difficult*" (Phillips, page 161), he cites calculations by David Marks with very high

degrees of statistical significance (Marks, 2020). Is this not what is needed? This author gave up statistics over fifty years ago and this is complex stuff. Is this route a dead end? Here I need to hand over to the specialists - you must be out there ... somewhere!

*“The plural of anecdote is data”*

(Raymond Wolfinger, quoted in Michael Prescott, 2021)

.....  
Addendum to “A Miscellany of Strange Events”

Since submitting the above for publication, there have been three incidents that may be of interest.

A Strange Telephone Connection

I was out in the countryside and reached for my 'phone to ring home. Before I could dial, I heard a familiar voice coming from the 'phone. It was my cousin who lived in Maastricht in the Netherlands. He was as surprised as I was as he had just picked up his 'phone to speak to a friend. Nonetheless we were connected without either of us having dialled a thing! We had a laugh and followed this up with emails in the evening, agreeing that it was somewhat spooky. The 'phone conversation was the last we ever had as my cousin died from a sudden heart attack three days later.

The Library Angel?

I asked daughter Natalie to buy me a book for Christmas 2023: George Haas and William Saunders, “The Cydonia Codex”, published in 2005. Natalie responded that the prices on Amazon for second hand copies were very high but that she would keep looking. She turned up on Christmas Day with a

parcel containing said book which she had located on a UK based second hand online book store. I opened the parcel and took out the book, in near pristine condition, and inside was a dedication *“To John, George J Haas”*.

*“How on earth did you get the author to sign it for me?”* says I to daughter. *“What are you talking about”* says Natalie, informing me that she had never even opened the book or even taken it out of its packaging. Here we have a book, signed by the leading author, presumably in north America, finding its way to the UK and finishing up in the hands of a person with the identical name of the original purchaser!

### Synchronicity?

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at around 5pm, we were leaving our local supermarket car park and proceeding around the adjacent traffic island. On our left was a office block that was once occupied by our old firm of solicitors with whom we had deposited the top copy of our house deeds some three decades before. This firm had subsequently been taken over by another firm of solicitors which had latterly vacated the premises and 'disappeared'. The missing deeds were not really a problem as we had photocopies and with digitisation at the Land Registry paper deeds are pretty redundant anyway. However, I was moved to remark to my wife that I wondered where the documents had finished up and perhaps we should try to locate them.

At around 11am the following morning, some eighteen hours later, we had a letter from a firm of solicitors in nearby Kidderminster stating that they were holding our deeds and, among other options, would we care to collect them? This after over thirty years!

There is no obvious explanation for the latter two events other than chance. Or is there? As for the telephone connection, I have no explanation whatsoever ver to you, good reader.

## Acknowledgement

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# REVIEWS

Chris Aubeck, *Saucers: Tracing the Origins of Disc-Shaped UFOs*, Amazon, 2023, ISBN: 9798862476095. 409 pp.  
Mark Fox

There's a view of religious, spiritual - and, by extension, anomalous - experiencing that has been around for nigh-on fifty years and which goes by various names. Of these names, *constructivism* is one. In essence, constructivists claim that experiences such as those undergone by mystics are not just *shaped* by language, culture, and expectation but somehow *created* - or *constructed* - by these things. It's a popular view, particularly within academia where it sits comfortably within a prevailing ethos that often champions both diversity and variety of experience (it tends to rule out

'common core' theories of various 'types' of religious experience, for example) and a reductionistic view of anything 'supernatural' or 'anomalous.'

I thought of the constructivist attitude to anomalous phenomena throughout my reading of Chris Aubeck's *Saucers*. Specifically: of whether or not his thesis throughout this book lent support to the view or not. And herein hangs a tale...

In fact, there really is no way to review this fascinating study without providing the story with which it begins. Which, in essence, is this: on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1947, businessman and aviator Kenneth Arnold was flying his CallAir A-2 aeroplane near Mount Rainier, Washington. At approximately 10,000 feet he saw nine shining objects moving erratically between the mountain peaks, estimating their velocity at an incredible 1,700 miles per hour. The objects were nothing he could identify and reading his earliest accounts of his curious aerial 'encounter' gives the distinct impression that he

was troubled by what he saw: not least because the 'craft' had no tails and resembled nothing he'd ever seen. Once landed in Yakima he related what he'd observed to a friend and the story quickly reached the press. Somehow - and in a crucial sense this is the essence of the book - the phrase 'flying saucer' found its way into the ensuing press furore and the term itself was born.

Except, as Aubeck shows, the process wasn't anywhere near as straightforward as this and as he attempts to peel back the layers underlying the origin and rapid spread of 'flying saucer' we discover not what Arnold saw - it doesn't really seem possible to do this - but, rather, where the term was actually 'birthed' and why it came to proliferate so quickly and so widely. In fact, towards the middle of the book there's a real surprise regarding the origin of the term which we'll come to shortly.

Aubeck leaves the reader in little doubt that Arnold's sighting, and its immediate aftermath, did much to lead to the ubiquity of the term 'flying saucer.' But pre-1947, he asserts, the saucer *shape* of UFOs was more-or-less non-existent and post-1980 has appeared in only 5.9% of sighting reports to date: a percentage surpassed by lights, circles, triangles, fireballs, 'unknown' and 'other.' Various databases are presented and analysed to demonstrate this, including one which currently houses no fewer than 146,000 reports. Hence, it seems, 'flying saucer' as a descriptor appeared relatively late on the UFO 'scene', shone brightly for a few decades, and had pretty much gone by 1980. 'To put it into perspective,' writes Aubeck, 'that's shorter than the music career of the Rolling Stones to date.'

Conventional UFOlogical wisdom has long had it that 'flying saucer' arose because a journalist misheard (or misquoted) Arnold: that Arnold was denoting motion when he used 'saucer' - as in a saucer's motion when it skips, stone-like, across water - but that

this became later transmuted into a description of the objects' *shapes*. Hence the term's origin was in a kind of 'error' which then dictated the detail - certainly the shape - of subsequently-sighted UFOs. Aubeck's book shows this to be something of a simplification and herein lies its big surprise. For as the author demonstrates convincingly and at length, 'flying saucer', in fact, originated in the 1880s as a term to denote the small circular targets used in trap and clay pigeon shooting. By 1900 the term had spread and it continued to do so right up to the late 1930s and early 40s when shooting sports were suspended. Yet even here the descriptor showed resilience: the term being used to denote the targets used for gunnery practice during the war. Only by the mid-1950s did it stop being used within the shooting context, and this because its meaning had been transferred to the rapidly-proliferating body of UFO reports.

In parallel with this process of descriptor 'evolution', the early decades of the twentieth century saw a rapid permeation of popular culture by disc-shaped, unusual, craft: most markedly in novels, short stories, 'pulp' magazines and other sources of speculative fiction. Further, and as part of this, crucial additional UFO *motifs* from within later flying saucer lore such as trips through space and encounters with aliens featured prominently. In sum: fiction preceded fact. As Aubeck asserts: 'For those interested in the history of UFOs, this continuity between speculative fiction and later eyewitness testimony should prove thought-provoking. It's like a chicken and egg situation, except in this case we know which came first.'

There's more to Aubeck's book even than this but you get the gist. It's not about whether or not these craft actually exist, or even about what Arnold saw. Instead, it's all about...well, the taking shape of a *shape*. And herein lies the constructivist rub. Because, in ways analogous to those of the constructivists before him,

Aubeck too seems to be arguing strongly that cultural-linguistic expectation did more than simply shape a pre-existing, pre-linguistic phenomenon. Instead it went *further* than this. So, as regards the preponderance of disc-shaped craft in the various forms of popular Western speculative fiction of the early twentieth-century, he writes: 'There was no precedent for the phenomena they portrayed.' In other words: popular culture *created* the flying *saucer*. Or constructed it, if you prefer. *Ex nihilo*.

Aubeck provides copious illustrations throughout this extremely well-produced book as he sets about proving his points. This is necessary because flying saucers were quintessentially visual phenomena but it also serves to reinforce those self-same points. It's one thing to be told that 'flying saucers' as a term existed before late-June 1947, quite another to be shown page after page of actual headlines spanning several decades prior to this which absolutely prove it. Succour for constructivists, then? Support from a most unlikely quarter? Well, not quite. Taken on its own merits, *Saucers* makes a compelling case: at least in places. But it raises crucial questions whilst begging a fair few also. On the one hand, it appears that in the case of flying saucers expectation created at least one crucial detail of experience: *shape*. Not in Arnold's own case, however. He drew something akin to a bat or boomerang shape and steadfastly denied that he'd seen saucer shapes thereafter. Ufological history also shows that by the 1990s flying *triangles* were being sighted in considerable numbers: particularly in Europe. Might this morph from saucer shape to triangle shape provide a good way of testing Aubeck's contentions in *Saucers*? On the surface at least, it is not clear that triangles had assumed anything like the potency or ubiquity as a pre-internet 'meme' by the 1990s comparable to that of saucers by the late-1940s. There is at the very least the opportunity for a 'test' study here.

I was also struck throughout my reading of *Saucers* by the overall complexity of Aubeck's analysis. It might be argued that this was necessitated because societal and cultural processes are themselves complex. However, those committed to the use of Occam's Razor for the understanding of anomalous phenomena might want to point to something simpler: that the objects *themselves*, perhaps, might have undergone a process of willed and deliberate shapeshifting. Much is made in some quarters of the tricksterish nature of many Fortean phenomena and, as is commonly acknowledged, tricksters are shapeshifters *par excellence*. Might we be being presented with another example of their wily ways here?

Finally, and regardless of how Aubeck's conclusions might be viewed, even the briefest examination of the Ufological literature as it has unfolded over many decades reveals the inescapable fact that *something* has been repeatedly seen by witnesses: in many cases something with no discernible conventional explanation. Cultural-linguistic expectation might indeed 'clothe' this. But it surely doesn't entirely *create* it. Particularly in that significant number of high strangeness cases where, having no concepts whatsoever on which to 'hang' their experiences, subjects actually do *not* know what it is that they have encountered - often experiencing extreme anxiety as a result. The October 1973 Pascagoula 'abduction' is a case in point but examples are legion.

The constructivist hypothesis with regard to religious and spiritual experiencing might well go further than Aubeck goes in the case of UFOs in *Saucers*. But the potential for the application of his analysis to the very different realm of religious and spiritual experience is at least theoretically there. As above, so within, perhaps. Regardless: those seeking to build bridges between the wide variety of phenomena within the equally wide field of

anomalistics might well find much to ponder in Aubeck's excellent work.

Mark Fox is a freelance researcher and writer with an interest in all things anomalous. You can find him at [www.markfox.co.uk](http://www.markfox.co.uk)

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Thalbourne, M.A. (2005) ‘The Pros and Cons of Being a Parapsychologist’. *Society for Psychological Research: Paranormal Review*, 36, 21-22

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