

ISSUE 137
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seriously
strange
magazine

**The Ghost
Laser Grid**

ALSO INSIDE:

Professional Body Changes

K2 Meter Review

Numerology

Spiritual Investigation Methods

Investigation CCTV

How to Hunt Monsters

Spirit Mediumship Perspectives

Crop Circles 2011

UFO Ideologies

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The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena was formed in 1981 to research and education about a wide range of anomalous phenomena.

These fall into the broad categories of psychic phenomena, earth mysteries, Ufology and Fortean phenomena. ASSAP holds no corporate views and the views expressed by individual authors are their own.

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Address: ASSAP, PO Box 371, Stroud, GL6 1EL
Tel: 0845 652 1648 www.assap.ac.uk

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ASSAP News Team:

Editor: Dave Wood (Contact us at news@assap.ac.uk)
Regular Contributors: Lionel Fanthorpe, Ian Topham, Maurice Townsend
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Are you on Email?

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

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ASSAP Affiliate Groups:

Groups provide incidental support for ASSAP's charitable objects by acting as forums for research. Should you wish to affiliate or start a group please contact assap@assap.ac.uk

ANGLIA PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION SOCIETY (APIS)

Operates in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire area. Contact Paul Keech at apismail@ntlworld.com or phone 01234 771 351 or visit www.apisteamspirit.co.uk

GHANON is a group covering Wirral, Cheshire and North Wales. Membership by invitation. Contactingq@ghanon.org.uk or visit www.ghanon.org.uk

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

MELTON PARANORMAL RESEARCH SOCIETY (MPRS)

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

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THE MIDLANDS GHOST RESEARCH SOCIETY (TMGRS)

Operates in the Coventry area. Visit www.tmgrs.co.uk or email Amanda and Martin at info@tmgrs.co.uk

OPEN MIND INVESTIGATIONS (OMI) Operates in the Kent and Hampshire areas. Contact Cara via the website on www.omi-uk.org

PARANORMAL SITE INVESTIGATORS (PSI)

Operates in Wiltshire and surrounding area and produces e-newsletters and research journals. Contact Dave or Nicky through www.p-s-i.org.uk HauntedSwindon.com TheOrbZone.com or 0845 6521529.

PARASEARCH

operates in Worcestershire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands. Visit www.parasearch.org.uk or phone: 0121 550 8874 / 07505 323443 or send an SAE to Parasearch, 15 Brier Mill Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3HA.

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

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

STAFFORDSHIRE PARANORMAL STUDY GROUP (SPSG)

Monthly meetings in Stoke on Trent. Contact Terri at thespsg@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.spsg.org.uk

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATIONS UK (SI) are based in Devon and Somerset and Cornwall but also operate further afield, mainly focusing on hauntings. Contact Stuart at stuart@supernaturalinvestigations.org.uk

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Professional Body: Draft Recommendations

More general information on the next page

1. ASSAP Register of Professional Investigators

Migrate from the current National Register of ASSAP Approved Investigators (NRAAI) to the National Register of Professional Investigators (NRPI).

ASSAP currently operates a NRAAI comprising a register of investigators who have been trained, assessed and approved by ASSAP. This will be migrated to the NRPI using different approval procedures.

2. CRB checks for Investigators

Many investigators apply for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks before working with vulnerable clients. This will be mandatory for all ASSAP members who choose to be part of the NRPI.

3. Free Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance

Adequate insurance is very important for all investigators. ASSAP members who choose to be part of the NRPI will receive free insurance for cases undertaken in that capacity. These do not just apply to cases allocated by ASSAP, but applies to all cases undertaken as part of the NRPI. This is an extension of the free insurance currently provided to AAls, which only applies to ASSAP allocated cases.

4. Discounted rates for standalone Insurance

Those members who want standalone insurance, for example for running conferences or heritage events, will receive a 20% discount on Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

5. Professional Code of Ethics for the ASSAP NRPI

The current Code of Conduct for the NRAAI will be revised to apply to the NRPI. This code will focus on minimum ethical standards to be applied in cases undertaken whilst promoting oneself as a member of the NRPI. This code will apply to those ASSAP members who choose to join the NRPI.

6. Migrate Affiliated Groups to ASSAP Register of Professional Groups

ASSAP currently affiliates investigation groups where one lead investigator is an AAI. Groups can choose to join the ASSAP RPG where regular members of that group are part of the ASSAP NRPI. That group will then receive free insurance when operating as an RPG.

7. Creation of an Investigator class of ASSAP Membership

At present ASSAP members are either Associate Members or Approved Investigators. The Investigator class of membership will be the basis of membership of the ASSAP NRPI. ASSAP members would need to choose to 'upgrade' their membership should they wish to.

ASSAP membership presently costs £15 per year. ASSAP Investigator membership (and membership of the ASSAP NRPI) will cost £20 per year. This £20 includes the benefits of the £15 class of membership, and is not in addition to it.

This additional £5 per year cost will pay for three-yearly CRB checks. The professional indemnity and public liability insurance will be free.

8. Qualifications for Professional Investigators

AAls will be migrated towards a formal qualification that will be optional for investigators. These investigators will be allocated cases from ASSAP in the same way AAls presently do. This migration will take place over a period of time.

9. Establishment of an Ethics Panel

A panel to consider specific ethical issues and to pass general research proposals and any changes to the Code of Ethics through.

10. Public Education

To work with the general public and clients to raise awareness of ethical issues.

These are just recommendations. If you would like to see anything change email us at chairman@assap.ac.uk

4 Professional Body Changes

Professional Body: Draft Recommendations

These recommendations only apply to ASSAP members. They do not apply to investigators who are not members of ASSAP. The scheme is optional for members of ASSAP.

This list is only draft suggestions based on the consultation. If you disagree with any suggestions or can suggest improvements please let us know, this forms part of the second part of the consultation that will run until 10th January 2012. Email consultation@assap.ac.uk

Questions and Answers

Does this apply to people who are not ASSAP members?

It has no impact on non-members of ASSAP. Existing members of ASSAP also do not have to participate. Non-members of ASSAP can choose to join and participate.

Does this involve scientific methods or just ethics?

Ethical issues are more clear-cut than issues of scientific method. We want this process to be inclusive and do not wish to stifle creative methods where it is ethical to do so. Creativity can lead to unexpected knowledge and advancement. For example use of 'exploratory' methods would not be appropriate in a client's home, but where a hiring arrangement exists with a tourist location that freedom to be creative can still exist. However promoting 'good practice' in use of scientific methods would also be important.

Does this apply to entertainment companies and paranormal practitioners?

Entertainment companies fall outside the remit of ASSAP because they have a primary concern to provide an 'experience' for those who purchase tickets rather than helping vulnerable people. Those practitioners who fall primarily outside of 'science' such as those who operate primarily as mediums or healers also fall outside the remit of ASSAP.

Would there be an enforcement angle to these schemes?

If a client chooses to use a member of a professional body it is right that the client can complain if those voluntary standards are not upheld. However we must be aware of non-client complaints, due to the competitive nature of the community. Accountability should primarily be about clients rights.

In Detail: The Code of Ethics

The consultation revealed a lot of questions and analysis of ethical issues. Many respondents discussed the issue of vulnerable clients and children as being the most important issues.

A Code of Ethics may include:

- Non-contact with statutorily vulnerable people (i.e. those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, extreme distress) and the recently bereaved
- Questions about whether contact with children is appropriate
- Where non-statutory vulnerable people are involved (e.g. clients in their own homes): CRB checks, indemnity insurance, public liability insurance, training, not introducing tools to 'fish' for paranormal assumptions as they may harm the client.
- Adequate referral methods for the vulnerable
- Where no vulnerable clients are present, and the primary objective is research, many of the above may not apply.
- Data protection issues
- General issues relating to confidentiality, debriefing, briefing, freedom to withdraw, no deception, reporting results.
- Issues regarding trespass and 'open land'
- When a client can seek redress where the voluntary code is not followed

Consultation results can be found at: assp.ac.uk/consultation

Positions on New ASSAP Committees

During a restructure of ASSAP the Board of Directors created two new bodies: the National Investigations Committee and the National Research Committee.

With the results of the professional body changes coming soon, and more people interested in ASSAP research we need strong teams to take these forward. The departments are now too large for one or two officers to take them forwards. If you are interested in these committees email chairman@assap.ac.uk



E-Voting for ASSAP Elections

Following the introduction in 2010 of ASSAP's new governance model most voting for members of the Board of Directors will take place electronically. In line with our new constitution where we hold email addresses for members we will send you the ballot information by email, and you can vote electronically. Alternatively you can still print the form and post. Where we have no email address we have enclosed a paper form with this mailing. If you want to vote electronically and have a paper form contact us. Also if you have received neither let us know.

**Members
area of
website, new
password
See p2 for
details**

Research Grant awarded to UCLAN

ASSAP has awarded a small research grant to Dr Paul Rogers of the University of Central Lancashire to work with ASSAP affiliated Group Paranormal Site Investigators (PSI) on a project about paranormal belief.

The project, which started using participants in PSI's Swindon GhostFest 2011, is planned to be published in a mainstream academic journal.

We will report back the findings in a future edition of the ASSAP magazine.



6 K2 Meter: A Review



K2 METER

A Review, by Michael Burns

The Equipment Review is a new series of articles critically examining new 'investigation equipment' to see if these innovations are groundbreaking or just bank balance breaking.

EMF meters (or EMF detectors) are devices used for detecting the presence of electromagnetic fields caused by electrical appliances. They can be used by people to gage how much electromagnetic pollution they are exposed to, as in some cases too much can make people ill. It is believed by the paranormal community at large that fluctuations in the electromagnetic fields around us are possibly caused by the presence of ghosts or spirits. The K2 meter is one such EMF device, and after much testing (and head scratching!) I compiled this report. First Impressions - After purchasing the item from the USA, it arrived in my letterbox. Opening the box, I found a very vague instruction manual which didn't really explain what EMF was, just how to press the centre button once for a reading, and for a longer reading, wedge a penny into the button hole to keep the button held down. The device is very simple, the centre button is all the control you have, and there are five lights across the top from green to red, measuring EMF in milligauss (mg) from 0 – 20+.

USING THE K2 TO HUNT GHOSTS - The K2 meter can apparently be used in different ways to hunt ghosts and spirits. It can be used as a standard EMF meter held out in front of the investigator to detect variations in the natural electromagnetic field, or used as a device like an electronic Ouija board, where an investigator asks a question, and the K2 blinks its lights in a response.

TESTING - I tested the K2 in various environments using both of these methods, and here are my conclusions. Method 1. The device measures EMF on a single axis (left to right in front of the device) and in the 50 & 60 Hz range. This is the range of EMF only attributed to DC-input appliances, and not the 0.1 to 30 Hz range scientifically tested as giving 20 – 30% of the population an "experience", paranormal or artificial. So in theory, a "spirit" would have have stood in front of the device no more than 12 inches from your hand. Also because of the vague LED light meter, you cannot gage accurately what the exact EMF value is. If the second green light is on, it is between 1.5 and 2.5 mg, but when the next yellow lamp is lit, it is measuring between 2.5 and 10mg! Method 2. Using the device as an electronic Ouija board in my opinion is a joke. Because of the design of the K2, the operating button has to be pressed down all the time you need to use it. But the button is on a spring and keeping the button down continuously is quite a feat of strength, and the slightest deviation in pressure on the button will cause the device to shut off. When the device powers up, it does a self test of the LED's, which looks like a fluctuation in EMF, or a response from a "spirit".

CONCLUSIONS - My conclusion is that the K2 meter is a device which is being flaunted as a ghost hunting appliance as a way of making money from unsuspecting legitimate paranormal investigators. One website is selling these devices at \$49.95 and is labelled as a "Ghost Communicator". This is a device for checking if your bedside alarm clock is giving you headaches, not for trying to make contact with the departed!



Michael is an investigator with Ghanon, an ASSAP Affiliated group that covers the Wirral, Cheshire, North Wales and Merseyside. He joined the group in September 2005 and has been a core member of the team ever since. Michael's expertise is most

notably his 'all angle' approach to paranormal research and in relation to this article, the technical department!

To make a change from visiting underground labyrinths, tombs where lead coffins allegedly moved of their own accord, north country farms where vampires were said to attack the innocent residents and good old run-of-the-mill ghost and poltergeist sites, we rather fancied something that could be investigated from an armchair in the study: numerology.

It's the sort of investigation area that might also appeal to ASSAP friends and colleagues. The basic unresolved question is whether numbers can have any sort of mysterious influence over people and their environment. There's always the self-fulfilling prophecy idea. A numerologist will tell us that a particular number is lucky – or unlucky – for us and we will become subconsciously positive or negative about what has to be done. My years of martial arts contests suggest that if you go into a fight full of confidence that you can beat the other guy – you frequently do. If you go in feeling that he's bigger, stronger, younger and more skilful – you almost invariably lose. The classic example of this was the great world heavyweight boxing champion John L. Sullivan – the famous Boston Strong Boy. John L. proclaimed out loud at the start of every fight. "I'm John L. Sullivan and I can lick any man alive – including you!" For many years he could and he

did! I have a picture of John on my study wall – complete with speech bubble -- and when I find there's a month's work in my in-tray that has to be done by tea-time, I echo my hero's word and get stuck into it! (John died in 1918, nearly 20 years before I was born. Who believes in reincarnation????)



But what if numerological predictions are *more* than self-fulfilling prophecies? Is there any rational, logical possibility that numbers have strange powers and influences over and above their function as calculating tools? Let's look at a few of the popular number associations and then ask ASSAP friends and colleagues to write in and let us know if any numerological experiences of theirs have seemed to have an anomalous quality.

by President and First Lady, Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

What the Numerologists Say:

- 1 = independence, pioneering, initiating things
- 2 = co-operation and partnering
- 3 = the sheer joy of living
- 4 = solid foundations, steady growth and achievement
- 5 = adventure, freedom, vision
- 6 = protectiveness, responsibility
- 7 = knowledge, wisdom, understanding and awareness
- 8 = practicality, pragmatism, power and achievement
- 9 = generosity, unselfishness, kindness

NUMEROLOGY

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Spiritual Tools and Methods

'Investigation Equipment' is a series of education articles by ASSAP Chairman Dave Wood, critically assessing the (often flawed) instrumentation commonly used by paranormal investigators.

In ASSAP's investigator training the use of spiritual tools and mediums during investigations is strongly discouraged, and in no official ASSAP case would such tools be used. The reason for this is because where you are using an unknown (no-one knows how these tools work) to investigate an unknown (no-one knows precisely what a haunting is) it is ethically suspect. Where there are vulnerable clients they are likely to accept that findings of mediums or spiritual tools, even though the investigator cannot know that these findings are legitimate scientifically. I have seen many cases where a visit by a medium or the use of Ouija boards or dowsing crystals has left lasting harm in the minds of the client.

It should be noted that where there is not a vulnerable client – for example a museum that is used to visiting investigators – the harm to the client is unlikely. It should also be born in mind that some 'public buildings' have seen harm when these methods have been used. Many locations now ban the use of such methods, underlining the need to discuss all aspects of an investigation with the client ahead of time. In cases of harm these are typically 'virgin' cases where they are not used to investigations taking place, and such methods can make clients fear the place they work.

Where there is no vulnerable client, or where a hire arrangement exists there is likely to be little ethical harm in using such methods. However a clear justification should always be in place for

their use, and the results of such experiments should be measurable. Another case where use of such methods and mediums is commonplace is during 'standalone research'. In these cases the researcher is not using a medium, séance, or whatever, to 'prove' an unknown. They are using these methods to answer a specific research question, which is measurable and scientific. One cautionary note is about the participants used in such research. Where they are seasoned investigators it might be reasonable to assume that they are accustomed to such methods by having participated in more spiritual investigations, or public events, or had exposure through the mass media. However if participants or investigators have mental health issues, or strong religious beliefs, or strong views, distress can be caused. The clear advice is not to use such methods in people's homes, or with vulnerable clients. Even where no harm could be caused to the client ensure your research question is strong, be sure to know your participants well enough to anticipate their responses to these situations.



By Dave Wood

How to Hunt Monsters

Part 3, by Richard Freeman

NATIVE GUIDES

This is perhaps the most important factor in any monster hunt. It is vital to get hold of trustworthy and experienced local people to help you in your expedition. I have been lucky in having worked with some of the best guides in the world. Some companies will provide excellent guides with intimate local knowledge. When we investigated the Mongolian deathworm we worked with the brilliant Mongolian company e-mongol.com.

They provided us with English speaking Mongolian guides and drivers who knew the desert and the nomads like the back of their hands.

In Guyana we were lucky enough to have a native chief of the Eagle Clan Arrawak Indians as our guide. Damon Corrie of <http://www.guidedculturaltours.com/> took us off the beaten track and into native villages. We were honoured to be the first westerners allowed into caves where an ancient burial had taken place. Thanks to Damon we uncovered information on monsters unheard of outside the country. Getting away from tourist areas is one of the keys to carrying out a successful expedition. Sometimes your guide will be as interesting as the monster you are hunting.

In Sumatra our guide Sahar was a shaman said to be able to bring down the 'tiger spirit' to possess him. In the jungle his bush craft was second to none and we even found and

followed the tracks of an orang-pendek. His friend Debbie Martyr, head of the Indonesian Tiger Conservation group had seen the orang-pendek several times.

Often the guides will not only know monster witnesses but will have often seen the creatures themselves. An elderly man in Thailand took me into a maze of caverns in the jungle to show me where he saw a 60 foot naga crawling through a subterranean river. In Russia the respected Ukrainian scientist Gregory Panchenko had twice seen the almasty, one at very close range.

TRANSPORT

Getting around in third world countries can be an adventure. In some countries you will have to transverse vast distances. In my experience there are two types of expedition. The first is when most of the exploration is done on foot due to the terrain. You may drive to the area initially but then you spend weeks in the jungle or mountains. The second is where you drive from place to place and spend comparatively little time walking. Sumatra, Russia and Guyana fell into the former type and Thailand and Mongolia into the latter. Roads, where they exist at all, tend to be much worse than in the UK. Full of potholes driving along them can be as dangerous as hacking your way through the rainforest. Mountainous areas like The Caucasus and Sumatra have

tortuously twisting roads making a journey that would last two hours in the west last up to eight hours.

I recommend you get a four-wheel drive vehicle of decent size. This way you can use it to carry equipment and even to sleep in if needs be.

INOCULATIONS, TABLETS AND HEALTH

Before you go tearing off on a monster hunt, make sure you have the correct inoculations or you might be falling victim to much smaller monsters! Make an appointment at your local health centre. They will have detailed information on the inoculations you need for each country. Some areas will differ from others. Visitors to Mongolia will need a series of injections against rabies. The neo-tropics, South and Central America harbours yellow swamp fever. Most tropical areas will have malaria carrying mosquitoes. Malaria tablets are a must in these cases.

Depending on the kind of malaria tablets you are on you may have to start taking them several weeks before you leave.

All ways take Imodium for an upset stomach and water purification tablets. The latter are available at most camping / outdoor stores. This will kill off most bacteria in drinking water enabling you to re-fill your flask from lakes and streams. Always read the instructions carefully. Decent insect repellent is a good idea as is a powerful sun

10 How to Hunt Monsters

screen for hot countries. A first aid kit with plasters, ant-septic cream and bandages is a must. If your first aid kit contains scissors remember not to carry them in your hand luggage on the flight!

Obviously, make sure you have comprehensive travel insurance before you leave.

EQUIPMENT

What you need to take can differ radically from expedition to expedition. Generally you will be camping out in the wilds.

Good, hardy footwear is essential. I once saw a man who came on an expedition with tatty old boots whose souls fell off three days into the trip! He spent the rest of the arduous expedition in soft slippers!

Make sure you know about the climate of the country you are visiting. Remember many countries have rainy and dry seasons. If you are going to a wet climate you will need a rain poncho and a waterproof bag to keep your extra clothes dry. Take warm clothes for a cool climate and lighter one for a tropical country. Remember even in the tropics it can get cold at night. I recall on my first trip to the mountains of Sumatra I was freezing cold at night because I had not brought an adequate sleeping bag. A good multi season sleeping bag is a must.

Sometimes guides will provide tents and camping equipment but don't bank on this enquire first. Guides usually double up as cooks and have their own cooking equipment. Sometimes the guide's fee covers food expenses sometimes not make sure this is all worked out in advance.

You need to travel as light as

you can. If your expedition is to be made mostly in vehicles then this is not too much of an issue but on foot, believe me, you can feel every ounce in your backpack. Apart from tents and bedding take as few clothes as you can. You will end up smelling like a tramp but this is a monster hunt not a fashion show! You will need to leave room for other equipment and any evidence you find as well. If you carry too much they will be an additional; charge on flights.

Always take both moving and stills cameras. Imagine if you saw a cryptid and had no camera on you! Who would ever believe you? I find digital cameras the best. Take extra batteries as electric sockets for recharging are few and far between in jungles, deserts and mountains. Trigger cameras or camera traps can be picked up relatively cheaply on line.

Remember where you set the traps up. You don't want to forget where you put the camera and lose it in a forest! In the UK there is always the risk of the camera trap being nicked so chain them in place. The CFZ has had one camera trap swiped when it was put up in a field to photograph a big cat.

On my last trip to Sumatra I found that the excessively damp cloud forest drained the batteries of my camera very quickly. Try to store extra batteries in waterproof bags. Take

as many as you can.

Also carry scientific specimen bags for any skin, hair or dung you may find. These bags are easily brought on line. When handling evidence always use surgical gloves as to not contaminate the DNA with your own. A good resin for making casts of footprints is a nice idea. Resin is generally stronger and keeps the shape better than plaster of paris. I remember carrying a plastic bag full of plaster of paris through customs and worrying what they would make of my bag of white powder! In very damp climates silicone rubber, available from DIY shops is the best bet for creating a good, waterproof and tough cast. Sound recording equipment such as a powerful Dictaphone is good for capturing vocalizations of creatures and eyewitness statements.

In the final part:

Making the best of your time

When you get home

The best way to hunt

Richard Freeman is Zoological Director of the Centre for Fortean Cryptozoology and is a prolific writer on the subject.



Focus On... is a series of educational articles covering the wide range of anomalous phenomena ASSAP has researched, mainly written by experts in their field.

If you would like to contribute a piece please contact us first - news@assap.ac.uk

CCTV



A New System that Works!

by Steve Wills & Dave Wood

Field investigation of haunting phenomena can sometimes involve a great deal of audio-visual equipment: camcorders, cameras, voice recorders. Investigators reasonably assume that if an anomalous experience takes place, especially if visual or auditory, an objective recording would be useful evidence. Considering the number of high profile cases that seem compelling but faltered due to lack of such evidence, twenty-first century investigators are often keen to not make the same mistake. Many investigators will invest in anything from one camcorder to more than a dozen. Although for some years investigation

groups with the means have experimented with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems. CCTV systems allow real-time monitoring, allowing investigators to respond to incidences as they take place. Groups have often complained and technical barriers to effective CCTV systems. Portable wired systems are prone to failure as wired systems tend to be static in the real world. Meanwhile wireless CCTV often struggles to send a signal through more than one wall. ASSAP group Paranormal Site Investigators (PSI), based in Swindon, began to investigate

innovative ways to deliver a quality CCTV system. PSI started by purchasing 4 Swann CCTV cameras with 36 night shot LEDs incorporated, hundreds of metres of cables to transport the video signal to the CCTV monitoring room, screens and digital splitters to make sense of the incoming signals.

All went well with a good quality video feed. The downside to this method showed itself from the very start: "TIME" During each investigation it was taking up to 2 hours to run the leads and get all of the system fired up and ready for action. This is when PSI started to

12 Investigation CCTV

research deeper into the marketplace to see if there was a better way.

Many hours of research ensued and finally a result emerged.

We stumbled across a solution normally aimed at people who wanted internet access in many rooms but could not use a wireless connection. This was a simple invention that uses the mains power cables in a building to transmit a Local Area Network signal.

PSI investigated whether this technology could be used for video.

We contacted the manufacturer of the new technology to ask whether an AV (video) signal could be sent through their device. The answer was 'no'.

So back to the drawing board, or so we thought. After talking to the tech guys at Devolo we realised that what we need to do was to convert the AV signal into a network signal; but how?

More hours of research led us to a smart gadget called an 'IP video server'. This piece of technology would convert the AV signal to a network signal which could be transported through the dLAN system. The dLAN starter kit is a pair of small adaptors that plug into the mains of a building allowing you to use the mains cabling to carry LAN traffic without the need for unsightly network cabling. The ability to network without cables has been around for some time with 802.11b and 802.11g wireless networks. The HomePlug technology used by the dLAN kit overcomes the problems of getting a wireless

signal through the many walls that a property may have.

Using the mains network to carry data has been around for some years now, but it has only started to develop in the last couple of years.

It works by using the mains wiring to carry a high frequency RF signal; fortunately the electricity meter in a property effectively stops the signal from reaching other houses in the area. HomePlug has been linked to Broadband over PowerLine systems, and while the RF components are very similar, the power levels required for the HomePlug kit are smaller and the localised nature of the set-up should help to mitigate any problems. For example, rather than have the RF signal on the wiring from the substation to many houses in an area, it will only be those houses with the HomePlug kit. This review is not going to be an investigation into the mysteries and urban myths surrounding mains borne data, but rather a look at what it can do for you the end-user.

The concept behind the dLAN starter kit is blindingly simple, if you can connect two devices using an Ethernet cable, then you can replace the cable with the two adaptors in the starter kit.

Extra dLAN adaptors can be used to network up to around ten cameras realistically, allowing you to link to the computers viewing software. There is one real limitation, and that is the bandwidth that is currently possible using the kit.

The current standard is around 11Mbps-13Mbps, which means it will generally out perform an 802.11b wireless network.

The video server came with a free software solution called Multiview. This software allowed full real-time recording and viewing of the CCTV cameras and even had motion detection incorporated. Every camera produces its own folder for video in a selected location on the computer's hard drive.

The most significant thing about this kit is that you simply forget that it is working. You can easily unplug it, and move the adaptors around and plug it back in, it may not have the freedom of wireless, but once you have tried to keep a wireless link working through four or more brick walls you will be looking for another solution. It has worked so well and was so simple to use we decided to link our HDD video camera to the system for real time analysis.


The dLAN kit at under £100 for the two adaptors, and £50 for any extra ones is not that cheap, but the time savings have proved invaluable.

The video servers are available for around £60 each.

This system has been field-tested by PSI for the last 12 months in order to assess any problems. PSI is pleased to report the system is high quality and fully functional. We were keen to share these results and should any investigators have any questions do contact PSI on team@p-s-i.org.uk or ring 0845 652 1529.



Ethnographic and Psychical Approaches to Spirit Mediumship



The two disciplines of ethnography and psychical research have traditionally approached their subject matter from opposing perspectives. Since the advent of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, psychical researchers have aimed specifically at the verification or falsification of claims to paranormal experiences and phenomena, while ethnographers have been primarily concerned with describing beliefs and experiences without any attempt at assessing the reality, or otherwise, of the objects of these beliefs. This short article will take a comparative look at the methods of ethnography and psychical research with particular emphasis on their approaches to the study of spirit mediumship. This will be done with the aim of exploring the potential for a merging of methodologies that might prove fruitful for both disciplines.

A reading of the older psychical research textbooks reveals a very distinct sense of the necessity to prove or disprove the claims of mediums in as rational and as scientific a manner as possible. In addition to this endeavour, researchers were also faced with the task of overcoming the ever present danger of deliberate fraud perpetrated by the mediums they were investigating. Hans Driesch's book *Psychical Research: The Science of the Super-Normal* (1933), for example, devotes 48 pages to the "Possibility of Deception in Psychical Research" in both spontaneous and controlled investigations. To be duped by a medium was, and likely still is, the worst nightmare of the serious psychical researcher. In order to achieve an impartial scientific test of the abilities of mediums, therefore, psychical researchers developed specific experimental procedures which could,

There are competing academic perspectives to mediumship and other claimed psychic abilities

14 Spirit Mediumship

they thought, help to insure against trickery. Robert H. Ashby's 1972 book *The Guidebook for the Study of Psychical Research*, suggests "Procedures for Sitting with Mediums" for the "serious student of psi" who wishes to "experience paranormal phenomena personally" (Ashby 1972: 90). Amongst the methods suggested Ashby includes: arranging sittings anonymously to insure against the medium conducting their own background research; refraining from volunteering any information to the medium during the sitting, and recording the sitting on audio tape for later content analysis (Ashby 1972: 93-95). These precautions apply specifically to the various forms of "mental mediumship" (clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience and trance mediumship, etc.), and are aimed at preventing information leakage from the sitter to the medium so that any information can be verified as having been received by genuinely paranormal means.

In the case of investigating "physical mediumship" more rigorous precautions have traditionally been employed. Driesch (1933) argues that although, at first, it is perfectly reasonable for sitters to adhere to the medium's seance rules, it is the psychical researcher's "imperative duty to free oneself as soon as possible from these conditions" (Driesch 1933: 23).

Driesch suggests that both mediums and sitters "must a priori be regarded as 'suspect,'" and that it is essential that physical phenomena be observed in good light. Further



LA TABLE ÉCHAPPA DE MES MAINS ET SE TRANSPORTA D'ELLE-MÊME A SIX PIEDS DE MOI

suggested precautions include: that the medium's body be "strictly examined" before the seance and that the room be thoroughly investigated before the medium enters. During the seance itself Driesch suggests: that the sitters form a chain of linked hands; that luminous tabs be placed on the medium's sleeves; that the medium's hands and feet be controlled by a reliable person, and so on (1933: 26-27). Methods such as these are specifically geared towards the elimination of the possibility for deliberate acts of fraud and trickery.

The approach of psychical research to the study of spirit mediumship is, therefore, proof focused, it's aim being to falsify or verify the abilities of mediums and the identities of the spirits they channel. By contrast the ethnographic method has specifically avoided the question of the ontological status of the objects of the beliefs it studies. Ethnography utilises a primarily descriptive methodology and seeks to document, in as much detail as possible, the social and cultural situation in which the ethnographer finds him/herself. In this regard, therefore, ethnographers are not concerned with whether or not the objects of the beliefs of a particular culture are real, instead they are interested in the way in which these beliefs affect and inform the functioning of the society and those who live within it. In a recent

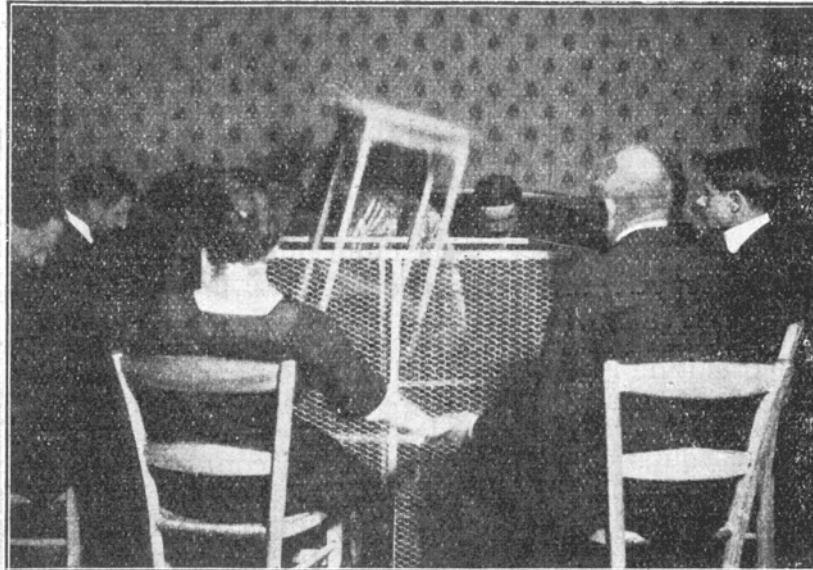
ethnographic account of spirit possession rituals in Indonesia the anthropologist Nils Bubandt (2009) argued in favour of treating spirits as "methodologically real" informants, as to do so allows the anthropologist to "get on with the business of studying the social and political reality of spirits" (Bubandt 2009: 298). To treat the spirits as methodologically real does not require the ethnographer to verify or falsify their existence as ontologically distinct entities, nor is it necessary to attempt to prove that the spirits are who

they claim to be. Instead ethnographic accounts of mediumship and spirit possession focus on describing the social role of mediums and the spirits that possess their bodies, and on functional explanations of the act of spirit mediumship itself. Unlike the psychical researcher investigating physical mediumship, the ethnographer does not insist on modifying the conditions of the mediumship performance to rule out deception and trickery, rather the ethnographer will examine the social and cultural role of the performance, asking what it means to the people who participate in it. Two illustrative examples of this sort of approach are the social-functional theory of spirit possession as a means for subjugated members of society to express their discontent in a socially

sanctioned manner (Lewis 1971), and the view of spirit possession as maintaining social and cultural continuity with the ancestors through regular interaction during possession performances (Stoller 1994 and Lambek 1998).

How, then, can we fruitfully combine the methods of psychical research and ethnography? To my mind the obvious point of contact is highlighted by the deficiencies of each approach. The ethnographer, in refusing to address questions of ontology is essentially ignoring the native interpretations of the societies

they are studying. To take beliefs in spirit possession seriously, and accept the *possibility* that spirits might have an independent ontological existence, is to take a significant step forward methodologically and can only result in a more complete ethnographic description (Turner 1993; Young & Goulet 1994). Conversely, psychical research can benefit from a more thorough appreciation of the role of culture, and of social interactions, in the experience of paranormal phenomena.



Mediumship (Mary Evans Picture Library)

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By Jack Hunter.
Jack is a PhD student at Bristol University.

He also edits the Journal of Paranthropology

Ghost Laser Grid:

A practical investigation method?

by Hayley Stevens



The Equipment Review is a new series of articles critically examining new 'investigation equipment' to see if these innovations are ground-breaking or just bank balance breaking.

The Ghost Laser Grid made its debut on 'Ghost Hunters International', a spin off from the US show 'Ghost Hunters' in 2010. In the episode the team used a laser pen with a cap on the end to fill a hallway with small green dots to see if they could capture evidence of a shadow mass that had been seen there by eye witnesses.

They captured a photograph that they claim shows the upper torso and head of a person, but what is actually seen is just a blurry disturbance in the dots. The idea that this is an apparition is a leap of logic. The green laser dots do nothing to help with the identification of what caused the blur – they just fuel speculation.

Following on from this appearance, ghost hunting teams started buying these laser pens as instruments to be used in their research into hauntings. They range in price from between £20 - £40. It appears that ghost hunters are paying mostly for the screw on cap that diffuses the laser light and turns it into small dots, because the same laser pen without the cap costs just £8.

The purpose, according to sites that sell these devices, is to '*detect shadows or general visual disturbances during an investigation.*'

There is a major flaw in the use of this device that it seems so many people are overlooking. Trying to catch potential 'evidence' of a ghost is a biased way of conducting an investigation, but putting that to one side for a moment – the very reason people use the pen in the first place is made impossible, by the pen.

The laser pen doesn't help detect visual disturbances, but it's really good at creating them. It doesn't provide additional practicality when it comes to investigating things that have been witnessed in the dark.

Any decent researcher knows that the best way to research such experiences is to replicate the conditions it was experienced in. By shining a laser pen into the room or area to illuminate it with small green dots is in no way replicating the conditions in which what you are researching was originally witnessed.

Save your money and simply turn on the lights instead. It's cheaper, more effective and safer – especially considering that the laser emitted from these devices can damage eyes (and scarily, the protective cap is easy to unscrew and loose).

British Ufology has, since the early 1970s, largely recognised that physiological and sociological factors play a significant role in the perception and interpretation of reputed UFO events. This approach was most embodied by the “New Ufology” movement best represented by “Magonia” magazine (which only ceased publication in 2010). While the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH) still enjoyed notable support in Britain, the New Ufological ethos nonetheless notably influenced informed Ufological enquiry at this time.

But as the 1980s progressed, clouds gathered on the conceptual horizon. It began with a surge of interest in UFO “crash retrieval cases”, most notably the Roswell incident. In Britain the Rendlesham Forest incident was interpreted as representing a similar event, at least for a short time (the first book on the incident even being entitled “Skycrash”). The Roswell “crash” was also alluded to in the Majestic 12 documents, which seemingly tied this event into claims of a super-secret UFO study group. More emphasis was also being placed on “alien abduction” claims, most significantly represented by the work of Budd Hopkins.


These evidential strands seemingly answered the criticisms made by the British “New Ufology” that there was no evidence for the existence of “nuts and bolts” style alien UFOs or their supposed. New Ufology was also undermined by commercial factors. UK book publishers, once happy to issue worthy (but commercially lacklustre) UFO books became more market orientated. This was cemented by Timothy Good’s best-seller “Above Top Secret” in 1988, which solely focused on an ETH origin for UFOs and supported the existence of a government UFO “cover-up”. As a consequence the public face of British Ufology gradually projected a

monochrome vision of extra-terrestrial UFOs; reinforced by the various newsstand publications appearing throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Thus, in 2011, British Ufology now effectively resembles that traditionally ascribed to American Ufology; the only cracks represented by the works of Andy Roberts and Dr. David Clarke. It is unfortunate this “triumph of the ETH” is a conceptual one only – with no further evidence supporting this theory actually emerging. The Roswell incident has been gradually weakened over the past two decades, while the MJ-12 documents are now widely accepted as hoaxed. No evidence supporting the physicality of “alien abductions” has emerged, with evidence emerging questioning the original studies and consolidating theories accounting for them in psychological terms.

The crowning irony is, however, that stateside Ufology is apparently changing. Disaffection within MUFON (America’s largest UFO group), has resulted in grass roots movements calling for reform. More significantly, these reforming voices seem willing to examine evidence associating UFOs with paranormal events, an approach previously considered virtually heretical. Further cracks are also appearing in the form of a more diverse American UFO literature; most notably *The Cryptoterrestrials* by the late Mac Tonnies (published in 2010). Another work, “UFOs; myths, conspiracies and realities” by John Alexander while supportive of UFO reality openly questions UFO conspiracy theories. Therefore, in 2012 (and beyond) we may therefore see the consolidation of more homogenous American UFO community, ironically at a time when similar views have become marginalised in Britain.

UFOlogical “Sliding Doors”: A Tale of Two Ideologies

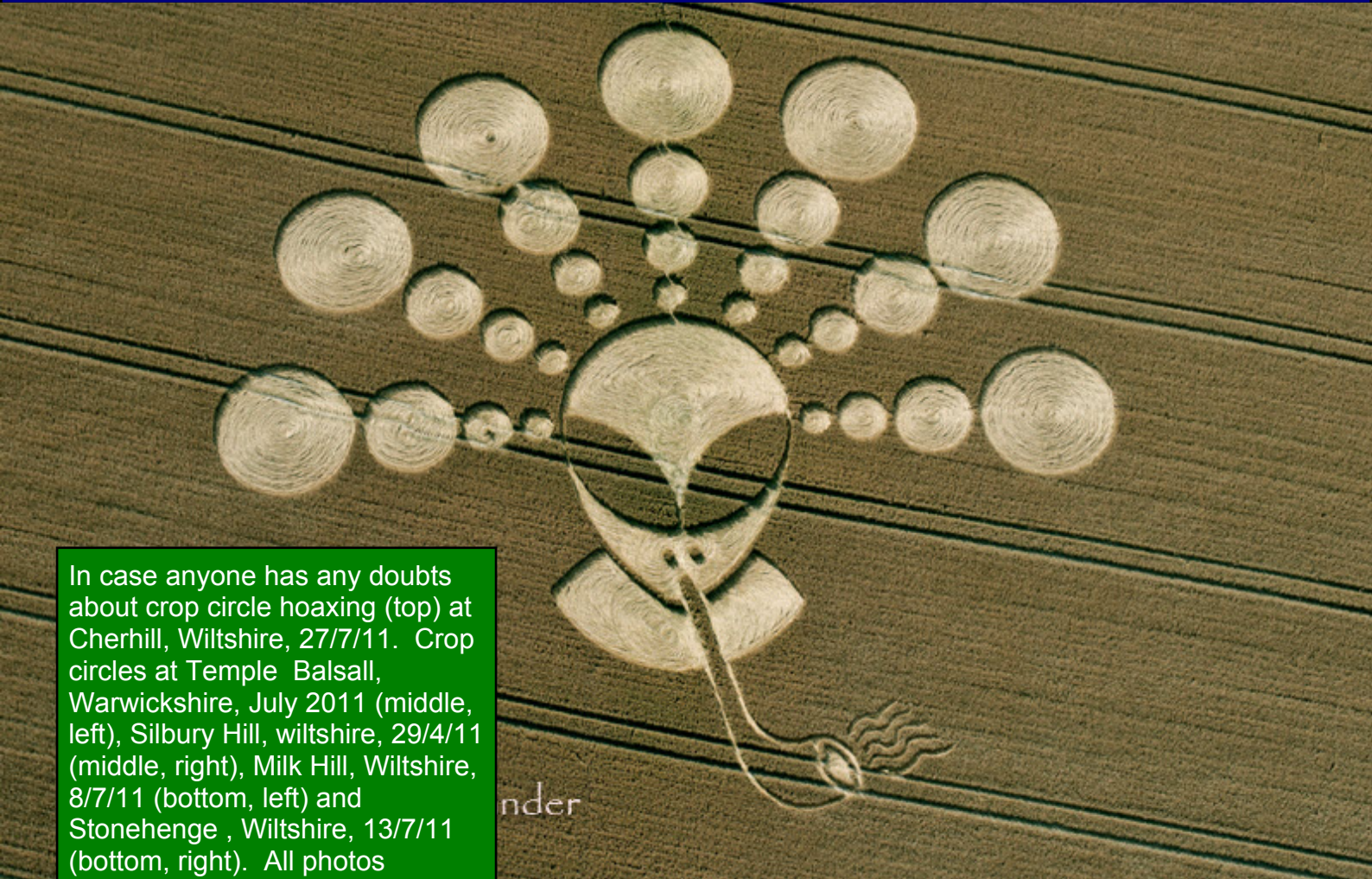
by Robert Moore



**KECKSBURG
U.F.O.
STORE**

Photo credit: Ryright

18 Crop Circles of 2011



In case anyone has any doubts about crop circle hoaxing (top) at Cherhill, Wiltshire, 27/7/11. Crop circles at Temple Balsall, Warwickshire, July 2011 (middle, left), Silbury Hill, Wiltshire, 29/4/11 (middle, right), Milk Hill, Wiltshire, 8/7/11 (bottom, left) and Stonehenge, Wiltshire, 13/7/11 (bottom, right). All photos courtesy Steve Alexander, www.temporarytemples.co.uk



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Crop Circles

by Trystan Swale

THEMES OF THE YEAR: 2011

Many readers will acknowledge the mystery of crop circles all but disappeared some twenty years ago with a very public confession. Doug and Dave may have shared their tricks, but there was still enough magic, unexpected events and controversy to make 2011's crop circles worthy of exploration.

By tradition the circles are found close to ancient sites in Wiltshire and Hampshire, but 2011's batch debuted in the most unlikely location: an oilseed rape field outside Chepstow, Monmouthshire, sandwiched between a motorway slip-road and an industrial estate. The geometry was imperfect but captured the imagination of enthusiasts who speculated its design mirrored that of the reactor building at nearby Oldbury nuclear power station. Only the second occasion the circles had been found in Wales, the phenomenon would also make fleeting appearances in Lincolnshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Warwickshire. Arguably, the latter's circle at Temple Balsall was the highlight of the season. Exquisitely crafted in wheat, the sixteen pointed star caused something of a minor stir as visitors attracted the ire of the farmer and, allegedly, the police.

The farmer's annoyance reflected a stiffening resolve amongst his colleagues further south. Regional National Farmers Union representative Tim Carson – whose land in Alton Barnes, Wiltshire is often compared to a crop circle Mecca – kept to his word and cut out circles upon their discovery. The massive serpent formation at West Woodhay, Berkshire, was mowed whilst the farmer at Fonthill Down, Wiltshire exchanged angry words with visitors to the 'megadoilie' on his land. Things were more pleasant at Hannington and East Kennett where the elegant and understated ringed designs recalled circles from years gone by. A three dimensional effect 'wormhole' design at Barbury Castle was an equally uncomplicated throwback

to the mid-1990s. The most visually complicated circles were all to be found in Wiltshire. The pillared sunburst at Rockley resembled the workings of the Large Hadron Collider and the stunning multi-layered diamond at Etchilhampton featured a beautiful 'basket weave' surround. Aztec pyramids and a two-stage celtic knot appeared overnight at East Kennett and Milk Hill respectively.

Two moments of alleged mystery both occurred within eight days in mid-July. First, a clinical looking 'dartboard' arrived under a full moon just yards from the busy A-road passing Stonehenge and its security team. Then, a circle with an unusual crop lay was said to have appeared in daylight upon Cherhill Down.

The season ended in appropriate fashion. An enhanced variation of the Etchilhampton formation was the second to appear at Cherhill Down, enclosed by six petals. It had the feeling of a seasonal finale, the best saved until last. But Wiltshire had to wait nearly two months until October for the last of 2011's circles; three of which appeared in a row along the beetle-bank grass strip dividing East Field. They perhaps sent a message out to Tim Carson that the circles will continue unabated, even if he and other farmers do their best to deny the tourists who descend upon Wiltshire every summer.

Trystan Swale is the creator and co-host of the Righteous Indignation skeptical podcast. For six years Trystan immersed himself in the world of Fotean and paranormal investigations, critically analysing the methods and approaches used by a range of investigators and teams.



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