

ISSUE 140  
AUTUMN 2012

seriously  
**strange**  
magazine

# Haunting Hotspots

**ALSO INSIDE:**

Training Weekend 2012

Seriously Strange 201

The Mysteries of Acre Ca tle

The Paranormal Crossword

...and flip this edition over for the  
Programme for Seriously Unidentified!

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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. ASSAP is a registered charity (327422) and a company limited by guarantee (2075226).  
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## New Website Members Password:

Username 'assapmember' password  
'spiritualism'

### 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](mailto:chairman@assap.ac.uk) so you can keep up to date!

# ASSAP AFFILIATE GROUPS

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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](mailto:assap@assap.ac.uk)

### ANGLIA PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION SOCIETY (APIS)

Operates in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire area. Contact Paul Keech at [apismail@ntlworld.com](mailto:apismail@ntlworld.com) or phone 01234 771 351 or visit [www.apisteamspirit.co.uk](http://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](http://www.ghanon.org.uk)

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Contact Ian and Vanessa Walker on [info@leicsparanormal.tk](mailto:info@leicsparanormal.tk) or visit [www.leicsparanormal.tk](http://www.leicsparanormal.tk)

### MELTON PARANORMAL RESEARCH SOCIETY (MPRS)

Based in Leicestershire. Contact Christine Hankey on 07745 398 569 or email [meltonparacub@aol.com](mailto:meltonparacub@aol.com)

**MIDLAND PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS** operates throughout the Midlands. Check out

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### THE MIDLANDS GHOST RESEARCH SOCIETY (TMGRS)

Operates in the Coventry area. Visit [www.tmgrs.co.uk](http://www.tmgrs.co.uk) or email Amanda and Martin at [info@tmgrs.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@spiritteamuk.com) or visit [www.spiritteamuk.com](http://www.spiritteamuk.com)

### STAFFORDSHIRE PARANORMAL STUDY GROUP (SPSG)

Monthly meetings in Stoke on Trent. Contact Terri at [thespsg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thespsg@yahoo.co.uk) or visit [www.spsg.org.uk](http://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](mailto:stuart@supernaturalinvestigations.org.uk)

## ASSAP Board of Directors

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### Non-executive members:

President: Lionel Fanthorpe, Vice President: Hugh Pincott  
Archives Officer: Terry Porter, Website: Maurice Townsend



## Another Training Weekend? Register your interest before it's too late!

Despite several additional Training Weekends being run in 2012 there is some demand for another ASSAP Training Weekend.

We have provisionally booked another weekend:

**10-11 November at  
Oxenwood, nr J14 M4**

Email Clare on [events@assap.ac.uk](mailto:events@assap.ac.uk) if you are interested in attending.

### **Introduction to Scientific Investigation**

The basic training weekend if you're new to ASSAP.

Basic accommodation and non-evening meals provided.

This course covers the basic skills and knowledge needed to start investigating. Costs approx £29-£34.

### **About ASSAP Training**

ASSAP Training is fun and inclusive. Many people come by themselves and immediately feel welcome and supported. Because it's residential people have a great time, get to network with like-minded people and learn a few new things. Book quickly before it sells out!

## OFFICIAL NOTICES

This is ASSAP's second year under the new governance arrangements that were passed by members in 2010.

### **Annual Meeting Notice**

The annual meeting of associate members shall take place at 9am on 11 November 2012 during the Training Weekend at Oxenwood Education Centre, Wiltshire.

### **Annual Reports and Election Ballots**

Following the 2010 amendment, ballots will be sent electronically where an email address is held. If you do not currently receive emails from us this means we do not have your email address. Help us save money by emailing [assap@assap.org](mailto:assap@assap.org)

### **Director Nominations**

Existing directors, elected and co-opted, will automatically reappear on the ballot paper where consent is given. Any associate member can appear on the ballot by sending, by 31st October to the address on page two, a signed statement of consent of nomination by the candidate and a signed statement by ten members or associate members who have held continuous membership for at least twelve months. Nominators must have not nominated any other candidate. If any associate member is generally interested in joining the team, without the bureaucracy, email Dave on [chairman@assap.ac.uk](mailto:chairman@assap.ac.uk) to discuss any roles available at the present time.

## 4 Training and Events

# It's Back!

## Seriously Strange, 6-8 September 2013

(Please note date change)

### Return of the biggest residential paranormal event in a generation

Put the date in your diary! The biggest residential paranormal event in a generation is back, on 6-8 September 2013 at University of Bath.

For the hundreds who attended *Seriously Strange 2011* it was a memorable experience:

- A massive recession-busting event, bringing hundreds of people together
- 20 of the top speakers and researchers in the field today
- The announcement of ASSAP's Professional Body status
- A 30th anniversary Gala Dinner and Disco
- Live paranormal experimentation to take part in

We have provisionally booked another weekend:

Note down the date for **THE Paranormal Event of 2013** and look out for booking details in the **NEXT** edition of *Seriously Strange* magazine.

## SPEAKERS

Do you have any suggestions for speakers, old or new? Email us on [events@assap.ac.uk](mailto:events@assap.ac.uk)



## Can you help?

If you want to be part of the group that organises and promotes *Seriously Strange*, email us on [events@assap.ac.uk](mailto:events@assap.ac.uk)



# The Mysteries of Castle

By President and First  
Lady, Lionel and  
Patricia Fanthorpe

# Acre in Norfolk



Our interest in Castle Acre and its history began with something very different from our usual research into unsolved mysteries and paranormal phenomena. That came later. Patricia's maiden name was Tooke before we married in 1957, and the Tooke family – with various spelling differences – go back many centuries in Norfolk history. Our genealogical delving came up with an Anglo-Saxon ruler of Castle Acre whose name was variously recorded as Toki, Toke and Toche. The Normans took over his old domain in the eleventh century, and William de Warenne built the magnificent castle there in 1089, commanding the River Nar at the point where the ancient Peddar's Way crosses it. This had great strategic importance in those days.

The reported hauntings of Castle Acre Castle consist mainly of light phenomena. Various researchers and other witnesses have reported what seem to be old-fashioned flaming torches seen in the distance and through the mist. There are also reports of inexplicable shadows within the ruined walls of the castle, along with unaccountable flashes of light. Some witnesses have said that the whole castle appeared to be lit, but there was no rational

explanation for this illumination. There have also been reports of poltergeist phenomena, mainly stone throwing.

We made one of our research trips there in July especially to take the photographs for this article, and found a very strange little stone bearing what appeared to be deliberate markings. How it got there, where it originated and what the markings mean – if they are deliberate markings – we have not yet been able to answer.



There is an undeniably strange and mysterious atmosphere persisting at Castle Acre, and it would be an ideal subject for a full scale ASSAP investigation. Does the shade of William de Warenne linger there? Do those ancient earth-works harbour psychic traces of the Anglo-Saxon ruler Toki? Or are the phenomena caused by the spirits of pilgrims and traders who once made their journeys along the Peddar's Way to cross the Nar?



## HAUNTING HOT SPOTS

By Maurice Townsend

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

*Q: What is a haunting hot spot?*

A: Haunted locations, such as buildings, do not produce reports of strange phenomena uniformly distributed across them. Instead, activity is usually concentrated in a few particular places. These 'hot spots' are usually quite small, maybe a single room or just part of one. Furthermore, each hot spot usually has a specific type of activity associated with it. So, for instance, there may be footsteps heard in a hallway, an apparition seen only in one particular room and a strange smell found in the cellar. Indeed, a haunting hot spot could even include a 'cold spot'!

*Q: How do you know where the hot spots are in a building?*

A: This information is usually deduced from examining original witness reports where certain places are mentioned repeatedly. When people are planning ghost vigils they usually pinpoint the hot spots so that they know where

to concentrate equipment and observers. In fact, the hot spot phenomenon is widely known but, despite this, it is rarely discussed and its implications hardly ever considered.

*Q: What ARE its implications?*

A: You need to ask yourself, why should particular haunting phenomena be confined to certain places? What is the difference between hot spots and other areas of the same building? Hot spots do not obviously fit with the most popular ghost theories.

*Q: So how do hot spots fit with the various theories of hauntings?*

A: Most people consider ghosts to be sentient spirits but this does not fit well with hot spots. It would require spirits to affect only certain places and then only in very specific and limited ways, for no obvious reason. Where are the spirits when they are not in these hot spots? If there is something stopping spirits

producing paranormal activity in non-hot spots, how do they 'jump' from one hot spot to another? There are lots of obvious questions raised but no obvious answers. To make the spirit idea fit with hot spots you need to introduce lots of pretty arbitrary 'rules' for their behaviour for which there is no other obvious evidence.

The fit of hot spots with the idea of ghosts as paranormal recordings is much closer. If hauntings are really caused by some previous (human) activity, somehow being 'recorded' at a particular location, you might expect the same activity to be repeatedly 'replayed' in the same place. There are still some problems, though. Why, for instance, are only certain aspects of an activity, like its sound or visual image, ever recorded? Why not full movie-style images with surround-sound on all occasions?

The fit with misperception is even better! Since misperception is produced by the presence of certain objects, it will not generally move around and be confined to a small area.

Misperception is usually visual, auditory or olfactory but seldom, if ever, a combination. Furthermore, while some people will see a misperception, others will not, which fits well with reports of ghostly phenomena.

Misperception fits the hot spot phenomenon without the need for special conditions or arbitrary rules.

*Q: Are you saying misperception causes all haunting phenomena?*

A: No, not all of them but it is responsible for many reported phenomena, as investigations have shown. Investigations have also revealed that haunting phenomena have many different causes, like near sleep experiences, where dreams intrude into waking conscious perception. Some of the remaining unexplained haunting phenomena may, indeed, have a paranormal cause. But if they do, then the existence of hot spots strongly favours paranormal recordings over spirits as a likely cause.

*Q: So do hot spots rule out the idea of ghosts as spirits?*

A: Not completely. When considering rival explanations for any particular phenomenon,

science usually goes with the one that requires the fewest assumptions and special considerations. That's especially so when such 'considerations' have no other evidence to support them. Scientists have discovered, through trial and error, that the simplest theory tends to be the one that is correct. Perhaps nature likes to keep things simple! In this particular case, it is clear that misperception fits hot spots best, with recordings a worthy second and spirits a very poor third. It doesn't rule out spirits but it does make them much less likely to be a source of haunting phenomena. Given the popularity of the spirit idea, it might explain why haunting hot spots are rarely discussed.

*Q: Has any research been done into why hot spots exist?*

A: Given the general lack of interest in the topic, the answer is, unsurprisingly, very little. One well-known hot spot is the haunted bed in the Tapestry Room in Muncaster Castle in Cumbria. Several different witnesses, without prior knowledge of the haunting, have reported, when lying in the bed, the sound of a child crying. The MADS (Magnetic Anomaly Detection System) project compared the magnetic characteristics of the bed area and a nearby spot, in the same room, where nothing has been reported. It turned out that the bed has an unusual iron mesh supporting the mattress. This distorts the ambient magnetic field around the bed. When someone is in the bed, and moving around, perhaps during disturbed sleep, it can generate EIFs (experience inducing fields) that cause some individuals to hallucinate. However EIFs, though a possible cause of haunting phenomena, are likely to be rare because of the unusual conditions required to produce them. There may be other things going on at non-EIF hot spots. It is clearly an area ripe for further research!

Further information:

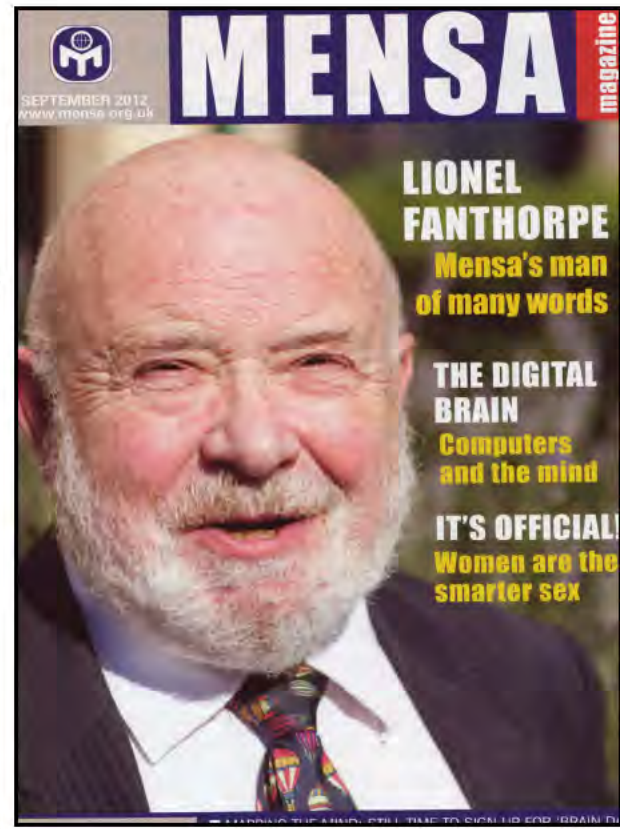
<http://www.assap.ac.uk/newsite/articles/Haunting%20hot%20spots.html>

<http://www.assap.ac.uk/newsite/htmlfiles/MADS%20haunted%20bed.html>

<http://www.assap.ac.uk/newsite/articles/Near%20sleep%20experiences.html>

## Paranormal Prize Crossword

To mark ASSAP's first appearance in the MENSA magazine, thanks to ASSAP President Lionel Fanthorpe, we present ASSAP's first Paranormal Prize Crossword!



Uncover the letters in the following order to discover the magic word:

- 24
- 16
- 22
- 27
- 18
- 3

To be in with a chance of winning a prize identify the letters in red in the order shown to the left to spell out the magic word!

## Crossword Clues Here

### Across

4. Surname of first ASSAP Chairperson
5. Rectory mysteriously burnt down in 1939
8. First name of ASSAP's First Lady
11. Alleged verbal communication from spirits captured on recordings
13. The county in which you will find Rendlesham Forest
14. Ape-like cryptid believed to inhabit the Himalayan region
16. Out of focus highlight captured on camera
17. Psychological phenomena of seeing faces, e.g. in clouds
21. Popular 21st century fictional vampire series of books
22. Ancient inn, claimed to be one of the most 'haunted' in England
23. Name of the child in the film The Omen
24. Silent 1922 German vampire film
26. "We should always prefer the simplest explanation". Who's razor?
27. The poltergeist you may encounter in Edinburgh's Covenanter's Prison
29. Complete your ASSAP training and you could become one of these!

### Down

1. We allegedly have seven of these central energy centers in our bodies
2. Pack of cards, usually 78 in number
3. Lines of alleged alignments of significant sites
6. London borough in which the 1977 poltergeist case occurred
7. County in which most UK crop circles are located
9. An object that seemingly appears in a way that cannot be explained
10. The Talking Mongoose
12. What's the subject of this November's ASSAP conference?
15. The village where the 'fairy' photos were taken in 1917
16. Yes yes board
18. Alleged subtle luminous radiation surrounding a person or object
19. Stephen King horror novel
20. Do the lights go on or off as you walk down the road?
23. Surname of Scottish medium imprisoned under British Witchcraft Act
25. Gaelic harvest festival on 31st October - 1st November
28. Alleged ability to receive information sensed by the mind

**Send in your answer to be in with the chance of winning three new\* paranormal books, plus Seriously Unidentified tickets!**

To be entered into a draw to win a prize simply email the correct six-letter answer to **assap@assap.org** or post or phone to the number on page two.

**Deadline 27/10/12**

\*These are brand new books sent to ASSAP this year as review copies, which someone may have read through to compile a review for the *Anomaly* journal.

