

ISSUE 143
SUMMER 2013

seriously
strange
magazine

**Into
the
Woods**



Bigfoot in Indiana?

ALSO INSIDE:

Ghosts in the Recycle Bin

Springheeled Jack

ASSAP News and Opportunities

...and flip this edition over for the

Seriously Strange Conference Programme!

A Lot Going on in ASSAP!

And Opportunities to Get Involved

Upcoming ASSAP Events

The Big Training Weekend:

The return of the ASSAP Training Weekend and Advanced Training Weekend! ASSAP is committed to coming closer to our members by moving training around the country. This year's training will come to you from Birmingham.

First opportunities to book will be at Seriously Strange - last time the training sold out within 24 hours, so do come along to Seriously Strange!

One-Day Vampire Conference:

In Spring 2014 ASSAP will be co-hosting a special one-day conference on vampires, to be held in London. Subjects will include how cultural portrayals influence people who think they are vampires, the science and biology behind vampire reports, and a great deal more!

More Special Conferences

ASSAP will be hosting more one-day conferences on subjects like ghosts, paranormal Investigations and other subjects. We will be moving these conferences around the country.

First Accredited Qualification

At Seriously Strange, ASSAP are set to announce details of the first accredited qualification for investigators of anomalous phenomena. This will take place through e-learning and will be complementary to physical training. If ready, people will be able to sign up for the first course at Seriously Strange!

Beta-Testing of the NRPI

In the last edition we appealed for 30 people to beta-test the new National Register of Professional Investigators. That number was reached before all copies of the magazine had even hit doorsteps!

The beta-testing will conclude over the coming weeks, following some technical difficulties.

More information will be available soon regarding when new members will be able to join the NRPI.

Can you spare an hour or two a week? New opportunities to join the ASSAP team!

This is an exciting time to get involved with volunteering for ASSAP. There is certainly lots going on and many roles for people with the time to become part of the team!

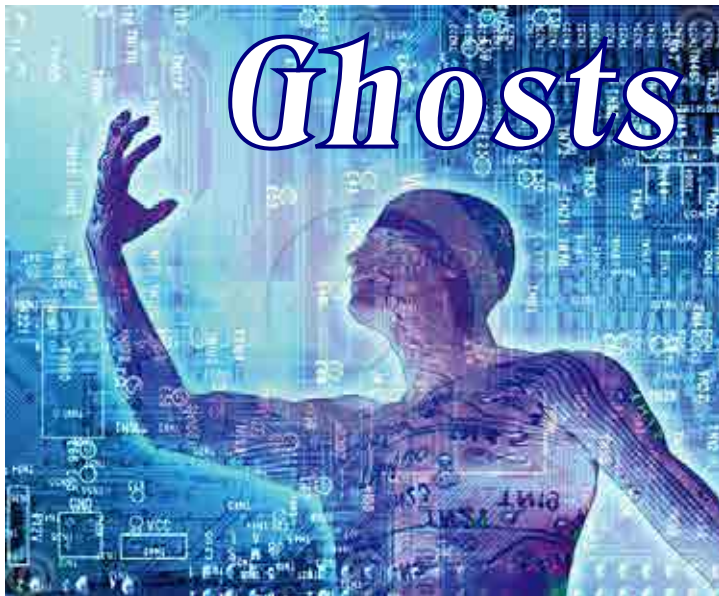
We have opportunities in our Management/Administration Team, Education Team and Research Team. Email Dave at chairman@assap.ac.uk if you'd like to find out more.



ASSAP's Sarah Spellman appearing live on BBC World News discussing UFOs. ASSAP's Dave Wood was also interviewed by BBC Radio 5 Live (drive time) on the same subject.

Coming Soon: Save Money by Switching to Paperless ASSAP Membership! Save 66% of Membership Fee

ASSAP will always have a physical publication class of membership - never fear!



in the Recycle Bin

By Kristian Lander

paranormal. Is it possible ghosts could be nothing more than the leftover data of a file/program that used to exist, incomplete or corrupted now its life cycle has come to an end? Because the file hasn't actually been removed yet, it's still around.

For example, the apparitions that are seen replaying the events just before their death over and over again like a recording. It may go to explain the apparitions who seem to appear as just a torso and entire figure stood awkwardly motionless, incapable of interaction. Disembodied voices. These seem to be incomplete and/or damaged files. Phantom hitchhikers, who disappear after a brief recognition of them being present or an interaction. How about phantom scenery phenomena? Where there is allegedly an entire scene experienced that appears to have been from time gone by. Incomplete programs still running but not removed. Likewise, programs may still have lines of code and files left within other folders. If this *is* a computer simulation maybe such happenings are merely a glitch in the machine. After all we can still click play or open any file in the recycle bin.

With the Fermilabs Holometer and other experiments going ahead over the next few years, we can see once and for all whether or not we indeed live within a holographic universe. Which will have profound implications and considerations for all sciences, not least the paranormal studies.

Consider this. You are not living in reality, you are living in virtual reality. A computer-generated simulation of unimaginable size and power. A holographic universe, if you will. Seem crazy to you? Maybe not as crazy as you might think. Recent scientific developments reported across many publications give us this very indication. The holographic universe theory is not a new theory, it has been discussed before, and is now potentially supported by studies in areas of physics, astrophysics, biology and also into the workings of the human brain. Truly fascinating material.

The holographic reality theory could be considered thus. We may simply be a program or just a file in an unimaginably sophisticated machine of some sort. Effectively players of consciousness who live within a simulation, like the artificial life simulation "Creatures" mixed in with SimCity and each one of us is a generated avatar, or character, within it playing our own MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) like World of Warcraft.

Now assuming that *this* reality that we are perceiving and that of other apparently living entities is a super sophisticated simulation of the universe, what happens to an avatar when they die? In the artificial life simulator game "Creatures". The body of the generated Creature stuck around for a bit after death. Sometimes, by quirk, glitch or evolution in each "game" the AI-driven other Creatures would respond as if it were alive to them. However, some Creatures couldn't see it at all. Effectively they were seeing a digital ghost.

This struck me as fascinating. Creatures is now by definition a dated game. Consider now that old game where developers could not have anticipated that something like that may happen, then why not a more sophisticated version of it in a computer as large as our universe?

Are ghosts people stuck in the recycle bin of the holographic universe?

When you delete a file on your computer it ends up in the recycle bin, awaiting confirmation of true deletion. Let us use this analogy and consider some reports of the

Letter: Mediumship Evidence

In his tribute to the polymath and parapsychologist Archie Roy (*Seriously Strange* 142 (2013), pp. 14-15), Hugh Pincott says that Trish Robertson and Roy demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the 'messages' from alleged deceased persons in question in their studies were more relevant to intended recipients than others. Now Pincott is fully entitled to his own assessment of what R&R demonstrated – but surely his wording should have acknowledged that skeptical commentators on R&R do not accept their own very positive interpretations of their results. For a longer discussion of this and related issues, see my 'blog' on the Skeptical Humanities site (<http://skepticalhumanities.com/>).

- Mark Newbrook

The Mystery of Springheeled Jack

By President and First Lady, Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

My father, Robert, was born in 1880, and so grew up in the last years of Victorian Britain. As a boy in the 1930s and 1940s, I heard the events that my father had lived through as what was for him the news and current affairs of the closing years of the 19th century. One of my father's favourite accounts concerned Springheeled Jack.



First reported in 1837, Jack's sordid exploits went on for decades, and the most recent report of him was in 2012. Reports of his appearances came from London, Liverpool, the Midlands, Scotland and many other areas of the UK.

Jack was described by various witnesses as having a demonic face and glowing red eyes. He was credited with being able to blow blue and white flames from his mouth. His hands were described as claw-like and metallic. He was reported to wear tight-fitting white oilskins under a black cloak. Those witnesses who reported that they had heard him speak said that he spoke normal English.

Jack may have been associated with legends of the Hammersmith Ghost from 1824, and a weird entity that was said to haunt Southampton. Like Jack, this Southampton ghost was said to be able to leap over houses.

A very detailed early account of Jack's activities came from Mary Stevens. She was walking to the house in Lavender Hill where she worked, after going to visit her parents in Battersea, when Jack attacked her on Clapham Common. He gripped her tightly, attempted to kiss her, and ripped her clothes away with hands that Mary described as being cold and metallic. When she screamed for help, Jack ran away from his pursuers and leapt away to prevent capture.

The following day, the weird, leaping figure terrified a horse causing the coach it was pulling to crash, and severely injuring the coachman. When pursued, Jack gave vent to peals of insane-sounding laughter and escaped by leaping over a ten foot wall.

On January 9th, 1838, at a public meeting, the then Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Cowan, revealed various reports that had reached him about Springheeled Jack's activities. Servant girls were

reporting answering the door to a strange, frightening, spectral figure, which had terrified them.

So the reports continued – and, rather surprisingly – they *still* continue. The most recent account came from the Scott Martin family and dates from February 2012. They saw *something* very like Springheeled Jack on the road near Nescot College on the Ewell bypass. What would a serious ASSAP investigation make of Jack? There are numerous theories – with varying degrees of probability.

Is he an alien from a world with a higher gravity than ours, which accounts for his ability to make prodigious leaps? Has he come through a portal from another parallel universe? Is he a paranormal supernatural entity of some kind, a djinn, a demon, a ghost? Is he the work of a series of athletic hoaxers? Henry de la Poer Beresford, the Marquis of Waterford, prior to his death in 1859, was singularly powerful and athletic, and had a notorious sense of humour. Did he and his followers create Springheeled Jack?



Into the Woods

Bigfoot in Indiana?

By Sarah Spellman

A Very Brief History of Bigfoot

“Bigfoot” entered the American lexicon in 1958 with the discovery of massive human-like footprints at a road construction site near Bluff Creek, California. Also known as Sasquatch, this cryptid’s place in popular culture was cemented in 1967 with the Patterson-Gimlin film, a brief clip of an alleged Bigfoot on the move. Although the idea of a bipedal primate unconfirmed by science gained cultural currency only in the second half of the twentieth century, North American sightings of creatures matching this description go back hundreds of years. British Columbia, California and the Pacific Northwest are traditional hotspots, but sightings continue to come in from across the US and Canada.

If you know nothing about this phenomenon, it might seem easy to dismiss it as a blend of misidentification and fabrication. However, blanket dismissal becomes more of a challenge when you dig into the sighting reports themselves, many not so easy to explain away. Might the volume and content of witness accounts suggest something more than surprised bears and tall tales?

Those interested in investigating for themselves whether this question is a live one can check the notes at the end of the article for some recommended resources, but first I’d like to share my own initial attempt at joining the search for Bigfoot.

Unlikely Squatchlands

When you think of Sasquatch, if you think of it at all, the mixed agricultural and industrial Midwestern state of Indiana is probably not the first of the creature’s stomping grounds to come to mind. Before moving to the UK, I lived the first 22 years of my life in south-central Indiana and had never thought of the area as Bigfoot territory. At that time I had little interest in the subject, but a few years ago I took a closer look and

became intrigued by the large and consistent volume of sighting reports and the existence of purported footprint/track casts.

It’s a feature-cohesive body of testimony; that is, a lot of people are reporting a lot of similar things. It’s also interesting to note what they fail to report. They don’t see brightly-coloured Bigfoot, speaking Bigfoot or Bigfoot with antennae (I’m taking cryptozoologist Loren Coleman’s lead and using “Bigfoot” and “Sasquatch” as both singular and plural). Even outside of the traditional Pacific Northwest Bigfoot HQ, reports tend to be clustered around wooded areas. What’s more, some track finds have been made in circumstances that all but rule out hoaxing.

None of this is proof of anything, but evidence isn’t the same as proof and I find the evidence fascinating. Prior to a trip to visit my family last year, my husband and I decided we’d try “squatching” (looking for Bigfoot/Sasquatch or evidence of them). He plotted Indiana sightings on a map and we found that they mainly centred around the Morgan Monroe State Forest and the more diffuse Hoosier National Forest, with the greatest number of sightings in and around Morgan Monroe. These areas are in “my” part of Indiana and I had visited nearby towns many times, never knowing that local people were reporting run-ins with a mystery.

During our trip, we set aside a couple of days for some exploratory hiking inward from the edges of Morgan Monroe State Forest. We didn’t particularly expect anything to happen, but we couldn’t visit the region without giving squatching a try.

The Percussive Forest

We drove into the woods, aiming for a trail recommended to us by a local wildlife educator and sometime Bigfoot researcher. We failed to find the starting point of the trail and instead stopped at a small car park in the Backcountry area of the forest.

6 Into the Woods

A common squatching practice is “wood knocking” – hitting a tree with a branch to send sharp, resounding knocks through the woods. It is believed by some researchers that Bigfoot can use wood knocking or cupped hand clapping to communicate with other Bigfoot and with humans.

Armed first with this knowledge and then with a stick, I started thwacking some trees. We didn't necessarily expect a response at all, let alone right away. However, we soon heard knocking...and then human voices coming from the same direction. We were still quite near the parking area and these noises seemed to be coming from further along the forest's meeting with the road. We stopped what was probably a knocking exchange with fellow visitors and moved deeper into the woods.

We hiked for a few hours, knocking intermittently with no clear response. We reached a small valley area and I began clacking rocks together periodically as we walked, alternating with wood knocking at the side of the trail. We heard apparent responses from two fairly distant points in the woods. We had not heard voices since leaving the section of woods near the parking area, but couldn't rule out other hikers in the area or coincidental forest sounds. We continued slowly along the trail as it started to run parallel to a slope leading up to a ridge.

We began to hear knocks from a location that seemed very close by, up on the ridge and just ahead of us. We still saw no sign of other hikers. The noise seemed insistent – it was a steady stream (with some pauses) of not-quite-rhythmic knocks, not just a few sounds here and there. I've spent many years living near Indiana woodland and this didn't sound like a woodpecker or any other animal I'm familiar with. We had also heard and seen woodpeckers earlier in the day and the contrast was clear.

We walked further along the trail and the knocking continued as we drew closer to its apparent source. I had been giving intermittent knocks but then stopped. It, whatever it was, didn't. At this point I'd had about enough mystery and ran up the slope and onto the ridge. During my approach, the sounds stopped completely. There was nothing out of the ordinary to be seen on the ridge. There were no humans and no Sasquatch. I had a good view of the surrounding area and saw no one retreating, and more importantly, I heard nothing. Anything moving away through the thick layer of dried leaves and other forest floor debris would surely have made some sound.

At this point it was nearing sunset. My husband wanted to stay a while longer but I was all for taking the quickest route back to the car before it got too

dark, and this is what we did. Nothing else of note happened, nor did we try to make anything happen by continuing with knocking or rock clacking. The ridge incident probably lasted between five and seven minutes. We did live to squatch again, but Day Two yielded little of interest.

[Lack of] Conclusions

So what made the sounds on the ridge? I have no idea. Bigfoot behaviour accounts often include elements of stealth and an amazing skill for forest navigation, but if the creatures exist, could one have been able to move away through thick, dry leaf litter soundlessly? It seems impossible. I can't think of another animal that could have made the sounds we heard and there was no wind to cause the jostling of tree branches. I can't say anything more conclusive than that it was an intriguing experience, but what is certain is that I'll be keeping a closer eye on the treeline the next time I'm in southern Indiana.

Notes

There is no longer a population of bears living in Indiana.

Books:

- *Bigfoot Casebook Updated*, Janet and Colin Bord
- *Bigfoot! The True Story of Apes in America*, Loren Coleman
- *The Field Guide to Bigfoot, Yeti and Other Mystery Primates Worldwide*, Loren Coleman and Patrick Huyghe
- *Bigfoot Sasquatch: Evidence*, Grover Krantz
- *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science*, Jeff Meldrum
- *The Locals*, Thom Powell
- *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life*, Ivan T. Sanderson

Online:

- Loren Coleman's blog (Bigfoot tag - www.cryptozoonews.com/category/bigfoot/)
- Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization for a large sightings database (www.bfro.net/)
- Bigfoot Lunch Club blog (www.bigfootlunchclub.com/)
- Researcher Stan Courtney's website (www.stancourtney.com/wordpress/)
- Researcher Cliff Barackman's website (cliffbarackman.com/)
- North American Wood Ape Conservancy (<http://woodape.org/>)