

seriously **strange** magazine

It's Back

Celebrating ASSAP's 35th Anniversary

Seriously Strange

University of Reading 10-11 September 2016

Also inside your
32 page
spring edition:

Back to Oak Island
Money Pit

Agnes Finne:
Edinburgh's witch

Who was Aleister
Crowley?

Living amongst
the dead

Plus: Two
new book
reviews

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A black and white photograph of a broom leaning against a wall. The broom has a long, dark handle and a head made of light-colored, coarse fibers. The wall is textured and appears to be made of stone or concrete. The broom is positioned vertically on the left side of the page.

Seriously BEWITCHED REPORTING BACK

• **On 28th November 2015 ‘Seriously Bewitched - Witchcraft Conference’ was held at Goldsmiths, University of London**

The project was a joint project between ASSAP and Professor Chris French’s Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Over 250 people from a wide range of backgrounds booked tickets; the conference sold out of tickets several days before the event.

The event was widely acclaimed and well received by the audience. Speakers included:

Deborah Hyde presenting an overview of her research on witchcraft. CJ Romer spoke about the cross-overs between witchcraft and poltergeist cases.

Ethan Doyle White gave a talk on why people declare themselves witches today.

Charmaine Sonnex gave a presentation on the elements of a ‘successful spell’.

Mark Norman spoke about ‘cunning men’ in history and the modern day.

Beckie Bird talked about what it is like to be a witch from a practitioner perspective.

We hope several of these talks will be written up in a future edition of Anomaly

Back to the Oak Island Money Pit

President and First Lady's Piece by
Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe



Seven years ago we wrote an article for ASSAP on our research work on Oak Island in Mahone Bay, just off the coast of Nova Scotia. We made several site visits there and talked with pioneer researcher Dan Blankenship who has now been investigating the mystery for nearly half a century from his home on the island.

Our interest was renewed by the current TV series called "The Curse of Oak Island" which is presently running on the "Yesterday" TV channel, and as Oak Island explorers ourselves, we thoroughly recommend this show and admire the work being done by Rick and Marty Lagina, Dan Blankenship, who is now in his nineties, and his son David.

The Lagina brothers have all the advantages of modern technology at their disposal: metal detectors, radar, ultra-modern diving equipment and many other technical devices which we would have loved to use had they been available when we were there more than 20 years ago.

Despite all the Leginas' excellent research efforts and their rational and logical approach to the Oak Island mystery, the secret remains unsolved – one of those outstanding anomalous phenomena in which we are all interested.

The modern part of the Oak Island mystery begins in 1795 when three teenaged lads (Daniel McGinnis, John Smith and Anthony Vaughan) were exploring there and discovered the top of what was to become known as the Money Pit. For over two centuries since then, one expedition after another has tried without success to locate the treasure – whatever it is – and to work out how it reached the island.

One theory, which has particularly intrigued us, connects Oak Island with the enigma of Rennes-le-Chateau and the mysterious sudden wealth of Father Berenger Sauniere who was the Priest there in the nineteenth century. In outline, there were Cathars and

Templars near Rennes-le-Chateau in the south-west of France for several centuries, and it seems possible that the mysterious Cathar religious treasure passed into Templar keeping. When they themselves were attacked, their fleet left La Rochelle and could well have crossed the Atlantic long before Columbus. Did some of the treasure remain at Rennes-le-Chateau, while they escaped with the rest? Templars were expert architects and builders as well as outstanding warriors, and their skill could have produced the booby-trapped Money Pit with its sinister flood tunnels – which have so far defeated all attempts to reach whatever they might have buried at the base of the Money Pit – 50 metres and more below the surface of Oak Island.

Other theories hint at pirate treasure, ancient manuscripts – including the works of Francis Bacon – or money hidden during the American War of Independence. Our friend, the late George Young, was an outstanding expert on the Oak Island mystery, and his hypothesis was that a group of Mediterranean traders had established a small permanent colony in Nova Scotia centuries ago and had used the Money Pit as a safe storage point.

The mystery is far from solved, and we wish the Lagina brothers every success.



SERIOUSLY Enchanted

A review of the conference by **Lucya Szachnowski**

On Saturday 12 March 2016 I went to Seriously Enchanted, the Assap conference on faeries and associated folklore, which was held in Bristol. All the Assap conferences I've been to have been brilliant. The speakers are always excellent, offering a wide range of insights into the topic in question – which in the past have included vampires, ghosts, demons and witches.

Seriously Enchanted, although smaller than the previous conferences, was just as good. Mark Norman talked about black dogs and the wild hunt, Dr Serena Roney-Dougal revisited the Faery Faith, Christian Jensen Romer (CJ) looked at the psychical dimension of faeries, Jon Kaneko-James talked about faeries, witches and cunning folk, Dr David Siver explained how UFOs might have developed from the Faery Faith and finally there was a panel discussion.

While all the talks were really fascinating, the one that I'm going to write about in depth here is Jon Kaneko-James' look at a witch trial in Rye in 1607 concerning Anna Taylor and Susanna Swapper and a case about summoning faeries to search for treasure.

Jon explained that witch trial records often contain little information about what the witches in question were supposed to have done, but in this case, known as Rye 13-1, there are about 40,000 words of primary source evidence showing faery witchcraft. The documents include letters between lawyers from the town of Rye and the Marshal of Cinque Ports.

In the year 1607, the new witch-hunting king, James 1, had just come onto the throne and people were quite touchy about witch cases. The 1607 Rye trial lead-up took 5 years and the documents show many different points of view, which allow us to study a real historic tradition of authentic folk magic.

Susanna described having had a night-time visitation, which started the witch trial. She said she was in bed with her husband when she saw four spirits - two men and two women wearing white and green garments. She said they wanted to take her away, but didn't succeed. She called to her husband and woke him and asked him to hold her, but he saw nothing, rolled over and went back to sleep.

Susanna discussed this with her landlady, Mrs Anna Taylor, who it emerged was quite knowledgeable about dealings with faeries. She told Susanna that if it happened again she should call upon God. She said she should ask them in name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost where they came from.

According to the records, Susanna saw the faeries again, who told her to go back to her landlady, but to call her young Anna Bennet, instead of Mrs Anna Taylor, then to go to garden and do some digging. She agreed. Susanna said that she and Mrs Taylor dug in the garden and heard a strange sound, after which Mrs Taylor thrust a spit in the garden, then went into the summer house and threw a stone.

It later emerged that it wasn't the first time people had dug in the garden for treasure or had contact with faery beings in the house. Mrs Taylor said the previous occupant, Mr Pywell had dug in the garden for

wealth, but unsuccessfully, and that Mr Pywell later died. Mrs Taylor stopped giving evidence about this, but expressed regret over Mr Pywell's death.



A few weeks after the first incidents, Susanna was encouraged by Mrs Taylor to visit 'the Queen of the Fairies' during the daytime. However, Susanna refused to give obeisance to the fairies, despite being told to.

It would be easy to say that Susanna was gullible and it was all a fantasy. However, there are details about Anna Taylor that are unusual. Rye 13 25 documents are about questions to Elizabeth Bishop. The third question is unusual for a witch trial: "Do you know or have you heard of the books of Zachariah of Hastings that came to the possession of Anna Taylor?"

Zachariah was a real person, a cunning man. Ten years before this trial, there was a deposition that his advice had been sought in a case of witchcraft. He recommended getting blood from the witch to end her influence. Anna Taylor is clearly the daughter of a wise woman, old Anna Bennet, and there is a lineage of visions of seeing fairies.

A confusing statement at the end of the deposition regarding Mrs Taylor said that "they spend her daily a great deal of water". Rye is on a marsh so nothing special about water, but in Paracelsian magic there are lists of medicinal waters for curing illnesses – they are called strong waters. The depositions contain many mentions of strong waters. For example, in 13 8 Susanna describes going into room where faeries lived, in her hall of Mrs Taylor's house, to see if spirits were there. She said when she was there she heard a spirit called Richard, willing her to go to Mrs Bennet and take her some planet water. This could be a distillate.

In another instance, Anna Taylor tried to get Susanna to take her son to the room with the faeries with an offering of flowers. At first nothing appeared, the second and third time they went the child became scared. After that she would not allow children in the house.

Obviously these descriptions are a little unclear about what was going on, but could they really be summoning fairies?

Plenty of magicians using grimoire traditions did call up faeries as well as other spirits. Several magical books give descriptions for summoning faeries, including Oberon, using hermetic ceremonies. One even gives instructions for summoning faeries with 'spits of wood'.

Mrs Taylor seems educated – she could obviously write as she wrote in the case documents. She got away with being a witch because King James intervened and got her released from prison. Contrary to popular belief, King James was often as keen on debunking witches as he was on prosecuting them.

Jon's talk offered a fascinating glimpse into historic witchcraft practices involving interactions with faeries. For further reading, he recommended a book called Rye Spirits by Annabel Gregory. I'm going to add this to my wish list.

"Witch trial records often contain little information about what the witches in question were supposed to have done, but in this case, known as Rye 13-1, there are about 40,000 words of primary source evidence showing faery witchcraft."



Agnes Finne

- Edinburgh's most prolific witch

by Jayne Harris

Edinburgh, often referred to as 'The City of the Dead' is one of my favourite locations for ghost hunting. It has one of the most macabre and sinister histories of any place on Earth and whenever I walk down The Royal Mile from Edinburgh castle to Holyrood Palace, I can feel the cities ghosts lurking behind each nook and cranny.

But it's not just ghosts and hauntings that fascinate me about the place.

Anyone who has visited historic Edinburgh, and taken time to soak in its legends will know that in its long and macabre history, the city is no stranger to Witchcraft and during the 17th century Edinburgh had no shortage of witches. According to records, one of its busiest and most productive witches was Agnes Finnie who lived in the Pottersrow Port area of the city. She was convicted

of Witchcraft in 1644 with a total of 20 charges made against her. If ever there was a successful witch worthy of her neighbors fear and accusations, it was Agnes.

But was she a witch? Was she able to exert some kind of supernatural force upon others? I encourage you to read on, and then decide for yourselves.

It is documented that on one occasion while on his way home, the young son of Mr. William Fairlie passed Agnes in the street and promptly called out "Agnes Winnie!" an impromptu nickname he would very soon regret. Agnes publically cursed him and within 24 hours he had completely lost the use of his left side and became bedridden with "so incurable a disease" that his family knew he was dying. One week later he was dead with medical physicians describing the cause as something 'supernatural'.



The young boy was not the only neighbor of Agnes Finnie to suffer her wrath. Beatrix Nisbit had annoyed Agnes in some way and so was given a most 'fearful disease' in which she lost the use of her tongue, never able to utter another word. With this Agnes had made sure her neighbor could not annoy her further. Beatrix was fairly lucky however, in that she escaped with her life unlike poor Janet Grinton. Janet was a fishwife and had sold Agnes two herrings; upon eating them Agnes decided there were not fresh and so went to demand her money back. Janet, in failing to refund Agnes the eight pennies she had paid, seemingly sealed her own fate. Agnes screamed at Janet that she would "never again eat another thing in this world!". Sure enough, the fishwife died that very day before another crumb could pass her lips.

As with most people accused of witchcraft at this time it was the common belief that Agnes had made a pact with the Devil, and had regular audiences with him. One piece of evidence that suggested she was engaging in acts of 'devilrie' was recorded following a visit Agnes made to

the son of Mr. John Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan's son had cerebral palsy and desperate for a cure, his parents called for Agnes to visit him which she did. After a few moments

in the room with the sick child, Agnes asked his parents to leave the room to go and pray for him. When they returned they found their son so ill that he could not move any part of his body. As they held him up and tried to help him move his mother screamed out in horror. What they discovered was a large wound about the size of a hand, on his right buttock -- as if a chunk of flesh had been literally torn away. The child died within a week.

Agnes however had not yet finished with this family. The child's mother Bessie Currie and Agnes got into some

kind of heated dispute over the changing of a sixpence. Agnes, who was not happy with how the argument was going, threatened to summon the Devil to come and take a bite out of her, as he had her son. At this point Mr. Buchanan came onto the scene and of course supported his wife, thus incurring Agnes's wrath. He called her a witch and threatened to throw her over the nearby staircase unless she

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ceased upsetting his grieving wife. With that, Agnes simply walked away. That night however, he became very ill indeed with a fever, but he was a strong man, and by the next day he seemed to have slightly recovered. Feeling he had the upper hand, he visited Agnes to tell her that unless she lifted the evil from his body he would tell the whole town how ill she had made him. In an instant he felt better. But it would not be for long...

Sometime later Mr. Buchanan entered into yet another argument with Agnes. Agnes had refused to give Mrs. Currie a cake on credit. Agnes demanded that they leave her premises immediately and uttered that as his birth had clearly been caused by a witch, then so too would his death. Immediately upon returning home he "contracted a long and grievous sickness, whereof he was lyke to melt away in sweating". It will come as no surprise to readers by this point that soon after, Mr. Buchanan died.

Although Agnes had not seen fit to give credit to Mrs. Currie for the shilling cake, it seems she did give credit to one Isobell Atcheson. However, when the time came to settle the bill, the two ladies disagreed on the amount. Once again Agnes declared she would summon the Devil to 'ride about the family' and wreak havoc upon them. Predictably, the next day, the poor woman Isobell fell from a horse and broke her leg.

Apparently pleased with this result, Agnes felt a similar punishment was due to the daughter of Euphame Kincald. Mrs. Kincald made the mistake of arguing with Agnes and calling her a witch. Agnes replied by stating that if this were indeed the case, then her family better watch out. Accordingly, a few days later Mrs. Kincald's daughter was out playing next to Agnes's house when a huge wooden beam fell and crushed her leg to a pulp rendering it useless forever more.

There are several accounts of Agnes threatening to call upon the Devil to aid her in her workings. A lady named Margaret Williamson suffered one of Agnes's worst attacks following an argument in the street. Agnes screamed that she would summon the Devil to 'blow her blind'. Soon after Margaret fell very ill, and lost her sight.

So what can we deduce from this? Well clearly Agnes was a woman who was very able to defend herself in an argument, and apparently well aware of the rumors about

her. Later reports show us that she was equally able to protect her own family.

Robert Wat, a highly prestigious shoemaker in Edinburgh was foolish enough to fine Anges's son in law Robert Purse for 'riotous behavior'. Outraged Agnes went to where the shoemakers were all meeting and whacked Mr. Wat over the head with her cap, stating that his greed had become his downfall and that he would not earn a penny more. In itself not a particularly appalling act however in this case it is believed that revenge was slow and sweet for Agnes, as from that moment on, his thriving business went into rapid decline.

Much time passed and one afternoon Mr. Wat was engaged in conversation with Agnes's grandson when Agnes arrived unexpectedly. She reminded him of the blow to the head he had received and warned him that his business would continue to fail unless he apologized to her son in law. He did so, and refunded the fine to Mr. Purse. Within one month it is reported that his business recovered and Mr. Wat returned to his former prosperity.

By this point it can be reasonably assumed that Agnes Finnie ran a general store of some kind, and yet it's incredible to imagine why anyone would have taken their custom there. One such person was Christian Harlow who ordered and received a delivery of salt. Either ignorance or skepticism led him to return the salt claiming he had been overcharged. He did not encounter Agnes that day but her helper and was given a refund. But the story did not end there. Christian fell terribly ill. Instantly the family suspected Agnes and summoned her to the death bed, demanding that she lift the curse in return for a significant payment. This she apparently agreed to and Christian recovered much to the disbelief of physicians.

As a widow, we can imagine that Agnes was very careful with her finances, and it seems from some of the stories we've heard so far that non-payment of outstanding debts

was a particular annoyance for her. A foolish young woman by the name of Mrs. Sympson came to learn this when she asked for a second extension of a further eight days to pay off a loan that was long overdue. Agnes flew into a rage and told her that she would have a very sore heart indeed if she did not pay her when the eight days were up. The debt was not paid and on that very 8th day Mrs. Sympson's husband died.

A lady named Margaret Williamson suffered one of Agnes's worst attacks following an argument in the street. Agnes screamed that she would summon the Devil to 'blow her blind'. Soon after Margaret fell very ill, and lost her sight.





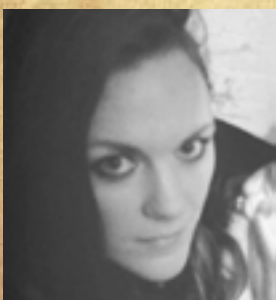
The accounts linking Agnes Finnie to Witchcraft continued to build. John Robeson was sent into a hellish fever simply for calling Agnes a witch. John Cockburne was terrified by the appearance of Agnes in his bedroom one night even though the windows and doors were locked. The reason for her 'visit' was that he had disagreed with her daughter. William Smith was ruined and left a pauper meaning he could not recover his belongings pawned at Agnes's shop. Janet Walker received a terrible sickness from Agnes while she was in the late stages of pregnancy. Only when summoned by Janet's sister, desperate for her sister and unborn baby to be well, did the illness lift. The reason for Agnes causing this illness is not recorded but it seems that just maybe, she took pity on the life of the unborn baby and lifted the curse.

Finally, after 28 years locals held a meeting and declared that enough was enough. On December 11th 1644 Agnes was tried and convicted of being "in continual society and company of the Devil" and condemned to be hanged outside Edinburgh castle, and then burned at the stake. In one final statement Agnes confessed that she had often consulted with the Devil and that she was a 'rank' witch, a term used to describe a witch who is 'noble, proud and powerful'.

In one final statement Agnes confessed that she had often consulted with the Devil and that she was a 'rank' witch, a term used to describe a witch who is 'noble, proud and powerful'.

Today, at the eastern end of the castle esplanade you will see a small plaque and wall fountain which marks the spot close to where Agnes Finnie and as many as 300 other women were burned at the stake for allegedly being witches. Often the witches were strangled first and then their bodies burned. During the 16th century more witches were burnt in Edinburgh than anywhere else in Scotland.

Those feeling brave whilst in Edinburgh city can take part in a number of ghost walks on which you will explore the alleyways and graveyards of the Old town in search of Agnes Finnie's ghost. Should you be one of those fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to encounter her, it is said that dropping a coin at her feet will ensure she does you no harm, so before you take part, make sure you have plenty of spare change!



About the author:

Jayne has had a fascination with all things paranormal for as long as she can remember. She began studying the paranormal as a hobby in 2001. With qualifications in Criminology, Psychology and Counselling, Jayne loves continuously learning and gaining knowledge, and is currently studying Demonology alongside a recognised qualification in Paranormal Investigation

Mysterious Appearances

by Paula Dempsey

London's the kind of place where you can find a weird thing that just wasn't there two minutes before. Here's a few.

The Translocation of Mrs Guppy

Fashionable Victorian mediums Frank Herne and Charles Williams held regular séances at their digs over a shop in Lambs Conduit Street, Bloomsbury. One one occasion in 1871 the two men hosted one William Harrison, editor of The Spiritualist magazine, among their distinguished guests.

Herne and Williams settled the sitters and the lights were turned off. The mediums quickly connected with two spirit guides; the pirate John King and his daughter Katie (Katie was, of course, more commonly associated with her look-alike, medium Florence Cook). Katie proved amenable to conversation and as the evening wore on one of the sitters asked Miss King to produce some apports.

Harrison jestingly requested that Katie might carry another well-known medium, one Mrs Agnes Guppy, into the room. This was a cruel joke at the lady's expense, for Mrs Guppy was as famous for her circumference as she was for her mediumistic abilities. It must have been quite a shock when Mrs G plummeted onto the dining table from out of thin air and with considerable force.

The Spiritualist circle was immediately broken and someone turned up the lights. Mrs Guppy stood in deep trance squarely in the centre of the table. She was half-dressed and still clutching the grocery list she had been compiling in her parlour just moments before. Once she'd recovered her senses, Agnes realised she could hardly take a more conventional route home in just her dressing gown. Katie helpfully materialised some of Mrs Guppy's clothes before the unfortunate lady was ushered into a carriage home. Apparently the whole exercise rather took it out of the poor soul and she had to rest for several days afterwards.

oops

Now to some Out of Place Snakes. This story caught my eye because last summer I was working in Wandsworth and often spent lunchtimes in St George's Park. According to the Evening Standard, police were called to the park on the evening of 10th August when a member of the public spotted a handsome black and tan snake slithering along some railings. The five foot carpet python was taken into custody and delivered to Putney Animal Hospital where it was checked over and rehomed. So far, so much a story about a dumped pet and a



heartless owner. But this was just one incident in a whole week of Out of Place Snakes. Just two days earlier the Richmond and Twickenham Times reported that two royal pythons had been found on grassland in Edwin Road, Twickenham. A council worker used a litter picker to capture the reptiles, who also ended up at Putney Animal Hospital.

In the same week an upmarket corn snake was found in Kensington and two more snakes of the same species discovered in Hackney and Peckham. The Evening Standard suggested that the warm weather had encouraged previously-dumped snakes to

become more active or that the creatures had escaped from homes through open windows. Either way, August was a bad month to be a snake.

Barking Angels

Just the one, actually. This member of the choir eternal materialised above Mirjeta Binoke's house in August 2014. She'd set out to photograph the moon and stars in an unusually clear sky and wasn't aware of the luminous humanoid image until she examined the picture later. At first she thought the white streak on the photo was a pigeon (presumably a very big one, or a very small angel). Ms Binoke told the Metro that her son had seen a strange white flash of light in the sky a couple of days before, so this may not have been the first visitation. As a devout Catholic, she was delighted to have a photo for posterity and said "it certainly made us think".

The most well-known London angel apparitions are along the river Thames. The website angelofthethames.com links sightings to significant events in history and suggests the angels are the spirits of those killed in the Great Fire of London. The Thames Angels really hit the headlines when singer David Grant saw one when he was filming a London edition of his show Talent Search. You'd think angels would have better things to do than photobomb minor celebs!



CC Image: St George's Park; Stephen Craven
Top Image: Mary Evans Library

More Things You Can Do When You Are Dead!

It gives me great pleasure as Editor to once again offer a short extract for a new book by an authority in the area of psychical research. Tricia Robertson is a name known to many for her work over the years on investigating both mediumship and spontaneous phenomena, and her role in the Scottish Society for Psychical Research, as well as the fascinating series of papers she published with Archie Roy in the JSPR on experiments with selected mediums. I read and enjoyed *Things You Can Do When You are Dead*, and now a second volume is available I asked Tricia if I could include an extract...

Materialisation, Tricia Robertson

There was an occasion in 1975 that I personally know about, where the English medium Gordon Higginson held a materialisation séance in The Glasgow Association of Spiritualists. Unfortunately this was about seven years before I began to take an interest in these matters, but I have written and verbal testimony from several trustworthy people who were there.

This hall holds just over 200 people. There were, and still are, blackout curtains on the large windows suspended by means of ordinary curtain rails. Because of this, the blackout was by no means complete and tiny shards of light came around the edges of the curtains during the demonstration. Gordon Higginson was seated in a chair on the slightly raised platform that is in situ at that location within a flimsy wooden cabinet which was covered with black material, like a curtain.

One woman, Diane Mitchell, who subsequently became a good friend of mine, attended that event. It was one of her first ventures into these matters. She was very suspicious of the whole thing and thought to herself, 'If this is a fraud, I'm going to get to the bottom of it.' With this in mind she arrived very early and managed to occupy a seat in the front row, right in the middle, where her eye-line was in focused on the edge of the platform and hence in line with the bottom of the medium's chair which was a few feet away.

The proceedings began, with a full capacity of around 200. After introductions and a period where the medium settled in to his chair, the front of the cabinet was covered by the black material. Diane's eyes were glued to the foot of that cabinet. All lights were now switched off. After a short time she saw what looked like a substance resembling white smoke billowing out from under the black curtain. She was still

various parts of his body. Recipient after recipient received information from, or had a conversation with, a relevant materialised figure who demonstrated meaningful personal knowledge about their individual lives. The proceedings lasted for about an hour and a half,



...When the white smoke spilled out onto the platform from under the curtain, and then gradually built up into the shape of a man. The figure seemed to have a self-illuminating quality and was not just any man, but her father... she was stunned.

somewhat sceptical. This scepticism somewhat diminished when the white smoke spilled out onto the platform from under the curtain, and then gradually built up into the shape of a man. The figure seemed to have a self-illuminating quality and was not just any man, but her father...she was stunned. Even more so when it moved towards her and said, 'Where's Doris?' This was her mother's name. More than somewhat taken aback she managed to blurt out a response to that question and further questions and statements that followed... no doubt with her in a slight state of shock.

Every person in the room could see that figure and all subsequent figures from the correct perspective of their seated positions in the room. At one point in the proceedings, a person who was seated on the platform at the side of the cabinet leaned over and pulled the curtain aside so that everyone could see the medium in the chair. They all saw the medium, Gordon, slumped in the chair with this white smoky substance emanating from

various parts of his body. Recipient after recipient received information from, or had a conversation with, a relevant materialised figure who demonstrated meaningful personal knowledge about their individual lives.

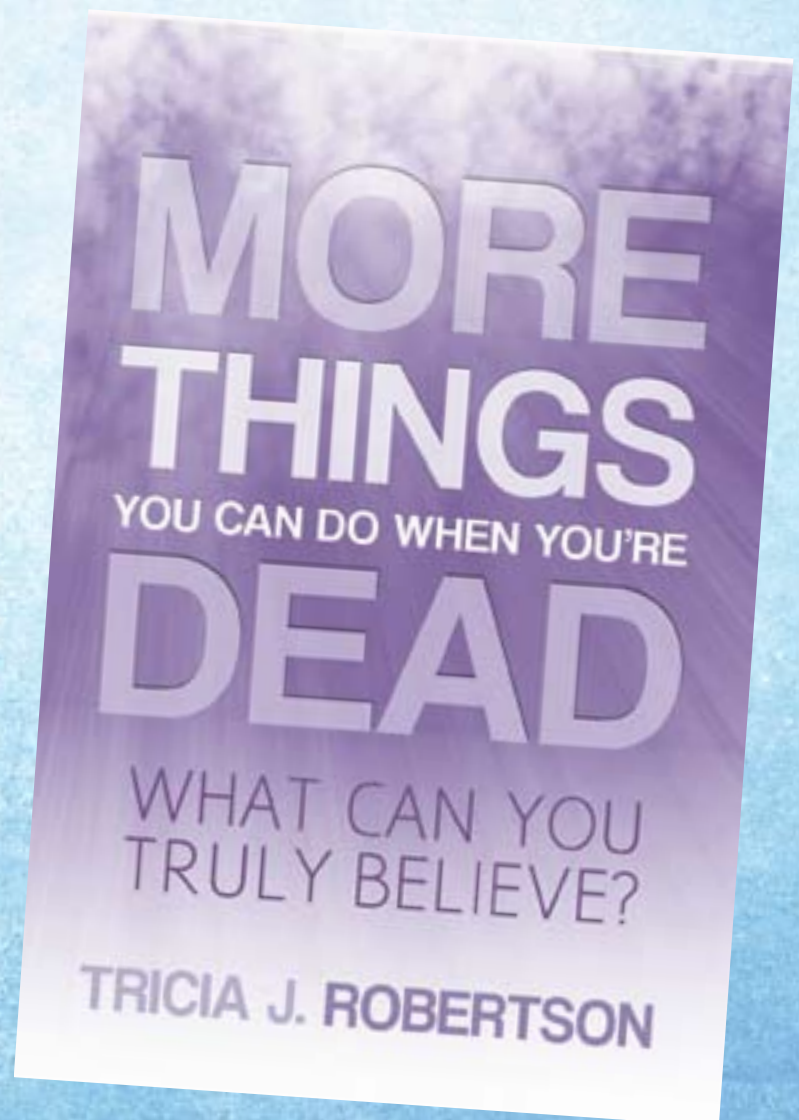
The proceedings lasted for about an hour and a half,



where, in plain sight, figure after figure seemed to disappear and then another figure built up for the next recipient.

One of the psychologically strange things that happened after that was that about two weeks later, when cognitive dissonance had set in, Diane managed to convince herself that these events could not have happened. On further personal interrogation she then intellectualised and realised that those events did happen and, being an intelligent person, had then to integrate them into her world model; her new paradigm. Avoiding change in our thinking and absorption of new facts is actually something that we all tend to do as no one likes to alter their personal understanding or conception of reality.

Since 200 people witnessed the same proceedings that evening I think that we can rule out misperception or fraud in this case.



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S E R I O U S L Y

INVESTIGATING



Who was Aleister Crowley?

by Sue Treanor

He gave himself the title 'The Beast' and was known as 'The Wickedest Man in the World' but what is the truth behind this mysterious and sinister man?

Crowley was the Cambridge-educated occultist and inventor of the religion of Thelema and according to Crowley, he isn't finished yet. "1000 years from now," Crowley once wrote, "the world will be sitting in the sunset of Crowlianity." The egotistical Crowley dubbed himself "the Great Beast 666" amongst many other titles. The British press dubbed him "The Wickedest Man in the World," and is perhaps most famous for his dictum "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law".

Born Edward Alexander Crowley in 1875 to wealthy British Plymouth Brethren brewers, Crowley very early set about replacing the religion of his family and his culture with a variety of extreme endeavours, from mountaineering to sex magic and all manner of practices derived from a mixture of Eastern religions and ancient and modern demonology. The results were mixed. All but the most adept find most of his occult writing incomprehensible (although it's witty in places, it's really the ramblings of someone obviously affected by years of drug-taking). His quite sexy poetry is frequently amusing. Most people found his overbearing personality unbearable, and he squandered his wealth and lived much of life penniless. But his biography is inarguably fascinating—creepy but also heroic in a strange way—and his presence is nearly everywhere inescapable. Crowley travelled the world conducting magical rituals, writing textbooks on magic (or "Magick" in his parlance), founding esoteric orders, and interacting with some of the most significant artists and occult thinkers of his time.

As a mountaineer, Crowley co-leads the first British expedition to K2 in 1902. As a poet, he published some of the most scandalous verse yet printed, under the name George Archibald Bishop in 1898. During his brief time in the occult

society Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, he exerted some influence on William Butler Yeats. He is also indirectly connected to the development of the jet propulsion system—through his American protégée, rocket scientist Jack Parsons—and of Scientology, through Parsons' partner in magic (and later betrayer), L. Ron Hubbard.

Though accused of betraying the British during the First World War, it appears he actually worked as a double agent, and he had many ties in the British intelligence community. Crowley rubbed elbows with Aldous Huxley, Alfred Adler, Roald Dahl, and Ian Fleming. After his death in 1947, his life and thought played a role in the work of William S. Burroughs, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, the Rolling Stones, David Bowie, Ozzy Osbourne, Robert Anton Wilson, Timothy Leary, Genesis P-Orridge, and countless others. Crowley pops up in Hemingway's *A Movable Feast* and he has inspired a number of literary characters.

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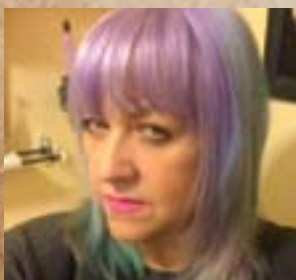
So who was Aleister Crowley? A sexually liberated genius, a spoiled, egomaniacal dilettante, a sceptical trickster, a cruel and abusive manipulator, a racist misogynist? A 1915 *Vanity Fair* profile put it well: "a legend has been built up around his name. He is a myth. No other man has so many strange tales told of him."

As with all such notorious, larger-than-life figures, who Crowley was depends on whom you ask. Various New Age groups utter his name in reverence or mention it as a matter of course, as physicist's reference Newton or Einstein. In some countercultural circles, Crowley is trendy, like Che Guevara, but not much more. Dig into almost any modern occult or neo-pagan system of thought, from Theosophy to Wicca, and you'll find Crowley's name and ideas. His legacy offers the bizarre, repulsive, intriguing, and completely absurd, that can beggar belief and compel one to learn more about the enigmatic, pan-sexual black magician and self-appointed Antichrist.

About the author:

Sue and Michael Treanor are a husband and wife team who are professional Ghost Hunters and psychic mediums. Both realised their connection from a very early age, and now work together from their spiritual shop, Spiritus, in the old riverside town of Evesham in Worcestershire.

Sue and Michael have worked with all of the 'big name' mediums including Derek Acorah, Ian Lawman and Brian Shepherd, and were regular guests on The Most Haunted Radio Show on Kerrang Radio when it ran in 2007/8. Sue and Michael have a client base which includes celebrities, famous authors and Lord and Ladies!



Living amongst the dead

by Alexandra Holzer

“Living amongst the dead in reality is living in nature as it is a parallel universal happening superimposed onto our world and theirs.” - Alexandra Holzer

The field of Physical Research otherwise referred to as the paranormal, meets up with some of us we call encounters. Not everyone experiences these encounters however; it does not mean it does not exist. The paranormal covers a wide variety of subject matter from UFO's to Cryptology, Possession, Hauntings, Cross-Breeds, Witch Craft into folklore lending us topics on The Jersey Devil, Big Foot, Lochness Monster and Vampires. There are more to list but this is a preliminary outline of what's popular. The Occult Sciences are also part of this grouping.

Some individuals learn about what a ghost is with a ghost story. Some individuals learn through education via books, past professors, parapsychologists, scientific educators, mediums, psychics, and the metaphysical field. Some learn through their own enlightenments or experiences. The key is to learn as the more knowledge we possess, the better armed one is to comprehend about life and death.

The paranormal is quite normal. Below are just a few of the field's forefathers who researched different aspects



of the paranormal. Each in contributing to furthering our awareness and information on what happens when one dies. The burning question is where do we go?

A few of my personal favourites are:

Psychic Researcher Nandor Fodor who focused on poltergeists, haunting and paranormal phenomena usually associated with mediumship.

Fodor, who was at one time Sigmund Freud's associate, wrote on subjects like prenatal development and dream interpretations.

Hereward Carrington a British investigator of psychic phenomena and author who's subjects included several of the most high-profile cases of apparent psychic ability of his times. He wrote on subjects including the paranormal and psychical research, conjuring and stage magic, and alternative health issues.



Harry Price a British psychic researcher and author, who gained public prominence for his investigations into psychical phenomena and his exposing of fake Spiritualists. He is best known for his well-publicized investigation of the purportedly haunted Borley Rectory in Essex, England.



Hans Holzer an Austrian born scientific paranormal researcher, occult researcher, professor, spiritualist, and author. He wrote well over 100 books on supernatural and occult subjects for the popular market as well as several plays, musicals, films, and documentaries, and hosted a television show, "Ghost Hunter" (not to be confused with Ghost Hunters, a separate show). He worked with famed Irish Medium Eileen Garrett moving science into the metaphysical world combining the two approaches in obtaining critical data and evidence. This birthed The Holzer Method creating a new modern protocol for researchers after him. Some of his ghost photos were considered top evidence proving life after death.



Anything positive is better than a negative - It just is! Pretty soon you will be attracting good things in a span of time and suddenly find yourself scratching your head. How did I get here: fate, destiny, paths connecting to the right people and timing? Yes to all and then some. Don't forget to thank your paranormal friends, family and guides on the other side as well. You have nothing to loose and everything to gain if you just try and put it out there.

Once you decide to get to that point, a vortex of possibilities could open up a new path for you. Age, time and the past does not equate if you're not content. Try not to hone in on drowning endless situations. Trust the guides who have been assigned to us from birth and let go.

Most of us hold back when inside we might be bursting at the seams to ask if they too, believe. This is good news. Maybe some of you ask what can the paranormal field do for you? Maybe some already know while others are new on the scene. Whatever effect it's meaning has on the individual will lead to a positive.

Take a case of sadness. It's ok to feel sad and so perhaps you've had a tough life. Here's where your faith, belief systems, patience, perseverance, experiences and anything else you can throw in are tested. This is the time for those in need to turn towards the paranormal and ask for help. Spirit guides. Yes, this also falls into the realm of the unknown as it is the unknown that enlightens and teaches. Some wonder if it is silly to ask out loud for guidance? We speak of the universe providing us with what is needed at the right times because we need to have some sort of faith. It is not black or white. This field creates 'spiritual fillers' when living out our daily lives.

Try to carve out a new path in which you can change the course of your destiny. Envision what you need and desire for yourself and go there even if it seems odd at the time. If one does not try to envision ahead one may not know and be stuck in a rut that is a negative.

"Hans Holzer an Austrian born scientific paranormal researcher, occult researcher, professor, spiritualist, and author. He wrote well over 100 books on supernatural and occult subjects for the popular market as well as several plays, musicals, films, and documentaries, and hosted a television show, "Ghost Hunter."

It may not be overnight or perhaps during the next few months but within a decent amount of time you will be in a far better place. For those already there - you know of what I speak. For those in between, you are doing a great justice for your soul and those around you who love you.

Nothing is perfect, even for the rich and famous. At the end of the day we are all cut from the same cloth. I had worked in the past with an educator from Rutgers College in New Jersey on helping to guide our youth in a positive way in the explaining what choices to make and not make. The facts about life and death are expressed to prevent them from ending up on the wrong side before their time. Otherwise, we will have too many poltergeists about creating havoc. Understanding the process and accepting that we are truly never alone is an important step in one's life.

For this month, I only hope to find more people connecting, sharing their paranormal experiences and seeing their faces light up when mentioning Ghosts, Spirits, UFOs, Demons, Witches and other odd occurrences.



About the author:

Second Generation Ghost Hunter and Writer, Alexandra Holzer, is no stranger to the world of the supernatural, publishing or art. She attended The Fashion Institute of Technology following her mother Artist Countess Catherine Buxhoeveden (related to Catherine the Great), who also attended. She follows in her late famous father's (Parapsychologist Dr. Hans Holzer) ghostly footsteps (Original Ghost Hunter, NBC's In Search Of, Amityville Horror, WOR Radio with Joe Franklin.) Hans Holzer was also an Assistant Professor of Parapsychology at the New York Institute of Technology, Research Director of the New York Committee for the Investigation of Paranormal Occurrences, and a member of the College of Psychic Studies in London, as well as a lecturer at leading colleges. Alexandra is co-founder of her global organization, The Hunt with Holzer, in which her research continues into the unknown.



The Influences of Life on a Hobby

by Dave Holdich

So many people ask me if I believe in Ghosts because I'm so into paranormal research, and the answer is no, I don't believe in ghosts.

Belief is a strong word for my thoughts on this varied subject, because for me, beliefs seem to be very deep set in an individual, and are often based on a life event or religious teachings etc., and as such they're not easily changed, and to even try to do so is disrespectful and can lead to offence.

I prefer to term my thoughts on the paranormal as ideas as these are free to fluctuate depending on the situations and evidence offered forward as a case, or extended research into phenomena progresses.

Baring this in mind, I think when I first started taking an active interest in the paranormal, I did have a certain amount of conviction on the existence of ghosts, and to an extent this conviction remains, but it has changed, as I have learned a lot from speaking with various people, reading the literature and attending conferences and lectures offered by both ASSAP and the Society for

Psychical Research, and I like to keep these associations ongoing to further my understanding.

This change has taken time to come about. I first started "investigating" by doing the vigils with night vision cameras etc., with a team of people in my local area, and although I had a few experiences I still can't explain away, soon began to realise that on a scientific level, this approach offered little in the way of reputable evidence, and I soon became disinterested. As a result I am now left with an absence of real understanding of how an investigation is constructed and executed. It seems to me that many methods can be picked apart as lacking controls, flawed and in some ways damaging to the real study of anomalous phenomena.

I do not in any way consider myself an expert, and through my writings, all I aim to do is put across my thoughts, they are to be taken or left depending on the readers own

opinions, and with a subject as diverse, and with as many wide ranging hypothesis as this one, there are bound to be a great many conflicting opinions.

"I have learned a lot from speaking with various people, reading the literature and attending conferences and lectures offered by both ASSAP and the Society for Psychical Research."



Moving on from active investigation, I turned more towards the academic side and began reading books and research papers on psychology, neuroscience and how the brain may misconceive, or even fall on invent its own scenarios, leading the individual to believe they have had an anomalous experience. Tricks of the senses such as sensory deprivation, auto-suggestively induced imagination, and false perceptions of an event based on existing ideas or knowledge of history (which in some cases was wrong in itself) began to become apparent, and I started communicating these observations via social media. For example, if I was made aware of a link in which the tabloid newspapers were exhibiting a ghostly encounter, I'd read carefully the story and look at the situation for myself and dissect it, making clear to those that read it via my page, that various attributes about the surroundings may be influencing the individual's own evaluation of the occurrences and misleading their judgement to the wrong conclusions, before offering my own thoughts on what may in fact have been happening. I would always go on to say that the thoughts offered were entirely my own, and should be taken as such.

My interest in the paranormal was then shifted slightly with a family tragedy when my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. This hit my family and I as a massive shock, especially as we were told that she had only days left to live, but she was a fighter and went on to last a further two weeks. Over this time period I spent a lot of time at the hospital helping to look after her and let her know she was loved and keep her calm etc., but at the same time I also observed a few things which provoked thought.

“As she drew closer to her end I observed on many occasions, that although deeply unconscious, she would extend her arms out in front, as though reaching for something which I could not see..”

As she drew closer to her end I observed on many occasions, that although deeply unconscious, she would extend her arms out in front, as though reaching for something which I could not see. She appeared to be reaching out towards the ceiling of the room and attempting to speak, although I could not identify any clear words. It has often crossed my mind, the possibility that she may have been reaching out for family members who'd come back to guide her on her way, and assure her that everything would be fine and she was safe.

I have since read *The Art of Dying*, by Peter and Elizabeth Fenwick, in which they write about the separation of the spiritual self from the physical, and relate statements of those who've spoken with family members on their deathbeds, and have conversed about loved ones who'd since passed over, returning to reassure them that life goes on beyond the veil.

On the other side of the proverbial coin, I have also carefully considered the possibility that these reactions were caused by lack of oxygen to the brain, or dreams/hallucinations caused by either medication, or a deep state of unconsciousness accessing the subconscious and bringing forward memories, which may have been experienced very vividly, I can only speculate.

I can understand why someone grieving the loss of a relative they loved dearly would prefer to think along the lines of passing over and continuing in happiness on a different level, and this brings me to thinking of a multiverse theory, but I shall not go into that now, or this will turn into a book, and I don't have time for that. I often like to think my mother is ongoing and watching over us, and that thought brings comfort.

On a final note, I would just like to thank you for reading. I have touched on some very personal aspects in this article, but wanted to convey my journey in the field of paranormal research and the scope of experiences, change and life events which have brought me to where I am now.



Potsford Wood: a Suffolk Murder & Haunt

by Jonathan Covington

To the traveller on the B1708 in rural Suffolk the wood perched on top of the hill looks like any other hill. About half a mile from Letheringham and 3-4 miles from Wickham Market this however is Potsford Wood and you might not want to look too closely at it at night. It stands upon what is known locally as Drag-arse Hill, but that is not its claim to fame – that lies in its ghost.

Access to the wood is via a white farm field gate at the top of the hill. There is a muddy track that curves through the edge of the wood, and you cross what is left of an old cross roads. Carry on about a hundred feet further, and up on your right stands an opening with square wrought iron railings surrounding what looks like a dead withered tree, just over 5' in height. It is supported by metal splints at the base, and riddled with woodworm.

It's not until you get close you realise why all the guard rails and metal splints have been put up

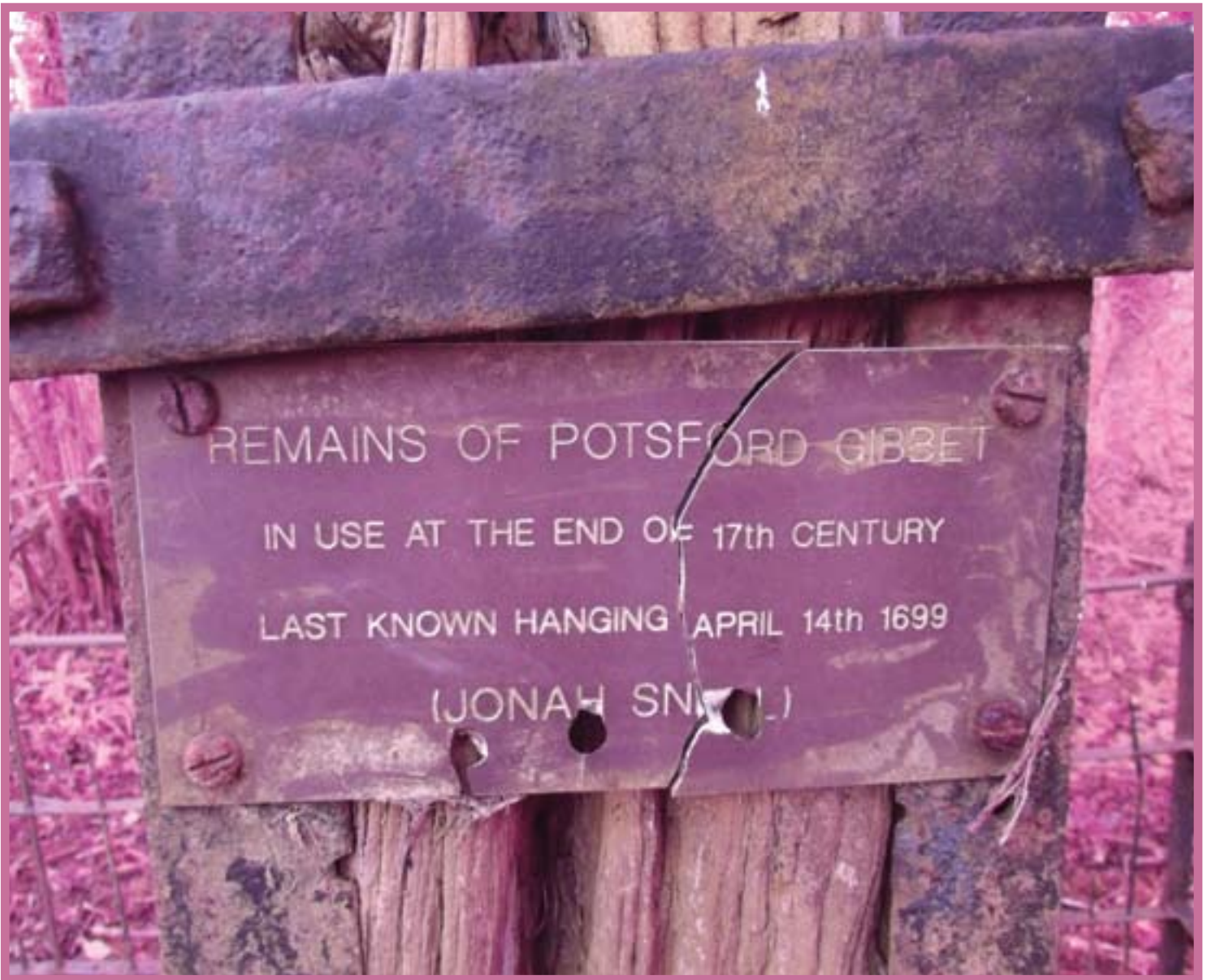
to protect this grisly piece of Suffolk history. The cracked plastic plaque bolted on the front of it reads "REMAINS OF POTSFORD GIBBET. IN USE AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY. LAST KNOWN HANGING APRIL 14TH 1699 JONAH SNELL."

Jonah Snell's body was hung up here wrapped in chains on the gibbet to rot for the murder of one John Bullond and his son. The murder took place inside the local mill, and to this day no one knows why Jonah Snell killed these unfortunates. He was working at the mill when he committed the murders, and the Bullonds were doing the accounts when Jonah leapt upon them with an axe. He was still in possession of the bloodstained axe when he was captured.

After his hanging they dragged Jonah Snell up the hill in chains from Letheringham, and they say his being

dragged up it on his backside to the gibbet gave the hill

"Stories have long circulated around the Potsford area that there was a skull in a dark hooded cloak seen in the area of Potsford Gibbet, and that travellers seeing lights were being lured to the Wood."



its name. The Murder Act gave the Judge the power to impose gibbetting; normally the executed criminals body was then taken to a gibbet and hung up in a cage or wrapped in chains deterrent to all that passed the gibbet what happens to law breakers.

Looking at the gibbet tends to stop you for a moment you get a real sense of the past, expecting to see Jonah Snell's decaying corpse swinging there, as at that very spot it happened in 1699: there is only time separating that moment with the murderer being punished for his crimes from us standing there in the wood

When I went there a bitterly cold South-easterly wind cut through me and I gathered my thoughts upon my surroundings, and concentrated on my efforts on securing my footing on the old muddy crossroads as slipping over and falling into the mud wasn't an option I wanted to explore.

The track wound through the wood. I looked deep in to the gloom of the wood for darkened shapes in hope that it was the ghost of Jonah Snell; the air wasn't filled with menace yet? I did have an Olivus M Ghost Box (a controversial device) with me at the crossroads walking up to the Gibbet,

the Olivus spoke, "East/West"?

The feelings I got from the area were peaceful there was no ominous black phantom waiting for me to turn around to scare the living daylight out of me. I wandered around the woodland not far from the Gibbet wondering about where Jonah Snell's bones had been buried but no records were kept and one can only wonder where exactly they are probably not far from the gibbet?

"There are more modern stories of the phantom of Jonah Snell. A lorry driver stopped to on the side of the road to relieve himself, and was drawn into Potsford Wood when he saw lights and a dark figure standing near him."

Stories have long circulated around the Potsford area that there was a skull in a dark hooded cloak seen in the area of Potsford Gibbet, and that travellers seeing lights were being lured to the Wood. Even during the day it was said the skull dressed in a black hooded cloak was seen standing behind whoever entered the wood. Tales told in local taverns for the weary traveller by a local gamekeeper

seasoned though he was but still frightened of the Wood. Still the tales stay in your mind out in the Woods and having to go near and past through Potsford Wood and passed the ominous Gibbet mindful of what may be behind you?

Deliberately perpetuated myths and scare tactics put about by poachers? Could the haunting of Potsford Wood be a ploy



to keep strangers out? Even a stout hearted Gamekeeper gave it a wide berth, and no one would tread where the poachers stalked on the lord's manor dressed as the ghost of Jonah Snell, free to come and go as they please????

Maybe, yet there are more modern stories of the phantom of Jonah Snell. A lorry driver stopped to on the side of the road to relieve himself, and was drawn into Potsford Wood when he saw lights and a dark figure standing near him. He fled back to his lorry as fast as his legs could carry him, and drove off.

Another story tells how a couple stopped their car and felt compelled to get out and stretch their legs on edge of the boundary to Potsford Wood. A dark figure appeared in front of them, they grabbed each other and ran back to their car up Dragarse Hill, and made a prompt get away in to the night.

None of these stories can be verified, neither are the people in them named so no real witnesses independent or otherwise to corroborate any of it. They are just, that

stories. More recently there have been accounts from Paranormal Investigators; the sound of choking noises at the gibbet.

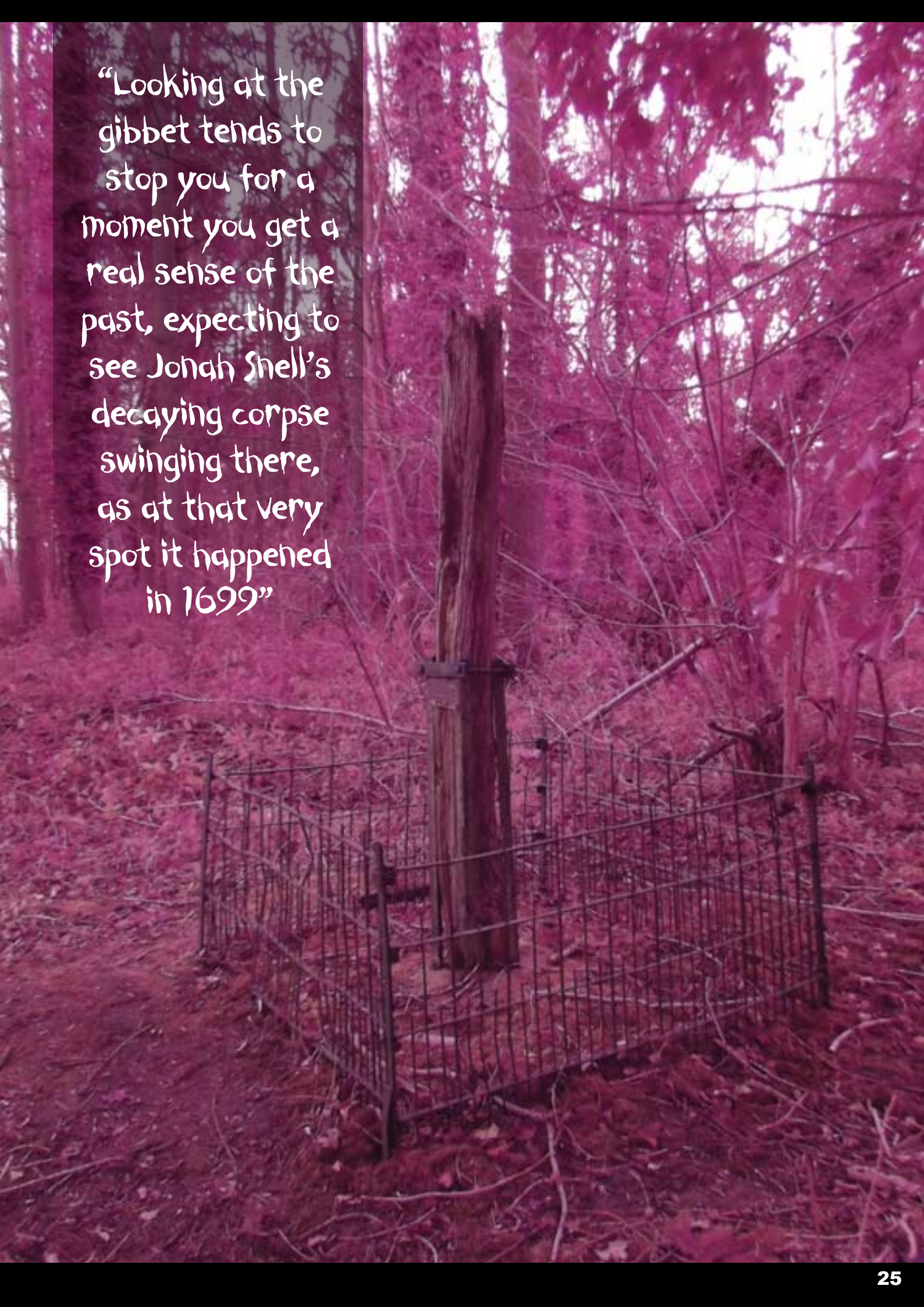
Whether there is a disembodied, ominous black phantom of Jonah Snell, actively seeking out the drivers and passengers in the many passing cars and trucks on the B1078 up and down Dragarse Hill and also people on walking in the wood I can't say. The idea the ghost draws people in, lures or compels them to the site then terrifies them is a very strange one. Is the ghost just shadows cast by the Tree's sparking people's Primeval fears with a sudden movement caught in the peripheral vision in the eye being in an unfamiliar area at night?

I wasn't compelled by a mysterious force luring me off the Road into the Wood, to the Gibbet. Then again; I didn't visit Potsford Gibbet during the hours of darkness?

If you're ever in that area then pay a visit to Potsford Wood, you can then decide for yourself whether the spook of Jonan Snell is just a story?



“Looking at the gibbet tends to stop you for a moment you get a real sense of the past, expecting to see Jonah Snell’s decaying corpse swinging there, as at that very spot it happened in 1699”



Padfoot:

A Supernatural History

by Patricia and Lionel Fanthorpe



When the President and First Lady of ASSAP produce a new book it is always time to pay attention, and I was delighted when a review copy of Padfoot dropped through my letter box. Those who caught my talk at Seriously Enchanted may recall that I am fascinated by legends of spectral black dogs, and even have a dog ghost story of my own. While I prefer the Suffolk "Black Shuck" name to the other names - "Padfoot", "Old Trash", etc whatever you call him the black dog has an important role in British folklore.

This book does an excellent job of covering black dog spooks (or fairies, or demons, or whatever it is!) at three levels - in the UK, in Europe, and Worldwide, with two chapters dedicated to each. Packed with fascinating stories, written with style and verve and thoroughly entertaining the pace is perhaps a little breakneck at times - I would like to see a more detailed treatment of some of the cases, and while the second set of three chapters professes to offer that they are actually still quite brief treatments of cases mentioned earlier, with some minor repetition of material.

Despite the name the book does not limit itself to Padfoot, but deals with all manner of dog related hauntings, and a few dog stories that while arguably paranormal or bizarre are not really about ghosts at all. My favourite is an American case where a house was struck by lightning, and caught fire: the dog failed to rouse the family by barking, so it went outside and rang the doorbell. Clever dog! In other cases the ghostly dog is simply a beloved pet that appears to have returned from the grave. At times, such as the supposed "Lucy Lightfoot" timeslip from the Isle of Wight the doggy link is a bit tangential - her beloved crusaders sepulchre has a dog at his feet - but the stories are all worth reading.

The coverage is very impressive - I noted a few omissions, but they are few and far between. I don't think one of my favourites gets a mention, so I will tell it here and the authors are welcome to use it if they wish in future editions...

H.Rider-Haggard is best remembered today for his two great novels of Victorian romance and adventure, "King Solomon's Mines" and "She". He had a lifelong interest in things supernatural and while at Bungay he had an experience which is one of the most curious in the annals of communication from beyond the grave. The dead spirit was in this case that of his daughters dog.

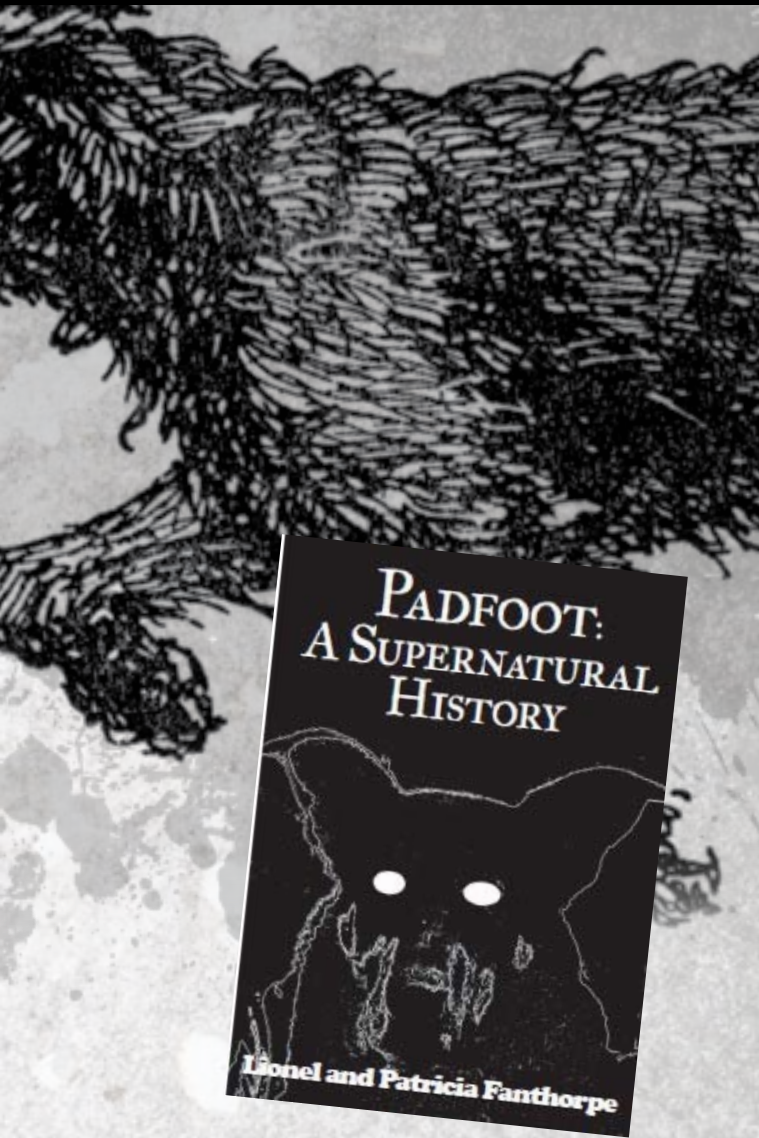
Despite the name the book does not limit itself to Padfoot, but deals with all manner of dog related hauntings, and a few dog stories that while arguably paranormal or bizarre are not really about ghosts at all.

On the night of July 9th 1904 the author retired to bed after a usual day with his family. A few hours later he was awakened by his wife from a most peculiar nightmare. In his dream he had been drowning, and struggling to reach the reed lined shore of a river or brook. Then, as his wife shook him, another image floated before his eyes, that of his daughters dog "Bob." The dog was trying to talk to him, but realising this was impossible it somehow transmitted instantaneously to him the knowledge that it was dying. When he awoke fully he laughed about the dream with his wife and she assured him that he had made noises very much like a dog in distress, and that is why she had roused him.

In the morning the whole family and household were told of the master's silly dream, and it was only later in that day that it was realised that Bob was actually missing and a feeling of foreboding settled over them. Sadly the dream was completely accurate, for it seems that Bob had fallen asleep on Falcon Bridge after a hard evening out rabbiting and had been struck by the Harleston to Ditchingham train at eleven the night before. The force of the impact had completely smashed the poor animals head and must have killed it instantly before throwing the body into the river below.

It seems that some two or three hours after his death Bob was somehow able to communicate the tragedy to Rider-Haggard, suggesting that dogs have souls as immortal as ours! The interested reader can find the full report in the S.P.R. Proceedings for October, 1921.

Anyway enough shaggy dog stories. The book has has a few short chapters of great interest - the Black Dog as



an omen or premonition; sounds accompanying black dogs; variations in appearance and finally a chapter dedicated to possible explanations of the Black Dog phenomena. With an emphasis on historical and folkloric cases rather than recent eye witness reports it is hard to draw too many strong conclusions from the accounts, but this is interesting stuff.

The book has one terrible flaw, that must be laid at the feet of the publisher not the authors. The material is somewhat randomly ordered – at times stories seem to cluster geographically within the UK chapter, with say a group of Welsh stories, but then we jump to East Anglia, then back to Tyneside. The lack of an index is absolutely dreadful in this circumstance – there so much useful and fascinating material, but I resorted to creating a series of bookmarks to find stories again. I did set about creating an index, but it is a herculean task, as the book is packed full of material. The electronic version if one exists is doubtless searchable, but the physical book really could do with an index or more section headers.

A book that any ASSAP member can enjoy, with a treasure trove of folklore and accounts written with with and intelligence.

Recommended - CJ Romer

Hardcover: 172 pages
 Publisher: The King's England Press (2015)

“Photos from the Cage.”

John Fraser provides these photographs which accompany his article in ANOMALY 48



Simon Scratching



Cage Donna1 - left inside of the calf 1



Cage Donna3 - Right leg inside calf



Cage Vienna Amsterdam - Jan - Jun '15



Cage Vienna, Amsterdam - Jan - Jun '15

You Might Think I'm Crazy, but...

By Rick Hale

Those of us who investigate claims of paranormal activity are all too familiar with the phrase, "You might think I'm crazy, but..." It's usually the very first thing a prospective client says when they contact you inquiring about your services. I have heard this dozens of times and oddly enough I never seem to get used to it.

Mental illness appears to be an ever present and growing problem in the Western world. An overwhelming amount of Americans are diagnosed daily with one form of mental illness or another. Most diagnosis is for something as simple as Seasonal Affect Disorder, a disorder which affects a person's mood during the long cold winter months. It is believed that shorter days and a lack of outside activity causes people to become mood and depressed. However, it would appear that more people are being diagnosed with more serious mental illnesses such as Bi-polar Disorder and Schizophrenia. But how does this relate to alleged paranormal activity? And, how can you help your client that they are not losing their mind?

Believe it or not there are there are mentally illnesses, specifically mood disorders that could make a person believe they are experiencing paranormal activity. Please keep in mind I am not suggesting that everyone who has experienced anomalous phenomena is having some kind of break with objective reality. Rather this is just speculation in an attempt to explain some reports of paranormal phenomena. And why it's important for the paranormal researcher/investigator to be familiar with these illnesses and their symptoms. Because there have been a couple cases where a lack of understanding had deadly consequences.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

When my uncle returned from Vietnam, he came back a very changed man. My uncle, a normally gentle man, drank to excess, experienced tremors and would fly into violent fits of rage when he heard loud bangs. As a child I didn't quite understand what my uncle was going through. However,

I learned much later in life, that due to his service to our country he developed a very serious psychological condition.

"Believe it or not there are there are mentally illnesses, specifically mood disorders that could make a person believe they are experiencing paranormal activity. Please keep in mind I am not suggesting that everyone who has experienced anomalous phenomena is having some kind of break with objective reality. Rather this is just speculation in an attempt to explain some reports of paranormal phenomena."

Post-Traumatic Stress disorder, PTSD, is a mood disorder that a person develops after experiencing a traumatic event. Sexual and physical abuse, a terrible accident or, in my uncle's case war, can trigger the disorder. Those who experience PTSD are in their own private hell so to speak. But, how does this relate to paranormal activity? The answer lay in the symptoms.

PTSD sufferers often report disturbing, reoccurring flashbacks and hallucinations that can seriously cripple their lives. Those who experience PTSD report that it is as if they are right back in the Traumatic situation. A woman who has been assaulted may experience a strong feeling that her attacker is near. In my uncle's case he found himself back in the jungle locked in mortal combat with a former enemy. Fortunately for the PTSD sufferer their illness can be treated with medication and therapy.

Fantasy Prone Personality

At first I was reluctant to include this as it is not necessarily a mental illness. However, after dealing with a client who clearly had a fantasy prone personality, I felt it was appropriate to add it.

People who have a fantasy prone personality sometimes find it difficult differentiating between what is fact and what is fantasy. The person with an FPR can go about their daily lives being a contributing member of society. However they report that fantasy can quickly take over making it difficult to cope with reality.

As I briefly mentioned I do believe I dealt with a person who had a mild case of FPR when I conducted an investigation in their home. Despite the fact we found absolutely nothing that would make her house haunted, she persisted in the belief that her house had disembodied entities and whatever I had to say she knew better.

Bi-polar Disorder

Bi-polar Disorder is a mental illness that affects thousands of people. This mental illness is characterized by the extremes of being overly happy or manic, and to the other extreme of being terribly depressed. Those who suffer from Bi-polar Disorder may engage in risk taking behaviours while in a manic state and isolating them and being suicidal while depressed. Some sufferers have reported audio and visual hallucinations in rare instances. Like PTSD, Bi-polar Disorder is treatable.

Schizophrenia

Most of what we know about Schizophrenia comes to us from a very bad source, mass media. Television, movies and books have painted the schizophrenic as being an axe wielding maniac on a killing spree. What they fail to show is the inner struggle that a person afflicted with this disease goes through. It is an uphill battle with the voices they hear and the bizarre hallucinations that goes along with this illness.

Schizophrenic sufferers experience disorganized speech that could give the impression they are speaking some kind



“Anneliese died from malnutrition and dehydration as a result of being subjected to several exorcisms.

Anneliese was already diagnosed with mental illnesses but stopped taking them after being convinced by a Catholic priest she was possessed by the devil.”

of unknown language. And the hallucinations and paranoia might make the sufferer violently lash out. To them the hallucinations are all too real to the untreated sufferer and the paranoia might cause them to isolate. Have you guessed the paranormal connection yet? Spirit or demonic possession.

In the New Testament, the man known as the Gadarene demoniac is a perfect example of a schizophrenic sufferer being confused with so-called demonic possession. He had delusions and powerful hallucinations that drove him away from society causing him to isolate himself by living in a graveyard. He lived in squalor and didn't care about his personal hygiene and appearance. Those who knew him believed him to be infested by evil spirits. If this man lived today he would be diagnosed as suffering from Schizophrenia and institutionalized and not subjected to an exorcism.

Another more recent case involved a young German girl who clearly suffered from mental illness and not demonic possession, Anneliese Michel.

Anneliese died from malnutrition and dehydration as a result of being subjected to several exorcisms. Anneliese was already diagnosed with mental illnesses but stopped taking them after being convinced by a Catholic priest she was possessed by the devil.

As time went on Anneliese's behaviour became increasingly bizarre and she became reclusive, spoke in tongues and cursed sacred icons of her Catholic faith. To those around her witnessing her bizarre behaviour became convinced she was possessed. A tragic misunderstanding that led to her death.

For those reading this I feel compelled to say that if you are not a trained medical professional you shouldn't diagnose any one. Our job is to hear their story and investigate appropriately. However, if you do think you are dealing with a legitimately mentally ill person please consider how to proceed, and point the client to appropriate help.



About the author:

Rick Hale has spent his life in the pursuit of the unknown after witnessing an apparition at his grandparents' house on the north side of Chicago. Over the past 20-plus years, Rick has been on dozens of investigations with large paranormal groups to being completely independent. Rick began writing for Paranormal Underground magazine in May 2009, and a year later he became co-host of Paranormal Underground Radio.

Lancashire Folk

written by Mel Warren

I've known Mel for over 20 years, meeting through ASSAP while investigating paranormal cases in the North of England. We share a passion for collecting stories and coming from Lancashire myself I have been looking forward to reading Mel's new book and revisiting some of the old stories, coming across some new ones..and of course, I can now add the book to my collection!

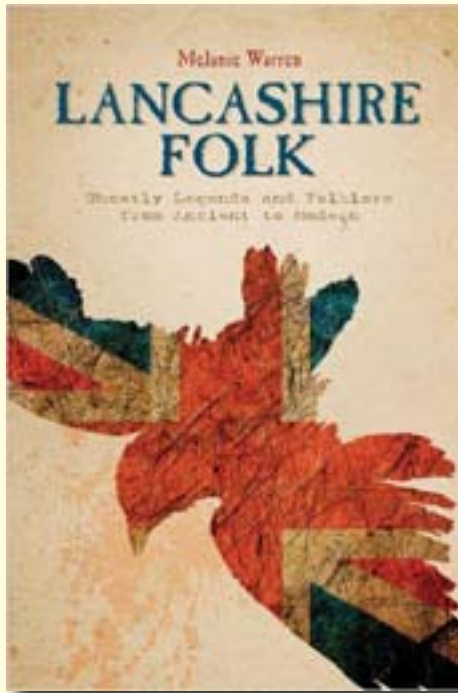
Lancashire Folk takes the reader on a broad trip around the county and includes folktales, legends, ghosts, phantom animals, the occasional dragon, witches, boggarts, curses and tales of the Devil. As Mel herself says, "I think I can safely say that Lancashire Folk is the most comprehensive collection of Lancashire weirdness ever to be in print." Melanie certainly has gone through her extensive collection and pulled together a comprehensive and engaging book on the area.

The book hits the right notes from the start, Mel's contents are alphabetical by town, covering 155 locations and gives the reader a good format to follow and dip in and out of. The introduction is well written and talks in particular about the county's rich connection with witchcraft and various Devil tales over the centuries and also includes an area which can often be overlooked in paranormal books, the development of folklore and legends surrounding locations and monuments such as standing stones, Holy wells and springs.

Having read a lot of these old tales and accounts while doing my own research for Mysterious Britain it's interesting to see how Mel has pulled the information together from a wide variety of sources and written them up in a nice style that's factual and easy to read.

One account which brings back a few memories (which are best not discussed here!) is the story from Walton-le-Dale and St. Leonard's Churchyard where in 1560 Dr. John Dee, the famous occultist from Manchester, tried to summon a corpse from the ground. Mel however has found a different and interesting story regarding the church which may not be as familiar to some readers.

Fairy folklore features heavily in the area and Melanie includes some fascinating and interesting accounts within the book. The tale of Extwistle Hall while brief is the story



of a death foretold by a man seeing his name on a coffin carried by a fairy funeral procession while on his way home from a Jacobite meeting. He severed connections with the cause in an attempt to save his life but sadly still died shortly after following an accidental gunpowder explosion in his home.

Touching on the Pendle area Melanie covers the well know accounts of the witches but I was also interested to read about Apronful Hill where the devil is supposed to have stood throwing rocks at Clitheroe Castle and also the tale of Fox's Well, a spring found by George Fox, who climbed Pendle Hill while under instruction from God.

Readers of my previous book reviews on my website, Mysterious Britain, will know that I'm a believer in stating sources as much as possible and giving clear references. Melanie's book doesn't disappoint, at the back she gives her bibliography and a topical index for all the accounts again, before listing OS Map references and postcodes (with a note to watch for private land and not to trespass!). I thought I would miss not having images throughout the book but actually having them at the back in a small gallery makes them less intrusive and I like that format.

Recommended - Ian

About the author: Melanie Warren has collected British folk tales and ghost stories for almost four decades and her fascination with her subject shines through in this collection. For many years, Melanie was a paranormal investigator and took part in innumerable ghost-hunts but never saw a ghost, although she did have several experiences she finds hard to explain. She was also BBC Radio Lancashire's resident paranormal expert and co-authored two collections of ghost stories, which were broadcast on BBC local radio stations. Melanie is now concentrating on turning her extensive collection of stories and tales into a series of books, one county at a time. Melanie lives in Lancashire and has done so all her life.

Hardcover: 240 pages
Publisher: Schiffer Publishing (10 Mar. 2016)

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