

seriously
strange
magazine



**DON'T SAY
WE-JEE**

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**2019 Seriously Strange
Conference details**

Minsden Chapel

**UFO of Redfalls,
Minnesota**

**Guidance notes
for Investigators of
spontaneous cases**

**UFO of Redfalls,
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The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena was formed in 1981 to research and educate about a wide range of anomalous phenomena.

These fall into the broad categories of psychic phenomena, earth mysteries, ufology and Fortean phenomena. ASSAP holds no corporate views and the views expressed by individual authors are their own. ASSAP is a registered charity (327422) and a company limited by guarantee (2075226).

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Username 'assapmember' Password 'ectoplasm'

Are you on Email?

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

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Glastonbury automatic writing mystery

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



Frederick Bligh Bond

Dear ASSAP Friends and Colleagues,

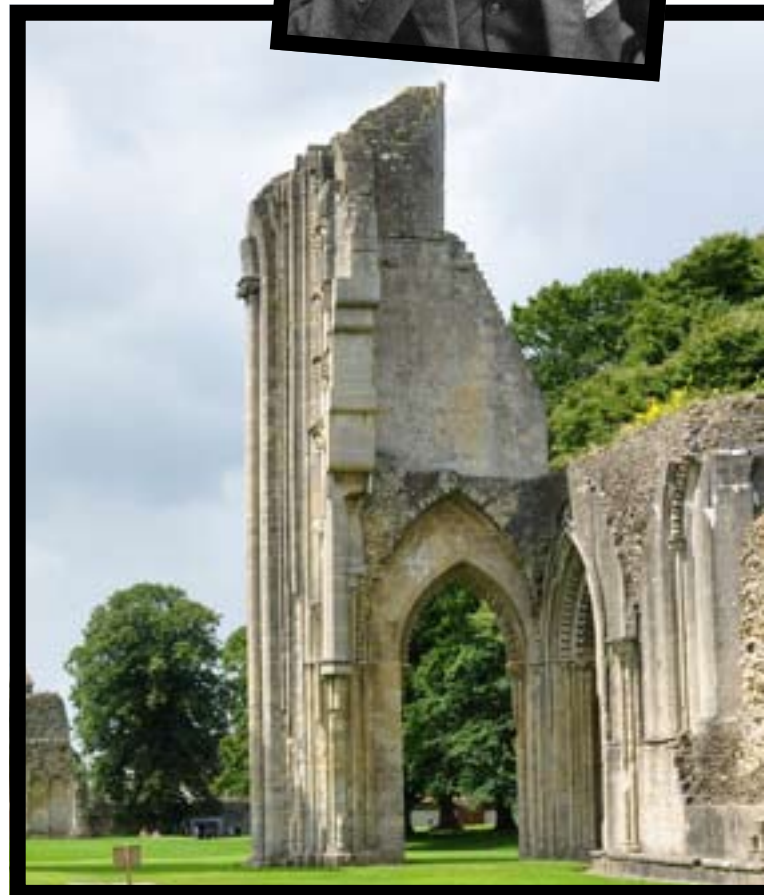
Patricia and I were recently commissioned by Steve Rudd at King's England Press to investigate and then write about a Glastonbury mystery dating back over a century. It interested us greatly, and we felt that you would like to share it with us.

The central figure of this mystery is Frederick Bligh Bond 1864 – 1945. His mother was Mary Isabella Delafosse, the wife of the Reverend Frederick Hookey Bond, Headmaster of Marlborough Royal Free Grammar School. The wider Bligh family included the notorious William Bligh, Commanding Officer of the Bounty when the mutiny took place. Another famous family member was the hymn-writer, the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould.

Frederick grew up and qualified as an architect. His great interests were archaeology and life's psychic mysteries. In collaboration with his friend, Captain John Allen Bartlett, Bond experimented with automatic writing, and the two investigators firmly believed that they were in contact with some of the monks who had built Glastonbury Abbey centuries ago.

The core of this mystery is that as a result of what he believed was information from these long dead builders, Bligh's archaeological work at Glastonbury was extremely successful. He located many important pieces of evidence which earlier investigators had not found.

What is of major interest to us as ASSAP researchers is investigating the real nature of this so-called psychic information. What is automatic writing? Does it come, perhaps, from the strange contents of the writer's own subconscious mind? Or is it really from autonomous spirit entities? Perhaps an automatic writer is picking up ideas telepathically from the minds of people in the vicinity?



It offers wonderful opportunities for ASSAP members to design experiments in the automatic writing field which could hopefully solve the mystery of its origins.

With our very best wishes to all friends and colleagues in ASSAP.

Lionel & Patricia



paranormal UFOs vampires psychology
ghosts seriously earth mysteries
psychic EVP hauntings
anthropology
cryptids
consciousness mediums
**seriously
strange**

TWO DAY CONFERENCE £34.99

AND DON'T FORGET THE

GALA DINNER - SAT NIGHT £35

www.seriouslystrange.org.uk

Seriously Strange is going to be a great, fun weekend. Join the top speakers in the field today as they come together to discuss everything from ghosts to vampires, poltergeist to UFOs.

We have a great variety of academic speakers and lay researchers. A blend of accessible talks and more serious talks. We also have the Paranormal Olympics, a fun series of experiments to take part in or watch.

See the top experts debating anomalous phenomena. The audience will have a chance to get involved in these debates too. Give your opinion on the burning questions of the day, or just sit back and watch the debate unfold around you.

We wrap up the Saturday session with the Gala Dinner. Another highlight of Seriously Strange an exclusive opportunity to sign up to the National Register of Professional Investigators and exclusive booking to the ASSAP Training Weekend and upcoming conference: We're looking forward to seeing you on 7th or 8th September for a great weekend!

The full list of speakers will be listed on our website and facebook pages soon!

ACCOMMODATION

You can stay at The University of Bath on the 7th and 8th September, it is £80 for two nights. See website for more information.

DATE AND TIME

Sat, 7 Sep 2019, 10:00 – 17:00 (subject to speaker times)

Sun, 8 Sep 2019 10:00 – 17:00 (subject to speaker times)

LOCATION

University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY

Visit www.seriouslystrange.org.uk to book your tickets today

2019 SERIOUSLY STRANGE CONFIRMED SPEAKERS



ASSAP's President - Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe

Lionel Fanthorpe was born in England and has worked as a journalist and teacher. He is currently Director of Media Studies at Cardiff Academy and an independent priest. Lionel is President of ASSAP (The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena) and is also the President of BUFORA (the British UFO Research Association). He's now a popular TV and Radio presenter and celebrity guest on chat shows. Lionel is also the author of over 250 books.



Alan Murdie

Alan Murdie is a lawyer active in psychical research in the UK and abroad. He has conducted research into spontaneous cases in United Kingdom, Romania and Colombia and has written and broadcast extensively on paranormal topics for local, national, and international media. He is a Council member of the Society for Psychical Research and is chairman of the Ghost Club, founded in 1862. He is the editor of the new edition of Ghost Hunting: A Practical Guide, writes a monthly column 'Ghostwatch' for Fortean Times magazine and runs the website europaranormal.com.



Chris French

Chris French founded the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit (APRU) at Goldsmiths in the year 2000. Prior to that he had carried out research in a wide range of different areas, including cerebral hemispheric differences, computerised assessment, and cognition and emotion, but from a young age he was fascinated by claims of the paranormal. By setting up the APRU, I was able to focus upon this fascinating aspect of human experience. Chris is a member of both the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit and the Forensic Psychology Unit at Goldsmiths.



Ann Winsper

Ann Winsper is a Psychical Phenomenologist, and is currently a PhD student at the University of Central Lancashire, researching the Psychology of Electronic Voice Phenomena. As well as being a member of the Parapsychological Association and the Society for Psychical Research, she has been actively investigating reported hauntings for nearly 30 years and is co-founder of Para.Science psychical research and investigation.



John Fraser

John Fraser is a member of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, and has been 'Vice Chair Investigations' of the Ghost Club – the two oldest groups in the country that study the subject. His topics of study have been as varied as hypnotic regressions and vampire folklore, as well as more conventional paranormal research. Since 2015 John has been working on an extended project of witness testimony regarding the well-publicised phenomena occurring at The Cage in St Osyth Essex, also assessing the validity of witness testimony in spontaneous 'paranormal' cases.



Jackie Tonks

Jackie particularly has a keen interest in collating evidence of Bigfoot, via filming, using daylight and night vision photography and filming, thermal imaging, and camera traps, and is a keen tracker....She is also interested in the Anthropological ('personal/cultural meanings') of the Bigfoot field and also her Psychological background means that perceptual factors and eye witness testimony factors are of interest to her. Jackie studied Psychology at degree level and then went on to do Masters degrees in varying subjects and then qualified as a Counsellor. She now works as a Social Worker for the NHS. She is also a member of the Centre for Fortean Zoology, and ASSAP.



Peter Laws

Peter Laws is an researcher, author and ordained Baptist minister with a taste for the macabre. He writes a monthly column in The Fortean Times and is the creator of the acclaimed Matt Hunter series of dark thriller novels. His new non-fiction book, The Frighteners, explores why human culture enjoys the morbid. He hosts the popular podcast and YouTube show The Flicks That Church Forgot which reviews horror films from a theological perspective. He regularly speak at churches and events. He's appeared in various magazines, newspapers and radio shows. He lives with his family in Bedfordshire.



Richard Freeman

Full time cryptozoologist. Herpetologist (reptiles) former zookeeper, Author of 'Dragons; More Than A Myth?', 'Explore Dragons' and 'The Great Yokai Encyclopedia; An A to Z of Japanese Monsters; Orang-pendek, Sumatra's Forgotten Ape. Goth, Dr Who fan, book collector



Steve Parsons

An Investigator and Researcher of Ghosts, Hauntings and related human experiences. Author of three books and numerous published articles on ghosts, ghost hunting and related subjects, cited or referenced in many more. Presenter and advisor on paranormal documentary shows for UK and overseas broadcast networks including; The Discovery Network, National Geographic, The BBC, ITV etc. Also Canadian, Japanese and US TV networks. Appeared and advised on popular paranormal 'edutainment' TV shows including Most Haunted, I'm Famous & Frightened & Paranormal Investigation Live. Hosted & co-hosted radio shows for the BBC and other broadcasters.



Mark Rees

Mark Rees is the What's On editor for South West Wales Media and specialises in articles on the paranormal. He has interviewed a lot of well-known faces associated with the genre, such as the cast of Most Haunted and celebrity psychic mediums, as well as researching guides to the most haunted places in Wales, the country's famous ghosts, and an annual ghost hunt which is published every October. He has been invited to speak about the subject on several occasions, most recently as the guest 'specialist' on the BBC Wales show. Mark's previous book is The Little Book of Welsh Culture and he lives in Port Talbot



Dr Hannah Gilbert

Dr Hannah Gilbert Sociologist and Theologist Hannah received her doctorate from the University of York in sociology and is best known for encouraging sociological perspectives on the paranormal, especially ghosts.

Dylan Jones



Amethyst Grey





OFFICIAL NOTICES

In accordance with the governance arrangements that were passed by members in 2010.

Annual Meeting Notice

The annual meeting of associate members shall take place at 10am on 17 November, Arnos Manor Hotel, 470 Bath Road, Arnos Vale BS4 3HQ

Director Nominations

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

Annual Reports and Election Ballots

Following the 2010 amendment, ballots will be sent electronically where an email address is held, except where you request a postal copy of the ballot before 31 July. If you do not currently receive emails from us this means we do not have your email address. Help us save money by emailing secretary@assap.ac.uk

It's time to volunteer for ASSAP

ASSAP is an extraordinary organisation and I'm proud to continue on its committee.

Our voluminous website is a go-to resource for thousands; hundreds attend our educational conferences each year; hundreds more contact us for advice and help; dozens attend our training for paranormal investigators each year.

ASSAP is also growing at a pace. Our membership is more than twice what it was 6 years ago and is at its highest ever level in our 38-year history. More people are receiving our magazines, journals and emails. But co-ordinating such a wide-ranging organisation is a big job. We have no paid staff and instead rely on dozens of talented and dedicated volunteers. ASSAP's strength comes from its continual renewal of volunteers over the decades: we

have several volunteers with decades of continuous service, but most of are committee are much newer to the organisation.

Although dozens of people volunteer we still need a lot more help the keep improving and keep growing. Do you have any of the following skills? General organisation, customer service, web design, social media professionals, volunteer management, teaching, assessing and a great deal more.

We all work remotely – so you can be based anywhere - but we do stay in touch and meet at events where possible. If you can help us on a regular basis I'd like to hear from you. Do send me an email about yourself to chairman@assap.ac.uk

Dave Wood





THE STRANGE CASE OF 'ROSALIE'

by Paul Adams

The case of Harry Price and 'Rosalie' is a ghost story, and like the best of such tales it has, at its heart, a vivid human drama. However, this particular ghostly tale is not fiction. It involves real people and real events that have unfolded in stages over a period of eighty years. Its origins lie in what can with much truth be described as a 'golden age' of Spiritualistic phenomena – the years between the First and Second World Wars – and one which it seems we are unlikely to experience again. The positioning of 'Rosalie' at the extreme end of this time period acts in some way as a closure on this particular span of psychical history.

'Rosalie' is a story of physical mediumship, and specifically what has been considered to be very much its pinnacle: the materialisation of spirit people in solid form. The subject has seemingly been demonstrated since the earliest years of the establishment of Modern Spiritualism in the middle of the nineteenth century, yet remains equally illusive and controversial. Even convinced Spiritualists are divided as to its benefits within the movement. Some of its most famous

exponents, physical mediums such as Florence Cook, 'Margery' Crandon and Helen Duncan, all became mired in controversy at some point during their lives, and regular readers of *Psychic News Magazine* will know that modern exponents have not been successful in bucking this particular trend.

Traditionally, materialisation has been achieved in full blackout, or in semi-dark conditions with red light, utilising ectoplasm, an amorphous substance produced by the medium which can be moulded into temporary structures – hands, faces and in the most advanced cases, full figures – by visiting discarnate people. Over a period of several years in the 1990s, the Scole group of sitters, working in locations both in this country and abroad, pioneered an alternative form of materialisation. This harnessed a blend of three distinct psychic 'energies' derived from the natural surroundings, the physical people involved, as well as from spirit world visitors themselves.

The case of 'Rosalie' is a curious one as when looked at initially it appears to fall somewhere between these two distinct forms of materialisation. It was presented to the public by a person who himself was no stranger to controversy and sensational headlines: the flamboyant psychical researcher, Harry Price. Most famous today for his investigation of Borley Rectory, a gloomy and remote red-brick house that the Press and Price promoted in equal measure throughout much of the 1940s as 'the most haunted house in England', Harry Price spent the best part of the inter-war years in the séance room. There, along with other researchers of the day, he attempted to obtain evidence for physical mediumistic phenomena. A particular interest was the production of ectoplasm and materialisation.

Although well known to the general public, Price was treated with suspicion by other psychical investigators (particularly the somewhat conservative Society for Psychical Research or SPR) who considered many of his reported cases were little more than publicity stunts. He also had an antagonistic and somewhat difficult relationship with the Spiritualist movement during the course of his career in psychical matters. Cutting remarks, to the effect that Spiritualism was 'at its best a religion; at its worst a "racket"', as well as the gleeful exposure of séance room fraud, did not endear him to many. Some considered him an enemy, although Maurice Barbanell, the founding editor of *Psychic News*, felt that this was a front and that, at heart, Price was a believer and essentially accepted the reality of survival after death. This view may have been based, at least in part, on his experience of 'Rosalie' which took place, as he later revealed, in the winter of 1937.

Initially as a private discussion at a meeting of the Ghost Club at the beginning of 1939, and subsequently in a chapter of a new book, *Fifty Years of Psychical Research*, issued later the same year, Price told a remarkable story. Just over twelve months before, he had been invited to attend a séance meeting by members of a small home circle, where it was claimed, the solid form of a little girl always materialised. 'Rosalie' had died at the age of six of diphtheria in 1921, but was now being reunited with her mother, a widowed Frenchwoman whose British husband had died in the trenches in 1916. The circle, comprising 'Rosalie's' mother, together with a middle-aged couple and their teenage daughter and her boyfriend, offered a single opportunity to witness the materialisation of 'Rosalie'. But there was to be no follow-up investigation or enquiry, and although he was free to discuss the case and publish a report, those involved demanded complete anonymity in every respect.

Price said the séance took place in a drawing room in a large Victorian house in South London. He searched the sitters and the room was locked and examined. Seals across the door and windows, and starch powder scattered on the floor, made it impossible for anyone to either enter or leave without giving themselves away. Yet over the course of a two hour sitting, in a heightened atmosphere charged with

"Price said the séance took place in a drawing room in a large Victorian house in South London. He searched the sitters and the room was locked and examined. Seals across the door and windows, and starch powder scattered on the floor, made it impossible for anyone to either enter or leave without giving themselves away."

emotion, Harry Price appeared to encounter the impossible. For over thirty minutes, the solid figure of 'Rosalie' appeared and stood silently among the sitters. Price felt her naked form in the darkness, took her pulse, and observed her features by the soft glow of a luminous plaque. Despite being prompted, the spirit child remained silent, only speaking on a single

occasion at the climax of the séance to confirm, when asked by Price, if she loved her mother. It was an eerie yet heart-rending moment that affected all those present. When the lights were eventually raised, only Price and the members of the circle remained – 'Rosalie' the ghost girl had gone.

From the outset, Price's reporting of 'Rosalie' became enmeshed in controversy. It remains arguably, even considering the later charges of fakery and misrepresentation levelled at him over the Borley investigation, his most controversial case. Sceptical colleagues felt he had finally overstepped the mark as there was nothing, other than his word, to back up the story – an apparent 'gentleman's agreement' with the circle not to reveal the location or the identities of those involved was simply too convenient to take seriously. He also drew fire from the Spiritualists, but for a different reason. It seemed

impossible that, after admitting to such an experience under his own control conditions, Price could now not deny the reality of spirit materialisation and survival. That he still did, citing the fact that the séance would have to have taken place in his own laboratory to come to such a conclusion, caused resentment, particularly from commentators such as George Lethem, the Editor of *Light*, who had been present at the Ghost Club dinner when Price first spoke publicly about the 'Rosalie' case.

Price addressed his critics by claiming he had kept in touch with the 'Rosalie' circle and had pressed them for permission to carry out further research. However, the spirit child's mother, afraid that her daughter would be frightened away by the intrusion, refused. Following the outbreak of war, she was said to have been caught up in the German advance on Paris and was never seen again.

On 29 March 1948, Price himself died suddenly at his home in West Sussex, and the case of the spirit child seemed at an end. Ten years after his death, on the heels of their Borley debunking, a critical account written by two SPR members, Eric Dingwall and Trevor Hall, charged Price with wholesale dishonesty over his spirit child story, trashing his posthumous reputation completely. Surprisingly, those most offended by the claims were several prominent Spiritualists, who felt that Price's reporting of 'Rosalie', despite his own reservations, was one of the best examples of post-mortem survival.

Although Harry Price was gone, the 'Rosalie' story has been capable of the most remarkable twists and turns, and those who thought that there was no hope of any further insight into the case were wrong. We do not have to rely on Harry Price's



word for what may or may not have happened in December 1937, and that nothing independently exists to support his claims is untrue.

Richard Lambert, the former Editor of the BBC's *The Listener* magazine, quickly challenged the Dingwall and Hall viewpoint, stating that Price had discussed the case with him both before and after the séance took place. Correspondence preserved in the archives of the University of London Library supports this. In 1963, Kathleen Goldney, a former member of Price's National Laboratory of Psychical Research, stood up during a Ghost Club meeting convened specifically to discuss the 'Rosalie' case, and stated that by chance she visited Price's office in Berkeley Street on the morning after the séance was said to have taken place, and found Harry Price in an extremely distressed state. He was writing an account of his experience and there was no doubt that he had been completely shaken by what had happened. As Mrs Goldney was one of the authors, along with Eric Dingwall and Trevor Hall, of the critical SPR 'Borley Report', her testimony is all the more compelling.

In the mid-1960s, it seemed that investigators into the 'Rosalie' mystery were on the edge of a breakthrough. A letter in Price's archive to a Mrs Mortimer, arranging an appointment for the exact day of the séance, led to an exhaustive search of all surviving houses in London where a household of that name resided in 1937. But despite Price having given an exact description of the séance house in his account, none of the addresses matched. Then a surprising occurrence took place. David Cohen, a psychical investigator from Manchester, who had self-published a book defending Price over 'Rosalie' and offered a cash reward for information, received an extraordinary letter.

The writer claimed to be the daughter of the family who held the sitting in 1937. The séance had been fake and she herself had played the ghost by undressing and redressing in the darkness. Her father had borrowed money from 'Rosalie's'

mother to cover losses on the Stock Market, and in order to buy time to pay it back the family were pretending to be able to contact her dead daughter to whose memory she was devoted. When the mother became suspicious that the spirit child was not who she appeared to be, she demanded an investigation, and Harry Price was the man who was chosen. Although her parents were dead, in order not to sully their memory, the writer insisted on remaining anonymous. The letter was signed simply, 'Rosalie'.

At the time, opinions were divided on whether the letter was genuine or itself a clever hoax. Within months, David Cohen had died and there seemed little more that could be done in achieving some kind of closure. Yet to let the case continue to hang in limbo without resolution is unfair, not only to the memory of Harry Price, but to the people over the years who have expended time and energy looking for the answers. For this reason, since 2008, I have spent much time examining the 'Rosalie' story in considerable detail, and the book, *The Enigma of Rosalie*, is the result.

Of all his many cases, when looked at more than just superficially, 'Rosalie' clearly had the most effect on Harry Price as a person. Borley Rectory may have given him financial success and great fame, but this brought him closest to the essence of his life's work as a psychical researcher, dealing as it does with a subject that affects us all, the concept of survival after death.

Today it is now possible to state where Harry Price went and who he met with on a cold winter's night in December 1937. He had a remarkable experience, one that for all his faults, his bluster, ego and heavy-handedness, makes him appear the most human. He did tell the truth. He may or may not have believed what he experienced was real, but he reported genuinely what he saw. And, like other genuine researchers in similar circumstances, both before and since, he suffered for his honesty.



Minsden Chapel

by Ed Woods

In the dead of night, looming out of the cold darkness under the illumination of torchlight emerge the crumbled knapped flint walls of Minsden Chapel. Remote, decayed, abandoned, overgrown, encroached by woodland and standing alone on its hilltop, the chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas has stood out from the Hertfordshire landscape since the 14th century, in close proximity to the old pilgrims' way. Used by local clergy and parishioners for approximately four centuries, it had become decayed by the late 17th century, so much so that by the 18th century the structure had become sufficiently unstable that it ceased to be used for ceremonial purposes. According to legend, on 11th of July 1738 during the wedding of Enoch West and Mary Horn, a lump of falling masonry knocked the Bible from the curate's hand. Thus ended its working life as a place of worship. But its subsequent history has carried its fame far beyond this corner of rural England: it acquired a reputation of being haunted.

The tales of haunting go back to around the turn of the last century, when the chapel became associated with Reginald Hine. Hine was a solicitor and historian resident in Hitchin and spent a great deal of time visiting the atmospheric ruins. In fact he was able to obtain a lifetime lease on the structure. The most famous haunting at the chapel is that of a ghostly monk, who climbs a flight of stairs at the north-east section, which have long since been consumed by time and the elements, at midnight on Halloween, as the lost bells of Minsden toll mournfully: audible but invisible. A glowing cross was alleged to have been seen there by paranormal investigator Peter Underwood, although he admitted it could've been a trick of the light. Other stories abound. Of a nun murdered at the chapel, of a secret tunnel, of the

ethereal strains of music, and the ghost of a dead child. Occult ceremonies have been conducted here, such as the one held in the summer of 1983.


In 1907 Hine and two friends, Thomas Latchmore and Frederick Griggs, visited the chapel with the intention of capturing on film the image of the phantom monk. Making their way through the ruins, they allegedly were able to photograph the famous revenant stood beneath the remains of an arch. The famous arch itself finally collapsed in 2008. The image of a ghostly figure was published over twenty years later in Hine's, *The History of Hitchin* (1929), although it would appear to have been faked. Latchmore in 1930 admitted that the photograph was faked and it appeared that he was experiencing with the photographic trick of double exposures, and the figure may well have been the young Reginald Hine, who never admitted to it being fake.

Hine himself, a sufferer from depression in his later years, committed suicide in 1949 at Hitchin railway station, whilst in conversation with a friend. He was cremated at Golders Green Cemetary and his ashes committed to the wind at the site of his beloved chapel. A memorial stone to Hine now lies flat upon the earth; as like a tomb amongst the ruins.

His famous and oft-quoted threat was that, "trespassers and sacrilegious persons take warning, for I will proceed against them with the utmost rigour of the law, and, after my death and burial, I will endeavour, in all ghostly ways, to protect and haunt its hallowed walls". As yet his threat to guard Minsden Chapel from beyond the grave has yet to be realised....for now at least.

About the author:

Ed Woods was born in Somerset and has an interest in the supernatural that goes back to when he was two years old, when he saw the ghost of a sailor and a dog at the top of the stairs in his house. He also has a love of history and photography; a combination that he finds most enjoyable when doing field trips.



UFO encounter at Redwood Falls, Minnesota

by Brian Sterling-Vete

I recently had the privilege of being asked to be a guest speaker at ASSAP's Seriously Strange North conference which was held in Manchester, England this year. I was very impressed by the event and how well it was organised, and equally impressed with the people I met there. The attendees I spoke with after my presentation were highly intelligent professional people which made the break time conversations very interesting indeed.

In addition to this, it was a real pleasure to finally meet with several senior members of ASSAP, which is an organisation that has always enjoyed a justly-deserved reputation for being the best in the business when it comes to the scientific research and study of anomalous phenomena.

The topic of my presentation at the conference was about the experiences and encounters I've had during my lifetime with UFO's, or AAP's (Anomalous Aerial Phenomena) which seems to be the current most PC way to talk about good old-fashioned UFO's.

On several occasions during my lifetime, I was either lucky enough to have been in the right place at the right time, or in the wrong place at the wrong time, depending upon which way one looks at it. With that said, the fact remains that I've been witness to several UFO sightings as well as having been thrust into several encounters with the paranormal. On the 1st of July 2017 my wife and fellow researcher Helen Renee Wuorio, and I witnessed what has been called, "One of the most significant UFO incidents of recent times."

We'd been invited to participate in a paranormal investigation led by our good friend, author and paranormal investigator Dr. Adrian Lee, who is a Brit who now lives in Minnesota, USA. He'd arranged for the axe which was the weapon used to commit the infamous 1917 Redwood Falls Axe Murders to be taken from the museum where it's normally kept, and to the cemetery so it could be used as a trigger object where the graves of the victims and the alleged perpetrator of the crime are all buried.



So, it was never destined to be a run-of-the-mill Saturday evening with that on the agenda. Dr. Adrian Lee, who also hosts the paranormal radio show, MQTA – More Questions Than Answers on Dark Matter Digital Radio, is an excellent science-based paranormal researcher. He and his team deployed an impressively wide range of equipment to perform the paranormal investigation, but we got a lot more than we bargained for.

As the second stage of a three-part investigation was about to begin, I spotted what would be a triple succession of UFO's flying silently at about 10,000 ft, at about 300 knots on a West to East trajectory. They were silent, large, and very bright. They also performed several stops and trajectory changes before disappearing in the same direction each time. In fact, from our vantage point they each appeared to travel at exactly the same speed and performed exactly the same stops, course changes and manoeuvres.

More importantly, since we'd already pre-deployed an extensive range of testing and measuring equipment for a completely different purpose, we were able to record data which would have otherwise been impossible to capture.

This is what makes The Redwood Falls UFO encounter of July 1st 2017 so significant. Instead of only being able to investigate after the fact, as is the case in almost all UFO sightings, we were ready to record data ahead of a sighting by pure luck and coincidence.

The Redwood Falls UFO incident is documented in detail, together with the original transcript of evidence and data which was submitted to the investigative authorities in Minnesota afterwards. It's in my book, Paranormal Investigation – 'The Black Book of Scientific Ghost Hunting and How to Investigate Paranormal Phenomena' which is available on both Amazon.com and on Amazon.co.uk <https://amzn.to/2wNHvG7>





An evening talk at Bodmin Jail

At Bodmin Jail in Cornwall on November 9th 2019, I'm one of the two guest speakers at the paranormal conference and evening dinner event they're holding. (<https://bit.ly/2oK6Nkj>) I'll be speaking about how when I was producing a TV documentary in 2012/13 about the origins of the United States as a nation, my TV crew, which incidentally consisted of 13 people, were thrust into one of the most baffling cases of apparently paranormal activity I've ever known.

During the 1st 24 hours after arriving we were all witness to doors which wouldn't stay closed, we had debris being thrown at us by unseen hands, a door ripped off it's hinges by an unknown means while the team were in the next room, we were all woken at night by very loud and strange noises of furniture being dragged around in rooms where there was no furniture, and several people even saw apparitions which interacted with them.

The location was a 110-room old mansion hall built in 1495 which was the home to the man who was the driving force behind the Pilgrim Fathers and in getting them onto the Mayflower to sail the Atlantic in 1620 to form the first settlement in what we now call the United States.

President George Washington's mother also lived on the same estate, as did President Quincy Adams' family. Lastly, a direct descendant of the man in question, Robert Browne, was officially the first person to fire the opening shot in the American War of Independence. So, this one place, and this one man was directly responsible for most of the key elements in the formation of the country which we now know as The United States of America.

I spent a total of 10 months living in this old mansion house over a two-year period, and during that time I discovered that there used to be a village, complete with church and cemetery situated on the front lawn. It was moved sometime

during the 18th century, but even though they moved the village, the church and the gravestones, they didn't move the graves, which are still there buried under the lawn to this day on deconsecrated ground.

The Squire of the estate was interviewed while we were there, and he openly admitted to having seen on several occasions the apparition of a man dressed in 17th century costume. This seems to be consistent with the same apparition which other people have reported seeing, including several members of my TV crew. I believe that the Squire, and the other members of my TV crew, all witnessed the apparition of Robert Browne. This is the man who is now most commonly believed to be the one person behind most of the key elements which allowed the United States to become a nation in it's own right.

The full story is told as it unfolded in sequence in the book, *'The Haunting of Lilford Hall: The Birthplace of the United States as a Nation Haunted by the Man Behind The Pilgrim Fathers'* which is available in paperback on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk - <https://amzn.to/2ToUGKf>

I'm now planning to launch a new project leading up to 2020 year, the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower, to return to this mysterious old mansion and investigate the entire location thoroughly and scientifically. I'll keep ASSAP informed about this and will very likely be inviting certain members of the organisation to join the investigation team. I'm releasing a new book about this in time for Halloween.

About the author:



BBC TV news veteran, TV Broadcaster, Guinness World Record Holder, and author of the highly acclaimed book: *Paranormal Investigation: The Black Book of Scientific Ghost Hunting and How to Investigate Paranormal Phenomena*. Brian has a life-long interest in anomalous phenomena tempered with as high a degree of objective scientific neutrality as possible.

To date, he has participated in over 1000 investigations throughout the United States and in the United Kingdom and is a regular guest on the Dark Matter Digital Radio show: "More Questions Than Answers" with Adrian Lee which is about all things paranormal and anomalous. In 2017, Brian was part of the team, two U.S. Government workers, which accidently became part of what has been hailed by MUFON as "one of the most significant UFO sightings of recent times".



The Paranormal and the First World War

by Dr Leo Ruickbie

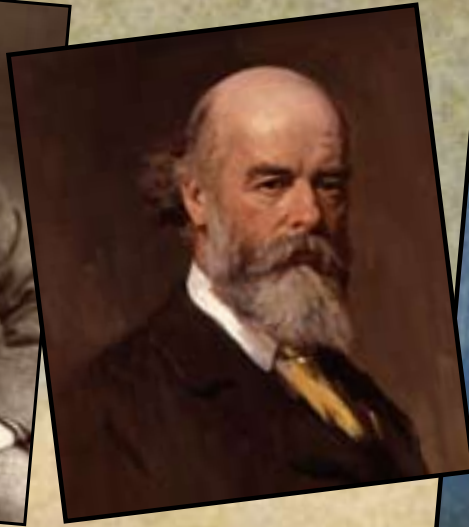
The unimaginable butchery of the First World War brought an unexpected and intense interest in the paranormal. People asked, could the dead return? Were the British on the side of the angels? Could black cat amulets and lucky pennies protect against bombs and bullets? Could the fate of nations be foretold?

In 2014, I started work as the editor of the Paranormal Review, the magazine of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) – founded in 1882, it's the world's oldest and largest organisation for the study of what we now call the 'paranormal'. Of course, 2014 was also the hundredth anniversary of the start of the First World War and my first issue was devoted to looking at paranormal aspects of the conflict. And this got me thinking. You may have seen that WWI recruiting poster showing a father with his children and his little daughter asking 'What did you do in the war, Daddy?' Well, what did the SPR do in the war?

On the surface, there was not much to find – a few dusty accounts in mouldering journals, the occasional more recent publication – so I had to dig deeper. The work took me into special archives in the British Library and Cambridge University Library where I read letters and papers that did not seem to have seen the light of day in the last hundred years. There were original and unpublished accounts of the Angels of Mons, letters from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In the smell of old paper, faded ink and illegible handwriting waiting to be decoded was the raw stuff of history. Here was still a physical link with all that had gone. It was like entering a time machine.

I discovered that the SPR did quite a lot. They investigated angels, poltergeists and premonitions, among other things. Some members of the Society went to war themselves, others saw their sons leave for the Front, many never to return.

One of the most well-known members of the SPR at the time was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. We've all read Sherlock Holmes, but how many have read, or even know about, his spiritualist writings? Conan Doyle was a member of the SPR long before the war started. He was also a believer in Spiritualism before 1914, but the tragic events of the war would lead him to make public his belief. And being Conan Doyle, he did not just make his belief public, he turned it into a crusade.



Another influential member of the SPR was the physicist Sir Oliver Lodge. He was Principal of Birmingham University and a Fellow of the Royal Society – an eminent scientist – and he was also deeply interested in the paranormal. When the war came, his youngest son joined up. What happened to him became the subject of one of the best-selling books of the war.

And then there was a fresh graduate in her twenties, an assistant research officer for the SPR, who found herself deciding the fate of angels when the SPR launched an investigation into the Angels of Mons. Did she sense at the time that she had in her hands one of the greatest mysteries of the First World War?

What I found fascinating was to follow these different biographies through the war years, seeing how events shaped or destroyed them. There were strange contradictions as society wrestled with the problem of the paranormal. Fortune-tellers were put on trial for fraud at the same time as the Army could stage a mass handout of lucky charms. A dramatic case like the Angels of Mons affected the whole country, but there were also so many individual encounters with the uncanny, with seemingly impossible coincidences or strokes of luck (good and bad). It seemed more than any other conflict to be a quintessentially paranormal war.

Now, in 2018, on the hundredth anniversary of the end of the war, the Centenary of the Armistice, I have told these stories, many for the first time, in *Angels in the Trenches: Spiritualism, Superstition and the Supernatural During the First World War*.

Angels in the Trenches was published on Thursday, 8 November 2018, by Robinson (an imprint of Little, Brown) in the UK and is available from Amazon and major booksellers. To find out more visit Amazon.co.uk or Amazon.com.



About the author:

Dr Leo Ruickbie specializes in controversial areas of human belief and experience. An elected member of the Royal Historical Society with a PhD from King's College, London, he is the author of six books on the history and sociology of witchcraft, magic and the supernatural. His work has been mentioned in the media from *The Guardian* to *Radio Jamaica*, and is cited in the current student book for A-Level Sociology in the UK. He is the editor of the *Paranormal Review*, the magazine of the Society for Psychical Research, and can be found at www.ruickbie.com.



DON'T SAY WE-JEE

Peter Laws on the paranormal device that's become a pop-culture icon: The Ouija Board

The 'talking board' received its earliest known patent in 1854, but the music professor who filed it, Adolphus Theodore Wagner, actually his as a telepathy device for living people. He called it a Psychograph. In the spirit-hungry climate of the day, however, his talking board idea soon became a handy, easy-to-make ghost-phone.

The first time the public at large really became aware of this bit of spirit-tech was on the 28th of March 1886 when a short, unassuming article called 'The New Planchette', was published on page nine of the New York Tribune Sunday edition. The article recounts an interview with a 'Western man' who talks excitedly about 'a new scheme for mysterious communications'. He even gives detailed instructions so readers can make their own talking device at home. They need a rectangular board, of about eighteen to twenty inches, with letters, numbers and words written on it. The paper includes a handy diagram showing where to place the letters, the numbers, the 'yes' and the 'no'. The interview also recommends including 'Good-Eve' and 'Good-Night', so the ghost conversations can be polite and courteous. Users put their thumb and forefinger on the planchette – 'a little table' on four legs. Then they simply ask aloud 'Are there any communications?' The planchette then moves across the board and offers what the interviewee calls 'remarkable conversations'.

This was a far more practical and clear way of talking to spirits than the awkward, hard to interpret rappings from the séance scene. Best of all, users didn't need specialised mediumship skills to try it. People loved it so much, some were becoming addicted. The article lists at least seven Ohio cities that were experiencing a 'perfect craze over the new planchette'. It had now 'taken the place of card parties' as evening entertainment. A gentleman acquaintance of the 'Western man' found his family so obsessed with 'the witching thing' that the man burned it. Baffled as to where it had gone, and unable to live without it, the family got their servants to build a new one. The board dutifully told them what had happened to its predecessor. It spelled out: Jack burned it.

Attorney Elijah J. Bond spotted the growing demand for talking boards. He patented the device in 1891 and assigned the rights to the Kennard Novelty Company, who trademarked the word 'Ouija'. Some say the name came from the combination of the French and German word for yes, 'oui' and 'ja'. So, if you want to look like you know about these sort of things, don't pronounce it 'wee-jee' like everybody seems to. Say 'weeja' instead. Others believe that the board named itself. Charles W. Kennard simply asked it what it wanted to be called, and it spelled out the word 'Ouija' in response. The board insisted this meant 'Good Luck'.

After some business wrangling, the Ouija eventually became the project of shop foreman and soon-to-be entrepreneur, William Fuld. The board itself told Fuld to expect good times ahead and told him to build a factory. He claimed it spelled out 'Prepare for big business'. It was right. By the 1920s Fuld became a millionaire through Ouija sales, and The New York Times said the boards were as popular as bubblegum. Some Christians denounced it as evil, and ironically some spirit mediums came out against it too. Because even in the spirit world, new tech can affect jobs. With the Ouija board, mediums were seeing their role as specialist conduits to the dead effectively cut out. It also didn't help that the twentieth century had seen a series of scandals in which individual mediums were exposed as frauds. So, the public welcomed this simple, easily tested piece of wood.

The Ouija board may have told Fuld about the good times ahead, but it didn't give him a heads up about 1927. On the 24th February that year he fell three stories from his factory roof. He managed to grab an open window but, like a scene from a horror movie, the window slammed shut and he plunged to the ground. It was thought he might survive and he was rushed to hospital, but a bump in the road en route rammed one of his broken ribs into his heart. The factory that the board had specifically told him to build ended up killing him. Insert ominous thunderclap here.

Fuld may not have made it to 1930, but the Ouija board did, and its popularity hasn't stopped since.²⁹ It thrived and is still manufactured and sold today. Toy giant Hasbro recently offered an all-pink Ouija, aimed especially at young girls. The board has also become an instantly recognisable icon of morbid pop culture, but it's a controversial one too. Horror films like *The Exorcist* popularised the idea that Ouija boards could be the doorway to demonic attack or even full-on possession. Christians continue to see it as a 'doorway to danger'. Some mediums and paranormal investigators also warn that the Ouija is like a direct line to hell – although it's possible that some of them simply want to divert people from the low-cost Ouija toward their own premium-rate channels to the beyond.

Despite this potential danger (who are we kidding: probably because of it) the Ouija has become a morbid rite of passage for millions of teenagers across the globe, who

gather at parties or school libraries to summon the dead.

I was one of them. I made a Ouija board in woodwork at school, and what it lacked in carpentry finesse, it made up for with supernatural drama. Like those nineteenth-century seekers calling out: Are there any communications? into their candle-lit parlours, my friends and I would start our session with that classic line: Is there anybody there? Only this was in my red-lit bedroom, with N.W.A. playing quietly in the background. Like a spectral chatroom, we eventually summoned a young woman. I say young, but she soon announced she'd been hanged in the Middle Ages for being a witch. I forget her name, I just remember she was nice at first. Funny even. Complimentary too. But then she started saying things about us, things we hadn't told anybody else. And when we started believing she really might be a spirit, she turned a little psycho, spelling out which of us were going to die that year, and who she might kill first.

A fortnight later, thoroughly creeped out, I took that Ouija board back into school and hacked it in half with an industrial saw. All the time I was torn. Was this legit communication from the dead, or just the result of subconscious pushing? The more time passes, the more I think the latter, but I still can't be sure. But what was beyond doubt was how it made me feel: disturbed, frightened and thrilled, all at the same time. For a teenage boy looking for proof of the afterlife, and who at the time had no connection with any organised religion, the search for ghosts seemed like the most natural and immediate way of starting a spiritual quest.


The Ouija board was the mass-market progression of what had begun with the Fox sisters, who began communicating to spirits through rapping sounds. They introduced the world to an observable, testable mysticism which captured the imagination of millions of people. They also showed us something important about modern humans: we don't want science to completely replace spirituality. Not all of us, anyway. Ideally, we want to hold on to both. Organised religion may well promise an afterlife, but you might have to die first to see it. Until then, you have to trust in an invisible God. Hands-on tech like the Ouija board, however, promises proof of an afterlife, right there on your kitchen table.

About the author:



Peter Laws is an ordained church minister with a taste for the macabre. The above is an extract from Peter's latest book *The Frighteners: Why We Love Monsters, Ghosts, Death and Gore*. Out now in Hardback, Paperback, eBook and Audio from Icon Books (UK) and Skyhorse (US). The book seeks to understand, and defend, why human beings would be drawn to morbid subjects, from horror films and serial killers, to zombies, werewolves, vampires, ghosts and the paranormal. He is also the creator of the Matt Hunter series of novels (*Purged*, *Unleashed* & *Severed* - published by Allison and Busby) about an ex-church minister turned atheist professor, who helps the police solve religiously motivated murder.

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Guidance Notes for Investigators of Spontaneous Cases.

Apparitions, Hauntings, Poltergeists and Similar Phenomena.

by Steven T. Parsons

These days it seems that almost everybody wants to be a ghost hunter. This desire to examine reports of ghosts is not a new thing either, for as long as mankind has been reporting ghostly encounters there have been some others who have sought to examine the subject for themselves. Over the years this interest in ghosts has waxed and waned but since the turn of the century it has continued to be a popular pastime with a strong following. For example, a straw poll of the internet I carried out in 2018 using Google and searching for UK based paranormal teams resulted in more than 900 active groups being identified. This was most certainly not definitive and the actual number is likely to be higher.

Ghost hunting is frequently portrayed as a cool way to spend a Saturday night with friends; battling against evil possessing demons, listening attentively to the disembodied voices of the dead and watching through bleary eyes for the flashes of multi-coloured lights as they react to the presence of a nearby spectre. Of course, I am generalising. Not every investigator is fortunate enough to spend their leisure time

battling demons or lucky enough to hear the anguished pleas of the undead on their latest item of ghost tech.

There are also some investigators who have dedicated themselves to a more serious study of the subject and who work to the highest ethical standards, in the manner in which they collect and the way that they consider the information obtained. Whilst many investigators now rely upon technology and apps to assist them, there are many more who have to make do with or may even prefer using those good old-fashioned methods derived from Spiritualism that have always proved so unreliable in the past. In 2018, table tipping, dowsing and mediumship remain as popular as ever.

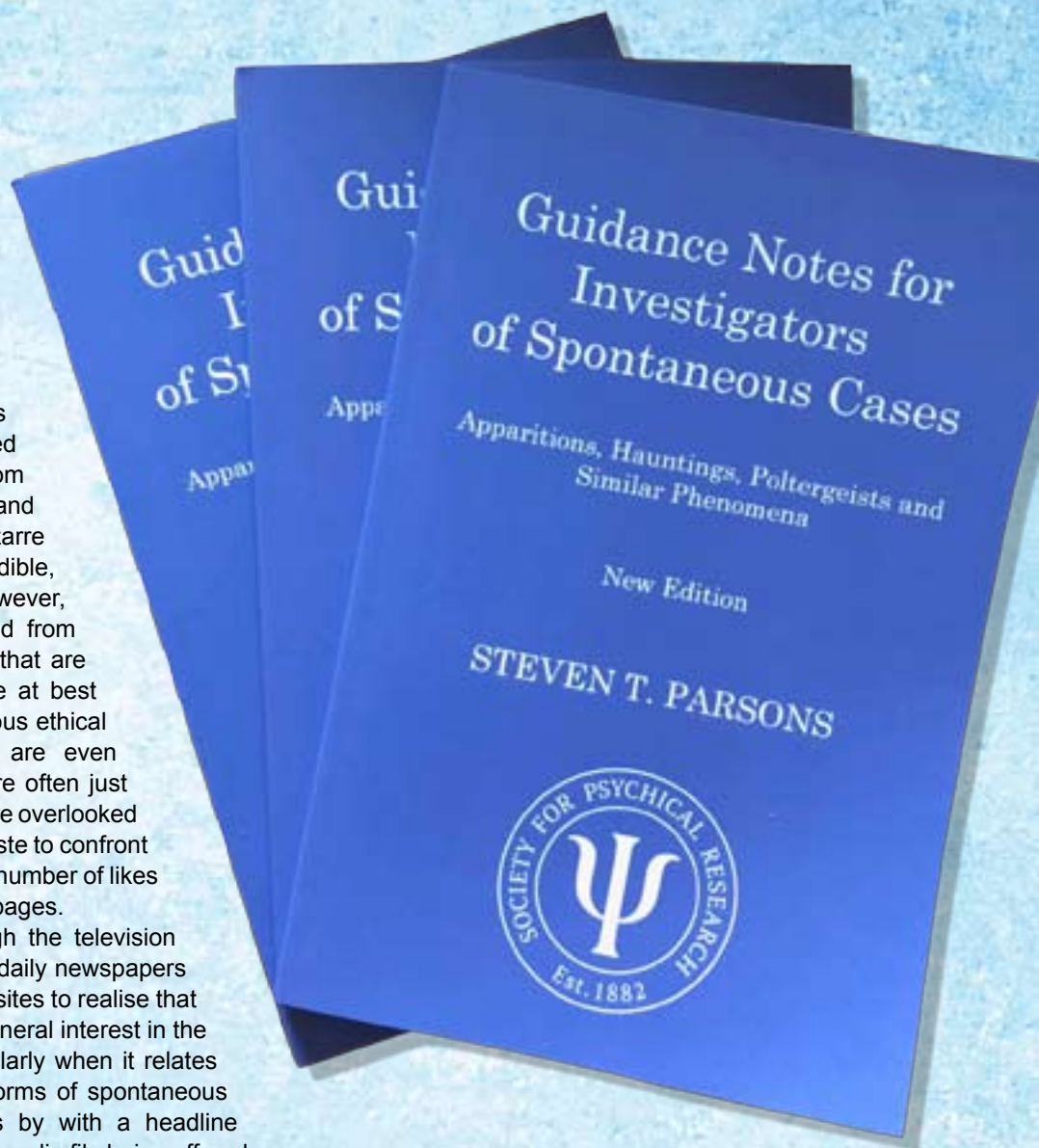
Paranormal investigators have always been a creative and inventive bunch and down the years many things have been pressed into service to aid their quest for proof of the existence of ghosts and related phenomena. Items including smartphone apps, broken radios, flickering torches and stuffed toys filled with flashing lights and parts taken from electromagnetic meters have all been pressed into service,

with the results subsequently offered up as absolute proof of the existence of ghosts and sometimes, increasingly frequently, the existence of demonic entities.

Besides the equipment, there is also a multiplicity of methods and techniques that are employed by investigators which derive from a host of theories, ideas, notions and beliefs. Some may appear bizarre whilst others seem to be more credible, sometimes even plausible. However, all too often, the results obtained from the equipment and the methods that are being employed are questionable at best and undoubtedly some have serious ethical issues too. Ethics, when they are even considered by the investigator, are often just paid lip service. More often, they are overlooked entirely by investigators in their haste to confront tormented souls and increase the number of likes and shares on their social media pages.

One needs only to flick through the television channels, read almost any of the daily newspapers or scroll through the social media sites to realise that there is a strong and sustained general interest in the paranormal within society, particularly when it relates to ghosts, hauntings and other forms of spontaneous phenomena. Hardly a day goes by with a headline grabbing photograph, video clip or audio file being offered up as challenging proof for the existence of the otherworldly. The internet has allowed everyone unparalleled ease of access to a vast spectrum of unregulated information. Since the millennium, the development of social media since has encouraged this newest generation of investigators to share and swap their discoveries and personal ideas as never before. Social media has now become a fertile ground for those seeking out new theories or confirmation of their existing ideas. It is a place where ideas are swapped and traded, theories argued and more than occasionally fought over and evidence compared.

The often-dramatic portrayal of paranormal investigating in television and film also plays a part in this modern trend, with techniques and equipment used on the television shows quickly becoming accepted as the de-facto means of conducting investigations and experiments. Television and social media have also produced a number of paranormal celebrities whose views, opinions and methods are highly influential. It is not surprising to learn that in a



“Social media has now become a fertile ground for those seeking out new theories or confirmation of their existing ideas. It’s a place where ideas are swapped and traded, theories argued and more than occasionally fought over and evidence compared.”

recent poll of the most influential ghost investigators; joint first was Ed and Lorraine Warren but they were closely followed by Zak Bagans (Ghost Adventures), John Zaffis (Haunted Collector), Ryan Buell (Paranormal State), Jason Hawes and Grant Wilson (Ghost Hunters) and Yvette Fielding (Most Haunted).

Whilst many of the techniques portrayed in these media shows may be described as unproductive at best, often ethically questionable and generally worthless to psychical research. But in their favour, I suppose that they are sometimes entertaining to watch. However, there is no questioning the extent to which these mainstream and social media portrayals have influenced current trends, or the fact that genuine interest in studying spontaneous cases is being badly served by the current media led model which places audience viewing figures, sensational storytelling and a craving for likes and shares above any real desire to inform or educate.

“Whenever I talk with ghost hunting groups and individuals, it is immediately apparent that there are many within this community who are seeking greater knowledge of the subject and who wish to participate in some form of additional learning. But the lack of support in the form of good quality information and advice from the ivory towers of science and academia has opened the stable doors to a whole host of groups and individuals offering their own courses and qualifications.”

It is easy to ridicule their ideas and methods but in reality, it is often those who claim to be the most interested in studying those experiences that are labelled as paranormal who are probably the most to blame. The parapsychologists, scientists and academics who study PSI and related human experiences, have for the most part chosen to disassociate themselves from the ghost hunters instead of engaging with those who go out investigating.

Whenever I talk with ghost hunting groups and individuals, it is immediately apparent that there are many within this community who are seeking greater knowledge of the subject and who wish to participate in some form of additional learning. But the lack of support in the form of good quality information and advice from the ivory towers of science and academia has opened the stable doors to a whole host of groups and individuals offering their own courses and qualifications. Abandoned by the academics and left to their own devices, investigators have turned to one another on social media in order to share information and to seek guidance. There, they will find information a plenty; too much information and much of it conflicting information. The useful information fights for space with countless meme's, animated gif's and innumerable inspirational posts proclaiming how much fun or warnings about how dangerous ghost hunting can be. All of which means that any hope of finding good quality information becomes in reality a forlorn hope.

With only the most cursory of searches I managed to find quite a few options for those who might wish to develop their knowledge of spontaneous cases further or who seek qualifications in this area of study. As we might expect the content of these courses is extremely variable, in some instances, it is apparent that there are some courses which clearly seek only to cash in on the interest and the desire for information. In addition, a lot of the training on offer is not overly concerned with ethics and developing good methodology. But the courses and training that are being offered are just the inevitable response to the

persisting lack of any meaningful assistance that has been forthcoming from those who are in a position to offer good quality information and content.

But there is another problem, a big problem, a great gaping chasm of a problem that confronts anyone who wants to provide some form of resource and training for investigators. Regardless of content or worth, the courses that are offered are just not well received by those for whom they are intended. They are often perceived as being irrelevant and worthless by the majority of ghost investigating community. Individuals and groups are frequently reluctant to change, preferring to stick with methods that they find work best for them. Often, methods they have developed in-house based upon poor quality information obtained from social media or picked-up from watching several series of their favourite ghost hunting TV show or following leading names in the paranormal media.

Over the years there has been numerous attempts to bring some semblance of organisation and standardisation to the chaotic situation that paranormal investigation has found itself in. Most notably by the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) who almost since their founding in 1981 has provided both basic and advanced training courses for its members. The ASSAP courses may provide a wealth of useful and helpful information for participants, but by comparison to the total number of active investigators, the number of people taking advantage of the training on offer is insignificant. ASSAP despite its laudable aims is only gaining support from a small minority of the paranormal investigating community with attendance figures of its training days representing less than one percent of the total active paranormal investigating community.

Meanwhile, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) which was founded back in 1882 and has an enormous wealth of resources to draw upon has fared no better. Almost 140 years later they are still considered within the scientific and academic community to be the leading authority on the

study of all types of paranormal experiences. Unfortunately, this same consideration does not apply to the modern ghost hunting community who for the large part are not aware of the work that has been carried out by the SPR, or worse, they haven't even heard of them. It was clear that the SPR was finding itself increasingly out of touch with the majority of investigators, seen as being either irrelevant and in many instances the ghosts hunting community was barely aware that they even existed.

Those engaged in investigating generally do not consider that they have anything to learn from organisations such as ASSAP or the SPR or indeed from anyone. This may be likened to the attitude of many drivers who consider that their car handling skills are above that of the average driver. This same 'illusory superiority' frequently results in the investigators rejecting assistance, often perceiving it as criticism of themselves. They become defensive of their methods and may react strongly against any proffered assistance. The oft quoted "There are no experts in the paranormal" is their typical reply to any critical questioning of their methods and the rationale that they use to explain them. But of course, there are experts in almost every area of paranormal investigation; History, Psychology, Physics, Architecture, Sociology, Environmental monitoring etc. All of which are key areas that relate to any ghost investigation and much more likely to be productive than any attempt to merely get the ghost to flash some lights.

The cost of training is generally perceived as not worth spending money on, when compared to putting the money towards something that many consider to be more helpful such as a new app or new piece of equipment. The perception borne out of TV shows and social media events is that one only has to set foot in a haunted building in order to obtain stunning evidence of paranormal activity. So why pay?

The reality is that if the information is readily available, easy to access, affordable and of good quality then some people at least will access it and change often comes from within. Once a few members in each team begin to question the tried, trusted and failing methods then I believe that little

by little positive changes will begin to filter through into the mainstream.

In July 2017 the SPR Council commissioned a fully revised and up to date set of Guidance Notes for Investigators of Spontaneous Cases. The book will also be fully supported by a series of dedicated webpages within the SPR's main website, which will expand upon sections within the guide book and address the need to update information as and when required. The book can also act as a stand-alone resource and the SPR have made arrangements whereby it will be printed in limited batches with rapid access to the master copy, allowing revisions and changes to be made that reflect changes in methods or equipment and to include new research as it becomes available. Updates will also be posted onto the supporting web pages in a format that allows them to be printed and pasted into existing copies.



The new edition of the Guidance Notes provides helpful advice, information and guidance in all of the key areas pertaining to the

investigation of ghost, hauntings, poltergeists etc., from the first steps right through to the completion of the investigation. Comprehensive sections include talking to witnesses and helpful methods for gaining the best information from the witness. Methods and equipment used during the investigation are also covered together with advice on how to ensure the best quality evidence can be obtained and how it can be presented following the investigation.

It is hoped that this new set of Guidance Notes for Investigators of Spontaneous Cases will become a valuable resource for all those who are interested in the study of ghosts, hauntings, poltergeists and similar phenomena.

Published 1st September 2018 by the Society for Psychical Research, London.

The Guidance Notes are now available from directly from ASSAP, the Society for Psychical Research <https://www.spr.ac.uk/books-sale-0> and via Amazon.

£10 per copy incl. UK postage. Overseas orders £15 incl. International postage.

A chat with ASSAP members, Andy and Nick

It may be a cliché, but it's probably fair comment to say that interest in the paranormal is very much a journey, meeting like minded folk, sharing ideas and experiences along the way. The final destination is very much down to the individual.

That's very much how Andy Wilson and Nick Howe see it. They met some years ago through their membership of The Ghost Club and although they admit to having some differences of opinion on things paranormal they see that as a positive, something which keeps them firmly grounded. The one common and bonding factor was their desire to be more active in the field and to take active control of their journey.

Apart from The Ghost Club Andy and Nick are also members of The Society for Psychical Research which, being based in London means they have access to the excellent resources offered. Unfortunately, the organisation offers little in the way of hands on experience, Andy and Nick are quick to point out that they are not scientists and saw their lack of scientific credentials being a drawback in the lofty company of academic scientists and doctors of this and that!

So, a search began late in 2017 to find an organisation that offered the opportunity to research and investigate the paranormal and lo they struck gold when they discovered ASSAP. What really impressed them was the wealth of information available on the website plus ASSAP'S commitment to a rational, ethical approach and methodology when dealing with all matters paranormal, this very much reflected Andy and Nick's own thinking.

What also caught their attention was the opportunity to undertake training and to demonstrate and achieve a level of commitment and high standards. As they went on to explain, "We had already decided that we wanted to set up our own research and investigations group. The idea of the National Register of Professional Investigators (NRPI) was particularly appealing because we wanted to undertake our own investigations. It was an ideal way of standing out from the myriad of paranormal groups, we would be able to present ourselves as rational and ethical investigators and researchers, something lacking in so many other groups".

Having joined ASSAP in December 2017 Andy and Nick enrolled for the March 2018 training weekend, to be held in Bristol. Prior to attending the course attendees had to complete an ethical code distance learning module. Andy went on to add, "given our

own professional backgrounds we fully understood the need to deploy ethical methods, including data protection, confidentiality and the need to identify vulnerable persons. Dealing with people who may already be traumatised or vulnerable can be tricky, compounding their anxieties; even if done with the best will in the world, this should not happen".

With March came unseasonal snow and of course the training weekend at the Arnos Manor Hotel in Bristol. The trainers for the weekend were Dave Wood, Mark Davey, CJ and Norie Miles with the group comprising 12 ASSAP members from across the UK and the ROI. Apart from revisiting aspects of the ethical code the focus of attention moved on to interviewing techniques and how to plan investigations. Real life case studies were used as a framework to develop these skills with the group being split into teams who then presented their findings and conclusions.

All very sociable and interesting, Nick added, "the discussions were always conducted in an open way, everybody was able to express an opinion and it added value to the weekend. For me the paranormal is very much people based and opinion is important, you might not agree with everything being said but you can always take something from it".

Needless to say, Andy and Nick immediately signed up that weekend for the advanced training course which was to be held in November 2018.

In the meantime and not resting on their laurels, the

training weekend energised them to form Paranormal Research Investigators UK (PRI UK), a website and social media channels followed, as they both pointed out "We were lucky as we had long standing friendships with three other experienced investigators who were equally keen to be part of PRI UK. They certainly add to the dynamic and I think it's reasonable to say they all positively recognise the methods that we've brought from the ASSAP training".

Well, the memorable summer came and went before you could say boo to that proverbial ghost the advanced training weekend was upon us.

"It was good to catch up with some old faces as well as new ones" Andy and Nick explained, "it became apparent very quickly that everybody got on and how focused everybody was". Unfortunately, CJ was not able to lead the Saturday session due to illness but Craig Williams stepped into the breach and did a sterling job at short notice, Dave Wood led the Sunday slot with Norie Miles providing support (and cakes and biscuits) on both days.

"We had already decided that we wanted to set up our own research and investigations group. The idea of the National Register of Professional Investigators (NRPI) was particularly appealing because we wanted to undertake our own investigations."

So, what was on the agenda? The weekend kicked off with a recap on approaching the investigation, dealing with witnesses, followed by a review of the PEACE (Planning, Engaging, Account, Closure, Evaluation) model, closing the interview and evaluation. If that wasn't enough the course turned to witness memory and a case study and role play where interview skills were honed all polished off by a talk about investigation planning. And that was just Saturday.

Those staying at the venue had the chance of an evening meal and catch up in the bar. Andy and Nick had booked the infamous room 160 which is supposedly haunted. Did anything happen? "Not that we're aware, there was a loud rap on the door but we reckon that the "poltergeist" had drifted up from the bar in an attempt to spook us, but we're too experienced to fall for that one, unless.....?"

Sunday opened with a talk on the psychology of anomalous experience and a case study into research investigations and developing a hypothesis together with the methods by which it could be tested, the weekend was closed by a group discussion on ways to set up and organise investigation groups.

Again, a lot of material to squeeze into two days but thoroughly enjoyable. What did Andy and Nick get out of the weekend? Andy, "I thought the schema theory was particularly interesting, it makes you think that everything's not necessarily what it seems. We're all vulnerable and that applies to investigators as well as witnesses". What about Nick? "Developing a hypothesis was absorbing; I used an actual experience as the basis for that hypothesis. With a teammate we developed a test plan that could be used to gauge how people react to auditory phenomena in the dark. Interesting and practical".

Would Andy and Nick recommend the training weekends? Both replied with a resounding "Yes" and went on to add "both weekends covered a lot of material; some of it was familiar with other parts new to us. It's all practical advice and although the training room is an artificial environment it means that faced with real life situations you are better prepared to deal with them. Any personal concerns can be addressed during training and your confidence grows".

Andy and Nick saw other benefits as well, "there was plenty of discussion and comment amongst the group, with the opportunity to network through social media. Also, the focus wasn't all to do with hauntings as some members of the group's interest leaned towards other paranormal phenomena such as UFOs and cryptids. We think that all in all we've enjoyed two really good weekends and believe that goes for the rest of the group. The weekends were good value for money and are thoroughly recommended for anybody wanting to improve their professionalism in this fascinating field".

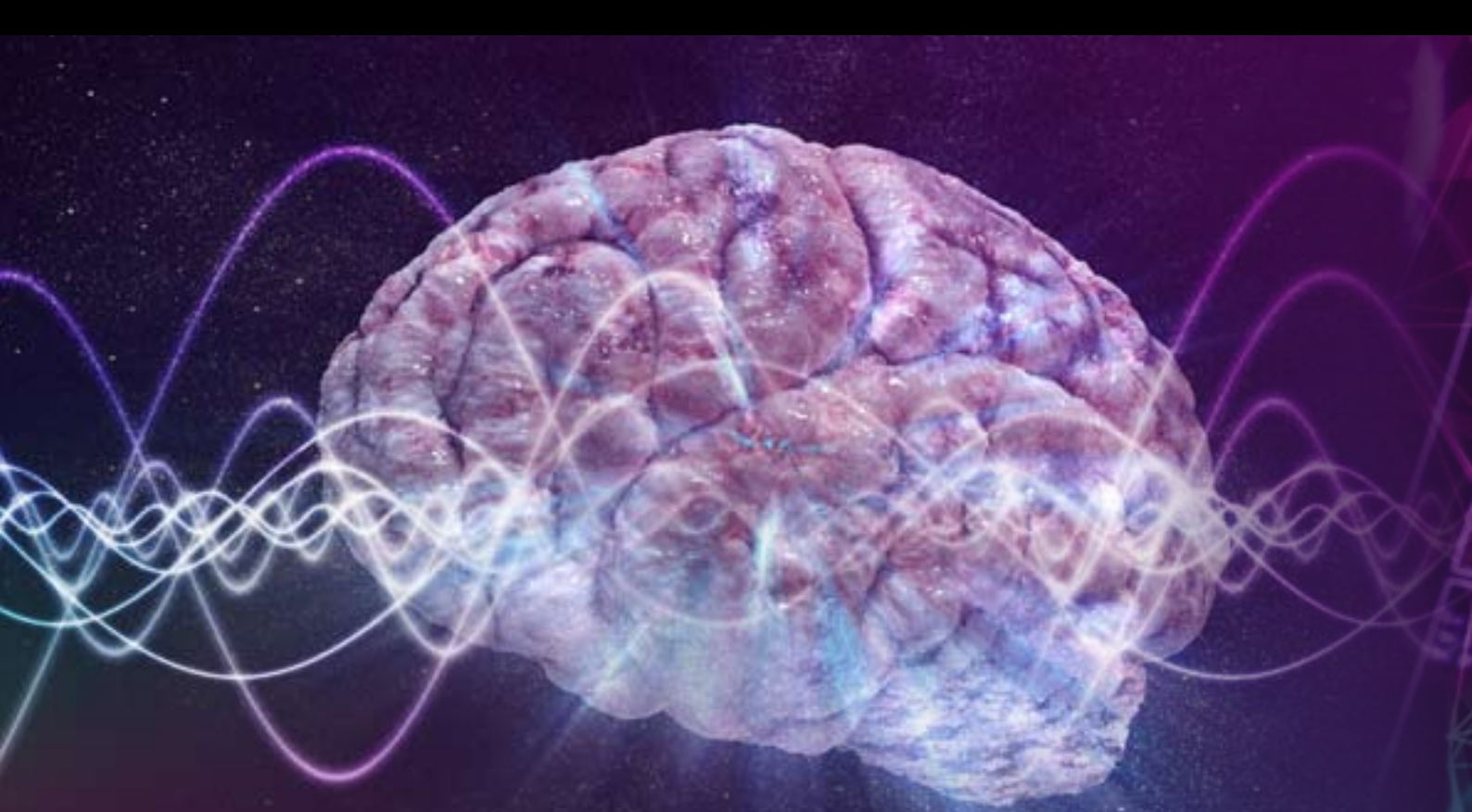
So where does this leave Andy and Nick on their journey? "These weekends were an important stop on the way. We had already joined the NRPI Facebook group and want PRI UK to become an affiliate of ASSAP. It's reassuring that we can move forward with their support should it be needed. As for the future, we just want to continue researching areas of interest and use investigations to feed this. We have established good contacts inside and outside of ASSAP with achievements to date including a written contribution to The Ghost Club journal as well as other publications. We just want to keep going and are not placing any limits on our progress; ASSAP is an integral part of that move forward".



Nick's involvement with the paranormal developed through an interest in religion, although of no faith it became apparent that the paranormal was a common theme of belief. Coupling this with personal experiences he was staggered by the number of events family, friends and acquaintances also experienced. On retirement, he felt it was time to devote more time to studying this which culminated in the formation of PRI UK. Nick is also a member of The Society for Psychical Research and the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena and the Ghost Club.

Andy's interest in the paranormal started early in his childhood after some personal experiences which could not be explained rationally. Since the 1980s Andy has been researching the paranormal and is involved in regular investigations. During this time his understanding has evolved to incorporate a more rational and scientific approach. He is a member of The Society for Psychical Research and the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena and the pioneering Ghost Club established in 1862. Andy values his contact with clients while respecting their own paranormal experiences.





Reductionist, materialist theories of mind regularly falsified by research

by Pierro Calvi-Parisetti MD

The relationship between mind and brain is one of the most hotly debated subjects in the fields of philosophy and natural science. So hotly, in fact, that it provides the ground for nothing less than a true war of religion. On one side of the frontline, the fashionable and currently dominant theory of materialism maintains that all that exists is matter. Mind simply does not exist – it is an illusion, produced by the electrical activity of the brain. You, as Richard Dawkins famously said, are just a biological robot.

On the other side of the frontline, we find scientists and thinkers who believe that science is not a set of fixed ideas. It is a method, and the method says just one thing: follow the data, follow the evidence, and base your understanding of the world on that. They look at the experimental data, and conclude what I said in the beginning – mind is related to, but independent from the activity of the brain.

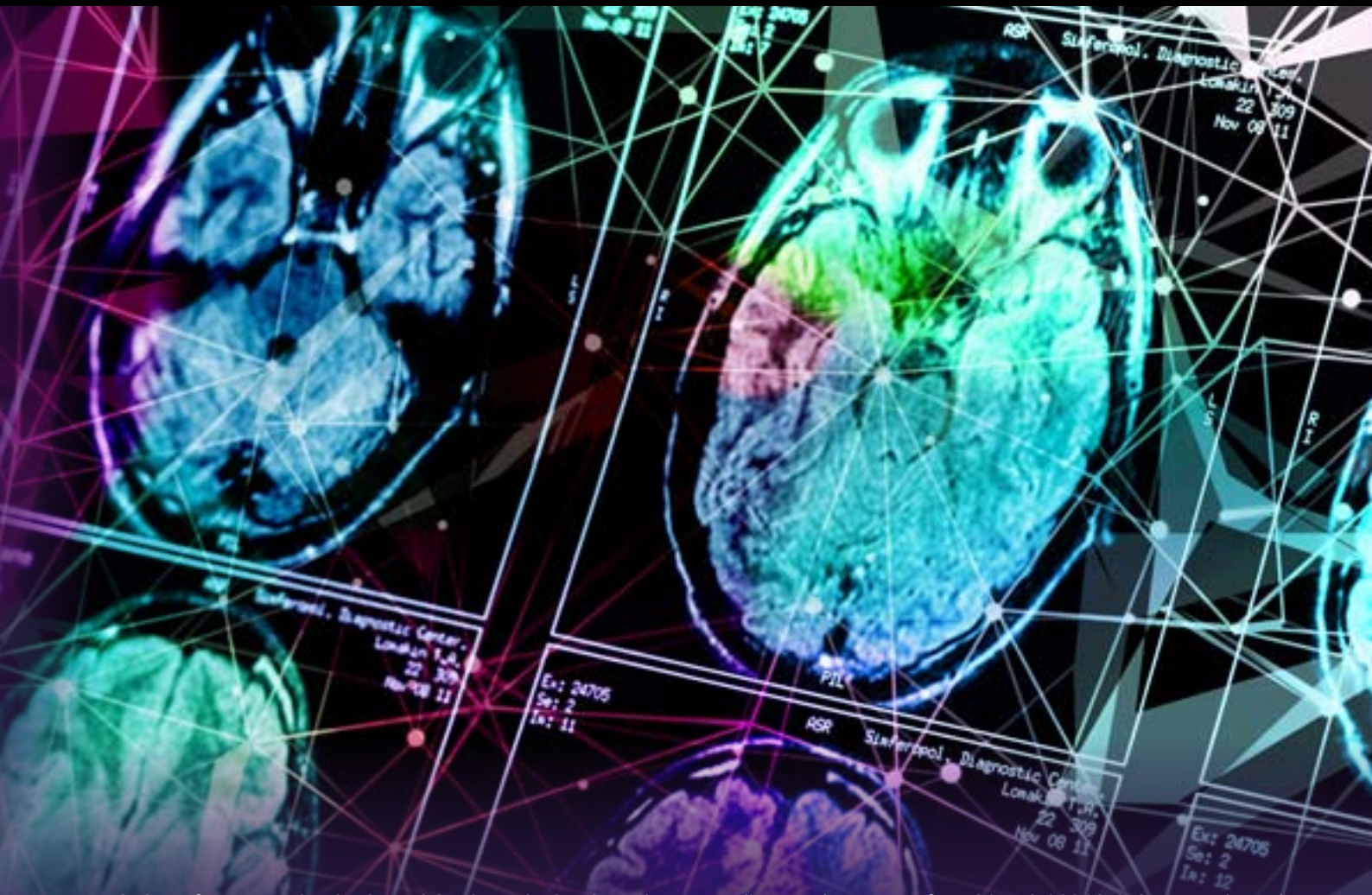
Materialists also follow an extreme interpretation of the so-called scientific method, a philosophy called scientism, essentially asserting that materialist science is the only method we can use to learn about the world. A corollary

of it is that if something is not published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, it either does not exist or is not true. This is interesting, in a way, because Tatties, the cat that sits on my desk as I write, has never appeared in a peer-reviewed journal. Yet, lo and behold, she exists. Similarly, the fact that my wife and I had breakfast together this morning has not been ascertained by a double-blind randomized trial, and yet is true.

One may then conclude that materialists do not consider evidence for an independently existing mind because it does not appear in peer-reviewed journals, but that, in fact is very wrong. There are literally thousands of scientific papers, published in all sorts of peer-reviewed journals, which indicate that materialism is a false theory. Mind is clearly related to, but not the “product of” the electrical activity in the brain.

Let's take just one example, but not one chosen at random. I pick this particular one because it concerns one of the most cherished technologies used in support of the mind=brain theory – fMRI.

Functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, is a



technique for measuring brain activity. It works by detecting the changes in blood oxygenation and flow that occur in response to neural activity – when a brain area is more active it consumes more oxygen and to meet this increased demand blood flow increases to the active area. fMRI can be used to produce activation maps showing which parts of the brain are involved in a particular mental process.

Materialists point to an ever increasing mass of studies showing the links between all sorts of mental processes and highly specific fMRI findings and say – Hey, what more proof do you want? Mind is in the brain.

This is also interesting, because it is the same as saying: I have measured the voltage of a transistor in my FM radio, and it changes when I hear a voice through the speaker. So, hey, what more proof do you need? The transmission originates in my FM radio!

Never mind, let's not get distracted. Let's look at the results of a most interesting 2005 study¹, published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* – indeed a peer-reviewed scientific journal. The paper's abstract says:

This study, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology, demonstrated that distant intentionality (DI), defined as sending thoughts at a distance, is correlated with an activation of certain brain functions in the recipients. Eleven healers who espoused some form for connecting or healing at a distance were recruited from the island of Hawaii. Each healer selected a person with whom they felt a special connection as a recipient for DI. The recipient was placed in the MRI scanner and isolated from all forms of sensory contact from the healer. The healers sent forms of DI that related to their own healing practices at random 2-minute intervals that were unknown to the recipient. Significant differences between experimental (send) and control (no

send) procedures were found ($p = 0.000127$). Areas activated during the experimental procedures included the anterior and middle cingulate area, precuneus, and frontal area. It was concluded that instructions to a healer to make an intentional connection with a sensory isolated person can be correlated to changes in brain function of that individual.

Now – what's going on here? Simple: a scientific study using the materialist theorists of mind's most revered technology – and published in a peer-reviewed journal – proves that they are wrong. Mental activity in one person determines measurable changes in the brain of another person when all communication channels are closed. This a special form of psychokinesis or "mind over matter", well known and very well documented for many years. It demonstrates with no ambiguity that mind and matter are definitely not the same thing.

What do materialists say? Deafening silence. They simply ignore the evidence. If they cannot ignore it, they try to suppress it (see, for instance, the ugly Wkikipedia wars2...). And, as a last resort, the insult, ridicule and smear researchers and proponents of alternative views (see, for instance, the entry about myself on RationalWiki).

For the rest of us, we should try to ignore the frustration – some would say open irritation – at the intellectually dishonest stance taken by so much of the academic world, and rather focus on our awe for a universe which we cannot necessarily see or touch, measure or even understand, but which is extraordinarily fascinating.

1. Achterberg J, Cooke K, Richards T, Standish LJ, Kozak L, Lake J. Evidence for correlations between distant intentionality and brain function in recipients: a functional magnetic resonance imaging analysis. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2005 Dec;11(6):965-71
2. Weiler C. Psi Wars: TED, Wikipedia and the Battle for the Internet: The Story of a Wild and Vicious Science Controversy that Anyone Can Join! CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (4 Dec. 2013)

The Frighteners:

Why We Love Monsters, Ghosts, Death and Gore by Peter Laws

Peter Laws book was purchased for me as a gift from the man himself while he was speaking at ASSAPs Seriously Strange North conference in Manchester in September 2018. Peter even kindly signed it for me, complete with a little doodle of a bat and a partially cloud covered full moon. I'm flattered Peter considers me a 'spooky thing'.

Peter Laws is a self-confessed horror fan and thrill seeker; but in what appears to be a completely contradictory turn of events, he is also an ordained Minister. The synopsis on the back of the book even christens Peter 'The Sinister Minister'. Yes, Peter has conducted services, married people and buried them, and is quick to point out that the later was official and legal. Peter's book is partly a defence of his interest in the macabre while being a 'professional nice person', and mostly looks at exactly why people love this kind of subject area. I've met Peter several times at ASSAP conventions and I can confirm he is a 'nice guy'.

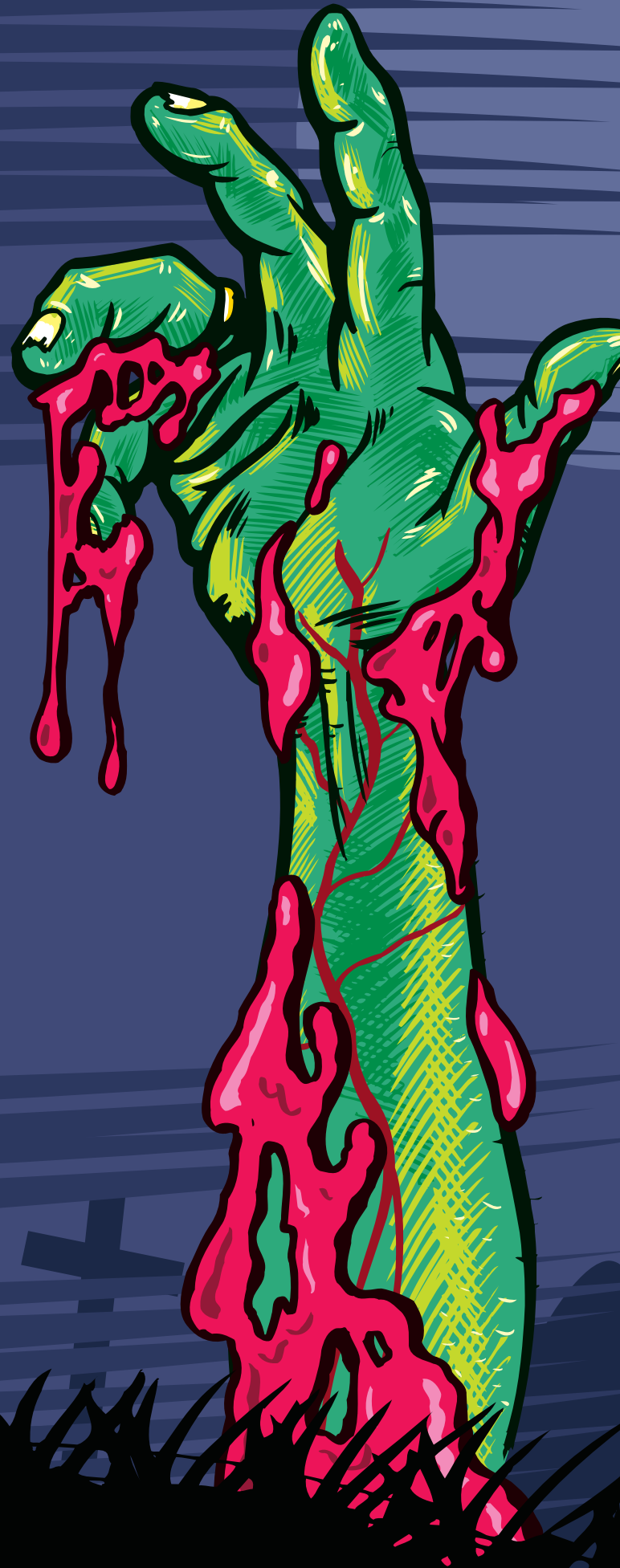
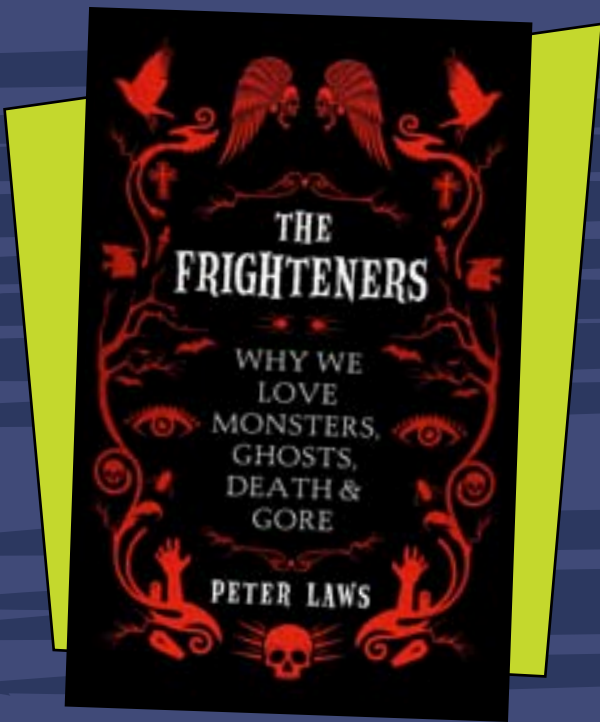
I know how the old saying goes, but the cover of the hardback at least (the recently released paperback has a different cover) ticks my 'oh I'd like to read that it has an appealing cover' criteria. The cover is black (it had to be really) featuring blood red images of skulls, zombie arms and coffins, complete with the main title of the book in a suitably Halloween font. The perfect cover for this type of book. Peter is a very engaging, engrossing and entertaining speaker and his writing style mirrors this. This isn't a heavy academic read; it's much more laid back and relaxed. There are several points in the book where I had a LOL moment, including when he describes accidentally farting at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve one year and killing the moment with the stench of a farmyard. I may be a grown up but unfortunately anything to do with farts tend to tickle me. I wish this wasn't the case.

The book consists of 10 chapters covering horror films, vampires, zombies, serial killers, ghosts, and of course some background on Peter himself and his experiences. Peter opens the book talking about the beginning of his trip to Transylvania; a trip of a lifetime for him that was a present for his 40th birthday. He describes excitedly (he'd been hoping someone would ask) telling the man on airport security, who

was rummaging through his suitcase at the time, that he was going on holiday to Transylvania. His response "It's a real place?". Throughout the book Peter describes several personal experiences; some that were research for writing the book and some just because he wanted to do them. These include the trip to Transylvania, attending a furies convention, hunting for a Werewolf walking a piece of raw meat on a string, a trip to a morgue and an apocalyptic hunting/running away from zombie's experience.

Peter's book is certainly entertaining when he regales us with tales such as running away from a zombie in a wheelchair who was surprisingly fast; but there is also a much more serious side. He also considers questions such as whether we should be concerned when children engage in morbid play or art; drawing dead bodies or 'shooting' their friends, whether violent video games can lead to real violence and what effect Murderabilia (the sale of items such as serial killers hair) has on the families of victims and how ethical this is. Morbid play in particular is a difficult one. I would probably be disturbed if a young member of my family proudly showed me their picture of people burning to death in a fire and wonder if we had a future pyromaniac/serial killer in the family. But apparently this can be perfectly healthy and be a way for children to deal with trauma they have experienced. However, this shouldn't be encouraged, it should only arise naturally, and when it does it should be monitored by an expert or it could make things worse.

I believe Peter's argument through the whole book is that all of this is 'safe' horror. You feel a rush of adrenalin and fear, but deep down you know there is no real danger or a very small possibility that something will go wrong. Many of us go on rollercoaster's knowing there is a small chance that the ride will malfunction is some way. Accidents do occasionally happen, like the horrendous The Smiler crash at Alton Towers in June 2015, that can result in the loss of limbs or even life, but the chance is so small it is considered a 'safe' thrill. The same can be said for horror films; we may need to fall asleep with



the light on that night, but deep down we know the chance that a man is in our closet wearing a mask and carrying a huge knife is incredibly small.

I have found myself at Alton Towers near Halloween walking through a 'scare tunnel' surrounded by zombies and baseball wielding maniacs. What makes this slightly crazy is that I suffer from both Coulrophobia (a fear of clowns) and Masklophobia (a fear of masks, or in my case pretty much any costume, especially where the face is covered) and I've previously injured myself running away from 'scare' actors. But deep down I know at most they can only get all up in my face, they usually aren't even allowed to touch you in any way, and even if they are they can't actually harm you. But of course we still run screaming as soon as a scare actor as much as looks in our direction.

Peter's book is well researched, well written, and enjoyable and certainly made me think about exactly why I like spooky things, to the point where I went back to university for six years to research ghosts and get a PhD in Psychology. To be honest I'm still not entirely sure, but it is an interest I've had since primary school, so I'm a long-term fan, just like Peter.

Finally, just a little warning to be cautious if you read right to the very end of the book and are just about to go to bed while home alone. Thanks for that Peter. Sleep tight!

The ASSAP Training Weekend

16-17 November 2019, Arnos Vale, Bristol

To book visit www.assap.ac.uk

The ASSAP Training Weekend has, over the decades, prepared hundreds of paranormal investigators to take on and handle cases.

The weekend focuses on practicing the skills needed to handle a client from start to finish including assessing a case, science and ethics, interviewing skills, analysing evidence and re-port writing.

Important to note this is not a 'how to' guide for how to run a group vigil with vigil attached. There are many commercial events companies that offer such experiences.

The ASSAP Training Weekend is a client focussed introduction to serious investigation.

The weekend is also very friendly with group work and social opportunities galore.

Your journey will include a pre-training phone conversation to make sure this is the right course for you, a pre-training learning book and assessment, NRPI e-learning assessment and a post-weekend report.

Please note these events can sell out very quickly. Past Training Weekends have sold out in less than a week.

Costings: £50 (no Lunch) / £65 (including two Lunches) / £80 (including two Lunches and Dinner)

A two-course evening meal is available on Saturday, which will give you the option at checkout to Book with Lunch

Book accommodation for Arnos Manor Hotel through Bookings.com There are other cheaper Hotels locally.

The course runs from Saturday 10.00am to 6.00pm and Sunday 10.00am to 5.00pm

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Do you have something you want to share in an upcoming edition of Seriously Strange magazine? We're always looking for interesting contributions. We prioritise articles from our members but also welcome pieces from non-members. If you'd like to write up your research summary, original account or topical thoughts into a short article, please get in touch on publications@assap.ac.uk.

We also welcome proposals for submissions to our annual journal, Anomaly.





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