

Tales from the Otherwood
Minister and the Fairies
Derbyshire folklore

The creation of new
Expert Advisory
Panels. You can join

Conference 2026
announcement
You can be involved

seriously strange

Issue 163

BLACK DOG

on the prowl in

BECKINGHAM

YEARS IN THE MAKING

Dragon Paths and
Leylines a Geomantic
Landscape Assessment

ASSAP

www.assap.ac.uk



ABOUT ASSAP

Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

ASSAP, investigating the weird seriously (and the seriously weird) since 1981.

ASSAP is a scientifically oriented educational and research charity, as well as a learned society, dedicated to advancing the understanding of anomalous phenomena. In addition to providing education, we conduct investigations and research. We also host and present content that enriches the learning and broadens the knowledge of all who seek information on anomalous topics.

Over 44 years researching and exploring the topics of the strange, seriously.

Anomalous phenomena can be broadly divided into four main areas: psychic phenomena (such as ghosts, telepathy, and mediumship); Fortean phenomena (including cryptozoology, fish falling from the sky, and SLI); Earth Mysteries (like leys and archaeoastronomy); and UFOlogy—a term that may now be somewhat outdated—which encompasses UAP, UFO, USO, and associated phenomena.

ASSAP was founded on 10 June 1981. Founders included well known authors Hilary Evans and Jenny Randles as well as Fortean Times editor Bob Rickard and scientists Drs Hugh Pincott and Vernon Harrison. Other founders included Alan Cleaver and Maurice Townsend.

Our president is the Rev Lionel Flanthorpe and our Chair is Steve Parsons.

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Dr. Simon Grace's patience can finally be satisfied with the publication of his work, *Geomantic Landscape Enhancement*. This book offers the first systematic analysis of the St. Michael's Line sacred nodes through

the lens of feng shui, revealing sites that align with yin-yang principles while others do not. Exploring potential British geomantic intentions, Grace draws parallels with well-documented Korean and Tibetan traditions, examining techniques such as earthworks, tree planting, and watercourse alterations to achieve harmonious energy flow.

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Actor and storyteller Dylan Knight makes his ASSAP *Seriously Strange* debut, taking us into the Derbyshire Dales with *Minister and the Fairies*, examining how ghosts and folklore are interwoven with historical accounts.

Professor Rob Gandy's feature graces the cover of this edition, delving into Nottinghamshire, particularly the village of Beckingham, where a tale of a great black dog prowling the roads unfolds. Faiths collide, and accounts differ. What exactly is stalking the history books?

INSIDE ASSAP



ASSAP E-News

William Eyre made the announcement that he is stepping away from his long time role as the ASSAP Archivist and librarian. Bill has overseen the E-News for a number of years.

We will move forward to bring new enthusiasm, expertise and insight to our community. Don't miss out on the fascinating discoveries, inside track and updates – sign up today!

The ASSAP E-News is a special mailing list newsletter that you can subscribe to, featuring information from in and outside ASSAP, broader commentary, insight into events listings and activities that may be of interest - being an ASSAP Member does not sign you up to this list automatically.

Available at www.ASSAP.ac.uk

seriously strange

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Access to the popular ASSAP Paranormal Webinars LIVE, a continuing weekly series of exceptional presentations, talks and special events. The ability to participate in live Q&A and conversation.

ASSAP's e-membership grants access to the live webinar events.

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ISSUE 163 – EARTHLY TONES

EDITORIAL

With Issue 162, I set in motion what I intended to be the beginning of a rhythm: creating the icons of ASSAP and establishing a broad thematic focus for each issue. Issue 162 leaned distinctly toward the UAP/UFOlogy topic, closing with the announcement of a more earthly tone for this edition, delving into the mysteries of the Earth.

During the summer months, I took time to read Paul Devereux’s book, *Sacred Geography*, in preparation, exploring earthworks, regional folklore, and Doggerland—Britain’s Atlantis. The latter is available online for everyone at www.assap.ac.uk under Articles.

Examining previously unpublished papers, Dr. Simon Grace submitted several works to the Association for publication in 2022, aligning perfectly with this earthly theme. Geomantic Landscape Enhancement, Burrow Hill Triangle, and the technical Smartphone Magnetometer Accuracy are among them. We are thrilled to begin the process of publishing these works in this and upcoming issues.

Ley lines have always intrigued me, though I’ve gone back and forth on their validity. The parameters for inclusion in a ley line are quite broad, not as precise and straight as some might suggest. Nevertheless, it’s remarkable that numerous significant sites broadly align. The concept evolved within the 1960s Earth Mysteries movement and New Age spirituality, describing apparent invisible channels of energy carrying spiritual or magical power. These alignments suggest that ancient cultures deliberately built along these lines for navigational and ritual purposes, implying a lost knowledge of geomancy. It’s fascinating! Dragon paths share

similar characteristics, with a focus on the movement of energy in feng shui. Dr. Grace examines whether ley line locations align with specific dragon line principles.

Dylan Knight, a druid, storyteller, and presenter of *Tales of the Otherwood*—a person I’ve had the pleasure of knowing for over 15 years—makes his *Seriously Strange* debut with a vivid exploration of an intimate story where Derbyshire folklore and fact interweave, with a touch of spookiness for the season!

Professor Rob Gandy takes pride of place on this month’s cover, featuring the ferocious, character-filled face of the Black Dog of Beckingham. What has happened to all those brilliant big black dog stories?

Before going to press, we squeezed in an extra piece from Sarah Pilkington, who eagerly submitted three articles. This is coupled with a recap and review of our attendance at the special press event, *Dark Secrets: The Esoteric Experience*. We’ve filled as many pages as possible to the brim!

Plus Big Announcements to sink your teeth into!

Kristian

Contributions and support, even if was just a conversation that helped this magazines development push foward – Sarah Pilkington, Dylan Knight, Norie Miles, Steve Parsons, Sheena Aspinall-Young and Dr Simon Grace with his patience and Sylvia Wix.

DISCLAIMER

All submitted articles to *Seriously Strange Magazine* must be ‘Original Works’, commentary, features, articles and associated graphics/art. We are not responsible for articles that appear in the magazine which do not belong to the individuals submitting them. Some pieces may be reproductions and updates to pieces published elsewhere, owned by the author. We endeavour to credit individuals work and images. Some images are AI generated, used in context. If you are aware of any material featured in *Seriously Strange Magazine* that is not credited correctly, then please inform us as soon as possible. publications@assap.ac.uk

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We may not always get it right, we strive to learn and improve.

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Announcements

Plenty of excitement in the realms of ASSAP!

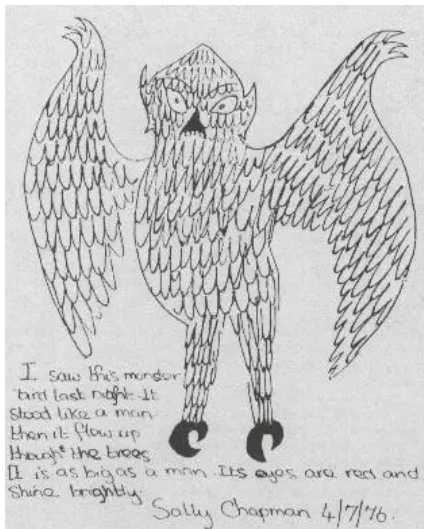


By Elliott Brown from Birmingham, United Kingdom - The Hive - University of Worcester CC BY-SA 2.0

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Update

The Owlman comes to ASSAP!



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Presidents piece

The legendary Rev Lionel Fanthrope

Not just a TV biker on the trail of the Fortean, a Reverend, he's our President and this is his piece!



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Conference

We are Worcester bound!

The Summer holiday weekend of August 22nd and 23rd 2026 is one to mark in the diary!

Readily accessible and ready to impress. The Seriously Strange Conference plans are afoot! We have opportunities for you to be involved!

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Article

Convoy Ghost of PQ-17

The PQ-17 Convoy is remembered for many reasons, mostly for the significant poor judgement of the admiralty leading to catastrophic losses of life and vessels.

This personal tale from a survivor, is a convoy ghost that perhaps is still lingering in the darkness.

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Article

Portsmouth Fortifications

Portsmouth is encircled with significant fortifications, built to withstand invasion and war.

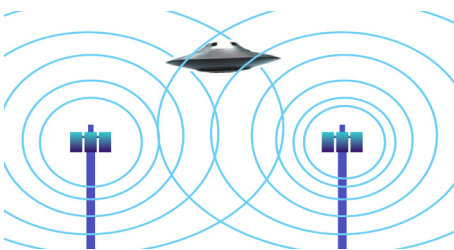
The cities silhouette highlights buildings and structures with stories to tell. Ghost stories, our favourite kind of story.

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Article

5G/6G Revolution: Connectivity, Sensing and the potential Frontier of Anomaly Detection

Could current and next generation communication technology also be serving a function as a form of radar for detecting UAP anomalies?



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Special



From walking through walls to projecting consciousness to meet multiple civilizations. Let's have a closer look and see what you can get up in the shed at the bottom of the garden this coming weekend for science!

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Article

Divisive Ouija

Sarah Pilkington offers a glimpse in the history of Ouija as many are inspired for Hallowe'en to have a play with the spirit board!

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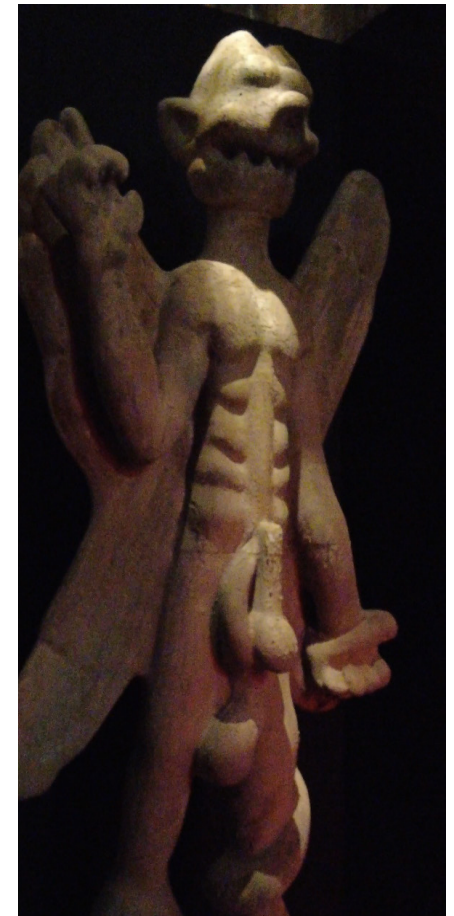
Creative

When our members let their minds flow creatively

Inspired words and visions come to those who forge their minds in the fires of imagination.

Review


Dark Secrets :The Esoteric Experience



Dr Simon Grace examines the deep similarities between dragon paths and leylines. Modification of the landscape and the adapting of natural spaces to achieve powerful flows of natural energy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS >

ASSAP is a hive of activity behind the scenes, under the direction of Chair Steve Parsons with bold visions in shaping the future of anomalous phenomena research, by moving forward, straightening the back of house, providing excellent education opportunities and being a responsible reputable organization.



Announcing
Expert Advisory Panel
We welcome you to join



This dynamic initiative is designed to enhance our commitment to rigorous research and investigation into anomalous phenomena. It will bring together a diverse group of experts from our member base—including enthusiasts, researchers, and academics—to advance ASSAP’s mission as a leading learned organisation at the forefront of exploring unexplained phenomena.

Purpose of the Expert Advisory Panel

The Expert Advisory Panel is designed to provide specialised support and guidance across a range of disciplines. Panel members will assist with analysing photographs, videos, and audio recordings, offer advice from their expertise to our field investigators, and contribute to the review of research projects. By fostering collaboration, ASSAP aims to enhance the quality and credibility of our investigations, building confidence in our work and reputation.

Panel Structure and Areas of Expertise

The Expert Advisory Panel will consist of small, focused groups of 2-3 specialists per area of interest, ensuring depth and diversity. The panels will cover the following key areas: Ghosts, Hauntings, and Related Phenomena, Ufology, Cryptozoology, Forteana, Photography and Video Analysis Audio Analysis and such matters.

To maintain focus and effectiveness, individuals will typically serve on no more than two or three panels, allowing for dedicated contributions to their areas of expertise.

This is a Call for Expressions of Interest!

ASSAP is actively seeking passionate and knowledgeable individuals to join this exciting initiative. Whether you are an academic, a seasoned investigator, or an enthusiastic specialist in one or more of the above fields, we invite you to contribute your expertise to our mission. This is a unique opportunity to be part of a pioneering effort to advance the study of anomalous phenomena.

To express your interest in joining the Expert Advisory Panel, please get in touch with Roy Wilcock, ASSAP’s Investigations Coordinator, at investigations@assap.ac.uk. We welcome inquiries from individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise who share our commitment to rigorous investigation and research.

ASSAP Seriously Strange expands to more media outlets



The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena is stretching its wings to reach more people with our produced content. The ASSAP Paranormal Webinars LIVE celebrated our 5th Birthday in July 2025, passing an incredible 250 presentations that have been conducted. For a number of years, Kristian Lander has produced and edited a vast number publishing them onto video platforms online, such as Youtube. As the production values and quality increased, so has our outreach.

We simultaneously uploaded to Bitchute until the Online Safety Act engaged and Bitchute withdrew from the United Kingdom. Rumble has also seen our uploads of episodes. Spotify is also a fantastic home to ASSAP, all of the 2025 catalogue of Paranormal Webinars branded under the our moniker of "Seriously Strange".

The goal: Wherever you listen to podcasts, you can find Seriously Strange!

Youtube, Spotify and Apple Podcasts provide some fantastic insight and analytics into the audience who watch/listen to our content.

In the evolving space of online media, Shorts/Reels/X/Tiktoks have become a fast infoburst source of media consumption usually Vertical and phone friendly. We have adapted to providing Youtube Shorts, Reels and Xs for many of our presentations promoting the speakers and topics they discuss. Not so secretly its a catchy trailer for the upcoming public release on what we call ASSAP Tuesday.

Paranormal Webinars as a LIVE experience is our main focus, as are the members who attend. Caroline McKendrick Gibson performs an amazing role organising our speakers and presentation arrangements.

...and yup, we've uploaded our entire Seriously Strange catalogue to Blockchain based video platform Odysee!



A Unified Field of High Strangeness?

- Emotional intensity may act as a trigger, opening a channel between consciousness and external phenomena.
- UAPs and poltergeists often follow the same patterns: distortion, interaction, and environmental disruption.
- Both may be responses to the same force — filtered through belief, emotion, and perception.



Like, follow and subscribe wherever you prefer to watch and listen!

YOUR FAVOURITE PODCAST APPS



ARE NOW SERIOUSLY STRANGE!



ALL THE 2025 ASSAP PARANORMAL WEBINARS ARE ON SPOTIFY, APPLE PODCASTS, AMAZON MUSIC, POCKETCASTS, CASTBOX, OVERCAST, YOUTUBE MUSIC AND MORE!

University of Worcester to host the 2026 Seriously Strange Conference

Confirmed just minutes before going live on the air on the 26th September featuring Julie Elizabeth Boyds presentation on The Winchester Mystery House. The Events team ticked off the communication and the official nod from the ASSAP Committee.

Seriously Strange is returning to the stage, namely the University stage, aiming to host an extra-ordinary event.

ASSAP prides itself on superbly accessible prices, for membership, for training and for events. We really wish you to attend, enjoy accommodation, fun catering and not have to dig deep into your pockets. We always endeavour to always keep our prices reasonable for everyone.

The venue is the campus of the University of Worcester. Providing an easy jumping off point for motorways (M5) and public transport links for those wishing to attend via train or coach.

With a year out in planning, we really would like our members' input in what this could look like. **A celebration of 45 years of the Association.**

Come and be involved. From assisting with laying out some tables, helping welcome our tremendous attendees, assisting speakers to checking tech, being a point of contact for guests. Helping with our brochures. Promoting the event through your social networks and contacts. Engage in conversation and build anticipation.

There are plenty of ways you can assist.

Email: events@assap.ac.uk

Let's put Seriously Strange back on the map as the truly exciting and memorable calendar conference of the wonderful, weird, fortan and paranormal that we strive to be.

Details available www.ASSAP.ac.uk



THE OWLMAN ICON UPDATE

In Seriously Strange Issue 162 we unveiled these ASSAP stylized themed icons, highlighting Communication, PSI, Cryptids, Earth Mysteries and the UFO/UAP Phenomena that we choose to discuss and investigate.

They have become part of the introduction sequence and ending to the Paranormal Webinars LIVE/ Seriously Strange. Adding character, instant recognition and positive colourful promotion.

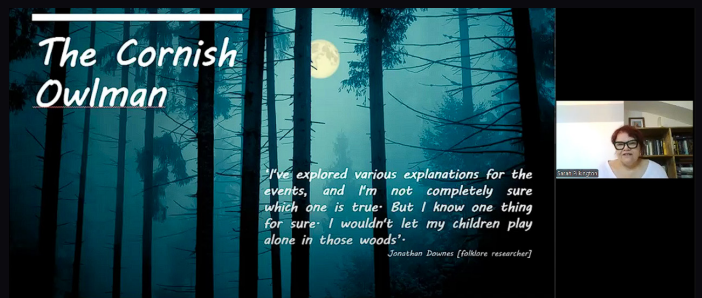


Then along came an owl, rather an Owlman!

When the sun was high in the sky in the summer month of July, ASSAPs own Sarah Pilkington stepped on to the stage of Seriously Strange presenting on the accounts of high strangeness that have occurred in and around Mawnan, Cornwall. Exploring the vivid witness sketches, from the Melling sisters in 1976 to later sightings, revealing a creature with glowing eyes and clawed wings. The same region being the centre of surreal historical events at the turn of the century from the 1800s to the 1900s, the invocation to an avian bird-god Loplop.

The Owlman: a cryptid, a misidentified owl, a supernatural entity, or something far stranger? Sarah's captivating presentation on this mysterious figure gripped the audience, sparking a lively discussion filled with questions. The conversation revealed a broader truth: Britain lacks a definitive cryptid on par

with Bigfoot. While Alien Big Cat sightings hint at the possibility and student film projects from Cannock Chase have spun compelling urban legends, no single creature has captured the nation's imagination as a true cryptid icon. The suggestion that we should have Owlman in the icons rather than Bigfoot was put forth. Have begun the process of updating all the artwork, templates and covers with our clawed companion rather than our large heeled potential cousin.





The Minister and the Fairies a glimpse into Derbyshire folklore.



Dylan Knight is a modern day Druid, professional actor, storyteller and armchair folklorist who lives in Nottingham.

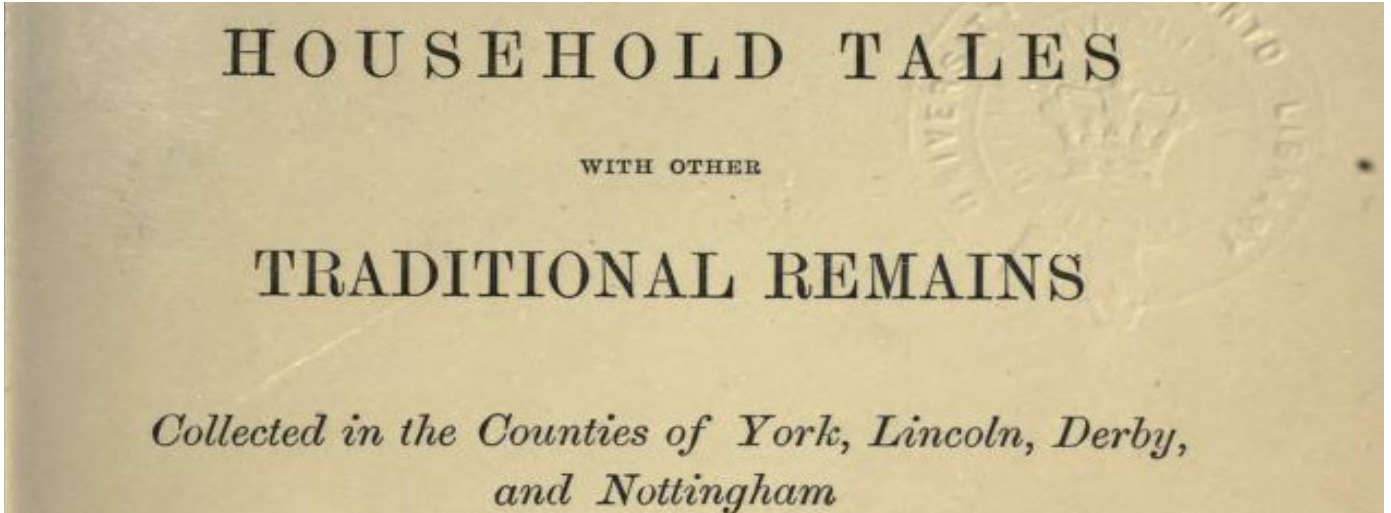
You can listen to his own monthly podcast **Tales From the Otherwood**, which explores the folk tales and folklore of the East Midlands and beyond at:

<https://talesfromtheotherwood.buzzsprout.com/>
and episodes are found on your favourite podcast app.

Greetings dear reader and welcome to my first article for ASSAP. I am at heart a storyteller, a modern bard if you will and I specialise in the folk tales and folklore of the East Midlands.

Folk tales and ghost stories usually crossover with each other, it could even be argued that one fuels the other. Regardless, I would say both enrich the folklore of a place and area.

This story is set in Derbyshire, and was recorded by the Sheffield Antiquarian Sydney Oldall Addy in his book 'Household Tales with other Traditional Remains Collected in the Counties of York, Lincoln, Derby and Nottingham' originally published in 1895.



Addy records the story as being recorded from the Derbyshire village of Calver and the tale goes:

'A Methodist minister once lost his way on the moors. So he asked for a night's lodging at an old house that he passed. The people in the house told him that he might stay, but they said that the house was haunted by spirits, and he might find trouble in the night.

The minister sat downstairs awhile, and then went to bed without his supper. He had not long been in bed before he heard a noise in the house like pots rattling. And he heard the footsteps of somebody walking towards the stairs, and a voice calling, "Armaleg, come to thy supper.

When the hungry minister heard the word "supper" he got out of bed and went downstairs, and there he found a great supper laid out on the table, and many beautiful men and women sitting around it. So he took his place amongst them and said, "I always say grace before meat." So he shut his eyes, and amongst the words of the grace that he said were these: "devils, fear and fly." And when he opened his eyes the company, the table and the supper had all gone.'



This, as far as I'm aware, is the oldest printed version of this story. And although Addy documented where he heard the tale, he never recorded from whom he heard it. Other folkloric books and writers have embellished the story somewhat, with the minister having been caught in rain, and having foolishly set off without eating as he was expecting to be fed in another village some miles away in the Peak District. Others even have the whole incident set on Halloween!

I, myself have gone for the more embellished versions in my retellings of this story, but I wanted to present you with the original written version. On my first reading, I thought it was a ghost story, and why not? The owners of the house warned the minister the house was haunted, he was disturbed by noises downstairs and once he ventured into the kitchen, he was met with a company of 'beautiful men and women' presenting a great feast.... Only for them to disappear after he had said his prayer.

These could have been ghosts, the minister could have been witness to a haunting where the same actions were repeated every night and it was just that, on this occasion, he was there to witness it. He could have even experienced a time slip. As well as disembodied voices there are certainly echoes of hauntings where those experiencing them could have sworn there were distinct noises coming from the kitchen, but when they get there, no one is around and nothing has been disturbed. And yet the story has a full visual encounter in this instance.

The title of the story in Addy's version is 'The Minister and the Fairies', its gone by different names in different tellings: 'The Ashbourne Minister', 'Grace Before Meat', I call it 'The Fairy Supper'. And its the connection with fairy that makes this story stand out. When I had first read the story, at first glance I thought it was of a ghostly haunting. It was only after reading more folk tales and folklore, as well as listening to other folklore podcasts I began to see it in a different light: it was a fairy encounter! I mean, the clue is in the name isn't it?

It's only since the Victorian age we associate the word 'fairy' with tiny winged people wearing flowers for hats and being generally dismissed as bedtime stories for children. I have no doubt that folk tales were told to people of every age, and although they can be adapted for children.... They are certainly not children's stories.

The word 'fairy' comes from 'faerie', which in Early Modern English means 'realm of the fays', which comes from the Old French 'faerie' which describes a woman skilled in magic. It is from this term we get 'Fey enchanted' or the well known 'Morgana Le Fey' from Arthurian legend.



Morgan with Lancelot under an apple tree in a Siedlecin Tower fresco (early 14th century)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>

Ludwig Schneider

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The term 'faerie' was used not to describe an individual spirit, but supernatural phenomena as a whole. So anything strange, weird happenings and anything not quite of this world was described as being 'of faerie'.

Curiously enough, S.O. Addy was a believer in the hypothesis (of his time) that fairies, ghosts and witches were in fact all the same thing in that they were accused of stealing away children, able to change their shape, perform spells or enchantments, gathering at midnight.... I can't say I've heard of ghosts doing those kind of things and although I see his point, I actually disagree that they are the same, but I will agree they can all be described as being 'of faerie' given that word's context.

What of our story? Apart from the title what evidence is there that shows that this a faerie story and not a ghost story... Or fairytale, for that matter. Faerie lore has plenty of examples of 'glamour': the illusion of a scene depicted by the fairy depending on what they wanted their target to see.

Usually this image overlaps what is really there: a manky cave becomes an elegant feasting hall complete with oak wall panelling, candles illuminating the room, fires in the hearth and a sumptuous banquet presented on the dining table.

In this case we have not so much a change of scenery, more that the downstairs of the house is the same, but is now filled with beautiful people, a delicious supper with enough for everyone and a welcoming atmosphere with a space before him at the table. This is all a sharp contrast to the 'you can stay the night, but there's a warning' the minister received when he arrived at the house. Also, the story makes mention that the minister 'went to bed without his supper', through being lost, he must have been very hungry and although grateful for shelter for the night he must have been disappointed there was no offer of food. Perhaps the people living there were poor? Perhaps they were mistrusting of strangers, allowing the minister to stay only because he was a man of the cloth?

Seriously Strange

Of course, before partaking of his supper, the minister says his prayers.... To find the whole company and his supper gone when he opened his eyes. It is tempting to think that the prayer had scared away the fairy host, indeed in some folklore fairies are driven away by church bells and prayers, but to make things complicated, there are others where the fairies quite like the sound of church bells and even want to become Christian, joining in with prayers and all!

What would have happened should the Minister eaten of his supper? According to faerie lore, this would have resulted in one of two ways: by eating of the otherworldly food, the minister would have made himself part of their world, so when it came time for the host to disappear, he would have disappeared with them.

There are three things you must never do when the fairies offer them: never eat their food, never sup the drink they offer you and never dance with them; otherwise you are trapped with them and their world forever.... Or until they get bored of you and let you go, although hundreds of years might have passed.

The other fate from eating their food could have seen the minister tucking into a wonderful plate of boiled ham and drinking wine to find the fairies had played him their usual awful trick and he would be, in fact, eating dried leaves, rotting vegetation and drinking stagnant bog water!

It is purely my guess that this was the prank the fairies were wanting to play and then he went ahead and spoiled it with his prayer.

Speaking of which, the prayer used may have been:

*God bless us to this drink and food;
Keep us from sin and make us good,
In hope of Heaven to live and die,
And may all devils fear and fly.*

This full version of the verse comes from Folktales of the East Midlands by Eric Swift, published in 1954. The reason I write 'may have been' is because Addy recorded a similar prayer that was to be used to exorcise spirits:

*Jesus, a name high over all,
O'er earth, and air, and sea,
Before thy name the angels fall,
And devils fear and flee.*

Addy noted that this prayer was to be said out loud and repeated, presumably until the spirits in question had gone away. I do find it interesting that the first prayer calls upon the powers of heaven through hearth and home, whereas the second calls upon the land, sky and sea: the original elements of pre-Christian times. Whether these prayers work or not is another matter, but I'd suggest bearing them in mind should you find yourself being summoned to a night time supper with a company of people you definitely know weren't there before.... Just in case.



As always, we are left with questions: were they ghosts? Were they fairies? What would have happened to the minister if he ate the food? Would he have found himself a prisoner? Would he have found he was eating mulch and ashes? Was this an encounter that was passed around by word of mouth in Calver? Was it even attached to a specific house? Sadly, we'll never know as Addy never wrote down who told him the story, but we do know he wrote it down as coming from Calver, which had some very interesting fairy, or should I say faerie lore indeed.

Was this a story? Was it an actual account? Or was it all the minister's dream from being very hungry? I shall leave that up to you.

Sources:

Addy, S.O, Household Tales with Other Traditional Remains Collected in the Counties of York, Lincoln, Derby and Nottingham (Reprinted from 1895 as Folk Tales and Superstitions, EP Publishing Limited, Wakefield, 1973).

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Collins Compact English Dictionary, HarperCollins Publishers, Glasgow, 1998.



THE BLACK DOG

OF BECKINGHAM

By Prof Rob Gandy

On 3rd April 2025 I tuned in to the regular ASSAP Paranormal Webinar, where Andy McGrath presenter of "Weird Britain" described a selection of stories of folklore and mystery from across Britain. Of course, it goes without saying that Andy had to include tales of 'Black Shuck' and other black dogs that roam the countryside terrifying lonely travellers.

Like other ASSAP members I kept an eye on the Chat function to see what comments were being made. It was then that I spotted a post by Kristian Lander referring to the Black Dog of Beckingham. Having visited Beckingham on a number of occasions I was intrigued and messaged Kristian to see if he could let me have more details. This he kindly did, including text from Wayne Anthony's *Haunted Nottingham: Myths, Magic and Folklore*(1), which states the following:

"Before the present-day by-pass, there existed a main road that ran from Sheffield to Gainsborough through the heart of Beckingham village, and villagers once reported seeing an enormous black dog that would run quietly along it. The beast was reported to have stood as tall as a man's shoulder and had huge glowing eyes that seemed to burn with the fires of hell itself. This otherworldly dog has been seen emerging from the local cemetery, moving quietly but with purpose, continuing along the old road and turning off in a southerly direction before vanishing from sight.

One local is said to have confronted the beast one dark night. Standing in front of the infernal creature he raised his hand and demanded to know, in God's name, what the creature's business was. But no sooner had he spoken the words than he was struck by a paralysis, which left him lying unconscious in the middle of the road. Some time later he was found mumbling incoherently. He never recovered from his ghostly experience and, according to local legend, spent the rest of his days completely paralysed down one side of his body.

It is said, and believed by many, that the black dog of Beckingham was once the guardian beast of a local Lord of the Manor. In the early seventh century, when Christianity was first brought to Nottinghamshire, the Lord of the Manor was a Pagan who refused to even consider the concept and doctrine of the Christian faith. So adamant was he not to convert that he trained his trusty guard dog to attack any Christian trespassers that came on to his property. One day the missionary priest visited the lord, but instead of the dog attacking him it lay down and gave itself over to being petted and fussed. When the priest left, the dog followed him; the two became inseparable, and the dog would go about the countryside converting Pagans with his new master. Some time after, the dog died and the priest buried it in the churchyard, and from that time to this day the dog is said to guard the churchyard against evil. It is thought that Satan himself would not set hoof there for fear of the phantom dog."

Seriously Strange

Kristian refers to the beast on his website (2), which includes the added detail:

"Among its oldest tales is the legend of the Black Dog of Beckingham. As with so many ghostly canines, this one is always seen as black as night. It emerges from the cemetery, moving purposefully along the road or running silently, following a path toward the old boatyard before taking the south road, across the meadows to the River Trent and vanishing. Accounts of this spectral creature stretch back centuries."

Now my wife and I have two very close friends who were married in the church in question, viz. All Saints' Church; I will call them Arthur and

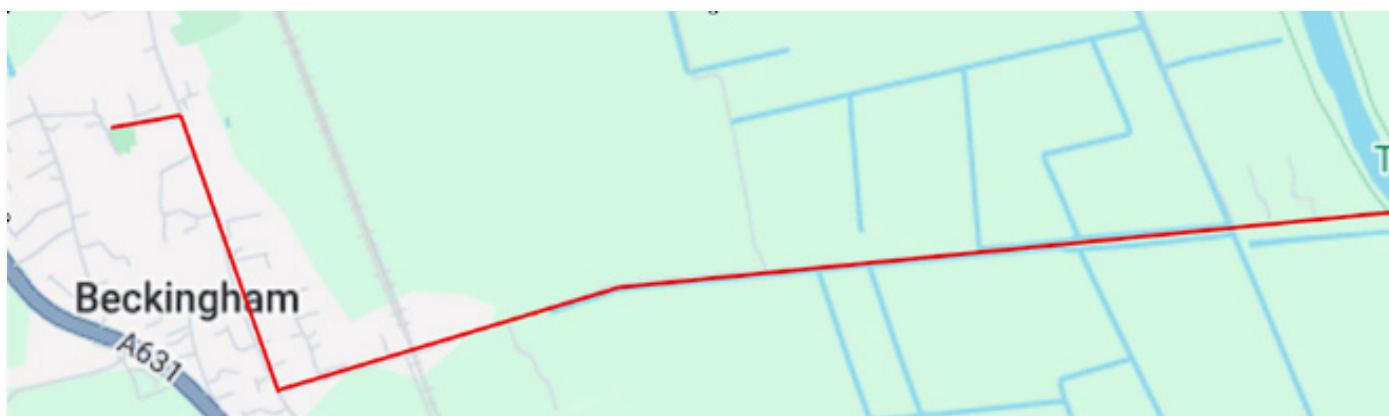
Beatrice (pseudonyms). Beatrice was brought up in Beckingham, the daughter of a well-respected local farmer. So naturally I contacted them to seek their information and advice about this local hellhound. Their response was "Never heard of it!" Neither had Beatrice's sister and brother, and they all said that their mother and father had never mentioned it either. Indeed, their mother and father were great friends with the vicar of All Saints and his wife; sometimes going on holiday together, despite Beatrice's parents not being regular churchgoers.

They could not comprehend how the vicar would not have mentioned that the church was the lair of a Black Dog, if he knew about it.

FEATURE

I subsequently contacted the local historical society to see if they had anything on record. The archivist indicated that her family had lived in Beckingham for over 130 years and although she had heard of "The Black Dog Tale" she had never heard of any actual sighting in the village. Indeed, her husband had lived in the village for 85 years and he hadn't heard about it until she mentioned it to him following my email!

She believed that there was a single reference to the Black Dog in the archives but she could not lay her hand on it; but she had discussed it with the previous archivist, and the information was the same as what is already on the internet.



Alleged Route of Black Dog from All Saints' Church to River Trent (Red line)

She later confirmed the alleged route of the Black Dog from All Saints' Church to what was Watson's shipyard on the River Trent. This was down Church Street to Low Street, following Low Street down to Station Road and then left towards the river (see map)

Interestingly, just before I wrote this article, the archivist indicated that a villager had recently said to her that her grandfather had worked at Watson's shipyard and been told that a crewman was stepping off a barge with his black dog when he slipped and fell between the wharf and the barge.

Unfortunately, he was crushed to death and later buried in All Saints' churchyard.

The story then went that the dog travelled between the two places trying to find his master. It sounds as if this was an 'old' story at the time it was relayed to the grandfather; which I guess places it in the late 19th Century, after 1869. The death of the crewman may well be a true event, and it is known that dogs will often pine after their departed master.

However, it is hard to believe that the crewman's black dog, which accompanied him on his barge, would fit the above description of the hellhound and

also go for 'walkies' beside the river. Therefore, at best, I suspect a conflation of a tragic accident and the old legend.



Now call me an old pedant, but the little that has been written about the Black Dog doesn't stack up:

The "villagers once reported seeing an enormous black dog that would run quietly along" the main road (my emphasis) – There seems to be a lot of detail from this singular sighting.

The Black Dog "emerges from the cemetery, moving purposefully along the road or running silently, following a path toward the old boatyard before taking the south road, across the meadows to the River Trent and vanishing" – This route is two miles long! It would take someone quite some effort to see the creature come from the cemetery and follow it all the way to the boatyard; otherwise, how does anyone know the full route? Besides, would anyone seeing that it "stood as tall as

a man's shoulder and had huge glowing eyes that seemed to burn with the fires of hell itself" then decide that it would be a good idea to run after it? Dogs run a lot faster than men and the pursuer would need to be very fit to chase the creature for two miles. The only person said to have seen the Black Dog was then struck down with paralysis in the middle of the road, so it obviously wasn't him that chased after it.

The Black Dog "emerges from the cemetery" but the local vicar appears to have never mentioned it to one of his best friends, who had an interest in local history, and so many people who have lived in the village for a long time have never heard of it.

So, what should we conclude? My personal take is that at

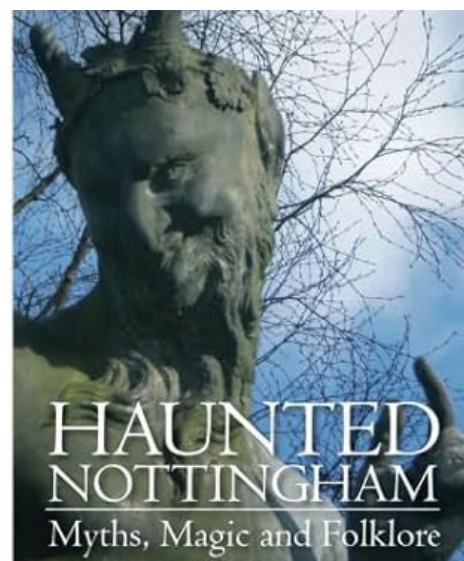
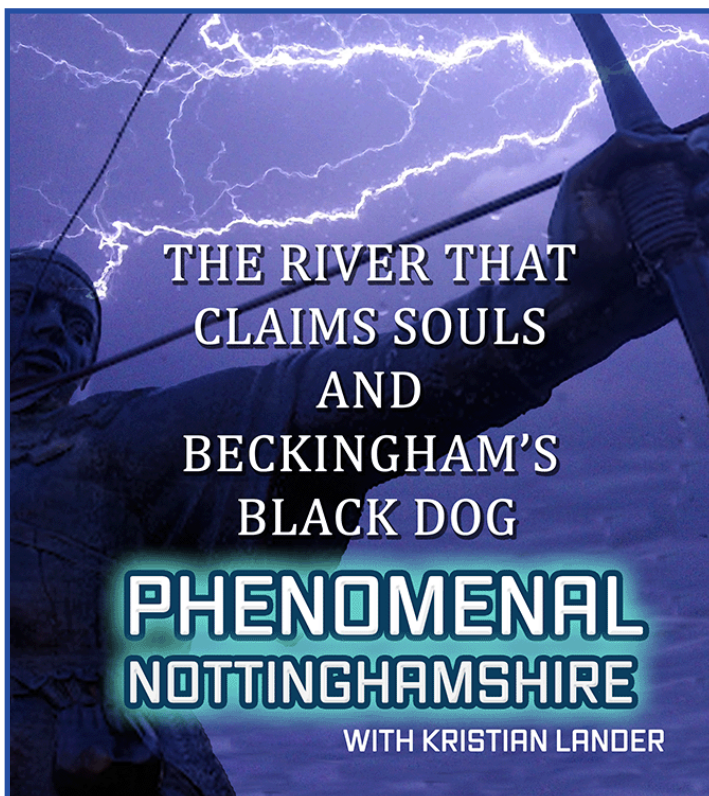
some point in the distant past someone familiar with the folklore of Black Shuck, and similar, decided that it would be a good idea to add some mystery and excitement to Beckingham by telling or writing the story of The Black Dog of Beckingham. That there appears to be a single source about a single event makes it suspicious. Therefore, it is my opinion that it is a great legend, but in the end it is a Shaggy (Black) Dog story.

Acknowledgements:

My thanks to the local historical society for their help and advice, and to Kristian Lander for his help in setting me off on this investigation.

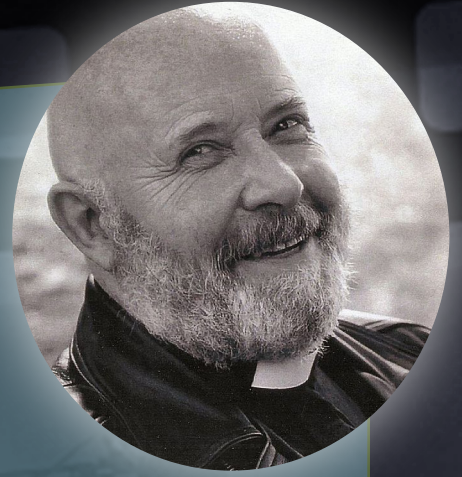
Sources:

- 1 Wayne Anthony (2008) *Haunted Nottingham: Myths, Magic and Folklore*, Breedon Books Publishing Co Ltd ISBN-10: 1859836194; ISBN-13: 978-1859836194
- 2 <https://kristianlander.com/?p=3592>
Images of the Black Dog generated by Grok AI



Beckingham's Black Dog forms a part of episode three of the Phenomenal Nottinghamshire podcast. There are twelve bite size 5-10 minute audio. Find them on your favourite podcasting app, such as Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

PRESIDENTS PIECE



Rev Lionel Fanthorpe and Patricia Alice Fanthorpe

What do we categorise as normal or ordinary, and what do we regard as strange? Perhaps we should consider the hypothesis that normality, or ordinariness, is whatever is contained within the environment that is consistently ours: it becomes our normality because we grew up in it and it surrounds us now.

Ordinariness is our unvarying, habitual, conventional whereabouts. What is strange is whatever differs from that conventional environment. The most seriously strange can then be defined and understood as that which differs most.

We have explored unsolved mysteries for well over half a century – and we still enjoy doing it. The stranger something is the keener we are to investigate it. Looking back over those long years together – and we have just celebrated our 68th Wedding Anniversary – we tried to judge which was the most interesting of all the mysteries we have worked on, and decided to choose the Pedlar of Swaffham: partly because Lionel went to school in Swaffham, where he was taught by Harry Carter, who made the town sign as a figure of the famous Pedlar, John Chapman. Harry's uncle was the famous Howard Carter, who worked on Tutankhamun.

John Chapman had a strange dream that if he went to London he would hear information that would make him rich and famous. He met another dreamer there who told John that he had dreamed of a pedlar in Swaffham who had found gold coins in his garden. John hurried home and found great treasure. Being a good, kind and generous man he spent a great deal of his wealth helping the poor.

So where did those mysterious dreams come from?

How did John and his London informant obtain that vital information?

After our long years of researching the strangest mysteries in the universe, we have found the human mind to be the greatest mystery of all.



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By Kristian Lander at Seriously Strange 2024 Winchester



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Convoy Ghost of



By Sheena Aspinall-Young

June 1942

My father was just twenty-one years old during the harrowing days of the Arctic Convoys to Russia, enduring sub-zero temperatures as low as -45°C .

He served aboard HMS Britomart in the ill-fated PQ-17 convoy, infamously known as the "Convoy to Hell." This convoy suffered the greatest loss of any British convoy during the Second World War. Of the thirty-five ships that set out from Iceland, only eleven merchant vessels and one Soviet tanker reached their destination in the Soviet Union. Tragically, several ships were also lost on the return journey, compounding the disaster.

My father rarely spoke of the terrifying experiences he endured on HMS Britomart. Before his passing in 1990, however, he shared a haunting tale he had heard from shipmates on another vessel, knowing my passion for a good ghost story.

HMS Bitterhorn sliced through the black, icy waters at six knots, its engines muffled by the biting cold. The crew had been subdued since the Luftwaffe's devastating attack the previous night, which left one destroyer sunk and others badly damaged, limping through the Arctic sea.

No response!

Below deck, in the cramped mess where the men swayed in their hammocks, conversation turned to



the Nevsky—or rather, the SS Neva, a Soviet freighter that had supposedly been part of the convoy when it departed Iceland. Despite its reported presence, the ship had failed to respond to three signal checks.

"Maybe she peeled off?" Able Seaman Farrow mumbled sleepily, his breath visible in the frigid air.

"She didn't," replied the Petty Officer firmly. "I saw her last night on the starboard horizon."

Farrow bolted upright, his hammock creaking. "There's no Soviet ship left in the group. Are you sure?"

f PQ-17



Convoy PQ 17 sailing in Hvalfjord Ware C J (Lt) - This photograph A 8953 comes from the collections of the Imperial War Museums (collection no. 4700-01)

Note: The author highlights the names of the ships involved in the article are not the actual names of the ships involved due to privacy and respect.

William Richard Aspinall
Born 27/10/1921

Medals received for active service in the North Atlantic during Second World War Deceased 07/03/1990



The Petty Officer had seen her sailing still, her doomed crew standing in eternal watch.

That night, the Petty Officer took the first watch. At 0200 hours, as ice encrusted the ship's rails, he saw her again. No more than a thousand yards away, a solitary freighter with a black hull materialized in the darkness. A tattered white flag bearing a red star fluttered faintly. There were

The ship began to turn toward HMS Bitterhorn, gliding without sound or spray. Heart pounding, the Petty Officer reached for the signal lamp, but his hand froze. Before he could act, the Nevsky began to fade. First her ghostly lights dimmed, then her deck blurred, and finally, her hull dissolved into a bank of low Arctic mist. Within seconds, she was gone, leaving only the endless black sea.

The next morning, a message arrived from the Admiralty: Freighter SS Neva sunk by U-boat. Entire crew lost. Coordinates: 15 nautical miles northeast of your position.

The Petty Officer had seen her sailing still, her doomed crew standing in eternal watch.

Adrift forever

Sailors whispered that if you were quiet enough during convoy duty in the Arctic darkness, you might glimpse the Nevsky in the distance. No signal. No wake. Just a red star on a tattered white flag, forever adrift in the ice-cold black.

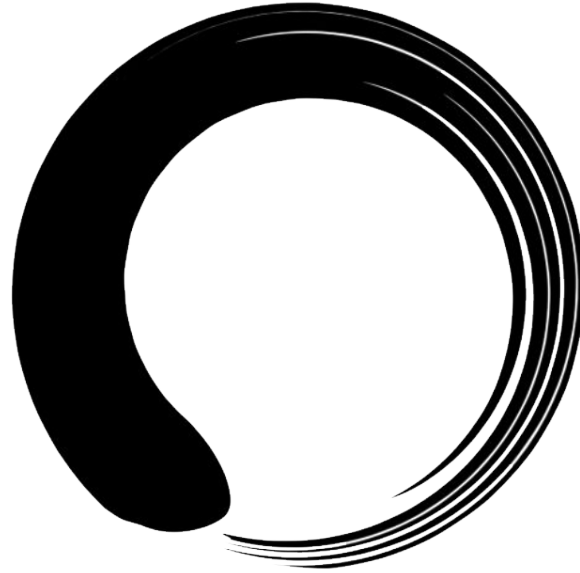
The Petty Officer nodded slowly, his expression grim. "Red flag, white star. The whole ship was lit up, glowing like St. Elmo's fire.

But the water around her—it was flat, no wake. She wasn't moving."

A heavy silence fell over the mess. The men exchanged uneasy glances, the weight of the Petty Officer's words settling like frost.

no signal lights, no hum of engines—just an eerie stillness.

Raising his binoculars, the Petty Officer scanned the deck. Figures moved aboard—at least a dozen—but their movements were unnatural. They shuffled in slow, jerky motions, some clutching their heads, others limping as if wounded. One figure turned and stared directly at him, its pale face gaunt, mouth agape, hands frozen mid-reach in a silent plea.



In Zen Buddhism, ensō is a sacred symbol often referred to as "The Circle of Enlightenment." It is a circle that is hand-drawn in one or two brushstrokes to express a moment when the mind is free to let the body create. Some artists draw ensō as an open circle, while others complete the circle.

Geomantic Landscape Enhancement

Dr Simon Grace

Setting the stage

Over 50 years ago John Michell (1973) proposed a linkage between western leys and the lung mei (dragon paths) of Chinese geomancy. The end to end survey of the St. Michael Line performed by Miller and Broadhurst (1989) corroborated Michell's earlier assertion, their findings strongly suggesting that leys and lung mei are in fact one and the same. It was not however until 2022 that a systematic assessment of the features of the St. Michael Line's nodes against the precepts of form school feng shui was undertaken by Grace (2023). Grace (2023) established that whilst many of the St. Michael Line's node locations conform with form school tenets many also do not.

The most common point of non-compliance being that the site (node location) and wider landscape are both of the same underlying form. According to form school feng shui a hsueh or dragons lair, the node point on a ley line in western parlance, should be located at a site of opposite form to that of the landscape, ie. a hill on a plain or a flat spot in a range of hills. It was however noted that in some instances the landscape may have been artificially enhanced to bring it into geomantic balance.

This piece investigates Korean and Tibetan geomantic traditions in order to establish if; landscape features



were modified for geomantic reasons, what form the interventions took and what if any was the underlying rationale. The paper additionally considers the geomantic role pre-reformation Christian churches may have played in the British landscape. Korean and Tibetan geomantic traditions were examined as they are living and well documented but importantly have millennia old roots and may therefore provide some insight into prehistoric British geomancy.

It was found that within Korea and Tibet landscapes were artificially modified to achieve geomantic aims. Modifications principally appear to have been associated with the construction of yang features

such as chortans or temples which were positioned at geomantically significant locations in order to control the purported energy of the landscape. Further to this it was found that the entire Tibetan cultural landscape appears to have been planned in conformance with geomantic principles.

These findings broadly support the concept that the menhirs, stone circles, mounds or churches located at many of the St. Michael Line's nodes represent geomantic interventions that align with oriental practice. Such parallels are of course based on the premise that widely geographically and historically separated cultures responded to the features and energies of the landscape in a similar manner. Given the similarities that are now known to exist between western leys. and oriental lung mei then it is quite possible that such parallels did indeed exist in Britain's pre-history.



Introduction: The St. Michael Line: Decoding Ancient Earthworks and Sacred Sites

Deep in the British countryside, the St. Michael Line stretches like a hidden thread, linking sacred sites that pulse with ancient energy. My 2023 study explored these sites—known as nodes—through the lens of form school feng shui, offering a fresh perspective on their alignment with the landscape. The findings? Some nodes fit perfectly with feng shui principles, while others challenge them, raising tantalizing questions about how ancient Britons shaped their world.

Balancing Yin and Yang in the Landscape

In the form school feng shui, a "hsueh" or "dragon's lair"—a node in ley line terms—should embody balance. Ideally, it's a yin site (think flat, calm terrain) cradled in a yang landscape (rugged hills or mountains), or a yang site (like a prominent hill) rising from a yin landscape (gentle plains). This interplay of opposites creates harmony, a core principle of geomancy.

The research revealed that nodes like Glastonbury and Carn Les Boel are textbook examples of this balance. Glastonbury, for instance, sits in a flat area surrounded by dramatic hills, practically singing with feng shui harmony. But other nodes, like Avebury and Creech St. Michael, break the rules. Both are set in overwhelmingly yin landscapes—flat and serene—with no yang features to offset them.

Then there's the curious case of Ogbourne St. George in Wiltshire. Here, the node lies in a yin landscape, but it's marked by an artificial conical mound—a "fire hill" in feng shui terms, a bold yang feature. Could this mound be evidence that ancient Britons deliberately sculpted the land to achieve geomantic balance? The mound's presence suggests they might have been aligning their sacred sites with cosmic principles, creating a yang focal point in a yin setting.



Clues from Ancient Traditions

Since no living tradition of British geomancy survives from the prehistoric era when the Ogbourne mound was likely built, we can turn to other ancient practices for insight. Korean and Tibetan geomancy, rooted in Chinese feng shui, offer well-documented examples of how cultures shaped their environments to harmonize with the land's energy. As scholar Yoon noted in 1980, oriental geomancy is about choosing auspicious sites and building structures that resonate with the natural world.

This article dives into these traditions to explore whether landscapes were altered for geomantic purposes, what forms those changes took, and whether they followed a clear rationale. We'll also examine pre-Reformation Christian churches, many of which dot the St. Michael Line, to uncover their potential as geomantic markers in the British landscape.

A Landscape Alive with Meaning

By connecting the dots between ancient British earthworks, Eastern geomantic practices, and early Christian sacred sites, we aim to unravel the mysteries of the St. Michael Line. Were its nodes placed with intention, shaped to balance the land's energies? Join us as we explore this ancient alignment, where the earth itself tells a story of harmony and purpose.

Linkerage

John Michell (1973) made one of the earliest speculative linkages between oriental lung mei (dragon paths) and western leys in *The View Over Atlantis*. Michell's ideas appeared to be borne out by the detailed survey of the St. Michael Line performed by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst in the late 1980s. Over a

two year period Miller, an accomplished earth energy dowser, and author Broadhurst used dowsing to track the St. Michael Line along its entire length. Their work was published as *The Sun and The Serpent* (Miller and Broadhurst, 1989). The picture that emerged from Miller and Broadhurst's (1989) work was that a ley consisted of three key components:

- A generally straight line geometric alignment linking sites as conceptualised by Watkins (1925).
- Two sinuous lines of 'earth energy' one yin, one yang that intertwine about the geometric alignment and cross each other at major points termed nodes.

This picture united what had been the western straight line ley concept with the sinuous lung mei of Chinese geomancy (feng shui) that purportedly transmit chi within the landscape. It was not until 2022, some 50 years after Michell (1973) proposed this linkage and 34 years after the publication of *The Sun and The Serpent* (Miller and Broadhurst 1989) that node compliance with feng shui precepts was tested. The resulting paper being published in 2023 (Grace, 2023).

Review of Korean Landscape Enhancement Methods

Yoon (2011), a prolific researcher, provides an excellent overview of the techniques and methods used to enhance the landscaped for geomantic purposes within Korea. Korean geomancy was very highly influenced by Chinese feng shui following its introduction to Korea in the 10th century and the later incorporation of neo-Confucian concepts in the 15th to 17th centuries (Jang 2017). From a landscape or landform perspective Korean geomancy broadly follows the same set of core principles as form school feng shui. Classic feng shui texts such as Skinner (1989) or Walters (1991) describe an ideal site (Figure 1) as being located to the south of an arc of hills with a high

Seriously Strange

dragon hill to the site's east and a lower tiger hill to the site's west. To the south gently flowing water channels chi to the site. The landforms surrounding an ideal site are said to produce or convey beneficial energy (chi) to the site which benefits its inhabitants. Yoon (2011) quotes a geomantic proverb 'There are no auspicious sites without flaws' meaning that it is almost impossible to find a site that totally matches the ideal of Figure 1. It is noteworthy that the hseh located at Chalice Well, Glastonbury comes close to achieving this ideal, see Grace (2023).

In Korea the practice of modifying the landscape to remedy geomantic defects is termed chosan pibu. Yoon (2011) reports that it played an important role in shaping the Korean cultural landscape during the Koryu (918- 1392 Common Era, CE) and Choson (1392 - 1910 CE) periods. The end date of the Choson period, 1910 CE, indicates that chosan pibu was still practised almost within living memory. The methods employed in chosan pibu are summarised in sections 3.1 to 3.5

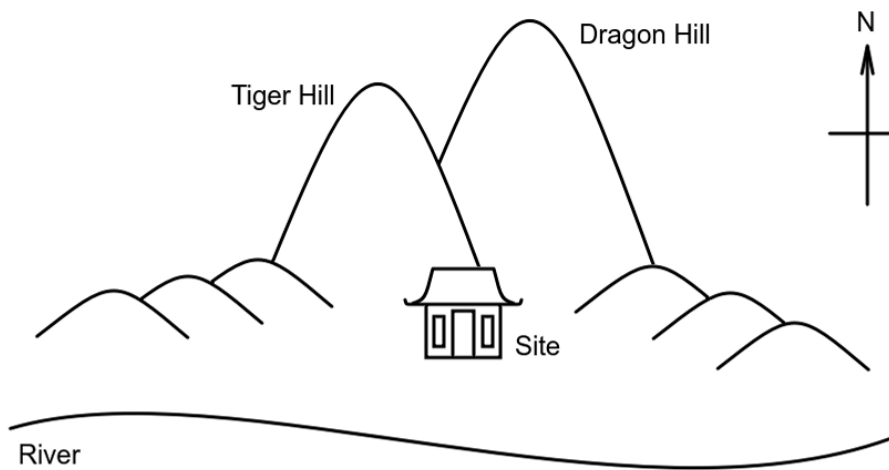


Figure 1 - The Ideal Site

The Old Straight Track

The St. Michael line is one of the United Kingdom's (UK) more well known leys. It spans the southern part of the UK from Hopton in Norfolk down to the western tip of Cornwall. John Michell (19??) is widely credited with the discovery of this ley which became known as the St. Michael Line as a consequence of the large number of churches dedicated to the saint through which it passes. The line does not just pass through churches dedicated to St. Michael. It also passes through a great many ancient sacred sites such as:

- Carn Les Boel an iron age promontory hill fort located on a cliff edge at the far west of Cornwall.
- The Hurlers triple stone circle in Cornwall.
- Chalice Well, Glastonbury, Somerset.
- Oliver's Castle (iron age hill fort) Wiltshire.
- Avebury, Wiltshire.
- Sinodun Hill fort, Berkshire.

The idea that leys somehow transmitted some form of mystical earth energy akin to oriental chi (life force) was well established within the earth mysteries movement by the late 1960s. One of the first references to such ideas was made by Colquhoun (1952) who discusses a line of 'magnetic energy' extending from the east coast of England to the tip of Cornwall.

The definitive survey of the St. Michael Line was performed by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst in the late 1980s. Over a two year period Miller, an accomplished earth energy dowser, and author Broadhurst used dowsing to track the St. Michael Line along its entire length. Their work was published as *The Sun and The Serpent* (Miller and Broadhurst, 1989). The picture that emerged from Miller and Broadhurst's (1989) work was that a ley consisted of three key components:

generally straight line geometric alignment linking sites as conceptualised by Watkins (1925).

- Two sinuous lines of 'earth energy' one yin, one yang that intertwine about the geometric alignment
- and cross each other at major points termed nodes.

Figure A.1 illustrates the St. Michael Line and its 20 or so node points.

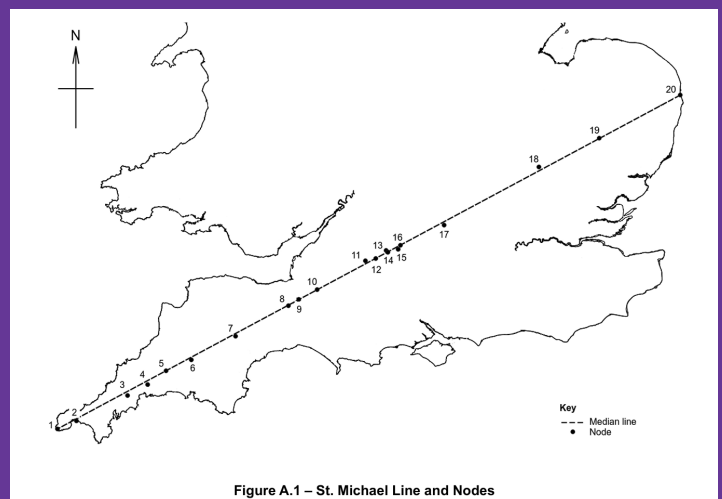
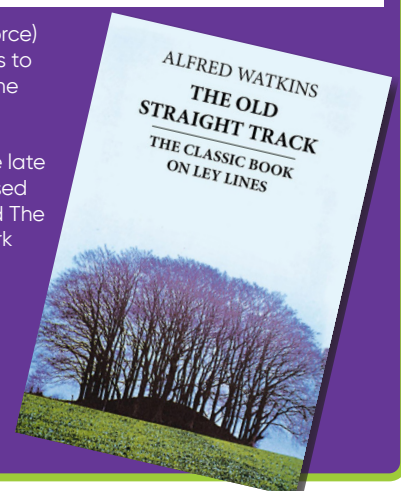
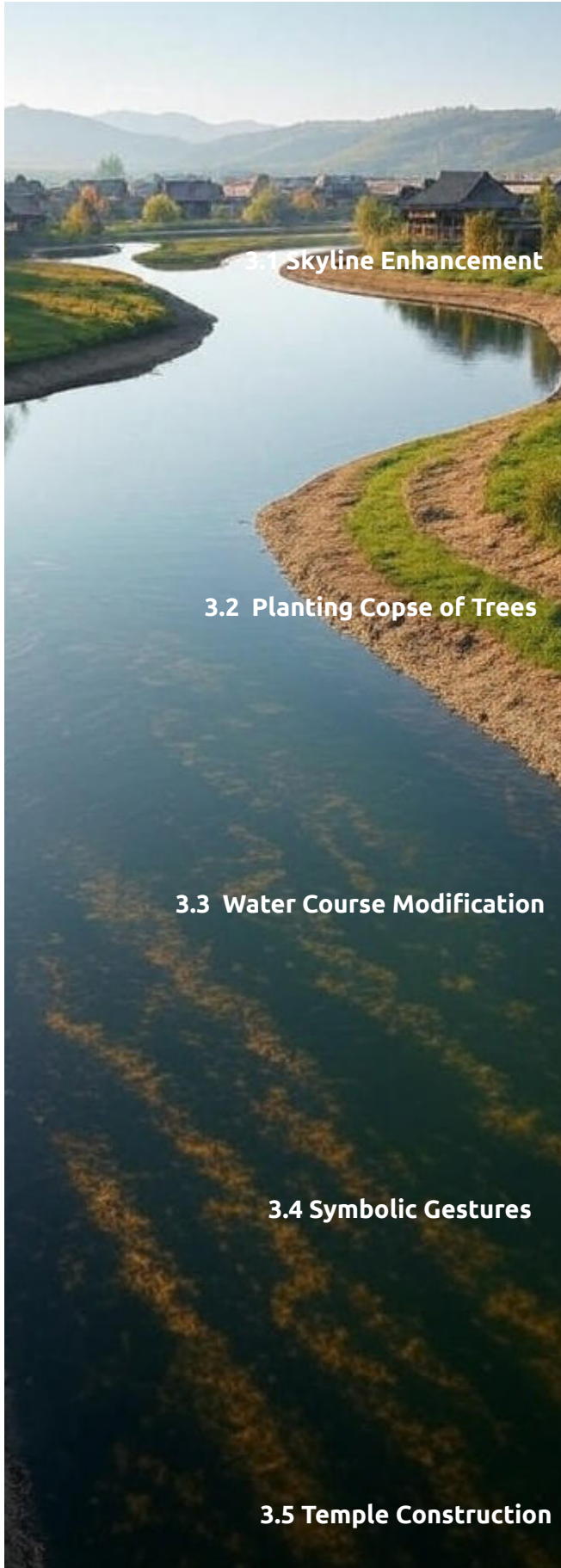


Figure A.1 – St. Michael Line and Nodes



A little human intervention

Uncovering how landscapes were skillfully modified during the Koryu and Choson periods to enhance geomantic harmony. From subtle earthworks to symbolic renamings, these techniques reveal a deep cultural reverence for balancing the land's energy.



3.1 Skyline Enhancement

If the skyline of a range of hills encircling and protecting a site had gaps at critical points or an insufficiently prominent dragon or tiger hill then this could be remedied using chosan pibu. Yoon (2011) reports that Korean chosn pibu serving this function were comparatively modest being typically less than 10 m diameter and not more than 4 m tall. They were often constructed from earth and stone and referred to as ountains. Referring to such comparatively modest structures as mountains appears to be a symbolic gesture that magnifies the psychological significance of the enhancement.

3.2 Planting Copse of Trees

Yoon (2011) reports that an appropriately positioned copse of trees can be used to remedy skyline defects in in much the same manner as the chosan pibu described at 3.1. Yoon (2011) indicates that a tree copse can appear larger than a man made hill, is less costly and simpler to install. Further to this a tree copse can also be used to screen landscape features such as the confluence of several water courses. It is noteworthy that Yoon (2011) indicates that such a confluence would be considered undesirable and screened in accordance with Korean practice whereas Skinner (1989) writing from a Chinese perspective states that confluences are generally beneficial and would be considered a 'key dragon point', a point of chi concentration.

3.3 Water Course Modification

Skinner (1989) advises that water courses are one of the most obvious flow lines for chi. A river flowing in a straight line could however be considered to either bring sha (harmful chi) to a site or to conduct beneficial chi away too quickly. The river banks would therefore be modified and naturalistic curves introduced. Artificial moats or lakes with an open vista to their south were often constructed at villages in order to receive and pool beneficial chi.

3.4 Symbolic Gestures

Yoon (2011) states that symbolic gestures such as renaming were used to enforce favourable geomantic conditions. Such gestures would include renaming a modest hill as 'Great hill' were such a feature was required. Hills or villages could also be renamed in order to be attractive to existing auspicious features such as a phoenix shaped mountain.

3.5 Temple Construction

Religious structures such as temples, chortans (stupa) or pagodas could also be built to overcome deficiencies in the geomantic landscape. Yoon (2011) advises that it was widely believed that the supernatural powers of such structures compensated for landscape shortfalls

4.0

The Tibetan Geomantic Landscape

One of Tibet's semi-mythological founding stories concerns the country's conversion to Buddhism from earlier shamanistic religions (see Stutchbury, 1994 and Romain, 2021). The myth tells that the earth of Tibet was formed by a demoness, a *sinmo*. During the process of conversion to Buddhism temples and chortens (stupas) needed to be built. Construction did not progress smoothly as the demonic forces of the land dismantled during the night what was built during the day. Variations on the Tibetan founding myth see either the King (Songsten Gampo) or a Chinese Princess (Kong - Jo), an expert in geomancy, establishing that construction failures were due to the demoness flailing about. In order to pin down the demoness a series of temples and chortens had to be built at specific sites of geomantic importance.

It is noteworthy that the Korean founding myth describes how the demonic forces of the land undid by night temple building work performed during the day. This mirrors exactly the construction myths associated with many British churches located at ancient sacred sites.

This is exemplified by the church of St. Michel de la Rupe located on North Brentor in Devon. The church of St. Michel de la Rupe falls on the St. Michael Line and has a node point located at its foot (Miller and Broadhurst, 1989). Stutchbury (1994) reports that Princess Kong - Jo built 21 chortens as *me-rtsa* on the spine bones of the leonine mount *Lcags-Ka* to achieve this.

A nine level black chorten was used to press down the lions head. Stutchbury (1994) advises that the term *me-rtsa* is a term for acupuncture pins. Stutchbury quotes Aris who states that *me-rtsa* is also 'A geomantic term referring to places that act in a strange way on other places just as in acupuncture one or several points in the body relate to the operation of the vital organs'. The phrase 'Places that act in a strange way on other places' is highly suggestive of some form of ley or lung mei linking sites together.



Church of St. Michel de la Rupe, on top of Brent Tor in Devon

By Tigerboy1966 - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27467388>

Seriously Strange

Romain (2021) states that the temples and chortens used to pin down the demoness were located at the following sites.

Central Temple

- Jokhang temple, Lhasa. This temple is centrally sited over the heart of the demoness.
- Controlling Temples
- Four controlling temples hold down the demoness' shoulders and hips. They are located at:
 - Tradruk temple, Nedong county, Lhoka, 7 km south of Tsetang.
 - Katsel also known as Uru Katshal, Maizhokunggar county, 80 km north east of Lhasa
 - Yeru Tsangdram. Most likely the Yerpa monastery, 16 km north east of Lhasa.
 - Rulak also known as the Ralok Yungdrungling Monastery, 170 km west of Lhasa.

Border Taming Temples

- Four border taming pin down the demoness' elbows and knees. They are located at:
 - Buchu, a monastery 28 km south of Bayi, east Tibet.
 - Khomting. Most likely the Khoting temple at Lhaxhang Dzong in Lhodrag.
 - Mon Bumtang. Most likely the Tamzhing Lhündrup Monastery, central Bhutan.
 - Jang Traduntse. Most likely located in Drongpa county, west Tibet.

Further Taming Temples

- Four further taming temples hold down the demoness' hands and feet. These temples are located at:
 - Den Langtang Dronma. Most likely the Langtang Tara temple, in Denma.
 - Jang Tsangpa Lungnon. Most likely the Nyethang Drolma temple, 33 km south west of Lhasa.
 - Mangyul Jamtrin. Most likely the Lhaxhang, near Kyirong.
 - Paru Kyerchu also known as Kyerchu temple in Paru district, Bhutan.
- It should be noted that Tibetan place names have several alternative spellings dependent upon dialect.

The situation is further complicated by the use of Chinese names for some sites. This has made

identifying the temple sites specified by Romain (2021) rather difficult. Figure 2 provides a best estimate produced using Google Maps (2023).



By en:user:John Hill - en:image:Monastery ruins, Yerpa 1993.JPG, CC BY-SA 3.0,

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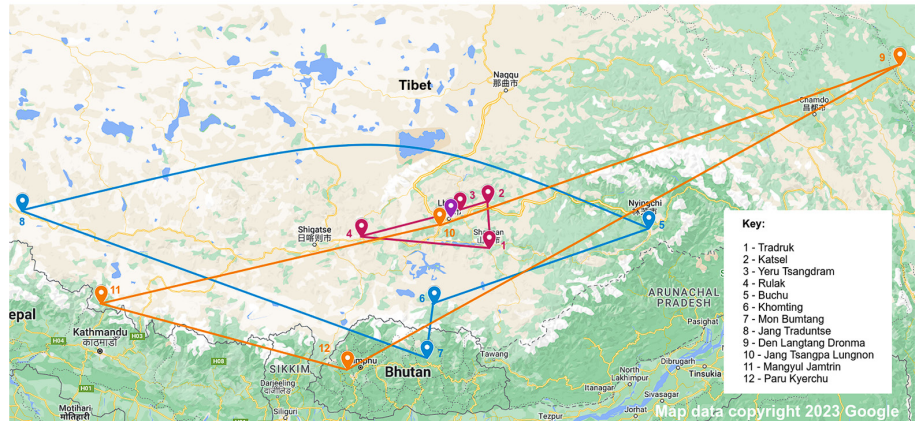


Figure 2 - Principal Tibetan Buddhist Temple Locations (after Romain, 2021)

Romain contends that when the centre, controlling and taming temples are plotted on a map they form a series of near concentric zones around the central Jokhang temple. This certainly appears to be the case for the controlling and border taming temples. The geometry is however severely compromised by the further taming group of temples. That said many of these temple sites stem from the first millennia or thereabouts. Without performing further research one can only guess at the accuracy that Tibet had been mapped in this period and the extent to which the cartography that did exist was stylised to conform with the national founding myth, religion, etc. This could well result in the perceived cultural location and the actual physical location of the sites being quite different



By ampersandyslexia - originally posted to Flickr as India, Day 15, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7715658>

Seriously Strange

FEATURE

Mount Meru is located at the centre of the Buddhist cosmic mandala. The sun and moon orbit Mount Meru at half its altitude. Surrounding Mount Meru are seven mountain walls that get progressively lower. Between the mountain walls rain created an inner fresh water sea. Outside the outermost mountain wall there is a salt water ocean containing 12 continents, the southernmost being inhabited by human beings. The great ocean and its continents are in turn surrounded by an iron mountain wall. Xu (2010) argues that many Buddhist temples are designed based on the cosmic mandala and / or sited in the landscape based on the cosmic mandala. Xu exemplifies the use of the cosmic

mandala in the layout of the Samye temple complex (779 CE).

This temple features:

- A circular outer wall representing the iron mountains.
- Halls representing the four major continents located at the four cardinal directions.
- Chortens erected in each corner that represent the four divinities that guard the land.
- Small buildings on the north - south axis represent the sun and moon.
- The central Buddha hall is square and surrounded by a square courtyard.

Further to this the Samye temple is correctly geomantically sited

in accordance with form school precepts. The temple is located in the Chimpu valley, south of Lhasa. Mountains surround the temple's northern aspect and the Yaluzangbu river flows to the temple's south. A comparison of Figures 2 and 3 however suggests that not only are individual Tibetan Buddhist temples laid out based on the cosmic mandala, so too is the entire country. The national implementation of the mandala however appears to be centred on the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, Tibet's ancient and current capital city, as opposed to the earthly incarnation of Mount Meru at Mount Kailash which lies in the west of Tibet.



Church Symbolism

It is widely acknowledged that many pre-reformation churches in the UK were constructed over or replaced ancient monuments such as menhirs or stone circles following the introduction of Christianity. This is exemplified by All Saints Church, Alton Priors, Wiltshire. This church very unusually incorporates hatches in its floor which, once raised, allow the dolmens of the earlier pre-Christian site beneath to be viewed.

Churches are clearly religious buildings and their form and decoration are rich in Christian symbolism.

Churches could also potentially be geomantically significant, not only by way of their location but also by way of their form. The bell tower or spire of a church is principally used to house the church's bells allowing

them to sound clearly over surrounding buildings. A church tower or spire is however also a visually dominant feature in a flat landscape that can often be seen from a considerable distance. In form school terms a spire and a tower could be considered to be representative of a conical fire hill or a tall round wood hill respectively. Both are yang forms.

One of the St. Michael Line's nodes is located in the parish church of St. Michael in the village of Creech St. Michael at the western edge of the

Somerset levels. The immediate landscape around the village is flat at an overall elevation of 10 m. What hills there are in the village's immediate vicinity undulate quite gently. Modest dragon (50 m) and tiger (40 m) hills are located approximately 3 km east and west respectively of the village. The node point is therefore located at a yin

site in a yin landscape. The church of St. Michael, with its flat roofed tower, however artificially introduces a yang element to the site restoring the required balance in the same manner as the conical mound at Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire. The role of the church at node points could also be far simpler and simply be based, as Yoon (2011) states, on the belief that the supernatural powers of religious buildings compensate for landscape defects

It is also likely a pure coincidence but the modern name for the village of Creech St. Michael is likely a derivation of the much earlier name Crug Muchel which means great hill (British History Online) The great hill is, in reality, only of 40 m elevation above the plain of the village. Such a name could potentially be an example of a symbolic geomantic gesture in accordance with Yoon.

Seriously Strange

Summary and Conclusion

From the review presented at Sections 3 to 5 it can be concluded that:

- Within Korea and Tibet the purported underlying energy of a landscape was subdued to the benefit of man by constructing chortens and temples at key geomantic locations.
- Landscapes were artificially enhanced or modified to achieve geomantic aims (chosan pibu).
- The techniques of chosan pibu principally appear to be associated with the construction of yang features, that said the demolition of pre-existing yang features to make a site more yin may not be well documented or readily detectable.
- Entire national cultural landscapes, as evidenced in Tibet, were planned in conformance with religious beliefs and geomantic practice.
- The supernatural energy of religious buildings was perceived as being able to overcome shortfalls or defects in the geomantic landscape.



These principles can be applied to the St. Michael Line and suggest that:

- The ancient monuments (menhirs / stone circles and the churches that supplanted them) at the line's node points were, from a geomantic perspective, likely constructed to pin down the contortions of the dragon line that lies under southern England.
- Pinning down the dragon of the St. Michael Line would have been perceived as being of positive auspicious benefit to the human communities living in the vicinity of each node point.

FEATURE

- Chosan pibu style methods that include the construction of 'mountains' from earth and stone could well have been applied to bring a landscape into balance where necessary. These are fairly straightforward interventions that are strongly paralleled by features such as the mound at sites like Ogbourne St. George.
- The humble English parish church could potentially represent a continuation of pre-historic geomantic interventions that, by virtue of its form (tower or spire), continues to exert the required yang balance at a site.

Parallels with ancient British geomancy are of course based on the premise that widely geographically and historically separated cultures responded to the features and energies of the landscape in a similar manner. Given the similarities that are now known to exist between western leys and oriental lung mei then it is quite possible that such parallels did indeed exist in Britain's pre-history.

Menhir located between Millstreet and Ballinagree, County Cork, Ireland
By Ceoil - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11334228>

Simon L Grace is a semi-retired professional engineer. He holds BEng (Hons) and MPhil degrees in engineering and more recently a diploma in advanced feng shui. Simon has a 30 year plus interest in the study of ley alignments, stone circles and menhirs. His current research activities are focused on investigating if there is a geophysical underpinning to leys and the parallels that may exist between oriental and western geomantic traditions.

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena extends gratitude to Dr Simon Grace, we will also be publishing the original version of this paper in our upcoming journal and an additional paper entitled "Smart Phone Magnetometer Accuracy" and in the next issue will feature, Burrow Hill Triangle by Dr Simon Grace.

Out of the cracks in the pavement into something tangible in your hands.



Seriously Strange Magazine, Anomaly Journal and the weekly Webinars are platforms to announce, discuss and publish.



With a dedicated audience of learned and interested membership.

Lets get back on track to what's important

Fortifications of Portsmouth



By Norie Miles

Photographs
courtesy Norie Miles

The History

At the bottom of the High Street lies the Square Tower, believed to date back to the time of Edward III, who was the first to order the town enclosed. The tower served as a residence for the Governor during the early Tudor period.

Subsequently, the Governor was given residence in the Domus Dei, and the tower was converted into a powder magazine. In the early 1800s, a semaphore was added to the top of the tower, but it was demolished in 1848 following the introduction of the electric telegraph. Around this time, the Royal Yacht Squadron unsuccessfully attempted to secure the tower as club premises. Whoever controlled the Point also controlled Portsmouth Harbour.

In 1418, permanent defences were constructed, and the Round Tower was erected—often referred to as King Edward’s Tower. During the invasion crisis of 1545, Henry VIII established the 18 Gun Battery, commonly known as the gun battery. Later, King Charles II instructed his chief engineer, Sir Bernard de Gomme, to build the outer wall, which remains visible today and dates from the late 1680s.

Originally a single-storey building, the 18 Gun Battery was narrower than it is now and backed onto a row of houses built where the parade ground now stands. In the wall at the south end of the battery, de Gomme constructed a small S-shaped Sally Port, where the moat crossed the road.

The Point Artillery Barracks were built between 1847 and 1850, following the demolition of buildings between the Battery and Broad Street. The Round Tower was heightened, and another tier was added to the flanking battery to house 32-pounder cannons. Additionally, 68-pounder carronades on traversing mounts were added to rearm the rest of the Battery. In the early 1960s, when the Coast Artillery was abolished, the barracks were sold to the city.

Today, under the arches during the summer, artists sell their works. Nearby, one monument—“The Bonds of Friendship” by Australian sculptor John Robinson—commemorates the special bond between Portsmouth and Australia. The first ship to sail from Portsmouth to Australia departed in 1787.

Seriously Strange

The Ghosts

The top fortification leading to the entrance of the Round Tower is said to be haunted by a soldier who paces back and forth along the top. Witnesses describe him standing proudly in his red coat, carrying a rifle, and surrounded by a beautiful golden glow.

Near where the soldier is seen lies the entrance to the top of the Round Tower. Many people walking through this area and up the stairs report feeling watched and deeply uncomfortable, as if something does not want them there.

I grew up in Old Portsmouth for the first 14 years of my life, spending many happy hours by the sea. However, I always felt as though someone was watching me from the ramparts when passing the Round Tower. On a few occasions, this sensation caused me to run for my life!

The Round Tower also seems to house the spirit of a medium-sized black dog—a common motif in British folklore. This apparition appears during educational trips and tours, running back and forth around visitors and the guide.

The Square Tower has a resident ghost: a man in the lower part of the building, whose identity and the date of his first sighting remain unknown.

Old Portsmouth is reputed to be home to many haunted sites, including the Sally Port Hotel, The Dolphin, Buckingham House, Felton House, and the Cathedral—each with stories that have been told and retold for generations




WEIRD SCIENCE

PATENTS AND PUBLISHED RESEARCH BENDING THE RULES ON REALITY

Whether it's private individuals, corporate entities or governments, a patent offers significant protection and can be a valuable commercial tool if the invention is new, not obvious. While a patent is not a prerequisite for selling, it is a legal right that prevents others from using, selling, or making your invention without your permission, as such many interesting and novel inventions makes it to the Patent offices. What can get patented are; Inventions that are not publically available or described in publications. Patenting technical processes and methods of doing something. This means they have to declare it publically, so no-one else can patent it!

Whether they work is not up to us to evaluate here, you can patent the process. Let's take a look today at a patent that is unusual and steps the line into Weird Science.



US 20060072226A1

(19) **United States**
 (12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2006/0072226 A1**
St. Clair (43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 6, 2006**

(54) **REMOTE VIEWING AMPLIFIER** Publication Classification

(76) Inventor: **John Quincy St. Clair, San Juan, PR** (51) **Int. Cl.**
 (US) *G02B 1/00* (2006.01)
 (52) **U.S. CL.** *359/896; 359/804*

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SAN JUAN, PR 00911 (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **10/957,391**
 (22) Filed: **Oct. 2, 2004**

(57) **ABSTRACT**
 An apparatus which enhances the ability of a person to perform remote viewing by connecting the human spiritual eye to the tetrahedral geometry of subspace.

Seriously Strange today looks at the 19 page submission to the US patent office on 2nd October 2004, and published 6th April 2006 entitled "Remote Viewing Amplifier" under the patent number US-20060072226-A1 available is a preview, the PDF and the text of the document.(1)

The implication on the bold name alone Remote Viewing Amplifier implies a signal must exist and this is a booster to the signal perhaps to reach greater distance or for the signal to have better clarity in its current range. It is certainly food for thought as we dabble in the weird science wormhole.



Patently-obvious

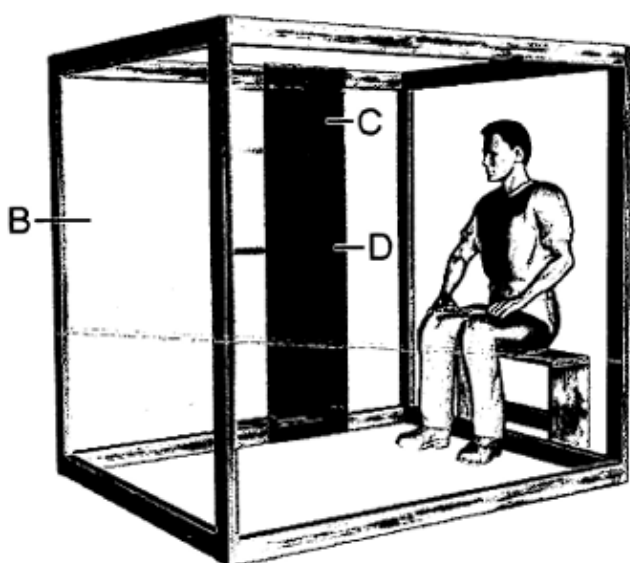
There is a period between submission and a patent being granted, an examination process is conducted. An examination report will check that the application satisfies conditions like novelty and inventiveness in case there are similar products already in the marketplace and so on. Back and forth. Before a green tick is firmly stamped on the box and acceptance is granted, this process can take a number of years.

In matters of the mind, and the theoretical an area that is a minefield of peer review, subjection and opinion. Due to shifting perspectives and attitudes. Remote viewing is in a tricky space in 2004 and it still is today deemed to be fringe, allegedly not repeatable and largely dismissed by the science establishment. Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ from the Stanford Research Institute would state otherwise.

The submission application is filed by inventor John Quincy St. Clair from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Who we met last issue, who developed a "Walking Through Walls Training System", which was tested with the rigour of a Saturday night drinking game here at the ASSAP NSTC Facility (Nottingham Satellite Testing Centre, ie my living room) resulting in the girlfriend humorously walking into the living room door arms crossed like an Egyptian priestess. St Clair describes this apparatus as designed to enhance a person's ability to perform "remote viewing," which the inventor defines as projecting spiritual modules of the human energy field to distant locations in subspace, space, and hyperspace to observe, communicate, or interact with entities.

From within a structure, a wooden rectangular box measuring 6ft long, 4 ft wide and 6 ft high, the size of the average garden shed! So this comes with a DIY homework assignment from ASSAP. The additional of a plexiglass sheet mounted to one side with wedge shaped spacers attaching a shorter plexiglass panel parallel to this main sheet. An useful bench for the user to sit and align their sight along the wedge a 60 degree angle, to diffract and refract the spiritual eye. Which is where the rather practical invention starts taking a leap into the spooky. So hold on, we are taking a detour around the cosmos!

The claims



The claims made in the patent, by the inventor recounts a number of out-of-body experiences, such as viewing a palm tree, soldiers on a bridge, and a computer room from 10,000 miles away. He describes the human energy system as modular (legs, body, arms/hands, voice, eye, mind, soul), powered by vortices along the body that build the aura.

John Quincy St Clair asserts it has enabled contact with 430 alien civilizations and contributed to notable scientific discoveries like the electron and proton being the same particle, the existence of hyperspace and projections from subspace.

Talking of those aliens, the patent details communication with the Pleiladian Federation, a collective of more than 100 species of space faring civilizations currently more than 400 light years away. Highlights include "Blonde aliens", "intelligent insect beings" and "beamships". That is a lot of communication to catalogue!

Revelations at the Sandwich bar

In the patent, on p18. the process is described how he came to the revelation of the invention. He was at Subway, post salad application and after the last ditch sales pitch of cookie or crisp, that inflates the price by double. He took his seat, unwrapped his sub and is looking through a plexiglass window. Whilst seating he was engaged in telepathic communication with an entity he refers to as "the Admiral." This Admiral is implied to be part of an extraterrestrial group. Who have a ship parked in Earth orbit. The Admiral transmits that "they are bringing two people aboard". St Clair, observes the abduction remotely. Both "captives" are armed officers and are about to pull their guns out to defend themselves. St Clair claims he engaged with spiritual hands preventing the attack. The Admiral impressed by his abilities, tasks him with finding out how this was possible.

St Clair measured up the windows, refractions and angles taking notes. Leading him to build a prototype in rendering software and and stereolithography, replicating this setup in his remote viewing station (illustrated in Figures 11–13 of the patent). St. Clair's claimed psychic experiences with practical observation. It ties into the device's core mechanism: using Plexiglas refraction at specific angles (60° incident, 35.26° refracted per Snell's Law) to amplify remote viewing by connecting the spiritual eye to subspace.

Your homework assignment is "To call the cosmos from your garden shed" this weekend via a trip to the hardware store and detour to Subway. The source of the Weird Science can be found online -
(1) <https://patentcenter.uspto.gov/applications/10957391>

Whispers in the Gallery

In rooms and corridors dimly kept,
Where rust and rhythm softly slept,
Artefacts from years gone cold
Whisper secrets left untold.

A jukebox hums, though no one hears,
Its song a thread from ghosted years.
Bell-bottoms swish in unseen grace,
A shadow turns—an absent face.

The footsteps come without a source,
Drifting slow in silent force.
A sudden bang, a door unhinged,
Then laughter—sweet, and singed.

Lights flicker on in empty rooms,
Bathing mannequins in gloom.
Cassette tapes spin, the reel unwinds,
As if possessed by fading minds.

A boy once giggled in these halls,
Now he echoes through the walls.
With skipping steps and hollow glee,
he plays where none should ever be.

The air grows thick with longing deep,
The kind that stirs when ghosts can't sleep.
Each corridor a tender snare,
Alive with memories that dare—

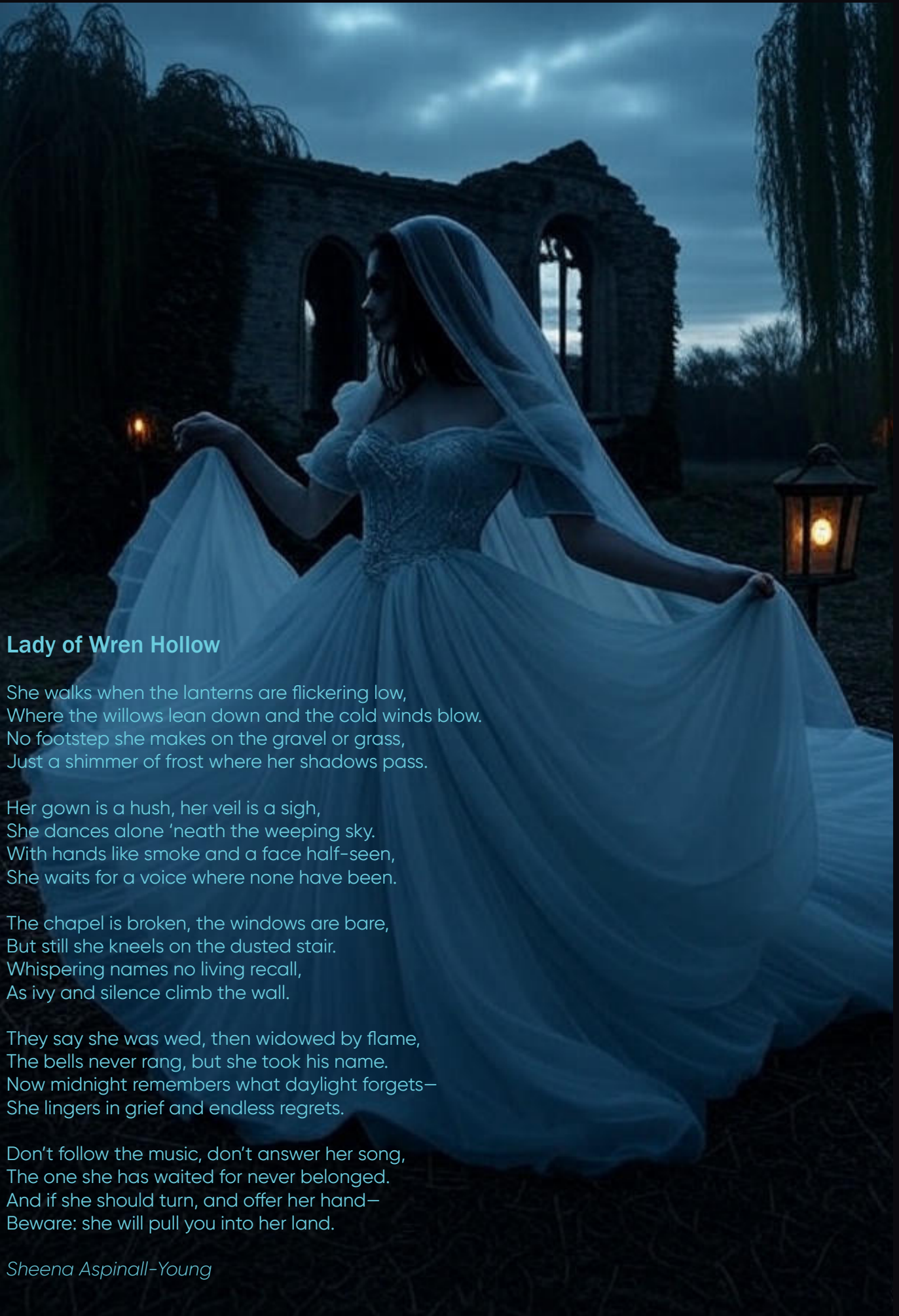
Dare to touch the world anew,
To bleed the past into the view.
A vinyl love song curls and fades,
As shadows dance in window shades.

You may feel fingers graze your sleeve,
Or scent a cologne that shouldn't breathe.
Romance, perhaps, or its remains,
Still pulsing through electric veins.

What lives here now is not quite dead—
The past walks on, just out ahead.
And if you stay past closing time,
You'll feel it stir beneath the grime.

The knocks will come, the lights will burn,
And every step will twist and turn.
This place remembers all who came,
But won't recall your face or name.





Lady of Wren Hollow

She walks when the lanterns are flickering low,
 Where the willows lean down and the cold winds blow.
 No footstep she makes on the gravel or grass,
 Just a shimmer of frost where her shadows pass.

Her gown is a hush, her veil is a sigh,
 She dances alone 'neath the weeping sky.
 With hands like smoke and a face half-seen,
 She waits for a voice where none have been.

The chapel is broken, the windows are bare,
 But still she kneels on the dusted stair.
 Whispering names no living recall,
 As ivy and silence climb the wall.

They say she was wed, then widowed by flame,
 The bells never rang, but she took his name.
 Now midnight remembers what daylight forgets—
 She lingers in grief and endless regrets.

Don't follow the music, don't answer her song,
 The one she has waited for never belonged.
 And if she should turn, and offer her hand—
 Beware: she will pull you into her land.

Sheena Aspinall-Young

5G/6G Revolution: Connectivity, Sensing and the potential Frontier of Anomaly Detection



“Overlapping signals working as effective radar for anomalies moving through the space.”

By Kristian Lander

Over the past decade, countries worldwide have invested heavily in 5G technology, deploying millimetre-wave standards, multi-spectrum relays, and denser information packing per wave. This rollout has slashed latencies, enabling breakthroughs in artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT). However, communications service providers (CSPs) need vast spectrum access to deliver these services, particularly for what is known as ultra-reliable low-latency communications (URLLC). We all want to have brilliant lagless wireless video calling at the touch of our smartphone.

URLLC promises real-time data exchange, revolutionising sectors like the push towards autonomous vehicles. Imagine smart cars on intelligent roads, traveling closer and faster via AI-monitored metrics like weight and acceleration. Yet, current self-driving tech falters, relying on datasets for recognizing road markings and hazards, often yielding inconsistent results.

5G infrastructure features prominent MIMO (Multiple Input Multiple Output) antennas, those large lollipop-shaped structures—that beam high-speed signals spherically. By analysing signal reflections akin to LIDAR, they discern surface compositions, colours, shapes, and motion. Each wave acts as a “frame” enabling real-time 3D mapping. Meshed networks of multiple towers enhance precision in urban areas, boosting mapping tools and their potential.





Integrated Sensing and Communication (ISAC), also referred to as Joint Communication and Sensing (JCAS), is a technology candidate with promising potential. ISAC integrates sensing and spatial location of passive (not connected) objects into the mobile communication network, expanding the network's functionality beyond just communication.

Robert Baldemair the Principal Researcher, Radio concepts and performance for Ericsson (1) writes that ISAC integrates this sensing natively, allowing the network to "see" disruptions or unexpected echoes in real time without dedicated radar hardware. For instance, demonstrations have shown 100% detection accuracy for drones up to 300 meters, with

99% precise speed estimation via micro-Doppler analysis and clutter cancellation.

Simulations further indicate robust performance in urban settings, with position errors as low as 2-4 meters for airborne targets at altitudes up to 200-300 meters, using frequencies like 30 GHz (millimetre waves) or 3.5 GHz.



The image above is from Ordnance Survey, an early mapping experiment in 2016 (2) in Bournemouth involving a small number of 5G antenna and the 3D map that was generated solely from wireless signals being projected into and returned from the environment.

With 6G technologies already set to rollout building upon these foundations, With low- to mid-band spectrum availability in limited supply, wider frequency requirements and bigger data packets of transmission are needed. The opening up of more wavebands particularly "cmWave the 7-15 GHz" range. Centimetre Wave bands will underpin the vast majority of 6G deployments.

If the object moves through the projecting radial sphere, there would be potential detectable disruption.

'Unleashing vast amounts of new spectrum, sub-THz frequencies can enable specific future 6G use cases where extreme data rates or low latency in local areas are required. This includes professional high-resolution holographic communication and advanced machine-to-machine interaction'

– <https://www.ericsson.com/en/6g>



One of three signal towers along a stretch of the A610 and residential, Nottingham.

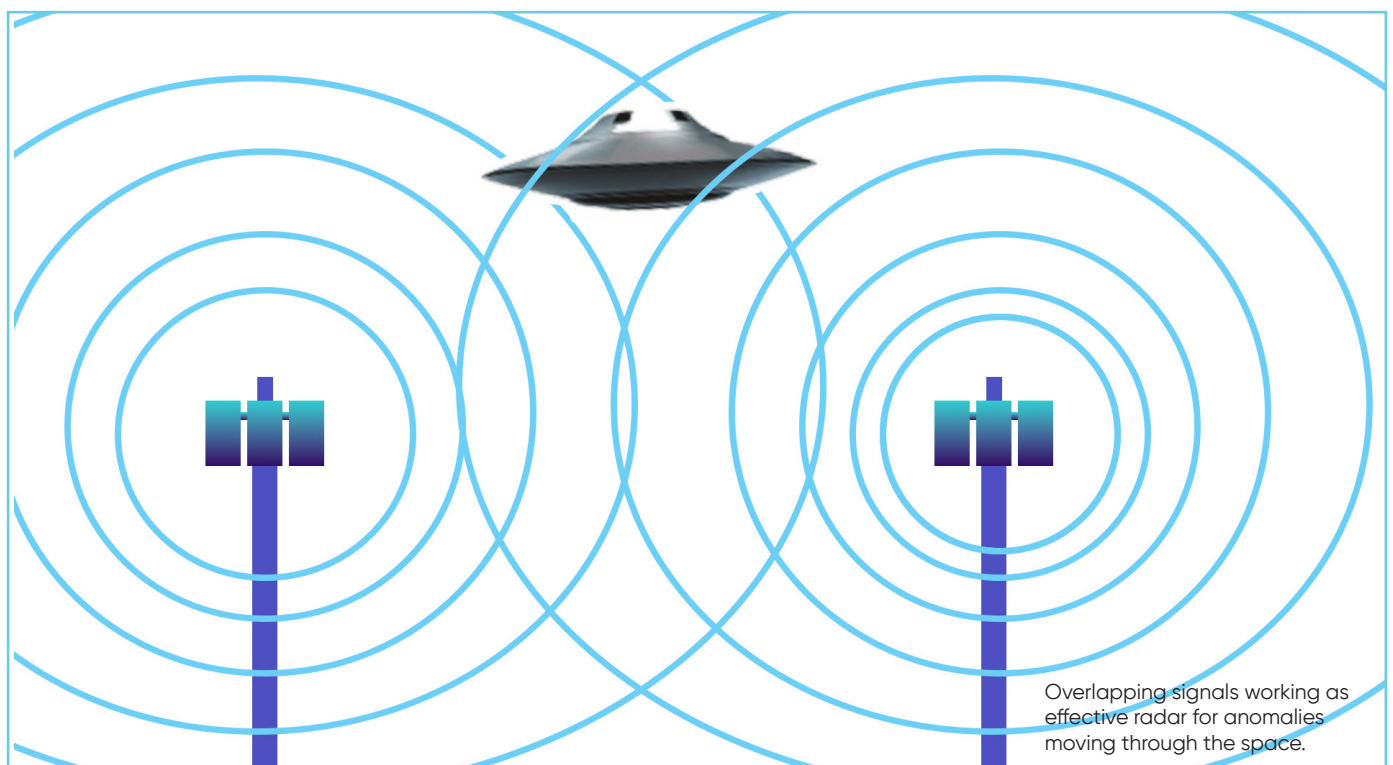
Potential Use as a Sensor for Anomalies

Venturing into speculative application, could this ISAC-enabled mesh detect more exotic anomalies? Applying this to detection of UAP—often reported as fast-moving or anomalous aerial objects—the same principles could make them “visible” as they interact with signals (e.g., via reflection or scattering) as they pass through the environment in the range of these arrays of towers.

Research on UAV detection via 5G traffic patterns achieves 99% accuracy even with encrypted data, suggesting potential for flagging unusual behaviours or signatures that deviate from expected norms. Multistatic setups (multiple towers meshing data) enhance precision, enabling tracking of anomalies in prohibited airspace or urban environments. While direct UAP studies are limited, the tech’s proven efficacy for drones implies feasibility for similar phenomena, assuming comparable radar cross-sections. Multistatic configurations—where data from multiple towers is fused—further boost accuracy, turning networks into efficient surveillance grids.

Accounts of phasing, manipulating gravity and ultimately the defying of conventional detection. Many reports of visible identification (VLoS) but not on radar by pilots and control towers. There are accounts to the bending of light / space; the principal anomaly on Skinwalker Ranch known as “the bubble”. A 2000ft sphere of unknown properties that appears by observation and experiments to disrupt light, rf signals, GPS and even fixed telescopes with star tracking.

If Unidentified Aerial Phenomena interact with radio waves through reflection or scattering, 5G/6G networks could detect them as disruptions in signal patterns. As UAP move through the coverage area, they may create distortions or gaps in the real-time 3D maps generated by 5G’s Integrated Sensing and Communication systems, manifesting as missing data or irregular echoes from small spheres to larger objects. With the evolution of 5G-Advanced and 6G, these networks could unintentionally form a global sensor array, capable of identifying extraordinary phenomena and blurring the boundaries between telecommunications and cosmic surveillance.



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and producing data

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1 2 3 4

G



DIVISIVE OUIJA



By Sarah Pilkington

As the darker nights roll in and we close our curtains against the worst that British weather can throw at us, how to keep ourselves occupied? In the fin de siècle days before *Strictly* and *Bake Off*, parlour games were the epitome of family entertainment and the Ouija board, lacking its current sinister reputation, was a firm favourite.

The Ouija board was patented by attorney Elijah J. Bond in 1891, though it had been a collaboration with his business partners, including Charles Kennard and others from the Kennard Novelty Company. Talking boards tapped into the post-Civil War growth in Spiritualism and the desire to communicate with the dead—step forward the Fox Sisters. They were variously promoted as a means of connecting with spirits, predicting catastrophes, solving mysteries, and even committing crimes.

The name “Ouija” was provided by Bond’s sister-in-law, Helen Peters—a spiritualist medium—who allegedly asked the board what it wanted to be called. Later, William Fuld, a former employee of Bond and Kennard, took over manufacturing and became its most significant populariser. In 1927, William sustained fatal injuries after falling from the roof of a building that, with a delicious twist of irony, the Ouija board had told him to build.

Ouija’s association with the occult gained pace in the 1940s, following a series of exorcisms performed by Catholic priests on an anonymous 14-year-old boy, documented under the pseudonym Roland Doe. The Catholic Church asserted that Roland’s use of the Ouija board had resulted in demonic possession. Claims of paranormal events during the ritual served as inspiration for author William Peter Blatty’s 1971 novel *The Exorcist*, and the 1973 film of the same name sealed the board’s malign reputation.

The Ouija board was eventually acquired by the toy manufacturer Hasbro in 1991, and the name remains trademarked to the company. Hasbro continues to market Ouija as a family game and “...a source of wholesome amusement with an element of otherworldly excitement.” In what could be interpreted as a cynical marketing ploy, Poundland placed age restrictions on its sale in 2020 due to concerns about potential risks to young and impressionable users—allegedly on the advice of a paranormal investigator who claimed the board should only be used by suitably trained individuals.

The Ouija board remains one of the most divisive tools in the world of paranormal research. Naysayers mutter about the ideomotor effect and blindfold experiments, while others argue that it provides an effective means of connecting with the spirit world. Whichever school of belief you follow regarding its efficacy, maybe it’s best to ignore any advice it gives you to get up on the roof and fix that loose slate—just in case.

Seriously Strange



Dark Secrets: The Esoteric Experience

Location: The Vaults, London. (Near Waterloo Station, entrance within Graffiti Alley)

As the veil between worlds thins this season, The Vaults beneath Waterloo Station have become a portal to the unknown. Dark Secrets: The Esoteric Exhibition has been curated by Italian producers Italmostre, who set the stage for the macabre here previously with the Serial Killers: The Exhibition. As the doors are now open to the wider public, intrepid visitors can enter 27 immersive rooms brimming with more than a thousand artifacts from magic, folklore and the supernatural!

From the outset, visitors are ushered through a corridor of intense red atmospheric lighting before being presented with the large, iconic idol of Pazuzu from the opening of *The Exorcist*. To the immediate left, an overwhelming behemoth stands tall, an imposing stone Golem and a striking statue of the hermetic Baphomet, eager to assert their presence, leaving their imposing imprint firmly etched in your psyche.

Winding rooms take you on a journey through specially selected items and artifacts from the curator's personal collection.

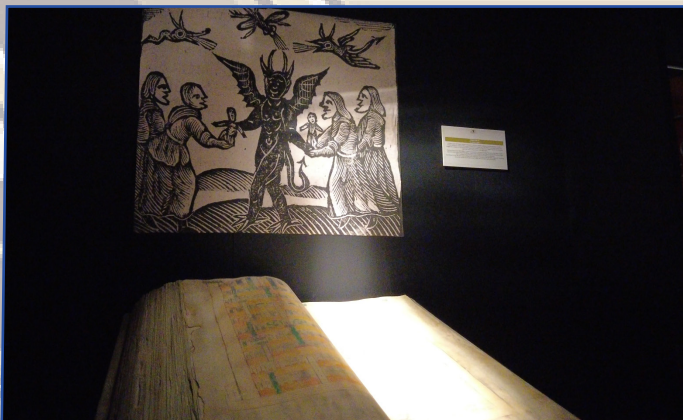


Druidic magical items and Shrunken heads from the Shuar tribes of the Amazon, symbolised as war trophies and ritual objects. Europe's largest gathering of cursed dolls, over a hundred specimens that are alleged to whisper tales of possession and misfortune, including The Weeping Doll, whose accounts note it has the ability to shift its gaze.



REVIEW

Present is the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the witch-hunters' guidance-bible, evoking chilling fervour in medieval persecutions! Coupled with a full reproduction of the *Codex Gigas*, the so-called Devil's Bible, is among the exhibition's book collection. The account of this beautiful, ornate, grand-sized work being scribed by a single monk in a single night, who was possessed by the angel of light. The lure to reach across the rope and turn the pages to explore the artwork within was so extraordinarily tempting.



Whilst his mother may have dubbed him "the beast", the man who embodied that title, Aleister Crowley. Several items of his magical possessions are being put on display; his ceremonial staff with scribed letters lies as a companion to fragments of the infamous Abbey of Thelema.

Ebay is full of so-called Dybbuk boxes home to apparent spirits with created stories to make a quick turnover. *Dark Secrets* is instead providing harbour to the Dybbuk Box with a Jewish spirit residing inside said to be the direct inspiration for the horror film, *The Possession*. More modern items feature prominently too, the jacket worn by Jimi Hendrix tied to the "27 Club" and a collection of ill-fated sports memorabilia, like England's cursed 1966 World Cup jersey.

The curators took great delight in guiding Norie Miles and me on a personal tour of the exhibits before the press event began. This intimate exploration offered first-hand insights into the purpose of each item in the vast collection and the intention behind every room. We revelled in their vivid explanations of the Knights Templar and Voodoo artifacts, uncovering layers of history and mystery.

We were soon joined by the charismatic Professor Matteo Borrini, who brought the history of Tarot to life with wonderful explanations of the cards' origins. He graciously accepted our invitation to join the ASSAP Seriously Strange Conference in 2026.

As the curators finalised preparations for the incoming guests, Matteo welcomed us to witness the setup for the Victorian Seance—a centrepiece event for the gathered press. Before a rapt audience, we watched in awe as the masterful illusionist entranced the crowd (quite literally, in one unforgettable case). The performance not only showcased the artistry of illusions but also shed light on how Victorian con artists exploited these techniques to scam the unwary. Matteo's commentary served as a cautionary tale for those who might dwell in such deceptive behaviours today.

It almost looks to build on the success following the *Serial Killer Exhibition*, which is now touring across European venues that drew more than 120,000 macabre-loving visitors through its doors last year. The Vaults provide an atmosphere within the subterranean halls that really bring this new dark spectacle to life. Whether drawn by curiosity or ritual resonance, the occult flame burns bright in 2025. Opening on the closing day of the Harvest Moon. The *Dark Secrets: Esoteric Exhibition* is set to run until 2026, closing at the end of May.

Certainly will ignite fresh covens of conversation—or perhaps a few guarded glances from the shadows.

To book and learn more visit their website.

<https://www.darksecretsexhibition.com/london>

APPARITIONS: CONSCIOUSNESS BEYOND DEATH
 PRESENTED BY LOYD ALLEBRACK
 ASAP

TIMESLIPS
 OR ANN WINSPEER
 ASAP

HAIRY HOMINIDS IN THE MODERN HISTORY ERA WALES AND IRELAND
 'TWO LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY HAIRY HUMANOID/HUMAN/HOMINID/HALLUCINATION CASES'

POLTERGEISTS & EMOTIONAL MANIFESTATION
 THE HIDDEN CONNECTION BETWEEN TRAUMA, POLTERGEIST AND THE UAP PHENOMENA

SpectradOS
 THE HAUNTED TERMINAL

AND FIVE CAME HOME...

SHAPESHIFTING AND THE SACRED
 UFOS, SHAPESHIFTING, AND THEOLOGY: A THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION WITH DR. MARK FOX

GHOSTS OF ARADALE ASYLUM

SLEEPY HOLLOW AND SALEM
 WITCHES, GHOSTS AND TULPAS

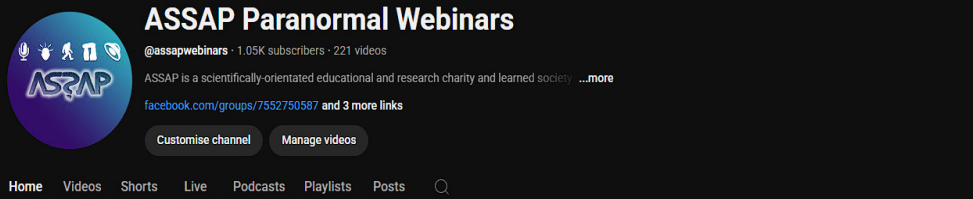
THE GREEN CHILDREN OF WOOLPIT
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For more than five years, the ASSAP Paranormal Webinars have hosted high-quality weekly presentations, providing a solid outlet for a live audience invested in the supernatural. We aim to feature a broad variety of guests and topics—suggestions and requests are always welcome.

ASSAP Paranormal Webinars LIVE also serves as a platform for those stepping up to present for the first time, offering a sounding board to bounce ideas off and refine their work, as well as for seasoned presenters facing an audience of welcoming, paranormally interested individuals, enthusiasts, and academics. We are keen on new speakers who share fresh ideas and promote good research.

We would like to experiment with different formats, add new concepts, and try innovative shows. Perhaps you, as a valued member, would like to get involved.

Reach out to webinars@assap.ac.uk.



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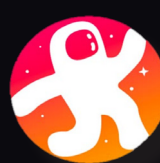
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Congratulations

William Eyre has dedicated an extraordinary 33 years to the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP), serving in recent years as our esteemed archivist and librarian. His expertise ensured that inquiries about our past cases, studies, and activities were met with remarkable insight—recollections delivered with startling accuracy and source materials retrieved with near-effortless swiftness.

Equally impressive is William's longstanding leadership with the Chesterfield Psychic Study Group, where he served as chair and continues as treasurer and webmaster. Since its inception in 1982, the group has thrived by hosting a vibrant array of regular talks and events that champion psychical research while fostering a welcoming community hub for networking, knowledge sharing, and inspiration.

At our most recent Annual General Meeting, William graciously stepped down from his role as archivist.

In a fitting tribute to his unwavering dedication and profound commitment to ASSAP, Steve Parsons—with the unanimous support of the committee—proudly proposed, and we joyfully endorsed, William's appointment as an Honorary Vice-President. This well-deserved honour celebrates not only a remarkable career but also a true pillar of our organization, whose passion continues to illuminate our path forward.



ASAP

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Closing remarks and last minute thoughts

**It takes time and dedication to generate stability,
which we trust has been witnessed and we will strive to continue.**

Challenges are overcome with resilience and the willingness to move forward in a positive direction.

Education, training, events, webinars, conferences and to be a pillar of trust in the anomalous space.

Huh! Would you look at that... It's October about to publish and this issue wasn't Hallowe'en themed.

Quick add a Pumpkin with a bat, cat and a ghost!

Tremendous thanks to Bill for the dedication.

Next publication



Let's lean towards psi

ASAP



ASSAP leading towards a brighter future and you are welcome

