

Inside the Analytics of our
changing demographics

Victorian Forteana
Jack with a Spring in his heel

Membership
Updates

seriously strange

ISSUE 164

DMT and CE4 experiences

Are they connected?

BIGGER , STRONGER FASTER!

How dangerous might a Sea Monster be?

HEED HIS WARNING!

The Legendary Gray Man of South Carolina

ASAP

Seriously Strange

ABOUT ASSAP

Welcome to the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

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

ASSAP is a scientifically-orientated educational and research charity and learned society dedicated to a better understanding of anomalous phenomena. As well as education, we carry out investigations and research. Producing content and using the medium to share those ideas

2026 ASSAP celebrates 45 years

"ASSAP is a scientifically-oriented educational and research charity, as well as a learned society, dedicated to advancing our understanding of anomalous phenomena through investigation and evidence-based study. We share these efforts with members and the public via publications like this magazine, webinars, and events – creating a space to explore ideas, present findings, and invite feedback that helps refine theories and build on existing evidence.

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 present president is the Rev Lionel Fanthorpe, Vice Presidents Dr Hugh Pincott and Bill Eyre and our Chair is Steve Parsons.

ASSAP Membership

Having an ASSAP membership gives you access to publications, like this one! Online access to a large catalogue of issues, access to investigator training, the opportunity to apply for research grants,

Early bird / membership price to the annual Seriously Strange LIVE Conference and events.

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

An ASSAP e-membership does grants access to the live webinar events.

Website: www.ASSAP.ac.uk

Registered office: ASSAP, 63/66 Hatton Garden, Fifth Floor Suite 23, London, EC1N 8LE. (Soon to change, moving around the corner in May.)

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Editor: Kristian Lander
Communication and Article Submissions
Publications@assap.ac.uk



Seriously Strange Conference 2024 Panel, Deb Oakes, Dr Kate Cherrel, Prof Chris French, Dr Paul Rogers, Dr Ann Whinsper and Deborah Hyde.

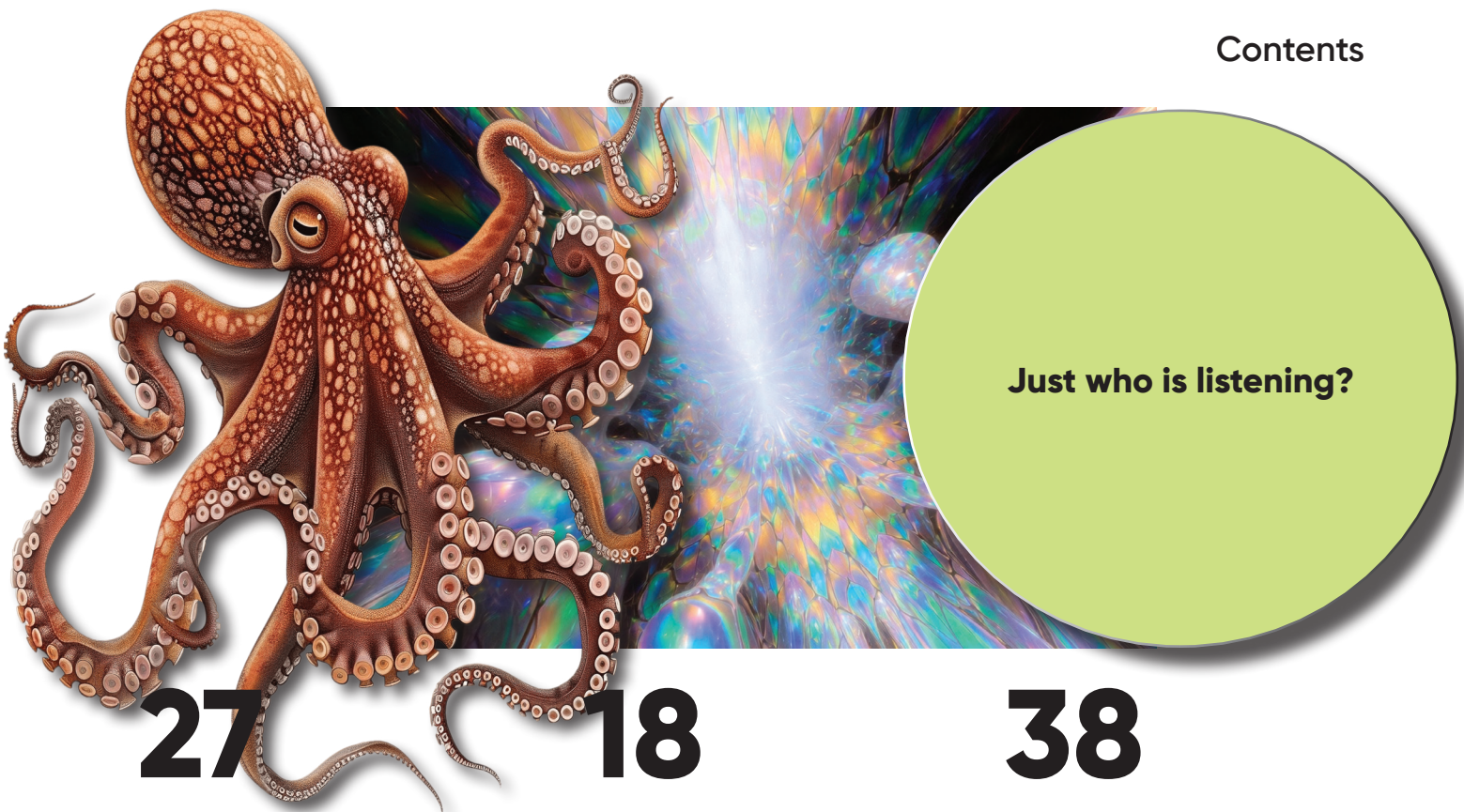
> FEATURING



This review, by Simon Grace, examines Dr. Rick Strassman's 1990s DMT trials at the University of New Mexico, where volunteers described alien-like encounters mirroring Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind (CE4/abductions). It explores Strassman's pineal gland DMT hypothesis from *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (2001), bolstered by 2013 rodent studies confirming endogenous pineal DMT, proposing natural DMT surges may explain many CE4 reports.

By Prof Rob Gandy, this long awaited article summarizes statistician Daniel Zelterman's submitted paper. Using extreme value statistics (Gini test), it analyzes maximum sizes of giant snails, sponges, walruses, and giant squid from reliable data, cautioning cryptozoologists against misidentifying outsized known species as true sea monsters like krakens. It highlights measurement errors, exaggerations, and the need for scale verification in reports.





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Damnistics; How dangerous might a sea monster be?

DMT and CE4 experiences might they be closer than first considered?

Inside The Analytics of our changing demographics

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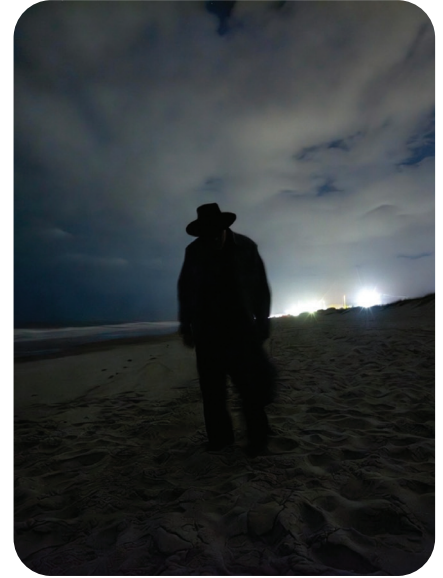
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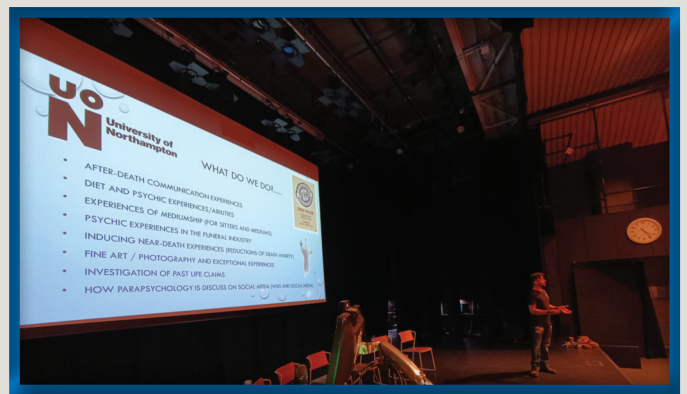
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THE INSIDE CHAIR



I'm sure you look forward to each new issue of *Seriously Strange* as much as I do. It's just one of the many things ASSAP is proud to provide for its members, alongside our weekly webinars, the annual conference and our training courses for investigators. Our aim is to give ASSAP members the very best the paranormal community has to offer.

Of course, none of this happens by magic. ASSAP runs on the dedication of a small team of volunteers who give up hours every week – not just to meet expectations, but to keep improving what we offer.

In 2026, we'll be refocusing on our core research aims. With support from our Research Officer, new research specific online training modules, research grants and a growing number of expert panels, we're building something exciting.

Our expert panels will bring together members with specialist knowledge or strong research

interests, using that expertise to support field investigators, media enquiries and research projects.

We would love for more members to get involved. Whatever your special interest, please consider applying to join one (or more) of our Expert Advisory panels – get in touch

Training has always been at the heart of ASSAP. Since 1981, we've supported members developing their field investigation skills across hauntings, UFO sightings, cryptozoology and more. We remain the only major UK organisation offering structured paranormal training, and our courses are respected both here and internationally.

In 2026, we'll be launching a refreshed training programme, building on our existing AAI and ARI courses, improving delivery, lowering costs and making access easier. A key highlight will be our annual training and activities weekend – a chance to sharpen skills, test new methods and connect with fellow members. And yes, that sounds a little like our annual conference – deliberately so. The conference is always a fantastic mix of expert speakers, networking, social events and, of course, the Gala evening.

Every year I'm amazed at how much value it offers. Huge

thanks go to our Events Officer, who works tirelessly to make each one better than the last.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our webinar team keeps things moving week after week. Finding great speakers, coordinating schedules, managing the tech – it's a constant effort, and they make it look easy, rather like the swan that appears to glide effortlessly across the water, but in reality it is paddling furiously beneath the water.

ASSAP is nothing without its members, and we want every single member to feel that they have a voice. We've recently appointed a dedicated Members' Representative – an independent voice and advocate holding the Executive to account, feeding back your ideas and working alongside our Safeguarding Officer should problems arise.

Finally, a small ask. We're always looking for more volunteers. Whether that's giving a webinar talk, helping at conference, or pitching in behind the scenes, every bit helps.

If you'd like to get involved – even in a small way – get in touch.

Steve Parsons
chair of ASSAP
chair@assap.ac.uk

ISSUE 164 - The Mantra "BOOKING OPEN TICKETS AVAILABLE"

EDITORIAL

Kristian Lander

Amazingly, it has now been a full year in the editorial hot seat, shaping our magazine's content from initial concept through to print. This marks the fourth issue under my stewardship, and it has been a genuine privilege so far. I've been learning every day—what works well and what needs improvement. There have been plenty of "doh!" moments along the way.

With the technical design aspects and paragraph styles, Bjorn has been an absolute right-hand assistant in this area, and the improved quality of the magazine is a direct reflection of his patient guidance

In this issue you'll notice more journal-style features appearing alongside our usual pop pieces and articles. Together they provide a well-rounded reflection of ASSAP's inclusive spirit: we have always kept the door open to the casually curious, the seasoned enthusiast, and the detail-oriented academic alike.

Prof Rob Gandy and Simon Grace have had their excellent features ready and waiting for some time now, and we're proud to finally bring them to publication.

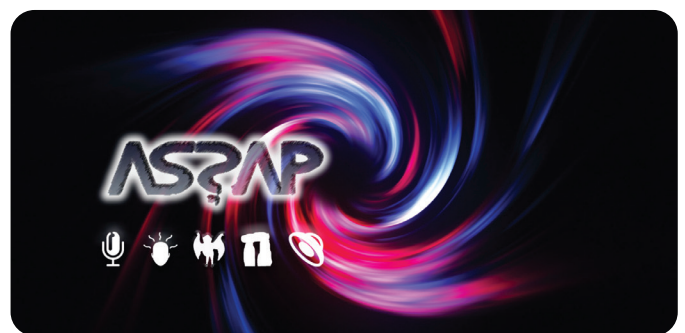
We reiterate that we warmly welcome submissions. Whether you're offering lengthier, in-depth features, substantial articles, or lighter, more accessible pop pieces, please

do get in touch. We expanded our magazine and publishing team, bringing on board Bjorn and Maria.



Bjorn hails from Amsterdam, a familiar face with familiar hair at the Seriously Strange Events. Has been an ASSAP member since 2014. "Hopefully my insights as a graphic designer will help get the magazine to flourish and making it look sharp. My interest in the unknown has always been there since I was about 8 years old. We, of this age, all know how Scooby Doo, the Ghostbusters films, the Twilight Zone and Dahl's Tales of the Unexpected have influenced us getting here."

With a background in Hispanic Literature and Linguistics, Maria is currently completing a Master's degree in Publishing Media and has experience in cultural and community projects. She is passionate about turning ideas into finished publications, and about how publishing helps share knowledge and sparks imagination. Through her work on Seriously Strange, she aims to explore different areas of publishing while helping create engaging, well-crafted content.



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, and are 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. at publications@assap.ac.uk

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The views and opinions expressed in any of the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Association of the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS>

STARTING LIGHT

Tweaking is the name of the game

In the past, when individuals joined ASSAP, they were not automatically added to our general E-News mailing list. That list (which evolved from the original ASSAP mailing list after the 2020 website relaunch) has always been open to anyone – members and non-members alike – who wants to stay informed about broader updates, events, and paranormal news straight to their inbox.

Behind the scenes, this created separate lists: one for general subscribers, and others for members specific invites for targeted communications.

However, we've heard from several of you that this setup led to confusion: new members sometimes missed out on general updates, even though they expected them as part of the membership experience. As social media chatter about newsletter content only highlighted the issue – people wondering why they weren't seeing things others were discussing.

To fix this and create a more seamless experience, our membership, webmaster, and media officers have been working together on a simple but important change: From now on, everyone who joins ASSAP will be automatically added to the Inside E-News mailing list. It's a little simple tweak, that perhaps should always have been the case.

We are not going to retrospectively go and add everyone.

What does this mean for your inbox?

We've decided to keep things light and focused – never overwhelming. Here's what you'll typically receive:

Monthly Inside ASSAP E-News (now landing reliably in the first week of each month, packed with announcements, a reference story, introspection, editorial flair, and more – mirroring the style of Seriously Strange magazine.

Weekly webinar invites and useful reminders for our live Paranormal Webinars (Thursdays at 7pm UK time, exclusive to members).

Annual AGM-related information and voting details. Occasional sensible announcements (e.g., major events, feedback requests, or opportunities to shape ASSAP's future).

That's it – thoughtful, relevant, and infrequent enough to respect your time. If anything changes or we need your insights to keep improving, we'll reach out sparingly.

This small tweak should eliminate the "Why didn't I get that?" moments and make sure all members feel fully in the loop from day one. If you're already a member and not receiving the monthly E-News and you wish to receive the updates, visit ASSAP.ac.uk then click Mailing List on the menu on the right and then enter your email address, name and surname.

Thanks for being part of ASSAP – your feedback drives these improvements!



Follow us now on Instagram

ASSAP Launches New Instagram Channel @assap_paranormal

We're excited to announce the launch of our dedicated Instagram presence at @assap_paranormal!

This vibrant new channel serves as a visual hub for all things anomalous: eye-catching graphics promoting our popular Seriously Strange live paranormal webinars, public media releases, and monthly themed images featuring the iconic ASSAP logo – think hauntings in autumn mists, cryptids under moonlight, or eerie UFO skies, all with a nod to serious inquiry. Encouraging chatter, likes and love between members across the anomalous space.



It's a fun, social way to connect with fellow enthusiasts, research groups, paranormal pages, and curious newcomers. Follow us for striking visuals that spark discussion, highlighting upcoming events, and share the wonder (and science) of anomalous phenomena.

Join the conversation, like, share, and tag us in your own strange encounters!
@assap_paranormal

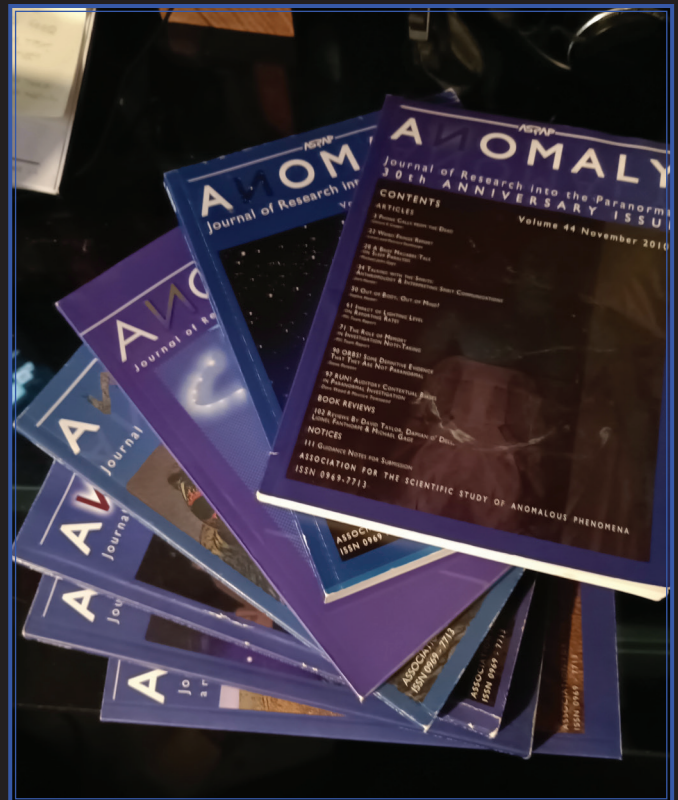
Anomaly Review

As we move into 2026, the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) is undertaking a thoughtful review and refresh of our publishing efforts.

Our long-standing journal *Anomaly* – a cornerstone of anomalous research and favourite on the shelves – is currently under evaluation as we adapt to modern demands and opportunities.

Seriously Strange, is evolving to embrace a more contemporary, science-oriented style inspired by publications like National Geographic and BBC Focus.

For 2026, we aim to incorporate a greater proportion of structured, evidence-based articles that prioritize methodological depth, accessibility, and quality. This shift will help elevate the content while addressing practical realities: it reduces some publishing costs



and responds to several key factors driving this direction. In the most recent 15 months, our publications have been managed and developed by a single dedicated individual – who also produces and edits our popular webinars into Seriously Strange video/audio episodes, graphics/media and the treasury. Combined with a smaller volume of journal submissions and an increase in article/feature style submissions.

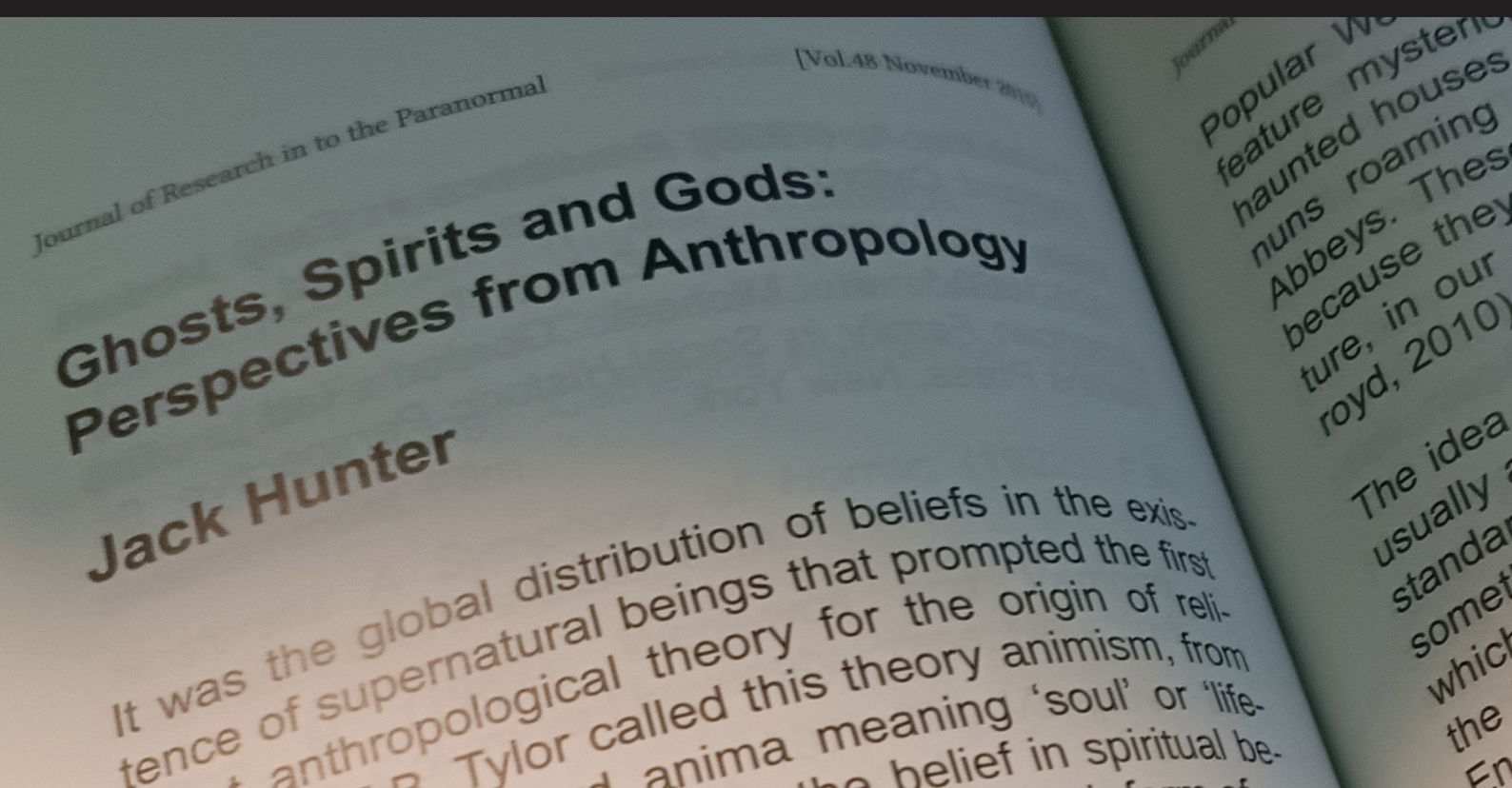
Meanwhile, our committee has expanded with valuable support from research officers including Dr. Mike Benbough-Jackson and Dr. Paul Rogers, the formation of Expert Panels, however the development of a peer-review contact group needs addressing. Improving internal and external communication remains an active priority as we build this stronger foundation.

Our digital presence has changed dramatically in recent years. The ASSAP Paranormal Webinars LIVE and Seriously Strange video/audio series have expanded in scope, quality, and range of topics, becoming a vital part of our outreach.

This has attracted a more enthusiast-driven, research-oriented audience that leans toward serious, grounded inquiry. We understand we also serve as an approachable entry point for newcomers, inviting them into deeper discussion and exploration within a connected community of engaged individuals and organisations. Many casual yet curious viewers discover us through webinars/podcasts and are drawn further. We recognise that, looking through education materials, events and conferences how many we have touched base with—a large base of people. Within this issue will be a feature article on the analytics of our media.

We recognise that this evolution may disappoint some who value Anomaly as the more formal, archive-worthy addition to their libraries and collections. We view it not as a retreat, but as a strategic contraction and an exciting experiment in refreshed formatting. The adage of “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.” from Jessie Potter in The Milwaukee Sentinel does ring true—we have to be willing to experiment. How people consume information, especially media has also shifted, and we need to ensure we are better placed to adapt to these changes.

As an association committed to education, research, and publication, there is a strong case for having a more academic-themed publication in the future. As dara and long form papers are challenging to implement into a magazine format. Bjorn and Kristian are going to test drive 2 features the long awaited Damnastics from Prof.



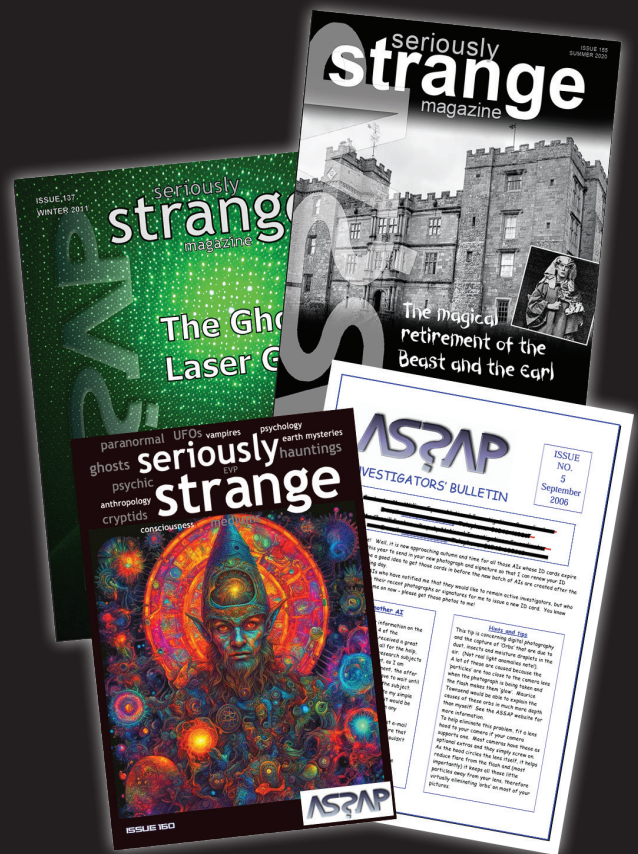
Rob Gandy and a longer awaited Simon Grace piece that's been on the ASSAP back pile since 2022, Burrow Hill Triangle.

For now, we intend to evolve Seriously Strange itself to be a stronger part of that – which itself has transformed over the years from the Investigators Bulletin, ASSAP News, ASSAP Magazine to an earlier incarnation and now in this newer form, aligning our identity under Seriously Strange.

The other elephant in the room, there are whole industry questions surrounding the future of print media. While many similar organisations have left the writing and publications space, others have shifted to digital-only and have ceased physical printing altogether, ASSAP remains committed to holding the line on tangible editions. We will continue offering physical copies, supplemented by additional digital-only releases to broaden access and flexibility.

To support this vision, we have expanded our publications team and are committed to strengthening communications across the board with international flair as Bjorn Licht from Denmark, and Maria Jesus Meza from Chile coming onboard from Kristians calls.

We warmly also invite your involvement, submissions, feedback, and participation – whether through articles, editing and contributions. supporting peer review or to lead where our volunteer time is scarce.



Looking Ahead:

Our 2026/2027 Publishing Roadmap

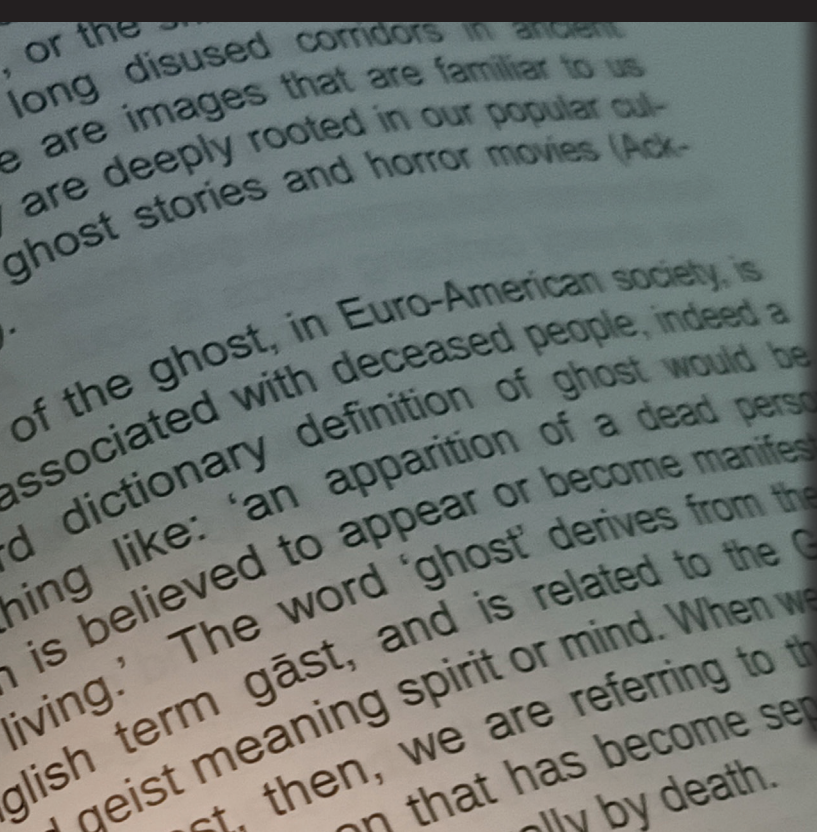
We are targeting a balanced cycle aligned with the wheel of the year and our ASSAP calendar:

- March/April:** Physical edition of Seriously Strange, this edition in your hands!
- June/July:** Digital-only supplemental publication, delivered to inboxes and our online catalogue – timed to prepare members for the ASSAP conference with focused articles, updates, and content.
- October:** Physical edition, embracing the season as nights draw in, with post-conference reflections and spooky-season relevance.
- December/January:** Digital edition offering a year-in-review summary, highlights, and forward-looking insights.

This rhythm of two physical and two digital editions per year provides sustainability, while maintaining variety and timelines. It's not set in stone, but that is our steer.

We will monitor how this plays out through 2026 and review progress openly.

Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and loyalty.



ASSAP's Membership Review and Pricing Adjustment for a Brighter Future in Anomalous Research

To supplement the announcement on ASSAP.ac.uk at the beginning of February, following several meetings with a focus of membership. The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) is excited to announce the conclusion and decisions of those meetings.

With roots stretching back to 1981, ASSAP has long been a beacon for evidence-based exploration of the paranormal, high strangeness, and beyond. In this rapidly changing world—where information flows digitally, communities connect virtually, and investigations demand innovation—we're committed to keeping pace. This review, driven by our volunteer committee (who are members just like you), focused on enhancing communication, what our training looks like, what our events calendar could/should look like, and what benefits we provide to ensure ASSAP remains robust, relevant, and ready for the decades ahead.

It was said in 2023 at the Seriously Strange Conference, in the opening monologue ASSAP faced an uncertain future, even 'irrelevancy' in the face of multiple options for people. Comments like no-one is interested in being ethically educated in paranormal investigation, what does the future look like with social media dominating the sphere of influence and communication of reports, print media going out the window, lowering attendance in such event spaces. All relevant thoughts.

Questions of what shape the membership could take dominated those passionate conversations. There was advocating for different arrangements, many different structures were put forward before deciding on what we have gone for.

Value at the core of the arrangement and decisions.

What does ASSAP need to focus on?

Regardless of whom is in the chair and internal directions, the core has always been to support research into the anomalous, even if we are not the ones actually doing it, ASSAP can be a place to publish, present and share those results. Support good standards. Have great connections to the community. 'What ASSAP really wants to be doing is, training and education, putting on events, publishing magazines and hosting webinars. 'So, simply put that's what we want to do.

We've already begun this evolution slowly and surely in increments; overhauling our educational training programs with the SPR-endorsed Accredited Anomalous Investigator (AAI) and Registered Investigator (ARI) courses, launching of the Expert Advisory Panels, and booking the refreshed Seriously Strange Conference a year in advance. Now, we're fine-tuning our membership structure to support the value proposition, including an increase in Seriously Strange magazine issues from two to three / four per year (Submitted features, research, and insights). We're also exploring ways to integrate the Anomaly journal materials seamlessly into Seriously Strange as we hope you will enjoy for the inclusion of two inside this issue, blending print and digital formats to manage rising costs while maintaining that tangible quality many of us will cherish. The additional digital editions could provide more frequent touchpoints, aligning with modern consumption habits like viewing on tablets or smartphones. With the Paranormal Webinars LIVE having shifted to being a great platform of content, platforming ideas and presentations.

Many are now opting to present essays and papers in modern, visually rich formats. The shift toward consumption and interaction in publishing has evolved rather than disappeared.

Addressing the Pricing Reality: Transparency and Sustainability

ASSAP's membership fees have not increased in over 20 years—remaining at £20 for UK postal (with £15 concessions) since... *drum roll... July 2005!

Despite each year's inflation, escalating printing, postage, and technology costs. We've absorbed these through our volunteer passion and lower overheads, but to sustain and expand our offerings—like delivering 2025's 50+ live webinars annually (1.5–2 hours each with Q&A, guests, and a 250+ archived catalog), accredited training, awards, early-bird event access—we must realign for fairness and longevity.

Effective May 1, 2026, new members joining up with ASSAP annually will see updated pricing:

**Postal Membership (Print + Digital, UK):
£40 (standard)**

**Concession Postal (Under 21, over 60 OR
unwaged): £30**

**Digital Membership (PDFs via Members' Area,
International/UK): £20**

To honour our loyal community, existing members who renew for 2026 will continue to enjoy grandfathered rates: £20 for postal membership (£15 concessionary rate) or £5 for digital-only access.

This approach softens the transition as we work toward a more sustainable future. Postage costs for recent issues alone have run into the thousands, underscoring the very real expenses we absorb to keep delivering high-quality content to you.

We are retaining a similar tiered membership model because it strikes an important balance: allowing members to choose the option that best suits their needs and circumstances.

The £5 Digital e-membership provides full access to all current content and our complete publication catalogue. However, when weighed against the considerable time, effort, and commitment required to produce everything we offer, this price point remains unsustainable

in the long term without adjustment. Kristian completed a comparative analysis available on ASSAP.ac.uk in December our market place across similar organisations to understand our price point and value.

Extraordinary Value in Context: How ASSAP Stacks Up

Pricing isn't just about costs—it's about perception, value, and consumer behavior. Research shows that while low prices can attract, they sometimes signal lower quality, especially against established brands. ASSAP has long been praised for undercharging given our output, but we're shifting to better reflect the immense volunteer effort behind our webinars, publications, training, and events.

By tying our increases to some tangible enhancements you can see and feel—like more from our *Seriously Strange* issues and education modules—we aim to show we are building without compromising our accessibility.

Drawing on our strengths

We've listened to feedback: many note we undercharge, and "cheap" can deter those seeking premium quality. By increasing value alongside price—more issues, a buffed events calendar, refreshed content—we're fostering in a loyalty program like grandfathering and transparent communications to keep you at the heart of our community.

We're not a high-street retailer driven by supply and demand, but in this curious bubble of anomalous investigation, we *do* want to supply more: deeper insights, stronger connections, and opportunities for all.

Together, let's ensure ASSAP thrives for another 45 years of sensible, approachable exploration.

How do you know when you've seen a ghost? It is a question that haunted Roderick. He had set out to be a famous rock star and yet somehow ended up running a small company whose clients had a habit of not always paying their bills.

Gwen, his new assistant, was about to depart on a trip around the world, but she had somehow omitted to tell Roderick. And the company had, for some reason, attracted the attention of a group interested in paranormal phenomena, notably hauntings.

Maybe Laura, Roderick's best friend could help him unravel these mysteries, given that she lived in a haunted flat.



You could see a ghost in the street
- M R Townsend

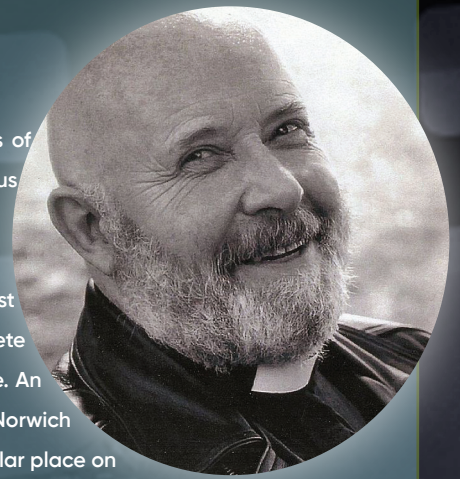


<https://www.amazon.co.uk/You-could-see-ghost-street-ebook/dp/B0F5HF7HLS/>

Available online and Kindle Unlimited

Maurice Townsend was one of the founding members of ASSAP. He has been fascinated by anomalous phenomena since childhood. He was involved in research for ASSAP for many years, coming up with concepts like the orb zone theory and xenormal. When it came to writing a book, however, he decided on a novel as it felt like a better way of celebrating the paranormal.

PRESIDENTS PIECE



After more than half a century's on-site research all over the world into various aspects of the paranormal, we have categorised five possible explanations for the numerous anomalous phenomena that we have explored and what honest witnesses have reported to us.

First, there are what we regard as traditional Shakespearean or Dickensian types of ghost – spirits of dead human beings. They are psychic entities who seem to be trying to complete tasks they left unfinished on Earth – or to make contact with those of us who are still alive. An example of this type of spirit would be the ghost of the monk in the muniment room of Norwich Cathedral. He persistently tried to direct the attention of anyone who saw him to a particular place on the floor. During some repairs and refurbishments of the muniment room, however, an old coin was found between two floor-stones precisely where the ghostly monk had been observed. That coin was restored to the funds of the cathedral and the spectral monk has not been seen since.

The second category refers to those paranormal episodes that seem to raise the possibility that something has interfered with time. Is it possible that an event from the past is somehow being re-enacted in the present? A young plumber, Harry Martindale, was working in the cellar of the Treasurer's House in York in 1953 when a ghostly column of Roman soldiers marched through it. Harry thought that they were marching on a lower level than the present cellar floor, because he could only see their feet when they passed through a hole that he had dug there as part of his repair work. Could some inexplicable disruption of time have apparently linked 1953 with an event that took place two thousand years before?

The third type belongs in the realm of the most imaginative, free-thinking physicists. Let us consider the thought-provoking idea of parallel universes. One basic theory suggests that when we make a decision, say a word, or take an action, it has an effect on our overall environment. It carves out a recess in our life history. However, the parallel word that wasn't spoken and the action that wasn't done become a fragment of another reality – what we might term a parallel universe. Should our reality and that corresponding universe crash into each other, certain anomalous events would probably be observed. Might this explain curious accounts of doppelgangers? Could a witness see his, or her, alternative self in such a parallel cosmos?

The fourth type can, perhaps, be reported when witnesses become aware of extra-terrestrial aliens. If such highly developed entities exist and perhaps have access to the fourth dimension, or something similar, they could well appear to behave in what we regard as traditional 'ghostly' ways: gliding through walls; appearing and disappearing with strange suddenness.

Our fifth and final category is based on the amazing power contained inside the human mind. Despite modern science, these weird powers are still largely unknown. They may possibly account for what we describe as poltergeist phenomena. The power of the human mind seems almost infinite. We need to know much more about how to employ these massive mental powers that our minds possess. Many reports of poltergeist activities include the presence of teenagers – a time of powerful emotions. Can a really powerful mind employ telekinesis to heave furniture about, and to drag blankets off a bed?

Examined as one whole hypothesis, can these five possibilities together cover the anomalous events that we have studied for the past fifty years, and which we hope to go on studying in the future?



Mrs Patricia and Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe

ByUser:Jack1956, CC BY 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34644704>
By Kristian Lander at Seriously Strange 2024 Winchester

ASSAP ADVISORY PANEL

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) is delighted to announce that its Specialist Advisory Panel has now been successfully formed and is operational. This milestone follows the initial announcement on September 6, 2025, and represents a significant step forward in ASSAP's mission to advance rigorous, evidence-based investigation of anomalous phenomena, including hauntings, UFO/UAP sightings, psi experiences, cryptids, and related topics. The Specialist Advisory Panel brings together specialists from enthusiast and academic backgrounds to deliver targeted, high-quality support. It comprises small, focused groups of 2-3 experts per key area, such as:

Ghosts, Hauntings, and Related Phenomena

Ufology / UAP

Cryptozoology

Fortean

Photography and Video Analysis

Audio Analysis

Physical Mediumship

Sensible Skepticism



Steve Parsons with Dr Paul Rogers and Dr Mike Benbough Jackson

We are proud to welcome the following distinguished experts to the newly formed panel, each contributing specialized knowledge and experience:

Steve Hume
Ian Liston-smith
William Eyre
Dr John Tate
Paul Morgan
Peyton Autumn
Caroline McKendrick Gibson
Dr Paul Rogers



ASSAP extends sincere thanks to all panel members for their willingness to contribute. The organization continues to welcome expressions of interest from qualified individuals who share this commitment—please contact investigations@assap.ac.uk

Members of the public, researchers, and media are encouraged to follow developments via the official ASSAP website (assap.ac.uk) as the panels begin active contributions to ongoing projects and investigations.

We are still looking for a photography Advisor – get in touch.
Thanks Roy Wilcock

A REVIEW OF DMT IN RELATION TO CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOURTH KIND

Simon Grace



During the 1990s, drugs trials were undertaken at the University of New Mexico using Di-Methyl Tryptamine, one of the most powerful psychedelic drugs known. Volunteers on the trials reported experiences that had many features in common with reports of alien abduction (Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind).

The research lead, Dr. Rick Strassman, hypothesised in his 2001 publication *DMT the Spirit Molecule*, that the pineal gland, located deep within the brain, may be an endogenous DMT source, producing psychedelic amounts of DMT at times of extraordinary stress.

Research results posted by the Cottonwood Research Foundation in May 2013 appear, for the first time, to have established the presence of DMT with the pineal gland of live rodents, thus confirming that DMT is endogenous to the

mammalian brain. It is therefore tentatively suggested that naturally occurring imbalances of pineal DMT may be a contributing factor in the experience of a purported CE4 event.

This paper has been written to provide an introduction to the Di-Methyl Tryptamine (DMT) psychedelic drugs trials performed by Dr. Rick Strassman at the University of New Mexico, from 1990 – 1995. The results of Strassman's research are pertinent to a number of parapsychological experiences such as Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind (CE4, alien abduction) and near death experiences and, as such, deserve to be more widely known. This paper focuses on DMT in relation to CE4 events, *DMT the Spirit Molecule* (Strassman, 2001) which details the DMT research programme and the trial volunteers' experiences, is highly recommended to readers wishing to gain a fuller understanding of this drugs effect.



Once they decided I was okay they went about their business. I felt like something was inserted into my left forearm, right here, about three inches below the chain link tattoo on my wrist. It was long. There were no reassurances with the probe. Simply business. When they were on me, there was a little bit more confusion than fear. Kind of like “Hey! What’s this?” and then there they were. There was no time for me to say “Who the hell are you guys, let’s see some ID?”. This description, provided by Ben (Strassman, 2001), incorporates many features that are characteristic of an apparent CE4 event. CE4 events typically incorporate the following experiences:

“Immobilisation by a blinding blue / white light.

A sense of floating into a white round room or operating theatre.

Painful physical examination, often involving the removal of ova or semen.

The implanting of an object or carrying out keyhole surgery using long, thin probes”.
(Pope, 1996)

One would expect that CE4 experiences are mercifully rare but this would not appear to be the case. The Roper Polls (Hancock, 2006) were a series of three national polls performed by the Roper Organisation in the United States (US) in 1991. They aimed to gather data about unusual personal experiences.

DMT and in Relation to CE4 Events

“It started with a sound. It was high pitched like a tightly tauged wire. There were four or five of them. They were on me fast. As crazy as this sounds, they looked like sagauo cactus, very Peruvian in colour. They were flexible, fluid, geometrical cacti. Not solid. They weren’t benevolent but they weren’t non-benevolent. They probed, they really probed. They seemed to know time was limited. They wanted to know what I, this being who had shown up, was doing. I didn’t answer. They knew.

‘They weren’t benevolent but they weren’t non-benevolent’



The results of the Roper Polls established that:

One in five respondents had, at some point, woken up paralysed with the sense that a strange figure or presence was in the room;

One in eight respondents had experienced a period of one hour more in which they were lost but could not remember why;

One respondent in 10 had felt the experience of actually flying through the air without knowing how or why;

One respondent in 12 has seen unusual lights or balls of light in a room without understanding their cause;

One respondent in 12 has discovered scars on their body which they could not recall how they were acquired.

The Roper Poll designers were aware that the experiences described above are characteristic of reported CE4 events. The 2% of respondents who claimed to have experienced four or more of the above experiences were therefore classified as likely abductees. Ben was not however an abductee. He was one of 60 or so volunteers on Strassman's DMT trial, the first psychedelic drugs trials performed in the US since the 1970s.

Psychedelic drugs fall into three principal classes:

Phenethylamines which include well known drugs such as mescaline and ecstasy;

Tryptamines which include drugs such as psilocybin, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms.

Lysergamides such as LySergic acid Diethylamide (LSD).

(Wikipedia, 2013)

DMT is one of the most powerful known

psychedelic drugs. It is also one of the simplest consisting of a tryptamine molecule with two additional methyl groups (Fig. 1).

Psychedelic drugs, including DMT, exert their primary effect on the brain's serotonin system, mimicking the effects of serotonin in some cases and blocking them in others. Serotonin receptors exist in high concentrations in areas of the brain associated with psychological and physical processes such as cardiovascular function, temperature regulation, mood, perception and motor control. Intravenously administered DMT takes effect within several heartbeats and volunteers are, dose depending, back to normal within 20 to 30 minutes (Strassman, 2001).

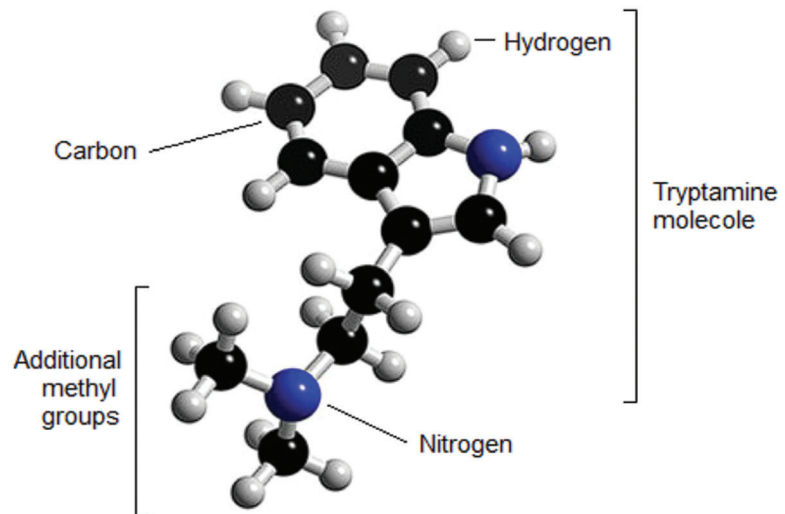


Fig. 1 DMT molecule (Harrison, 2011).

Encounter with the DMT elves

Ben's 'encounter' with non-human / alien beings whilst under the influence of DMT was typical of many of the volunteers on Strassman's DMT research programme. Remarkable consistencies were found between the volunteers' experiences, typically:

"Sound and vibration build until the scene shifts to an alien realm; The volunteer finds themselves in a landing bay, research environment or high technology room;

The highly intelligent beings of this other world are interested in the subject, seemingly ready for his or her arrival and waste no time getting to work;

There might be one particular being clearly in charge, directing the others;

Volunteers frequently comment on the emotional quality of the relationships; loving, caring or professionally detached;

The beings business appeared to be testing, examining, probing and even modifying the volunteer's mind and body;

The purpose of the alien contact was unclear but several volunteers felt that it was an attempt to improve them individually or as a race".

(Strassman, 2001)

During the course of Strassman's DMT trials, each volunteer was tested with several different doses of DMT in order to establish the correlation between dose and psychedelic effect. In many instances the dose was of sufficient magnitude to cause the volunteer to experience the alien realm a number of times. One of the observations made by some volunteers who had such an experience was that the alien realm felt truly like visiting another world that exists independently of our own:

A volunteer did not step back into the alien world where they had left it at the end of their last psychedelic experience;
Time moved on in the alien realm parallel to our own time;
The alien beings were expecting the reappearance of the volunteer.

The question that now requires addressing is that of how does injecting a volunteer with DMT in a test laboratory potentially help explain CE4 events which are experienced by everyday people who are not psychedelic drugs users? The answer to this question would appear, according to Strassman, to centre on the function of the pineal gland. The pineal gland is located near the centre of the brain, between the two hemispheres (Fig. 2).

The pineal gland is located between the brain's two cerebral hemispheres. Its name is derived from its shape, which is like that of a pine cone. The pineal gland contains several neuropeptides and neurotransmitters, such as

somatostatin, norepinephrine and serotonin. The major pineal function is production of the hormone melatonin, a derivative of the amino acid tryptophan. In humans melatonin plays an important role in the regulation of sleep cycles. Its production is influenced by the detection of light and dark by the eye (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013). Melatonin is not however 'psychedelic', meaning that it does not cause visions or any similar experiences.

Strassman has proposed that the pineal gland may produce psychedelic amounts of DMT at times of extraordinary stress in our lives such as may occur during an accident, thereby causing an out of body or near death experience. Strassman makes a strong argument for the pineal gland synthesising DMT on the grounds that this gland:

Contains all the building

blocks and enzymes required to make DMT, eg. serotonin (highest concentrations found in the body) and the methyltransferase enzymes required to methylate tryptamine;

Makes other substances, the beta carbolines that inhibit the breakdown of DMT by the body's monoamine oxidases, hence enhancing DMT's effects.

Strassman's proposal regarding pineal gland DMT production would appear to have been vindicated when the Cottonwood Research Foundation announced on 23rd May 2013 the acceptance for publication of a paper documenting the detection of DMT in the pineal glands of live rodents (Cottonwood Research Foundation, 2013). This finding would appear to confirm the pineal gland as an endogenous source of DMT within the brain. The Cottonwood Research Foundation's web site advises that the paper will be published

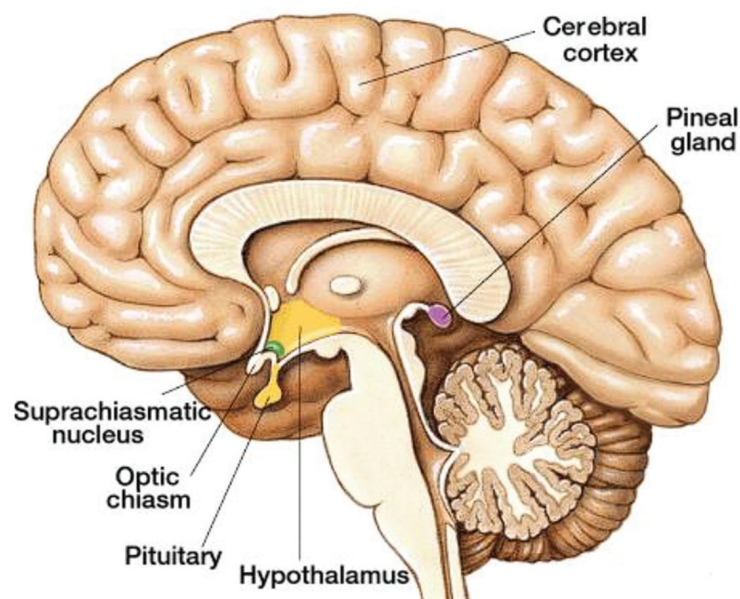


Fig. 2 Pineal gland location (healinghaven.typepad.com, 2013).



in the journal *Biomedical Chromatography*

Could Naturally Occurring Pineal DMT Surges Account for Many Alien Abduction Reports?

Given these research findings it is therefore tentatively suggested by the author that naturally occurring imbalances of pineal DMT may be a contributing factor in the experience of a CE4 event. This hypothesis is given more credence when it is understood that many abductees describe being 'taken' from their marital bed or a car whilst their partner or other passengers are totally oblivious to the event that appears to be unfolding in their midst, eg. the event is 'internal' to the abductee. Further to this many abductees report sighting a UFO through the windscreen / rear view mirror of their car prior to being abducted. Such sightings may be an hallucination, a phosphene, brought on by an increased level of DMT within the brain. Phosphenes are

subjective images, independent of an external light source, that originate within the eye and brain and can be induced by chemical agents such as psychedelic drugs (Hancock, 2006).

Imbalances of DMT within a subject's brain do not however offer a satisfactory explanation of CE4 events involving more than one abductee such as the classic 1961 case of Betty and Barney Hill (Pope, 1996). It must however be noted that the Hill's testimony was obtained under hypnotic regression – a technique that is now known to have its defects. This is exemplified by Alvin H Lawson's

1976 study which compared the under hypnosis accounts of four UFO abductees with those of four student volunteers without UFO experience who imagined the abduction experience through hypnosis (Lawson, 1997). Lawson found that the accounts of both groups were very similar and also had a lot in common with perinatal memories, reports of near death experiences, shamanic practice or drug induced hallucinations. Lawson's findings would appear to resonate with those of Strassman some two decades later.

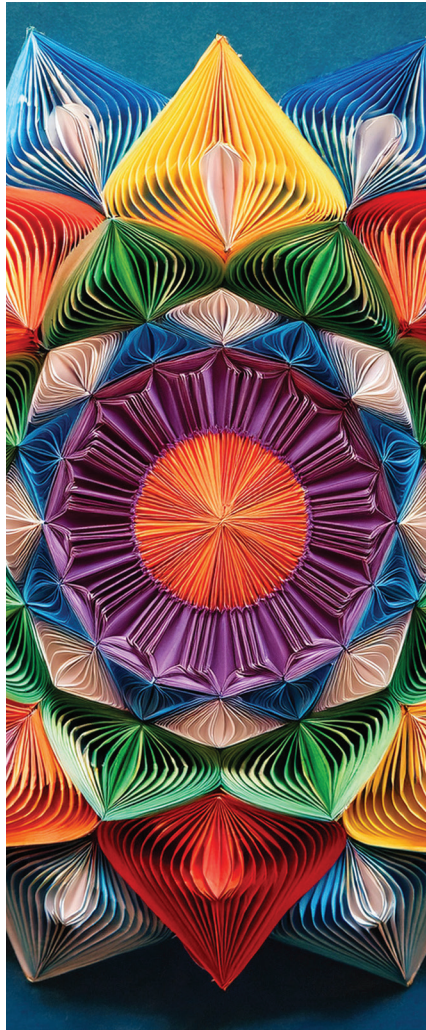
Betty and Barney Hill Universal History Archive/Getty Images



In conclusion

Given the DMT experiments conducted by Strassman at the University of New Mexico during the early 1990s established that the experience of a DMT 'trip' has much in common with a CE4 event; and Recent confirmation that the pineal gland produces DMT within the brain; then it is suggested that CE4 experiences may, in some instances, be explicable as being caused by a high level of DMT spontaneously occurring within the subject's brain. Such a hypothesis is supported by the results of the 1991 Roper Poll which suggests that around 2% of the US population claim to have experienced such phenomena, eg. 2% of the US population, some 6.28 million people, are not realistically being abducted by aliens.

In addition, this hypothesis may also be supported by the concept of 'cultural tracking' – the phenomena by which 1960s abductees accounts describe control panels, switches and reel-to-reel tape recorders during a reported CE4 experience, and that there are no descriptions of high technology such as computer touch screens until we had invented them ourselves. Cultural tracking is often explained in terms of abductees not relating to things they did not recognise or alien technology being only a small step ahead of our own. It is suggested that it is far more likely that an abductee's experience of day-to-day technology influences what they perceive when under



the influence of a psychedelic substance such as DMT. This explanation is considered to be far more likely than alien races traversing interstellar distances using technology comparable to that existing during the 1960s.

To conclude, current findings indicate that further research into this field is required as it could be a key explanatory factor into the majority of reported CE4 incidents. The Cottonwood Research Foundation will be publishing a paper documenting results of the detection of DMT in the pineal glands of live rodents in the journal *Biomedical Chromatography* in the near future.

Source

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NORTHUMBERLAND HAUNTED MUSEUM



ASSAPs Media team reached out to Michelle Marie Liddle who recently launched a passionate project recently and a fundraising campaign for the development of a new Haunted museum in Northumberland. Making national news thanks to the resourceful Keith Newman and Highlights PR

Building community and having great relations is a key element of ASSAP.

We recently invited Michelle to join a Paranormal Webinars LIVE / Seriously Strange Episode to share her vision, and to discuss the challenges and successes.

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Something haunted is coming to Northumberland..

We're bringing the region's ghost stories, haunted artefacts, and chilling folklore to life in a one-of-a-kind immersive museum experience.

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It belongs to the people
who share their stories



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Damnistics:

How Monstrous Might A Sea Monster Be?

by Rob Gandy

'Size doesn't matter' some people say, but in respect of sea monsters maybe it does? Rob Gandy summarises a statistical paper that has been submitted for publication in ASSAP's Anomaly Journal.

Readers of Seriously Strange will remember and hopefully enjoyed my article Romero, Romero, Wherefore Art Thou Romero?¹ where I presented a summary of research undertaken by Daniel Zelterman, Professor Emeritus of Biostatistics at Yale University. Dan had explored the distribution of zombies across the various states of the USA and, of course, his tongue was firmly in his cheek – there is no data on real zombies in the USA. But maybe they are an underground movement?

It was during our correspondence that Dan sent me a copy of a paper that he had written, and which was unpublished. The result of our email exchanges was that I persuaded him to submit the paper to ASSAP's Anomaly Journal, where it is currently under consideration. Dan's paper details a study of the extremes of recorded sea creatures published in an extensive array of literature. Where I believe this to be very important is in connection with sea monsters. Cryptozoologists have long sought such creatures (which include Krakens, Leviathans, Sea Serpents, Scylla and many more) but they are elusive and have a dastardly habit of staying underwater out of sight; only allowing an occasional, tantalising glimpse of a little of their (assumed) large bodies to break surface in front of terrified sailors. Of course, some 'monsters' do exist, with the Giant Squid arguably being the best example,

and some creatures assumed long-extinct are then found to be alive, e.g. Coelacanths. So, in all the vastness and deepness of the oceans, sea monsters must surely exist? Cryptozoologists would like to think so, but what Dan's research cautions is that there can be some very big examples of known sea creatures. Therefore, care must be taken not to mistake them for something more exotic. Also, everything is relative, and there can be extraordinarily large specimens of even small sea creatures.

I should begin by emphasising that Dan is a far more qualified, experienced and competent statistician than me, and that I have never had cause to utilise the methodology he used in his research, i.e. the Gini Test statistic², which provides a measure of where the extremal model is applicable. The second section of his Anomaly paper details the 'Statistical Methods for Extremes', which is obviously very statistical, with formulae and assumptions which would cause Seriously Strange readers to roll their eyes, reach for a glass of something strong, and move on to another article! Therefore, I summarise the key points from Dan's research in what I hope is a 'reader-friendly' presentation for the known audience.

Why look at extremes?

Elementary statistics courses don't cover extremes – statisticians tend to look at means and medians, i.e. those measures that are near the centre of things. I often quote the man with one foot in a bucket full of scalding hot water and one foot in a bucket full of ice cubes, who

Left: Map created by Freepik

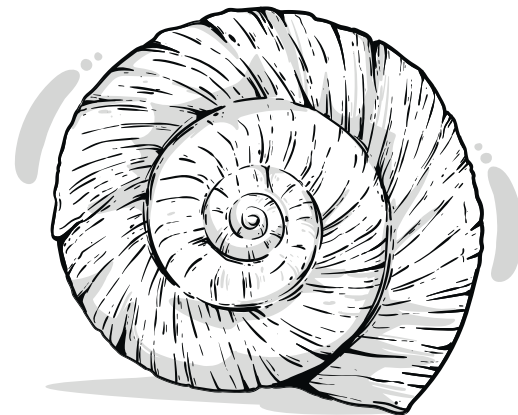
Top right: pngtree.com/freepng/cartoon-giant-octopus_15979074.html

says “On average, the temperature is lovely”. Yet it is extremes that the news media and public like to discuss and debate; for example, extremes in weather or disease rates or politics. Interest is such in things that are the smallest or biggest ever recorded, that Guinness World Records³ has been kept in business for many, many years; with some claims so extraordinary that they are hard to believe. There can naturally be extremes that relate to the oceans, such as the worst storm of the century or the warmest sea temperatures ever or beaches with the greatest risk of shark attacks; with the measurement of climate change being particularly of interest. But it is marine biology that drew Dan’s attention. After all, you can’t simply catch a fish without immediately wanting to compare it to the biggest specimen ever! And so, his aim was to use statistical methods to separate the entirely credible from the truly outlandish. The methods that he applied had been developed by probabilists in the Netherlands; which might be surprising at first until you remember that the Dutch are very interested in how big to build their dykes so as to avoid flooding! Knowing what the highest waves and tides might be is critically important.

Hollywood films have long fed fear into the public’s imagination with sensational scenes where giant creatures crawl out of the sea to destroy half a city or drag a ship and its crew to their doom in the deep. Ray Harryhausen-esque perspectives can give credence to there being monsters of incredible size, despite his Kraken from ‘Clash of the Titans’, only being a four-foot-long model⁴. The scientific term abyssal gigantism is applied to oversized creatures, and there is a tendency for deep-sea animals to grow much larger than their shallow-water cousins; although the reason for this is not clear. Perhaps it reflects the availability of food? So, what indeed is the reality? To answer this question, Dan applied his methods to data he accessed from the thorough census accumulated by McClain et al.⁵ of (as Dan describes) “all things large and slippery”; with, as will be seen, a dash of eBay! The four sea creatures investigated were: Giant Snails; Giant Sponges; Walruses; and Giant Squid.

For each of these creatures Dan provides figures where the lines represent the fitted extremal

distributions for each of the largest values, i.e. minimum or the maximum. The thick lines are the central 50% region of each distribution and the thin lines are the central 95% regions of these fitted distributions. Observed values are represented as a dot on the horizontal axis, plotted against their ordered values on the vertical axis.



Giant Snail - source: Freepik 8975947

Giant Snails

The largest snail is *Syrinx aruanus*, and is prized by shell collectors because of its huge size and beauty. It is also known as the Australian trumpet or false trumpet. It is edible and the shell can be carved, to be used as decoration and to carry water. It is found in the waters of Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, but little is known about its ecology. The collectability of the shells means that extreme examples have a large and ready market, and consequently it is possible to research the sizes of the largest examples by looking on eBay! I won’t go into the patterns of the prices paid here, but Dan identified that ridiculous sums can be paid by shell collectors, with prices rising somewhat exponentially for larger specimens to a maximum of just under \$600. Figure 1 shows an excellent agreement between theory and the observed record. Only a handful of observations falling outside the central 50% of each distribution. This points to the greatest size a *Syrinx aruanus* might reach will be no more than 33 inches, which would make for a hearty meal.

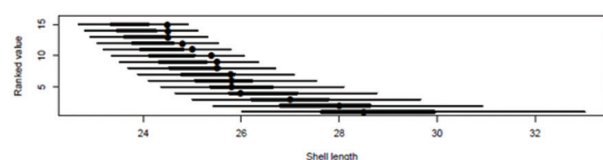


Figure 1 - Greatest sizes of *Syrinx aruanus* snail shells (in inches)

Seriously Strange

Giant Sponges

The Caribbean Giant Barrel Sponge (*Xestospongia muta*) is the largest species of sponge, and is sometimes described as the “redwoods of the reef” because of their longevity and large size. They usually reproduce sexually⁶, but their great age is achieved through clonal reproduction. Giant Sponges play an important role in filtering water, which contributes to the quality of life in a coral reef. The largest known specimen was a well-studied individual off the coast of Curaçao, which is off the north coast of Venezuela. It became a popular destination for scuba-divers in the 1980s and 1990s. It died of a sponge-related disease in 1997, probably brought to it by the divers. This sponge measured 1.7 metres (5 foot 7 inches) in height, which means that if you put it in your bath then you probably wouldn't be able to get in yourself!

Fortunately for statisticians, Giant Sponges anchor themselves to the seabed and so verifying their size and location is straightforward. The thirty largest recorded heights of these creatures are set out in Table 1. It is seen that there is greatest variation between the largest specimens.

1.7000	1.4000	1.2800	1.2300	1.1800	1.1525	1.0600	1.0515	0.9900	0.9055
0.8650	0.8200	0.8185	0.7945	0.7940	0.7882	0.7750	0.7650	0.7635	0.7435
0.7254	0.7052	0.7050	0.7000	0.6965	0.6900	0.6800	0.6775	0.6750	0.6665

Table 1 Thirty largest recorded heights of Caribbean Giant Barrel Sponge (*Xestospongia muta*) (in metres).

It was found that for the largest sponges the three measurements of base diameter, volume, and height, appeared highly correlated. An important feature was the lack of extreme outliers among the largest recorded values for each of these three measurements. Figure 2 shows that in no instance does a sponge height fall outside its fitted, central 95% region; and no evidence was found of the extremal distributions failing to adequately explain the observed data values. The observed record of largest heights was well-behaved.

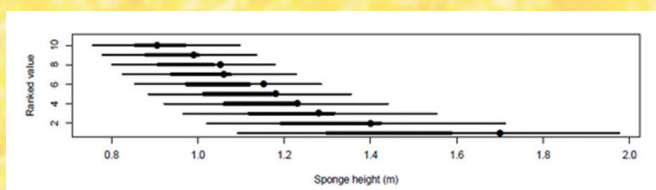


Figure 2 - Largest recorded values for heights of giant sponges (in metres)

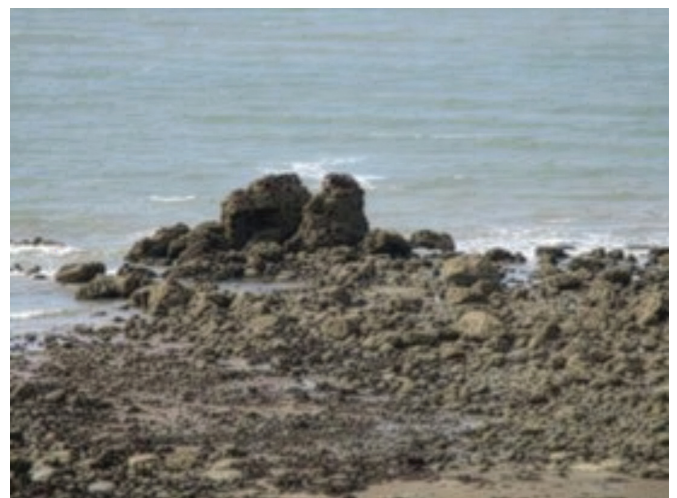
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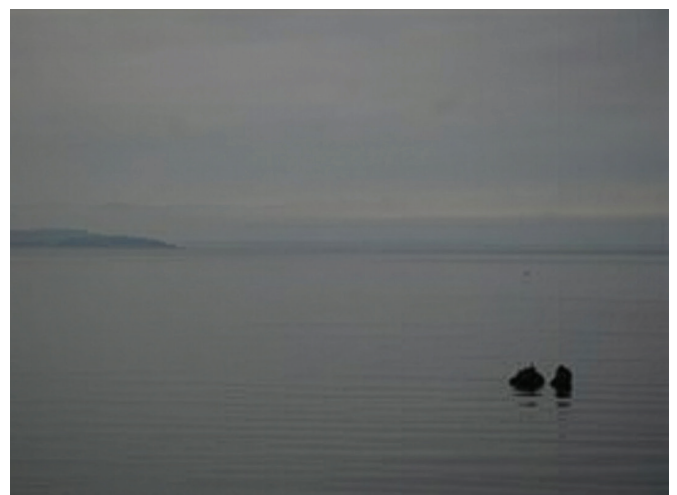
Source: vecteezy_72112882 (Giant barrel sponge)

Walrus

Walrus are big beasts that live in the Arctic Ocean and sub-Arctic regions of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Many have been tagged and some have also been equipped with satellite tracking devices. They feed on shellfish, using their whiskers to locate food on the ocean floor. Their natural predators are polar bears and killer whales. Mind you, if they were to try and eat the walrus quoted in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* they would end up dead or lose lots of teeth! The actual Walrus and the Carpenter, which inspired the poem, are two rocks out in the bay of West Shore in Llandudno, North Wales, close to Alice Liddell's holiday home.



The Walrus and the Carpenter at low and high tide⁸



So, how big do walrus get? Males are much larger than females, and a study of 105 walrus in Greenland included extensive measurements⁹. Figure 3 shows the fitted extreme value distributions for the largest and heaviest recorded walrus. The weight values are entirely reasonable and follow the patterns anticipated. Data regarding the lengths of walrus was a bit different, but not hugely so; with the four greatest recorded being a bit larger than expected and in a class of their own, but still within a credible range. Of course, there is the question of how to measure the length of a walrus? Does one measure stem to stern (i.e. "as the crow flies") or does one stretch the tape measure from nose to tail following the lay of the land (assuming the walrus will sit still long enough)?

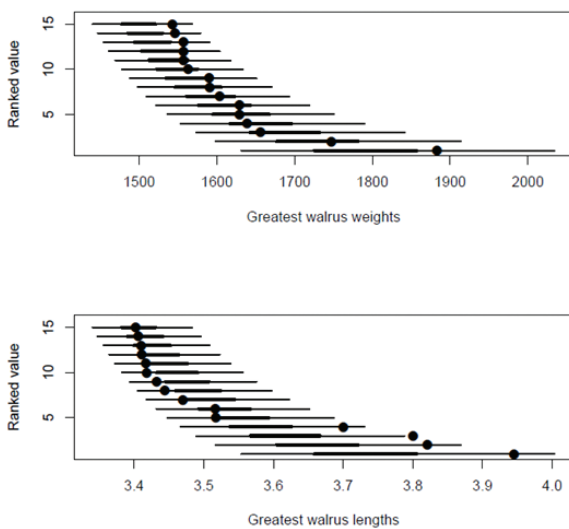


Figure 3 Largest recorded values for the weights (in kg) and lengths (in cm) of Walruses

Giant Squid

The previous three creatures aren't particularly scary – unless you find yourself about to be sat upon by an oversized walrus! But the giant squid, which reminds us the Kraken, is scary – and ugly, as Dan is keen to highlight. They look as if they auditioned for a horror movie, with basketball-sized eyes and huge tentacles; and they live at depths of at least 900 metres (2,950 feet). There is much to learn about the lives of giant squid, given that only twice have researchers been able to catch footage of these elusive giants in their natural environment in recent times¹⁰. Yet it is the description, given by Verrill in 1879, of a battle against a giant squid which had wrapped its

tentacles around a boat, by sailors armed with only an oar and an axe, that is the template for many scenes in sea monster films! That oversized specimens live deep below the ocean's surface is evidenced by whales that have been caught with huge squid sucker marks, which indicate pitched battles between these behemoths.

Giant squid are closely related to the octopus, with both classified as cephalopods. It has eight tentacles arranged in pairs; and squirts ink to escape larger predators. Some species are known to jump out of the water and fly short distances! Table 2 sets out the 30 greatest lengths of giant squid from a census of the creatures published in 2015¹². The pattern is not dissimilar to that for sponges, i.e. a good adherence to the extreme value model (see Figure 4).

However, when we look at the greatest recorded weights (Table 3) there is a gigantic monster of 907 kilograms (roughly 2000 pounds), far and away bigger than any of the others! This is the one witnessed by Verrill¹¹. How can this be? The spacing between the largest and second largest values is too great, thereby straining credibility (as it would the deck of the ship) (see Figure 5). Applying his statistical nous, Dan points to the fact that scale is very important in marine biology. What, he asks, if the recorded weight was not 907 kilograms but 907 pounds? The latter would convert to 411.4 kilograms; which is still a big number but it is a value much closer to other recorded values. Modifying the analyses for this amendment, Figure 6 shows that the greatest weight is no longer such an outlier, and is not necessarily unreasonable.

17.3736	15.8496	15.8496	15.8490	15.0000	15.0000	13.7160	13.4110	12.1920	12.0000
11.5824	10.6000	10.4900	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	9.7536	9.7530	9.2400	9.1440
9.0000	8.8500	8.8455	8.7900	8.6200	8.5000	8.2000	8.0800	8.0100	8.0000

Table 2 – Thirty longest recorded squid (in metres)

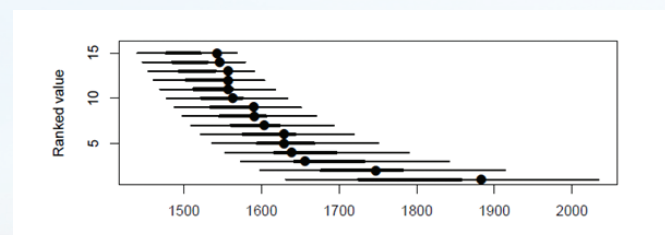


Figure 4 Longest recorded squid lengths (in metres)

Seriously Strange

907.0	280.0	270.0	270.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	240.0	230.0	220.0
220.0	220.0	211.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	190.0	184.0	183.0	181.4
181.0	180.0	170.0	168.4	159.0	150.0	150.0	150.0	150.0	148.0

Table 3 - Thirty heaviest recorded squid (in kg)

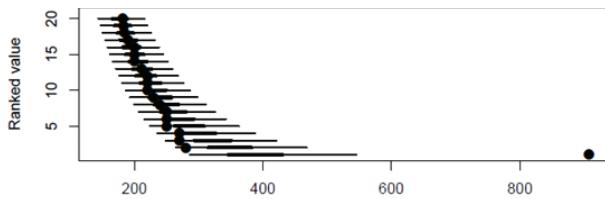


Figure 5 - Heaviest recorded squid (in kg) prior to modification

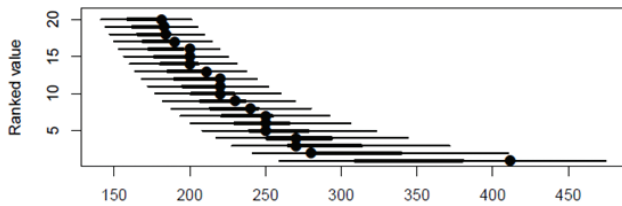


Figure 6 - Heaviest recorded squid (in kg) after modification

Conclusions

Dan's research serves to illustrate that sea creatures can come in all shapes and sizes, and some of them can be very big, albeit in the context of the profiles of the creatures in question. Even smallish creatures can have relative 'monsters', although a horror film titled 'Attack of the Giant Sponges' might not be too scary! What I believe is the most important lesson for cryptozoologists is for them to ensure that they are confident, if not certain, of the scales being quoted for measurements in historical documents and by modern witnesses. There may be inadvertent errors and misquotes, and it should always be kept in mind that fishermen are prone to exaggerating the size of their catch.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Daniel Zelterman for agreeing to me writing this article and for checking it over to ensure I didn't misinterpret anything from the paper he has submitted to Anomaly.

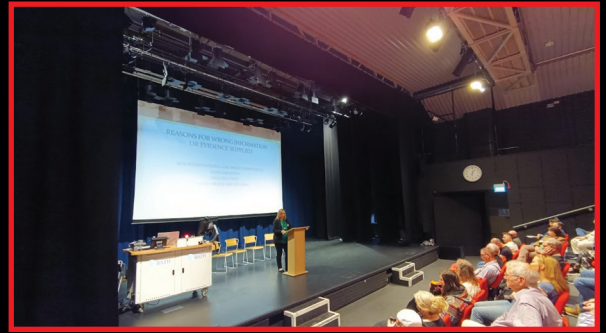
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Features



Source: *gigantic-kraken-storm* - freepik AI



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“Fritz”

The Phantom Sentry of Margival

by Dr John Tate





Bunker - source: www.Battlefieldsww2.com

In a steep sided valley located between the Les Gostis and Les Poltons Forests, ten kilometers to the north-east of Suissons in the Department of the Aigne in northern France, and lying along the Paris-Laon railway line, is a series of massive, reinforced bunkers built by the Germans in World War 2. Called "Wolfsschlucht 2" (Wolf Canyon 2) their original purpose was to function as Headquarters for Hitler in overseeing the invasion of Britain.

Information on construction seems confusing as some sources give the start date as 1942, which seems more than a little late to oversee Operation Seelowe ("Operation "Sealion"), which was postponed following Germany's defeat in the Battle of Britain in 1940! (1). However, the Germans would have anticipated an Allied invasion later on and such a facility could have played a defensive role. It had some 600 telephone lines installed, many to Berlin, as one would expect. In addition to the Fuhrer Bunker, there were other bunkers, ammunition stores, casements and much more; heavy reinforced blast doors, ventilation shafts, medical facilities and fearful gun emplacements. Some 22,000 workers (mainly slaves) were employed in its construction, but typically Hitler used it (briefly) only once, in 1944, immediately after D Day.

Of immediate relevance to this story, however, is that the location, close to the River Aigne and the Somme Battlefields, has strong historical links to the First World War - Hitler himself is said to have seen action close by. The initial German thrust in 1914 was stopped by the allies on the Aigne (and the Marne) and the Battle of the Somme in 1916 needs no further comment. Post 1945, it was taken over by the French Army and then occupied by NATO from 1955-1968 when it played a very secret but key role as a command centre to take over the defence of western Europe should Brussels, Paris or London be taken out by nuclear strikes - an important but almost forgotten place. It was abandoned in the 1990s but is now, thanks to local effort, a tourist attraction and is said to be in good order. There are many photographs on the Internet should the reader wish to follow up on the history (2).

In a previous article (3), I introduced a military contact of mine in relation to the subject of UFOs. On 20th September, 2019, he and I were sitting outside a lovely cafe in the centre of Arnhem in the Netherlands, being served alcohol and other goodies by a very attentive Dutch waitress. The medals on my companion's chest probably helped matters! The occasion was the 75th Commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem in which I had lost a cousin. The warm sun was shining



Accommodation Block? - source: www.Battlefieldsww2.com

and we must have chatted for at least a couple of hours until my family returned from our hotel. Spurning UFOs, he went on to tell me a ghost story concerning Margival, where he was stationed as part of a clandestine NATO signals unit, part of the above mentioned Command Centre.

The Margival bunkers were large and complex, and security was very tight'. Different units embedded there were not necessarily aware of one another's' existence. My friend's unit had not been there long when members started talking about a 'sentry' who seemed to be stationed outside a neighbouring bunker. The place was pretty much locked down, and operated in secret. The notion that another unit was using a sentry seemed odd - a give away, even. This sentry was a trifle weird in that he wore an odd uniform. Maybe members of the French Army were still present? Eventually, a curious

member of the unit, although not wanting to be shot, got close enough for a better look at this strange chap. In doing so, he got a shock. The uniform was not modern French but WW1 German!

Remember that German forces operated powerfully in this area in the early years of WW1, though there doesn't seem to be any evidence of earlier bunkers. The sentry had a long great coat and a spiked helmet. Sadly, my informant passed away in October 2022 and there are details missing here. I can't be certain how long the 'haunting' went on for or how frequent the appearances were, but it is clear that the troops regarded

these events as having some significance. The sentry became almost part of their everyday operations, so much so that the apparition was given the name "Fritz" and almost regarded as being a member of the 'family'. My friend's widow tells me she gave him the alternative title of "Herman the German"! My friend apparently was witness to hearing his footsteps outside at least once and even seeing his admittedly misty form on one occasion. His form therefore seems to have had mass and he patrolled like a sentry. I do not know whether anyone had the temerity to approach him closely or whether, given the terrain and circumstances, this latter was even possible. What I do know is that, prior to the unit moving out to another base at Fontainebleau, there was an event that 'topped the lot' and which apparently involved my informant.

During the middle of one night, my friend and others were on

'Suddenly, there was a loud, frantic, hammering on one of the inside armoured doors'

duty, happily monitoring Soviet military communications ("We knew what they were going to say before they had even said it."). Suddenly, there was a loud, frantic, hammering on one of the inside armoured doors. On being opened, there stood an off - duty member of the unit, shaking like a leaf and wearing only his vest - a trained soldier, screaming his head off. He had suddenly woken to find "that (expletive deleted) thing standing at the bottom of the bed". Fritz had come to visit! Now, of course, this may well have been a dream, but the chap was in such a state that he would not go back to his room

to collect his kit, and he spent the rest of the deployment ensconced in a corner of the ops room, flatly refusing to return to his quarters. Some dream! Bear in mind that these were highly trained personnel, not national service men or soldiers only recently out of training. Make of this what you will but remember the quality and number of the witnesses.

The above is the result of a conversation that covered many things. I do wish I had asked more questions but I was rather taken aback by the story as it stood. Sadly, my friend is no longer with us, but his widow

has confirmed what has been written and is currently racking her brain to see if she can trawl out more details! However, if anyone reading this was stationed at Margival during its NATO years and has more information, I would be happy to hear from them. The events described happened over fifty-five years ago. The whole complex, initially abandoned by the French Army in the early 1990s, is now at least partly open to the public and might be worth a visit should the reader be in that part of France. Alternatively, there are a number of websites containing history and photographs. Margival was, and is, a forbidding place indeed, and one is left to wonder whether its spooky occupant of all those years ago still remains on duty.

JCT 10-01-24



German WW1 Soldier Outfit: <https://kaiserbunker.com/gtp>

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1. See, for example, Pierre Rhode and Werner Sunkel. 1993: "Wolfsschlucht 2 Autopsie eines Fuhrerschauptquartiers". No publisher given.
2. Excellent photographs can be found at www.landmarkScout.com/fuhrerhauptquartier-wolfsschlucht-2-margival-laffaux-france/
3. John Tate. 2023 "Lights Over the Rowley Hills", Seriously Strange Magazine, Association for The Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, Issue 159, pp. 6-8.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank my friend's anonymous widow for further details relating to the story; also Dr Peter McCue for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

Inside the Analytics

2021 YouTube
100% Male

2022 YouTube
86.7% Male

For more than 5 years, weekly presentations, talks and special panels have been produced by the Association, which has seen continual growth albeit gradual. Putting them on video platforms like Youtube, Bitchute, Rumble, adding 2025 Spotify.

Can we numbers make interesting?

2023 YouTube
82.6% Male

2024 YouTube
77.9% Male

2025 YouTube
64% Female

Audience Gender demographic of ASSAP on Youtube.

2021 100% M 0% Female
2022 86.7% M 14.6% F
2023 82.6% M 17.4% F
2024 77.9% M 22.1% F
2025 36%M 64% F

**ASSAP
Youtube
Published Videos**

17 - 2020
35 - 2021
33 - 2022
60 - 2023
46 - 2024
55 - 2025

**What devices to
people use?**

Mobile 35.6%
Computer 29.7%
TV / Smart device 25.3%
Tablet 9.1%

**Playlist popularity
in order**

Ghosts Spirits and Hauntings
Psi Consciousness and mind
Folklore and more
Cryptids
UFOlogy/UAP
Locations and Earth Mysteries



**Bitchute was our first alternative to using
just YouTube**

After copyright claims were challenged in a video presented by Christian "CJ" Romer, featuring a number of audio clips.

The only way to make the video available online was to find an alternative to Youtube. The audience of Bitchute is a bit more edgy and rebellious. Topics such as over-reach of policies, particularly the pharmaceutical industrial complex during and post covid and promoting freedom of speech, users who found themselves removed from Google's platform found a home on Bitchute.

Bitchute and ASSAP Webinars have success; many videos sees numbers far exceeding YouTube, the garnered audience in particular has a love of topics of consciousness and mind.



**Rumble has been home to ASSAP
Webinars under the
"Seriously Strange" moniker
since Mid-2023.**

To also have an alternative beyond Google's grip, with an audience focused around sports, live broadcasting, politically active and those with a view skeptical of traditional media.

Rumble has a dedicated audience that is not afraid to talk on controversial topics.

According to Marketscoop demographically, Rumble's audience skews heavily male, with 71.69% male users compared to 28.31% female users.

The age distribution shows a strong appeal among Millennials and Gen X, with 23.62% of users aged 25-34, 16.59% aged 35-44, and 15.36% aged 45-54.

Younger users (18-24) make up 16.38%, while older groups (55-64 and 65+) account for 15.16% and 12.88%, respectively.

Statistically, our content on Rumble does better on topics of the Psi/Mind and cryptid content. The UFOlogy/UAP topic being a favourable topic

Youtube will be our focus owing that we have 5 years of statistics.

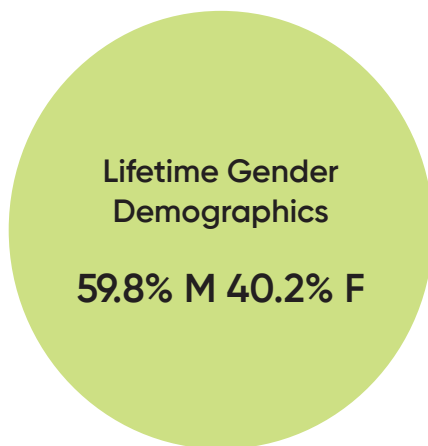
ASSAPs Youtube presence has been consistent in its content upload for a couple of years. It's growth, steady with around 13-20 subscribers per month, with occasional spurts. After 5 years breaching the hallowed ground of 1000 subscribers moving into monetisation territory. Rightfully so, why has it taken so long when there is exceptionally great content each and every week, with varied speakers from researchers, enthusiasts to academics and speaking newcomers presenting across a vast array of topics under the fortean and paranormal umbrella.

Presently more than 250+ are available on the Youtube catalogue of presentations. Most features are just the presentation talk. As the intended prime audience has always been our membership, who come live on a Thursday 7pm to the Paranormal Webinars LIVE. It's a space for announcements, ASSAP News and the presentations, members can ask questions

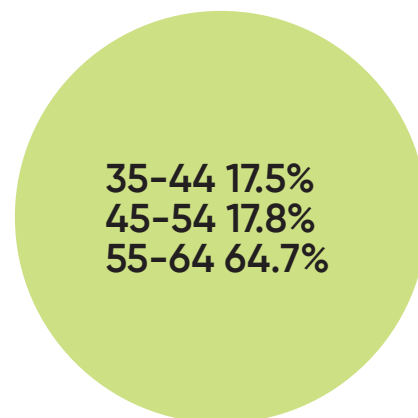


and have conversation with the guest afterwards and has proved a winning formula. with the addition in the last year of more discussion with the hosts and guest proving very popular as a format.

Bringing in those interview personalities and an opportunity for the guests to expand on matters beyond the presentations and relax, which is much more professional and the feedback has been acknowledged.



1st Jan 2025 - 31st Dec 2025
For YouTube age range



1st Jan 2024 - 31st Dec 2024
For YouTube age range



That's not to say, there is not an audience watching outside of the captured data; they could be watching on devices like televisions, consoles and phones/tablets not signed into a Google/YouTube profile.

Broadly, the webinars becoming on demand has moved through some different eras.

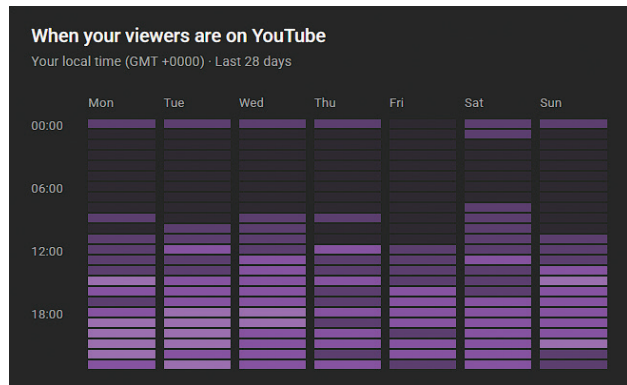
- The first era; recorded raw; very little editing, and posted online
- The second era; edited with intro and outro, audio tidied up. Gaffs removed.
- The third age; edited and released as soon as, with artwork.
- The present era; edited and scheduled - having a set release date,

What began as a way to provide access for members unable to attend live events during the Lockdown period has grown into a platform reaching far beyond ASSAP, captivating an online audience intrigued by paranormal topics. It attracts those who appreciate an organisation that discusses such matters thoughtfully, avoiding sensationalism and hype.

Just being casual

YouTube more recently also added a category of viewers besides regular and new, the inclusion of "casual". A definition would be users who have watched at least one video on your channel per month every month within the past year, indicating interest, but don't watch each and every one. They represent an intermediate level of engagement between new and regular viewers. Casual viewers are likely to watch only the videos that interest them, or they may stop by sporadically rather than consistently viewing

every upload. Our channel's publishing style leans into those people, because of the nature of the content, picking their choice of topic.



The analytics reflect this, with more than a fifth (21.5%) of viewers being casual, and for 2026 so far 63.5% of our audience are new. Retrospectively 2025, highlights similar numbers 66.3 being new viewers, 21.6% casual.

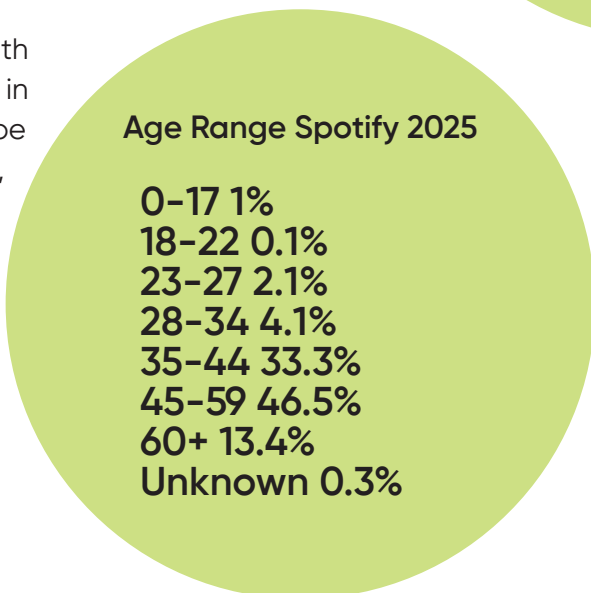
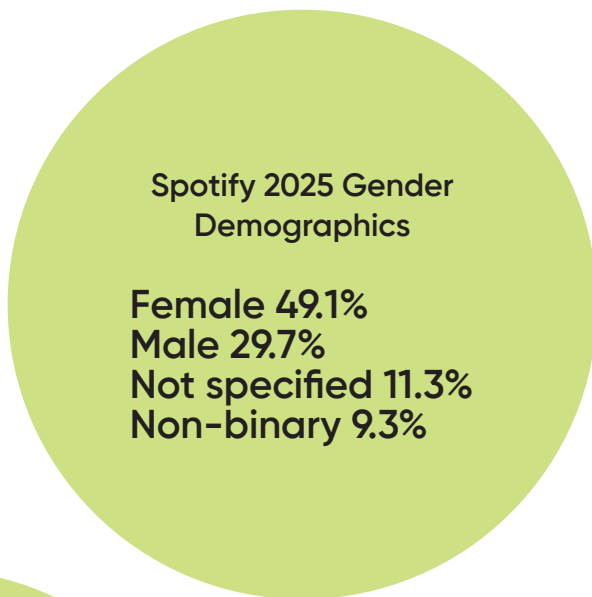
With a majority of people watching ASSAP content on a Monday and Tuesday between 1800 and 2100, with a regular additional binge on feet up Sunday night at 1900.

Spotify Analytics Insights (March 6, 2025 – December 31, 2025)

Spotify's analytics tools are particularly valuable for uncovering audience trends and supporting content discovery.

A notable period of growth and maturation occurred starting in March 2025, when we began publishing episodes simultaneously across platforms on the same day.

This shift aligned closely with the significant increase in female listeners on YouTube during the same timeframe, suggesting cross-platform synergies in our audience engagement.



Themes driving engagement

Topics like consciousness, hauntings and technology consistently perform well across the platforms,

Having Question-based titles e.g., What lies with Fort Widley? and mystery-driven content attracts curious viewers. Why Britain's Most Haunted Ruin Never

Sleeps? Do better overall. For the longest time, we abiding to a formula of Presentation Name | Presenter | ASSAP a little too rigid to grow the audience.

Our focus on measured, more serious discussions of paranormal topics resonates with audiences seeking credible,

non-sensationalised content. This could be because emphasising mystery-solving of the topics in titles is driving that.

People see the question, sparks wonder and then want to see the question being answered, through thoughtful breakdown and exploration.



Hello Ladies!

Alrighty, let's chat about the female shift, as it is a sharp pivot from male to female centric in a short period of time and we continue to have a female centric audience – Have spoken about this 180 degree shift openly in the data, digging into why the real meat of the content from February onwards.

We kicked things off with a proper format shake-up: a special panel featuring Dr. Ian Rubenstein and Dr. Mark Fox diving into Heol Fanog – that creepy Welsh farmhouse that's blown up thanks to Danny Robins' Uncanny series, asking, 'Which farm is the real Witch Farm?' Super timely and fascinating. Then we had Andy Guy walking us through practical data logging – tech and database tricks for serious paranormal investigations. Paul Goddard and the legend Loyd

Auerbach jumped in with past-life regression, apparitions, and what consciousness might look like after death. Julie Boyd took us location-hunting at Wycoller Hall, Jane Holmen asked the big one: 'Is ParaUnity even possible?' – which hit right at the heart of what ASSAP was wrestling with back then.

Marq English straight-up challenged everyone with 'Is Ghost Hunting a Waste of Time?' Brutal but needed. Andy McGrath from Weird Britain popped out from behind the scenes to tease the new Blaze TV series. Ash Ellis from UFO Identified crunched the numbers on UK UFO reports from 2020–2024 – proper data-driven stuff. Prof. Rob Gandy brought his commentary to Ghosts of Goblin Hill. Eamonn Van Harris showed off his custom tech setup for trying to

chat with... well, ghosts? Aliens? Time-displaced entities? Take your pick.

The variety? Insane – in the best way. Ghosts, UFOs, tech, history, philosophy, you name it. And the style started shifting too. Kristian Lander and Caroline McKendrick Gibson we turned up the chat factor – moving from straight presentations into proper conversations before and after the main body humanising the shows before the audience Q&A and open forum. It feels way more personal now; guests open up about their own philosophies, experiences, and what drives them. We are getting to see the human side, not just the presentation.

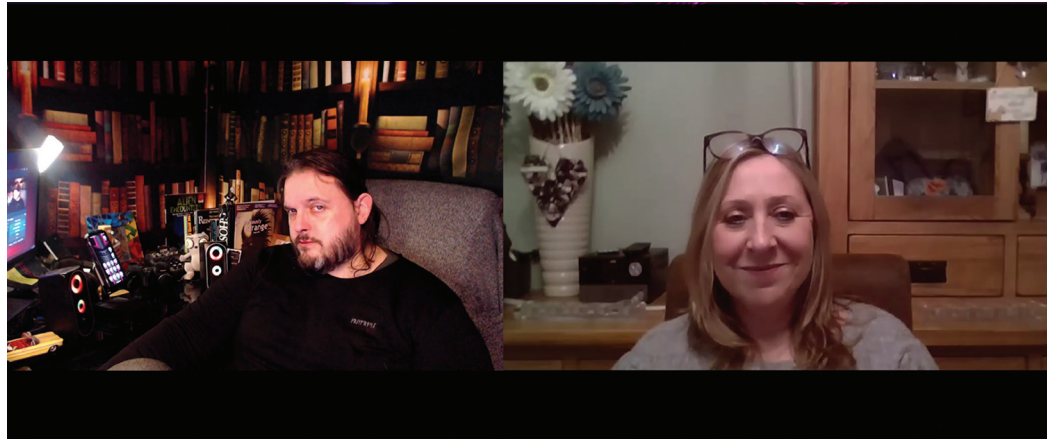
Might this shift have been a contributing reason?

2026 Year of Opportunities has seen a calling to our vast talent pool of the Membership to contribute.

Gladys SJ is bringing forward a new *High Strangeness* series to be released on ASSAPs Media Network

Alice M also has took to the microphone, recording *ASSAP The Recap* a monthly review and commentary on recent episodes.

Might your talents be organising, being hands-on, administration, community, we could certainly utilise your skills.



Since Caroline McKendrick Gibson and I (Kristian Lander) took the reins of ASSAP’s Paranormal Webinars back in October 2024, we’ve been pouring our hearts into making them the best they can be. Caroline handles all the guest wrangling—reaching out, chatting ideas through, sorting schedules—while I focus on the editing, production, and making sure everything flows smoothly.

We’ve got this simple, no-drama agreement between us: keep any internal and external politics out of it entirely. Members are the most important. Our unified goal was straightforward—give every guest and attendee the most welcoming, enjoyable experience possible. Promote great values. We understand that not every topic will click for everyone, and honestly, that’s part of what makes this so much fun. The weird, wonderful variety is the whole point!

Conclusion

The data shows “Seriously Strange” has matured into a robust, multi-platform presence for ASSAP. Over five years, we’ve seen steady organic growth in subscribers, views, and engagement—starting from a niche anomalous-phenomena base and driven by diverse, high-quality content rather than heavy marketing. Audio platforms brought notable boosts, especially in demographics and reach. Podcast apps make it perfect for on-the-go listening (gym, commute, work, background vibes). The March–Aug 2025 skew (61.5% female on Spotify) highlights how conversational formats pull in listeners who favour talk over visuals accounting for about 40% of our audio audience, with data linking back from Apple Podcasts and similar.

Analytics confirm a successful evolution: from niche archival material to a vibrant, resonant platform. 2025 was the tipping point for demographic diversity and deeper engagement. The female-viewer uptick stems not from “gendered” topics but from format tweaks—post-presentation chats, Shorts—and wider multi-platform discovery.

We’ve carved out a thoughtful, non-sensational niche in a crowded paranormal field. This momentum is building real excitement for the Seriously Strange Conference—people are buzzing about experiencing our signature show live with a physical audience.

Leading the trend, we’ve noticed several big podcasts and outlets picking up topics shortly after we cover them,

often diving in to create their own episodes. There’s solid evidence we’re accelerating (if not outright leading) certain trends—like the Dodleston Messages deep dive with Dr. Paul Rogers and Deb Oakes in July 2025, followed by a wave of coverage elsewhere, or Road Ghosts trending across platforms soon after our take.

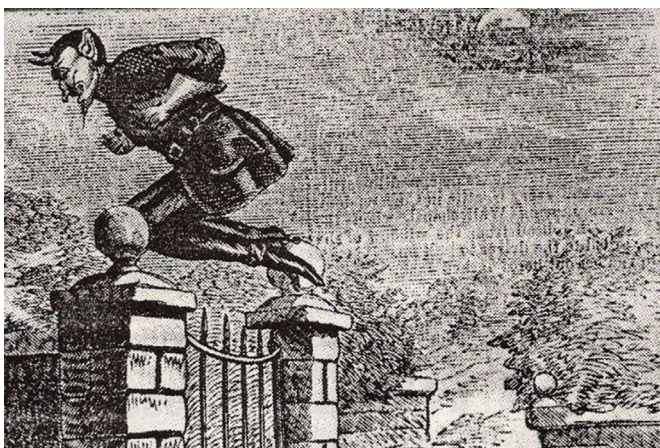
Our member-first webinars frequently act as catalysts and credible reference points, sparking broader conversation. The paranormal space thrives on interconnection: overlapping guests, migrating audiences, cyclical topics. Creators seek strong starting points for their storytelling and Seriously Strange is increasingly that spark. It’s a healthy dynamic and a real testament to the strength of ASSAP’s programming.

VICTORIAN FORTEANNA: SPRING HEELED JACK



A mysterious figure that terrorised Victorian Britain, leaping over roofs, breathing fire and leaving behind one of the biggest legends of the period.

Spring-heeled Jack is a legendary figure from Victorian-era English folklore, first reported in 1837. He was said to leap great distances, breathe fire, and terrify Londoners with his clawed hands and glowing red eyes. Sightings spread across London, the Midlands, and Scotland, with the last major report in Liverpool in 1904. Descriptions varied, but consistent features were tight-fitting 'oilskin' like garments along with a cloak and helmet. He was said to be tall and thin, sometimes gentleman-like. Paranormal aspects attributed to him included breathing blue and white flames, having sharp metallic claws, and glowing eyes.



ORIGINS OF THE LEGEND

In the early 19th century there were reports of pale ghosts stalking the streets of London, preying on lone pedestrians. Stories of these figures formed part of a distinct ghost tradition in London, which may have laid the foundation of the later legend of Spring-heeled Jack. The 'Hammersmith Ghost', which appeared between 1803 and 1804, and then again in 1824, was believed to be the spirit of a person who had taken their own life. Belief in the ghost was used as a legal defence in a case where an excise officer fatally shot a bricklayer in 1804, after mistaking his work clothes for a shroud. This marked the first time that belief in ghosts was used as a defence in court.

Another apparition, the 'Southampton Ghost', was also reported as assaulting individuals in the night. This spirit bore many of the characteristics associated with Spring-heeled Jack and was reported as jumping over houses and being over 10 feet tall.



The first claimed sighting of Spring-heeled Jack was in 1837, with subsequent sighting reports all over the United Kingdom but most prevalent in suburban London, the Midlands and Scotland. Numerous theories about the nature and identity of Spring-heeled Jack were proposed, due to the tales of his bizarre appearance and extraordinary leaping ability. Those who claimed to have seen him often described a terrifying and frightful figure with clawed hands and eyes that 'resembled red balls of fire'.

Whilst many stories mention a 'devil-like' appearance, others describe him as tall and thin with the appearance of a gentleman. There was a persistent belief that members of the upper classes were perpetrating an elaborate hoax.

PUBLIC PANIC AND OFFICIAL REPORTS

During a public meeting on 9th January 1838, the Lord Mayor of London shared a complaint received from a resident of Peckham:

'It appears that some individuals (of, as the writer believes, the highest ranks of life) have laid a wager with a mischievous and foolhardy companion, that he durst not take upon himself the task of visiting many of the villages near London in three different disguises—a ghost, a bear, and a devil; and moreover, that he will not enter a gentleman's gardens for the purpose of alarming the inmates of the house. The wager has, however, been accepted, and the unmanly villain has succeeded in depriving seven ladies of their senses, two of whom are not likely to recover, but to become burdens to their families.'

Though the Lord Mayor was sceptical, a member of the audience confirmed that 'servant girls about Kensington, Hammersmith and Ealing tell dreadful stories of this ghost or devil'. The Lord Mayor believed 'the greatest exaggerations' had been made, and that it was quite impossible that 'the ghost performs the feats of a devil upon earth'. He was confident the person or persons involved in this 'pantomime display' would be caught and punished. The police were instructed to search for the individual responsible, and rewards were offered.

The Times reported this on the same day, and other national papers followed on 10th and 11th January. Soon after, letters started to pour in from places in and around London complaining of similar 'wicked pranks'. One writer said several young ewomen in Hammersmith had been frightened into 'dangerous fits', while others had been 'severely wounded by a sort of claws the miscreant wore on his hands'. Another correspondent claimed several people had died of fright and others had fits.

144 THE BOY'S STANDARD.
Published Weekly. NOW READY. Price One Penny.
NOS. 1 AND 2 (TWENTY-FOUR PAGES), SPLENDIDLY ILLUSTRATED, IN HANDSOME WRAPPER.



The History of this Remarkable Being has been specially compiled, for this work only, by one of the Best Authors of the day, and our readers will find that ho has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a Wonderful and Sensational Story, every puge of which is replete with details of absorbing and thrilling interest.

The most well-known sighting occurred on 19th February 1838. Jane Alsop answered the door to a figure she initially believed to be a police officer. The figure told her, 'Come quick and bring a light—We have caught Spring-heeled Jack here in the lane'. As she handed him a candle, he threw off his cloak and 'presented a most hideous and frightful appearance'.

'vomiting blue and white flame from his mouth while his eyes resembled red balls of fire'.

He tore at her gown, neck and arms with 'metal' claws, fleeing when Lucy's sister came in response to her screams for help.

On the 28th February 1838, 18-year-old Lucy Scales and her sister encountered a person wearing a large cloak who spurted 'a quantity of blue flame' into Lucy's face, blinding her and causing violent fits which continued for several hours. Lucy's sister described the assailant as tall,

thin, and of a gentlemanly appearance, covered in a large cloak, and carrying a bull's-eye lantern like those used by the police.

A peculiar report from *The Brighton Gazette*, which appeared on the 14th of April 1838 edition of *The Times*, related how a gardener in Rosehill, Sussex, had been terrified by a creature in the shape of a bear or some other four-footed animal. *The Times* wrote that 'Spring-heeled Jack has, it seems, found his way to the Sussex coast', even though the report bore little resemblance to other accounts of Jack. A report from Northamptonshire described Jack as 'the very image of the Devil himself, with horns and eyes of flame', while in East Anglia, attacks on mail coach drivers became common. The legend was also linked to the phenomenon of the Devil's Footprints, a 100-mile trail of cloven hoof marks which appeared overnight in Devon in February 1855.

In November 1872, *The News of the World* reported that Peckham was in a state of commotion owing to the 'Peckham Ghost', which was attributed to further appearances of Spring-heeled Jack. In April and May 1873, the Illustrated Police News reported numerous sightings of the 'Park Ghost' in Sheffield, which locals also identified as Spring-heeled Jack.

In August 1877, a night sentry at Aldershot Garrison challenged a peculiar figure advancing towards him, who came up close and slapped his face. A guard shot at the figure with no visible effect, before it disappeared into the darkness with astonishing bounds. The panic at Aldershot became so severe that sentries were issued ammunition and ordered to shoot 'the night terror' on sight, after which the appearances ceased.

Spring-heeled Jack was next seen at Newport Arch in Lincoln in the autumn of 1877, where an angry mob cornered him before he disappeared with amazing bounds. Around 1888, he allegedly appeared on the rooftop of St Francis Xavier's Church in Liverpool, and for a final time in a nearby street in 1904, before melting away into history.

FROM TERROR TO LEGEND

Spring-heeled Jack falls into a Fortean category of phantom attackers. These are typically human in appearance, so may be perceived as prosaic criminals, but who also display extraordinary abilities. Such characteristics, combined with the long period he was active, have led to varied theories of his nature and identity. Sceptics have dismissed the stories of Spring-heeled Jack as legend exaggerated and altered through mass hysteria, powered by unsupported rumours, superstition, oral tradition, sensationalism, and folklore.

The vast urban legend built around Spring-heeled Jack influenced many aspects of Victorian life. His name was equated with the bogeyman, used to scare children and encourage women to remain indoors at a time when they were first beginning to venture beyond the domestic sphere. Although not directly linked, events such as the Great Garrotting Panic of 1862 added to an atmosphere of paranoia and sensationalism, alongside phenomena such as the Whitechapel 'Dead Body Train' and Black Sewer Swine.

Spring-heeled Jack became a staple of penny dreadfuls and one of the most popular characters of the period. For a while, the Devil in Punch and Judy shows was renamed after him, and plays about him were performed in the cheap theatres that abounded at the time. In more recent times, Spring-heeled Jack features in graphic novels and steampunk fiction, including Philip Pullman's *Spring-Heeled Jack* (1989).



Sarah Pilkington - ASSAP Governance Officer, lover of wild swimming and all things duck!

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THE LEGEND OF THE GRAY MAN



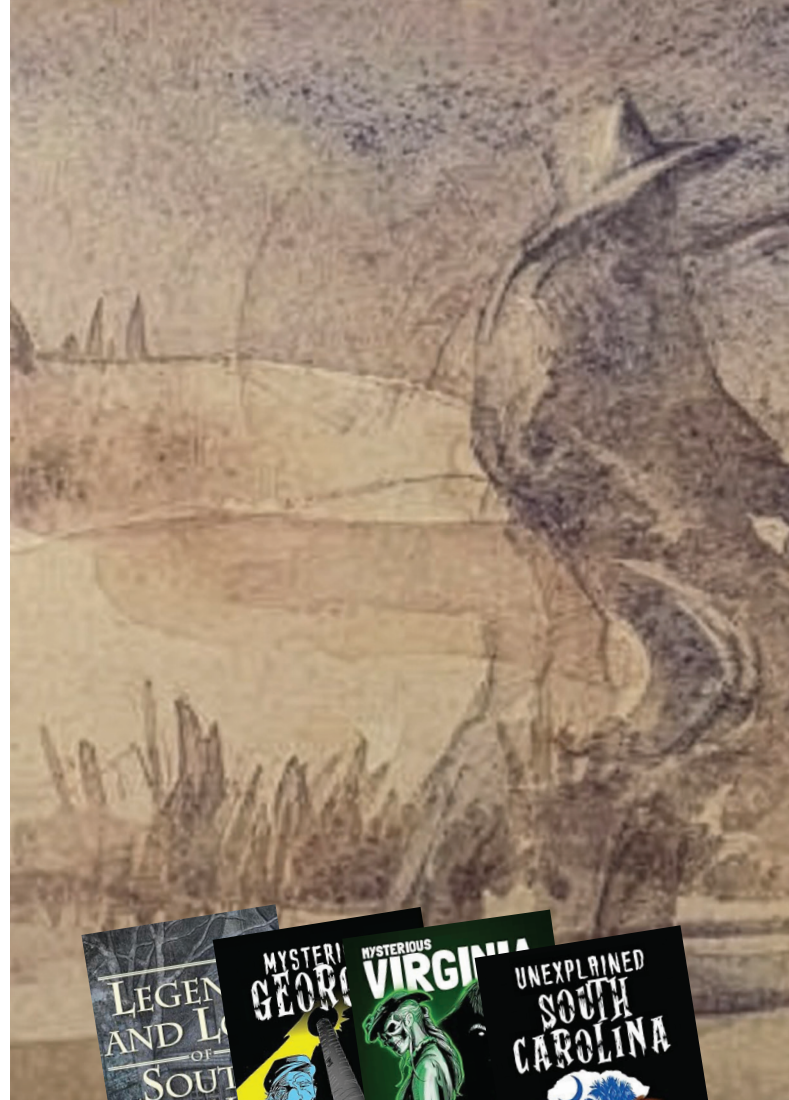
The mysterious figure said to walk the shores of South Carolina before deadly hurricanes arrive.

South Carolina's most famous ghost is the Gray Man of Pawleys Island. Over time, the story has become part of local folklore, and it's almost impossible to discuss ghosts or the history of Pawleys Island without somebody bringing up the Gray Man.

The first known appearance occurred shortly before the hurricane that struck Pawleys Island, South Carolina in 1822. According to the legend, the Gray Man never makes an appearance except just before a hurricane hits Pawleys Island.

Unlike many ghost stories, the Gray Man is considered a sign of protection from the hurricanes. If a person sees him walking down the beach, any home they own on Pawleys Island will be spared.

There are many stories about who the Gray Man is. One suggests he is the ghost of Percival



Pawley, the namesake for the island. Another tells of a young man heading to Pawleys Island to set a date for his wedding. He reportedly took a shortcut through the marshes, where he and his horse fell into a pit of quicksand, got trapped in it and died. According to the story, later his fiancé was taking a stroll along the beach and encountered her fiancé's ghost.

The ghost warned her to leave the island due to an incoming storm. She hurried home and told her parents about the encounter and the warning. They packed up and left the island. When they returned after the storm, they found that their house had not been damaged, while other many houses were destroyed during the hurricane of 1822.

Another story tells of a man returning home from being at sea, only to find that his fiancé had married his best friend instead of waiting for him.



Courtesy of Gray Man Gallery at Pawleys Island

Overwhelmed with grief, he threw himself into the Waccamaw River and drowned.

Some stories also describe an unknown sailor whose body washed ashore, and died before he could be identified.

Reports of the Gray Man have continued over the years. Witnesses have seen him walking on the beach at Pawleys Island before every major hurricane that hits the place, including the Hurricane of 1822, Hurricane Hazel in 1954, Hurricane Hugo in 1989, Hurricane Florence in 2018, and Hurricane Ian in 2022.

Stories of the Gray Man can be found in books by the author, such as *Forgotten Tales of South Carolina*, *Hurricane Hugo 1989*, *Legends and Lore of South Carolina*, *The Hurricane of 1822*, and *Unexplained South Carolina*, *Hurricane Florence 2018*.



Sherman Carmichael

22 years in Law enforcement, 29 years as a photographer, 27 years in the entertainment industry. Published author of more than a dozen books.

Whispers in the Halls: The British Museum's Enigmatic Inhabitants

by Norie Miles

The British Museum, a treasure trove of human history and artistry, stands as a testament to centuries of civilization. Yet, beyond its well-documented exhibits and scholarly pursuits, whispers persist of a different kind of inhabitant – spectral figures said to roam its hallowed halls.

Such tales are often met with skepticism, and rightly so. In an institution dedicated to empirical evidence and historical accuracy, the notion of ghosts can seem jarring. However, the stories themselves offer a fascinating glimpse into the museum's rich, layered past and the power of human imagination.

One of the most enduring legends revolves around the Egyptian mummies. The museum's extensive collection has, perhaps inevitably, become a focal point for paranormal speculation. Some

claim to have felt sudden drops in temperature or experienced unsettling sensations near certain sarcophagi. Others recount stories of objects inexplicably moving or strange shadows flickering in the dimly lit galleries.

'Spectral figures said to roam its hallowed halls.'

Another tale centres on the museum's library, a haven for researchers and scholars. It is said that the ghost of a former librarian, deeply devoted to his work, still wanders among the towering shelves, ensuring the books are in their rightful place. This benevolent spirit is often described as a quiet presence, a guardian of knowledge rather than a malevolent force.



Visitors outside the British Museum entrance. Source: British Museum



The Kings Library. Source: Kristian Lander

It's important to approach these narratives with a balanced perspective. The British Museum, like any old building, is subject to creaks, drafts, and the play of light and shadow. Our minds, too, are prone to suggestion, especially in environments steeped in history and mystery.

Moreover, the museum's vast collection is filled with objects imbued with cultural and emotional significance. These artefacts, witnesses to countless human dramas, can evoke powerful feelings and trigger vivid imaginations. It's easy to see how, in such an environment, stories of ghosts might take root and flourish.

'Even in the most rational of institutions, there is always room for a little bit of wonder.'

Ultimately, whether one believes in the supernatural or not, the tales of ghostly encounters at the British Museum add another layer to its already compelling story. They remind us that history is not just about dates and facts, but also about the enduring power of human imagination and the mysteries that continue to intrigue us. These whispers in the halls serve as a gentle reminder that even in the most rational of institutions, there is always room for a little bit of wonder.



Tied to ancient beliefs about the afterlife, objects like this have helped inspire some of the museum's more mysterious tales.


Inner Coffin of Honerdjitef, from Thebes, Egypt, 240 BC. Source: British Museum

WEIRD SCIENCE

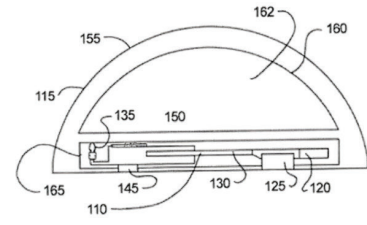
PATENTS AND PUBLISHED RESEARCH BENDING THE RULES ON REALITY

The past three issues we have been toying in the grey-zone between holding the suspension of disbelief whilst a tongue firmly in the cheek into the patents on matters supernatural, from remote viewing amplifiers to the best practice of walking through walls and doors. That we put to the test!

The idea of playing with ghosts or maybe those silver spheres that could be inhabiting the space surrounding us. What if a toy could point us in the right direction? No we are not talking cat balls! Those feline friendly light up gizmos deserve a whole article all to themselves. Lets get playful with Mauren Mae and US patent US9517421B1 "Device for the fanciful detection of ghosts"



US09517421B1

<p>(12) United States Patent Mae</p> <p>(54) DEVICE FOR FANCIFUL DETECTION OF GHOSTS</p> <p>(76) Inventor: Mauren Mae, Springfield, TN (US)</p> <p>(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 415 days.</p> <p>(21) Appl. No.: 13/514,558</p> <p>(22) Filed: Der. 8, 2011</p> <p>(51) Int. Cl. A63H 33/00 (2006.01)</p> <p>(52) U.S. Cl. A63H 33/00 (2013.01)</p> <p>(58) Field of Classification Search CPC A63H 33.00; F21V 33.00; F21V 33.0008; A44C 15.0015 USPC 446/14, 175, 484, 485, 491, 463/9 See application file for complete search history.</p> <p>(56) References Cited</p> <p>U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS</p> <p>2,707,769 A * 5/1955 Shuper G01R 33/07 324,251 4,285,158 A * 8/1981 Cnerts G01C 17/02 324,260 4,971,592 A * 11/1990 Cascia, III A63H 33/00 428,3 5,434,500 A * 7/1995 Hanck G01V 33/01 324,207,17 6,051,622 A * 4/2000 Heowitz A47G 33/00 362,234 6,064,190 A * 5/2000 Suda 150/83 1,383 324,149</p>	<p>(10) Patent No.: US 9,517,421 B1 (45) Date of Patent: Dec. 13, 2016</p> <p>6,991,238 A * 7/2000 McDorman G01B 7/03 315,507 6,232,581 B1 * 5/2001 Suda G01R 29/0878 324,149 6,288,498 B1 * 9/2001 Cheng A44C 15/0015 315,185, 8 6,329,924 B1 * 12/2001 McStaly G01R 29/0887 340,552 6,755,199 B2 * 6/2004 Rehder A61B 90/39 128,808 7,428,994 B1 * 9/2008 Jeffrey, Jr. A44C 15/0015 255,454 8,044,813 B1 * 10/2011 Dento G01R 29/0887 320,108 2008/0048606 A1 * 3/2006 Mames A63H 30/00 446,166 2007/0121317 A1 * 5/2007 Haang, et al. 362,183 2007/0428075 A1 * 6/2007 Fariroz A63H 5/00 446,397 2009/0217702 A1 * 9/2009 Nagavena A44C 15/0015 453,13 2011/0057583 A1 * 3/2011 Fariroz F21L 4/02 315,313 2011/0058363 A1 * 3/2011 Fariroz F21L 4/02 362,190 2011/0275315 A1 * 11/2011 Dento et al. 455,411</p> <p>* cited by examiner</p> <p>Primary Examiner—Gene Kim Artisan Examiner—Alyssa Hyllinski (74) Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Stephen J. Stark; Miller & Martin P.L.L.C.</p> <p>(57) ABSTRACT A novelty toy, apparel, or jewelry, device for fanciful detection of ghosts, or other paranormal phenomena, through exploitation of Hall Effect, or of thermochromic material.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets</p> 
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In December 2016, the United States Patent and Trademark Office granted US9517421B1, titled "Device for fanciful detection of ghosts", submitted 5 years earlier by inventor Maureen Mae from Springfield, Tennessee. This quirky patent describes a novelty toy, piece of jewelry, apparel accessory, or curio designed to playfully simulate the detection of ghosts or paranormal activity—without ever claiming any real supernatural powers. She might be one of us!

The core idea Maureen has is simple yet ingenious: the device reacts to everyday physical phenomena that ghost-hunting enthusiasts often associate with spirits, such as fluctuations in electromagnetic fields (EMF) or sudden temperature drops.

It uses a Hall effect sensor—a common electronic component that generates a small electrical current when exposed to magnetic fields—to detect nearby EMF sources like power lines,

appliances, mobile phones, or wiring. This current then triggers visible or audible effects: an LED lights up (with brightness varying by field strength), a tiny heating element activates to change the color of a thermochromic material (similar to mood rings), or the device might vibrate or emit sounds.

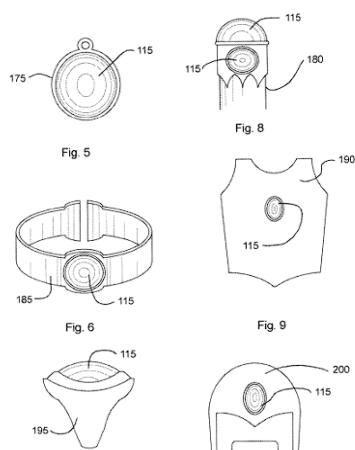
For Entertainment Purposes Only

The patent emphasises its purely imaginative purpose. The abstract calls it a “novelty toy, apparel, or jewelry” for “fanciful detection,” and the description repeatedly stresses that any “ghost” interpretation is left to the user’s creativity and imagination. It exploits real-world physics—ubiquitous EMF and temperature variations—to create spooky, interactive experiences perfect for games, storytelling,

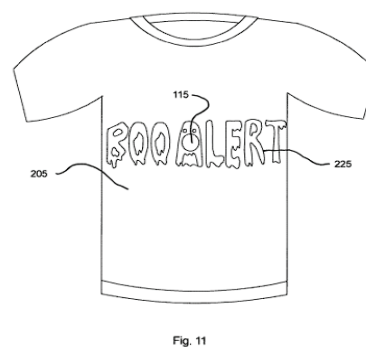
Halloween parties, or “role-playing” as a paranormal investigator. Oh we like that! Designs are versatile and aesthetic. Drawings show the gadget incorporated into elegant forms: a pendant, bracelet, ring, breastplate, helmet, or even sewn into clothing. (fig 3) The main body resembling a crystal housing the electronics, with a manual switch and adjustable sensitivity (via a variable resistor) to tune responses and reduce constant triggering in modern environments full of electromagnetic noise.

A battery, Hall sensor, LED, resistor, optional amplifier or microcontroller—it cleverly packages them for thematic fun. It leans into to the popular ghost-hunting lore (Running around with EMF meters and chasing cold spots, while staying firmly in the realm of it’s a play thing.

U.S. Patent Dec. 13, 2016 Sheet 3 of 4 US 9,517,421 B



U.S. Patent Dec. 13, 2016 Sheet 4 of 4 US 9,517,421 B



More fiddling less ghosts!

This reminds me strongly of laser quest and video games accessories, where you can sport some similar looking equipment, that vibrate and light up. The patent on closer inspection cites 18 prior references, including earlier toy detectors and magnetic field gadgets! What this shows is that there is an evolution of these novelty electronics rather than breakthrough science. We are wrapped

and rooted in entertainment, but enough into the spooky-zone. The patent is set to last until 2033, Maurens time for exclusivity is running out. In practice, it would trigger constantly in the modern world. Phones, Wi-Fi routers, cars, lights – basically anywhere with electricity produces EMF that a sensitive Hall sensor would pick up. A k2 meter you can wear! You’d likely spend more time turning the sensitivity knob (variable resistor) than actually enjoying any “haunting.” experience.

The Patent source of this issues Weird Science can be found online
<https://patents.google.com/patent/US9517421B1/en>
 USPTO Patent Center US9517421B1



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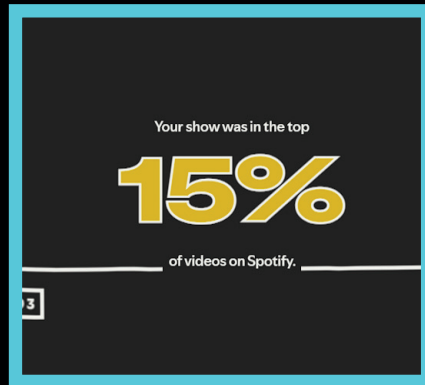
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Closing remarks, notes and last minute thoughts

Recently found a volume of material in our digital storage, articles, publications from much earlier in ASSAPs history. When time permits, will endeavour to add them to the Catalogue on ASSAP.ac.uk!

All new Digital-exclusive Summer Issue 165 pre-Conference special- coming next!

The Sphere Network hypthosis? There's more than a little something to it, we might be looking at high strangeness cases all wrong. Safe to say, more data is needed.





Might the various phenomena being experienced in paranormal cases be by-products of something going about routines in that space? Might we be dealing with technology rather than the forms of the dead? Radiation? High frequency communication? Intentional distraction?

