

ASSAP NEWS

ASSOCIATION FOR THE
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF
ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA

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Levitation project takes off

A PROJECT to see if that most basic of forces, gravity, can be defied has been relaunched by a group of researchers in London. Project Daedalus is being run by experimenters — two of them with doctorates in psychology — holding about five sessions, of three to four hours, a week.

They want to train each promising subject for at least six sessions, gradually increasing the number of experimenters and volunteers.

One of the researchers, Ruth West, explained how the project came about from a programme initiated by the Society for Psychical Research about 15 years ago.

She said: "Gravity is considered to be the fundamental force which makes the universe hang together; unlike the electromagnetic force it cannot be manipulated, increased or decreased, screened off or reversed.

"However there are persistent reports in the history of various cultures, referring to more or less well-documented episodes, in which exceptional individuals are said to have been capable of defying the force of gravity and of levitating during prayer or in other exalted states of consciousness."

Ruth said: "These tales were dismissed as naive superstitions even by the majority of parapsychologists until recent years, when a renewed interest in

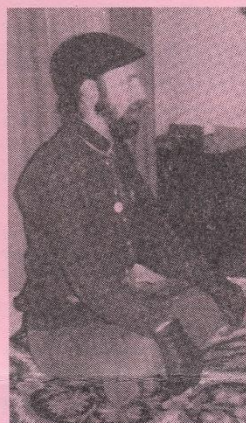
psychokinetic phenomena happened to coincide with a profound crisis in subatomic physics, which shattered our traditional ideas of space, time, matter and causality.

"This turned some of our leading physicists into avowed or shame-faced mystics.

"As a result of this convergence we now see, on the one hand, alleged levitation techniques taught by the Maharishi's instructors as an advanced stage of Transcendental Meditation, while at the opposite end of the spectrum in Birkbeck College, University of London, the Professor of Experimental Physics, John Hasted, is engaged in investigating the 'psychic-quasi-force field' which he believes must be responsible for levitational phenomena, if they exist."

Project Daedalus is aimed in the same direction. Or, more precisely, at the study of "mood-induced fluctuations in body-weight."

Ruth explained they are in search of even small fluctuations which



One of the volunteers attempts to levitate.

do not produce levitation in the strict sense of the word.

When I visited her at the West London laboratory she was able to show me one subject who had apparently been able to dramatically increase his (or her) weight during one session. There seemed to be no 'normal' explanation for this sudden increase.

As well as looking for gifted subjects to test — for which purpose researcher David Robertson is building some portable equipment — they are looking for subjects to train to levitate.

Using bio-feedback or any other method to induce an altered state of consciousness in a subject they hope to discover a way of defying gravity.

The instrumentation is constantly checked by a team so they know the machinery will not be at fault.

The project has been running for about a year now and initial problems with temperature changes and warm up of the equipment have been resolved. Now they are ready to run the project at full steam and are looking for volunteer subjects.

Ruth said: "We want anyone who is fascinated by the idea themselves and able to give a good six weeks of their time getting to know us and working with us and learning bio-feedback techniques."

Volunteers and people requesting further information can contact Ruth West on [redacted] or by writing c/o the [redacted] Secretary Lesley Park whose address is on page four.

More groups formed to tackle anomalies

A NEW organisation has been launched to study Unidentified Flying Objects and allied phenomena. Its nucleus is two organisations — Federation UFO Research and the Manchester Aerial Phenomena Investigation Team — which now cease to exist in their own right.

Mark Tyrell, former Secretary of FUFOR, explained why the Organisation for Scientific Evaluation of Aerial Phenomena (OSEAP) came to be formed:

"Over the last few years FUFOR has striven to emulate a scientific and objective methodology in its investigation and research. It has worked to achieve certain ideals and in most cases succeeded.

"As time went on new ideas and objectives came along and FUFOR found its horizons expanding. To be able to achieve this new set of priorities it became necessary to look at itself and this led to a total reorganisation. So, with others, FUFOR has become something new."

OSEAP will publish 'Centre Update' twice a year which will consist of book reviews, abstracts and a complete rundown for researchers of material received at the OSEAP Resources Centre in Stockport, run by David Rees. The 'OSEAP Journal' will also be published twice a year.

MEANWHILE in America Marcello Truzzi, editor of the Zetetic Scholar and a professor of sociology at Eastern Michigan University, has announced the formation of a new private Center for Scientific Anomaly Research (CSAR).

He says the Center will bring together scholars and researchers interested in responsible scientific inquiry.

Truzzi was originally a founder and co-director of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) but recently resigned.

CSAR is sponsored by, among others, Dr Eric Dingwall, Prof. Hans J Eysenck, Prof J Allen Hyneck and Prof. J Palmer.

It aims to study and evaluate anomalies in a "constructively sceptical manner" says its statement of purpose, and adds: "History clearly demonstrates that tomorrow's science is likely to contain surprises, and tomorrow's theories are likely to explain some of what are today viewed as controversial anomalies."

ASSAP activities

MARCH 6: ASSAP Study day: "Believing your eyes" to be held in North London at Tufnell Park Hall, Huddleston Road, North End from 9.45 am to 6 pm. For further information write to

MARCH 6: British UFO Research Association at Kensington Central Library, London. Kevin McClure, editor of Common Ground, lecturing on "Seeing and Believing - Religious responses to UFO experience." Start 7 pm.

MARCH 8: Maidstone Parapsychology Group at "The Chequers", Old Loose Hill, Loose, Kent. Mr Baldwin and Mr Smith talk on mediumship.

MARCH 9: Society for Psychical Research at Kensington Central Library, London. Rupert Sheldrake.

MARCH 12/13/14: Aquarian Festival at Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, London SW11. Topics include Astrology, Chinese Medicine, Reincarnation, Witchcraft, Tai Chi, Geomancy, The Dragon Project, Psychic Surgery, Astral Projection and Glastonbury.

Speakers include Roger Elliot, Nigel Pennick, Paul Devereux and Mary Caine. For further in-

MARCH 11: The International Institute of Integral Human Sciences at Loughborough Central Library, Granby Street, Loughborough, Leics. Bryan Fearon lecturing on "Imagination and Creativity".

MARCH 13/14: BUFORA National conference at Edinburgh, Scot-

MARCH 20: ASSAP Study Day. Details on separate sheet.

MARCH 28: IIHS at Quorn, Loughborough, Leics. Day-long workshop on "Mind, Power and Communication". For more

MARCH 22: Maidstone Parapsychology Group at "The Chequers", Old Loose Hill, Loose, Kent. Mr and Mrs Stroud talk on healing including illustrations and a demonstration.

APRIL 3: BUFORA at Kensington Central Library, London. P Hill lecturing on "The Interface between the UFO report and new information". Start 7 pm.

APRIL 5: MPG at "The Chequers", Old Loose Hill, Loose, Kent. Open meeting.

APRIL 25: Wessex Research Group, Winchester Centre, Parchment Street, 3.30 pm. Hilary Evans, ASSAP publications officer, gives an illustrated lecture on "The Entity Enigma."

The training department is planning another Saturday workshop to be held on 12 June entitled CREATING VIEWPOINTS.

This will give ASSAP members, whatever their field of interest the chance to present their views either as a written paper, a practical demonstration or experiment.

It could be a report on a personal experience, a speculative idea, reflections on the views or work of others, or whatever.

Training Officer Dennis Bury emphasises that contributions are welcome from all members, whether new to the subject or with a lifetime's experience.

"Start by sending us a brief outline of what you'd like to say or do, and how long you reckon it would take, and so on.

"We can't guarantee to incorporate every suggestion, but we would hope to construct a balanced and varied program which will cover a wide range of topics, and provide a stimulating and exhilarating opportunity for view-sharing and debating."

Contributions should be sent to

Thanks

ASSAP gratefully thanks the following for their donations:-

F. Jones; S. Rothwell; M. Straw; R. Redman; R. Evans; A. Harcourt; P. Goodman; D. Holley; G. Morris; M. Dickinson-Webb; Mr & Mrs F. Williams; J. Stamp; I. Nook; J. King; K. Ryan; J. Beck; L. Brunt. R. Russell; M. Cooper; M. Wysocki; A. Amos; E. Robins; B. Sydney; F. Howe; N. Ellis; L. Venet; C. Sherratt; J. Foubister; A. Davies; V. White; L. Rivers; J. Whitehead; S. Winton; J. Best.

M. Jacobs; B. Boyle; Sgt & Mrs Atkey; R. Boylen; R. Howarth; G. Cummins; B. Oldham; P. Carroll; F. Makin; I. Kennedy; A. Sowerby; K. McClure; H. Pincott; J. Bagnall; J. Smitherman; J. Porcher; A. Morgan. D. Christie-Murray.

G. Wallwork; A. West; W. Bolton; K. Dyke; A. Bach; A. Wood; A. Cleaver; H. Evans.

Others will be acknowledged in future issues of ASSAP News.

All in the mind ?

INVESTIGATIONS by psychologists into the brain functions of mediums strongly suggest a link between a "weakness" in the right temporal lobe and a psychic faculty.

The research is being carried out under the auspices of London-based Institute of Psychiatry by Stephen Galliano.

The work was initiated by him and Dr Peter Fenwick last October.

Stephen said: "Basically there were three or four reasons why I was taken in this direction. Dr Fenwick and I examined the literature on epilepsy and psychic phenomena and the relation between the two things. We discovered three findings:

"First, epileptic patients after seizures report very mystical types of experiences, religious conversions and strong religious beliefs. These occurred in patients not previously very religious.

"Secondly, we discovered these experiences only occurred in a series of patients with epilepsy in the right temporal lobe of the brain.

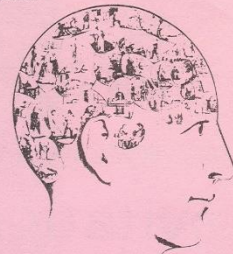
"Also from anecdotes and reports on holy people we found in many of these cases a history of epilepsy had been noted.

"These findings led us not so much to hypothesise, but to look at the possibility of whether psychic people had in any way some form of underlying weakness, not damage, in this part of the brain."

The right temporal lobe is concerned with the relation between time and space.

Stephen sought the help of London's College of Psychic Studies in finding 25 psychics to take part in several tests. The majority of mediums who came forward were women; Stephen is also interested in seeking the aid of male mediums.

For a control group Mr Galliano selected people who had a strong faith in religion and were regular church-goers.



Is there a connection between the psychic faculty and a part of the brain? (Picture by courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library).

To both groups he gave tests to assess the function of the right temporal lobe to see if there was any disfunction. These trials were to assess visual memory ability and also general intelligence tests.

The volunteers filled in questionnaires about their medical history and psychic experiences. Stephen noticed the high incidence of psychics who have had head injuries, a finding noted by other researchers. In the group of mediums the incidence was about 50 or 60 per cent and 10 per cent in the control group.

Stephen said: "Head injuries often cause some form of brain damage. This would, of course, explain why psychics reported more head injuries than non-psychics."

Stephen also noticed another interesting characteristic "These psychic people had a very high vocal intelligence as measured by our tests.

The probe is an important first step in evaluating the scientific basis of psychic phenomena.

At School

An important part of ASSAP's educational work lies within schools, colleges and universities.

Already we have been called upon to provide speakers and also to give advice with individual student's and group projects.

In order to co-ordinate and develop this function more effectively we propose to appoint one or more academic institutions liaison officers.

Ideally any member undertaking this work should have connections within the teaching profession, at university level if possible, or they should feel at home in an academic environment. A relaxed outgoing personality would be an added advantage.

Survey launched

A regional group in Sheffield has taken the initiative in launching a survey to find out what percentage of people have experienced anomalous phenomena and what sort of phenomena they were.

The Sheffield Society for Research into the Paranormal hope that other regional groups will also take part in the scheme.

They want to find out which phenomena occur most frequently and whether people believe in the supernatural. So far their questionnaire has been distributed to more than 400 people.

Copies of the questionnaire can be obtained from Dr Michele

Anomalous phenomena around Britain

REPORTS of anomalous phenomena continue to be given to ASSAP and where possible our members are sent to investigate. Below are brief summaries of these cases as well as reports from other organisations and sources. If you hear or read of reports of phenomena which you think would be of interest to ASSAP please send all relevant information to the editor.

In the last issue of ASSAP News it was reported that a plague of unidentified fibres was threatening to engulf an East Anglian household. Dr Pincott, ASSAP's external affairs officer, said then that he believed there would be a normal, if unusual, explanation.

ASSAP investigators have now finished their study of the case and the housewife suffering from the phenomenon has written to express her gratitude:—

May I thank you and your colleague microscopists most sincerely for the detailed attention you have given to what must appear to be an imaginary problem. I am, needless to say, delighted and relieved to hear of your findings and conclusion that there is nothing 'living' within us.

In the meantime I have given much thought to the matter and realised that I neglected to inform you of one vital factor — which I must say did not occur to me immediately:— I am a dress designer/maker, and at the time when this strange phenomenon came to my notice I was working on a particular wedding dress for about six weeks. Perhaps I inhaled some of the fine fibres? Also since I finished that dress the itchiness seems less. None of the fibres on my person were coloured, and I must admit that since receiving your reassuring reply I have resisted to look for more 'signs'. Although I have worked with fabrics constantly for about 10 years, this peculiarity has never come to my notice before.

Although you would be most welcome, I do not know if further investigation would bring beneficial results, but I am not averse to the idea: I feel this is just some irregularity which I shall have to accept as part of my work which I enjoy to the full. I feel that our neighbours might not welcome an investigation as all are elderly, one is blind and I would not feel comfortable in troubling them.

I cannot fully express my most extreme gratitude to you for your reassurance and thorough investigative help, through your organisation of ASSAP, to which I shall eagerly subscribe to membership: in the meantime, if there is anything I can do to assist the organisation on this subject or any other, please be assured of my attention.

With sincere gratitude — K.H., Felixstowe, Suffolk.

BANBURY, OXON. January 1981 onwards. Survival.

This case, if true, could be one of the most impressive Survival cases

of the last ten years. It centres around a circle of Spiritualists and a medium Doreen Fowler. The medium has received scripts in foreign languages including a rare and ancient form of Chinese. They eventually found an expert capable of translating the script. He said of the writing: "No human hand could have written in such perfection. It just is not possible." He commented on their luck in finding him and said he was probably the only person in this country who could translate this rare script. One writing told of "the East about to dawn, Radiating but sorrow to mankind."

This is not the first highly evidential case which the circle have been involved with. Recently a complex "cross-correspondence" message came through the circle involving the late radio star Peter Cavanagh.

A researcher in the area is needed urgently to monitor the developments. ASSAP is fortunate to have the support of Alan House, one of the circle, who has joined the Association.

SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE. February 1982. Spontaneous human combustion?

A 30-year-old woman died in hospital after she was engulfed in flames in her back garden. Police are investigating.

MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE. February 1982. Fireball.

A ball of fire fell from the sky and buried itself into the ground in the garden of the Whelan family in Halifax Road.

Son Mark, 19, said: "I looked out of the window and saw this incredible ball of fire. The place seemed ablaze and the flames were about 2ft high. It was a jagged object looking very mysterious."

Fire and Police services were called and samples of the substance were taken away to be examined by the Forensic Laboratory at Aldermaston.

Mrs Whelan told the News of the World: "It was frightening — if it had been a few inches closer we could all have been frizzled alive."

HACKNEY, EAST LONDON. December 1981. Alien Animal.

Four boys spotted a "giant growling hairy thing" on Hackney marshes described subsequently as a bear by the press. Paw prints

were also discovered. The reports were given added credence because the bodies of two headless skinned bears were found floating in the Lea River next to Hackney marshes a month earlier.

Later press reports suggested a hoaxer from a fancy dress party could have been responsible for the sightings.

At the same time a huge pig was seen wandering on the A361 at Deddington Oxon but when police arrived on the scene there was no sign of it.

BEVERLEY, YORKSHIRE. October 1981 onwards. Haunting.

Workmen at Beverley Guildhall carrying out restoration work have heard mysterious footsteps crossing the bare boards of the Mayor's parlour. One of the workmen has also claimed to have smelled cigar smoke which he attributed to the alleged ghost.

CONSETT, DURHAM. January 1982. Haunting/Poltergeist.

A "white lady", mysterious footsteps and lights being inexplicably switched on and off are just some of the phenomena the Brown family claim have taken place over the last 14 months in their council house. Derwentside council have now agreed to rehouse them.

Progress report

It is ASSAP's intention to keep all minutes of meetings open to members — with the exception of matters prejudicial to public interest — and with this aim in mind periodic reports of internal meetings will appear in ASSAP News.

If any member requires minutes of specific meetings they should send an s.a.e. to the minutes secretary — a post currently held by Maurice Townsend whose address is on page four.

The rail strike has meant most departments have been unable to hold any meetings for members but now the strike is over they will again start up. Executive meetings continue however.

TRAINING: Under the auspices of Dennis Bury training has made significant progress as reported in ASSAP News 2. In particular a one-day seminar "Believing Your Eyes" will be held on Saturday March 6 in North London. It is hoped the seminar can be repeated in other parts of the country.

ASSAP is planning three or four major conferences but as these take time to organise, individual members of ASSAP have volunteered to lecture to local groups throughout the country.

The only stipulation is that other ASSAP members in the locality may be invited along as well — which is, of course, welcomed by

most groups. Local groups who wish to find out more about this scheme should write to External

GROUP AFFILIATION: This has now been discussed thoroughly by the Executive and while they realise it is impossible to make rules to apply to all groups they have drawn up guidelines. The affiliation (perhaps co-operation is a better word) will be of mutual benefit to both organisations.

RESEARCH: David Christie-Murray has introduced his survival project to the Executive. He aims to co-operate closely with the Survival Research Foundation and the Survival Joint Research Committee Trust.

CONSTITUTION: This has been discussed in detail and will be presented to the first annual meeting by Dr Vernon Harrison.

PUBLICATIONS: Common Ground — ASSAP's journal of record — and ASSAP News continue to be published although ASSAP News 2 was delayed due to factors outside the department's control.

It is hoped soon to publish the first "one-off" publication on one particular aspect of anomalous phenomena. The department is also pledged to producing book lists of recommended reading for particular subjects.

Letters

I THANK you for the leaflet which you sent me, however before I join any organisation I consider it is essential that I first find out if you have any groups in this area.

I find that most of the action is in the South and it would be pointless to join unless it was possible to attend things of interest. I am wary of reading other people's points of view, either in books or leaflets.

My husband and I have both been workers for Spiritualism for 40 years and are used to sitting for research but we would not travel to London.

Could anyone let me know if there are any others in this area with whom we could link-up?

CAN any reader inform me how I can contact a group in my area?

I am particularly interested in investigating life after death and would like to join a group as near to me as possible who are investigating the associated phenomena: evp, direct voice, materialisation etc.

Super esp eliminated by new project ?

A NATIONAL survival-pact project is set to be launched in Britain which hopes to overcome the super-esp theory. "Project: Unrecorded Information" was initiated by the Survival Research Foundation based in America and earlier this year its president, Dr Arthur Berger, gave details of the project to a one-day conference of the Survival Joint Research Committee Trust held in London.

The SJRCT wants to co-operate with Dr Berger on the project and ASSAP are also aiming to work with Dr Berger. ASSAP's ombudsman David Christie-Murray has been working on a similar scheme.

Dr Berger hopes the project will receive a large scale response in Britain. "If survival is real people ought to be able to communicate with us after death," Dr Berger commented.

He explained at the one-day conference there will be three types of project available to participants but all of them will involve a key-word or number to open a lock...

The first test was invented by the English psychologist and parapsychologist, Dr. Robert H. Thouless. Thouless' test consists of a test message prepared in cypher by the use of an established method of encipherment with two key words or a key passage which is not written down but is expected to be remembered. The enciphered message is left with the Survival Research Foundation (SRF) which conducts the experimental program. The key is not revealed to anyone. It is this key which is to be communicated through a psychic or otherwise if death is survived. Only the planner's key will allow the message to be read. There is no living mind from which to obtain it telepathically. There is nothing to be read by clairvoyance.

Dr. Ian Stevenson, the American psychiatrist and parapsychologist famous for his investigations of cases of the reincarnation type, conceived the "Combination Lock Test". In this test a combination padlock is set to a combination consisting of three pairs of numbers

which the planner alone knows and which is remembered by using a six letter word or six word phrase that, by the use of correspondences given by Stevenson, can be translated into a combination of six digits. Again, the word or phrase is not written down but is to be remembered and to be communicated after death. The initial letters of the phrase or the letters of the word, when converted into numbers, will open the lock.

Another test was formulated by the American author, editor and researcher, Frank C. Tribbe, in conjunction with Clarissa Mulders. The "Tribbe/Mulders Cipher Test" consists of a key phrase selected from a standard reference work and from which a personal code is created. A test message is then enciphered with the code and left with the SRF. The key phrase is not written down but is to be remembered and communicated after death. The test message cannot be deciphered without the correct key phrase.

Project: Unrecorded Information is a long-term, large-scale educational and experimental program which offers to all interested persons the opportunity to become familiar for the first time with tests for survival, to learn how to work and to select and prepare one which, if successful, will supply cogent evidence for researchers as well as loved ones that there is continuation after death. Besides educating the public in these tests, the Project will conduct postmortem experiments in attempts to obtain the information known only to deceased planners. After a planner's death, if the test selected is completed successfully, the strong prob-



Dr Arthur Berger demonstrates to the conference how one of the codes works. (Picture by courtesy of Psychic News).

ability of the planner's post-mortem identity and survival would be established.

The Project hopes to record a multiplicity of successes. Many successes accumulated in the program over a period of years, especially when surrounded by the rigid experimental safeguards imposed to ensure the purity of the experiments, would result in formidable empirical evidence coming from the dead which

might tell us that survival of death is a reality.

Like ASSAP, the Survival Research Foundation believes that working together with others is the best approach to problems, particularly the problem of survival. The SRF urges the active involvement of individuals and groups both in England and America in its investigation and their positive participation in Project: Unrecorded Information.

For further information

ASSAP is an integrating body designed to encourage existing efforts and initiate new ones. Many people, as individuals or as members of groups, are already researching anomalous phenomena; ASSAP offers them the chance to do so more effectively, by working in association with others, benefiting from a nation-wide investigative network, consultation facilities and information resources, and by fostering communication between those working in the same or related fields both in Britain and internationally.

However ASSAP has no intention of taking over existing groups; they will retain full autonomy, and it will remain their decision to what extent they integrate their activities with those of ASSAP as a whole.

More details about ASSAP and an application form can be obtained from the Membership Secretary Janice Bagnall,

an s.a.e.

Editor of ASSAP News is Alan

Any contributions for ASSAP news 4 should be sent to the Editor by April 5. Letters, news of activities and items for the "Help!" column should be sent to the Editorial Secretary by the same date.

The quarterly journal of ASSAP is COMMON GROUND. It contains articles on a wide variety of topics not necessarily written by ASSAP members. The latest issue contains an article on ouija boards by Alun Virgin.

This journal is always outspoken, often controversial, but committed to the search for that 'common ground' where our studies converge. We urge all ASSAP members to subscribe.

A single issue cost £1 within the UK, a four-issue subscription £4. Foreign subscription is \$4 for a single issue or \$15 for a four-issue subscription. ASSAP members can benefit from a 10% reduction, receiving a year's subscription for only £3.60, postage included.

Common Ground is available from Kevin and Sue McClure,

Physical mediumship research group

This group is now in active operation, and though it currently meets in London there are plans to conduct research all over the country. The intention is to apply modern research techniques to a subject which has been sadly neglected since the classic researches of the pre-1914 era.

The group is fortunate to be in contact with a number of mediums who practice direct-voice, levitation (without contact) of furniture, and materialisation either partial or complete. They will be glad to hear from other physical mediums who are willing to help with research, and it is hoped to bring together subjects and researchers living in the same area.

The other requirement is equipment. The use of modern equipment has already been obtained,

but more is required: it is intended that this should form the nucleus of an ASSAP equipment pool which will be able to supply tools and instruments to associated groups throughout the country. All gifts or loans of equipment will be much appreciated.

Any offers of help, any offers of equipment, and any physical mediums willing to help with research, will be most welcome to get this project under way on a large scale. "We are particularly anxious to hear from people living in Northern England," says Maurice Townsend, who will gladly provide further information and receive offers of assistance.