

ASSAP NEWS

ASSOCIATION FOR THE
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF
ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA

NUMBER 8
August 1983

THE following letter raises many points which may make other readers think:

I am writing to complain in the strongest terms about our ASSAP News 7.

Why that front page? It was taking a diabolical liberty to expect us not to see that this was a blatant plug for yet another book from Andy Collins.

Why not plug it in a book column then Jenny Randles can get hers in at the same time along with

those of Hilary Evans and Paul Devereux — the "bureaucratic elite" as one member dubbed them.

Surely there is more going on in ASSAP besides people writing books? Let us think of something else.

Who is investigating what? What knowledge do we possess between us? Are there any members actually being haunted? Have any members got any specific talent as in healing or clairvoyance?

We have dogmatism in far too many magazines and I hope that ASSAP at least will broaden its horizons.

R Daulby, Paignton, S Devon

The report on Runwell by Andy Collins and his Earthquest group was used to illustrate how work on ASSAP's Project Albion might be carried out.

It was the result of many hours of work by Earthquest and much

personal loss of money by Andy Collins.

The least I could do as editor instead of just 'stealing' all this work was tell people where to buy the book in the hopes Andy could recoup some of his losses.

As for the rest of your comments, Mr Daulby, I agree entirely! What are ASSAP members, and non-members, doing out there? Tell me!

Alan Cleaver

ASSAP launches major book series

WHAT should the man in the street believe...about survival, UFOs, reincarnation, demonic possession, spirit communication, creatures unrecognised by science, abductions by aliens?

A new series of books, published by the Aquarian Press in conjunction with ASSAP, seeks to set out the evidence for — and against — each of these controversial topics.

'It came about almost inevitably,' explains Hilary Evans, ASSAP Publications Officer and Editor of the Evidence Series. 'It has become clear in recent years that the general public are no longer content to have these matters dismissed as flights of fancy.

'Too many people have had poltergeist experiences, or premonitions, or sightings of unexplained phenomena. They want to know what is going on.

'And it suddenly struck me that here in ASSAP we have people who are pre-eminently qualified to give an informed account of these matters'.

He insists that the 'Evidence' series quite definitely does not

set out to make people's minds up for them. 'Our authors have a clear brief — to set out the evidence and let the reader do the evaluation.

'We are acting as counsel neither for the defence nor for the prosecution. As far as is humanly possible, our authors will be impartial and objective'.

Without exception, ASSAP's authors have found the experience stimulating, and in some cases astonishing.

Kevin McClure, whose *The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary* is one of the two titles which launch the series, says that researching it was an experience which has radically modified his attitudes to the subject even though he has been studying it for many years.

The other of the 'opening batsmen', Hilary Evans, describes writing *The Evidence for UFOs* as an exciting challenge:

'It forced me to be really honest with the material — and with myself. I don't mind admitting, I am the first to be astonished at the conclusions to which the evidence inexorably led me.

'Setting it out on paper was like drawing up a balance sheet; for the first time you realise just where you stand'.

Though the books are resolutely

impartial, the authors are invited to provide an Epilogue in which they present their own personal summing-up of the evidence.

The Editor explains: 'We decided we owed it to our readers to show them where the evidence has led at least one individual who, after all, has given years of study to the subject.

'We felt that people would find the examples stimulating, even though they themselves may come to different conclusions. But there is no attempt to persuade or argue a case'.

John Rimmer, whose *The Evidence for Abductions by Aliens* will be one of the follow-up titles, to be published in Spring, 1984, speaks for all the authors when he says that, though he offers his personal opinion, it is by no means a hard-and-fast one, and he is prepared to modify it if new evidence comes in.

With this subject, as with the creatures of Janet & Colin Bord's *The Evidence for Bigfoot and other Man-Beasts*, another 1984 title, new evidence is indeed continually coming in.

'We want our readers to see the books as situation reports,' the Editor explains, 'Should the situation change, the books will be updated'.

Aquarian plan to maintain a steady flow of further volumes, gradually building up a comprehensive collection covering the range of topics which made up ASSAP's field of study.

Two further titles are already in hand: Andrew Green's *The Evidence for Ghosts* and Michael

Goss's *The Evidence for the Phantom Hitch-Hiker*.

'I dare say we'll raise a few eyebrows with Michael's book, but his text will convince even the most sceptical that something really extraordinary is going on.

'It has all the appearance of life imitating legend, though maybe what is happening is something akin to Sheldrake's "formative causation" in a behavioral rather than a biological context'.

Because the series is aimed at a wide audience, the books are in paperback format and, though illustrated, priced at a modest £2.50. But this does not mean they have been 'written down' for a popular market.

If they stretch the reader's mind, so much the better; I don't have the least doubt they will stretch his imagination!

THE EVIDENCE FOR VISIONS OF THE VIRGIN MARY



Kevin McClure

THE EVIDENCE FOR UFOs



Hilary Evans

Editorial: Changes for ASSAP News

ON our front page is a very outspoken letter from an ASSAP member.

But I was not annoyed to receive it — I was glad! It is encouraging to receive any feedback from members even if strong criticism.

We are about to change the format of ASSAP News so if anyone has any suggestions now is the time to let me know. Remember this is your newsletter — if you don't like it suggest some improvements!

The media is now well into the "silly season" when news is difficult to come by and reporters turn instead to stranger stories.

It means therefore a boom time for the paranormal with more ghosts, UFOs and other anomalies to follow up.

Hopefully it will also mean much coverage for the British UFO

Research Association third International congress on August 27, 28 and 29 in Lane End, Buckinghamshire.

There are many famous speakers plus of course the chance to meet up with local researchers. Details

The Running Well Mystery featured in the last issue of ASSAP News has apparently angered many Christians and led to researcher Andy Collins being banned from the Runwell Church in Essex.

One church official said: "It has created a lot of doubts and fears in people's minds and is just stirring up the work of the devil."

Now photographers are not allowed in the church and visitors have to be accompanied by the warden.

A curious comment on the mystery of missing schoolgirl Genette Tate seems to have gone almost unnoticed.

The senior detectives flew to Australia to interview car mechanic Michael Bastin. He first told police two years ago that he believes Genette was killed by a man currently serving a life sentence for murder.

The Sun quoted Mr Bastin's elder brother John as saying that "psychic forces" played a part in his "divine mission to seek out the truth."

But added: "It would be quite improper to say what that is."

What is the psychic link in the Genette Tate case?

The Daily Express broke tradition and devoted much space to an

anomalous occurrence: the strange appearance in crop fields of perfect circles of flattened corn.

Numerous explanations were put forward from landing UFOs to mating hedgehogs although sadly none quoted Bristol researcher Ian Mrzyglod who has carried out much work into this phenomena.

Already I notice peculiarities, perhaps even Men in Black activities with this news. The Daily Express quoted the London Psychophysical Research Institute — yet as far as many sources know there is no such organisation!

As we go to press I note W H Smith stores are selling Jenny Randles latest book *The Pennine UFO Mystery*. Price £1.50

Chasing a common factor in ghosts

RECENTLY we seem to have experienced a marked reduction in the number of interesting cases suitable for investigation.

There is a tendency when this happens to dig over old cases and try to extract as much as possible from old reports and local tales.

I would like to remind investigators that it is very easy to get carried away by interesting stories and to make links which may not be scientifically valid.

As an example I could describe the investigation we carried out at Radio Sheffield. There were reports of recent unusual phenomena and we spoke to a gentleman who had worked in the building in 1960 and had seen the ghost of a maid on the stairs.

He told us that shortly afterwards an acquaintance had told this tale:

In about 1916 or 1918 a maid worked at the house who was being courted by a local policeman. She would stare out of the window waiting for him to pass.

She would then run down to meet him in the orchard. She later disappeared in mysterious circumstances.

The gentleman who witnessed the apparition linked it with the maid. It is very easy to extend the story and imagine the poor love-sick maid having to leave because she got into trouble.

Or even to imagine that the policeman secretly murdered her.

However there is no factual link between the girl in the story and the ghost that was seen.

Local legends are very interesting and can add a lot of colour to a

fairly boring report but we should be very careful as scientific investigators to keep our facts separate from the fiction.

On a completely different topic I have been trying to find links between haunted sites in this area to see if there is some sort of common denominator.

I have been marking the sites on a map but no pattern has emerged.

The only common factor that I have noticed so far is that most places seem to have high levels of mental tension.

Most theatres seem to have a ghost and there is always a considerable amount of backstage tension before each show.

Our local radio and TV stations are haunted — anyone who has been interviewed on the radio can vouch for the nervous tension prior to the broadcast.

On the occasions that I have investigated poltergeist cases in private homes I have often found that there is a lot of tension within these families — not entirely due to the poltergeist.

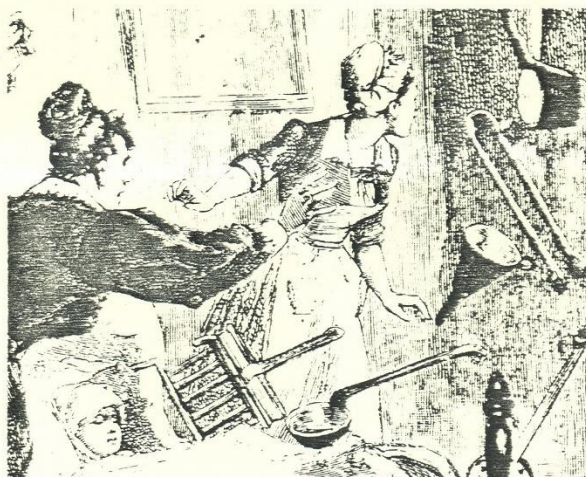
One often finds there is a history of nervous breakdowns or of the children going into care.

If a ghost is seen in a building it often seems to be that it occurs on the stairs.

I would appreciate it if anyone with access to suitable records could check this.

In any house the place where one is most likely to worry about falling is when walking down a flight of stairs.

Could there be a link or am I just clutching at straws? What



about other places where there is a high level of mental tension — for example dentists' surgeries?

I would be very interested to hear of any reports.

Other group news...

Now affiliated are The Sheffield Society for Psychical Research, The Rainbow Group, Brockley and the Kent Association for Paranormal Research.

Richard Weekes has started up an ASSAP Leeds group in Morley.

JANICE Bagnall has moved to Colchester, Essex, so our new membership secretary is Caroline

NEW ADDRESS!

Lost ?

IF you were one of those who didn't receive a June newsletter please send a note to: D. Bury

Dennis is attempting to mail those who missed out as long as supplies last and is taking up a case with the post office about the significantly inefficient delivery rate which we have discovered regarding the June Newsletter mailing.

Ghostly Pumas escape the Captor's net

THE appearance of a hitherto unknown species of cats around Britain have attracted the attention of researchers into anomalous phenomena.

It has long been thought by many investigators that such creatures are a form of 'ghost' which, although solid in appearance, will always vanish to escape capture.

Indeed even when radio bulletins announced a 'beast' in Exmoor had been cornered it once again slipped the hunters' net.

The animal, thought to weigh 70lb, apparently killed more than 100 lambs in two months by breaking the neck two vertebrae from the skull. This is said to be the trade mark of a large member of the cat family.

But police later changed their mind when trying to pigeon-hole the creature into a known species and said it was a cross breed of two dogs.

Witnesses alternatively described it as a puma or a panther.

On more than one occasion Royal Marines armed with high velocity sniper rifles tracked the animal.

Coincidentally a book was published on the subject of these strange beasts at about the same time as the 'flap' in Britain.

"Cat Country" by Di Francis (David & Charles Newton £4.95) called on Di's diligent work particularly in Devon and South Wales.

She quite accepts their existence having seen and photographed the cats for herself. But Di discounts the ghost theory stating in Fortean Times:

"They are not spirit or out of this world creatures. They do not vanish, leave no trace or fly off to another planet.

"They are in fact, very large and rather beautiful animals that have been living and breeding throughout our countryside undetected by the scientific world.

"And the only reason they have been undetected is because the scientific world would not get out of their comfortable chairs and take the situation seriously."

Fellow animal hunter and author: Janet Bord reviewed her book in Fortean Times.

She hoped "that as a result of its public recognition it will not immediately be hounded out of existence by trigger happy hunters claiming to be protecting the community."

Sadly that is exactly what happened in Exmoor a few weeks later.

Perhaps the situation was not helped by the advertising for Di's book which offered £500 for the first cat to be captured alive.

Or the Daily Express offering £1,000 for a picture of the 'Exmoor monster'.

Meanwhile armed police in

Stokenchurch were searching another Puma stalking this Buckinghamshire village.

Local press played on the "danger to mums and children" angle but High Wycombe Chief Inspector Tony Miller seemed remarkably better informed:

"There have been several hundred sightings of these animals, but there is no tangible evidence of attacks on livestock or people.

"Police have never even found carcasses of dead animals."

Indeed local farmer's wife Julie Marshall, although scared of the puma, had to admit: "I can't understand why it hasn't killed anything."

Mr Miller added: "On previous sightings the animals seem to disappear quickly never to be seen again."

Retired Stokenchurch businessman Philip Viccars first sighted the puma paddling across the netball court at the back of Stokenchurch first school.

"It had a body the size of a big dog" he said "a long tail and a small head."

Student Margaret Brooks, 18, watched it through binoculars.

"It was a large tawney cat like creature. It was the size of a great Dane."

Synchronicity began to play its part. Two weeks after the Stokenchurch puma sightings a lioness escaped from nearby Didcot. It was eventually recaptured.

It seems the Stokenchurch animal next moved to Wendover when a five-inch diameter plaster cast of a paw-print taken from a garden was sent to Oxford University for examination.

A plastercast of a paw mark possibly left by an alien puma in Essex was taken by researcher Andy Collins following sightings in the area.

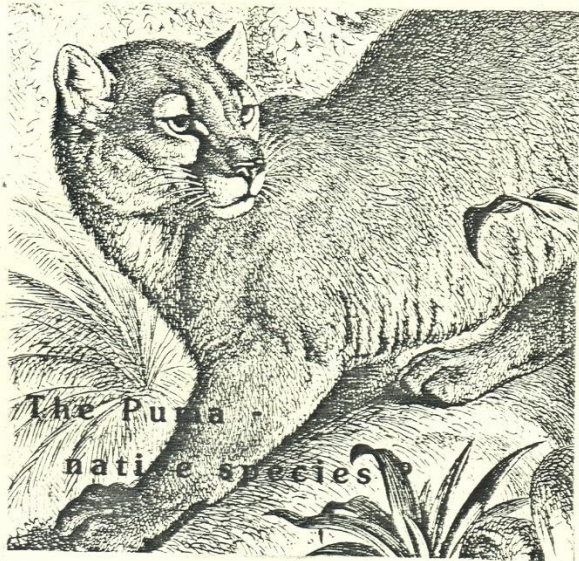
Harlston, Norwich: The imaginary playmates of Gemma Wiles, 6, took on a new significance when other members of the family heard them walking about and her mother Carol saw one of them.

The ghosts of a girl and old man were eventually expelled by a medium.

Report from Eastern Daily Express.

Burnley, Lancs: Roy Atkin, owner of a car repair workshop on the banks of the River Burn reports sensing a "presence" in the building which was once a 17th century forge.

Report from Burnley Express



Saddleworth, Lancs: Raising of a bed, moving lights and an invisible hand resting on residents' shoulders are some of the phenomena claimed by farm owner Fedor Bagenz for his haunted Hill Head Farm.

Chester: Steve New owner of an antique shop and Audrey Haynes, owner of La Belle Femme both report poltergeist phenomena such as moving objects in the Cheshire Observer.

North Cheam, Surrey: Two women saw a noiseless black and silver UFO at 8.10pm on May 5. Although in a busy populated area nobody else was around at the time. "It was as if time stood still while we were watching it" said D Henderson. "There was no one to confirm it...it was as if it was for our viewing only."

Investigator: Alan Cleaver.

Rock on

PSEUDO-TERRORIST action has erupted in Earth Mysteries research with the formation of a secret Markstone Liberation Front.

A group of at least ten masked men moved a three foot tall sacred stone in Thundersley, Essex, re-erecting it in its "original position."

They claimed council men had moved it while digging trenches some weeks earlier.

The MLF have told local papers they will strike again to "keep alive the last semblance of our rich and magical heritage."

Correlated

CORRELATION is a new journal, devoted exclusively to research into astrology.

Articles report on empirical research, debate methodology, conceptual and philosophical issues and include reviews.

To date contributors have included Prof Hans Eysenck, Dr David Nias, Dr Geoffrey Dean and Drs Michel and Francoise Gauquelin.

Association members £3.00, non-members £4.50. Two issues a year.

Training

THE time is now approaching for ASSAP to begin its plans to establish a basic training scheme.

Ten members are sought to form a team of 'tutors' who will also form a panel of adjudicators in setting up a form of basic 'qualifications' which members will be able to undertake.

As it is a policy to involve members as widely as possible the training Officer hopes that members who are not coordinators, lecturers in the subject, ASSAP consultants or otherwise already involved in ASSAP will want to sign up.

If you are interested in joining this team, wherever you are in the UK, to tackle this unique venture — and have a cassette recorder, and willingness to

few U.S. research

their normal professional activity, scientists make many contributions to the understanding and betterment of the world. They usually try to communicate their new knowledge to the public, with more success in some areas than in others. Nevertheless, there are a number of topics concerning which the public turns to scientists for information only to find that they have little information or interest.

One good reason that some of these topics are outside the mainstream of science is that their reported properties appear to be counter to established scientific knowledge.

Thus "precognition" violates the principle of causality, and "UFO reports" sometimes seem to describe phenomena that violate the laws of motion. Since the relevant evidence is "soft" (typically narrative in form), there is good reason for scientists to be sceptical of the reality of these reported phenomena.

One can use the term "anomalous" to characterise a phenomenon which is actually or potentially investigable by establishing methods or future developments of these methods, but which is generally regarded by the scientific community, for reasons such as the above, as being outside their established fields of inquiry.

One can recognise also that there are a number of other topics which are possibly investigable methods but which do not belong to any recognised sub-discipline of science, and for this or other reasons tend not to be fully discussed in the scientific literature.

The established disciplines and traditions of science and other forms of scholarship do not always offer a ready procedure by which concerned scientists and scholars may investigate anomalous phenomena in response to the public interest or their own interest. Exchange through refereed articles in established journals is essential for scientific and scholarly work, but such journals are often reluctant to give space to studies of such phenomena.

One sees little prospect of progress towards arriving at an understanding of such topics (beginning with the basic question of their reality) until they are subject to the normal processes of open publication, debate, and criticism which are the lifeblood of science and scholarship.

It is with this conviction that the founding Committee decided to establish an organization which is now named "Society for Scientific Exploration, Formed by the Study of Anomalous Phenomena". (Most business will be transacted with the shorter version "Society for Scientific Exploration".)

The Society will provide a forum in which research on these and related topics may be presented to other members of the Society and to the scientific and scholarly community in general.

The Society, as such, has no intention of endorsing the reality or non-reality of any particular

topic. On the other hand, no subject will be prohibited from discussion or publication simply because it is now an accepted part of scientific or scholarly knowledge.

Laurence Frederick, Professor of Astronomy, Dept of Astronomy, University of Virginia, PO Box

Blatherings?

It is right that ASSAP should keep an open mind on all subjects, but that is no excuse for the publication in ASSAP NEWS SIX of so sloppy, shoddy and downright silly an article as 'The key to the past and the future'.

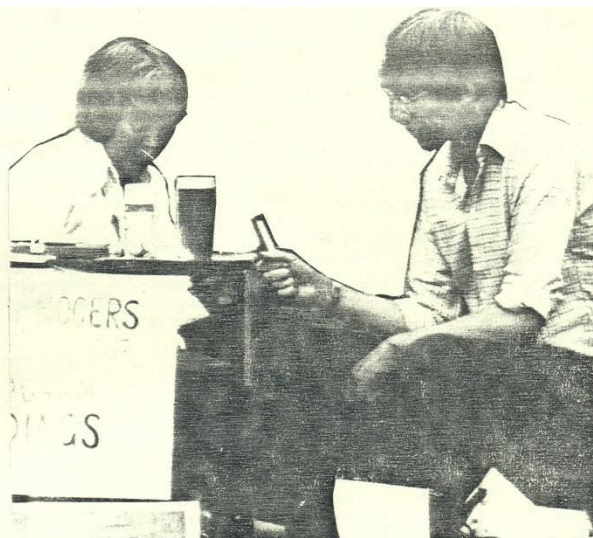
The members of the Society for the Interpretation of Ancient Texts are free to believe what they choose, but there is no place for their blatherings in the periodical of an association dedicated to scientific study.

Consider what is virtually the first sentence: 'In January 1974 the lost key to the ancient system of symbolism, which is the key to past history and wisdom, was recovered'. Leaving aside the claim itself, the statement is unsupported by any evidence that such a 'key' ever existed; or that if it did, that it was 'lost' or that, found, it would unlock 'the ancient system of symbolism' — what ancient system?; or that it follows that it was also the 'key' — whatever that may mean in this context — to 'past history and wisdom', itself a meaningless comprehensive phrase.

And so throughout the article. Who were these 'people from all walks of life' who gathered at Babylon during 'the Age of Reason', whatever that was? What are these 'research centres' which flourished during the same period? What evidence is there that there has ever existed a 'man of the materialistic age' (again, undefined) who 'chose a completely materialistic way of life' which thenceforward became 'the only reality known to him'? I submit that such a creature has never existed except in the minds of mystically-inclined theory-mongers.

It is disgraceful that such a piece of pseudo-mystical doubletalk should appear in the pages of ASSAP NEWS except as an example of everything to which ASSAP is opposed. I would like to think that it was in this spirit that the article was published, but I very much fear we were supposed to take it seriously.

Hilary Evans, London SE13



HANDS up those who listen to the radio after one o'clock in the morning?

Well, the ASSAP garden party held on June 25 was given a 45 minute slot by the London Broadcasting company from 1.15 to 2am on July 6.

First to be interviewed was Dr Hugh Pincott, ASSAP's secretary who explained our purpose and activities.

Author Brian Inglis, who opened the event was also asked for his views.

The interviewer was taken with dowsing experiments and was impressed with the results.

Mary Cairns was heard expounding on the Kingston earth zodiac figures and how modern day activities seemed to relate to them still such as polo playing in Sagittarius.

Jimmy Goddard of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group talked

about local ley lines and related mysteries.

David Medina of the British Raelian Movement briefly outlined their leader's contact experience.

Some of the theories which might explain UFOs were outlined by Lionel Beer of BUFORA.

Finally the interviewer was given an aura reading by Carmel Rogers.

The weather on the day turned out to be grand with 200 people coming to the event.

Organiser David Christie Murray and his wife are to be congratulated for their efforts and making their home and tree-lined garden on the River Imber available for the event.

It raised nearly £60. Special thanks go to all those who helped with the event.

Lionel Beer

Welsh Mysteries find a forum

WELSH border earth mysteries are probed in a new quarterly magazine.

The first issue has attracted writers such as Janet and Colin Bord, Paul Devereux and Nigel Pennick.

There is a report on the first Gaia monitoring session. The Gaia Project aims to obtain a wider view of the radiation conditions at sites around Britain.

It appears original research will play a large part in this magazine. Jonathan Mullard, the editor, is himself a prolific and respected researcher who has carried out much valuable original work.

Contributions from other researchers and writers will be

making it a lively forum for debate.

The magazine is well produced including photographs and diagrams.

Page boys

IF you would like to become part of a team updating and expanding the ASSAP booklist service for new members please write to Pat