ASSAP NEWS

ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA

NUMBER 9
October 1983

MERLIN TAKES OFF!

ASSAP'S Research Department is now moving into top gear for the start of the MERLIN programme.

The research committee is now meeting regularly to administer the programme and look at other research matters.

MERLIN is an attempt by ASSAP to investigate the fundamental psi relationship between man and his environment. Despite the lofty objective it is essentially a practical project designed to make use of ASSAP's most important asset - willing volunteers.

People wishing to take part need only write to the MERLIN registrar who will send details of the project which consists of various 'modules'. You can try sitter groups, Christos technique, Mind Games, dowsing and other projects.

The modules are mainly designed for groups but any individuals applying will be put in touch with other members and/or groups in their area so please do not feel put off.

Project Albion, part of the MERLIN programme, can be undertaken by people on their own.

As well as MERLIN, ASSAP's research department is interested in helping with any other projects members may have. The research committee will be glad to hear from anyone doing research. The committee consists of Chris Hall (in charge of non-MERLIN research, equipment and investigation back up), John Merron (Earth Mysteries co-ordinator), Peter Hallson (ESP co-ordinator), Patrick Webb (Physical Phenomena co-ordinator) and Maurice Townsend (MERLIN co-ordinator).

As well as MERLIN and other research projects the research committee will look after the various specialised research groups (eg. Hypnosis and Physical Mediumship).

If you want more information about MERLIN please contact the Merlin registrar, **Alan Cleaver**

There will be regular reports about the progress of MERLIN and other activities of the research dept. appearing in ASSAP News from now on. This will feed back information to participants in the various projects, ultimately it is hoped that the results will be published in a book.

JOB SPOTS VACANT

SEVERAL people have said: "Nothing ever happens in my area. All ASSAP activity takes place at Tufnell Park/Merseyside/ wherever." Here's the big chance to change this.

ASSAP has gained a lot of operating experience in different regions over the past two years, and we now want to put this to good effect throughout the rest of the country. But it cannot be done by remote control.

We need help from members who are prepared to devote a minimal amount of time to establish an ASSAP presence in localities where we are a bit thin on the ground. Don't worry if you have no experience, every assistance will be given from the "centre."

Many other opportunities exist within the Association. Would you like to help with the organisation or coordination of research, investigations, archives, records, information and training, lectures, meetings, external affairs, publications or general

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How ASSAP spends your subscription

WHEN ASSAP was originally formed in June 1981, the executive obviously could not accurately predict how the finances would go and the subscriptions were deliberately set low to attract a wide membership.

It was thought that no one who wanted to join should feel excluded by high subscriptions. On the whole this policy has worked. Indeed many members have remarked that they thought the subscriptions were unrealistically low (not a common cry among societies in general!)

We have managed to keep our head above water because many generous people have given their time and professional services freely (or for very little). There have also been very useful donations and the underwrite fund (some £500 lent to the association by members without interest until it gets its feet off the ground).

We hope people will continue to be generous but we should not RELY on it or EXPECT people to work often without even expenses. If this association is to further the ideal of a multidisciplinary approach we must AT LEAST cover our costs. Preferably we should aim to MORE than cover costs to allow for money to fund new projects and buy equipment.

We will also need a little in reserve for any unexpected problems in the future.
The executive has recently looked at the association's finances and decided reluctantly to alter the subscription rates to more realistic levels. Therefore from 1 NOVEMBER 1983 the following rates will apply: -

Ordinary Subscription	£6.50
Concessionary sub:	
(over 60, under 21 etc)	£4.00
Joint Subscription	£10.00

You may think that the concessionary rate has been raised "anomalously" high compared to the others. This is because in the financial year 1982/83 (ASSAP's financial year runs 1 July to 30 June incidentally) the cost of sending six newsletters (taking the average production costs per newsletter plus postage) to an ASSAP member was an astonishing £3.85! At a subscription rate of £3 then we would have been placed in the invidious position of not encouraging people in the concessionary category to join because they would actually cost the association money!

As it is the new rate will just cover the costs but still contribute little to other overheads (such as room hire, conferences and advertising). Those who will have to pay the new rate will therefore hopefully understand the reason behind the apparent 33% rise.

On a brighter note, in the new year (or even before) ASSAP News will be produced by a somewhat cheaper method (without too much loss of quality). This, with the more realistic subscription rates, will hopefully ease our finances in 1983/84. We might even be able to spend on the research, equipment and other things our organisation should be all about.

At the last AGM (January 1983) the executive was asked to give its projection of the percentage expenditure expected in the financial year 1983/84. To put this in context the income and expenditure accounts for earlier years are also included.

The illustrations show percentages and are not a scale comparison of total income and expenditure. In all cases Common Ground subscrip-

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Money for Research

From Page One

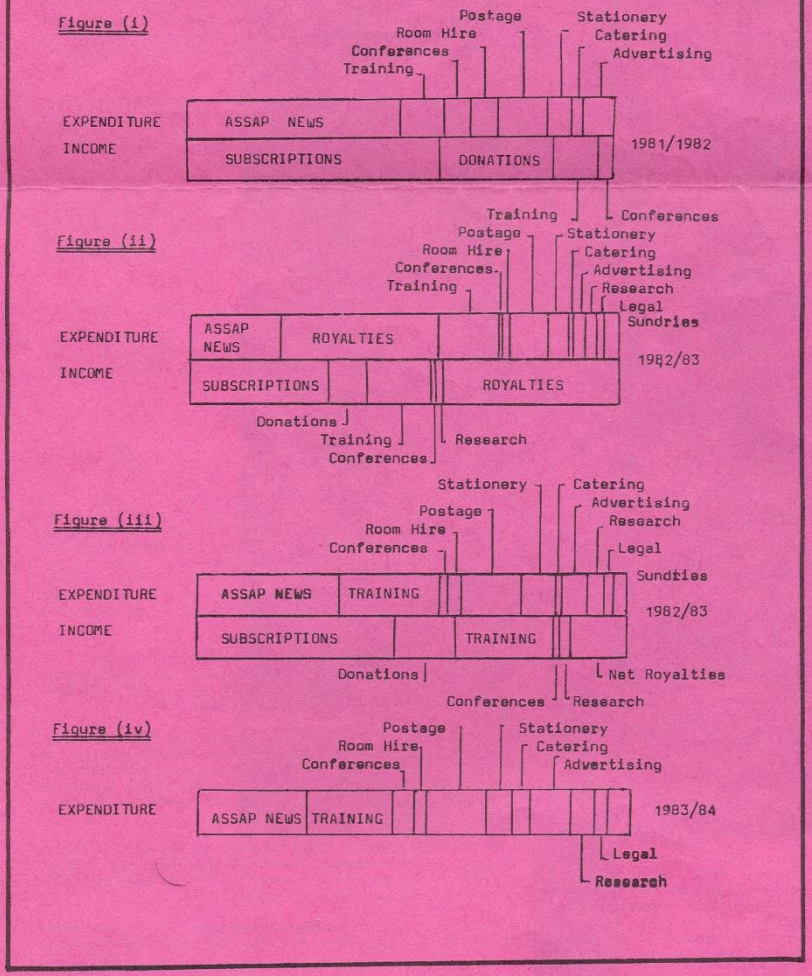
tions (which are paid straight to Kevin McClure and hence cancel out) and the underwrite fund mentioned earlier are NOT included.

Figure [i] shows the income and expenditures for our first year (1981/82). In figure [ii] the same information is shown for 1982/83 (pre-audit). It includes the advance royalties paid to ASSAP for the "Evidence For..." series of books. Most of this was passed on to the authors concerned.

In figure [iii] the same information is displayed but with the distorting factor of the royalties reduced to a net income. In figure [iv] there is a provisional projection of the expediture account for 1983/84. And in figure [iii] the royalties have been netted to the income side and hence do not appear.

You can see that we are aiming to continue the trend of reducing the costs of ASSAP NEWS and spreading the budget more evenly between the various departments.

It is hoped that training and conferences will pay for themselves. Hopefully over the next few years we will be able to spend larger amounts of money on items which the association was set up to investigate and less on administration.



Living legends

Alan Cleaver reports on Project Albion.

Work has already begun on Project Albion and a number of individuals and groups are beginning to find out how exciting this Domesday Book of the Paranormal can be.

By starting to log the different types of anomalous phenomena in their area they begin on a quest to discover the land's secrets.

There are of course no formal reports yet but perhaps I can relay some of the initial work being carried out.

Naturally I have started working on the Chilterns. I have just moved to this area and have found it rich in legends and folklore.

On the edge of the Chilterns are two crosses carved into the chalk. They look out onto the vale below but it is a mystery why they were cut and when. They are at least 300 years old. Visiting one of them — the Bledlow Cross — was difficult because it is so hidden now in the undergrowth. But I soon met the local 'guardian' a man who knew the area well.

As we walked to the cross he continually talked about his hunting escapades and the number of rabbits and animals he had shot. He had his gun and dog with him then. I look this as a hint that 'hunting' may be an aspect of this area — perhaps a part of a geomantic zodiac.

The guardian told me of a legend associated with the Cross: Human sacrificies were said to have occurred at Bledlow and the heads chopped off their victims and rolled down the side of the escarpment. Another indication that 'the thirst for blood' was important to the area.

During a visit to the library I looked up Bledlow and discovered that one of the interpretations of the name was "the bloody hill"!

The final surprise came a few weeks later. A headless body was found in Exmoor. Police discovered the body of a woman who lived at Bledlow, Bucks and went to her house in the village.

In the house they found the woman's decapitated head. A man has been charged with her murder. It seems the memory of 'Bloody Bledlow' breathes still.

I am always anxious to talk to groups or individuals about

HELP COLUMN

COULD I ask through the newsletter whether anyone recognises the following words (or expressions) from a known language? They may only be written phonetically and might even be names:

Plen - mem - phen - peren - bena - metal - lema - nenel - "Vleni ubni mem" - Letha - metha - memthum (or) merthum lembm motha metha tharer mlemba lmembe, thetha, lema mertha, shomb cu-mem.

Mrs Ingrams, London SW3

GHOST LOVES A DRINK!

RESEARCHER Viga Graham sent this note about a haunting on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent:

A ghostly nun is one of the regulars at landlord Ken Ganderton's pub. But she only drinks Guinness.

Ken took over the 350 yr old Prince of Waterloo on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent just ten months ago. Ever since then, Agatha, as she is known to the locals has started her tantrums.

She does not like change of ownership and every time new owners have taken over the pub, Agatha has showed her displeasure.

Ken keeps finding empty bottles of Guinness, with the tops wrenched off and the liquid gone, on the cellar floor. This has happened when the cellar is known to be securely locked.

She isn't keen on letting other drinkers in on the act either. Ken told me that the bottled gas supply has been mysteriously switched off several times. Ken has just usually finished working in the cellar and it is well locked when this has happened.

"The pumps are switched off with such force that I have to use a wrench to get them back on again" said Ken.

A large mirror has been known to completely dissappear and later reappear hung the wrong way round, not as easy as it sounds as the mirror fits into a heavy wooden frame very tightly.

Another of Agatha's tricks is to switch on lights that have just been switched off. The 'click' of the switch has been heard by numerous people.

Said Ken "There's a bricked up tunnel in the cellar that is supposed to lead to the nearby abbey. The story goes that some nuns were supposed to have been walled up there."

Interestingly, two tape recorders refused to work in the cellar, yet did so perfectly afterwards. And a camera belong to myself refused to work inside the pub yet functioned outside.

However, despite all this Ken and his wife have got quite used to living with Agatha and her tricks and are convined that once she also gets used to them she will curb her playfulness.

ACTIVITY IN YOUR AREA

From Page One

administration? Have you any skill or talent we could use?

And if you live *outside* Greater London, so much the better.

Most particularly at present, we need a Librarian. An offer from someone in Surrey or South London who could spend a few hours at Purley regularly would be most welcome.

If you are interested in any of these "job spots", please write

Mystery of Ladywell

From page 2

Project Albion and I recently visited the Rainbow Group in Ladywell, SE London.

The group soon started thinking about their area and a site called One Tree Hill. I told the group how researchers John Merron and Caroline Wise, investigated a UFO sighting in that vicinity. The hill, they found out, was a geological anomaly in the sense it was an intrusion in the rock strata. There also seemed to be magnetic anomalies connected with the hill. Further investigation showed there was a holy well at the base of the hill (hence the name 'Ladywell') so it was obviously an important site to our ancestors.

Members of the Rainbow group soon began to volunteer their own information including a marvellous local legend of how One Tree Hill is where 'the Four Winds meet'.

On a later visit to the hill by members of the group there was evidence of a witchcraft ceremony having been held on the hill. There was a double rimmed circle with strange markings and the word Lucifer crudely painted on the ground. Strange burn marks were also noted. So the site still seems important today.

The group have picked up a thread and are beginning to follow it through the landscapes mysteries. And that is how Albion stops being just a list of mysteries and more an Agatha Christie mystery! If anyone wants me to talk to their group please

By chance or by our design

by Jenny Randles

As ASSAP members know, I have been writing and presenting a series of weekly shows on the commercial radion station "Radio City". By mid-May this had reached twenty programmes covering a wide diversity of anomalies. I have learned a great deal myself from the research that has gone into each week's production. I would like to share an eerie but instructive set of experiences regarding one feature when I became the subject of strange phenomena!

Readers should be reminded that I have been operating a research project (The Incidence of Coincidence) via **Common Ground** for the past couple of years. Voluminous date has been collated; although I must add that this has dried up markedly in the past few months. I suspect this is not because coincidences no longer occur but you have simply lost the incentive to report them to me. I would wish to reiterate that it would be of great help if you could watch for these events and then report them in a letter. All information will play a part in the final ASSAP report on the project; so this is one easy, practical way you can assist us.

If you think that coincidences never happen to you then take heed from the fact that by thinking about the problem one very often stimulates them into being. You are about to see a most disturbing example.

At the beginning of May I decided to do a show about coincidences, and gave it the title "Synchronicity" - the term coined by Jung and Pauli to cater for the phenomenon. Of course I had to elaborate on this to explain it to the Radio City staff who were bemused by the word. I explained that synchronicity was the most common psychic experience in the world, which can happen to anyone at any time, and may well be a symptom of how we (i.e. our consciousness) are capable of manipulating reality at a sub-atomic level, so steering us into favourable situations which appear to us as coincidences.

Having made up my mind about the subject over the preceeding few days, I announced (as is usual) at the end of my Tuesday show, that this was to be the topic under the microscope the following Tuesday. Little did I know how the universe (or myself?) was engineering a particularly impressive demonstration of just how commonplace it really is! During those few days when I was considering what to do for next week's programme I suddenly found myself in confrontation with the police. There had been an armed raid on the Wirral and the thieves decided to use our littel cul-de-sac to dump the getaway car. Right outside my front door in fact! (And with a clear sign the fates were not on the thieves' side, and the doorstep of a Merseyside CID officer who lives opposite us!) Of course I was to spend the best part of a morning "helping the police with their enquiries", as they say. Needless to say this was for me an unusual event.

Next, early on the morning of the show when I announced that I was to do synchronicity as the subject next week, I had a rather unnerving telephone call. I received a UFO report via Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope (itself not that uncommon). This put me in touch with a man who in the early hours of that Monday had spotted a cigar-like object over Whiston from his home in the neighbouring town of Huyton. At first this meant nothing much until the afternoon news brought reports of a tragedy at Whiston that same morning. Indeed it made most of the national daily papers on the next day (Tuesday). This involved two teenagers who had unaccountably wandered onto the Liverpool-Manchester railway line, having inexplicably left their motorcycle nearby and walked straight in front of an overnight mail train. Both were killed instantly.

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Shaping reality to our own devices

From page 3

Obviously I saw the possible link here and, with some trepidation went over to the Radio City news team and dug out the teletype information from the day before, which referred to the tragic accident. As Radio City staff will testify it made me feel shocked and sickened. I discovered the accident and the reported UFO sighting coincided in time exactly (just after 4 a.m.), the part of Whiston involved was the same. And the boys lived in the same part of Huyton as the UFO witness! Of course, it occurred to me that this might not be a fantastic series of coincidences but a perverted form of joke. However it seemed highly improbable that the alleged UFO witness could have known the details of the accident early on the morning of the day it had happened, or indeed he would have made a hoax call to Jodrell Bank - far enough away from the incident to make such a ploy seem nonsensical. The other option was, of course, that the boys had seen the same UFO and had dumped their motorcycles in panic, running blindly away in terror straight in front of the train.

I spent much of that morning debating whether I should pass this information on to the police as they had requested any information to aid the inquest. In the end I did so, having determined that the Code of Practice clearly instructed me to do just that. I felt a bit foolish when I, once again, helped the police with their enquiries that afternoon. But I need not have done, the sequel, which would be a misleading sidetrack here, was most interesting.

Down in the studio, having recorded my trailer for the next week's show and my work thus over for the day, I was chatting to DJ Brian Ford about my ethical problem and seeking his advice. Should I tell the police, I asked. Believe it or not, through the glass windows that make the studio visible to and from the reception area, at that moment in walked two uniformed police officers! It transpired they had come to interview another DJ about a traffic offence. But, as I said to Brian, the police were out to get me. There was no way I was going out into the reception until they had gone!

I really did not have time to fully appreciate the number of coincidences linking me with the police over those same few days that I had determined to do the programme on synchronicity. The incident with the car, left by chance by my door, the many coincidental links that joined the UFO sighting with the Whiston death and finally the way I had lingered in the studio long enough for me to still be there as the two policemen walked in; they having decided to follow up a relatively minor offence that day. Not only did I think that this was simply a set of circumstances with no obvious thread between them, but I was far more concerned with the death situation and the problem it caused me. However I did say to Brian that when one concentrates upon coincidences they do tend to happen in the way that all these police connections were suggesting.

But the single most amazing coincidence was yet to occur. It was the one that would cement the relationships and make the pattern crystal clear!

On the way home that afternoon I called in at a record store looking for a particular record. It was not yet in stock, but I noticed a record on special offer I was interested in so purchased this. With the record the shop gave me as a free gift a music paper - something I never buy. I decided to scan idly through it. My attention was caught by the column that previewed the new album releases for May, suggesting which were the ones most likely to sell. When I read the one they regarded as highly promising I nearly fell through the top deck of the bus. Even now, having seen the album, I can scarcely believe it is true. But it is. The album is the latest by famed pop group The Police. Its title - well, what else? - was to be: Synchronicity !!

See what I mean? The universe is full of anomalies. But as Charles Fort might have said, is it laughing at us or (apropos David Bohm's theory) are we shaping it to our own devices? I prefer not to think that for it might mean I killed those boys but I do think it is vital we try to find out the truth. Hence the importance of "The Incidence of Coincidence".

Harley Street has a new neighbour

A CENTRE devoted to homeopathy, osteopathy, chiropractice, acupuncture and medical herbalism has opened up within a stone's throw of the citadel of orthodox medicine, Harley Street.

The Institute for Complementary Medicine has an impressive head-

The building no doubt helps improve the image of the alternative therapies and it has already received support from individual medical doctors, members of Parliament, therapist organisations and the public.

The idea of an Institute was first considered only two years ago and from a financial base of £4,000 some £220,000 was raised in only 13 months.

A computer-based library houses the names of therapists, research papers, legal matters and details of more than 600 organisations dealing in self hope and self care in Britain.

They do not supply mailing lists but the names of local therapists are open to bona fide enquiries.

ASSAP members will also be interested to learn that it is possible to hire the conference rooms at the Institute.

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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, befitting from a nationwide investigative network, consultation facilities and information resources, and by fostering communications 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.

Any contributions for ASSAP News 10 should be sent to the Editor by November 15. 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.

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 costs £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.