

# **Mysteries Of The Past, Present And Future**



**Mike James**

**MYSTERIES  
OF THE PAST,  
PRESENT AND FUTURE**

**Written by  
Mike James**

## **COPYRIGHT**

Any resemblance to events, locations or actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2022  
by Mike James

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner.

First ebook edition January 2022

[www.jamesonline.net/mysteries](http://www.jamesonline.net/mysteries)

*To steal from one book is plagiarism,  
but to steal from many is research.*

**ANONYMOUS**

*Any fact is better established by  
two or three good testimonies,  
than by a thousand arguments.*

**C. P. SCOTT**

*Be prepared to give up every  
preconceived notion....  
or you shall learn nothing.*  
**T. H. HUXLEY**

*When you have eliminated the impossible  
whatever remains, however improbable,  
must be the truth.*

**SHERLOCK HOLMES**

*Absence of proof is  
not proof of absence.*

**ANONYMOUS**



# CONTENTS

Introduction  
Coincidence  
Religion  
Crop Formations  
Ghosts  
Monsters Of The Deep  
Poltergeists  
Psychic Healing  
Reincarnation And Past Lives  
Spontaneous Human Combustion  
The Astral Body  
The Bermuda Triangle  
The Giza Plateau  
The Man Who Is Not A Man  
The Roswell Incident  
The Siberian Explosion  
Unidentified Flying Objects  
Sources

# INTRODUCTION

Perhaps even more difficult to explain than strange phenomena is the reason why we are all fascinated by them. There can be no doubt that at the mention of ghosts, U.F.O.s or the Loch Ness monster we all prick up our ears and become suddenly attentive, some of us eager to discredit, others to accept. What is it about the strange and mysterious that holds us in awe? Is it perhaps a fear of the unknown? Could it be a primitive instinctual urge for us to know and understand, and then more importantly dominate all that surrounds us? We, as humans, like to see ourselves as the most intelligent life form on the planet, so therefore we should know of all the things that occur in our environment and beyond.

Ironically the task of investigating any such phenomena is made almost impossible by the very nature of them, either by the infrequency of their occurrence or the unpredictability of them. Sometimes the knowledge that we gain from our research serves only to confuse us all the more rather than adding to our understanding of them as the details can often become more and more contradictory, or even worse go against the grain of popular belief. It is this popular belief which people often seem unable, or are unwilling, to discount in favour of accepting or even considering an alternative viewpoint.

Could there possibly be a prehistoric creature long thought to be extinct still living in a Scottish Loch, and are there other fantastic creatures alive and well in the world's oceans? How can human beings suddenly burst into flames that reach thousands of degrees in temperature and be reduced to little more than a pile of ashes, yet the bed sheets around them remain relatively untouched? Can people somehow "survive" death and remain on earth in a

"ghost" state? Even more oddly can these "souls" be reborn to live on earth again and their new lives mirror that of the previous one, even to the point of dying at the same age, and sometimes from the same cause? Or still more remarkably can these people be made to recall these previous lives while under hypnosis? Are there people who can see into the future and can they do it at will? Are we in fact living on the only life supporting planet in existence, and if not can the other life forms in the universe visit us, examine us and then return to their own world relatively undetected?

These are all fascinating questions, some of which are more likely to contain truth than others, some of them may never be answered, some may have already been answered but people are simply unwilling to go against their instincts and take on board what the newest and latest theory is.

The question that we must ask ourselves though is do we really want these questions answering? If we do answer them what would it do to us as a civilisation to know that we are not in fact the most intelligent in the universe, and indeed may look positively primitive in comparison to those who can travel across thousands of light years in craft which make our own attempts at space exploration look prehistoric. This could destroy us as a civilisation, as has happened many times over in history when primitive peoples are introduced to a more modern civilisation and their many developments such as television, guns and drugs. We need only look at people such as the Eskimos, American Indians and many other remote tribes who have slowly but surely killed themselves off within a very short space of time without retaining their own individualism. If we were in fact to discover that there was a life after death would we still hold a certain fear of it? or would we welcome it, maybe possibly even crave it?

It isn't just for these reasons though, it is also that the whole mysterious spectrum would lose it's romantic, fascinating aura and we would no longer talk of such things as the Loch Ness monster with a sense of awe or with a twinkle in our eyes, but as though we were discussing something as mundane as an evenings television viewing. It is similar to the feeling we get on Christmas Eve while looking at our presents which we will be able to open the next morning. This feeling of excitement and anticipation is far greater than the feeling we get on Christmas Day when we have opened all our presents and know what is inside them all and so they hold no more mystery or fascination for us. The knowledge then is far outweighed by the wonder

and the yearning for that knowledge?

Some of the phenomena we will look at you may already have a certain knowledge of and therefore will have formed an opinion on, what I ask of you is that you put these possibly preconceived ideas to one side and consider the evidence for both sides of the argument and become an impartial jury before either firming up your belief or possibly changing it. When talking about phenomena such as these, the answers are likely to be as amazing and unbelievable as the phenomena themselves, but we must consider all the evidence before "hanging a guilty man." We may be no wiser by the end of the final chapter, and may well have come up with no new answers, but we will have looked more closely at the things that we all yearn to understand. I ask not that you change your opinion, or form the same view as me, I ask only that you carefully consider the options and carefully survey the evidence before you with an open mind.

Mike James

# COINCIDENCE

## THE LINCOLN - KENNEDY COINCIDENCE

- Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846.
- John F. Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.
- President Lincoln was elected in 1860 and inaugurated in 1861.
- President Kennedy was elected in 1960 and inaugurated in 1961.
- Both men were elected from the Senate Committee.
- Both their respective first ladies lost children due to miscarriage while in the White House.
- Both men were concerned with civil rights problems.
- Lincoln's secretary was named Kennedy.
- Kennedy's secretary was named Lincoln.
- Both secretaries advised their respective employers not to go to the place of their deaths.
- Both presidents were shot on a Friday.
- Both were shot in the head.
- Both were shot in the presence of their wives and the public.
- Both were assassinated by Southerners.
- Both were succeeded by Southerners named Johnson.
- Andrew Johnson was born in 1808.
- Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908.
- The name Lincoln contains seven letters.
- The name Kennedy contains seven letters.
- The name Andrew Johnson contains thirteen letters.

- The name Lyndon Johnson contains thirteen letters.
- John Wilkes Booth was born in 1839.
- Lee Harvey Oswald was born in 1939.
- The name John Wilkes Booth contains fifteen letters.
- The name Lee Harvey Oswald contains fifteen letters.
- Lincoln was shot in a theatre named "Kennedy".
- Kennedy was shot in a car named "Lincoln".
- Booth ran from the theatre and was caught in a warehouse.
- Oswald ran from the warehouse and was caught in a theatre.
- Both alleged assassins themselves died by the bullet before standing trial.
- Both also strongly proclaimed their innocence of the crimes, and with apparent good reason.
- Both Lincoln and Kennedy were carried on the same caisson.

## THE TWENTY YEAR CURSE

Another coincidence which once again concerns the Presidency, though lesser known than that concerning Lincoln and Kennedy, is that all of the Presidents who have been elected to power on every twentieth year since 1840 have died while in office:

**1840** - William H. Harrison (1841 - 1841) was the first president to die while in office and apparently he started something of a craze. Harrison lasted for just one calendar month at the reigns and died on April 4th 1841 from pneumonia which wasn't helped by the stress that he was under in his new post.

**1860** - Abraham Lincoln, "Honest Abe" (1861 - 1865) was the first president to be assassinated. He was shot on April 14th 1865 while watching a play called "Our American Cousin." His bodyguard had left the door in order to watch the play, thus allowing the gunman access. Lincoln was hit in the back of head and died without regaining consciousness the next day, April 15th 1865.

**1880** - James A. Garfield (1881 - 1881) lasted five times longer than Harrison at five months. He was shot on July 2nd 1881 while entering Washington

Railroad Station by a disgruntled office seeker who had been rejected despite constantly pestering Washington officials. Like Lincoln, Garfield clung to life but for far longer. To escape the coming hot Washington summer he was moved to a New Jersey cottage but died on September 19th 1881.

**1900** - William McKinley (1897 - 1901) continued the vogue of dying by the assassins bullet and he took two of them, one in the abdomen. They were fired by the extreme anarchist Leon Czolcosz who felt that all leaders should be shot as all forms of government were oppressive. He took it upon himself to rid the world of this particular leader and did it at the Pann-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, but despite hopes that McKinley might survive, he collapsed and died eight days later.

**1920** - Warren Harding (1921 - 1923) "was a bad president" who couldn't say no to his friends. He once said to a newsman "I have no trouble with my enemies, but my damned friends - They are the ones who keep me walking the floor nights." Newspapers reported him to be suffering from food poisoning, but he died from a stroke on August 2nd 1923 while in San Francisco. He was mourned until the details of malpractice and fraud carried out by himself and his "poker playing buddies" came to light. They would play, drink and smoke cigars until the early hours while organising bribes and corruption, including the looting of monies destined for the building of hospitals. The other thing for which Harding is noted is that in June 1923 he became the first president to broadcast on radio.

**1940** - Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933 - 1945) survived four elections, and in 1936 he was elected with the biggest winning margin in U.S. history. Commonly referred to as FDR he was struck by polio in 1921 and all but lost the use of his legs, only being able to walk but a few steps with the aid of leg braces and two canes. In his final year he attended the Yalta Conference along with Churchill and Stalin, and on his return, exhausted, he remained seated throughout his speech. This would be the first time he had alluded to his paralysis in a public speech. After twelve years in power FDR suffered a fatal massive cerebral haemorrhage on April 12th 1945.

**1960** - John F. Kennedy (1961 - 1963) was assassinated on November 22nd 1963 allegedly by a lone gunman named Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas, Texas. Kennedy was the youngest man to take office since Teddy Roosevelt and he faced many problems throughout his presidency. Though he was adored by the public he made enemies at almost every turn including the

Mafia, the C.I.A., the F.B.I., the Russians and Fidel Castro, all of whom have been credited with his death at one time or another. Kennedy's was perhaps the most brutal and shocking of all the presidential deaths, and a tearful Walter Cronkite broke the news to a stunned America.

**1980** - Ronald Reagan was at 69 the oldest man to be elected as president, one "expert" when asked for his opinion on the Reagan Presidency said "He was a great actor." In truth he had made over fifty films, his most highly rated performance being in the 1942 Warner Brothers film "Kings Row" but for some strange reason he is most often remembered for his role in the 1951 B-Movie "Bedtime For Bonzo" in which he starred with Diana Lynn and a chimpanzee. As Reagan left a Washington Hotel on March 30th 1981, he was gunned down by a mentally disturbed John Hinkley who had performed the act to show his love for a girl that he had attended college with, a budding young actress named Jodie Foster. Despite his injuries, including a bullet lodged less than an inch from his heart after it had pierced a lung, Reagan had walked into the emergency room before collapsing. He was praised for his bravery and made a full recovery having cheated the "twenty year curse,"

Is it a curse? Is it a freak chance? Is it a coincidence? Has Reagan banished the curse for good or will it return in the future? If so it has clearly skipped a generation because despite Bill Clinton perhaps wishing he was dead at times during his presidency, he survived it unscathed, well, physically at least.

## **PLANE LUCKY**

In 1985 while on a flight from Hong Kong to London Paula Dixon suddenly fell ill, she had suffered from a potentially fatal collapsed lung. The cabin crew asked for any doctors on board the aircraft to make themselves known and offer assistance. The two doctors who came forward were Professor Angus Wallace and Dr. Tom Wong.

Wallace was an accident and emergency specialist and had just completed a course on this very condition. Dr. Wong had on his person a book, it was the text book describing how to perform the necessary surgery in the case of a collapsed lung.

Following the book and Wallace's experience they performed the



operation with a wire coat hanger sterilised in brandy, a roll of tape, a tube and a plastic bottle to catch the fluid pumped down the tube.

## **IT'S FOR YOU**

In July 1992 Sue Hamilton was working in her office when her fax machine broke. Unable to fix it she decided to phone one of her colleagues, Jason Pegler, who had left for home a little earlier. Looking around the office for his home phone number she found one pinned to a notice board.

Thinking that it was his home number she rang it and waited for him to answer. When Jason did answer the phone she began to tell him about her problem at the office with the fax machine. Jason stopped her in mid sentence and told her that he wasn't at home, in fact he was still on his way home and had been walking past a telephone box which had been ringing and he had decided to answer it.

The number that Sue had found pinned to the office notice board had not been his telephone number, but his employee number. The number was the same as that of the telephone box he had been walking past.

## **TITANIC COINCIDENCE**

In 1898 the writer Morgan Robertson had one of her books published, the book was called "The Wreck of the Titan" and it told the story of a brand new 46,000 ton ocean liner whose builders had described as "unsinkable."

In the book the Titan's maiden voyage was to take it from England to New York, a journey which it began in April. When the ship had reached the North Atlantic it collided with an enormous iceberg and the collision brought about its sinking. Due to the lack of sufficient lifeboats on board the Titan many of the passengers on board drowned.

Fourteen years later on April 15th 1912, the 45,000 ton "unsinkable" Titanic left the port of Southampton for New York on her maiden voyage. Whilst sailing through the North Atlantic she encountered bad weather and collided with a gigantic iceberg and began to sink. The ensuing mayhem on board was due to the lack of sufficient lifeboats, meaning that many hundreds of those on board drowned.

As well as the many unlucky passengers that travelled the 2 plus miles to

the bottom of the ocean with her was a copy of Morgan Robertson's book in the ship's library."

Another coincidence concerning a book is one written by the notorious author Edgar Allan Poe, who wrote, in 1883, about three shipwrecked men who, to avoid starvation, were forced to eat the ship's cabin boy, Richard Parker. In 1884 three shipwrecked sailors were rescued after they had eaten their cabin boy, Richard Parker.

## **TWO OF A KIND**

In January 1979 James Edward Lewis of Lima, Ohio began searching for the identical twin whom he had not seen or contacted since they had been separated when only a few weeks old and been adopted into different families (the Lewis family and the Springer family). Lewis was encouraged by his adoptive mother, Lucille Lewis, and he contacted the children's home they had spent a short time at and the court that had handled their adoption. After five or six weeks Lewis had managed to track down his identical twin and a meeting was arranged at the Springers' home. Springer sat chain smoking while Lewis was late after stopping on the way for some Dutch courage, and when they saw each other they began laughing, and Lewis later said "... I felt close, it wasn't like meeting a stranger."

Their Christian names were chosen by their adoptive families independently (The Springers for some reason were told that the other twin had died despite being willing to adopt them both) and this was just the first of many amazing coincidences in their lives.

- Both were born prematurely on August 19th 1939.
- Both had owned a dog as a boy and named it Toy.
- Both had the same favourite subject at school, Mathematics.
- Both hated spelling and were not good at it.
- Both grew up with adoptive brothers named Larry.
- Both put on 10 pounds in their teens for no apparent reason and later lost it again.
- Both began at age 18 to suffer from "tension" headaches that start in the late afternoon and turn into migraines.
- Both had worked part time as a Deputy Sheriff.

- Both had worked for McDonalds (the hamburger chain).
- Both had worked at a petrol station.
- Both had holidayed at the same beach at St. Petersburg, Florida (a beach only 300yds long) and had driven there and back in the same type of Chevrolet car.
- Both first married a Linda and then divorced.
- Both then married a Betty.
- Lewis named his first son James Alan and Springer named his first son James Allan.
- Both drink Miller Lite beer.
- Both chain smoke Salem's cigarettes.
- Both bite their nails right down.
- Both have had vasectomies.
- Both have had two confirmed or suspected heart attacks.
- Both suffer from haemorrhoids.
- Both suffer from the same sleeping problems.
- Both use the same slang words.
- Both enjoy stock car racing and dislike baseball.
- Both have basement workshops where they work in wood.
- Both have built a white bench around the trunk of a tree in their garden.
- Both enjoy doing household chores at the weekend.
- Both leave love letters lying around the house.

## **TABLE FOR FOUR**

Albert and Betty Cheetham found themselves sharing a dinner table one night while on holiday in Tunisia. They introduced themselves to the other couple who also turned out to be called Albert and Betty, but their surname was Rivers. The coincidence did not end with their Christian names, both couples were retired and in their seventies, both Alberts having worked in the railway coach business and both Bettys having worked for the Post Office.

Amazingly both couples had married at the same time on the same day, 2pm on August 15th 1942, and both had 2 sons born in 1943 and 1945 and both had 5 grandchildren. Both Bettys had lost their engagement rings and both were wearing the same type of 1930s watch bracelet which had been

broken and repaired at the same point at the same time. Both couples had booked their Tunisian holiday on the same day and had flown in on the same day.

## **IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS A COINCIDENCE?**

Are so many people living on the same planet not bound to have similarities in their lives with at least one other person? If you roll a die enough times will you not eventually get one hundred sixes in a row, or would this be another amazing coincidence? Similarly, so the saying goes, if you place an infinite number of monkeys in front of an infinite number of typewriters one would eventually type the complete works of Shakespeare. If one did would this constitute a great coincidence or is it only to be expected?

Exactly what is a coincidence and how is it determined? Are the coincidences described here really coincidences or are they something else? Can they be looked at rationally and explained likewise?

For example, if you were to write a novel about a ship, then you wouldn't be likely to make it the smallest ship, it would be the biggest, so that if something were to happen to it, in your story it would be all the more shocking. Its name could well be derived from its size, such as Colossus, Gigantic, Titanic etc. The book would most likely feature the excitement of the ships maiden voyage, and there are few, if any, things more exciting and gripping on the Oceans than a sinking, and this can be made all the more exciting still if there are not enough lifeboats to go round. It was well known that icebergs held danger for passing ships and could easily sink them, as it had happened before; to the "SS Pacific" in 1856 and to "The Persia" also in 1856, and what's more, on its maiden voyage, so coincidences are not always what they first appear to be.

Cosmologists have based theories on coincidence, for example in the 1930s Nobel Prize winner Paul Dirac took the age of the universe and divided it by the time needed for a ray of light to cross a subatomic particle. The answer he got was 1038. He then took the strength of the electromagnetic force in a hydrogen atom and divided it by the strength of gravity inside the atom. The answer was again 1038. Some think that this is a bizarre coincidence, but others think that it is evidence of a bizarre link between the cosmos and the subatomic world, and is possibly the basis of a link between

many other things on a larger scale.

Another man who looked at coincidence on a larger scale was the Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung who was fascinated by all aspects of the paranormal, and he studied astrology and the I-Ching, and followed the experiments of J. B. Rhine very closely. For much of his life Jung thought that psychic phenomena were purely psychological manifestations or "unconscious autonomic complexes that are being projected." By the age of 72 he no longer felt that a single cause could account for such a wide variety of paranormal effects. Jung felt that the explanation had to lie in something beyond what is normally defined as cause and effect, and he believed that this something lay in the phenomenon of coincidence. With the help of Nobel Prize winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli in 1952, Jung published a theory suggesting that an unknown principle might be responsible for what he termed "synchronicity" or "the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state." He felt that although most people could understand cause and effect only in terms of their day to day experiences, it was possible that other forms of space and time might exist, and if so, then apparent coincidences might be related in unknown ways.

As a psychiatrist Jung was interested in synchronicity mainly because it related to psychic states and events, and he cited the case of a patient who he found to be "psychologically inaccessible." He wrote that "the difficulty lay in the fact that she always knew better about everything" as she had a "highly polished Cartesian rationalism with an impeccably "geometrical idea of reality" and this prevented her from being able to accept the existence of the subconscious.

Jung hoped that something would occur which would cause her to drop this armour. He felt that it needed something "unexpected and irrational" and his prayers were answered one day when she reported to him that she had had a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. Jung wrote;

"While she was still telling me this dream I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window.... I turned around and saw that it was a fairly large flying insect that was knocking against the window pane from outside in the obvious effort to get into the dark room.... I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle... whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden

scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, "Here is your scarab." This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism... The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results."

A theory put forward by former Cambridge University researcher Dr. Rupert Sheldrake is that of "Morphic Resonance" where, he says, we, that is all living creatures, are linked by a "morphic field" which we use to share, and benefit from, the experience of others. He suggests that a group of people in one place may discover, or conquer, a problem at the same time or shortly after the same problem is conquered by somebody else in the same place, but what about other apparent coincidences on a more domestic scale, such as seeing two people at a party who share the same birthday?

This is not as surprising as it may seem at first, as to get odds of 50-50 you would need a room with only 23 people, as you are not matching a specific date but any date out of 365, and this reduces the number drastically. If you were to match a specific date you would need a room with over 250 people to achieve the same odds of 50-50.

Likewise the chances of meeting somebody at a party with whom you share a mutual friend are far from obscure if we consider that a typical party will be attended usually by people from the same social standing, and possibly field of work. Sociologists' research has shown that an average individual will have around 150 friends that they consider to be close, so we can describe a "friend of a friend" as any one of 23,000 people, but for each friend we have, we know more than one of their acquaintances, so then the number of "friends of a friend" rockets to 600,000 people. Hardly surprising then that we share a mutual friend at a party.

Maybe it isn't such a small world, but what about if we share more than a mutual friend with somebody? What if there are many details in our lives that are similar? Is it just purely down to chance or is it something stranger? The Lincoln - Kennedy coincidence seems to be beyond belief, and even when it is looked at rationally it seems uncanny that two men can have so much in common. The very laws of coincidence are that there are no laws, but some of the links can be explained rationally. For example, to be elected from the senate is not unusual, nor is being concerned with civil rights, or perhaps the stress associated with being first lady resulting in a miscarriage Perhaps though, the two presidents birth dates, their successors birth dates and their killers birth dates must surely be nothing more than a remarkable

coincidence.

The other coincidence associated with the White House is the twenty year curse and it appears to have been broken by Ronald Reagan, who had a near brush with death when he was shot, but continued his presidency. Was this a curse or was there something more serious behind it? It is believed that what does lie behind it is the ancient Shawnee curse. This is also known as the Indian's revenge, and it is said to have begun in the early 19th Century when the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh died in battle with the then Governor of Indiana, William Harrison. The Shawnee then placed a curse on Harrison, and said that Harrison would become President in a year that ended with zero, but that he would die in office, and any President who was elected in a year divisible by twenty would also die in office, Harrison, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, Roosevelt and Kennedy. It is well known that Reagan had used astrology to help him make certain decisions and announcements at certain times, so, could he have enlisted the help of somebody to lift the curse or help him survive it?

We've seen that two people can have amazing similarities in their lives with others, but are we, to some extent destined to live a certain type of life, is our life pattern or the way we will think and react to various situations already decided, and perhaps somehow pre-programmed into our genes? If not the how do we possibly explain the extraordinary similarities in the lives of the Jim twins? When they were reunited they attracted a great deal of media attention, including an appearance on the Johnny Carson show, and one of those who saw the case was a psychologist, Tom Bouchard, who, along with colleagues, raised a few thousand dollars from University funds and tracked the twins down. Since then Bouchard and his team have seen, or are due to see over thirty other twin pairs who were separated before the age of three. Of the first sixteen tested, all but one were separated before the age of six months, and the tests are carried out by professional testers who are not told the purpose of the tests so that there can be no bias in the results.

What we have to ask ourselves is what constitutes a coincidence, for example, if twins independently turn up at an airport wearing the same shirt, then that would be quite something, but if they both turn up and neither of them is wearing a tie, does that still constitute a coincidence? Possibly it would do if they would both normally be wearing a tie but had chosen not to do so on that particular occasion. What about the Jim twins both marrying

and divorcing a Linda and then marrying a Betty, truly a bizarre coincidence, but does the fact that Jim Springer is still married to Betty but Jim Lewis is engaged to a woman named Sandy detract at all from the coincidence? One would think so yes.

This goes to show that it is very difficult to spot a genuine coincidence. For example, there were once four people playing cards and they were dealt the full pack of fifty two cards, thirteen each, and each was dealt a perfect suit in number order. On first glance this appears to be a bizarre feat, but in all of the card games dealt in the world every day, surely it should happen more often because mathematically speaking it is destined to happen, so is it still such a bizarre coincidence? Is any event which is mathematically predestined to occur able to be considered as a coincidence, such as that which happened to the actor Sean Connery?

In 1963 Connery walked into the St. Vincent casino in Italy and played the roulette wheel. He backed seventeen and won, he then backed seventeen again and won again. He backed it a third time and won again, in total netting himself £10,000. The odds of this happening are 50,652-1. As there are tens of thousands of people betting in casinos all over the world every day and night, this must happen every few days at least in one or other casino, so even the rarest of events based on the most extreme of odds, if given a long enough period of time to occur will do so.

These are statistically calculated possibilities, not really true coincidences, but every so often we do get what surely must be pure coincidences, such as the taxi driver who in 1974 was driving along a busy street with his passenger, seventeen year old Neville Ebin, when he collided with a motorcycle, knocked the rider from it and killed him. One year later the same driver was again driving the same passenger, Neville Ebin, in the same taxi along the same street, when again he collided with the same motorcycle, again knocking the rider from it and killing him. The two dead riders had been brothers.

Again is it possible to analyse this case? For example how many times had the driver driven his taxi along that street and not collided with either of the two men? How many times had he carried that same passenger along that same route on what would appear to be his commute? How many times had either rider been knocked off their motorcycle by other cars?

In the case of the two Alberts and Bettys, are their lives really all that



similar, after all Albert and Betty were once very popular names, and the fact that their sons were born in the same years, does this still constitute a coincidence because they were given different names, or if they were born in different months in those years ? How many women called Betty have lost their engagement ring? How many women called Betty have a 1930s watch bracelet? The two bracelets had broken in the same place, could this have been a common fault with that type of bracelet? The two couples were of a similar, but not the same age and from similar but not the same backgrounds, so the same type of holiday resort is likely to have appealed to them, and possibly also the same time of year.

So, is anything that happens really a coincidence, or can everything be broken down and analysed rationally? Or, perhaps as has been suggested before, "coincidences actually happen all of the time, but we are just too busy to notice."

# **RELIGION**

## **CREATOR OR CREATED**

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT**

#### **SCENARIO 1**

##### **GENESIS CHAPTER 1 VERSES 1 TO 5**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a vast waste, darkness covered the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water. God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light; and God saw the light was good, and he separated light from darkness. He called the light day, and the darkness night. So evening came and morning came; it was the first day.”

That first day saw the creation of the heavens to "separate water from water." Day two saw God gathering the water into one place to allow dry land to appear, he called the dry land earth, and the gathering of water he called sea. On the land he created "growing things", plants that bear seed, trees that bear fruit and each he gave its own kind of seed.

Day three saw the creation of the stars to act as signs for festivals, seasons and years and to give the earth light, the two main "lights" he created to give light during the day and the night.

The fourth day was the day God filled the seas with fish and the skies with birds which he told to go forth and multiply.

Day five saw the rest of the animal kingdom created, the cattle, creeping things, wild animals and most important of all he created humans in his own image. He also told these creatures to be fruitful and increase. He told the animals that he had provided fruit and plants and trees for their food.

On day six God brought an end to his creations and on the seventh day he rested and blessed the day calling it holy.

Because God had sent no rain the plants and trees failed to grow, so, taking dust from the dry earth God created a human being and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living creature." Once he had done this he then created a garden in the east and put man there. The garden he called Eden, and in the middle of it he planted the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man's duties were to till the garden so that the trees and plants would grow. He was told that he could eat from any of the trees in Eden but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he were to eat the fruit of this tree he would be doomed to die.

God felt that man should not be alone and ordered the animals to the garden of Eden where man named them all. Once they were named, still no suitable mate had been found for man so God made him sleep deeply and removed one of his ribs from which he created woman and then he brought her to meet man and neither of them felt any shame at their nakedness.

The serpent God had made was the most cunning of all the animals, and it said to woman that it would be OK for her to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as she would not die but she would then be like God himself and know both good and evil. Woman picked fruit from the tree and ate it, she then went to man and gave some to him which he also ate. As the serpent had told woman, their eyes were opened and they suddenly felt great shame at their nakedness so they made loin cloths out of fig leaves for them both to wear. God visited the garden where man hid from him due to his nakedness, God said to him "How do you know you are naked?" and man told him that woman had made him eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and woman told God that it was the serpent who had told her to eat from the tree.

God was angry with the serpent and told him; "On your belly you will crawl, and dust you will eat all the days of your life. I shall put enmity between you and the woman, between your brood and her. They will strike at your head and you will strike at their heel."

He then said to the woman; "I shall give you great labour in child bearing; with labour you will bear children. You will desire your husband but he will be your master."

He then said to man; "On your account the earth will be cursed. You will get your food from it only by labour all the days of your life; it will yield thorns and thistles for you. You will eat of the produce of the field, and only by the sweat of your brow will you win your bread until you return to the earth; for from it you were taken. Dust you are, to dust you will return."

Man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living beings. God made them clothes from skins and banished man from the garden to prevent him also eating from the tree of life and living forever. Man lay with Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said "With the help of the Lord I have brought into being a male child."

## **SCENARIO 2**

### **THE BIG BANG**

The Big Bang theory was first developed by Georges-Henri Lemaitre, a Belgian priest, between 1927 and 1933, but it wasn't until 1964 that the theory became popular enough to be considered as the most likely explanation for the creation of the universe when two American Radio Astronomers discovered what they thought to be the afterglow of an ancient event of cataclysmic proportions. The afterglow was a "hum" of radiation with a temperature of 3 Kelvin (just 3 degrees above absolute zero), this is known as cosmic background radiation, and it gives us a picture of the universe as it was 300,000 years after the Big Bang.

The theory was reinforced when scientists discovered that the universe is expanding, this they discovered by looking at galaxies and specifically the waves that we receive from them on earth being stretched when they arrive. This is known as the "Doppler effect" after the man who first discovered it, Austrian physicist Christian Doppler. A simple example is that of an ambulance with its siren blaring. When the ambulance is coming towards us the sound waves are slightly compressed as they reach our ear, and they sound slightly different to the way that they sound when the same ambulance is going away from us as now the sound waves are slightly stretched. Two

Belgian scientists proposed that if this expansion was taken back to its origins then all the matter in the universe must have at one time been in a single point, so at the very beginning of time there was a single, very dense point that was caused to explode, probably between ten and twenty billion years ago judging by the rate at which the universe is expanding.

At the very beginning of time there was nothing at all, not even the laws of physics. At  $10^{-43}$  seconds is the period known as “Grand Unification” (G.U.T.) and during this time the weak, the strong and the electromagnetic forces are unified into one indistinguishable force, and possibly there was an extremely rapid and accelerating expansion of the universe which is referred to as The Cosmic Inflation. This inflation made the universe very large and flat but with slight imperfections in the form of ripples.

At  $10^{-34}$  seconds the temperature has risen to  $10^{32}$  Kelvin and the strong force now became distinct from the weak and the electromagnetic forces. The universe was only made up of Quarks, electrons and various other particles and the rapid expansion has now stopped under the force of gravity.

By the time the universe is  $10^{-10}$  seconds old the temperature has risen to  $10^{15}$  Kelvin and the weak forces have now separated from the electromagnetic forces. There is also an excess of matter over anti-matter at a ratio of a billion to one, and Quarks are now merging to form protons and neutrons, and particles now have substance.

We have now reached a full second after the beginning of time, and the temperature of the universe is  $10^{10}$  Kelvin. Neutrinos decouple and then the electrons and positrons annihilate, which leaves residual electrons, but mainly left behind is the cosmic background radiation we are able to detect today.

Three minutes have now gone by and the temperature is  $10^9$  Kelvin. Protons and neutrons are now able to join to form nuclei because the energy which they produce is now greater than the cosmic background radiation. Some of these nuclei are light nuclei, Deuterium (1 proton and 1 neutron) and Lithium (3 protons and 4 neutrons), but around 75% of these nuclei are Hydrogen and the other 25% are Helium. Other elements are only found in minute proportions.

Leaping now to 300,000 years after the Big Bang the temperature is around 3,000 Kelvin. Matter and the cosmic background radiation decouple as electrons bind with nuclei to make neutral atoms.

Leaping again, the universe is now 1 billion years old with a temperature

of 18 Kelvin and the earlier ripples and imperfections have now formed into quasars, stars and protogalaxies. In the interior of the stars the burning of hydrogen and helium nuclei produces heavier nuclei such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and iron and stellar winds scatter these nuclei as do supernova explosions which make new stars, planets and most important of all, life.

At 15 billion years old the temperature is 3 Kelvin and we have seen the last of the radical changes in the universe, atoms have been joining together to form molecules which in turn form very complex matter such as solids and liquids.

Both of these scenarios have certain problems and flaws, the main one and probably the most difficult to explain, and the most complex to grasp mentally is what existed before the creation of the universe, either before the big bang or the works of God? What existed, if anything, is an almost impossible question for the human mind to comprehend. The concept of nothing. The existence of a vacuum which even nature itself abhors. Another main problem with both scenarios is just what made the transition from nothing to a universe begin? What sparked off this massive step that saw the birth of what we now call the universe and why? If it was indeed God, then who and what is God?

The bible begins "In the beginning God..." but it doesn't tell us about God, what he or she is, where he came from or why he saw fit to create a universe, or indeed the bigger question of how he did it. Once the earth was created, God created man from the dust, a minor task compared to some of his other work. Man was to tend the plants and trees for God but he needed a mate, which God created from one of his ribs. In this scenario all of the first living creatures were created at the same time and man was one of the first creatures to inhabit the planet.

With the big bang we still have the same problem of what existed before the moment that the creation of the universe began and what triggered it off. If the big bang was the cause of the existence of the universe then the chances of the planets and stars existing at all are extremely remote, let alone the chances of life being sustained on these planets. Once the universe actually exists, by whatever means, the main difference between the two scenarios is that with God, man was one of the forefathers of the world sent to till the land whereas with the big bang man was a relative latecomer and was just a part of the evolutionary process, though we do in fact till the land it is not out of duty

but out of necessity to survive.

In the creation story there is no room for creatures such as the dinosaurs because we know that man and dinosaur did not exist simultaneously, and that they were separated by millions of years, let alone six days, and this is perhaps the best evidence against the God theory, though its supporters would come back with the argument against evolution, and the fact that man is the end result of an evolutionary process which begins with the most basic single cell life forms.

The basic thrust of the evolutionary process is that the first life on earth was a bacterium eater of some kind, and almost by accident the elements combined to construct these life forms, but what exactly triggered this change from basic matter to living tissue is still not fully understood, though scientists can break the chemical bonds of certain molecules and cause a rearrangement of the atoms into amino acids and nucleotides which make up living organisms using electricity. It is thought that lightening strikes could have done this in the dawn of time, but the mixture of these elements must be exactly in the right proportions for them to be called life.

The elements oxygen, nitrogen, carbon and hydrogen are just the basic ingredients required, and without any one of these there could be no life at all. The average human body of a ten stone man, to name but a few, is made up of enough lime to whitewash a small shed, ten gallons of water, enough fat to make seven bars of soap, enough sulphur to make a packet of sulphur tablets, enough iron to make a two inch nail, enough phosphorous to make two thousand two hundred matches, enough magnesium for a dose of salts and enough carbon to make nine thousand pencils.

Aside from these ingredients there must also be the right atmospheric conditions, temperature and moisture for example, and this is one of the arguments that the church uses, that such a finely balanced combination must be no accident and must therefore be the work of a supreme being, a "creator."

There have been many pretenders to the throne of explaining evolution, Henri Bergson, Leonardo Da Vinci and Sir Edwin Lankester, but most important of all Charles Darwin. Others such as Sir Isaac Newton only managed to confuse the issue by putting the date of the Creation at 4004BC.

In the dawn of time, the majority of the earth was covered by water, and it is thought that the first life forms were present in the seas, some of these

single cell life forms still exist today and amoebas are thought to be the oldest species of life on earth. Some of the early life forms evolved into plants most probably forms of underwater sponges and corals which attached themselves to rocks, while others evolved into microbes and plankton which used the seas currents to float around looking for food and in turn they developed into larger creatures such as worms which could now, to a small extent control their movements. Some of these worms evolved into huge predators up to forty feet long, while others took to living inside shells, and they were ancestors of today's molluscs. These molluscs became the most predominant life form in the seas and filled the ocean floors, so if other creatures wanted to eat and survive there was only one place that evolution could take them, dry land. It is thought that some of these molluscs, rather than having a solid shell, had a shell that was multi jointed, much in the same way as that of the scorpion or the armadillo, and they were known as the "Trylobites."

Just how these trylobites of 500 million years ago, and other creatures of the same era, made the break for dry land, going from water to air breathing, is a mystery, but there would have been no definite fixed line whereby we could distinguish between them living in water and living on dry land as it would have taken them millions of years. They would first live in the way that something like crabs do today, spending part of their time on land but needing to return to the water at regular intervals, though these intervals would become further and further apart as time passed. Another example of this transition from water to land is the lungfish which is still alive and well today, some of which can survive out of water for up to 4 years.

Whilst these creatures were learning to adapt to life on land, other changes were occurring in the water they were leaving behind. The sea was now full of giant sea serpents up to nine feet in length, and the gristle in their bodies was slowly evolving onto bone, and the vertebrates were born. Some fish still survive today without a true backbone, but what the spine enabled fish to do was to develop strong muscles and fins with which to guide themselves and control their movements far better.

Some of these fish, now with paired limbs in the shape of fins, also made the break for dry land and in time the fins became webbed feet and then legs with digits and claws, some of them laying their eggs in the water but living on land. The opposite is however true of the giant turtles today who come out of the water to lay their eggs in sandy beaches and then return to the sea. This



was now the birth of the reptiles which would “rule” the world for many, many years, taking eventually the immense forms of the large lizards, Dinosaurs (terrible lizards), some of which would stay on four legs while others would use their forelimbs less and less for walking and become true bipeds with their small forelimbs for eating, like the Tyrannosaurs which was a ferocious predator. As the land began to fill with more and more dinosaurs, both herbivores and carnivores, the smaller dinosaurs began to evolve more and more fearsome forms of defending themselves, such as huge horns both on their heads and along their spines, and the fight for survival on the ground became as fierce as that in the water.

So with the seas full and now the land conquered, all that remained was the air. Some fish had been trying to take to the air, and the flying fish of today still have yet to be able to fly for any great distance, but while flying was something of a hobby for the fish it was an obsession with the lizards. Pterodactyls, like modern day birds, had their heads positioned at right angles to their necks and also like some of the preceding bipeds from which they evolved. Their wings were not what we would call true wings today, but were more like a fine membrane which ran along their sides from the ankles up to the hands. There is debate as to whether the cumbersome creatures would climb to the cliff tops and throw themselves off and glide through the air, or whether they had the strength and the body structure to flap their wings and achieve a controlled take off from flat ground, no mean feat as the larger of the Pteradons had wing spans measuring up to 25 feet.

As time moved on and the era of the dinosaurs was drawing to a close, a climatic change was taking place and it was becoming colder. The response to this change was Archopteryx or “ancient winged” animal which was one of, if not, the first to “wear” feathers and is a direct ancestor of modern day birds. This meant that it was not only able to survive the colder temperatures but could fly at much higher altitudes than the other airborne creatures, enabling it to lay its eggs out of their reach which was essential to its long term survival, and the actual design of birds has changed very little since these early days of feathered flight. The Archopteryx was added to the short list of creatures who had found a form in which they could survive for millions of years, defeating changes in both climate and their predators. Bearing in mind that over the course of history there have been as many as six mass extinctions, with anything up to 76% of all life being wiped out, it is

survivors such as Archopteryx which have had a huge influence on life as we know it today, and the many and varied forms that that takes.

The response of the land based animals, rather than to develop feathers, was to develop hair or fur, and as they relied on egg stealing to provide their food, this helped to put pay to the reptiles as well as the drop in climate which was better suited to these new warm blooded mammals, though one creature in particular who would come through these difficult times, like the Archopteryx, remaining relatively unchanged, was the crocodilian family, made up of Crocodiles, Alligators, Caymans and Gharials.

The mammals were smaller in stature than the dinosaurs and in turn had a larger brain in relation to their body size making them far more intelligent than for example the brontosaurus which had a tiny brain, and who would take up to two seconds to realise that he had an injury at the base of his tail, so far was it from his brain. The mammals which now dominated the planet bear a marked resemblance to the animals we know today, though they were often smaller, such as horses, elephants and deer, though subtle refinements were of course made to adapt to the changing face of the earth. The woolly mammoth for example had tusks far larger than that of elephants we see today. Just as some of the reptiles had evolved into bipeds so too did a branch of the mammals and became known as primates and it is from this group that homo-sapiens originate. The problem is though, that where we have fossilised evidence of other evolutionary phases, we have none of this phase from primate to man and this is known as "The Missing Link."

Throughout man's evolution we can see evidence that he used to stand with a rounded back, had longer arms and that the skull was more elongated with a very prominent brow, and we can see that we have evolved into a being that walks more and more upright and appears less and less apelike. Though it has decreased in size and possibly still is doing, we still have at the base of the spine, a coccyx, or tail bone which primates, and possibly primitive man, would have used to aid him in balancing.

Thus goes the basis of evolution from the first inklings of life in the "primeval soup" to modern day man. Whether or not this process was truly due to evolution or natural selection is a much debated point and is one which was deeply investigated by Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882). He was however preceded by Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744 - 1829) whose book "Zoological Philosophy" was published in the year of Darwin's birth, and looked at the

relationship between animals and the world they lived in.

Lamarck claimed that the environment was instrumental in moulding the form of an organism, and that small changes would occur that would be passed onto further generations which would in turn alter slightly and pass these further changes on to their offspring. To make his point he used the example of the giraffe and looked at fossils of its ancestors which had relatively short necks. He said that as competition for food at ground level became more fierce they developed over generations a longer neck by constantly stretching it in their strive for food, and in turn their offspring would develop slightly longer necks still in an effort to reach the food at higher levels and thus avoid the competition, this process was known as “The Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics” and so the environment could therefore influence the appearance of the animals living in it.

Half a century later, in 1859, the monumental book “The Origin Of The Species” was published. Written by Charles Darwin it offered an alternative explanation for the adaptation of animals to their environment which was contrary to his first beliefs. Darwin wrote to a friend in 1844, "At last gleams of light have come, and I am almost convinced (quite contrary to the opinion that I had started with) that species are not immutable."

Darwin noticed that even in one species of animal there are subtle differences between individual animals, and that these subtle different differences are random. If one of these differences was that one of the short necked giraffes had a slightly longer neck than its fellow rivals for food, this would enable it to reach the higher leaves that the others could not. It would therefore have an advantage and a far greater chance of survival, and as these differences are inherited, it would leave behind it more offspring with the same slightly longer neck that would survive while the other shorter necked giraffes would be competing for food at the lower levels and eventually die out. This was referred to as “Survival Of The Fittest” or “Darwinism” and the main difference between Lamarck's theory and Darwin's is that, in Darwinism, the environment does not affect the appearance of the animals in it but the process is “Natural Selection” as nature selects those best suited for survival.

At the time that “Origin of the Species” was published these were very controversial revelations, and for many years afterward remained so, but later discoveries in science such as heredity laws and genes have shown that

Lamarck was wrong and Darwin right.

Darwin's basic theory was in three parts:

1. Random Variations - Whatever their cause, were occurring and were hereditary among members of the same species.
2. Struggle For Survival - Nature provides more offspring than can possibly survive, and the differences between them give some advantages for existence both between members of the same species and between different species in the same environment.
3. Survival Of The Fittest - Those animals with advantages will live longer and create more offspring; and the natural selection of animals with this same inherited advantage, eliminating those without, and, over time transforming the species, thus subtle variance's accumulate and create major changes.

It was not until 1871 that Darwin applied his theories to man. What Darwinism did was explain the evolutionary process without the need for a “designer or architect” though there is a huge misconception that this was Darwin's personal view when it was not, he felt that God was still ultimately responsible.

The seeds had been sewn though, and for many people the theory and existence of God were now redundant. Pre Darwin opinion was that the world was static, that the universe was fixed and that creation had finished with man at the pinnacle, but under dispute post Darwin, as well as the creation of the individual species of animal we know today, so was the very origin of man himself, who now appeared to be just a part of the evolutionary chain and not the tiller of the land that God had created in his own image.

This exercise is not merely an attempt to rubbish the book of Genesis but an exercise to show that the bible is not factual in detail but only in essence, and that many of its revelations are symbolic only and represent the romantic, poetic musing's of the author. We also have to allow for the fact that it was only translated into English relatively recently, and there are many examples of purposeful or accidental translation errors.

The fact that man was preceded on earth by the animals is evident in both scenarios, though we know that this period was far longer than a matter of days, but was in fact more like millions of years, and though the bible

author is clearly factually incorrect he shows an acute ability to interpret history and uses the existence of his own God to account for the inexplicable beginning of creation.

Neither scenario can explain with any certainty just what existed before the beginning of the universe, or what kick started the process into beginning.

The fact that the universe is still expanding, and the various ages of the bodies within it match up to one time when they came into being and at the same point would suggest that the big bang theory is the true one though this isn't a fully accepted theory and is disputed by many who highlight its faults, it is however the most likely explanation put forward to date.

So once we have life in existence on the planet earth how do we explain the theory of evolution in relation to that life? Was it Lamarck who was correct in his assumptions that evolution through the generations took place due to alterations caused by the environment in which they lived, or was it Charles Darwin with his theory of survival of the fittest, that nature selected only the best adapted creatures to survive and the rest to die out?

The Bible's explanation for the multiplication of man on the planet is certainly unsatisfactory, as the offspring of Adam and Eve were Cain and Abel, the latter of course being murdered by his brother. The first mention we get of any woman other than Eve is when Cain's wife is mentioned in the Land of Nod with no account of how she came to be there or who else was there. Though having said that, the theory of evolution also falls down on the point of man's origins as we can find no trace of the missing link which still remains a mystery today, but surely man can not have simply been created as even the most ancient picture drawings we see of Adam and Eve feature them with a navel, showing that they were "born."

The Bible's author explains that the serpent was apparently the epitome of evil and that God was responsible for it having to crawl on its belly as a punishment for the temptation of Eve. Was the snake possibly seen by the author as an evil creature and he accounted for it in this way, did it account for many deaths in the author's lifetime or does he just not like the look of them? Woman is also punished for Eve's indiscretion and is given the task of child birth for eternity, there is no doubt that in the author's lifetime child birth was an extremely dangerous procedure and would have accounted for many deaths of both the child and the mother. God also punishes man for being tempted by Eve and is forced to till the land in order to survive, all of

these “punishments” are factually true but are accounted for in a way we will come to recognise from the author, and the way he uses the struggle of good against evil in his writings. Perhaps he sees his fellow man as a disappointment, and if there were a creator he would understandably be disappointed in his creations and the ways in which they behave towards one another and would duly punish them to teach them the ways of good and evil and the path that they must follow through life, though the creator would surely know, as we do today, that this method of correction does not work and our prison system is a testimony to that fact.”

## **NOAH AND THE GREAT FLOOD**

By the chain of events that followed the creation, God had become disappointed in man and his evil ways, both in the way in which he treated his fellow creatures and the way in which he treated his home. He was so angry that he decided he would wipe his evil creations off the face of the earth. Noah however was a good and righteous man in the eyes of God and God told him of his plans to put an end to the human race and the earth with it. He told Noah to build an ark of cypress ribs covered with reeds and pitch. It was to measure 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits high and have a door on one side with three floors inside. Noah was then to take with him on the ark his wife, his three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their three wives, and two of every kind of animal alive on the earth, a male and a female, with enough food for them all to eat. God gave him seven days to gather all the materials he needed and to build the ark and fill it up with the animals.

When they were all on board the ark, God closed the door behind them and then brought the rains which would flood the earth, rains that would last for 40 days and 40 nights until all the earth was covered with water, even the mountains were submerged to a depth of 15 cubits and all the living creatures on the earth perished, apart from those on board the ark.

After 150 days of flood God caused the wind to blow and the waters to subside, and then on the seventh day of the seventh month the ark had come to rest atop Mount Ararat. After the first day of the tenth month the mountain tops were visible sticking out of the water. Noah took a raven and released it, it continued to fly around the skies until the earth was dry. He also released a dove which tried to find a place to land but couldn't because the earth was

still covered in water. Seven days later Noah again released the dove and that evening it returned to the ark carrying in its beak an olive leaf which it had plucked from a tree, so Noah now knew the waters had fully subsided and he waited a further seven days before releasing the dove again though this time it did not return. God told Noah to come out of the ark with his wife, their sons and their wives and all the animals so that they could go forth and be fruitful.

Noah built an altar to the lord and God said that he shall never again kill all the creatures as he had just done, "As long as the earth lasts, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, they will never cease." God told Noah that all the animals would fear man, and would become food for him, but he must never eat flesh which still has its life in it. He said I am making my covenant with you and your descendants and every living creature, never again shall all living creatures be destroyed by flood, and he gave Noah a sign of his covenant: "My bow I set in the clouds to be a sign of the covenant between myself and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds."

He told Noah that whenever the rainbow appears he would be reminded of the covenant with the living creatures of the earth, and so Noah and his descendents multiplied and began to fill the earth, some of the descendents travelled east to the land of Shinar and they came to a plain where they decided to make bricks and build a tower whose top would reach to heaven and then they could make a name for themselves. God saw what they were trying to do and said "Here they are, one people with a single language, and now they have started to do this; from now on nothing they have a mind to do will be beyond their reach. Come let us go down and confuse their language, so that they will not understand what they say to one another." That is why the tower is known as the Tower of Babel because God made a babble of the language and scattered the man all over the world.

Is this really the way it happened? To believe this would surely be just a little too far fetched, that it could rain for so long that all the earth is covered in water including the mountains, though we do know from history that around 4,000 BC the Persian Gulf was inundated and the city states that existed there were wiped out in the deluge. Could a craft made out of wood really support two of every kind of animal on the earth and all of Noah's family, not to mention enough food to last them for the ten months or more

that they were on board?

Again, in Noah's time, we have the story of the Tower of Babel where men tried to build a tower of bricks in their city tall enough to reach up to heaven, and as a result of their actions God became angry and scattered his people all over the world and made them speak in many different tongues so they couldn't understand each other. So one minute everybody was speaking the same language, and the next everybody had their own. The language barriers nowadays are roughly defined by the borders of the particular countries, so if this were true then all those people in the same land would be able to communicate with those in his country but not those from outside it.

We have seen that the bible is full of symbolism but in essence is based on truth, could the earth really have seen rain for so long that it was completely submerged? Surely there isn't enough water on, around or under the earth for this to have happened, so we must now try to read between the lines for the truth behind the story of Noah. Obviously the basis of the story is in a disaster of some kind, and through history there have been numerous occasions when civilisations have been wiped out by flood waters, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, not to mention the several mass extinctions of prehistory.

We can look back into the dim and distant past for accounts of disasters such as the dark cloud which rushed toward the earth and shrivelled the land with flames and returned "all human life back to its clay" which is recorded in the Babylonian "Epic of Gilgamesh" which is itself 4,000 years old but tells of events much earlier.

The Aborigines of western Brazil recall an event which saw the sky lit up with lightning and the deafening roar of thunder before heaven burst sending about fragments which killed everything and everybody, "nothing that had life was left upon the earth."

One theory is that disasters such as these are caused by meteors or the earth passing through a comet's tail, but there are also disasters with more obvious causes such as the volcanic eruption that destroyed Pompeii or the explosion of Krakatoa in 1883 whose resultant tidal wave drowned 36,380 people on the Indonesian islands.

Volcanic eruptions under the sea also cause tidal waves which can reach over 200 feet in height, thus containing an enormous volume of water, like the one that hit Kamchatka in the east of Russia in 1737 at a height of 210



feet.

Great floods have been recorded in the lowlands of China and Bengal, and it is believed that the Mediterranean was once a huge green valley that was swept away by the Atlantic Ocean in a sudden rush. Sometime between 5400 and 4200 BC a great flood submerged completely some 40,000 square miles of the Euphrates valley and Sir Leonard Woolley found traces of evidence to support this in 1929, and it is this flood which is believed to be the one referred to in the biblical account of Noah. Of course, when the bible talks of the earth being covered, it is referring to the known earth of the time, which is a very different thing. Also, there is a huge time span between the events portrayed in the bible and its time of writing, allowing for generations of dramatization and enhancement of details.

We know of the authors philosophy of man's quest and struggle between good and evil, and it appears that he has once again used the world as he sees it through his own eyes, and giving his own "poetic" views on what he sees, not only in his account of the great flood, but also in his account for man's many languages, again calling it a punishment for man sent from God, after all, what other explanations would primitive man have for such events than God?

The physical impossibility of building a wooden boat to house a male and a female of every species of animal, Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives and enough food for all of them to eat while the world is flooded is quite clear, so this part of the story is obviously an act of pure fiction. We see here the use of the term 40 days and 40 nights to mean a long period of time (we will see it again), and further symbolism is used in the releasing of the two birds, a raven (often associated with evil) and a dove (the bird of peace), yet more evidence of the battle between good and evil, and it can surely be no coincidence that it is the raven who doesn't return and the dove that returns to tell Noah that the end of the flood is apparent.

The author shows an uncanny ability in the use of these symbols and must surely be as gifted, if not more so, as those we now consider to be "classic" authors, such as the likes of Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Keats. There is clearly true feeling in his words, as though he is himself worried about the destiny of the human race. Not only is the punishment of man by God for his wrong doing toward his fellow man and his environment significant in biblical times, but it is equally significant today, and the author

must have considered Noah to be a good, true and honest man to be worthy of saving, or could actually he be a fictional character, a symbolic “good man” created by the author to suit his purposes?

The same could be said of other biblical figures seen as representatives of man's better nature, and another such man was Moses, to whom a greater part of the bible is dedicated, possibly because he not only symbolised the fight for good against evil but was also the saviour of a persecuted race of people, the Isrealites.

## **MOSES: MURDERER TO MESSENGER**

### **THE EXODUS**

The Isrealites were a large race who were growing in strength and numbers all the time which displeased the new King of Egypt, and he said to his people that they "must take steps to ensure that they increase no further." The king appointed men to "oppress them with forced labour" and thus sprang the cities of Pithom and Rameses with this Isrealite slave labour, and the demands of the Egyptians would become greater and greater as the slaves were badly mistreated.

Despite the King's regime, the Isrealite race continued to increase in size and he decided to take further action and instructed the Hebrew midwives that attended Hebrew births to kill the child if it was a boy, but the God fearing women did not do as the king had asked. When the king asked them why they had not done as he had asked they told him that they had not been disobedient but that the Hebrew women, unlike Egyptian women, would often give birth before the arrival of the midwife. The king then decided to order all Egyptians that all new born Hebrew boys were to be thrown into the Nile, but girls were to be allowed to live. Even after the death of the king the Isrealites were still a persecuted race and what they needed was somebody to help them, and that somebody was Moses.

Moses was born to a descendent of Levi and his wife, a Levite woman, who kept him hidden for three months until she could no longer hide him, so she constructed a basket of rushes sealed with pitch and tar and placed the baby inside it then placed it in the rushes on the bank of the Nile. The pharaoh's daughter and ladies in waiting came down to the river and spotted

the baby and one of the slaves was sent to retrieve him.

The baby's sister who had been watching, walked over to the Pharaoh's daughter and asked her if she should fetch a Hebrew midwife. She was told to do so and went to tell the baby's mother who was told by the Pharaoh's daughter that she would pay her if she would raise the child for her and she accepted. When Moses was old enough he was taken to the Pharaoh's daughter who then adopted him and called him Moses.

When Moses was grown up he was watching some of the Israelite slaves at work when he saw one of them struck by an Egyptian, when nobody was looking he went and struck the Egyptian down and then hid the body in the sand. The next day he saw two slaves arguing and went to try and restore order. They asked him who had put him in charge and if he would also strike one of them down. Knowing that he had been found out he was greatly concerned, and even more so when the pharaoh found out and ordered him to be put to death so he quickly left and soon settled in Midian.

One day while out walking Moses saw the seven daughters of a priest drawing water from a well and they were being driven away by a group of shepherds so he went to their aid. When their father asked what had happened they told him that an Egyptian had helped them to water the sheep and he insisted that they invite him to eat with them. Moses agreed and accepted the invitation and in turn was offered the priest's daughter Zipporah's hand in marriage. The two were married and Zipporah bore Moses a son and they called him Gershom, because "I have become an alien in a foreign land."

One day while Moses was tending his father in law's sheep he came to Horeb, the mountain of God, and there he saw a burning bush, but curiously the fire wasn't destroying the bush. From the bush God spoke to Moses and told him that he had witnessed the awful suffering of the Israelites in Egypt and told Moses that he should go to the Pharaoh and ask him to free the slaves so that he can then bring them to this mountain and worship God at this place.

Moses was doubtful that the Hebrews would believe him when he said that he had been sent by God, so God told him to place his hand inside his cloak and when he withdrew it he saw it was white with disease. God now told him to place it inside his cloak again and this time when he withdrew it he saw it was back to normal. God said that if they are still not convinced that I have sent you then take some water from the Nile and pour it onto the dry

land where it will turn to blood.

Moses now returned to Midian where again he heard the voice of God who told him that all those who had wanted to kill him were now themselves dead, so he took his wife and children with him on a donkey and the staff of God in his hand and made his way to Egypt.

During the journey Moses met Aaron and told him of all that had occurred and they both travelled to Egypt and called together the elders of the Isrealites. When they had seen the powers God had bestowed upon Moses they believed that he was indeed telling them the truth and that God had truly sent him to save them from their persecution by the Egyptians. However, the Pharaoh did not believe Moses and by way of punishment he ordered that the straw with which the slaves made bricks would no longer be fetched for them but they must fetch it themselves, yet they were still to make as many bricks as before. When they failed to do so the Hebrew foremen would be flogged and the slaves felt that Moses was to blame for the worsening predicament they now found themselves in. Moses then went to speak to God and asked him why he had heaped yet more trouble on his people and God told him that "Now you shall see what I shall do to the Pharaoh. He will be forced to let the Hebrews go." and again he told Moses to go and lead the Isrealites out of Egypt.

Moses and Aaron then visited the Pharaoh and when he refused again to free the slaves, Aaron then threw his staff down on the ground and it turned into a serpent. The Pharaoh called for his sorcerers and magicians who performed the same trick but their serpents were swallowed up by Aaron's, yet still the Pharaoh was obstinate.

Many times the lord sent Moses to ask for the release of the Isrealites but each time they were refused and Moses would use the power of God to bring many terrible plagues upon Egypt and its people, yet not affecting the Isrealites. These many plagues included turning the Nile and all its waters into blood, a plague of frogs that covered the land, a plague of flies, the striking down of all Egyptian flocks and livestock, a fine dust which settled over Egypt and caused festering boils on the skin of its people and a great hail storm that killed all the livestock that were left outside, but still the Pharaoh refused to co-operate with Moses and release his slaves.

Moses told him that the Lord could strike him down dead at any moment but he wanted the Pharaoh and his people to see the power of the Lord so that

he could tell his children and grand children of the power of God, but still the Pharaoh refused to let the slaves go free and Aaron and Moses warned him that more plagues would follow until he did so.

The next plague was a swarm of locusts that covered the land, filled the houses and destroyed the crops, then came three days of continual darkness over Egypt. The Pharaoh then said to Moses that the people may go free but their livestock must remain behind but this offer was not accepted by Moses and he said that all must be free to leave. He was again summoned by God who told him that following the next plague the Hebrews would be free to leave, but they would be driven out by force by the Pharaoh, and when the Pharaoh yet again refused to free the slaves, despite Moses' warning of another plague, Egypt was ravaged by a plague which caused the first born male child from the Pharaoh himself down to the cattle of his slaves would die. The Israelites were to mark their front door with blood and the Lord would pass by their house without affecting them but would strike at all others. The Lord also made the Egyptians well disposed to the Hebrews and they were to ask them for their gold, silver and clothing which the Egyptians then gave them wilfully.

At midnight the Lord did indeed strike the first born of all those whose door was not marked by blood, and the next morning the Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and told them that all were free to leave Egypt, and when they did go they took with them all the gold, silver and clothing they had taken from the Egyptian people.

## **THE PARTING OF THE RED SEA**

God acted as a guide for the Israelites to follow in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night so that they could travel both day and night. He did not however lead them to "The Promised Land" of Canaan, their intended destination by the shortest route, but led them through the wilderness so that none would turn back to Egypt if confronted by war.

God again spoke to Moses and told him to camp between Migdol and the sea to the East of Baal-Zephon, he said that the Pharaoh would then think that the Israelite exodus were in trouble in the wilderness and he would pursue them so that God would be able to win glory for himself at the Pharaoh's expense. In the meantime the Pharaoh was regretting releasing the slaves and

along with his armies he set off in pursuit of them.

The Isrealites in the camp saw that the Pharaoh's forces were almost upon them, and God spoke to Moses and told him to hold high his staff over the sea and the waters would divide enabling him to pass through on the dry ground.

The pillar of cloud then moved to the rear of the Isrealites and separated them from the Egyptians, and it then brought the darkness early and Moses held high his staff. God sent a strong east wind which lasted all night long and parted the sea allowing the Isrealites to cross, and when they had all reached the other side Moses held his hands out over the sea and in the early morning the waters came crashing back together sweeping away the Pharaoh and all his armies. The Isrealites saw the bodies of the Egyptians on the shore and put their faith in the power of God and his servant Moses.

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

Three months after the exodus from Egypt, the Isrealites led by Moses had reached the wilderness of Sinai where they set up camp in the shadow of the mountain. Moses went to the top of the mountain to speak to God who told him that they must listen to him and keep his covenant and then they would become his "special possession," his holy nation. He told Moses that in three days time he would come down Mount Sinai and speak to his people, but all must be ready for him with washed clothes and they must not go near a woman, nor must they try to reach God by climbing or even touching the mountain for any who did, including the priests, would be put to death, but nobody must touch them, they must be stoned to death or shot.

On the third day Mount Sinai was rocked by peals of thunder and bolts of lightning and the mountain was enveloped in smoke as a loud trumpet blew. Moses brought the people forward to meet their God.

God spoke to Moses and told him to bring Aaron with him to the top of the mountain and he told Moses that he must tell the Isrealites that he was the God who had brought them all from Egypt where they had been used as slaves by the Egyptians. He told him of ten rules that they must live by in order to remain close to their God, and that he must tell them what God had said and not let God speak to them for they were afraid. Moses told them that they should not be afraid for God was only testing them so that their fear of

him would stay with them to keep them from straying from the true path in sin. Moses walked into the cloud that covered Mount Sinai where God was and he told Moses of his ten commandments:

- You shall worship only me and no other Gods.
- You must not carve idols to worship of gold or silver, and altars must be made from earth and not hewn stones.
- You must not take the Lord's name in vain.
- You must keep the Sabbath day sacred.
- Honour your father and mother.
- You shall not commit murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not lie.
- You shall not covet.

God said to Moses that he should once again climb the mountain and he would give him two stone tablets on which he had carved the ten commandments, (when Moses climbed the mountain it was again covered in a large cloud and Moses remained on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights).

One of the main characters in the Old Testament must be Moses, the bible tells us that he was born a Jew but raised an Egyptian after being found in the bulrushes. However he came to be raised an Egyptian he never forgot his background, and the Jewish historian Josephus tells us that as a child in the Egyptian Palace he would throw the Egyptian crown to the floor, a sure sign that he longed to be with his fellow people and held no respect for those who raised and named him, even to the point of murder when he witnessed a slave being struck by an Egyptian for which he had to flee.

He was fortunate in finding a wife and employment as a shepherd, so what would cause him to risk losing everything in returning to Egypt to free the enslaved Israelites. We are told that he did it because God had asked him to go, but even with God's help Moses' new task would still have seemed like an impossibility, to meet the Pharaoh and ask him to release his slaves. Could Moses have been returning to Egypt for some other reason and events would turn out that he would be able to free his fellow people. Could it have been

the wish of his wife to go to Egypt to find a new and more prosperous life for their young family, and Moses found himself unable to tell her of his true reason for leaving Egypt years earlier?

It was true that the Pharaoh of the time, Rameses II, was becoming concerned about the increasing numbers of Israelites, and especially because they outnumbered his own armies but merely lacked strong leadership. His orders to the midwives to kill the male children and his orders that the slaves should produce the same number of bricks as before, even though they now had to collect their own straw could have been an attempt to help cut their numbers when they failed to do so, and in people's eyes he wouldn't then be seen to be simply slaughtering them but punishing them for their laziness. He could have done this either before or after a visit from Moses and not necessarily as a result of a such a visit.

So what about the plagues that befell Egypt? The mists of time would probably cloud the details about just how many plagues there were and what form they might have taken, but the possibility of Egypt being swept with plagues doesn't necessarily have to have a religious cause, but may have a natural, physical cause.

There has been much debate about the matter of the plagues and the most likely explanation is that they were caused by volcanic action further up the Nile in Ethiopia, from which ash and lava could cause the Nile to change to a reddish "blood" colour further down stream. The poisoned, dirty Nile water would cause the wildlife to leave the water and take to the land, and the unhygienic conditions resulting from this would cause anthrax among the cattle which would devastate the herds, and the anthrax could also spread to the human population causing the festering boils on the skin. The many bodies lying around the streets and in the stagnant water would bring the swarms of flies and maggots described in other plagues. The debris described as the hailstorm that "beat down every growing thing and shattered every tree." could be a genuine hailstorm which can strike Egypt in the month of January when the weather is changeable. January can also bring about a "Khamsin" or sandstorm, and these are not considered unusual if they block out the sunlight for several days. The strong winds which bring the sand can also bring swarms of locust into Egypt from Sudan and Ethiopia where they cause devastation regularly.

The confusion caused by these "plagues" would have given the Hebrews



faith in their new found leader and would have made the Pharaoh fearful of him, and so, in around 1300 BC, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt with the angry forces of the Egyptians close behind them.

The ensuing chase led them through day and night over unfamiliar territory to a dead end in the shape of the sea, though it wasn't, as is widely believed, the Red Sea, but as the Hebrew words tell us, what they called the Reed Sea, Sea of Reeds or Sea of Marshes, which is a body of water that lay between Egypt and Palestine known as "The Bitter Lakes" before it was swallowed up by the Suez Canal.

We are told that an east wind blew all night and that the waters were driven back. If this was either near the top of the lake or a shallow passage across it, then we can see how the Israelites could walk across, and when the waters flooded back they "swallowed up" the pursuing Egyptians who may possibly have been held up by their chariots and horses as they struggled to keep their footing and sank into the sand.

Another possibility that has been put forward is that the bed of the lake rose above the surface due to volcanic action, and then sank back down again taking the Egyptian armies with it and the ensuing tidal wave swept away those lucky enough to still be alive. This theory isn't however as far fetched as it sounds as it has also been known to occur in Naples in 1538. Yet another possibility is that as the Israelites made their way to Sinai they could have passed close to Per Rameses which is an area of lagoons and swamps, so on foot with meagre possessions the Israelites could pass through quite easily, but the armies of Egypt with their horses and chariots would have sunk into the mud.

So Moses and the Israelites continued their journey with their faith in Moses by now reaching awesome heights, and despite the chaos and rebellion within the ranks of their own people, their faith was enough to hold them together as they made their way across the Sinai Peninsula.

All the time they struggled to find enough food and water to stay alive and began to regret leaving the "comforts" of Egypt. By this time they had transformed from being a group of slaves freed and on their merry way to a new life in the promised land God had given to them, to an unruly mob beginning to fear for their lives which were in the hands of Moses who had held them together by his will power and their faith in him and his God. He was also able to provide them with water by breaking through the thin crust

of limestone rock to the water beneath, a trick he had learned when he had spent time in the wilderness after fleeing from Egypt after killing the Egyptian, so they realised that they stood a far better chance of survival by staying with Moses as their guide.

Eventually though, the strain became too much for them and Moses soon realised that his guidance alone wasn't enough, and that he needed once again to show them that they must stay with God, and they must once again become a close knit race abiding by the same set of rules, by God's rules. So Moses finally knew that he had to find a way to pull them back together, and the focal point of the exodus from Egypt becomes the laying down of God's law, so he went to the top of the mountain to carve the ten commandments into the stone tablets and was gone for "forty days and forty nights."

The commandments themselves are all fairly obvious ones, murder, theft, lies and adultery are obvious crimes, and false idols and taking the Lord's name in vain are clearly aimed at keeping the focus of the people's attention on the God that Moses wanted them to follow. The symbolism and meaning behind the ten commandments could be said to be as relevant today as it ever was, to respect one another's property and rights and to worship the only one true God. We can see between the lines, the message that even if we feel we are ready or are forced to leave the straight and narrow, then believing in and keeping to the ten commandments will ensure that we will return to, and stick to honest ways.

Once again though we can see that the basis of the story is perhaps factually correct but is romanticised by the author and possibly the ones he heard it from, and it is used to represent a struggle between good and evil. Whatever caused the seas to separate, it is uncanny that it should happen at such a convenient time for the pursued Israelites, and closed again on their pursuers. Perhaps the most credible explanation for the parting of the waters is volcanic action, a perfectly natural process, and one that has been seen to occur elsewhere in similar ways, and also it is the most probable cause for the plagues not long before.

In the 1950s, Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky's book "Worlds in Collision" argued that the earth had nearly collided with other heavenly bodies twice in the last 4,000 years, and that the earth passing through the tail of a comet could also explain the supposed appearance of God as a pillar of cloud during daylight hours and a pillar of fire at night. The pillar is clearly moving as the

Israelites were actually following it until it then moved into a position behind them, and they thought that it was to protect them from the Pharaoh and his army.

We can see in Moses the key figure that the bible author wishes us to see, perhaps the most significant in the Old Testament, truly a man among men. He was perhaps misguided in his belief that he was hearing the words of God, unless of course this is the creation of the author merely seeking to explain Moses' resilience which he truly did possess to even attempt to free an entire race from persecution especially when his own life was so delicately in the balance.

Moses though, considered himself to be merely a man who had been chosen to do a particular job rather than seeing himself as anything more important than a humble and ordinary man able to help his fellow Hebrews. It seems somehow fitting that such a man should be recorded in history as a martyr, a man who died taking his people to the promised land, what we now know as Israel. It is perhaps ironic that Moses died on top of Mount Nebo, a place from which he would be able to see the land that he had fought so hard to reach, and there within sight of his goal he died. His job though, had been done, the Israelites had been led to the land gifted to them by God, and now they must continue the work that Moses had begun. They chose their new leader as Joshua, and he gladly took on the job as Moses had done before him, and his conquest of Canaan is described in the book of the bible that bears his name. The time is now around 1250 BC.

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **JESUS: MAN, MYTH OR MESSIAH?**

#### **BIRTH TO BAPTISM**

Though the four gospels that tell of Jesus' life differ both in detail and the parts of his life that they cover, they are all in essence the same story, and we will look at all four to get a general idea of Jesus' life and some of the things he did and is remembered for.

#### **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW CHAPTER 1,**

## **VERSE 18;**

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; Before their marriage she found she was going to have a child through the Holy Spirit." On hearing that Mary was pregnant, Joseph, a man of principle, decided to have the marriage contract quietly set aside when he was visited by an angel of the lord in a dream and told that Mary was pregnant by the holy spirit and he shouldn't be afraid to take her home to be his wife. The angel also told him that the child would be a son and he was to be named Jesus "For he will save the people from their sins."

Joseph did as the angel had told him and took Mary home to be his wife and they refrained from intercourse until the boy was born and given the name Jesus. Jesus was born at Bethlehem, Judaea during the reign of Herod, and shortly after the birth astrologers arrived in Jerusalem asking the whereabouts of the new born King of the Jews as they had seen the rising of "his" star in the east and had come to pay homage to him.

King Herod and the rest of Jerusalem were perturbed to hear of this and Herod sent for his chief priests and asked them where the Messiah was to be born, they told him that it was in Bethlehem and Herod then sent secretly for the astrologers. They came to see him as they were asked and he asked them about the star that had guided them and at what time it had risen. He told them to go to Bethlehem and find the infant so that he too could go and pay homage to him. Once again they saw the star and it now guided them to Bethlehem where it stopped above the house where the child lay. They paid homage to him and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh then returned home by a different route as they had been warned in dreams not to go back and see Herod.

Joseph was again visited in a dream by an angel who told him to take his family and escape to Egypt where he was to stay until he was told otherwise as Herod would look for the child to kill him. Again Joseph took heed of his dreams and remained hidden with his family until after Herod's death.

Before his death however, Herod realised the trickery of the astrologers and ordered that every male child under the age of two in Bethlehem and the surrounding area should be killed in order to put an end to the Messiah.

For a third time Joseph was visited by an angel and this time he was told that those who had threatened the boy's life were now dead and he should go

to Israel. Again he took the advice of the angel, but on the way there he was disturbed to hear that Herod had been succeeded by his son Archelaus and again he was visited in a dream. He now changed course for Galilee and settled with his family in Nazereth.

This is Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus and the events surrounding it, the gospel of Mark however makes its first mention of Jesus when he encounters John the Baptist at the bank of the river Jordan, as does John, but Luke does give an account of the birth although it is different from that of Matthew.

In his gospel Luke says that the one visited by the angel was Mary, and that the angel said to her "Greetings, most favoured one! The Lord is with you." She was told that God had been gracious to her and she was soon to give birth to a son and name him Jesus. Jesus would be great, the son of the most high king over Israel for ever and his reign will never end. Mary told the angel that she was still a virgin and was told that the holy spirit would come upon her and so the child would be the son of God, Mary told the angel that she was "the Lord's servant" and the angel left. Soon after the visit Mary hurried away to a town in the uplands of Judah where Elizabeth (the expectant mother of John the Baptist) was, and stayed there for three months before coming back home.

In the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus a census was to be taken, so everybody returned to their own town to be registered and Joseph went to the city of David known as Bethlehem, accompanying him were Mary and their unborn child. While they were in Bethlehem Mary gave birth, but because there was no room at the inn Mary was forced to wrap the infant in swaddling clothes and lay him in a manger.

In the same district there were shepherds minding their flocks for the night and they were visited by an angel of God who told them that they were not to be afraid as he had brought them good news of the birth of the Messiah, they would find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger in the town of Bethlehem. The shepherds decided to go straight to Bethlehem and find the baby which they did, and when they told everybody present what the angel had told them they were all astonished. As is tradition with Jewish babies the child was circumcised at eight days old and was soon taken to Jerusalem to meet a man named Simeon who had been told by an angel that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Despite the

warning Simeon embraced Jesus and praised God. Joseph and Mary were taken aback by the reaction of this man to their son and they were told by Simeon that Jesus would be a sign that would be rejected and that many people in Israel would "stand or fall" because of him. They then returned to Nazareth after everything the law of God required had been done and Jesus grew to be big, strong and very wise.

Every year Joseph and Mary made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, but in Jesus' twelfth year when Passover had finished they set out for home with many friends and relations not knowing that they had left their son behind in Jerusalem. They were a day out of Jerusalem before they realised that he was not among the group with them so they returned to look for him.

It took them three days to find him and when they did he was sitting in the temple with the teachers to whom he was listening and asking questions. All those who heard him were amazed at his obvious intelligence and the way in which he was able to hold such conversations with these men by far his senior. Mary asked him why he had treated them this way and he said "Why did you search for me? Did you not know that I was bound to be in my father's house?" but they did not understand and returned to Nazereth in Galilee.

Though the two accounts differ in many ways they also share many similarities, and both follow the same basic outline and can quite conceivably be based on a true event, we have seen with the Old Testament that the author uses such true events to his own ends and that vein continues in the New Testament though the authors are of course different.

If we take the main points of both accounts we are left with what has evolved to be known as "the Christmas Story." It begins with either Mary, Joseph, or possibly both, being visited by an angel of the Lord and told that they are to have a son by immaculate conception and that he was to be named Jesus. Though they weren't married they were betrothed, and possibly Mary did go to Elizabeth's house for three months, and for some reason, most probably a census, they travelled to Bethlehem where they had trouble in finding accommodation due to the rush of people for census so they were forced to stay in a stable, and Jesus was born and lain in a manger.

The visitors to the stable are commonly referred to as "wise men" but the bible refers to them as either astrologers following a star or shepherds visited

by an angel and told to seek the new born Messiah, probably a few days after his birth. Whichever is the true version it is likely that they would have taken gifts for him and paid homage to him. Born a Jew he would be circumcised at eight days old.

When Herod heard about the commotion he ordered the infant to be found, and also all the male children under two years of age to be killed in order to flush out the Messiah, and so Mary and Joseph left Bethlehem and made their way to Nazereth where they settled to raise their son.

When Jesus was twelve he accompanied his parents on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover, but among the crowd after the festival they left without him and were forced to go back and look for him. When they found him he was in the temple engrossed in deep conversation with the elders and seemed surprised that it had taken them so long to find him. They all returned to Nazereth where Jesus continued to grow in both mind and body.

## **BAPTISM TO TEMPTATION**

The son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, whom Mary had visited, was John the Baptist, and John was only six months older than Jesus, his parents were also visited by angels of God. John was to be an important figure in the life of Jesus and a good friend to him, they met at the river Jordan in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judaea and Herod was Tetrarch of Galilee where Jesus went to be baptised by John who was astounded by the request and felt that he was the one who ought to be baptised by Jesus. He did however agree to perform the baptism and when he had done so the heavens opened and the spirit of God descended and John was told "This is my beloved son, in whom I take delight." The spirit then led the newly baptised Jesus into the wilderness where he would be tempted by the devil.

Jesus spent forty days and forty nights without food before the devil approached him and told him to turn some stones into bread to eat, Jesus said that man was not to live on bread alone but on every word from God's mouth. He then led Jesus to the holy city and to the parapet of the highest temple telling him to throw himself off and let the angels of God fly down to save him. Jesus told him that he should not put the Lord to the test.

Next the devil took him to the mountain top and told him that all he

could see would be his if only he would throw himself to the floor and pay homage to him, Jesus told him to get out of his way as he should pay homage to the lord God and him alone. Then the devil left him alone and the Lord's angels came down to tend to his needs.

## **THE DISCIPLES**

When John had been arrested, Jesus returned to Galilee and began to spread the gospel and his fame grew as he taught in the synagogues, amazing his elders with his extensive knowledge. One day he was walking by the sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers called Simon and Andrew who were fishing, he called to them and told them that if they were to go with him he would make them "fishers of men." As they walked he came across two more brothers, James and John, who were in a boat with their father Zebedee mending their nets, he called to them also and they left their father in the boat and followed Jesus.

His fame spread throughout all of Syria and he continued to preach in the synagogues and heal the sick, including Simon's mother in law, who came from far and wide to be healed of many diseases. The crowds who came to hear his sermons began to grow so large that he had asked his friends to get a boat so that he could escape the crowds as they clambered around him to see and hear him, and he took them up a mountain to pick his followers and then from there he could preach to the enormous crowd below. When he came down from the mountain his disciples followed him to the boat and they all climbed aboard before setting out across the lake while Jesus fell asleep.

As they sailed across, a great storm rose until the waves were washing over the sides of the boat, and this made the disciples so fearful that they woke Jesus who said to them "Why are you such cowards?" with so little faith. He stood and calmed the wind and waves which amazed them so much that they said what sort of man is this that the wind and sea obey him?

## **PARABLES AND MIRACLES**

When they reached the other side of the lake at Gerasenes, a man possessed by an unclean spirit came toward him from the tombs where he had made his home. Chains had failed to hold the man and other men were helpless against



him. He threw himself down at Jesus' feet and Jesus drove the demons from him, he asked the man's name and he said "My name is legion." The demons begged him not to banish them from the town altogether but to let them go among a nearby herd of pigs, and when they did the pigs ran into the lake and were drowned. The people came to see what Jesus had done and they were afraid when they saw the former madman clothed and sane and asked him to leave, so he and his disciples returned to the other side of the lake where Jesus continued to heal the people who were brought to him, they included a paralysed man, a girl thought to be dead and even a girl who was suffering from haemorrhages without even touching her. He told her that her faith would be enough and she would be healed. He went around many towns preaching in the synagogues and spreading God's word, and he felt that the crowds were like sheep without a shepherd and he told the disciples that "The crop is heavy, but the labourers too few; you must ask the owner to send labourers to bring in the harvest."

He called his twelve disciples together and gave them the authority to cure people themselves and to drive out their demons, and so the twelve were drawn together, Simon, Andrew, James, John, Thaddaeus, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Simon and Judas. Jesus sent them forth and told them not to take the road to gentle lands but to go to the lost sheep of Israel and proclaim the message that the kingdom of heaven is upon you, heal the sick and drive out demons, they received without cost so they should give without charge, to receive you is to receive me and to receive me is to receive the one who sent me. When he had instructed his disciples he sent them forth and he himself went to teach in the neighbouring towns.

Jesus would give his preachings in the form of easy to understand stories known as parables, the best known perhaps being the sewing of the seed. Some of the seed fell on stony ground with little soil, some fell on the footpath and was eaten up by birds, some grew among thistles which choked them as they grew and some fell on good soil and grew well. This, Jesus said, meant that the seed which fell on the path is the one that hears the word but doesn't understand it and is the evil which carries away what has been sown in his heart. The seed that fell on stony ground is the person that hears the word and accepts it at once but it doesn't last for long before he loses his faith. The seed that falls among the thistles is the one that hears the word but his worldly cares and false glamour choke it. The seed that falls on good soil

is the one that hears the word, understands it, accepts it and keeps it.

Once, while at a wedding, Jesus, his mother and his disciples were present as guests, and in the course of the wedding the wine ran out. When Mary told her son he replied that it was no concern of his as his hour had not yet come, and she told the servants to do whatever Jesus asked. Nearby stood six stone jars which were used by the Jews for rites of purification and each of them contained twenty or thirty gallons of water. Jesus told the servants to fill them with water which they did, he then told them to draw some of it off and take it for the master of the feast to taste, and when he did he tasted wine, not knowing from where it had come. The master then raised his cup and said to the gathering "Everyone else serves the best wine first, but you have saved the best until now." Jesus' time had now come and he had performed a miracle.

After the death of John the Baptist, Jesus was once again confronted with a large crowd and again he healed those who were sick, and as the day drew on the disciples approached him and told him that as they were in a very remote spot and night was falling they must send somebody to a farm or village to buy some food. Jesus told them that there was no need for anyone to leave as they had food already. The disciples looked at the meagre offerings they had and it came to only five loaves and two fish, so Jesus took these and looked to heaven saying a blessing then broke the bread and gave it to his disciples who gave them to his people who all ate and were all satisfied. When they had finished eating, what was left over was enough to fill twelve baskets, the crowd was made up of five thousand men, not counting women and children.

After all had eaten, Jesus sent his disciples across the sea to Capernaum but Jesus was not with them in the boat as he had gone up the hillside to be alone. As the boat crossed the water and night fell the wind started to blow and the disciples looked out over the lake and saw Jesus walking toward them across the surface of the water, thinking it was a ghost they cried out in terror but Jesus said to them "Take heart ! It is I; do not be afraid." Peter called to him and said "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you over the water."

"Come." Jesus said, and Peter walked over the water to where Jesus stood. Peter became frightened because of the rough water and began to sink, shouting to Jesus to save him. Jesus reached out and took his arm saying "Why did you hesitate? How little faith you have." Then they climbed into

the boat and the twelve fell down at his feet and said "You must be the son of God."

Jesus was asked to visit the home of an official who had told him that his daughter had just died, and he asked Jesus if he could lay his hands on her, so he and the disciples went to see the dead girl. When they arrived at the house they saw flute players and people mourning, Jesus told them to go away because the girl was not dead but just sleeping and they laughed at him. He went into the room where the girl lay and held her hand, upon which she got up and everybody was amazed and the word of this healing soon spread. This isn't the only time that Jesus raised somebody from the dead, but another occasion was still more fantastic than this instance as the man he resurrected this time was four days in the grave.

Jesus arrived at Bethany, the home town of Lazarus, less than two miles from Jerusalem and so many Jews were present to console his sister Martha. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died." Jesus told her that he would rise again, as whoever had faith in him shall live, even though he dies.

Jesus went to the tomb which was a cave with a stone placed against it and said to Martha "Take away the stone." but Martha said that as he had been there for four days there would be a stench to which Jesus replied "Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will see the glory of the Lord?" They moved the stone and Jesus looked up to heaven and thanked his father for hearing and said "I know you always hear, but I've spoken so all present will know that it was you who sent me." He raised his voice and said "Lazarus, come out." and the dead man walked out of the tomb, wrapped in bandages and with a cloth over his face.

## **THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM**

Jesus set out for Jerusalem with his disciples, and on the way he told them that the son of man would be given to the chief priests and scribes who will condemn him to death and hand him over to the gentiles who will mock him, flog him and crucify him, but on the third day he will be resurrected. As they neared the city of Jerusalem Jesus stopped at Bethphage at the mount of olives and sent two of the disciples into the nearby village where he told them they would find a donkey tethered with her foal beside her and they were to

bring them to him. If they were questioned they were to say that the master needs them. They did as he asked and laid their cloaks over the donkey, then Jesus mounted and rode on a carpet of cloaks that people had laid out on the road. Some cut down branches to lay down in front of him as he rode into Jerusalem where people rejoiced at his arrival. He rode to the temple where he found that people were carrying out their business, buying and selling and he immediately turned over the tables of the money changers and the seats of the pigeon dealers and said to them all "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you are making it a bandits cave." When they had left the temple Jesus began healing the sick who were brought to him and they began singing his praises. The chief priests and scribes asked Jesus if he had noticed how everybody treated him and praised his name.

Jesus spent that night in Bethany and returned to Jerusalem the next morning and, as he made his way back he was feeling hungry and saw a fig tree by the roadside but it bore no fruit, only leaves. He said to the tree "May you never bear fruit again" and immediately the tree withered away to the amazement of the disciples who asked him how he had done such a thing, to which he replied "If only you have faith and have no doubts, you will do what has been done to the fig tree," and if they truly believed then they could even cause a mountain to lift up and crash into the sea just by telling it to do so.

When they reached Jerusalem again, Jesus returned to the temple and began preaching which caused the chief priests and elders of the nation to ask him who had given him the authority to preach in the way he did, to which Jesus replied with a question of his own and, if they could answer it then he would answer theirs. He asked them "The baptism of John: Was it from God or from men?" They began to argue among themselves and eventually answered him that they didn't know, so Jesus told them that he would not tell them by what authority he acted. He began to speak to them in parable and ask them what the parables meant but they answered wrongly and realised that Jesus was getting at them so they became angry with him but wouldn't arrest him through fear that the crowd would react against them, so they went away and devised a plot by which to trap Jesus in argument and sent some of their followers and some of Herod's men to him. They said to him "We know you are a sincere man; you teach in all sincerity the way of life that God requires, courting no man's favour, whoever he may be. Give us your ruling

on this: Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor? " Jesus knew that they were trying to trap him and asked them why they were doing it, he asked them to show him the coin they used to pay their tax and they gave him a silver piece. Jesus asked them whose head was on the coin and they replied Caesar's, Jesus told them to pay to Caesar what belonged to Caesar, and pay to God what belongs to God. They left him alone but many others tried similar ways to catch him out but Jesus always came out on top and left his would be tormentors humbled until they decided that it was hopeless to continue trying.

Jesus then told the crowds who followed him and his disciples to do whatever the elders told them but not to follow their practise as they say one thing but do another. He continued to brand them as hypocrites who would shift their burdens to others rather than lift a finger themselves and he pondered how they could escape being condemned to hell. He said he would send prophets and wise men who would teach them, some of the teachers would be killed and crucified, others would be flogged in synagogues, and the guilt of the spilt blood of innocents would be borne by everybody of this generation, and he referred to the city of Jerusalem as the city that murders prophets and stones messengers.

Jesus and his disciples left the temple and Jerusalem and again returned to Mount Olive where Jesus had things to tell them. He said that the temple would be torn down so that not one brick remained atop another, and they must take care that nobody misleads them as there would be many false prophets who would try to do just that as the people would resent their allegiance to him, but those who persevere through this time will be saved. He told them to take a lesson from the fig tree, as when the shoots appear and break into leaf it is a sign that the end is nigh, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away.

## **THE LAST SUPPER**

Jesus told the disciples that he had to warn them, and that in two days time it would be Passover and the son of man would be handed over to be crucified, and, even as he was telling them this, a plot was being hatched by the chief priests and scribes who had met at the home of the high priest Caiaphas where they schemed ways to capture Jesus and put him to death. Their main

concern was that the seizure would not take place until after the Passover festival for fear of retribution by the people.

One of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, went to see the chief priests and asked them what they would give him to betray Jesus to them, to which they replied thirty silver pieces and gave them to him, and so Judas began to search for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

The disciples asked Jesus where he would like them to prepare the Passover for him, and he told them that they must go to the house of a certain man in the city and they prepared the Passover feast for him there. During the meal Jesus told them that one of the twelve would betray him, they all exclaimed "Surely you do not mean me Lord?" and Jesus replied that the son of man is going the way that was appointed him by the scriptures, but for the traitor it would be better if he had never been born. Jesus took the bread and broke it saying "Take this and eat it, this is my body" and he took a cup which he first blessed then said "Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood."

After the Passover they returned to Mount Olive where Jesus told them that they would all lose faith in him that night as it was written, but Peter stepped forward and said he would never disown him and the others agreed, but Jesus told Peter that before the morning cock had crowed three times, he would disown him three times.

They then came to a place called Gethsemane and he told them to sit here for a while as he went to pray, he took with him Peter, James and John and told them to wait and stay awake until he returned and he went to pray. When he did return he saw that the three were asleep and he woke them and asked them if they could not stay awake for one hour? He told them that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. For a second time he went away to pray and on his return found them again to be asleep, this time he didn't wake them and went away for a third time to pray. This time when he returned he roused them and told them that the betrayal was upon them.

## **ARREST AND TRIAL**

Before Jesus could finish speaking, Judas approached with a large crowd who were armed with swords and cudgels, Judas said to them "The one I kiss is your man; seize him!" upon which he walked to Jesus and said "Hail Rabbi!"

and kissed him, the crowd then came forward and seized him. The disciples ran and left him as he was led away to the house of Caiapha where the chief priests and scribes awaited his arrival. They were followed by Peter who sat in the crowd to see what would happen.

They tried in vain to find a charge against Jesus that would carry the penalty of death until one man stepped forward and alleged that Jesus had told him he could pull down the temple and rebuild it within three days, Jesus made no reply and the high priest asked him if he were the Messiah, the son of God, to which Jesus replied "The words are yours" but he added "From now on you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of the almighty." The high priest leapt to his feet and said that Jesus had committed blasphemy and all those present found him guilty and said that he should die. Peter got up to leave and was recognised by a girl who told him that he had been with Jesus the Galilean, which Peter denied, and walked to the courtyard gates where another girl recognised him and said that he had been with Jesus of Nazareth, which again Peter denied. Later, Peter was again recognised by people who told him that he must be one of them as his accent gave him away, and for a third time Peter denied it and said "I do not know the man" as he said these words a cock crowed and he was reminded of the words Jesus had said to him that evening. Peter went away and wept bitterly.

## **PONTIUS PILATE**

When morning came Jesus was bound and led away to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and, on seeing that Jesus had been condemned to death, Judas Iscariot was racked with remorse and gave his thirty silver pieces back to the chief priest and said that he had sinned by bringing an innocent man to his death. He was told that it was his problem and not theirs so he threw down the silver on the temple floor and left on the verge of breaking point and went immediately to hang himself. The priests couldn't put the money back into the temple funds as it was blood money so they used it to buy a burial place for foreigners which became known as blood acre.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate he was asked if he was the king of the Jews to which he replied "The words are yours" and he had the charges read to him but made no reply. Pilate asked him if he had heard all the evidence against him and again Jesus refused to answer and Pilate was left

with no option but to tell the priests that he could find no charge against Jesus but it was customary at festival season for the Governor to release a prisoner chosen by the people. He had a man in custody called Jesus Barabbas and he called to the crowd "Which would you like me to release to you - Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called Messiah?" as he knew that the priests and scribes had plotted against the Messiah, but they continued their plot by influencing the crowd and soon all were calling for the release of Jesus Barabbas. Pilate asked them what was to become of the Messiah and the crowd shouted "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate still doubted the validity of the charges against Jesus and became worried as his wife had had a dream the previous night and sent a message to him telling him to have nothing to do with the innocent man. Pilate asked the crowd what harm the Messiah had done and they again yelled "Crucify him! Crucify him!" so Pilate took some water and washed his hands and said to the crowd "My hands are clean of this man's blood, see to that yourselves" to which the crowd replied "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate now had no option but to release Barabbas and have Jesus flogged before handing him over to be crucified. The soldiers then took him into Pilate's residence, the Pretorium, stripped him and dressed him in a scarlet cloak.

## **THE CRUCIFIXION**

They made a crown of thorns for Jesus and placed it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand then fell to the floor in front of him and taunted him by saying "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him and beat him with the stick, then when they had finished they stripped him of the cloak and put his own clothes back on him and led him out to be crucified.

They saw a man from Cyrene named Simon, and he carried Jesus' cross to a place called Golgotha (Place of the skull) where he was offered a drink of wine that was drugged with gall and after he had tasted it he refused to drink further, then he was fastened to the cross and hung up with two other criminals, one on either side of him. Lots were drawn for his clothes and Jesus said "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It was nine in the morning.

A sign was made by Pilate which read "Jesus of Nazareth. The king of the Jews." and it was placed above his head as was traditional at crucifixions.



The Jewish chief priest told Pilate that he should not have written it as such but should have written "He claimed to be the King of the Jews." but Pilate turned to him and said "What I have written, I have written."

Jesus was taunted by the priests and one of the criminals on either side of him, they said to him that if he were truly the Messiah he would save himself. The other criminal said to him that the two of them were there for their misdeeds, but you are innocent, he asked Jesus a question, he said "Jesus, remember me when you come to your throne." and Jesus replied "Truly I tell you: Today you will be with me in paradise."

At midday, a darkness descended on the land and stayed until 3 in the afternoon and Jesus asked "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He said that he was thirsty, so a sponge soaked in the drugged wine and fastened to a hyssop was held up to him while he drank. After he had done so he said "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" at which point the curtains of the temple were torn in two from top to bottom, and the Centurion standing nearby who witnessed this said that this man was innocent and must have been a son of God. It was now evening and the day before the Sabbath, and the Jews became concerned that the bodies shouldn't remain on the crosses so they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and a Centurion broke the legs of the two murderers, but when he came to Jesus they saw that he was already dead and they didn't need to break his legs, but one of the Centurions thrust his sword into Jesus' side which brought forth a flow of blood and water.

A good, wealthy and upright man named Joseph who had come from Arimathaea went to Pilate and asked his permission to cut down the body of Jesus and bury it, to which Pilate agreed, so Joseph cut down the body and wrapped it in clean linen then laid it in his own unused tomb which was a cave he had cut out of the rock, and he then rolled a stone across the opening. Joseph had been watched by three women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, Mary of Magdala, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James. They saw where Jesus' body had been lain and went home to prepare perfumes, spices and ointments for his body, but they had to rest on the Sabbath day and couldn't return to the tomb until the first day of the next week.

## **THE RESURRECTION**

It was early in the morning, just after sunrise, when the women returned to the tomb and they were thinking about who could roll the stone away for them when they saw that it had already been done. They entered the tomb and saw a man there dressed in white who said to them that he knew they had come looking for Jesus of Nazareth and told them "Why search among the dead for one who is alive?" as he had risen from the dead and was making his way to Galilee. He told the women that they must tell Peter and the other disciples of this, so they left the tomb and were so afraid that they said nothing to anybody but Peter and the disciples who didn't believe them.

As the women were walking through the country to Emmaus, Jesus approached them but they didn't recognise him. He asked them what they were talking about and they asked him if he hadn't heard of the events of the past few days in Jerusalem. He walked with them to the village and stayed with them at their request, and as they sat down to eat Jesus took the bread and said the blessing then broke it and offered it to them upon which they recognised him, but as soon as they did he disappeared from sight. The women then returned to Jerusalem where they found the disciples together and they told them what had happened. As they were doing so, Jesus appeared in the room and asked them why they had not believed those who had seen him, and he showed them his hands and feet, which bore the marks of the crucifixion, so all knew that it was indeed the Messiah.

Jesus again appeared to the disciples while they were fishing in the sea of Tiberias though they didn't know it was him. They had fished all night and not caught a single fish so Jesus told them to cast their nets over the starboard side which they did, and when they were unable to haul the net back on board they saw that the reason was because it was so full of fish, and again they knew that it was Jesus. They towed the net ashore and found that it contained 153 big fish and they sat down to eat a meal of bread and fish, broken and handed out by Jesus. After they had eaten, Jesus returned to Mount Olive for the night and then returned to the temple the next morning where he began teaching the crowd gathered there. The chief priests and scribes entered the temple with a woman accused of committing adultery and they told Jesus that Moses had said such women should be stoned to death, they asked him what he would do with her, again hoping to catch him out. Once again Jesus knew what they were trying to do and said "Let whichever of you is free from sin throw the first stone at her." and he bent down to write on the floor with his

finger. When he looked up again he saw that all had left, the eldest first, and he was now alone with the woman. He said to her "Where are they? Has no-one condemned you?"

She said to him, "None sir."

Jesus replied, "Neither do I condemn you. Go do not sin again."

So it was that Jesus had fulfilled his prophecy of returning from the dead, and he told his disciples that they must go forth and continue to preach the gospel, baptise and heal the sick, and he led them as far as Bethany then was taken up into the kingdom of heaven to be seated at the right hand of God, his father in a cloud that took him into the sky. As they watched him go they were visited by two robed men in white who told them "This Jesus who has been taken from you up to heaven will come in the same way as you have seen him go."

The beginning of another chapter in history heralds the beginning of the New Testament and the gospel according to Matthew, gospel being an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning God story or Good story, so the author Matthew is telling us the good news about the birth of Jesus. Indeed the four gospel writers were concerned so much with the good news that we get no mention of Jesus' actual birth date, appearance, his opinions or his time of death, not exactly the work of a writer detailing somebody's life story but rather somebody in awe of the greatness of the man.

In the chapters of Mark, almost half of the sixteen are taken up by the chain of events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection, and clearly the authors are aware that they are not chronicling the life of any ordinary man but of a unique man. There are several marked differences between the four gospels, some just possibly down to the interpretation of the different authors, though some are clearly set apart by factual differences. Some of the facts we do know is that Jesus was born before 4BC when Herod the Great died. Herod had adopted the Jewish religion though he wasn't a Jew by birth, so his allegiances were to Rome but his sympathies were Greek, and by the end of his reign he was known to be quite mad and could quite easily have issued orders, such as the slaying of all the children in Bethlehem under two years old. After his death, the Jews wanted the Emperor Augustus to take the country under direct Roman supervision but he decided to divide the territory among Herod the Great's three sons. The son in charge of Judaea was a tyrant like his father and the land fell victim to riots and rebellion for ten years until

Augustus placed Judaea under the control of a Roman procurator whose superior was the Governor of Syria and then Augustus himself.

The fifth procurator of Judaea was none other than Pontius Pilate who took up office in 26 AD and was still in office at Jesus' trial. Another son of Herod the Great was Herod Antipas who was the ruler of Galilee, and he is the Herod who appears throughout the gospels during Jesus' life and who was almost obsessed with getting rid of him, Jesus even had a nickname for Antipas and referred to him as "that fox." Herod Antipas had also been behind the death of John the Baptist who had condemned him for his bigamous marriage to Herodias. It is ironic that Pontius Pilate, though apparently reluctant to condemn Jesus to death, was also a tyrannical ruler who ruled with repression and overstepped the mark so far that he was later tried in Rome for massacring civilians without sufficient cause and was banished to Gaul.

So it was that Jesus was present in a land and time that saw great political and social unrest as the Jewish people rebelled against Roman rule and an increasingly suppressing regime, so it comes as no surprise that so many suffered from "demons" within, and general mental and physical ailments. In time the Roman procurators allowed for the Jewish high priests to effectively rule the state but still be answerable to them. The "high priests" mentioned in the gospels are Annas, who reigned from 6 AD to 15 AD, and his son in law Caiaphas who ruled from 18 AD to 36 AD, and below their authority were the Sanhedrin who are referred to in the bible as "chief priests."

Local disputes were settled locally, and any that couldn't be were referred to the Sanhedrin, the equivalent of a high court in all but capital offences, such as the ones that Jesus stood accused of, so the stage was almost perfectly set, both politically and religiously, for a new Messiah who would deliver the world from both the evil tyrants and the evil of man. John the Baptist, himself a religious icon, was so enamoured of Jesus that he saw himself as unworthy of fastening Jesus' sandals, but the difference between the teachings of the two men was that John, and other preachers of the time, spoke of the wrath of God and scared people into accepting him to save themselves from their evil deeds but Jesus spoke of the love of God and his rewarding of good deeds by ordinary men. Despite these differences, John was still more than a friend to Jesus, he was also an inspiration, and their

meeting at the river Jordan was due to Jesus' wish to hear the preachings of the baptist whose reputation went before him, and so he journeyed from Nazareth in Galilee to the river Jordan to do just that, and he was so inspired when he did that he himself was moved to begin delivering such preachings.

The way that the gospels present the life of Jesus is as a series of episodes and encounters in his life, and we are told nothing of his own thoughts, just his words and deeds, and clearly the authors are writing just what they knew or were told.

Right from the start the story of Jesus, as represented in the bible, is on shaky ground with the notion of an immaculate conception, a physical impossibility, and the parents themselves, Joseph and Mary were not exceptional people in any way, tradition telling us that Joseph was a carpenter.

We are told that Joseph and Mary were betrothed but not married, and of course adultery was punishable by stoning, so for arguments sake we might assume that the child was fathered by Joseph, but illegitimacy would have been an almost equally serious crime and so they couldn't openly admit to pre-nuptial sex and came up with the story of an angel impregnating her with a child. Matthew tells us that Joseph set aside the marriage contract until he was visited by an angel and it is also interesting that shortly after finding herself pregnant Mary left for Judah to stay with the expectant mother of John the Baptist for three months, could this have been to avoid her fellow townspeople from knowing that she was pregnant, or was it to nurse her friend through her pregnancy up to the birth of her son, who were told was three months older than Jesus? Whatever the truth, as soon as Mary returned to Joseph, they both left for Bethlehem to register themselves in the census, so it is likely that nobody in their town ever saw her pregnant, and so they found themselves in Bethlehem with Mary's labour imminent.

Christian tradition holds that the birth of Christ took place in the year 0 on December 25th but we know that this is not the case as there was actually no year 0. The calendar actually goes straight from the year 1BC to the year 1 AD, and besides it must have been earlier than this, in fact before 4 BC. We know that in 7 BC the planets Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction and would have produced a bright light in the sky, could this have been the star we have come to know as a part of the Christmas story? Could it have attracted astrologers who came to investigate? Or is it the author using the

part of the Old Testament in Genesis that tells us that God created stars to act as signs for festivals? The three men are also described as shepherds, and as the Jews had been waiting for years for a Messiah, could they have heard about the birth of the son of David and left for the traditional home of David to look for him rather than being visited by an angel?

The story has become romanticised over the years and so details become glamorised, especially with the relationship with Christmas, but it is interesting that the virgin birth appears nowhere outside the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, and in fact in the early years of the church, belief in the immaculate conception wasn't a necessary part of Christianity.

The infant was praised by those who visited him in the manger and he became an overnight celebrity in Bethlehem, which angered the demented Herod who ordered all the infants under two to be killed, so the happy family escaped to Egypt and the relative safety there before settling in Nazareth, and we next see Jesus at the age of twelve in Jerusalem, doing what young children do best, asking questions. The next account that we get of Jesus after this is his meeting with John the Baptist thirty years later, so, did the so called Messiah not realise that he was the son of God, the King of the Jews? Did he not achieve any great goals until the age of forty or more? If so why did he tell Mary and Joseph that they should have known he would be in his father's house, if he did say such a thing? It is clear from reading the four gospels that the authors see the first significant event of Jesus' life not to be the virgin birth or his first trip to Jerusalem for Passover but his meeting with John the Baptist and indeed this is where both Mark and John begin their gospels, making no mention of Jesus' early life which he spent in Nazareth, a quiet village in the hills of Galilee.

Jesus therefore was a country man at heart who, as far as we know, didn't visit the city until he had turned twelve. The assumption is made that Joseph died around this time, and as Jesus was the eldest child he would have inherited any business of his father's, and so for thirty years he lived the life of a lowly village carpenter in the heart of the hills where he would have experienced men and women at their most simple, unassuming level. He would have learnt their ways and spent long hours alone where he could spend his time thinking and asking himself deep and meaningful questions, bread and butter to a man who enjoys his own company, and it gave him much time to think about the world he lived in and the people he shared it

with and their religious and spiritual problems of the time.

Jesus had an extensive knowledge of the Old Testament and understood the troubles his fellow men were experiencing, so when he heard of a preacher drawing large crowds at the banks of the river Jordan, he had to go and see what all the fuss was about. Something must have happened to him during his years in Nazareth that made him feel that he was something special, something more than just a carpenter, did he know that he had certain gifts, gifts that nobody else in his village had? Something must have given him reason to leave the only life he had ever known, his home and his job to go and hear the words of a preacher, and when he did hear John preach he was so moved by it that he felt compelled to take it up himself and display the gifts that had been bestowed upon him, possibly gifts given to him by the God that John was talking about, with similar opinions to those that Jesus himself held.

When he was baptised by John he felt that it was his duty to go forward and teach the word of God, but what would make him think he was the son of God? Had many told him that he was a virgin birth? Had he, clearly a wise man, been doubting it all his life and now finally believed it after hearing the sermon given by John, or did he simply have an inflated opinion of himself? It is possible that Mary told Jesus, but probably nobody else in Nazareth, as they had possibly settled in such a remote place to be able to put their indiscretions behind them. So, now in emotional turmoil at realising his new vocation in life and believing himself to be the son of God, he needed time alone to collect his thoughts, and used to spending such times alone he went out into the wilderness to decide his future for a biblical length of time, forty days and forty nights.

The time Jesus spent in the wilderness was taken up by him deciding which path to take and what direction his life was to follow. so he had many choices to make about what he was to do, whether or not to throw himself from the temple so to speak, and only when he had made these decisions to take the path he felt was right, and not necessarily the one he would be expected to take, or the one others would want him to take. Finally he returned to civilisation in Galilee, the land he knew so well and began his life's work spreading the word of God in a novel way compared to those that had gone before him, and so his teachings of the kingdom of God were taken as good news.

One typical day in Jesus' life is described in the chapters of Mark, where Jesus was preaching on the Sabbath day in Capernaum and his audience were grateful for the change of tack from the usual sermon, including one man not of sound mind, to whom Jesus' words meant so much and struck a chord so deep that his mind became clear, and all felt that through Jesus they had witnessed the healing power of God. Afterward Jesus and his four new disciples went to the home of Peter for a meal, but when they arrived there they found that his mother was bedridden with a high fever which was lifted by Jesus' touch, and she was then able to get out of bed and continue with her chores. Word soon spread and as the evening fell on the Sabbath, many people then came to Peter's house to be healed of both physical and mental ailments. Once Jesus had risen early on the following day he went away, again by himself, to find space for thought and time to reflect over what must have been one of the most important days of his life, and one which confirmed to him that he was what he thought he was, and during his time in the wilderness what he had decided to be, and that he possessed the powers that went with the "job" and over the ensuing years of his life, he would come to use them many times.

As he healed more and more people his fame spread far and wide, and the crowds that came to him grew larger and larger until they were too big to fit into a house or even a synagogue and he was forced to preach from a boat while the crowd stood around him on the shore. The feelings of Herod at that time who had already put pay to the preacher John the Baptist were certainly not favourable, and the fact that Jesus was able to attract a crowd probably larger than Herod himself wouldn't have helped matters any, and Jesus eventually left Galilee, though not only to escape a confrontation with Herod but also possibly for a more important reason. Jesus may possibly have felt that people were now only coming to him to be healed and not to hear what he had to say, and that people perhaps felt he would one day join them and lead them in a rebellion against the Romans, which he of course had no intention of doing. Jesus was careful never to use the word Messiah to describe himself and he also encouraged others not to do so as it would be another reason for Herod to be greatly angered by him.

When Jesus left Galilee he was possibly a very disappointed man because his plans had gone wrong, people had been following him for the wrong reasons, and he made the decision to recruit the assistance of a few



faithful followers, his twelve disciples, to help him start again on the right road. The choosing of the number twelve was no accident and it signified that he was striving for a new Israel whose twelve tribes were the "traditional embodiment of the people of God" and he took them away from Galilee in order to teach them on a more personal basis, away from the milling throngs he had in the past had to contend with.

So we have a gifted man with the powers to heal both mental and physical ailments, where we have psychiatrists and spiritual healers today, in Jesus' time illnesses, both of the mind and of the body, were thought to be caused by demon possession, and many of the healing stories feature such demons. Even in the modern, thinking world, primitive peoples such as Aboriginal tribes still hold this fear, and if such a person were to be told that his demons were being banished then he would be well, and by the same token if he were to be told that he were about to die within the next seven days then he would in turn be dead one week later, simply because his mind is telling him that this will be so. This is called a "psychosomatic" process and demonstrates the power of the mind over the body and shows that in the case of psychic healers, it is the victim who actually cures themselves by their faith in the healer rather than the actions of the healer directly curing them. We can see evidence that Jesus knew this in the aftermath of the events at Gerasenes when he told a girl that he didn't need to touch to heal her as her faith in him would be enough and she would be cured. It is for this reason that spiritual healers are more commonly, and more fittingly known as faith healers, and so once Jesus had cured one person, others would already have faith in him and his powers and so, to some extent, making it easier for him the more he did it.

So Jesus was to begin his work again, and he did it in such a way that all could understand him and he would use a little example in the form of a story known as a parable, the meanings behind the parables were on the basic theme that God would reward the good and disregard those that chose not to live as he would wish. Jesus would use everyday stories to get this message across, perhaps the most famous being the sower of the seed, the prodigal son and the good samaritan, but his preaching to crowds was now taking up a lot less of his time than his teaching of the twelve disciples in quiet places, where just the thirteen of them were present, and he tended to choose mountain tops for these meetings, away from disturbances. The disciples

were convinced that Jesus was who he said he was when they witnessed the miracles that he performed, turning water into wine, feeding the 5,000, banishing a man's demons to a herd of swine, calming the storm on the lake and resurrecting people.

We can read between the lines of the four gospels and see that the authors are clearly in awe of the man they hail as the Messiah, and the gospels were written soon after Jesus lifetime, possibly with the help of the disciples. We have also seen many times the use of symbolism in the bible right from the book of Genesis with the creation, through the Old Testament and into the New Testament, so do we take the miracles at face value as actual fact or do we look at them in the same light as we looked at the creation, Noah's ark and Moses?

The truth is that Jesus refused to perform to order to satisfy people's curiosity or to make them believe in him, in fact his miracles are all in context with the story and seem to fit in with the telling of the gospels, as though they were nothing special to Jesus but merely part of the story, not factual miracles but miracles with a far deeper meaning, a hidden truth.

The changing of the 120 gallons of water into fine red wine could be interpreted to mean the rich wine of Jesus' gospel replacing the plain water of Judaism of which everybody had had their fill. The feeding of the 5,000 was an unnecessary miracle in that all those present could easily have gone home to eat rather than staying where they were to eat with Jesus, and it could mean nothing more than a crowd of people attending one of Jesus' sermons and then eating a meal with him out in the open before returning home.

In the Old Testament we saw accounts of people such as Moses controlling the elements and we see it again in the New Testament when Jesus walked on the lake and calmed the storm with his words. Where the parting of the Red Sea was probably caused by some natural phenomenon, then likewise the calming of the storm could also have a natural cause but is more likely to represent Jesus possessing a power similar to God's over the elements as is Jesus walking on water and banishing the man's demons to the herd of swine. Jesus' act of making the fig tree wither would appear to be an error on the author's part because in another chapter we see that one of Jesus' parables is about a fruitless fig tree being representative of the fruitlessness of the people of Israel so there is an apparent mix up between something Jesus said and something Jesus did.

The resurrections that Jesus performed on three separate occasions could also have symbolic meanings, that Jesus represents a new life for people reborn into his world, or they could perhaps be factual in essence, especially in the case of the recently dead girl, because the definition of death in Jesus' time was far different to that we know today. A lack of breathing would once have been taken as death, as would a lack of heartbeat, both of which can be restarted nowadays and are done everyday in hospitals all over the world as a matter of relative routine. The common definition of death we have today is the cessation of activity in the brain, but even this is a point of contention in the cases of people in comas being kept alive by machinery which circulates their blood and pumps their lungs full of air.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, he emerged from the tomb wrapped in bandages with a cloth over his face, so could it have been somebody else in his place concealing their true identity?

Jesus' final "mission" in life seemed to be to go to Jerusalem, where he knew the hardened Jews were, and the essence of his life's work was to come to a head, and in one of his lessons to the disciples he seemed to have foreseen his own capture, flogging, death and resurrection. He also later predicted his betrayal by Judas at the last supper, and so they made their way to Jerusalem, arriving there at the time of the Passover, the second time that we know Jesus was in Jerusalem for the festival. It would seem that Jesus chose the Passover to go to Jerusalem as he knew it would be filled with many many Jews who made the pilgrimage annually, and he would have had a huge audience to preach to. We now refer to this time in his life as Holy Week, and it occurred probably around 29 AD. The bible chapters which cover holy week are more detailed than any other in his life story, as though it was apparent that this time was far more important than most. These chapters also appear to have been written earlier than the others because they are so much more literal and contain less symbolism than the rest so the truth is easier to decipher.

When Jesus entered the temple he saw people trading and carrying out their business there so he overturned their tables and threw them out, he said that this was the house of God and not the place for business. This angered the authorities even more than his arrival in Jerusalem had done and they plotted how they could arrest him without incurring the wrath of the Jewish pilgrims and the people of Jerusalem. During the day Jesus was in the temple

surrounded by his followers and at night he spent his time in one of the villages outside the city so this was the perfect place for them to arrest him, and when one of the twelve offered to betray him they had the perfect opportunity to get their man. Just why Judas Iscariot should have betrayed Jesus at all is a mystery as the amount of money he was paid was a pittance, could he have become disillusioned with Jesus and had a change of heart? Surely if this were the case then he needn't have betrayed Jesus but just left his inner circle, or did he do it to test Jesus, to see if he would use his powers to defeat his would be arresters? Did Jesus really foresee the betrayal or did he hear talk of it around the temple, possibly being warned by some sympathiser, or could he just sense a difference in the behaviour of Judas toward him? However he came to find out about it, he decided to hold one final evening together with his disciples, the last supper, at the end of which he broke the bread of his body and shared the wine of his blood, and these actions were taken into the early church's traditions and continue to be performed today as holy communion.

By this time Jesus is resigned to his death, even before he has been arrested and tried, he obviously senses the resentment felt for him by the chief priests and scribes and knows he will not receive a fair trial, and so he prepares himself for his final act, his greatest act, that of a martyr, willing to give his life, not only for his beliefs but also so that God's word will live on and that others will be saved by his act. He had resigned himself to it and yet he was still fearful of it and didn't want it, in the garden of Gethsemane he threw himself to the ground and begged for his life but his cries went in vain and he finally accepted his fate "Father, not my will but thy will be done." and he is arrested by his former friend and disciple Judas.

Jesus' trial was a hasty affair, rushed by the authorities who wanted to get both the trial and the crucifixion over with before the festival of Passover began on the Friday evening, the matter wasn't helped by Jesus who refused to answer the charges rather than cooperate and admit his guilt, though he did admit to being the Messiah when asked the question directly, and this was taken to be an admittal of guilt and he was duly condemned to death by his Jewish peers, but he must also be found guilty by the Roman authorities in the Praetorium where Pontius Pilate was presiding. Pilate was in a potentially dangerous position, he was in Jerusalem for the duration of the Passover to quell possible trouble from any politically minded Jewish pilgrims and he

would have been unenthusiastic about interfering with Jewish religious arguments, made worse because this particular case involved the death sentence, but he was also out of favour with the Roman authorities and wouldn't have wanted to anger the Jewish leaders and cause unrest in his community. He didn't think that the charges against Jesus were sound and he had his doubts about the motives of the Jewish leaders for whom he held no great love, but he was in such a position that he had no choice but to find Jesus guilty, as one of the charges was against Rome itself and Pilate couldn't risk angering his superiors by not committing him.

Could Jesus have known, as others did, about Pilate's precarious position and not so much foreseen his death but known that there was no other choice that Pilate, his ultimate judge, could make. Pilate tried to pass the buck and claimed that Jesus came under Herod's jurisdiction, but Herod held no trial but demanded that Jesus perform a miracle for him, and when he refused he was handed back to Pilate once again who had one final chance at freeing Jesus as it was customary for the Romans to free a criminal of the people's choosing at the festival of Passover. Pilate proposed that this should be Jesus but there was another choice, Jesus Barabbas, a man due for execution for crimes against Rome, the perfect man for the Jewish chief priests and scribes to have released, and they used their authority to influence the crowd and persuade them that this was the right man to call for, and not Jesus the Messiah. Pilate was now left with no choice but to condemn Jesus to death and so he was duly beaten to within inches of his life and then forced to carry his cross, as was traditionally a part of crucifixion, but after his savage beating he was unable to do so and a bystander was made to carry it for him.

So, on the Friday at 9 am Jesus was nailed up on his cross, and he refused a drink of drugged wine which was offered to him by the wealthy women who would usually attend crucifixions and offer the drink to help deaden the pain for the condemned men. Crucifixion victims were not hung very high but just above the ground where Jesus would have to bear the taunts of the crowds, and they could hear his plea for forgiveness from those who had condemned him, his cry that God had forsaken him. Jesus died at 3 pm much quicker than expected, as most crucifixion victims would take days to die.

As the Passover approached, the people were anxious to take down the bodies, and the legs of the men beside him were broken, but as Jesus already

appeared dead, one of the soldiers stuck a sword into his side to make sure, and his body was allowed to be taken away by a secret sympathiser of Jesus. It was then wrapped in linen and placed in a cave tomb and then the traditional cart wheel stone was rolled into place along its groove across the opening, apparently watched by the women who went away over the Sabbath to prepare ointments for his body.

Meanwhile, the disciples were left in dismay at the loss of their “leader” and didn't know where to turn, their Messiah had been arrested, beaten and crucified and they were left alone. The precise events of the time between Good Friday and Easter Sunday aren't clear, and the gospels give greatly differing accounts, understandable with such a momentous event as the apparent resurrection of the Messiah, but what is clear is that on Good Friday the tomb was closed and on Easter Sunday the tomb was open and the body gone. Soon afterward Jesus appeared several times to various people, though not en masse, he seemed to choose his time and place carefully appearing only to a select few, just enough to convince the disciples that he had risen from the dead, and they now realised that they once again had a life's work ahead of them and they were apparently both overjoyed and enthusiastic about it.

Could Jesus not have been dead, but recovered in the tomb from drugged wine or a state of coma or unconsciousness? More sinisterly, could the disciples have taken his body and made up the story of the resurrection to make people believe them, and listen to them all the more when they began their own quest to spread his word then they would seem more credible if their leader had risen from the dead than if he had died at the hands of his tormentors? Could his body have been removed by the authorities so that if the disciples had begun to preach about the resurrection of the Messiah then all they would have to do would be to produce the body and thus completely discredit them and prevent the work Jesus began from being continued by his followers. How do we explain the accounts where Jesus wasn't recognised by some of those who saw him until he performed an act typical of him such as the breaking of the bread? Was he somehow different in appearance after his ordeal? Was he just looking gaunt because he had been so close to death or was he not resurrected in body, but merely in spirit, a ghost performing the act of breaking the bread in death as he had done in life?

Whatever the truth behind the resurrection, it formed the basis of early

Christianity, if the resurrection hadn't been such a vital part of the new faith then it would merely have been one of the many branches of the Jewish faith swallowed up over time as a short lived cult, but instead the resurrection set it apart and Christians believed that God had spared his son the torment of his life ending at the hands of the envious and malicious Jewish church leaders.

If Jesus did exist, it is likely that he was a most gifted individual borne, not out of immaculate conception, but out of some indiscretion on the part of Mary and Joseph who wished not to be victimised and made outcasts by a society both unwilling and incapable of accepting the birth of a child out of wedlock. The time that the young Jesus spent in the village of Nazareth, almost alone, was perhaps the most significant and influential part of his life, and would prove to be the time that he realised that he was blessed with certain gifts that were not possessed by his fellow men, and he was only misguided in thinking that these gifts were bestowed upon him by God, the man he had been told was his father. He wasn't the only "Messiah" around at the time, in fact it seems that every soap box had someone willing to stand upon it and preach. Jesus merely represented a different and more refreshing approach, one full of reward and hope for all who chose to take the right path to God.

As well as being one of many preachers he is not the only man to possess the powers of healing, which formed a crucial, though later regretted, part of his work. He was a self-taught man and clearly very intelligent which enabled him, even as a young boy, to hold fluent and meaningful conversations with "wise men" by far his senior. This command of the language endeared him to those willing to listen and he clearly impressed his twelve disciples so much that they would devote their lives to him and his teachings, which even the least educated audience could follow due to the simplicity of the parable form they took.

The miracle of turning water into wine, is most likely an analogy used by the author, and in the gospels Jesus does not directly have contact with the containers but tells the servants what to do to convert it into wine, it is an example of Jesus telling man how to find the rich wine of God's word, and the other miracles are examples of symbolism used by the authors to convey a message as we have seen many times in the chapters of the bible, and we also see the muddled confusion in the telling of the tale of the fig tree.

So with his first mission unsuccessful, or rather misunderstood, Jesus

knew he had to go to Jerusalem where his real work lay ahead of him, and he also knew that he would be unwelcome, and possibly victimised and persecuted, and, rather than foreseeing his death, it was more a matter of common sense realising that trouble lay ahead. Once there he got what he expected, the chief priests and scribes trying to trap him and think of a way to arrest him, but he was equal to them and outsmarted them until he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, probably hearing about it rather than foreseeing it, and once he was destined to be taken into custody he knew that he would be condemned to death, and despite the efforts of Pontius Pilate to spare him he was doomed and had resigned himself to the fact.

Once he had been beaten to within death's grasp he was too weak to carry his cross and had it carried for him, and accepting the drink of drugged wine he was nailed to the cross where he begged for forgiveness for his captors, asking why God had forsaken him and he slipped away, not to death but close to it, and his body was taken down early before the Passover and placed in the tomb where he regained consciousness, rolled away the stone and returned to his disciples and told them to continue his work after he was gone. Possibly he felt that he had been through enough already, only to be deserted on the cross and left to die. He was most likely extremely disillusioned with the events of the recent days and wished to be alone again, free to return to the life he had known before in his own quiet little village of Nazareth, before the world to him became a place of hard and unrewarding work, and his disciples followed his wishes, preaching as he had asked. Christianity was born.

This new religion would centre around the life of a lowly, illegitimate village carpenter with certain gifts that he misunderstood the origin of, and millions of people the world over would come to live their lives by his rules, give their hearts and minds to him, and devote themselves to him completely, some taking vows of silence and celibacy in order that they could become closer to their Lord and to concentrate on carrying on his work long after he and his disciples had departed the earth.

## **FAITH AND ITS POWER**

There is no doubt that people's belief in the existence of a God, and their faith in that God, is of a great help to them and that mentally and spiritually



they find it very rewarding and reassuring. For example good things which may occur in their everyday lives they will say that it is their God looking after them or that their prayers are being answered. The actual act of praying itself, talking to your God, is a good form of therapy where you feel that you are sharing your problems and troubles with somebody else which is the basis behind psychotherapy and the way to good mental health, and of course there are no expensive bills. Whether or not there is a God to listen to you, you will feel a lot better if you have a faith and, as we know, if the mind is well then so can the body be, a problem aired is a problem shared, and a problem shared is a problem halved.

The fact that praying is of a great comfort to a great many people is beyond doubt, and many words of support can be found in the bible which can be put to good use in people's everyday lives as well as the benefits which come from simply talking to God. Here are just some examples of those words of comfort and also lessons in how to live our lives and how to treat our fellow man.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 7, Verse 17**

I shall praise the Lord for his righteousness and sing to the name of the Lord most high

**Psalms, Book 1, Chapter 8, Verse 9**

Lord our sovereign, how glorious is your name throughout the world.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 9, Verses 2 and 3**

I shall rejoice and exult in you, the most high; I shall sing praise to your name because my enemies turn back; at your presence they fall headlong and perish.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 13, Verses 5 and 6**

As for me, I trust in your unfailing love; my heart will rejoice when I am brought to safety. I shall sing to the Lord, for he has granted all my desire.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 18, Verse 3**

I shall call to the Lord to whom all praise is due; then I shall be made safe from my enemies.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 19, Verse 7**

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul. The Lord's instruction never fails; it makes the simple wise.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 19, Verse 14**

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my mind be acceptable to you, Lord my rock and my redeemer.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 29, Verse 11**

The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

**Psalms Book 1, Chapter 34, Verse 17**

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and sets them free from all their troubles.

**Psalms Book 2, Chapter 63, Verse 3**

Your unfailing love is better than life; therefore I shall sing your praises.

**Psalms Book 3, Chapter 83, Verse 4**

Happy are those who dwell in your house; they never cease to praise you!

**Psalms Book 3, Chapter 86, Verse 17**

Give me a sign of your favour; let those who hate me see it and be abashed; for you, Lord, have been my help and comfort.

**Psalms Book 4, Chapter 94, Verses 17, 18 and 19**

Had the Lord not been my helper, I should soon have dwelt in the silent grave. If I said that my foot was slipping, your love, Lord, continued to hold me up. When anxious thoughts filled my heart, your comfort brought me joy.

**Psalms Book 5, Chapter 116, Verses 1 and 2**

I love the Lord, for he has heard me and listened to my prayer; he has given me a hearing and all my days I shall cry to him.

**Psalms Book 5, Chapter 150, Verse 6 (the final verse)**

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord ! Praise the Lord.

We can also take advice from the book of proverbs which holds many examples of the way in which we are to live, mostly they are common sense and some are similar to proverbs we use today.

**Proverbs, Chapter 10, Verse 4**

Idle hands make for penury; diligent hands make for riches.

**Proverbs, Chapter 10, Verse 14**

The wise store up knowledge; when a fool speaks, ruin is imminent.

**Proverbs, Chapter 12, Verse 1**

He who loves correction loves knowledge; he who hates reproof is stupid.

**Proverbs, Chapter 13, Verse 20**

Walk with the wise and learn wisdom; mix with the stupid and come to harm.

**Proverbs, Chapter 14, Verse 16**

One who is wise is cautious and avoids trouble, but one who is stupid is reckless and falls headlong.

**Proverbs, Chapter 19, Verse 18**

Chastise your son while there is hope for him; only be careful not to flog him to death.

**Proverbs, Chapter 20, Verse 4**

The lazy man who does not plough in Autumn looks for a crop at harvest and gets nothing.

**Proverbs, Chapter 20, Verse 7**

If someone leads a good and upright life, happy are his children after him!

**Proverbs, Chapter 22, Verse 6**

Start a child on the right road, and even in old age he will not leave it.

We have seen that the bible is symbolic and also that it contains many words of comfort and wisdom by which we can lead our lives, yet we know that it is not entirely factual but is based on fact, no doubt Samson did fall in love with Delilah, Moses did lead the exodus from Egypt and died as a martyr, David did fight Goliath and win against the odds and Solomon was visited by the Queen of Sheba, but is there any proof of the existence of God within it? There is certainly no absolute proof here as the bible is after all just a book written many years ago and over many years, but as there can be no proof in the bible, is there proof elsewhere of the existence of God? This imponderable question has proved to be the life's work of many a great philosopher.

There are three main arguments for the existence of God. "The Beginning Argument" or the "Kalam Cosmological Argument" (Kalam is Arabic for speech) says that God exists because the universe had a beginning, so something must have caused this beginning to occur. To say that something exists is to say that it has a cause or that it was caused, nothing exists without a cause and the philosopher Aquinas said that everyone understands this to be God, though of course this on its own is not a proof of the existence of God.

The "Argument From Contingency" goes as follows; if we use the example set by Brian Davies O.P.; he says that Neil Armstrong was the first

man to walk on the moon, but this didn't necessarily have to be the case, it could have been anybody and not necessarily Neil Armstrong, so therefore it was contingent.

If somebody should say that it had been Ronald Reagan they would be wrong but they wouldn't be contradicting themselves, it could have been true, whereas if they said that some circles are square this could not be true. If we bear this in mind then we can say that everything around is contingent, so it is possible to conceive them as not existing. There is no reason why any of them exist, but because they do there must be a reason for it outside of them. So we must consider something which is not contingent, that is, something which has a reason for existing within itself, and this must be God. According to the argument from contingency, since the universe is contingent there must be something whose non existence would be impossible, as is the square circle.

The "First Cause Argument" seeks an answer for the existence of something such as trees, we could ask: How come trees exist? If we look at one particular tree we could ask how come it is there? If we were to answer this question we would look at the tree from which it came and this would give us our answer, but what if we were to ask how come there are trees at all? We could answer this in terms of the conditions present on the earth which aids the development of trees.

We could move on from this and ask how come these conditions exist? We could ask more and more questions until eventually we would come to the question: How come the universe exists at all?

Supporters of the first cause argument suggest that any legitimate question must have an answer, so there must be an answer for there being a universe. Following on from this it must be that God is an "incomprehensible" being, and if he is the reason behind the existence of the universe then he must be something that we cannot recognise as being an inhabitant of the universe, so God is "outside the order of beings" as we conceive them.

Just why should we suppose that there is anything which all things depend upon for their existence? This is the argument against the first cause theory. There may exist something that is simply there and cannot be looked into in the same way as trees for example. By the same token people will say that we cannot say that trees simply exist, so why should we say the same of

the universe?

None of these, or any other theories are very convincing that there is a God of any kind, no creator, no “Lord“ we simply make our own luck, and the fate of both the world and of mankind lies in our own hands. However, if people want to hold a belief in God, as it must have many personal benefits for them, at what point does it become so serious that it approaches, and passes, the point of being dangerous as in the case of the many cults that surface even today.

We have mainly looked at Christianity in this chapter, but 99% of religions around the world centre around a supreme being, a God, though they have their own name for their God, Allah, Buddha etc. but as well as religions with huge followings such as Hindu, Islam, Christianity or Buddhism, there are many smaller religions which we know as cults or sects, and these have consistently received bad press and in many cases with good reason, such as those led by the Reverend Jimmy Jones or David Koresh.

Jimmy Jones fooled many people, nobody suspected that they were looking at, or shaking hands with, a very dangerous, yet calculating man, whose control over his “flock” was total. For those of us outside a cult it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine just how somebody can become so central in somebody else's life, and not just one person but a whole group or community of people. So what was it that Jimmy Jones had which stood him apart from other people?

Jones was an average student at school but would show an enormous enthusiasm for bible studies, and while his fellow students spent their spare time on the sports field he would stand on the doorstep of his family's run-down home and preach to passers-by. At age 18, in 1949, he took a part-time job to support himself through religious studies at Indiana University, and he also married a nurse called Marceline Baldwin. The following year, although not yet an ordained minister, he became a pastor at a church in Indianapolis and helped to run its racially integrated youth centre, but this caused him to suffer abuse at the hands of the local racial bigots, one of whom was his father, and even the more conservative church members protested about his plans to welcome black worshippers into the church.

Before Jones quit he was attacked by outsiders, and the once frosty church members rallied round him and supported him. It was this support which taught him one of the most important lessons he would ever learn;

even people who don't share each other's beliefs can be united if threatened by a common enemy.

Jones eventually bought his own church in a run-down part of Indianapolis with money from his followers and he named it "The People's Temple." It was here in this black ghetto that Jones began to preach racial equality and integration, and he and his wife adopted seven children, black, white and Asian, and citing his mother's Cherokee blood, he called himself "Biracial." Now that he was preaching to a black audience, Jones studied the style and technique of the black preachers who would hold their audience in rapture as they preached in their hellfire and damnation way. One of Jones' particular favourites was Father Divine of Philadelphia who lived a life of luxury, paid for by his trusting and devoted followers who even believed his claim to be able to raise the dead, and Jones felt that it was high time he tested the allegiance of his own flock.

Jones supplied the newspapers with stories of how he and his family stood defiant in the face of racial hatred directed at them, including an incident where a stick of dynamite exploded in their garden. This prompted the Mayor of Indianapolis to appoint Jones to a \$3,000 a year job in the city's human rights commission, but more importantly it brought him his congregation's undying devotion. In 1960 "Nuclear War Fever" was running high, and many Americans built backyard fallout shelters, and a tongue in cheek magazine article outlined the ten safest places to live in the event of nuclear war, one of which was Ukiah, California, and another was Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Jones told his members that he had experienced "a personal vision of the nuclear holocaust" and that they should be prepared to follow him to escape any danger - the common enemy - and he told them to be ready to sell their homes and take their savings out of the bank.

At the church's expense, he and his family travelled to Brazil but were more impressed by the tiny, newly independent country of Guyana where they had stopped over for a few days. Jones told his congregation of Guyana's qualities, but he told them that his vision of the holocaust had receded for the time being. Flattered by the number of his followers who had already put their homes on the market, he decided that the option of fleeing should be kept open for a future emergency. That emergency was not long in coming.

Jones launched himself into the lucrative faith healing market and his services were spectacular, profitable and fraudulent. He would lay his hands

on people who would jump up and say that they were cured, but things began to turn sour when there were claims that he had raised forty people from the dead. These claims aroused the attention of the newspapers and the state board of psychology, and it was now time for the flit to one of the safe havens near Ukiah, California wher the California of the mid 1960s welcomed three hundred religious enthusiasts preaching love and peace with open arms. Here, Jones found that he now only had to convert two possible troublemakers, the press and the civic busybodies.

His success in this task was astonishing as members of his temple were the first to volunteer to help out local charities, and others acted as foster parents to local problem children from orphanages, and Jones himself wooed politicians and dignitaries until he was soon elected as Foreman of the county Grand Jury and Director of Free Legal Aid Services. Jones' followers had now become totally devoted and he told them that in order for him to bring about his ideal of social justice they must gain further support for him by canvassing in elections and handing over their money to him. With this extra wealth the people's temple, being a well respected, state registered, tax-exempt organisation, Jones was fast becoming what he had hoped to be, and it was high time for the big stage.

Fleeing from the backwoods Jones headed for San Francisco where his following blossomed to seven and a half thousand devoted do-gooders, and the civic respect followed him and his organisation so they were given part of the welfare programme which meant that they had the task of dispensing thousands of free hot meals in their dining hall. What didn't come to light was the fact that among the grateful diners were Jones' own followers who gave him their wages, savings and even their social security payments.

Even bigger things were just around the corner for Jones who was asked a favour by a local political worker. In 1976 Rosalyn Carter, wife of presidential candidate Jimmy, was appearing at an election rally and should the turnout be small, Jones was asked to swell the numbers with his followers, which he duly did, and in return he received a standing ovation for his trouble. The next day his picture appeared in the press with Rosalyn Carter, and when her husband was later elected Jones received an invitation to Washington to attend the inauguration.

It was around this time that things began to go wrong for Jones as, while he seemed to the outside world to be a respectable pillar of the community

who donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to starving children in Guyana, defectors from the temple were telling of Jones' long tyrannical lectures about sex. Jones demanded, they said, that happily married couples divorce and remarry partners that he had chosen for them from his inner ring of church elders, and that he also held the right to have sex with any woman or girl in the congregation and would force them to submit to his desires. Jones would make members confess to imagined sins of homosexuality and there were claims that children were beaten on a platform in the temple to "make them show respect." Worse still, young girls were made to take part in boxing matches with bigger opponents who would easily beat them. Other children went into a private room to meet the "blue eyed monster" and sounds of screaming would come from within, along with the cracking noise of an electric cattle prod.

While all this was going on, money continued to pour in to the temple and San Francisco newspapers won large cash prizes through the temple's awards for "outstanding journalistic contributions to peace and public enlightenment" and even the police benefitted from donations to the widows and orphans of officers killed in the line of duty. Such was the pedestal that people put Jones on, and there was a deep sense of disappointment which went all the way to the White House when it began to look as though the Reverend Jimmy Jones may not be all that he seemed to be.

As the bubble began to burst, it was time for Jones to put his escape plan into action, and in 1977 1,000 of his loyal followers went with him to Guyana where he had squirrelled away hundreds of thousands of dollars, enough to buy a lease on 20,000 acres of jungle and swamp near Port Kaituma on the Caribbean coast.

On the site was built a pavillion which would serve as a headquarters and enough dormitories for 1,000 people so that they could start up a "new, just, socialist society" - "Jonestown." Most of the San Francisco politicians who had been taken in by Jones were quietly grateful that a potentially embarrassing scandal had decided to remove itself fromn their doorstep, but there was one particularly tenacious congressman who was unwilling to let the scandal rest.

53 Year old Leo Ryan was a politician who had a history of not letting problems go. He had spent time in the solitary confinement cell of Folsom Prison just to see what it was like to be a prisoner, and he had also taught in



ghetto schools to experience, and expose, failures in the education system. Ryan was approached by his constituents who told him that they feared for the safety of their loved ones who had discovered the truth about Jones and were being held against their will. Ryan managed to persuade the U.S. State Department to force the Guyanese government to let him visit Jonestown personally. Taking newspaper and television reporters with him he arrived on November 17th, 1978 and found Jones "holding court" in the pavilion. Locked away in a strongroom were 1,000 US passports taken from his followers, and he found armed guards patrolling the perimeter which Jones explained away by saying that they were "To keep away bandits."

Ryan found most of the people were gaunt and hungry but amazingly they were still fanatically devoted to Jones, and when Ryan addressed them himself, he said "I am sure there are some of you who think this is the best thing that has ever happened to you in your lives," which was met with shouting and cheering. He continued "But I promise if any of you want to leave you can come with me under my personal guarantee of protection." And this was met with a silence that left Jones seething. He knew that anyone who left with Ryan would spill the beans as soon as they were free of his grasp, and slowly, a volunteer stepped forward.

Ryan was allowed to stay for the night in Jonestown, but the team of reporters were made to stay 6 miles away in Port Kaituma, and when they arrived there one of them pulled a note out of their pocket which had been secretly thrust into his hand by a member of the congregation. On the note were 4 names and the message "Please, please get us out of here before Jones kills us."

When they returned to Jonestown the next morning they found Ryan waiting with 20 people who wanted to leave with them, but the plane was too small to carry them all and would have to make a second trip. Ryan bravely agreed to stay behind and wait, and there was a scuffle followed by a cheer because one of Jones' elders had cut himself while trying to stab Ryan. The reporters grabbed Ryan and pulled him aboard an earth moving truck to make their way to the airfield, and as they arrived and briefed the pilot a tractor appeared through the undergrowth. A volley of shots rang out and Ryan was killed instantly, falling to the floor with his face blown off. A TV reporter, Don Harris, was killed by automatic rifle fire, as was his cameraman who was filming the melee. Another young reporter from the San Francisco

Examiner was also killed and to add insult to injury, one of the so called defectors pulled a gun from his shirt and began firing at the pilot amid the confusion.

Back at Jonestown the Reverend continued to preach until the gunmen returned from the airstrip and the looks on their faces told everybody that something had happened there. One of them whispered into Jones' ear and he then addressed the crowd which had now gathered. He said to them "The Congressman is dead. I don't know who fired the shot. I don't know who killed the Congressman. As far as I am concerned I killed him. You understand what I'm saying, I killed him. He had no business coming, I told him not to come."

This quote is taken from a tape recording which Jones made of that final night in Jonestown, and that tape has now been released by the FBI. The tape recorded Jones' voice over the next 2 hours during which time over 900 of his followers would die.

They queued up to drink from vats of Kool Aid laced with cyanide, babies having it squirted into their mouth with syringes, and survivors say that Jones had always planned for the children to die first so their parents and grandparents would not run away.

On the tape Jones' voice can be clearly heard asking the children to hurry and he says to them "If you're gonna get that medication here, you've gotta move." In the background, crying can be heard coming from both the children and the adults, and to try and make things run a little more smoothly Jones reassures them by telling them "It's not to be feared, it's not to be feared, it's a friend, it's a friend. Please get us the medication. It's simple, it's simple, there's no convulsions with it, it's simple."

Witnesses describe mothers who were reluctant to let their babies go, and Jones' bodyguards would remove them from their mother's arms. Some of the children trying to drink the poison were spitting it out and ended up having it forced down their throats. Jones, by this time, was becoming frustrated and he urged "All you're doing is taking a drink, to take, to go to sleep."

Though many of the residents of Jonestown took the poison willingly, others did not, and medical examinations showed that many were murdered, held down while it was injected into their bodies, and Jones continued his encouragement as it went on all around him." I'm the best friend you'll ever

have. You'll regret it if you don't die, you'll regret it."

The last tape reveals that although Jones was willing, and by this time eager, for his followers to die, he had no intention of joining them. "Death is a million times preferable to 10 more days of this life. If you knew what was ahead of you, you'd be glad to be stepping over tonight. I want to see you go though. They can take me and do whatever they wanna do. I wanna see you go. I don't wanna see you going through this hell no more."

At one point Jones' wife of 30 years, Marceline, tried to stop the killing but, realising that it had gone too far and she stood no chance, she too drank the poison and lay down on her bed to die.

Jones' view of the whole situation is summed up in his words "We didn't commit suicide, we committed an act revolutionary suicide protesting the conditions of an inhumane world."

Though Jones still had no intention of joining his followers in death, join them he did, only not by drinking his own poison but by a bullet through the head, fired by an unknown assailant.

When Guyanese troops arrived at Jonestown the next day, they found entire families with their arms locked around each other in a final loving embrace and the bodies seemed to cover every available patch of ground. One of the dead, obviously one who had died willingly, had left a suicide note which was addressed to Jones, and which shows the unswerving devotion that some felt for him. It read: "Dad, I can see no way out. I agree with your decision. Without you the world may not make it to communism. I am more than tired of this wretched, merciless planet and the hell it holds for so many masses of beautiful people. Thank you for the only life I've known."

It was however summed up perfectly by Ryan in his last interview before his death when he stressed the inherent danger in one man controlling people to such a great extent, and he said "Jim Jones talks a lot about love, brotherhood and humanity and his faith and the power of religion but never once did I hear him mention God."

David Koresh however, went for a different approach, though the end result was ultimately the same. He lived up to the stereotypical cult leader who brainwashed his followers into hanging on his every word, donating all their money to him and even offering their wives and children to mother his own offspring, his own "holy children." What he didn't tell his followers was that in his own quarters he allowed himself to drink alcohol and watch MTV.

This is so in many examples of cult leaders who have an overwhelming control over their followers, so overwhelming that they will leave their homes and families and live in the domain of the leader without realising that they have lost everything for the sake of one man or woman who controls them. Many families who try to rescue their loved ones from these cults face a difficult uphill battle to win them back as their devotion to the cult is so total. The leaders manage to exert such a control by various methods which first came to light during the late 1930s during the Chinese Civil War and were called “hsi nao” (wash brain).

The Chinese used these techniques to make their prisoners fight against their former allies after a “doctrination” period of only a few weeks. The leader will feed his intended on low calorie diets, usually just fruit and vegetables, and make them attend long and intense meetings which combine to make them feel tired and become more susceptible, a proven method is to make them work hard all day and then have the meetings at night with only short breaks for sleep. Cult members are taken away from their families so that every source of information they receive can be controlled by the leader, and means of rewards and punishments are set up to get them to do as they are told.

The cult led by David Koresh went one stage further than most others and his control was so much more than usual that he and his followers ended their lives trying to protect themselves in a shoot out with the F.B.I. in Waco, Texas where they were either shot or burned to death in the fire started by themselves, but not before they had taken the lives of some of the officers trying to rescue them from the clutches of David Koresh.

It is also true that many cults are not dangerous in any way, for example the “Keep Sunday Special Society” may also be considered by some to be a kind of cult or “New Religious Movement” (N.R.M.) as “I.N.F.O.R.M.” (Information Network Focus On Religious Movements) prefers to call them. “I.N.F.O.R.M.” keeps files on many cults and has records of over 2,000 of them, and statistically it is thought that there are over 500 cults with millions of members. It is thought that this is a conservative estimate, and it is also estimated that since the Second World War there has emerged over 400,000 cults world wide.

Though most cults remain on the fringes of religion and are largely unheard of, others grow in stature and to some extent become an accepted

part of society. The irony is of course that at one time Christianity itself was one such cult with only a few followers who went forth to spread the word of their own particular God, though of course with far sounder motives than most others, and it is now one of the largest and most widely accepted religions in the modern world. Christianity itself is split into two sides, Catholicism and Church of England or Protestant. The Protestant movement was started, among other reasons, because Henry VIII wanted to divorce and remarry, something which the Catholic church would not allow him to do, and something it still frowns upon today, so the Church of England is a newer religion than Catholicism which proclaims itself to be something which it isn't, in that it does things which the bible tells us not to. For example Roman Catholics pray to Mary and to the saints when the bible tells us to pray only to Jesus, and they do something which all the Christian religions do, they pray to false idols such as statues of Jesus and Mary which of course the ten commandments tell us not to do.

The ceremonies that we see today in churches are largely due to the work of Queen Elizabeth I who oversaw the practises that the Church of England and Catholicism would use, and she tried to strike up a balance between the two. An example of this can be seen in the rite of Holy Communion which is of course symbolic of the body and the blood of Christ, the Church of England says to remember it as just that, whereas Catholicism says that they are actually the body and the blood of Christ.

It could be argued that Catholicism is itself derived from the older religion of Judaism which could itself be the religion of the slave exodus from Egypt, and if Jesus was the originator of the Christian movement, then why was he heralded as the King of the Jews?

There is one thing that many religions both preach of and look forward to, and that is the saving of the world, a world which they proclaim to be increasingly evil, and this will be done by the second coming of the Lord which they say is foretold in the scriptures, specifically in the book of Revelations.

Perhaps though, the whole notion of religion can be summed up by the words of an uncle of mine when he answered the doorbell one day and was greeted by two Jehovah's witnesses standing on his doorstep who asked him if he had heard the great news!

"What great news is that?" he enquired,

"Why the second coming of the Lord of course!" to which he replied, before closing the door,

"Well, that's assuming he came the first time!"

## CROP FORMATIONS

It was a stifling hot day in Little Eversden, Cambridgeshire, England in the 1930s, and a young teenager, Kath Skin, was absent from school with scarlet fever and so she was taking a walk through the fields near her home. She sat down under a hedge for a few minutes rest and looked up into the sky which seemed to be threatening a thunderstorm. Looking out over the field she was in she saw what appeared to be a whirlwind that was throwing up wheat and dust 30 or 40 feet into the air. She continued to watch it until it dissipated and the debris fell back down to the ground, she then made her way over to where it had been, and when she got to the spot she saw that in the wheat was a flattened circle. As she was wearing her sandals she could feel that the ground was hot and was warming her feet through her thin soles. The wheat stalks in the circle had fallen against one another in a clockwise direction, like a pack of playing cards and the ears appeared to be intertwined. Kath forgot all about the unusual incident until almost fifty years later when these circles began to appear with alarming regularity in the fields of southern England, and she found laughable the fact that people were attributing them to U.F.O.s and little green men. To this day she remains one of an almost elite group of people that have seen a crop formation being made, and she was certainly one of the first.

Another eye witness of a circle forming, this time at night was a farmer from Lydney, England called Tom Gwinnett. He was driving his car at the time and suddenly his engine stopped and his headlights went off. He got out of the car and he could now hear a low, almost distant humming sound, and over the hedge at the side of the road he could see strange lights in the air

over the field. He returned to the same spot the next day when it was light, and there in the field he could see a flattened circle.

At around 9 pm on May 17th, 1990, Gary and Vivienne Tomlinson were out walking in the fields of Surrey when a "vortex" formed next to them. It developed from a quiet rustling to a sound like a high pitched flute and they were forced down to the ground, finding themselves in the middle of a circle as it formed. Gary's hair stood on end because of static electricity as the wind roared around them before it eventually moved away and formed two more circles.

Dr. Terence Meaden, meteorologist and circle investigator since 1980, gives great credence to Tom Gwinnett's account, from a man he refers to as "most observant" and he says that a rare combination of temperature, atmosphere and landscape are what is necessary for a crop circle to form.

The circles tend to appear in the summer months between May and September, and Meaden says that the air would need to be calm (usually between evening and early morning and as the wind comes up against a hill, the downward airflow as it passes over the top creates a "Lea Vortex" and the smaller the lea vortex is, the more violent it is, rather like an ice skater who spins round faster and faster as they tuck themselves into a ball and spins more slowly as they extend their arms and legs. In humid conditions the vortex would be visible as a whirling column or a hollow sphere which some witnesses have reported, or it may be seen as the friction in electrical charges in the atmosphere which would explain the humming sound and the lights that dance in the air. Also television and radio interference may be apparent.

Not surprisingly, Terence Meaden feels that his explanation for crop circles is the only credible one that has been put forward, but one man who disagrees with him is George Pedley of Tully, Queensland in Australia's tropical north east, and he proffers the most frequently quoted explanation. Pedley is a farmer, and one day he was out in his fields driving his tractor when he heard "an unearthly sound like a hiss" and at first he thought that it was coming from his tractor, but when he looked up he saw a U.F.O. taking off, and it was this that was making the hissing noise. He went to the spot he had seen it rise from and he saw that it was a lagoon, and as he stood there watching, the surface of the water was broken by a woven mat of reeds that was two feet thick and thirty feet across. George went and told his neighbour, Albert Pennisi, who was amazed at not only the circle of reeds itself but also



by its sheer strength which was enough to support ten or twelve men because it was so thick. Following this occurrence both men are convinced that extra terrestrials are responsible for crop circles after disregarding some of the alternative theories that were put to them at the time such as helicopters flying upside down, trampling by spoonbills or mating alligators. Though some farmers have seen foxes and their cubs playing in flattened circles there is no evidence to connect them to the forming of the circle itself.

In 1985 it was proven that helicopters could not be responsible for crop circles when many experiments were carried out by Lieutenant Colonel Edgecombe of the Aviation Standards branch of the Army Air Corps based at Middle Wallop, Hampshire. Edgecombe's duties involved assessing helicopter damage to farmland for army insurance claims, and he showed that the downward draft from a helicopter's rotors spreads out radially in all directions rather than in a swirl pattern, and as it spreads the draft tapers out rather than stopping abruptly in a circular shape. Tests were also carried out by two B.B.C. television documentaries, "Secret Circles" in 1989 and "Running Rings Around Arthur" screened on October 9th 1988, which ironically showed a statue of Alfred not Arthur. They used different types of helicopter flying just above ground level, and all of the results were the same. The crop simply swirled about in a random manner and was not laid flat in a neat pattern.

Another theory put forward was that crop circles were caused by ancient field markings left behind from ancient history by farms, Roman roads, pits and Bronze Age ring ditches. Though ring ditches do sometimes cause markings which from the air do resemble crop circles, but when viewed more closely they don't have the tell tale swirl patterns, well defined edges or "layering" of the crop.

Also discounted as a culprit were giant hail stones falling from aeroplanes as they empty their toilets high up in the atmosphere, and the waste then freezes until it hits the ground and melts. This cause was for a time tied in with a jelly like substance that was found inside a crop circle at Goodworth Clatford in 1985, and which made everybody who had handled it feel ill. The substance was analysed at the University of Surrey and the National Testing Laboratories at Wisley who said that it was "some kind of confectionery that had gone off" though they found no sign of glucose syrup which is present in most, but not all, confectionery.

Archaeologists noticed that there is a similarity in size and in shape between crop circles and the shape and size of stone circles. Could it be a coincidence that by far the majority of circles are found in the county of Wiltshire which also gives us the stone circle sites of Avebury, Silbury Hill and of course Stonehenge? It could be a link but then again it could be the hoaxers using the county to their own advantage to add some more mysticism to the phenomenon. Ley Lines are often said to join ancient sites, and Paul Deveraux, author of various books on them, and widely heralded as the world's leading authority on Ley Lines, says that in all of his work in this field has seen no evidence that would point to a connection between them and crop circles.

A survey of cereal farmers carried out by BUFORA in 1987 asked what they thought could be responsible for the circles that were appearing in their fields, and the results were that 78 of them blamed hoaxers, 68 said that they thought it was the weather and only 17 said it could be U.F.O.s. The Ufologists obviously don't use this in their argument, but the more "natural" causes that are discounted, the more they say that an intelligent cause must be responsible. They say that the early formations were just lone circles, and as we found more and more ways to try and explain them the more complex the circles got so that there was no way that we could mistake them for anything but an intelligent phenomenon.

The more conservative minded people say that the simple formations and single circles have a natural cause while all of the complex ones must be hoaxes, and as with any such phenomenon, if one circle previously thought to be genuine turns out to be a hoax then all the others will have some doubt thrown upon them.

It was in the 1980s that reports of crop circles reached astronomical proportions and they soon came in from all over the world; Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, U.S.A., Canada, France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Russia and Japan to name but a few, but it was the southern counties of England that would play host to more formations than any other place in the world, and in particular it was the two counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire, and three sites in those counties proved to be most popular. They are the Cheesefoot Head "Punchbowl" near Winchester, Hampshire, the Westbury White Horse, near Bratton, Wiltshire, and Cley Hill near Warminster, Wiltshire.

Cheesefoot (pronounced Chez Foot) is perhaps the most well known site and produces circles most years which are clearly visible from the nearby A272 Winchester to Petersfield road. The White Horse carved into the chalk of Westbury Hill overlooks the most productive single site that yields at least a dozen circles every summer, and Cley Hill has long had associations with the mysterious as it was a popular place for U.F.O. sightings in the 1960s, but Cheesefoot and White Horse have associations that go back even further than this as they both have ancient "Devil" names which folklorists believe suggest a link with unusual occurrences in ancient times, but possibly they just possess the correct layout of hills and valleys, and the right climate to produce the conditions necessary for Meaden's vortexes.

Some countries and continents produce no circles of a genuine nature at all such as Africa and Asia, and there are very few from France. Others such as South America produce ones that consist mainly of burned circles which are usually associated with U.F.O. sightings, as are those from Australia, and it appears from the Australian reports that George Pedley's "nest of reeds" is one of many similar accounts from around Tully, Queensland. They date from 1966 and continue to some extent to the present day and there are now more "conventional" circles appearing in other parts of Australia and it is interesting to note that they occur during the Australian summer when the Northern Hemisphere is in winter. Australia, like Canada, is one of the countries that had circles before 1990, but only time will tell if they will come to "suffer" from them to the same extent that Britain has.

Each of the formations brought about as many, if not more, possible explanations, and of course there were the usual cranks and hoaxers claiming that they had made them, and no doubt a fair share of them were, and still are, hoaxed, but often the formations would appear in the middle of a field with no signs of footprints leading to or from them. More disturbingly there were circles found on sand where footprints could not be covered up, and also in Boston, Massachusetts circles were found on ice that was too thin for people to walk on. It wasn't just the lack of footprints that put certain formations beyond the capabilities of the hoaxer but also in some cases it was the time scale, because some have been known to form in a matter of minutes, in some case up to twenty circle formations in one night, too many to be the work of the nocturnal hoaxer.

It wasn't too long before the almost obligatory U.F.O. theory came

along, and for once it didn't seem too outrageous when you consider that a lot of accounts of circles being formed mention humming sounds, lights in the sky and interference with electrical equipment such as radios and televisions, but as usual many people were reluctant to accept this as a plausible explanation, preferring instead to go along with a more natural cause, but there was a hard core of believers, notably the press, who seemed to "push" the U.F.O. cause and people would want to believe it to be true hoping that the markings in the crops were caused by U.F.O.s as they landed, but better still that they were a kind of message that had been written for us, an attempt to communicate using signs, but markings would sometimes appear beneath power cables and telephone lines so they clearly couldn't be from a landing U.F.O.. This didn't stop the media from whipping up the theory with reports such as the crops being "contaminated" and that they should be "kept out of the food chain" ("The People", July 9th 1989), or the claim that a dead fly discovered "clinging" to a stem at the centre of a circle had been "zapped dead" by some "mysterious force" (Sunday Times July 9th 1989) and the report that circles could be a message from "some form of intelligence" trying to tell us that "if you destroy this food, your planet is finished." (Wall Street Journal August 28th 1989). In this same year the change in the molecular structure of affected crops was blamed for the food scares of that time, but to date no molecular damage has been found in affected crops.

While the early circles were single ones or sometimes up to 4 or 5 circles it seemed that it could well be a natural phenomenon with an "earthbound" cause and Meaden's theory looked quite water tight, but as the formations became more and more complex it was looking less and less so and it seemed that a new theory was needed. One particular formation in Leicester, England in 1988 sparked debate in the press, partly because it was in this year that Meaden went public with his work and his theories which initiated a response from British engineer and consultant to the "Flying Saucer Review," Pat Delgado.

Delgado said in the "Leicester Mercury" on July 8th 1988 that "A natural force could not create such intriguing patterns." to which Meaden replied in the press five days later "Some people believe these circles were formed by U.F.O.s. That is nothing but pie in the sky which is wasting a lot of people's time." On July 21st Delgado was at it again, this time in the "Winchester Extra", he told the paper that "we are so disgusted with Meaden" and "we

don't want anything to do with him" but a recent appointment of Meaden's was at a meteorological conference in Oxford and he had further work published in major publications, and later that year he was asked to lecture at a conference on atmospheric physics in Tokyo, so he clearly wasn't the black sheep that Delgado made him out to be with comments such as the Meteorological Office in Bracknell, Berkshire "falling on the floor laughing at Meaden's ideas." Further fuel was added to the fire by leading researcher George Wingfield who says that the link between U.F.O.s and crop circles is not in doubt because U.F.O.s have been seen in proximity to circles and "pictograms." "He said "When circles have appeared in new locations, they have often been preceded by sightings of unidentified flying objects."

Could the sightings of U.F.O.s in the 1960s and the formation of crop circles at Cley Hill be related? Perhaps caused by Tectonic Stress like the U.F.O. sightings in the Yakima region of Washington State, U.S.A., and if so what had manifested itself in ancient times to make the area be given a "Devil" name?

The natural cause theory and the hoax theory began to look very doubtful as the complexity of the formations increased and they would be made up of many circles, sometimes in geometric patterns, sometimes as circles with concentric rings, circles with other "satellite" circles round them and circles joined by straight lines.

Peter Sorensen video tapes crop circles in England, and he says that after ten years or so of ordinary circles he saw an "evolution" of patterns of circles, and it was at this point that he discarded the natural explanation. He says that: "Obviously these straight lines are not caused by a storm." He has noticed not only an evolution year upon year, but also throughout each individual year as well, the first one of the year being relatively simple, and they then escalate in complexity until the last one of the year which he says is the most complex, and is often referred to as the "Grand Finale." His favourite formation is the Grand Finale from 1994 which was a huge spider's web inside a circle, but what is most interesting about it is that it appeared over the course of two nights, a fact which could be used to argue that it could not be the work of hoaxers who would be unlikely to return to the "scene of the crime" or, on the other hand it could be used to argue that if it was an intelligent cause that can make other formations in minutes, why did this particular one take two full nights?

The characteristics of formations have been examined very closely to try and help "experts" determine which ones are hoaxes and which ones are "genuine" so that they can spend their time investigating the right ones and not waste time on fakes. The key features found were that there is a definite edge to a circle, it does not fade out but fallen stems lie right next to unaffected stems. The stems are flattened in spirals which "flow" around the circle and emanate from the "spiral centre," though the spiral centre is not always the centre of the circle and can be up to a metre away. When the circle is formed on a steep slope it is not circular but is oval, with the elongation running along the gradient of the slope so that when viewed from above it does look circular. It is a myth that all circles are perfectly round because they are not, in fact relatively few are, most are oval, and it is as though the round ones are just a coincidence. Some circles have two spiral centres, usually less than a metre apart, though far more common is just one, and the swirls which emanate from them are more commonly in a tight pattern, but some appear as what is referred to as a "starburst" as though whatever caused it didn't whirl around but dissipated outwards very quickly, but even then there is still a definite edge to the circle. There is roughly an equal amount of clockwise and anti clockwise circles and some formations display both, surely not possible if the cause is a natural one? Some circles will swirl in one direction while the rings around it swirl in the other. There is no known reason for the differing swirl directions and there is no record of multi directional swirls before 1986. Could this be because the phenomenon had only evolved to this stage by then, or it is equally possible that nobody was documenting such features before this?

Circles range in size from only a metre or so in diameter to the largest ever which was found to be forty five metres in diameter, though most commonly they range from ten to twenty metres. They have appeared in many and varied crops, and as long as the stems are pliable enough to deform permanently they will remain long enough to be examined. In England the crop is usually cereals such as wheat and barley but, formations have been seen in many crops such as rye, oats, rape seed, rice, mustard, runner beans, soya beans, spinach, tobacco, maize and sugar beet, and also of course in sand, dirt, snow and ice. Some have been known to appear in long grass but these tend not to last very long and are soon distorted or blown out completely by the wind. The straight lines that also appear in formations

sometimes follow tractor tram lines in the field but this is not always the case, so it is not always true to say that they follow the weakest path through the crop. The crop itself is not damaged and the stems are not uprooted but flattened to the ground as though pushed from above. The heads are undamaged and show no signs of being affected and they also continue to grow.

Experts say that these features cannot be hoaxed, and that they can spot a hoax, but some hoaxers claim to have fooled the so called "experts" many times. One such man is an artist named Doug Bower who began faking circles in 1978 using a plank of wood with rope tied to each end, and holding one of the ropes in each hand he would use the wooden plank to trample the corn down. He now "works" with a friend called Dave Chorley, and some of their designs can be quite complex. It was said that hoaxers may be able to create a circle, and this may be why most are not actually circular, but would they be able to create a straight line, particularly in the dead of night? Doug says that he is able to create a straight line in a field by using a peaked cap with a piece of wire attached to the peak. The wire has a loop in the end, and he would use it like a gun sight and line up this loop with a landmark on the horizon such as a tree or a house, and with one eye looking through the hoop at his landmark he would walk towards it, flattening the crop as he went and leaving a straight line behind him. Doug and Dave claim that they can do this in the dead of night without being seen or heard, and one night they were watched by the "Today" newspaper to prove it. Doug says that he just wants his story to be believed and to be told that he was right all along, and to try and prove that he was right, he even sent pictures of formations he was making, giving their measurements and saying both when and where they would appear.

As a test the two of them were set a task in the form of a complex formation which contained all of the features they claim to have hoaxed in the past, and they were filmed on infra-red camera as they made the formation in the dark. The next morning the farmer whose field they had worked in telephoned various circle investigators, and after examining the men's handiwork one of them said that the crop wasn't laid out in a spiral but in an outward blast of up to six layers and it must have all happened at the same time. He said that "It's impossible to replicate that." So clearly the so called "experts" can be fooled.

Some hoaxers not only seek to create the markings in the field but also recreate the lights in the sky using a balloon with a bulb inside it, and they flash the bulb on and off as they make the circle. They said, mockingly, that they do this to cheer up the Ufologists after all the hoaxing that had been uncovered so that they could once again link the circles to U.F.O.s, but many hoaxers themselves believe that not all formations are hoaxes, one said "There is a genuine phenomenon that lies beneath all the hoaxing. I'm not sure what the nature of it is but I believe it's there."

In 1992 Dr. Rupert Sheldrake organised a circle making competition (which Doug and Dave refused to enter), to see just how good the hoaxers were, and as night fell twelve teams entered a Buckinghamshire field to begin, and the organisers asked "experts" from the Centre for Crop Circle Studies to come and judge them. Sheldrake said that all of the entrants had done far better than he had expected, and during the night he had expected to see more lights and hear more noise as they were working. He did say though that there was less subtlety in the laying of the corn than he had seen in other circles. One journalist covering Sheldrake's 1992 competition said that he still doubts the totally human answer, but he thought that the top three entrants had been very good, and an "expert," Richard Andrews, was asked how he could tell them apart from real circles, and he replied that he had to be careful but one characteristic they all shared was a "lack of flow" in the laying of the stems, but this laying has been hoaxed well enough in the past to fool the experts, and in one case without even trying.

In 1991 a group calling themselves "The Wessex Sceptics" hoaxed a formation just to test the experts and to see if they would identify it as a hoax. They were in the field for a couple of hours after which they all felt that their efforts had gone badly. One member of the Wessex Sceptics was a French man who hadn't fully understood his instructions and had made his circle spiral in the wrong direction, but the experts made a great deal out of this, and one of the group, Dr. Robin Allen said that even when you make a mistake you can get away with it. Allen also heard that during the subsequent investigation a dowser had entered the formation and his rods had become uncontrollable which Allen doesn't find surprising as he sees dowsing itself as laughable. The experts said that the braiding of the stems (which the team had made no attempt to do) meant that it could not have been hoaxed by human beings and it was "100% genuine, a text book example." A friend of



Allen's says that one day they will have to take all the crop circle books from the pseudo science shelf and move them to the art shelf.

One man who would agree with this sentiment is Ken Brown who began investigating the phenomenon in 1991 and he says that he has found "underlying pathways" which he used to formulate his "earthbound cause" theory, and he says that all satellite circles are joined by pathways, sometimes very narrow, where people have walked through the crop sideways between them. He has also noticed that as a straight line spur meets a circle, the corn in the spur will be flattened into the circle and then the corn in the circle will overlap it so the damage is clearly not done at one time, but the circle is flattened after the spur, clearly supporting the hoax theory.

The new phase of formations were called "Pictograms" and they featured some or all of the features seen to date, i.e. circles with rings, circles with satellites, straight line and arcs, and they were usually on a grand scale. They were said to be far too complex to have been hoaxed overnight, and one film director said that if he and his team were to reconstruct one without leaving any evidence of having done so, it would take them six weeks and they would not be able to do it without the farmer seeing them.

It is these pictograms, sometimes in recognisable forms, that are the most interesting to the circle fanatic as they would seem to point to an intelligent cause, and not only this, but there would also seem to be an "awareness" behind them as they can apparently respond to outside influences. For example in 1989 there were three books available in print that pointed out the observation that three ringed circles always consisted of contra-rotated corn (flattened in alternate directions), but then in that year the first one appeared in which the circle and its rings all rotated in the same direction, and this prompted one commentator to say that "The circles display a sense of humour."

This apparent sense of humour was further emphasised when news of the falling human male sperm count was made public, and in a field near Chequers, the Prime Minister's country retreat, there appeared a huge formation in the shape of a phallus. Similarly when scientists were making the first big discoveries in the field of the DNA strand, a field near Avebury, Wiltshire produced a huge double helix, and an offer was made for hoaxers to try to recreate it next to the original, but none were forthcoming. From other competitions and challenges such as this we know that hoax formations can

take three or four hours to produce, but we also know that genuine formations can appear in a matter of minutes. One that I visited myself across the A303 from Stonehenge featured 151 circles varying from 2 to 9 feet in diameter, and in all the whole formation was 918 feet from end to end, yet it had appeared in less than fifteen minutes, and what's more it had done so right next to the main road and without anybody seeing its cause. The farmer whose field it had appeared in, and whose crops have been affected many times, told me that he was at first sceptical about any cause other than hoaxers being responsible, but as time goes by he is slowly changing his mind. Clearly what was needed was some conclusive proof of a cause, and an attempt was made in 1991 to capture on film a circle being made, this effort was named "Project Chameleon" and it was run by John Macnish and David Morgenstern.

They focused their attentions on Morgan's hill near Devizes, Wiltshire and they used cameras, infra-red surveillance and sound recording equipment and they settled down for a long wait. This particular site had produced both a quadruple ringed circle and a Celtic cross the previous July on the 1st and the 5th respectively, and with many fields now producing formations year after year this seemed as good a site as any.

Set up around the field by Mike Carrie who is the director of "Cloud 9," a company who market security systems, were intruder alarm devices which would let the team know if anybody were to enter the field, and if they should do so a remotely controlled camera mounted on a 150 foot arm would monitor them. The night of June 28th/29th was cloudy and damp but the team sat it out and waited. At 3am a mist descended which then turned into a fog which all but obscured any view, but they decided to keep the cameras rolling and the microphone switched on. As dawn came and went the fog remained, and as 6 o'clock approached it began to slowly lift from the field until it finally dissipated, and there in the field was a crop formation. The field's boundaries were checked and showed no signs of entry, nor did the formation itself, the intruder alarms had not been triggered, the cameras showed nothing and the microphone had recorded nothing on any frequency from 2 to 40,000Hz which covers the spectrum from infra-sound, through audible sound and some ultra-sound. The first man into the field to examine the freshly formed "dumb bell" formation was Mike Carrie who had previously doubted the genuineness of crop circles, and he now says "Now I just don't

know what to think."

One day Carrie was examining another formation in Etchilhampton near Devizes when his head was surrounded by a powerful whirring noise, and ever since then the circle phenomenon seems to have followed him. A few days later when he returned to his Nottinghamshire office he saw in nearby fields a dumb bell formation that was the same shape and size as that at Morgan's Hill, but this time the direction of the swirl in each of the circles was reversed, perhaps more evidence of the "responsiveness" of the formations, and perhaps evidence against the natural explanation.

An attempt at filming a crop formation that was apparently successful happened in 1996 when a pictogram appeared in a field near Stonehenge, and soon afterwards a video tape surfaced which showed two strange lights darting about in the air above the field while the formation appears quickly in the wheat beneath them. The film was examined by an author and researcher, Colin Andrews, who thought it was promising as it showed a real formation that many witnesses had seen, and there were lights above it while it formed, but despite him having linked formations with U.F.O.s in the past, he felt that he needed to find out more about the cameraman who had shot the film before he took what he was seeing as read. He discovered that the more he found out about him the more suspicious he became as he is a co-owner of a film company where they have some very complex and advanced equipment that is used for film editing.

Optical Physicist Dr. Bruce Maccabee has also seen the film footage and he says that it is a hoax. He says that it is done by filming the scene before a circle is there and then filming the same scene again after the circle is there, and then the film can be run through a computer which will fill in the sequence where the circle is formed, and it can also put the dancing lights on as well so it appears that the lights are responsible for the formation.

By now we were well into the age of the pictogram, and perhaps the greatest pictogram to date is that found in a field near Barbury Castle, Swindon. It was the largest and most complex at the time it was discovered by Nick Bailey who flies over the area in his helicopter regularly at 9am, and he had not noticed it the previous evening at 9pm. The pictogram was made up of a huge equilateral triangle whose sides measured 180 feet each. This was over a large double ringed circle, each ring being about seven feet wide. The angles of the triangle were bisected by straight lines that began in the

centre of the triangle and extended to circles that lay outside the triangle, each one of which had a different design inside it. One design was a plain ring of 75 feet in diameter, the second was a similar size ring with six equal segments and the third was a spiral that did not spiral outwards smoothly, but in steps every 90 inches.

Terence Meaden looked a very worried man that evening, and he was asked "... you don't think this was made by an atmospheric vortex?" and he replied that he could see that some of the stalks were broken, yet he didn't believe that anybody could have faked this formation in the hours of darkness. This was the general consensus but it was felt that the stalks were broken as a result of people walking through the formation afterwards rather than at the time of its forming as not many of them were broken, but the next day Meaden told the media that this was a hoax - what else could he say? - yet the experts disagreed, saying that it was in fact genuine as it had been witnessed. The manager of Waterstones bookshop in Bristol, Brian Grist, had been "crop watching" with two friends at Beckhampton, Wiltshire, when at around midnight they saw a pulsing light moving across the sky silently, and over the next hour they saw five more, some of which pulsed green, red and white, and they likened them to something out of "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Barbury Castle lay just five miles away and some of the objects were sighted in this direction, and at the time of the first telling of the story, Grist was unaware of what had been found in the crop there. Further reports of the same lights in the sky were received and the Warden of Barbury Castle who lives in a bungalow on the hill heard "a colossal roar" and a pulsing hum at around 3:30am, but this may have been an aircraft as Barbury Castle is close to R.A.F. Lyneham, however the warden is used to the sound of aircraft engines and he says that this sound was not like a low flying aircraft, it was different.

It seemed to be around 1990 that things took a change, up until that point the formations had been made up of circles with concentric rings, multi circles and circles with satellites, and in 1991 we saw the advent of the "linear spur" and more complex geometrical patterns and also what were termed "dumb bells." These were circles which were joined by a straight line, and around this time we also saw the advent of the next "evolutionary" stage, the Insectogram. As the name suggests this was a formation that took the shape of an insect, and as 1991 drew to a close a spectacular one appeared in

Ickleton, Cambridgeshire, and this would come to be known as "The Mandlebrot Set" and, like the phallus and the double helix, it was another "determinable" shape. It was named after Benoit B. Mandlebrot for his work on geometric forms, a field he calls "Fractal geometry" - the study of forms having a fractional dimension. Fractional Geometry is used to study chaos theory and the study of growth patterns in the natural world, and the Mandlebrot Set is representative of this.

The Mandlebrot Set appeared overnight and it was in a field of wheat that was 30 inches tall. It was a very precise formation with very precise circles, and at the base of the heart shaped body it tapered down to a single stalk. The stalks were flattened an inch above the ground and there were no foot prints around it, and the only thing the formation was missing to be complete was the "solar flares" which should emanate from it. Opinions on the formation vary, while on the one hand there are those who say "undoubtedly we are dealing with an intelligence, or intelligences, of a high order in the circle makers." on the other hand there are those who disagree and say that "... it must be a hoax because it couldn't be anything else."

During 1990 the mid west states of America, in particular Kansas and Missouri, began to encounter many circles and once again the same potential causes were put forward, whirlwinds, wildlife, U.F.O.s and hoaxes. On Roger and Linda Lowe's farm, between Odessa and Bates City, Missouri, two circles appeared in a field of sorghum - a coarse plant up to eight feet in height - one circle was thirty feet in diameter and the other was fifty feet. Though nothing out of the ordinary was seen that night, power cuts were registered in the Odessa area, but the Lowe farm was not affected in the power cuts and the weather was clear and calm. The larger circle soon expanded into an uneven shape the size of a football pitch and this is often seen with British circles as the wind distorts them over time. Residents joked that they were the landing markings of a U.F.O. or Bigfoot on the rampage and sceptics said that they were due to "atmospheric microbursts" or spinning winds called "dust devils."

Meteorologist and Professor of civil engineering at the University of Kansas, Glen Marotz, said that "when the atmosphere is faced with an energy imbalance, it acts like you would expect it would. It tries to get rid of them. One way is to create a spinning vortex." and to some extent this goes along with Terence Meaden's lea vortex theory although the landscape around

Kansas and Missouri is notoriously flat.

It is interesting to note that a study of North American crop circles or U.G.M.s (unusual ground markings) published in 1991 categorised them into;

1. Flattened circles.
2. Flattened rings.
3. Burned circles.
4. Burned rings.
5. Burned and flattened.
6. Concentric rings.
7. Vegetation missing / damaged.
8. Depression.
9. Holes.
10. Other markings or residue.

This is not the case in England where the majority of cases are flattened crops, while in the U.S. the majority appear in grass and not crops. In Canada and the U.S. rings and concentric rings are very rare, and the simple designs are very far removed from Britain's pictograms and insectograms, for these reasons the U.S. circles have more commonly been associated with U.F.O.s and the marks they may make when they land.

Though there is relatively little documentation on Russian formations, what there is, is very interesting. Early reports are mainly of burned circles while more recent cases appear to be very similar to our own, yet one circle which appeared in wheat near the town of Yeisk, in the Krasnodar region, was preceded by a white and blue luminescent object in the sky which was described as looking like a welding arc. The next morning an oval that measured 35 metres by 45 metres was found in the same spot, and the locals were afraid to enter it. A week later an investigating team led by Yuri Stroganov came to investigate the by now slightly damaged formation.

The crop in the oval was flattened in an anti clockwise direction, but in the centre was another oval of untouched, standing crop that measured 2 metres by 1.5 metres, and the large oval was aligned north to south while the smaller one was aligned east to west. In the flattened crop were two paths that were 40 centimetres wide and 40 centimetres apart, and they were circular though their centre didn't align with that of the ovals. The crop in these paths

was brighter in colour than elsewhere and their radiation level was nil, whereas the rest of the formation showed background radiation. Though the team of investigators experienced no health problems, those who had entered the formation when it had been new complained of headaches, and the team concluded that these symptoms were consistent with U.F.O. visitations.

Other reports from Russia include photographs and data on a variation of the crop circle, these are vertical cylindrical holes dug that are in the ground overnight, one such hole near Tomsk measured 4 metres by 6 metres and these holes have been compared to similar ones found in Switzerland, and by no stretch of the imagination could such holes be the work of lea vortexes or dust devils. To add further confusion to the phenomenon is a case which happened in Germany where it would seem that the formation of a pictogram was followed by what appears, to all intents and purposes, to be a "Man in Black," although he isn't described as wearing black or driving the customary pristine old car.

The formation appeared at Grasdorf, near Hildesheim, and consisted of 13 circles and a ring with a cross in it. The farmer charged people 3DM to go into the field and look at it, and one man arrived with a metal detector and asked the farmer's permission to use it in the formation. When the farmer agreed to let him, in front of television cameras and many other witnesses, the man found three places, each at the centre of a circle, where he said that metal was buried. He dug down at each spot to a depth of forty centimetres where he found a metal plate that was thirty centimetres in diameter. He put the plates in his car and said that he would take them for scientific analysis but he was never seen again, however he did send pictures to the press which showed the plates to be embossed with the layout of the very same pictogram they were found in, and he is also believed to be responsible for an anonymous phone call in which the caller said that the plates were made of gold so he was keeping them.

In the 1960s crop circles tended to be reported by Ufologists and they were often seen in the same place as U.F.O. sightings and strange lights, and they were nicknamed "U.F.O. nests" but circle investigators nowadays have often tried to dissociate themselves from the U.F.O. link and have adopted the title of "Cereologists." The phenomenon is complex in that there have been many potential explanations for the cause of it, but no one explanation would seem to fit all the formations adequately, not all can be caused by

U.F.O.s, not all can be caused by rampaging wildlife, not all can be hoaxed, but perhaps the most likely explanation is the natural one, that put forward by Terence Meaden, but it is not without its flaws and also, for that matter, its critics.

Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado wrote in "Circular Evidence" in 1989 that information Meaden had sent them was "a joke" and "an insult to one's intelligence" and they did not include any of it in their book. Delgado says that a whirlwind is caused by a pocket of air rising and rotating, so there is no way that it could press down and flatten a crop, and this is basically true, yet Kath Skin saw a whirlwind which made a circle and also threw debris thirty or forty feet into the air. Whirlwinds also rely on insolation (the sun's heat) and so cannot be the cause of circles at night, but what Meaden is proposing is a different kind of whirlwind, what he terms a lea vortex.

Meaden is head of the Tornado and Storm Research Organization which is an independent group of scientists based in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, and he is also the editor of the Journal of Meteorology. He has been researching crop circles for longer than most and his theory is generally well received, and in "Crop Circles, A Mystery Solved" Jenny Randles and Paul Fuller believe that it is the true answer to the mystery and can explain all the characteristics that are found in formations.

Meaden says that a lea vortex is caused by a rotating ball of electrically charged air which is known as a plasma vortex because it is made up of air molecules that have lost their negatively charged electrons, and so it is a cloud of positively charged ionised gas which may glow in a variety of colours, and has been compared to, but is not the same as, ball lightning. He says that it may form in the atmosphere and may hover for many minutes before descending and producing crop circles. It is generated by the flow of air over and around hill slopes and it tends to be surrounded by a strong electromagnetic field which can cause electrical phenomenon beyond the vortex which could cause interference with things such as radios televisions, engines and, to some extent, human beings. If there is such an energy field present, then can it be detected? There is a group of people who state categorically that it can, and they are often associated with crop circles. They are of course dowzers.

Whatever the legitimacy of dowsing the people that do it report feeling energies when they are inside a formation, but unfortunately they also report



energies inside hoaxed formations, so dowsing alone cannot be used as a test for a genuine formation, but can we rely on their feelings of energies at all?

One man who was dowsing near Rathfinny Farm, Seaford, Sussex found that the high energy levels in the area made it both difficult and unpleasant to dowse as it was causing him to feel dizzy, disorientated and to suffer lapses in concentration, so he decided to return a few days later. When he did so he felt that something had happened in the area, and indeed it had, a crop formation of five circles had appeared nearby in the shape of a cross where two energy lines intersected, and people could only remain in the formation for about ten minutes at a time before feeling sick, so it wasn't only the dowser that felt it.

We know that animals can be sensitive to strange phenomena, and a dog in Langenburg near Regina, Saskatchewan, Australia, in September 1974 began barking one night at midnight and wouldn't stop until about 3am no matter what the owners did. All the time that it was barking the dog had been looking in the same direction, and the next morning a nearby farmer, Edwin Fuhr, found a crop formation in one of his fields which lay in the same direction that the dog had been looking the night before. However, the dog had sensed something and been barking for about three hours which is of course ample time for a hoaxer to create a circle so it could just have been barking at the intruders rather than at anything more untoward.

The fact that Meaden proposes that a hill could cause a lea vortex to form could be backed up by the fact that 50% of crop formations appear within 1 kilometre of a hill, but perhaps another feature could substitute itself for a hill, such as a house or a group of trees. The theory requires a stable layer of air close to the ground which occurs mainly at night or in the early hours of the morning when most circles appear. Perhaps farm mechanization and the removal of hedgerows allow a greater incidence of this low lying layer of air so this is why we are now seeing more and more formations every year. Perhaps the warm air normally associated with a "normal whirlwind" was not present in 1982 when the country experienced a bad year weather-wise, and this may possibly explain why it was also a bad year for crop formations. Could the two be related? Possibly, if we look at Kath Skin's experience when she was in the fields near her home on a hot summer day and she saw a circle forming, she walked into it with only a pair of sandals on her feet and she could feel that the ground was warm inside the circle. This

may also explain the circles that have been found on ice if the warm air rushing around in the vortex melts the circle of ice.

Eye witness accounts are vital evidence but sadly they are few and far between, one experienced by Melvyn Bell of Keevil, Wiltshire was very similar to that of Kath Skin. Towards dusk one day in late July or early August 1983, Bell saw dust, dirt and light debris spiralling into the air and a few seconds later there was a ten to twelve metre circle in the wheat. At a distance of 50 to 60 metres he was unable to determine any sound coming from it, but other witnesses who have been closer than this to a forming circle have heard it making a sound such as a high pitched humming sound. In Dundee, Scotland in 1989 naturalist Sandy Reid experienced "an unusual condition of the atmosphere" that he found hard to put into words. In Thanet, Kent on August 10th Wilfred Gomez and a friend experienced a plasma vortex and also saw the glowing effects that they can produce. Gomez was driving along an unclassified road near Lydden, Kent at half past midnight when he saw what he described as a "solid hurricane of light" with a fuzzy, indistinct top but a more clearly defined base which was hovering over an adjacent cornfield. It was white with a bluish tinge and it seemed to be rotating. When he wound down his window he could hear a low, even "humming" sound coming from it. Both he and his friend could see the light for about four seconds until it seemed to "blink out to one side" and the humming stopped. Gomez stopped the car and they both made their way into the field and, by the light of the half moon, they found a small circle approximately five metres in diameter, and five metres further into the field they found another twenty metre circle.

Although there was no hill nearby there was a small incline fifteen metres away which sloped down towards the circles, and subsequent weather checks showed that there had been a five knot wind flowing down the slope in the direction of the circles and there were power lines above the site. These and other eye witness accounts would seem to validate several points about Meaden's theory: Atmospheric vortexes;

- can remain stationary for a length of time.
- can form some geometrical patterns in the atmosphere.
- don't always cause acoustic and electrical phenomenon.
- are caused, in part, by air pressure.

- happen on the lee slope of a hill.

It is possible that a descending column of air could create the circle before it turns into an ascending column that produces the cloud of debris, but this is still unclear. The eye witness accounts also show that there are different kinds of vortices, and none of the witnesses thought that what they were seeing was a supernatural event, but rather was a meteorological one, and the weather conditions they describe are most often hot days with little or no wind.

Ordinary whirlwinds which may appear over water or dusty deserts have been studied closely by meteorologists, and they have found that they typically leave behind them a spiralling pattern which is caused as the air rushes into them at the bottom from all directions and rises up into the vortex. These vortexes tend to travel along at ground level and they can move at relatively high speeds even if the surrounding wind speed is low, and it is this which deters many people from believing that they can be responsible for making crop circles as it is widely believed that a whirlwind can not, and will not, remain stationary. Just how some appear to be able to do so is not known at the moment, but there are good eye witness accounts of some that have done, and also some that have remained stationary for a time and then moved away, such as the one that was seen in the Egyptian desert and which made a "swishing" sound as it gathered up sand and vegetable debris around a circle as the axis remained still. The vortex was wide but was only about a foot high and remained still for about thirty seconds before moving away and slowly dying down.

Another initial thought about plasma vortexes was that they could not have a clearly defined edge which could create a crop circle with a definite edge as most whirlwinds have a fuzzy area at their extremities which seems to move slightly slower than the rest of it, and a whirlwind such as this would create an uneven shape. There are accounts of vortexes with poorly defined outer zones, or "sheaths," but the part that creates the circle is a well defined inner zone, or "funnel," but often the "perfect" circle is damaged by the outer sheath. There are accounts though that suggest that in stable atmospheric conditions some vortexes may be able to create precise, well defined circles, but what about ringed formations?

At sea there is a phenomenon known as water spouts which are a kind of

localised whirlwind, and which have been seen with up to three outer sheaths that are able to either ascend or descend. They are always concentric with the central "funnel" and they also rotate alternately clockwise and anti clockwise. If one of these were to form over a crop field then could it cause a ringed formation?

For ringed formations that contra-rotate (all in the same direction) Meaden suggests that there may be an invisible, gentle sheath in between the stronger ones so that all the rings would rotate in the same direction, and aerial shots of water spouts suggest that there are indeed further outer sheaths which are not visible from the ground - so far so good - but how could they produce a linear spur?

Meaden suggests that as a vortex is dying, the charged particles may cluster together in the outer rings and as the vortex breaks down the particles are blown away from the circle, probably along the line of least resistance which may well be straight, but again, would the edges be so clearly defined? As for multi-circle formations one possibility is that they could be caused by more than one vortex in an area, but though they do exist and have been seen to exist, multiple vortex sightings are very rare, far rarer in fact than multi circle formations, but they "have" been seen to exist.

The vortex theory is still, years after it was first proposed, not yet fully understood and it clearly needs a lot of work on it to see if it could bear close cross examination, mainly in the proposal that the vortex, like a whirlwind, could descend or cause downward pressure and be triggered by the lea slope of a hill.

One formation that was seen near Cley Hill, Warminster consisted of four circles, one of which was fifteen feet across. It wasn't near the base of a hill and so it didn't suffer the full effects of the vortex and that showed in the circles themselves. The crop wasn't fully flattened to the ground but was merely angled over, and they weren't circles but ovals, and it was suggested that this could be because the wind had been moving and dissipating as it partially flattened the crop.

This site at Cley Hill often produces formations and it was also a U.F.O. hotspot in the 1960s so could the two be connected? Could it be the particular area that causes these unusual phenomenon? Perhaps Cley Hill could share similar properties with the Yakima Region of Washington State, U.S.A. and the phenomenon could be caused by tectonic stress which produces lights in

the sky, but could this electrical activity also cause crop formations? Can it actually manifest itself above ground level? One kind of electrical phenomenon that can is ball lightning which is itself a very little understood phenomenon. Again though, there is a problem, ball lightning has been caught on film and can be seen to be a random phenomenon so it is unlikely if not impossible that it could produce a complex crop formation, and what's more it is extremely rare, again far more rare than simple or complex crop formations, and also far more rare than water spouts at sea.

As I said earlier, crop circles are a phenomenon that no one answer would seem to fit fully. There is no doubt that a lot of crop formations are hoaxed, but there is no way that all of them can be. The only other feasible explanations are a natural cause or some form of intelligent cause. The natural cause is likely a perfectly sound one, and the eye witness accounts of vortexes cannot be easily ignored as they prove that the phenomenon does exist, but what we don't know is just what it is capable of in terms of complex formations and to what extent it can do damage to crops. Admittedly a lot of the most complex formations will be hoaxed, but what of the percentage, however small, that are not hoaxed? It is these ones that are, and always will be, connected to some "intelligent" cause that seems to be able to "respond" to outside influences, the phallus at Chequers, the DNA double helix, Mandlebrot's Fractal equations, and in this it is similar to the poltergeist phenomenon in that "they" also seem to respond and also evolve throughout their duration from simple raps and scratches to voices and moving objects.

There is no one solid piece of evidence to connect these formations to an intelligent force, be it U.F.O.s or not, and they will, for the moment at least, remain truly a mystery, linked romantically if nothing else with little green men trying to give us a message, but if they really wanted to do this, couldn't they write it in something a little more permanent in future?

# GHOSTS

It would be quite impossible, and also I think quite wrong, to include all types of ghostly sightings into one loose fitting category as there would appear to be several different kinds of apparitions, all possibly having a different cause, and being created in a different way. Apparitions are extremely diverse in their detail and all sightings of such phenomena hold a certain fascination for those who have seen or experienced them, but also for those of us who have not or may never have such an encounter.

Could it be that there are the spirits of dead people, no longer of this world, forced to walk the places where they have lived or died, somehow unable to break their link completely with our world, stuck in a state of limbo between this life and whatever lies beyond it? A popular theory to explain just why we have haunted houses, churches and country lanes, to name but a few, is that those who are forced to return to the earth after their death are all people who have died an unnatural or sudden death and so were unable to completely sever their ties with this life. Taken before their time and wanting to say goodbye to their loved ones or just to touch or talk to those they have left behind one last time before they can pass over to the next life. However much this theory would seem to make sense it seems to be a little too romantic and simple, besides which the evidence would tend to point to some other explanation for one of the most fascinating of all strange phenomena.

As I said earlier there would appear to be different kinds of ghost and the first we will look at is known as the "Crisis Apparition." This is where a person will see a ghost, usually but not always, of somebody known or related to them. Sometimes the witness won't even realise that they are

looking at a ghost, while at other times it is apparent straight away, and they become worried for the person's safety.

Some witnesses to crisis apparitions will become so worried by the sighting that they will contact the person they have "seen" or they may find out later by another means that at the time they had seen the apparition, the person had actually died at that very moment, possibly thousands of miles away. Often the person seeing the ghost will not even know that the dead relative has even been ill, or possibly the death may have been the result of an accident such as something as unpredictable as a car crash.

It is possible in some cases for the witness to not realise that they are looking at a ghost because the vision will appear to be solid, as they would in life, rather than the "traditional" semi-transparent form. They may also appear to be doing something completely natural such as opening a door, though the door may later be found to have been locked, or if the lights are on in the room then they will cast a shadow or appear reflected in a mirror. When the ghost doesn't appear in the same room as the witness, it may be seen for example walking up the garden path to the front door, but when the person goes to the front door to let them in they find there is nobody there.

A classic example of the crisis apparition is that which occurred to a young girl in the 1800s while she was out walking along a country lane in England. Suddenly the scene in front of her disappeared and was replaced by a vision of one of the bedrooms in her house which was referred to as the white room. There in the white room, lying on the floor, was her mother who looked as though she was dead. Beside her on the floor was a white lace edged handkerchief and the vision remained with the girl for several minutes. She became so concerned for her mother's safety that, before she returned home, she went to fetch the doctor to accompany her. When they both entered the white room the scene which confronted them was the same one that the girl had seen earlier, even down to the handkerchief. Her mother had apparently suffered a heart attack and the doctor immediately performed life-saving treatment on her. When the girl's father returned home to find the doctor there he asked "Who is ill?" as the woman had been in apparent perfect health when he had left her that morning.

It is interesting to note that in these cases the ghost usually appears to the witness as they would appear in life, not as they are at the time, i.e. in the throes of agony, lying down in bed or injured in a car crash, though ironically

in the previous case the mother did appear as she was at the time, lying on the floor of the white room. Could this have been in order to convey the urgency of the situation to her daughter? Were it not for this case the occurrence of a crisis apparition could tend to suggest that the dead person is visiting their friend or relative for one final time, but taking this case into account it would appear that the sighting is caused before the point of death, by some sort of signal being sent from the dying person to the witness. This signal could possibly take the form of a telepathic message but why would a dying person send such a message in their dying moments, if indeed they do it voluntarily, and how is that signal transmitted over thousands of miles? The signal would seem to be sent at a moment of anguish, strife or intense emotion, intense enough to act as a cry for help to her daughter to come and save her life after suffering a heart attack.

In 1889 a huge survey was carried out called the "Census of Hallucinations" by the S.P.R. (Society for Psychical Research) in which they asked 17,000 people if they had ever seen a ghost or witnessed any strange phenomena. The results of the survey drew the S.P.R. to conclude that in such cases the ghost or apparition was telepathic and that it could still be classed as a crisis apparition if the vision was seen, or the signal received, up to twelve hours after the time of death.

This would suggest that the signal was transmitted at the time of death, but not received until a "convenient" moment by the recipient. One such case occurred to a Mrs. Paquet whose brother worked in Chicago on a tugboat. She awoke one morning feeling slightly depressed and could not work out why, nor could she shake off the mood. As she walked into the pantry to get some tea she saw her brother standing with his back to her, and as she watched him he appeared to fall forwards and seemed to have rope tangled round his ankles. She became distraught and exclaimed "My God, Ed is dead!" Later on that day when she received official word of his death she found that it had happened exactly as she had seen it, though it had happened a full six hours earlier than her vision. It is possible though that she may have experienced the feeling of unshakable depression at the same time as her brother's death.

A slight twist on the crisis apparition is the case often referred to as "Steer Nor' Nor' West" and this must surely still be classified as a crisis apparition even though the "Transmitter" and "Receiver" weren't known to



each other, and more importantly no death was involved.

A crew member on board a ship in the North Atlantic off the Canadian coast in the 19th Century, entered the Captain's cabin during the voyage and found a young boy at the captain's desk writing in the log book which is a very serious offence. When the man approached the young boy and spoke to him he disappeared before his eyes. The matter was reported to the captain who examined the log and found that indeed somebody had written in it. The words were written untidily across the page and read "Steer Nor' Nor' West." Thinking that it was the seaman he ordered him to write the same words out again, but when he did it the hand writing was completely different to that in the log. Angry at this the captain then ordered everybody on the ship to supply a sample of their handwriting. When all those aboard the ship had done so, still no match for the writing in the log book was found. After much deliberation the captain ordered that the ship change course and follow the instructions in the log book. It was along this new course that they encountered another ship stranded and caught in the ice flow. All those on board were running low on food and in poor health.

They pulled alongside the stranded vessel, and those still alive boarded the rescue boat. As they were doing so the seaman who had encountered the young boy in the cabin spotted another young boy on the stricken boat who looked just like the boy he had seen. When he told the captain this he was laughed away, but he remained so adamant that this was indeed the boy, the captain ordered the boy to write the words down and was amazed when the hand writing was a perfect match to that in the log book. When the boy was asked to explain the matter he was at a loss to do so as all he could remember was that at the time of the sighting he had been asleep in his bunk.

Is this also a type of crisis apparition then, as the boy would indeed have been going through a time of great emotional feeling, and it was this, rather than the moment of death, which triggered the sending of the signal? Though just how he knew in which direction to send the rescue boat is still a mystery.

Another twist on this type of apparition is the case of a Boston travelling salesman who was working at the desk in his hotel room when the ghost of his dead sister appeared before him. As he called her name she vanished. She had appeared perfectly normal as she had looked in life apart from one red scratch on her left cheek. He felt that he had to tell his parents of the experience and went to visit them. His mother became very emotional as he

relayed the story to her, and she told him that she had accidentally scratched the girl's cheek a full nine years earlier when she had been preparing the body for burial. Just two weeks later his mother died peacefully.

Could this be the ghost of his sister telling him to visit his mother before it was too late, or more likely was it that his mother had created the image by similar means to a crisis apparition as a way of enticing the salesman home one last time? In cases like these (we will see more later) while there is somebody alive who could have caused the ghost, then we cannot say for sure that the ghost has come from beyond the grave.

The next type of ghost we will look at is one which is seen by different witnesses on different occasions, usually at the same place, sometimes on the same date and possibly even at the same time of day, as though the time and place had had some specific meaning in the "ghost's" life, or death. These are commonly known as "Haunting Ghosts" and the examples of these are many and varied, though most are similar in some detail or other.

One example is the ghost which "haunts" Derbyshire's Taddington Hall. One of the past residents of the hall, a farmer, used to ride to Bakewell Market every Monday morning and would return home later that night much the worse for alcohol after drinking his fill with the other farmers after their days work at the market. However, one particular Monday he must have had more than his usual amount because on the way home he fell from his horse and was later found dead at the roadside by some of the other farmers also making their way home. His wife was at home waiting for him to return as she always did on a Monday and wasn't worried at the late hour, knowing where he was supposed to be and what state he would be in. She soon relaxed when she heard his horse walking into the yard as usual, and on looking out of the window saw her husband obviously drunk staggering towards the front door. She did however become worried when he walked in through the door without opening it.

Shortly after this there was a knock at the door and when she opened it she saw the other farmers who informed her of her husband's fatal accident, and that they had found him dead at the bottom of Bakewell Hill. The farmer's ghost is now said to haunt Taddington Hall at nightfall every Monday, eternally linked to both the time and the place which meant so much during both his life and his death.

Could a ghost have the awareness to appear as regularly as this or could

it be that as this was obviously the time of his wife's greatest trauma, that the signal was left by her rather than him, and recurs, only to be picked up at its strongest peak and at no other time when the signal is weaker? Surely the ghost itself isn't governed by the day and time in this way as we know from witnesses that ghosts seem not to be governed by their surroundings as they are in this day and time, but as they were in their own lifetime.

For example, a ghost which walks through a wall is often later found to have walked through an old doorway which has been blocked up since their time on earth, and a ghost which seems to float along the ground rather than walk along it, is often walking along an old floor which is at a different level to that which it is on now, so the ghosts are just walking where they have always walked.

There are simply countless stories of haunting ghosts which occupy the myriad rooms, corridors, stairs and grounds of homes the world over, and for some reason Britain seems to have at least, if not more than, its fair share of such ghosts. This not only seems to lend a romantic kind of air to the ghosts themselves but also the buildings they haunt as well and it seems that no Hall or Castle would be complete without a resident haunting ghost or two. Nothing seems to add a certain something to a ghost story more than a famous ghost in a well-known building such as Hampton Court or The Tower of London, and indeed no book on the subject would be complete without its compliment of stories of famous ghosts. These are interesting not only because of the fact that the ghost itself may be somebody well known, like a former monarch, but also because the witnesses to such hauntings are also usually famous themselves, or in a position of responsibility, and therefore they must surely become instantly credible witnesses whose reputations would be done far more harm than good if they were found to be romanticising about seeing such things as screaming ghosts gliding along the corridors of Hampton Court Palace, as the spirit of Catherine Howard has been seen doing by many subsequent residents of the grand London building.

Howard was one of the five wives of Henry VIII to live at the palace, and indeed it was to be her last place of residence. She was imprisoned there before her execution on February 13th, 1542. It is said that on November 4th of the previous year Catherine escaped from her guards and ran along the "haunted" gallery towards the chapel and pleaded with the king for her life. Her cries were in vain and she was taken back along the corridor to her room,

obviously screaming and most upset. The next time she would be allowed out of her room would be on the day of her execution when she was taken to the Bloody Tower and beheaded. A fate not uncommon among the many wives of Henry VIII.

On another occasion many years later when the "haunted" gallery was opened to the public an artist was sitting sketching one of the tapestries which hung there when a hand appeared on it. He quickly sketched the hand before it disappeared, and the ring on one of its fingers was found to be "very similar" to one which was worn by Catherine Howard.

Though Hampton Court Palace can lay claim to several ghosts it is not in the same league as The "Bloody" Tower of London and its surrounding buildings, the home of confinement, torture and of course execution for many years.

One early recorded sighting of a ghost at the tower took place as early as 1241 when the ghost of Thomas A Becket was seen. Certainly most of the ghosts seen at the tower could be caused by the violent and horrid way in which they died, such as Anne Askew who was tortured on the rack in the White Tower and whose screams are sometimes heard today emanating from the building. Martin Tower is home to a ghostly bear which was one of the many animals kept there until the final one was moved to Regents Park's Zoological Gardens in 1834. Martin Tower was also home to another one of Henry VIII's ill-fated wives, Anne Boleyn, who was imprisoned there and whose ghost sits in a dark corner appearing and disappearing, usually on Autumn evenings. She is also seen at many other parts of the tower such as Tower Green which Queen Victoria had railed off as this was the spot where Boleyn was executed, and she can be seen repeating her "last" walk from The Lieutenant's Lodge (now The Queen's House) to Tower Green where she disappears.

Many executions were carried out on Tower Hill such as Anne Boleyn's sister in law Countess Rochford in 1542, Lady Jane Grey in 1554 and the Countess of Salisbury Margaret Pole the Duke of Clarence's daughter whose execution can be seen annually being replayed in all its gruesome details. Pole maintained until the end that she had committed no crime and refused to kneel at the block, saying to the executioner that he had better do his job "as best he could" which he duly did by chasing her around the block taking wild swings at her until she fell dead. The Two Princes buried at the foot of the

stairs in the White Tower were murdered, probably by Richard III, in the Bloody Tower and have been seen since, walking silently together hand in hand.

The Traitors Gate has been the scene of a ghostly patrol which is never seen but can be heard in the form of studded boots cracking on the cobbled road surface as they continue to make their patrol from the Bloody Tower to Traitors Gate.

Sir Walter Raleigh is often seen walking across the ramparts between the Queen's House and the Bloody Tower where he was imprisoned in a cell measuring eight feet by ten feet, and in life he would have taken this walk many times for exercise. Raleigh is not the only ghost to frequent the Queen's House, as the ghostly screams of Guy Fawkes and his accomplices can also be heard along with the creaks and groans made by the torturing devices that they had to endure during their merciless interrogation.

Although Britain seems to have many famous buildings playing host to famous spirits, it is certainly not alone in this achievement as America can also stake a claim to host such an attraction.

Perhaps one of the most famous of America's haunting ghosts is that of Former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, who has appeared to such eminent witnesses as the Kennedy brothers, when neither John nor Robert expressed any belief in ghosts, let alone any great interest in the supernatural. After Lincoln's assassination in 1865, which ironically he foresaw and predicted after numerous dreams, he has continued to appear in the White House. The first president to sense Lincoln's presence was Theodore Roosevelt who felt on a number of occasions that Lincoln was with him in a room. The ghost wasn't actually seen though until Grace Coolidge, the wife of the 30th President Calvin Coolidge, saw the ghost between 1923 and 1929. She always saw him in the Oval Office looking out over Pennsylvania Avenue as though deep in thought, and many presidential aides and other White House staff have also seen Lincoln at that same window. Though Herbert Hoover says he never actually saw Lincoln, he claims to have heard him on numerous occasions between 1928 and 1932, describing the sounds as odd, many of them "fantastic." When Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands slept in the "Lincoln room" she answered a knock on the door, and there in front of her stood the dead President who, after doffing his trademark top hat, disappeared. When the British Prime

Minister Winston Churchill (himself seen in ghost form sat in a leather chair by his son Randolph at his home of forty years, Chartwell at Westerham, Kent), slept in this same room, he also saw the ghost of Lincoln. Between 1945 and 1952 during Harry S. Truman's reign as President, he claims to have heard Lincoln's footsteps, though he also never actually saw him.

Surely the evidence of these many credible witnesses must stand for something, they all surely wouldn't come forth with such stories if they doubted their validity. It is interesting to note that where Lincoln was often seen at the Oval Office window in deep thought, this is where he would have done a lot of his thinking during his reign, and would have made many an important decision at that same spot overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue. This isn't the only place that Lincoln has been seen though, he has also been seen by many people in places where they would have been doing a lot of thinking about him.

Lincoln's coffin was carried on a special funeral train that stopped for eight minutes at each station along the way so that people could pay their last respects to him, and there has since been seen a "phantom" train draped in black and carrying the dead President's coffin, and as the train passed along the funeral route, watches stopped for exactly eight minutes.

The ghosts of many other people haunt the place of their deaths, or places which had some great emotional meaning in their life, such as people seen walking into lakes, hanging from gallows or perhaps one of the most frightening when encountered, those seen hitch hiking at the side of the road. There are many documented cases of people picking up these hitch hikers and noticing how quiet or how pale they are throughout the journey, often offering to turn the heating up in order to make them feel a little more comfortable, and then later on they just simply disappear from the passenger seat.

More common than this though, are cases of motorists knocking over hitch hikers they don't see until the last minute or who seem to run out in front of their car, and the drivers hear or feel a bump as they are thrown from the front of the car, but when they stop and return to the spot, there is no sign of a body or even damage to the car. The police carry out their investigations and often the case turns out to be that the scene of the "accident" is the same place where a pedestrian has been killed in the past.

Some apparitions are clearly just that, apparitions, as they appear to be

grey or misty or semi-transparent while others appear to be completely life like, and people don't realise until later that what they have seen was actually a ghost, or until the ghost does something unusual such as disappear when spoken to or walk through a wall.

How is it then that these apparitions are seen by different people at the same place? Many believe that somehow a "recording" of the person is left behind during their life time, and that this latent signal is somehow later picked up and replayed in the mind of a "receptive" person under the right conditions, but a lot of ghost sightings occur centuries after the person seen has died, so this latent signal must somehow remain dormant for all this time. A common thought which seems to recur throughout the majority of ghost stories is that the recording of the signal is triggered by some sort of emotional stress, and there can be no place more emotional or stressful than the battlefield in the heat of a conflict. Many believe that this is why there are many tales of haunted battlefields and battle cries being heard at the scenes of medieval battles. A classic example of this phenomena is the scene of the first battle of the English Civil War at Edgehill, Warwickshire, where Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarians fought the Royalists led by Prince Rupert in 1643. This would indeed have been a scene of great emotional outpouring as the battle took the lives of 5,000 brave men.

It was a month later when local shepherds saw the battle being played out before their very eyes, but not only could they see the battle, they could also hear the battle cries and the clashing of sword blades and the beating drums. Although the scene appeared to be perfectly real to them there were no bodies left behind on the ground where the men fell.

King Charles I heard about this and, on Christmas Eve when it happened again, troops were sent to investigate the "haunting." Some of those sent had been involved in the original battle themselves and they witnessed the "replay" of the battle, and those who had been involved recognised the compatriots that they had lost while fighting alongside them. One of the men recognised Prince Rupert himself who was still very much alive, thus suggesting that the apparition was not from the afterlife, but caused by something which had been present on the day of the battle and somehow left behind at the time, and not just by the dead and dying but by the survivors as well.

Another more sinister tale of strong emotion leaving behind an imprint

on the surroundings is that of the evil land owner "Wicked" Will Darrell. In 1575 Darrell sent for a midwife to deliver a child at his home. The midwife, a Mrs. Barnes, was collected from another town and blindfolded throughout the journey so that she would not be able to retrace her steps and discover where she had been. Once at the house she was led into a bedroom where a masked woman was lay on the bed in the middle of giving birth. Mrs. Barnes was told that she would be well rewarded if all went well, but that she would be killed if the mother were to die during the birth.

When the woman bore a son, Darrell took hold of the midwife and told her that she must cast the infant into the blazing fire on the landing. When she flatly refused Darrell took hold of the child and he himself cast the newborn baby into the flames. The Distraught Mrs. Barnes was once again blindfolded and returned to her home, at which point she promptly contacted the local magistrates and showed them a scrap of material she had been able to take from the curtains in the bedroom, and she described to them the scene she had glimpsed through a window. They were able to recognise the house as Littlecote, a manor house in Wiltshire. However, due to his wealth Darrell was able to bribe the judge and justice wasn't served until later when Darrell was out riding with the hunt one day. He was thrown from his horse and in the fall he died from a broken neck. The scene of his death is now haunted by an apparition of a child engulfed in flames. The house itself, Littlecote, is haunted by the ghost of a midwife clutching a baby, and also by the screams of a woman and baby.

The haunting of the house is quite understandable as the woman, the baby and the midwife were all present here at one time, but just why the scene of Darrell's death should be haunted by the baby, a place where it obviously never visited is a more complex problem. Perhaps as Darrell fell from his horse his thoughts turned to the child, and he became overcome with guilt, but could this have left an image of the child there rather than Darrell himself?

So far what we have looked at seems quite acceptable if we view it with an open mind, people leaving behind images of themselves at places of great meaning to them, but if that is the case then how do we explain ghostly apparitions of inanimate objects such as stagecoaches, buses and even planes. Throughout the years many stories have featured outmoded means of transport, such as old stagecoaches on darkened lonely country lanes and



even cyclists. One such cyclist haunts the road at Eyam Dale, Chesterfield in Derbyshire.

One rainy day a man was riding his bike up the steep climb and was amazed when another bike overtook him easily. If this wasn't enough of an insult, the faster cyclist was bone dry and the water appeared to be just running off him, despite the torrents which were falling from the sky and soaking the other rider to the skin. This same bike has also been heard overtaking a stagecoach on the same stretch of road, and the occupants of the coach noticed how they could quite clearly hear the rattling of what sounded to be a positively ramshackle bicycle, yet they could see nothing, even when the sound was right alongside them.

As new and more modern forms of transport have taken over, they too have become the centre for ghost stories and hauntings, the most famous of all of them is that concerning a bright red London bus.

During the 1930s, a phantom bus was seen on the No.7 route at Kensington, London where St. Marks Road meets Cambridge Gardens. This was a notoriously dangerous bend and was the scene of many traffic accidents, some of them fatal. Many drivers involved in accidents there said that they had been forced to swerve to avoid a double decker bus which was coming towards them at high speed. One such driver said that he had seen that all of the lights inside the bus were on, but despite this he could see no driver or passengers on board. After swerving to avoid the bus and crashing into a wall he said that the bus had just simply vanished. Often there were independent witnesses to the accidents, one of whom said that the bus just appeared and headed straight for an oncoming car which swerved to avoid it, crashing into a wall and killing the driver.

The bus was clearly an apparition, and was also seen by a bus depot official who saw it late one night drive onto the depot forecourt, sit silently for a few moments, then just disappear. He said that there was no engine noise at all, it had seemed to just roll by itself.

Just why the bus was haunting this part of London can be guessed at, because when the notoriously dangerous corner was straightened out by the local council, the apparition of the phantom bus was never seen again. Was it a warning of the danger that lay ahead? If it was then why did so many people crash and die while trying to avoid it? How did it manifest itself? Was it a creation of the minds of wary motorists, and if so, was it a collective

creation, as many eye witnesses to the accidents also saw the bus. Then of course we are left with the sighting by the official at the depot who wasn't in danger at the time, nor was he even near the notorious black spot.

If we say that these latent signals are left behind at a certain point, then could it be possible that the strength of the signal could fade with time the longer it lies dormant because there is a reported case of this being apparently what has happened? During the 18th Century an apparition of a lady wearing red shoes, a red headdress and a red gown was seen to be walking along a corridor of an English mansion. Over the years though the sightings continued, they were now of a lady in pink shoes, a pink headdress and a pink gown. By the middle of the 19th Century, the apparition was described by witnesses as a lady in a white gown with grey hair. A century later people talked about hearing the swish of dress as if an invisible lady was walking along the corridor and when the building was demolished in 1971, workmen complained of feeling a presence in the old corridors.

Could the ghost have faded with time, and why do all apparitions not follow the same course, or could it be that the signal is being reinforced every time it is picked up by a new percipient, and replayed via them?

The signals can't only be picked up by people but also by animals, we've all seen the scenes in horror films where a dog barks at something that the people can't see, or a cat which is hissing with its hair stood on end, yet the people again are unaware of any danger. This is not as far-fetched as you may think, nor is it done just for effect in films as was proven by an experiment in a Kentucky house which contained a haunted room. The animals used in the experiment were a cat, a dog, a snake and a rat.

The animals were first tested in a room which showed no sign of a haunting and none of them showed any reaction and behaved perfectly normally. Then one by one they were led into the haunted room. The cat was carried in by its owner and on entering a few feet into the room, it leapt onto its owners shoulders, then on to the floor and sat spitting and hissing at the chair in the corner of the room with its hair standing on end on its back.

The dog was then led into the room and once it got a similar distance into the room as the cat it snapped at its owner and continually struggled to get out of the room, and once outside it refused to re-enter the haunted room.

When the snake was placed in the haunted room it assumed an attack posture and focused its attention on the same chair in the corner of the room.

It remained in this position for a number of minutes and then looked toward the window. It then backed slowly away, then once again assumed its attack posture.

When the rat was led into the room, it displayed no reaction to the chair or anything else in the room which had affected the other animals, and it continued to behave perfectly normally.

This goes to show that at least some animals can detect a haunting, sometimes which humans are unaware of. Assuming that they are not intelligent enough to perceive a theory of ghosts, can they pick up the recording of whatever was in the room, possibly an emotional occurrence or trauma of some kind. In fact Jimmy Wentworth Day, a renowned raconteur, author and collector of "ghost stories" is quoted as saying "Dogs I always regard as good witnesses."

Another relatively common kind of apparition is what is commonly termed the False Arrival apparition. This occurs when a vision of a person is seen or more commonly heard to arrive at a place, and then later turn up in person. This kind of apparition can occur, as with other kinds not just with human subjects but also with animals, such as people seen riding the horse they will later ride when they turn up in person. A case which takes this even further is one which occurred to a married couple.

Two brothers had married two sisters, and both lived a short distance away from one another. One day a friend was visiting one of the brothers and, while stood at the window, saw the other brother and his wife arriving in their horse drawn carriage. The carriage was being pulled by a horse called Dobbin who hadn't been used for a while as he had been injured in an accident. The brother and wife approached the window and also saw their siblings approaching, recognising them instantly, and they returned to their seats and saw the visitors pass by the window and awaited the knock at the door which never came. This was most unusual as they had never before passed the house without stopping to say hello. Seconds later the visitors' daughter burst in through the door looking very shaken. She said "Oh Auntie, I have had such a fright. Father and Mother have just passed me on the road without speaking."

Not ten minutes later the vehicle was seen again in the same place as before, only this time the visitors had arrived for real with the newly recovered Dobbin pulling the carriage. It was later found that at the time the

apparition was seen, the family had just been setting out on its journey. This would seem to link up with the crisis apparition, as some sort of psychic link, only where the ghost is seen at the time of death, here it is seen at the journey's beginning when the visitors would have been anticipating seeing their relatives again.

So we have seen cases where witnesses see an apparition in their surroundings behaving as they would normally do and doing things which seem natural. How then do we explain a sighting of an apparition which is seen not as just an apparition of a person or of a vehicle, but of a whole scene rather than a small part of it.

This very thing has happened a number of times, notably on one occasion in 1926 when a Miss Wynne was out for a walk to explore the countryside near her new home in Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk. She was joined by a friend of hers, Miss Allington, and they decide to visit the church in the nearby village of Bradfield St. George.

They walked through a farmyard and onto a road, and on the opposite side of this road was a high brick wall which ran around a corner and into which was set a large set of wrought iron gates. Through the gates they could see at the end of the driveway a large house set behind some large trees. The house was partly hidden behind these trees but they could see part of the roof and some of the windows which were in the Georgian style.

The next time that they walked along this route they could see no sign of the wall or the house. All they could see were the trees which were growing wild among mounds of earth, weeds and several pools of water, all of which had obviously been there for some time. They enquired about the house but nobody else had ever seen it apart from the two women.

Such cases as this are often referred to as Time Slips but could Miss Wynne and Miss Allington have slipped in time and seen the house as it had been years earlier or, stranger still, as it would be in years to come? Could they have possibly seen the vision through the eyes of somebody else who had been so moved by the sight that they left behind a recording of the sight which beheld them and the recording was then later picked up by the two women? This would apparently seem to hold true as most, but certainly not all, time slip cases are historic rather than futuristic.

Another historic case is that of Mrs. Turrell-Clarke who was one day in the church at Wisley-cum-Pyrford, Surrey singing along with the church

service when she was amazed to see the interior of the church regress to a state as it would have appeared hundreds of years earlier. The entire floor was made from soil, the altar was a rough-hewn stone and in the centre of the floor was a group of monks chanting who were dressed in long brown robes. During her experience she felt as though she was no longer taking part in the proceedings but watching the service from the back of the church with a small group of people.

Mrs. Turrell-Clarke later discovered that Pyrford church was once a chapel of Newark Abbey and that the monks had worn black robes, but in 1293 when the church was used by the monks of Westminster Abbey they had indeed worn brown robes. So how could Mrs. Turrell-Clarke have seen an image from seven hundred years earlier? Had she seen it through the eyes of another person in the small group at the back of the church? Was the image left behind and picked up later or, stranger still, had she actually swapped places momentarily? If so then there must have been a person in the thirteenth century wondering where the earth floor, stone altar and chanting monks had gone to, and why the candles were replaced by new electric lighting.

An amazing tale of a time slip which can't be explained by any of these possibilities, and frankly defies any rational attempt to explain it, appears in the book *The Mask Of Time* written by Joan Forman and features a man she named Mr. Squirrel.

Mr. Squirrel was a coin collector from Norfolk, and one day in 1973 he went to Great Yarmouth to buy some clear envelopes in which he could keep his coins as he had been told of a shop there that stocked what he was looking for. When he walked around the corner and into the street he wanted he was surprised to see that it was cobbled, but the shop he wanted was freshly painted and looked new. Inside the shop was an old fashioned box type till and a young assistant dressed in old fashioned Edwardian clothes with her hair piled on top of her head in a loose bun. He told her what it was that he had come for and she returned with a brown box full of the small envelopes. When he mentioned that he was surprised at how many she had in stock she told him that they always kept a large amount for the fishermen who came in regularly and who used the envelopes to keep their hooks in. He took the amount he needed and was told that it would be a shilling, he noted the use of the old term but thought little of it as decimalisation was still relatively new

in 1973. He paid with a new five pence piece which she looked at oddly but took as it was roughly the same shape, size, colour and value as its recently out dated counterpart.

When he left the shop it struck him just how quiet it had been inside with no sound coming in from outside at all, and in fact only his conversation with the shop assistant had broken the silence.

It wasn't until the next week when Mr. Squirrel returned to the shop to buy some more of the envelopes that all the pieces fell into place. This time there were no cobbles on the street and the shop front no longer looked new but appeared rather weather beaten. Inside the shop he was served by an older woman who claimed to have none of the envelopes he had asked for, nor she said had she ever stocked them. Mr. Squirrel still had the ones he had bought the previous week and when Joan Forman tracked down their manufacturers, she was told that they had originally been produced as early as 1914, but were sold as late as the 1920s. So apparently not only had Mr. Squirrel visited an Edwardian shop, but he also had interacted with the sales assistant and, even more amazingly, the small envelopes he bought had travelled back to 1973 with him.

In this case then could Mr. Squirrel have seen the shop as through the eyes of another person, possibly one of the fishermen? Unlikely as the assistant had explained to him that the fishermen often visited her to buy them to keep their hooks in, a fact the customer would have known being such a person. Then there is also the problem that he had interacted with the shop assistant, and not only that, but he still had the evidence of the envelopes in his possession in 1973.

Imagine then, if this had been a true time slip, the look on the face of the sales assistant who examined the coin which Mr. Squirrel had used for his purchase. Not only would the coin's date of manufacture be some fifty years in the future, but the face on the coin would be of a monarch who wouldn't take the throne for over thirty years to come.

So just when we could have an apparent explanation for time slips, along comes Mr. Squirrel to throw his proverbial spanner in to the works. His spanner though can't be as big or do as much damage as that thrown by Victor Goddard (later to become Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard) whose experience of a time slip can't fit into the theory of a recording picked up at a later date, as the sight which met his eyes would not exist until some four

years after he had witnessed it.

Goddard was flying in a Royal New Zealand Air Force Hawker Hart Bi-plane Bomber from Scotland to England when he hit bad weather and lost his bearings. In the bad weather and having to navigate by sight he was unsure exactly where he was. What he did know was that he was somewhere near Drem, a World War 1 Air Force Base no longer in use. Goddard knew he couldn't land there having visited the site in his car in the past and seeing the runway was now used as farmland. However if he spotted it he could use it as a guide to get back on course.

He flew below the cloud cover and indeed spotted Drem, only now it was fully operational and the sun was shining down on it. The hangars had all been repaired and he could see four planes on the tarmac, one of which he had never seen before, a Hawker Hurricane which was a monoplane fighter not used until 1935 and all of the planes were painted yellow and the staff on the ground were all wearing blue uniforms as oppose to the usual khaki denim.

Goddard flew on, now sure of his bearings, and landed safely at his destination, but when he reported his sighting, he was told to "Lay off the scotch" and it wasn't until 1938 that Goddard's questions were answered when the Hawker Hurricane entered into service. Training craft were painted yellow to distinguish them from operational ones, a lot of which were housed at Drem which was now made into a training site whose staff were issued with new blue uniforms.

Not only had Goddard seen Drem as it would be in 1938, but he had also encountered it on a fine sunny day rather than during the bad weather that he had experienced and lost altitude to avoid. He had used it to gain his bearings and continue his journey, so not only had Goddard himself slipped in time but also his aircraft had obviously gone with him.

Though this isn't strictly a ghost story as such, is it possible that Goddard and his aeroplane may have appeared as a ghostly sighting to anybody on the ground at Drem on that fine sunny day in 1938 in their new blue uniform?

So most of the examples we have looked at so far would seem to show that ghosts such as crisis apparitions, haunting ghosts and some cases of time slips are images created by the percipient in some way, most likely a psychic message rather than a spirit somehow left behind and picked up later by a sensitive person, whereas other ghost stories would seem to show a life after

death or a survival of the spirit.

So how do we explain a ghost which goes beyond being seen in an old house and disappearing or a battle being played out, but goes so far as to interact with living people and seem to have an apparent awareness of their surroundings? The best example of an Interactive Ghost is the story of Flight 401. The story features not one but two interactive ghosts, the ghosts of Don Repo and Bob Loft. They were the flight crew on Eastern Airlines Flight Number 401, an L1011 aircraft on its way over the Florida Everglades, when they hit trouble.

The autopilot had been engaged and could be disengaged by simply moving the steering column, and while the men were moving around inside the cockpit, one of them inadvertently knocked the column, thus disengaging the autopilot. The plane then began to lose altitude and dropped to five hundred feet. The two men were unaware of this as the autopilot read out had continued to show their former height of two thousand feet. Although a warning bleeper sounded, Loft didn't hear it through his headphones, and Repo had climbed down into what's called the Hellhole. This is a small compartment under the cockpit where the cabin crew can check to make sure that the front landing gear has locked down properly, which Loft thought hadn't happened. Obviously down there Repo was also unable to hear the warning bleeper.

The sight which confronted Repo from the Hell Hole, the last thing he would ever see, would have been the tops of the trees less than five hundred feet below him. Completely powerless to do anything, he and all those aboard the plane were living on borrowed time. Within twenty seconds all one hundred and one people on the aircraft were dead and the plane lay in pieces in the swamplands of Florida. Did Repo and Loft survive their deaths on December 29th, 1972, as many witnesses who have seen them since would tend to think? Most of the sightings since that fateful night have been on L1011 aircraft, and the majority of them on planes which have use recycled parts of the Flight 401 aircraft.

The many people who claim to have seen, and even spoken to Repo and Loft, as with the people who have seen Abraham Lincoln's ghost, are very eminent, reliable witnesses. These include pilots, flight officers and even the Vice President of Eastern Airlines. Other sightings have been by multiple witnesses, one such incident was that of a Captain and two Flight Attendants



who saw and spoke to Bob Loft before he disappeared in front of them. They were so worried by the incident that their flight was cancelled. Repo has also done a disappearing act in full view of a stewardess and a passenger who had enquired about the uniformed man next to her.

Whereas Bob Loft seems content to be seen and occasionally spoken to, Don Repo tends to be more involved. A Flight Engineer was carrying out a pre-flight inspection, as he would normally do, when a uniformed man told him "You don't need to worry about the pre-flight. I've already done it." The Flight Engineer turned to thank his helper and saw the figure of Don Repo.

Another occasion when Repo leant a helping hand was witnessed by a Flight Attendant who saw him in the galley fixing an oven. There was only one Flight Engineer on the plane at the time and he was adamant that he had not been in the galley. Repo was again seen in the galley of a plane on Tri Star 318, a stewardess, Faye Merryweather, saw his face looking out at her from one of the ovens. Very disturbed by this she ran to get two more colleagues, one of whom had known Repo well. All three of them clearly heard Repo speak to them as he warned them "Watch out for fire on this plane." The last leg of the plane's journey was subsequently cancelled due to serious engine trouble, and it was later discovered that the galley on Tri Star 318 had been salvaged from Flight 401.

An independent body, the Flight Safety Foundation was told of the sightings and after its investigations concluded that the witnesses were all trustworthy and experienced and that their testimony was significant. The Foundation's report stated that "The appearance of the dead Flight Engineer was confirmed by the Flight Engineer." Records show that indeed there was a fire on the aircraft.

Do Bob Loft and Don Repo live on after leaving their mortal bodies as it would seem? Do they carry on a crusade to save others from suffering the same fate as themselves? One Captain on an L1011 flight witnessed an appearance by Repo who, before disappearing, told him "There will never be another crash of an L1011... We will not let it happen." Since December 29th, 1972 there has indeed never been any other such crash involving these aircraft.

This case shares a similarity with the No.7 London bus case in so far that it is a warning of possible danger, but the similarity would seem to end there because with the bus many were killed while trying to avoid it while Loft and

Repo tried to avoid the loss of life. Also the drivers at the time knew of the possible danger ahead and so could have created the bus themselves, whereas with the L1011 case no danger was apparent beforehand, especially with the fire until Repo's warning.

We can also draw a comparison with another case of a warning of danger, that of a woman, Mrs. Tillotson, who was asleep in her bed in her own home. She was woken in the night by a knocking on the door and, on seeing the late hour, she was immediately both worried and curious. When she opened the door there was her daughter, Helen, who lived across the street standing there looking worried. She told her mother that she must come over to her house straight away so she ducked back inside to get her slippers and when she returned to the door Helen had gone. By now very curious and even more worried she went across the road to her daughter's house to see what was the matter. She was most surprised to see that there was no movement inside the house, and she had to knock several times before getting a response. Helen eventually came to the door and seemed most annoyed at having been woken at such an ungodly hour, "But you came and woke me!" said Mrs. Tillotson confused. As they stood there debating exactly who had woken whom, Mrs. Tillotson's house across the street was destroyed by a massive explosion. The cause was later found to have been a gas leak.

Helen knew nothing of the warning she was supposed to have given her mother and had been asleep all the time, so we must assume that the mother had somehow created the whole thing, could she have smelt the gas in her sleep and sensed the danger, and then in a semi waking state her mind had created the scenario of her daughter calling to get her out of the house? The problem here is that again some knowledge of danger must have been apparent, but why then, when awake and looking for her slippers, could she not smell the gas or sense the danger, or was it masked for her by the story of her daughter in trouble.

Still we are left with the problem on the plane where nobody but Repo knew of the fire risk which, if evident, would have been spotted in a pre-flight check and wouldn't have been apparent to Faye Merryweather or the two stewards she called to investigate with her, especially in the galley away from the engines. Was it the spirit of Don Repo fulfilling his and Loft's crusade to protect L1011 aircraft and all who flew on them?

Is it possible for ghosts to have such an awareness of their surroundings

as to be aware of danger? This would appear to be what happened in a Detroit factory in 1964 while a man was walking through the factory on his lunch hour. A giant body press was activated by accident, and just before the motor fitter was killed by the machine he was pushed out of the way by a tall black man with a scar on his left cheek. Later when he told his colleagues of the experience they recognised that the black man's description matched that of a man who had been decapitated by the same machine twenty years earlier while he had been pressing parts for bombers. Though he had been an excellent worker who knew his job well, long hours of overtime had made him drowsy and careless. The fitter said that the black man had pushed him out of the way easily and that he had looked and felt real. So how then could a ghost, if that is what it was, physically push a man? We have a similar problem in the Nor' Nor' West story where a ghost, though that of a living person, physically manipulated a pen and left behind writing in the ships log book. Can ghosts physically manipulate objects or are they really ghosts at all?

Could the scarred black man have been a crisis apparition created by one of the fitter's co-workers seeing the danger and suddenly recalling the accident of twenty years earlier and feeling a sudden dread? Even if this is the case then we are still left with the question of how a ghost, however it should be created, physically moving a grown man. The most likely explanation is some form of telekinesis or psychokinetic force (the ability to move things with the power of the mind) but who in a scenario like this would be using the power? The fitter himself, one of his colleagues, or possibly his co-workers collectively, and can telekinesis be used to influence a living breathing man or just inanimate objects?

With all the cases we have looked at so far have we seen any proof of an afterlife? Probably the best evidence so far is Repo and Loft, though even in their case some of the encounters don't necessarily show a "survival of death." To say that we truly have evidence of an afterlife we must surely need to communicate with the dead, to receive a message from the "other side." Occasionally we find a case where there is a strong suggestion of an afterlife, and where a survival of death seems to be the most likely explanation.

In North Carolina in 1921 James Chaffin died, leaving everything to one of his four sons. The son himself died a year later leaving no will of his own. Three years later, in 1925, the second son, now the eldest living, was visited

by the ghost of his father. The ghost spoke to him and told him "You will find my will in my overcoat pocket." The son then found the overcoat, and stitched inside the lining was a rolled up note. The note said to read Chapter 27 of Genesis in the family bible. When he found the bible and turned to the relevant section, in the page was a second will which bequeathed everything equally to all four sons.

The will was a later one than the original and was hidden where nobody else but the father knew about it. If the second son then didn't know of it, how did he know where to look for it in the coat and then the bible unless he was told to by his father, but could the message have actually come from beyond the grave? The other alternative is that the second son falsified the will in order to get a share of his fathers, then elder brothers fortune, though there was no evidence of this found when the case was looked into by a lawyer hired by a Canadian member of the S.P.R. but the significance of the 27th Chapter of Genesis is that it contains the story of how Jacob deceived his blind father Isaac into granting him the inheritance of his brother Esau.

Even a case like this then cannot be taken as proof of an afterlife as holes can be found in the story, but this is just one of many cases of a ghost telling people where to find wills, treasure and even on some occasions their earthly remains. There can't be many tales though of a ghost identifying his murderer.

September 28th, 1749 was the last day that 30 year old Sergeant Arthur Davies was seen alive. He went to go hunting and never came back, a search for him failed to turn up any sign of his whereabouts and was called off after four days. Due to the nature of the highlands where he went missing with its marshes, crags and strong currents, his body could have easily been concealed in any one of a thousand places so foul play wasn't suspected and the case died down over time until some 10 months later when a shepherd, Alexander Mcpherson, was visited by a man claiming to be the ghost of Sergeant Davies. Davies spoke to Mcpherson and told him that he was the victim of murder, of which no suspicion had been raised before, and he told the shepherd the whereabouts of his remains. Mcpherson decided to look where he had been told to, and indeed found a body at the exact spot. He turned and fled, feeling desperate to forget the whole ghastly business and did nothing further until he was visited by the ghost a second time. However this time the ghost was also seen by Mcpherson's employer's wife Isobel

Mchardie.

Davies asked Mcpherson to give his body a proper burial, and again told him that he had been murdered, only this time he gave the shepherd the names of his murderers. He also asked him to contact his friend Donald Farquarson, and when he did get in contact, Farquarson was very skeptical about the whole affair and doubted the motives of the shepherd. Despite his skepticism he decided to follow Mcpherson to the grave and was dumfounded when he recognised the clothing and hair colour on the body of the dead Sergeant Davies. Though they decided to fulfil the dead man's wish for a proper burial they did not tell the authorities of the alleged murder for various reasons. The main reason being that they didn't want to be seen to be involved in "ghostly goings on," bearing in mind that this was the 1700s and things like that were taken very seriously, and also the situation at the time between the Scots and the English which was delicate to say the least.

As time passed, Mcpherson was fired and his new employer was one of the men Sergeant Davies had accused of his murder, Duncan Clerk. Mcpherson was obviously nervous when in Clerk's company and, after rowing with him one day, he accused him of Davies' murder. Clerk offered the shepherd twenty pounds to say nothing to anyone, and the offer was accepted. Word soon spread though and eventually reached the authorities who put Clerk on trial for murder.

The main evidence against him was the I.O.U. for twenty pounds which he had given Mcpherson, and the two rings from Davies' fingers which were found on the fingers of Clerk's mistress. In addition to this evidence the prosecution found two witnesses, the most amazing fact however is that the court allowed the ghostly evidence of Mcpherson to be included in the trial. An excerpt from the court record book stored in Edinburgh at the General Register House read as follows;

*".. the deponent rose from his bed and followed him to the door and then it was as he had been told that he said he was Serjeant Davies who had been murdered in the hill of Christie aboute near a year before and desired the deponent to go to the place he pointed at where he would find his bones..."*

Despite all the evidence the two men accused of the murder were

acquitted, not due to lack of evidence, but more to do with the hostility between the English prosecutor and the Scottish defender which marred the trial, and the proceedings were further hampered by the hanging of one of the witnesses for an unrelated offence. So despite his efforts Davies failed to see justice done, but what he did achieve was the status of being the first person to testify in a court trial from beyond the grave.

So at last we have proof of an afterlife, or do we? As seems obligatory with these tales, there is always an alternative explanation, albeit an equally puzzling one.

As the murderers of Davies were still alive, is it possible that their feelings of guilt were somehow portrayed to the shepherd Mcpherson who was previously unaware of the murder, and possibly even that Davies was dead? There were certainly at least 2 people who knew of the killing and the location of the corpse, so once again there is no watertight proof that the vision of Davies was created by the dead man himself, but could have been created by the two "guilty" men or the two witnesses produced in court.

The problem with most ghost stories is that as they are passed down through the ages they become only as reliable as not only the person telling it, but also all those who have told it before. Details have a habit of becoming fuzzy, distorted and exaggerated with each telling, details which don't seem important are left out and those which are not so important are told and retold so they become slightly further from the truth each time. What we need then is a ghost story which has remained unchanged though the years, one that isn't told time and time again but is passed by some other means such as visually.

The saying goes that the camera never lies, and the photographs of ghostly images are many and varied, some show clearly defined figures while others show just a hazy mist, all however are most interesting.

Some such photographs are taken when a witness sees a ghost and then tries to capture it on film but not all of these attempts however are successful, others are taken when no ghost is seen at the time and, to the photographers surprise, a ghost is seen on, for example, a family photograph. Many such photographs though can be put down to natural causes such as tricks of the light, exposure problems, faults with the film or careless development of the film. It is interesting to note that some pictures have passed all of these tests and, years after being taken, still manage to defy all attempts to explain them.

Could they really be a ghostly image caught on film, surely if a ghost is visible to the naked eye then it would stand to reason that it would also be visible to the camera, as this is in reality a mere extension of the human eye which is able to store a picture for posterity.

If we suppose that a ghost is caused by a psychic effort rather than being the spirit of a dead person then could this psychic image still be captured on film as if it were a physical manifestation? When it is seen at the time of exposure this is reasonably understandable, but when it is not seen at the time of exposure we have a problem once again. Could the photographer be portraying an image himself? Could the signal that he is perceiving be relatively weak so he is unable to portray it physically, but is able to portray it mentally on to the photographic film?

There have been cases of psychics claiming to be able to perform "Thought Photography" by portraying images on to film by the power of thought alone, even under laboratory conditions where they are given a specific image and then made to portray it onto a photographic plate. One of the best examples is Ted Serios who is one of, if not the best exponents of thought photography.

Ted Serios' best work was produced in the 1960s and 1970s. He would use a Polaroid Instamatic camera so there was no question of him tampering with the film itself, and he would be able to produce images on the film often of faraway buildings, on occasion even when the camera was in a different room to him and pointing into empty space. So could unwitting photographers be producing such examples of thought photography of ghostly images completely by accident, perhaps after picking up a latent signal left behind years before?

We have examined the many and varied types of ghosts, and not all of them appear to have the same cause, but appear to be created in many different ways. Nowhere though have we seen an example which proves "beyond doubt" that they are the spirits of people no longer of this world who are returning from the afterlife as there is always another possible explanation. It is interesting to note that there are surprisingly few stories of ghosts appearing in graveyards where there should surely be many hauntings if ghosts are linked to the dead people they represent. The ghosts in the majority tend to frequent the places that were connected to the person in life rather than in death. One thing is for certain, whatever the cause for ghosts

and apparitions the explanation is very likely to be every bit as baffling and unbelievable as if they were somehow the spirits of the dead.

Before we can answer a question we must first know what that question is. Is it that ghosts exist, or is it what ghosts really are? What we must do is answer both questions in order, so if the first question is do ghosts exist then the answer must be yes. There can be absolutely no doubt in anybody's mind that people do see apparitions, both of people and of other things as well such as animals, phantom stage coaches, buses and even buildings. Some are even lucky enough to capture them on film though they're not always aware of it at the time.

So we now come to the second question, what are ghosts? The common belief being that they are the spirits of dead people, and if you should ask a person whether or not they believe in ghosts they will automatically make the connection that you are asking them if they believe that the souls of persons long dead can still walk the earth, so we must try to get away from this common misconception that "ghost" means the spirit of the dead. Though in some stories this would appear to be the case there is no proof of the fact, and though for some reason many people would love this to be true, the argument is far from convincing. So we must then answer the second question: What are ghosts? This one however is not as easily answered as the first question. We have seen that there are different types of ghosts and apparitions and not all appear to have the same cause, some causes being more obvious and simple than others. Whatever kind of ghost we are talking about, it is clear that the human mind, complex as it is, has a lot to do with it. What we will do is perhaps the only thing we can do and that is take each different type of ghost and look at it separately to try and see how the different scenarios differ or compare.

The first we will look at is crisis apparitions, this being perhaps the simplest of all to explain, that is the apparition of a person seen at the time of, or up to twelve hours after their death, and when the ghost is often known to the percipient of the vision. It is likely that crisis apparitions are caused by some sort of telepathic message sent out by the dying person in their last moments of life. We know from E.S.P. experiments that people can indeed "link up" (though with varying degrees of success) over vast distances. One early example of one of these experiments is that carried out around the turn of the century by a Mr. Kirk who had a lady friend to whom he referred to as



Miss G., his experiments were reported by the S.P.R.

The experiments took place over a period of 10 days and between the hours of 11pm and 1am every night but Miss G. was told nothing by Mr. Kirk of his experiment during which he would concentrate hard on making himself visible to Miss G. Over the 10 day period the two met on several occasions but neither spoke of the matter, Miss G. was still obviously unaware of what was going on, though she did complain to him of having trouble sleeping and feeling restless.

Mr. Kirk was disappointed in his apparent lack of success at having failed to appear to Miss G. and after the 10 days had expired he gave up. He was however in his office one day and was feeling rather tired after completing some auditing work so he leaned back in his chair and decided to have one last try at his experiment. Not knowing where Miss G. would be at the time he decided to concentrate on her bedroom though it was still only early, between 3:30pm and 4pm. It is Miss G.'s account to the S.P.R. that makes the most interesting reading.

*"In the afternoon (being tired by a morning walk) while sitting in an easy chair near the window of my own room, I fell asleep.... I was suddenly quite wide awake, seeing Mr. Kirk standing near my chair, dressed in a dark brown coat, which I had frequently seen him wear. His back was toward the window, his right hand toward me; he passed across the room toward the door...; but when he got about four feet from the door, which was closed he disappeared."*

The dark brown coat Miss G. describes was one which Mr. Kirk had indeed worn many times while in her company, though this particular day was one of the very rare occasions when he had worn it to the office.

There can be no more emotional or stressful time than that at the point of death, so in these moments it seems that the psychic message is sent and received by the percipient, sometimes immediately, sometimes a little later, possibly when the percipient thinks about the dying person or possibly, if they are busy at the time, when their mind is clear and able to receive such a message. We know that twins have a strong psychic connection and can feel each other's pain, happiness and sorrow, and even in the case of the inseparable Yorkshire born twins Greta and Freda Chaplin often referred to

as "The Terrible Twins" or "The Pests" finish off their sentences. This "link" would be much stronger than any other as twins are more closely related than any other kith and kin, so it would stand to reason that there would be a certain psychic closeness between all relatives by blood, ranging from twins sharing the womb to distant cousins who may possibly never meet, and this would explain why most crisis apparitions are experienced by people known to the ghost.

The next type of ghost we will look at is the haunting ghost, those which stay faithful to a particular location. The location is usually one which bore a significance to the person in their life such as their home, their place of work or the scene of their death. We know that mental signals take the form of electrical impulses, and can be picked up by receptive people, but could these signals still be in the atmosphere and be detected many years later? Surely the impression must be stored somewhere in the surroundings and not simply floating in the airspace being blown about by the wind, more probably stored on a conscious rather than a physical level.

The many sightings of haunting ghosts seem to show that the ghost is seen to perform in the same way every time it is seen, such as walking along a particular corridor or as in the case of Abraham Lincoln at the same Oval Office window looking out over Pennsylvania Avenue apparently deep in thought, a place where Lincoln would indeed have spent many hours during his time in office, emitting these electrical impulses.

It is most interesting to note that "old ghosts" which have been seen over many centuries obey the laws of physics which were relevant to their time rather than ours, i.e. when a ghost is seen walking through a wall. The point at which the ghost disappeared will later be found to have been the site of an old doorway long since bricked over, or a ghost seen to rise up, apparently floating may be seen at the site of an old staircase no longer there. One such incident which occurred in the North West of England on many occasions was experienced by a woman who lived alone in a large house and heard footsteps apparently climbing her stairs. She could not work out however why there were thirteen definite steps when she had only eleven stairs. In time, she had some work done on the stairs which included a new carpet, and when the workmen pulled up some of the floorboards they found that there were two further steps beneath the current staircase.

The ghost will always be seen to be doing something which they would

have done in life rather than walking around a graveyard for instance, suggesting that the origin of the ghost lies in the life of the person and not in their death. The only problem with this though is just how can a signal be left behind by somebody or something and still be picked up many years later? Despite this problem this is indeed what seems to happen and that the haunting ghost is caused in this way. It is also my belief that the original signal is possibly strengthened every time it is picked up, for example, a signal left behind by a now dead person later picked up by somebody else would then become not only the cause of an apparition, but also the percipient themselves shocked to see it will also possibly leave behind not only the original signal but also a signal of their own as a result of their surprise and shock. So there is then two signals left in the same place, and they may be then picked up again by a third person as two signals or one strong one. This would explain how animals can also detect a haunting if it is a mental signal as in the haunted room where no ghost was apparent. The theory also goes a long way to explaining why so few graveyards are haunted, and it is further bolstered by the fact that when battle scenes are recreated, living persons are seen in their battle throes as well as those who perished on the field, so obviously the signal is left by living persons as oppose to the dead. A good analogy used by Arthur C. Clarke is that the eye is like a camera which places an image on the retina which, via the optic nerve, sends a signal of what it is seeing to the brain, but if this situation were reversed and the brain picked up a signal from somewhere, could it then send it to the retina which would think that it is actually seeing it?

The sightings of inanimate objects such as cycles, buses and planes can be likened to such sightings of people who are still alive, in so much as the signal is left behind at the time by somebody else present at the time of the objects existence. For example, a soldier on a battlefield leaving a signal of all those around him including those still alive as well as those who perished on the field, or a person seeing a spitfire returning from a raid leaves a signal or recording of it, and when this recording is later picked by somebody else they see the same spitfire returning from a raid flown many years earlier, but the recording is left behind by the original witness rather than the spitfire or its pilot.

The London Bus apparition may not be included in the same bracket as this apparition was likely created by either the drivers of approaching cars or

by passing onlookers, because as the drivers approached the bend at Cambridge Gardens and St. Marks Road they would be aware of the pending danger as would any nearby witnesses, especially those who lived locally as this was a notorious black spot and buses were a regular visitor to the area. It would only take one such onlooker or one driver to leave behind a feeling of danger, or a bus about to crash for any subsequent drivers to be able to pick this up later, and so see a vision of the bus themselves. The curious point about this case though is the sighting at the depot by an official when there was no apparent danger, though the buses were obviously frequent visitors to this spot, and would have been witnessed at this spot by countless hundreds if not thousands of people any one of whom could have left behind a similar signal at this point.

The false arrival sightings would appear to be of the same in origin as crisis apparitions in so far as they are a telepathic signal, but whereas with a crisis apparition it is the time of death when the signal is transmitted and received, in the false arrival it is sent the beginning or the middle of a journey when the mind of the sender is on their pending arrival at the destination and once again meeting those who wait there for the visit. Though the false arrival ghost is often seen I would also include in this category the times that we have all encountered when we find ourselves thinking of somebody we haven't seen for a long time, only for them to either knock on the door or to telephone us, this could be a signal of the same kind though the percipient doesn't see an apparition but merely finds themselves thinking about the visitor or caller.

There we have some possible explanations for relatively common apparitions, but surely one of the most interesting of all ghosts are those seen in time slips where whole houses are seen or in the case of Mr. Squirrel a whole street. Not all the cases included can have the same cause but most typical are the cases of Mrs. Turrell-Clarke, and that of Miss Wynne and Miss Allington. As usual in time slips the women saw a vision of times gone by and in the case of Miss Wynne and Miss Allington they did not even realise they were looking at an apparition until the next time they visited the road where the house apparently was. In Mrs. Turrell-Clarke's case, though she also saw a scene of days gone by, she saw it slowly transform in front of her and then change back again. These are the more typical cases where it is possible to explain them as a telepathic signal and the visions of what the

women saw were once seen by somebody else, and the impression of what they saw was perhaps so inspiring to them that they left behind a signal to be picked up later as a vision by somebody, possibly and probably years later under the right circumstances. This could also explain part of Mr. Squirrel's time slip but only up until the part where he interacted with shop assistant. However Mr. Squirrels experience is obviously much more than an apparition as he completed a business transaction during his experience.

Equally unusual was Victor Goddard's sighting of Drem Airfield as it would appear four years later. A possible solution to Goddard's case seems to be a little too far-fetched, but then whatever the solution is, it is bound to be incredible in its own right. Could it be possible that Goddard actually stayed in 1934 all the time, and that it was the people of Drem who had a regressive time slip and saw an old Bi-plane in the skies above them, the plane which Goddard was flying. Could somebody have picked up a recording of a once common sight in the skies above England, and that Goddard was on the other side of the time slip, being, rather than seeing an apparition. Apart from an actual slip in time this is the only other plausible explanation, and if this is the case then in other slips do both sides of the slip see each other or each other's surroundings?

So once again we come to perhaps the most confusing of all apparitions, that is interactive ghosts. How is it that somebody can talk to, and interact with, a mere apparition? We have seen only one case which is absolutely baffling. Most of these cases feature one or more living persons as multiple witnesses, that of the Detroit machinist involved colleagues in the factory, in the case of James Chaffin we cannot absolutely rule out foul play, and the steps taken seem rather long winded and complicated for a man to go to just to leave a will rather than changing one he had already written. The Arthur Davies case, even though his testimony was allowed in court his murderers were still alive at the time, and it is possible that it was one, or both, of them that could have created the vision seen by the shepherd Alexander Mcpherson, and while there is somebody still alive who knows the details of a murder or death, then we can not say for sure that the evidence came from a ghost beyond the grave. As for the truly baffling case, that is the case of Bob Loft and Don Repo the flight crew on the ill-fated Flight 401.

When the flight engineer doing his pre-flight check saw Repo and was told by him that he had already done the check we could say that this was a

"normal" sighting as Repo would indeed have said this possibly many times during his career, and for the final time to Bob Loft, so the flight engineer could have picked up a signal left by Repo himself during his life. This could also explain many of the sightings by passengers on board L1011 aircraft which Loft and Repo flew many times.

The sighting of Repo in the galley oven is slightly different from the majority of ghost sightings in that the head was seen inside the oven itself and the apparition was certainly not acting like most others by acting normally and could in no way have been mistaken for a real person going about his or her normal business such as opening a door or casting a shadow. We can safely assume that Repo had never placed his head inside a galley oven and closed the door. The galley in question was later found to have been recycled from the crashed aircraft, and it is possible that if a signal can be left behind in haunted houses and other buildings then it must be possible for the ghost to be present in the galley, and the galley housed the latent signal which the stewardess Faye Merryweather picked up and was also seen by the colleagues whose attention she attracted. We can accept these incidents at face value for what they are, genuine apparitions, but what is baffling is the warning which Repo gave to the cabin crew of possible fire on the aeroplane. How could anyone else have known about the fire risk at that time? The plane did indeed develop engine trouble later on in the flight and the remainder of the journey had to be cancelled.

It is possible though that a flight engineer checking the engines had noticed a potential problem, and after becoming worried about the severity of it and not bringing it to somebody's attention, he had panicked and regretted greatly the fact that he had not told anybody else, and so he created the vision of Repo himself out of a feeling of dread or guilt, or maybe he did report it and that report was perhaps "lost" by somebody else who later became worried and created the vision, but surely if such a problem had been noticed then the plane would not have been allowed to fly any further without repairs being carried out would it? If there is an alternative explanation to the problem then we must look at it and give it equal consideration, but if this is a possible cause of the vision of Repo in the galley then it is surely as frightening as the prospect of Repo coming back from the dead to warn us of imminent danger. The other problem is the sighting by a fellow captain who saw, and was told by Repo that "There will never be another crash of an

L1011... We will not let it happen." A prophecy which to this day has remained true.

Do the spirits of Loft and Repo have a "mission" to fulfil in preventing further accidents involving L1011s, and continue to do so from the "other side"? We would all love this to be true, no matter how unbelievable it may be, and quite frankly there is no other obvious explanation for the events taking place on these aircraft.

So we must accept that ghosts do exist and, for the most part, are not in fact spirits of the dead whos souls have survived death or become locked for eternity in some nether world, but are in fact a telepathic message in the form of a psychic signal which is picked up by somebody else under the right circumstances. With crisis apparitions it is reasonably simple to understand as the signal is both sent and received within a very short space of time, so what we need to look at is just how a signal can be sent or left behind in a certain place in the case of a haunting ghost in such a way and still be picked up sometimes centuries later.

Many experiments have been carried out into psychic phenomena and the powers of the mind, and even when carried out on so called "great" psychics the results have always proved erratic. Even when the subjects were in the same room as, and concentrating hard on, one another, they don't always attain convincing results, sometimes just scraping over the threshold that one would expect if the subjects were just using guess work and the laws of averages. This could go a long way to explaining why a haunting ghost in a house for example does not appear all the time and to every visitor, or does not always appear visible but audible in some instances. A leading researcher into ghost sightings, John Spencer feels that there are a number of ingredients needed for a ghost to be either "recorded" or "played back" because otherwise everybody who ever walked into a particular room would appear at one time or another as a ghost and the room would be full of ghosts.

This would also seem to debunk Eleanor Sidgwick's "Psychometry Theory" where certain people are able to conjure up images of people when they come into contact with objects associated with that person, even though this is a tried and tested process often used in police investigations to catch criminals, the results are again very erratic, and only a rough profile of the person is the usual outcome rather than a perfect image precise right down to obscure details reported in ghost sightings.

John Spencer theorises that the necessary ingredients needed could possibly be the geographical shape of the room, atmospheric conditions i.e. a specific type of location, humidity or temperature, but the most important, and also the most unpredictable, ingredient is of course the human mind. Perhaps only a certain kind or frame of mind is able to create an apparition which would explain why some people see many ghosts in their lifetime while others may never see one at all. Spencer's wife Anne believes that an image is not left by the person recorded but by the person who sees them, as in the case of the man who, while looking out of a window, saw somebody lying in a pond, apparently dead. When he rushed outside to the pond there was nobody in the water. Upon returning to the window he once again saw the same figure lying in the water, so the apparition itself wasn't seen from anywhere but the window, the place perhaps where the vision of the dead body was first seen from and recorded not at the pond side but at the window.

To this day nobody knows just how a telepathic signal is communicated and in the cases of crisis apparitions the mind of the percipient plays a larger part in the vision than the mind of the sender as the vision is never seen as it is sent, i.e. on the deathbed or mangled in a car crash, except in the case of the girl who saw her mother lay on the floor of "the white room" when her mother had collapsed and needed assistance, possibly purposely sending an image of herself in trouble so that her daughter could get help, but it is seen doing normal things so the message they receive is somehow transformed in their mind. The fact that a number of people may see a ghost while another person in the same room may see nothing at all supports the fact that it takes a certain frame of kind of mind to perceive an image and thus receive a telepathic signal.

It is hard to doubt that a signal is left behind, and perceived by not only people but also animals such as the cat, dog, rat and snake experiment, which showed that all the animals, apart from the rat, detected something in the "haunted room."

H. H. Price who was also an Oxford philosopher came up with the theory of a "Psychic ether" which he said would "permeate all matter and space." Price said that this could be imprinted upon with mental images, probably at traumatic moments such as violent death or great emotional torment. With cases of ghosts who had lived a happy and uneventful life, and died a peaceful and natural death, he says that repeated attendance at a scene



could also be imprinted upon the psychic ether. He also says that the "impression" when received could take the form of a vision, a sound, a feeling or a physical touch.

This neatly fits in with the sightings of people still living, such as in battles for instance, as the psychic ether would already be impressed upon before their death, which also ties in with Anne Spencer's belief that an image is created by the seer rather than the seen. This could also go so far as to explain inhuman ghosts as if a "sender" can create an image wearing clothes or carrying objects, then they could surely also create an image of a vehicle they were riding in or were near.

As well as Price's theory of a psychic ether, there is a school of thought which believes that we have a "collective consciousness" which all people, at least on some level, are aware of and share a certain part of, and we all have an often latent ability to send and receive messages to and from each other. It is difficult to distinguish between this and the psychic ether as they would appear, in most respects, to be one and the same thing, and if we extend this psychic ether to a level where we all share a part of it, then they do indeed become one and the same.

So rather than a particular room or a particular object holding a signal over time and this being detected, it is likely that the psychic ether or collective conscious offer the best, albeit a still incredible explanation to haunting ghosts and that we do all indeed share some level of mental awareness of one another, this being at its strongest in twins the closest of relatives, and getting weaker the further removed we become. Also there is the added possibility of inherited memory and information which passes down through the generations. Not only does this explain the haunting ghosts but also that puzzling phenomena of ghosts appearing at certain times of day or on certain days of the year, as though on some level we are aware of what has transpired on these particular days in a given location.

An interesting footnote is that haunting ghosts in some cases can be exorcised from houses, or in the case of murder victims if their remains are given a proper burial they seem to find "eternal rest" and bother us no more, so it would seem that if we do somehow have a knowledge of past events then we must also have a knowledge of exorcisms or proper burials so that we no longer perceive a ghost when it has been laid to rest.

So the answer to the question do you believe in ghosts should be the

same as that given by H. H. Price, Yes, but as for them being the spirits of dead people then the answer is no, and, as Price said, the question should not be do you believe in ghosts?, but do you believe people sometimes experience apparitions?

## MONSTERS OF THE DEEP

Ever since man began navigating the world's oceans, there have been tales of fantastic and often fearsome creatures crossing his path, or is it in fact man that is doing the path crossing? Is there even so much as a grain of truth in any of these tales or is it in fact a classic case of the exaggerating fisherman gone wild? Have the reports now been blown out of all proportion with so many tellings and retellings, or is it really a case of there being no smoke without fire and what could have invoked such awe and fear in the experienced sailors?

We know of many species in our oceans that may achieve great sizes but do we realise just exactly how big they can reach? Legend tells of a fearsome creature that has been seen by many sailors, and there are also reports of it capsizing ships, and that creature is the "Kraken," the very mention of which could instil fear into the hearts of men. The Kraken was said to measure 100ft in length and was not afraid to take on a ship in battle, but how reliable are these reports?

For instance in 1874, the 150 ton British schooner, Pearl, was capsized in the Bay of Bengal by a creature with tentacles, and this was witnessed by the crew of the steamer Strathowen, but some reports say that the Strathowen rescued the crew of the Pearl while others say that the Pearl went down with all hands lost.

The prime candidate for the role of the Kraken is the giant squid but there is great debate as to whether or not a squid could reach such enormous sizes as those described in Kraken sightings.

The coast of Newfoundland has seen many giant squid washed up on its

beaches but most of them are around 20ft to 30ft long, and it is thought that they may be confused by periodic changes in the cold Labrador current and mistakenly swim into the shallows away from the deeper waters of the North Atlantic.

Squid are known to have a strong attraction to the colour red and Newfoundland fishermen will often fish without the need for bait, instead using metal painted red which they hang near their hooks.

In the 1930s the 15,000 ton tanker Brunswick was in the South Seas off Samoa, travelling at 12 knots when a huge squid attacked her amidships, but it was unable to get a grip on her hull and was cut to pieces by her propeller. Her captain, Arne Gronningsaeter, reported that the ship was attacked twice more in a similar way, and this prompted suggestions that there was something about the colour, the shape or the speed of the Brunswick which caused squid to perhaps think that she was a whale.

Whales and squid are known to prey on one another and a good example of this is given by the British writer F.T. Bullen who, in the late nineteenth century, was on board the whaleship Cachelot when bursting out of the water came a whale and a squid locked together in mortal combat. The whale was locked in the tentacles of the squid, part of which was in the whale's mouth, and locked together they disappeared below the surface again and were lost beneath the depths. Whales will often bear the scars of these titanic struggles in the form of huge sucker marks on their bodies, but the strongest evidence is to be found within the whale.

When a sperm whale is in its death throes it will vomit the entire contents of its stomach and often this will contain thousands of squid, both large and small, and Bullen describes finding pieces of tentacle as thick as a man's body. It is reported that some pieces of squid seem to indicate a full sized squid of over 100ft in length, and scientists say that this is nothing compared to the creatures yet to be discovered.

Quite common in the fishing nets of the Maldives and the Adamans are giant manta rays measuring 20ft across, and of course there are unconfirmed reports of bigger rays still, and likewise, the largest documented squid is smaller than those of legend, but still measuring an immense 65ft in length. In 1878 a 55ft squid was seen by three fishermen in a boat from Thimble Tickle, Newfoundland, and they watched as it was struggling against the incoming tide. They hooked it with a barbed grapnel and, as the tide brought

it further ashore, they secured it to a tree and then measured it. Its body measured 20ft and its tentacles 35ft with suckers measuring 4 inches in diameter, and it seemed that this was a smaller version of the legendary Kraken.

In comparison to this are crews of whaling boats who talk of hauling aboard sperm whales with sucker mark scars that measure 20 inches in diameter, proportionally suggesting a squid of 250ft long, surely not possible, but more in keeping with the scale of the Kraken of legend. Of course, the whales could have received these scars as infants and they then grew in size as the whale itself grew. The Kraken is thought to be a form of squid known as “Architeuthis” and with reports as precise and clear as the following, it is difficult not to believe it.

On board an admiralty trawler off the Maldives in the Indian Ocean was J.D. Starkey who, on his midnight to 4am graveyard watch, would lower a cluster of electric bulbs into the water which would attract shoals of fish and make them easy to catch, but one night all the fish vanished and he recalled:

*“As I gazed, a circle of green light glowed in my illumination. This green unblinking orb, I suddenly realised, was an eye. Gradually I realised I was gazing at almost point blank range at a colossal squid – the body alone filled my view as far as my sight could penetrate. I am not squeamish, but that cold, malevolent, unblinking eye seemed to be looking directly at me. I don’t think I’ve ever seen anything so coldly hypnotic and intelligent before or since. I took my Quartermasters torch and shining it into the water I walked forward. I climbed the ladder to the Fo’c’s’le and shone the torch downwards. There in the pool of light were its tentacles.”*

Starkey said that the tentacles were 2ft thick with the suction cups clearly visible. He then walked aft again, keeping the squid in view.

*“This was not difficult as it was lying alongside the ship, quite still, except for a pulsing movement. As I approached the stern again where my bulb cluster was hanging, there was the body still. Every detail was visible – the valve through which the creature appeared to breathe and the parrot-like beak. Gradually the truth dawned: I had walked the length of the ship, 175ft plus.”*

Starkey had experience of most large sea creatures, and he says he had 15 minutes or more to look at this one “It seemed to swell as its valve opened fully, and without any visible effort it zoomed into the night.”

There is another well known military account of a sea monster, this time by a German officer during the First World War. On July 30th, 1915 the German u-boat U-28 torpedoed the British steamer Iberian and wreckage from the blast was thrown into the air. An officer of the Imperial German Navy on board the submarine gave the following account:

*“A little later pieces of wreckage, and among them a gigantic sea animal, writhing and struggling wildly, were shot out of the water to a height of 60-100ft.... The animal sank out of sight after 10 or 15 seconds.... It was about 60ft long, like a crocodile in shape and had four limbs with powerful webbed feet and a long tail tapering to a point.”*

This truly astounding account brings to mind one fundamental question, have there been any other accounts of dead sea monsters that have been examined closely? The answer is yes, there have, but have they brought us any closer to an answer?

In 1808 a creature washed up on Stronsay in the Orkneys which was 53ft long. It had a long neck, an undulating tail and six legs – unique in a vertebrate, but before a detailed examination could be made, the body was destroyed by severe storms. In June 1928 a huge rotten carcass was washed up on Prah Sands, Cornwall but it was not in a good condition and the head was missing. It measured 30ft long, had four small flippers and a tapering tail and, more importantly, it defied identification.

The Japanese organise squid fishing on an enormous scale, and the lights from their fishing fleets are clearly visible on satellite images and appear brighter than any other light source on earth. In 1977 one of the fleet, the Zuiyo-Maru, caught a rotting carcass in its nets off Christchurch, New Zealand. The smell from the unexpected catch was so foul that the crew feared that it might be contaminated so they threw it back, but before they did, they took a number of photographs of it and took a sample of its flesh. The photographs appear to show a creature not dissimilar to a plesiosaur in its appearance and the measurements and shape of the catch were supplied by

the assistant production manager of the Taiyo Fisheries, Michihiko Yano.

The creature was 33ft long and had no dorsal fin and most thought that it was a badly decomposed basking shark which decompose in a deceiving manner. First of all the jaws, which are attached by just a small piece of flesh, will fall away leaving what looks like a small skull and a thin serpent like neck. Then as only the upper half of the tail fin carries the spine, the lower half rots away leaving the lower fins which look like legs, but Dr Fujio Yasuda of the Tokyo University of Fisheries, and one of the world's leading marine biologists, disagreed. He noted that:

*“In no known species attaining a large size is the trunk so elongated.... We are not able to find any known living fish species which agree with the animal trawled off New Zealand. If it is a species of shark, it may represent a species unknown to science.”*

Obata and Tomada of the Tokyo National Science Museum agreed with Yasuda's opinion, that it matched no shark, they said: “Whether the animal belongs to a group of sharks or whether it is a marine reptile, we do not know of any genera of species that agree with it.”

Another unidentified carcass was washed up on a beach in Gambia, West Africa on the night of 11th June, 1983. Fortunately, amateur naturalist Owen Burnham was on holiday there with his family and he heard about the creature that morning, and at 8:30, along with his brother, sister and father he went down to the beach to look at it. When they got there they found two African men trying to sever its head so that they could see the skull, but Burnham managed to persuade them to stop long enough for him to measure the creature.

The body was battered and distended with internal gas, it smelled foul but had not yet begun to decompose fully as it had not been dead for long. It was smooth skinned and had four flippers, one of which, a rear one, had been torn off. It was 15ft long, 5ft of which was its long, pointed tail whose cross section was triangular with rounded corners. It had a slightly domed forehead and what appeared to be two nostrils at the end of its 18 inch snout. Burnham at first thought that it was some sort of marine mammal (whale or dolphin) and he looked for a blowhole but couldn't find one. The teeth were a similar shape to those of a barracuda and Burnham counted 80 in all, and they were

evenly distributed, very sharp, but whiter and thicker than those of a barracuda. The flippers were solid and rounded, and there were no toes, claws or nails.

The two African men completed the task of removing its head, which took them around 20 minutes, and Burnham could now see that its vertebrae were very thick. Burnham, who was able to speak the local language, Mandinka, fluently and he asked the men what the animal was and they told him that it was “Kunthum Beleir” which translates as “Cutting Jaws” which is what the local fishermen call dolphins.

Burnham later described the creature to native fishermen in the hope that they could identify it but they had no idea what it was as they had never seen anything like it before. Burnham concluded that the two men at the beach had called it a dolphin because it looked more like that than anything else they had seen. He also “looked through encyclopaedias and every book I could lay hands on” to try and identify the creature and he found a photograph of a skull of the extinct Australian “Kronosaurus Queenslandicus” and, though the skull was similar, it was 10ft long, so it obviously wasn’t the same animal.

The detailed reports, measurements and sketches that Burnham made were studied by zoologist Dr. Karl Shuker in the mid 1980s and Shuker ruled out a lot of possibilities and came to the conclusion that the only creature that matched Burnham’s account had been extinct for 60 million years. One of the top contenders was the pliosaur, which was a family of short necked plesiosaurs that included the kronosaurus that Burnham had recognised but rejected. Another was a group of sea crocodiles called “Thalattosuchians” which had slender bodies and four paddle-like limbs. Thalattosuchians had a dorsal fin but the carcass Burnham found may have lost its fin and would then look uncannily like the body on the beach. Burnham says of the whole incident:

*“When I think of the Coelocanth, I don’t like to think what could be at the bottom of the seas. I’m not looking for a prehistoric animal, only trying to identify what was the strangest thing I’ll ever see. I couldn’t believe this creature was lying in front of me. Even now I can remember every minute detail of it. To see such a thing was awesome.”*



Not all carcasses that are washed up are unidentifiable, some of them are quite easily identified, but that is not to say that they are any less beyond belief. Dr. De Witt Webb of the Scientific and Historical Society went to St. Augustine Beach, Florida one day in 1896 to look at a carcass that had been washed up there in the winter tides. Webb found that he had to dissuade souvenir hunters and even a showman who wanted the body to use as an exhibit, but he was eventually able to examine the large, rotting corpse.

It had lodged itself in a shallow pit in the sand and after trying unsuccessfully to turn it over, he said that "It must weigh 6 Or 7 tons, for twelve men with a block and tackle ought to move anything less." So he later returned with four horses, six men and three sets of tackle, a rigger and a lot of heavy planking, all of which were used to move the body 40ft further up the beach.

Webb relayed his findings to Professor W.H. Dall of the National Museum in Washington in meticulous letters, and he wrote that the carcass was an invertebrate with no sign of a beak or other characteristics of a squid. The body was 21ft across and 7ft thick with skin 3.5 inches thick which was almost impervious to axe blows, but Webb did manage to carve large chunks off it to send to Washington, and these were examined, but dismissed as being part of a whale.

The Smithsonian Institute decided that it was not worth its while sending somebody all the way to Florida to view the creature as it could "scarcely afford the expense" but they did preserve some of the samples in bottles in their cellars where they remained for 75 years. After this time two scientists found and read about them, they were Joseph Gennaro and F.G. Wood, and they took the samples, foul-smelling but intact, and they prepared slides for histological analysis. Gennaro, Professor of Cellular Biology at New York University, concluded that the Sunday roast sized samples were not whale blubber, and nor did the tissue have the characteristic pattern of a squid, and he was forced to conclude that the creature had been an octopus.

However, this had unthinkable implications, and they were that with a body of this size, the complete animal would have been over 200ft long. While Gennaro was reaching these conclusions, Wood was working on some of his own. He looked at the documents from 75 years earlier, and he found that as well as the body on the beach, there had also been stumps of arms beside the body. A local man named Wilson had seen these arms, he saw one

lying to the west of the body that was around 35ft long, three arms lying to the south of the body, “One I measured over 32ft and from appearances attached to the body, although I did not dig quite to the body as it laid well down in the sand and I was very tired.”

The evidence suggests that there are, or were, octopuses ten times larger than the marine biologists are prepared to admit, and Wood went on to collect stories and accounts of octopuses well in excess of the text book maximum of 20ft. Accounts such as these clearly give rise to tales and rumours about the colossal Kraken among the seafaring fraternity, however, it wasn't only the Kraken that was prevalent on the oceans but also other large creatures, some of them decidedly unusual.

On September 3rd, 1959, 120 miles off Bermuda, Joseph H. Bourassa, a man of twenty years experience at sea, saw something unlike anything he had ever seen before. He was on board the scalloper Noreen when he saw a strange animal.

*“He had a large body and a small alligator-like head. The neck seemed to be medium size, matching the soize of the head. The body was very large, shaped somewhat like a seal. There was a mane of bristly hair or fur which ran down the middle of his head.”*

He would surface the upper part of his body and glide out of the water with the lower part of his body remaining submerged. The protion of his body which was visible measured about 40ft in length. We estimate his weight to be between 36 tons and 40 tons over all.

At no time did the whole body show. He stayed on the surface no longer than 40 seconds at a time. You could hear the heavy weight of his upper body when he dove below, creating a large splash and a subsequent wake. He surfaced four times in twenty minutes during which we tried to stay clear of him. The captain changed course to steer away from him and the queer fellow surfaced on our starboard beam.

Another peculiar thing about him was that when he'd surface he would turn his head looking towards us and it seemed to us he was playful and curious. Another point was that on the upper part of his body there were two flippers similar to those of a seal.”

While this one was apparently “playful and curious” the annals are not

devoid of those which one would rather not meet face to face. The U.S. Navy frigate USS Stein pulled out of San Diego, California on a cruise across the equator to South American waters where she was to track submarines, but soon after crossing the meridian she began to experience problems with her sonar. The crew tried to effect a repair, but they could not eliminate the heavy “noise” that was drowning out all useful signals, so the captain ordered the ship to the dry dock at Long Beach naval Dockyard, California.

As the frigate sat in the dry dock the water drained away until finally the sonar dome was visible, and the watching crew could see that it had been battered and had huge holes and gouges in the rubber covering that protects it from weeds and barnacles. When the dock was totally dry, the officers climbed down the steps to inspect the damage and they found, embedded in the rubber, hundreds of pointed teeth, sharp and hollow, some of them an inch or more long, which had broken off whatever creature had attacked the dome.

Staff from the nearby Naval Oceans Systems Centre examined the teeth and the damage to the dome and, after several months, they came to the conclusion that the creature responsible “must have been extremely large and of a species still unknown to science.”

Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans analysed 587 sightings of sea monsters made between 1639 and 1964 in his book “In The Wake Of The Sea Serpents” and after discounting hoaxes, misidentifications and vague or incomplete reports, he was left with 358 sightings. These remaining sightings he then split into nine different categories, and they are:

1. Long Necked Sea Serpent (the most frequently reported) - With four flippers, a cigar shaped body, a capacity to swim at high speed and which grow to between 15 and 65ft long.
2. Marine Saurians – Seen only in tropical waters in mid ocean and which may reach 60ft in length;
3. Merhorses
4. Many Humped Monsters
5. Super Otters – Not reported since 1848 and possibly extinct
6. Many Finned Monsters
7. Super Eels
8. Fathers-Of-All-The Turtles

## 9. Yellow Bellies – May be an as yet unidentified fish, possibly a shark

The super eel, looking just like an overgrown eel, worm or snake, is really quite plain in appearance when you compare it to the legendary Kraken or to Bourassa's monster, and the African python has been blamed for some reports as it is known to swim in the Indian Ocean from island to island in search of food, and it is possible that tales of the python boarding passing ships could give rise to tales of sea monsters, but again there are reports of sea serpents far bigger than the accepted norm for the African python.

Records of the sea serpents date back to centuries ago, for example, Aristotle wrote in his "Historia Animalium" of the fourth century BC:

*"In Libya the serpent are very large. Mariners sailing along that coast have told how they have seen the bones of many oxen which, it was apparent to them, had been devoured by the serpents, and as their ships sailed on, the serpents came to attack them, some of them throwing themselves on a trireme and capsizing it."*

The coast of New England saw a number of sea serpent sightings between 1815 and 1823, and in 1815 an animal was seen moving rapidly through Gloucester Bay, its body was around 100ft long and seemed to have 30-40 humps, each the size of a barrel. Its head was shaped like a horse and was dark brown in colour. Two years later it was seen in the same place and was reported in the "Gloucester Telegraph" which said:

*"On the 14th August the sea serpent was approached by a boat within 30ft, and on raising its head above water was greeted by a volley from the gun of an experienced sportsman. The creature turned directly toward the boat, as if meditating an attack, but it sank down..."*

The following year it was seen again in Nahant, and an account was given by Samuel Cabot of Boston. He was standing on the crowded Nahant Beach when he noticed a number of boats heading for the shore. He wrote:

*"My attention was suddenly arrested by an object emerging from the water at the distance of about 100 or 150 yards, which gave to my mind at the first glance, the idea of a horse's head. It was*

*elevated about two feet from the water, and he depressed it gradually to within six or eight inches as he moved along. His bunches appeared to me not altogether uniform in size. I felt persuaded by this examination that he could not be less than 80ft long.”*

The following year it was seen again by dozens of holiday makers, one of whom looked at it through binoculars and said; “that it was neither a whale, nor a cetacean (water mammal). None of these gigantic animals has such an undulating back.” Another witness was the Reverend Cheever Finch who watched its “smooth rapid progress back and forth for half an hour.”

The American incidence of sea monsters than moved inland, and the next North American area to play host was British Columbia, where deep lakes are found in between the Pacific coast and the Rocky Mountains. In 1854 a half breed Indian man was taking a team of horses across Lake Okanagan when he was “seized by a giant hand which tried to pull me down into the water.” He struggled and managed to get away, but his horses were not so fortunate, and they were pulled under. The Indians know the creature responsible as “Naitaka” and the settlers know it as “Ogopogo.” From then on the monster of Lake Okanagan was seen regularly, and another man escaped while his horses were taken, and by the 1920s Ogopogo had become internationally renowned and was the subject of a London music hall ditty which went:

*His Mother was an earwig,  
His father was a whale  
A little bit of head  
And hardly any tail  
And Ogopogo was his name.*

It wasn't too long before other American lakes began to boast monsters, the next being in 1860 when the Salt Lake City newspaper “The Desert News” reported the monster in Bear Lake which had been seen many times by the Shoshone Indians of Utah who referred to it as “The Beast Of The Storm Spirits” but their sighting were largely ignored. The report covered the sighting by a respected local man who was on the lake's east shore when “he saw something in the lake which.... he thought to be a drowned person.” He

did not see the body, only the head and what he supposed to be part of the neck. “It had ears or bunches on the side of its head nearly as big as a pint cup. The waves at times would dash over its head, when it would throw water from its mouth or nose.” The next day it was seen again, this time in motion, by a man and three women who said that it “swam much faster than a horse could run on land.”

Idaho’s Lake Payette produced a monster called “Slimy Slim” which was first seen in 1941. During July and August over thirty people, most of them boating on the seven mile long lake, saw it but they tended to keep quiet about it until the City Auditor of Boise, Idaho, Thomas L. Rogers, spoke up about his experience of seeing the monster. He told a reporter: “The serpent was about 50ft long and going five miles an hour with a sort of undulating movement. His head, which resembles that of a snub-nosed crocodile, was 8 inches above the water. I’d say he was about 35ft long by consideration.”

When this evidence brought the other witnesses forward, Slimy Slim became hot property and people flooded to Lake Payette in the hope of catching a glimpse of him. He was even featured in Time Magazine but the summer of 1941 had been his hey day and he was seldom seen again which meant that the focus of attention was once again switched to Lake Okanagan and Ogopogo.

Lake Okanagan, British Columbia, is a serpentine lake of around 80 miles long and never more than a couple of miles wide. It is also both deep and cold and, like Loch Ness, it was carved out of the bedrock by Ice Age glaciers. The shores are well populated and roads run very close to the lake’s edge. The Okanakane Indians called the monster “Na-Ha-Ha-Itkh” and whenever they had to cross the lake by canoe they would carry with them a dog or a chicken as a sacrificial offering in case Na-Ha-Ha-Itkh came too close for comfort. There is also a legend that the local Indians nicknamed him “The Remorseful One” because he was actually a man, a murderer, who had been turned into a serpent as punishment for his crimes.

The post-war sightings of Ogopogo and others of his ilk were the subject of a 1946 article in the New York Times under the heading “Normalcy?” which reported, not completely without irony, that following the insanity of World War Two, the world was returning to normal as monsters were once again being reported.

A captain in the Canadian Fishery Patrol described Ogopogo as like “a

telegraph pole with a sheep's head." A Vancouver woman swimming in the lake saw him swim within a few hundred feet of her and she described it as "a head like a cow or horse that reared right out of the water," and she went on to say: "The coils glistened like two huge wheels.... There were ragged edges (along its back) like a saw. It was so beautiful with the sun shining on it." It came up three times, then submerged and disappeared.

Another good report appeared in the Vernon Advertiser on July 20th, 1959. It was reported and written by R.H. Millar who was the newspaper's owner and publisher. He was returning from a cruise down the lake at 10mph when he noticed, in the boat's wake, about 250ft away: "What appeared to be the serpent." He looked at it through his binoculars and saw that it was indeed Ogopogo and that it was travelling much faster than his boat. He guessed it to be around 15-17 inches above the water. Millar described the creature as having "a snake-like head with a blunt nose, and there were five humps visible, which went smaller as he submerged, and they could not see a tail. The creature's colour was a very dark green and it swam gracefully in a smooth motion."

In 1976 Ed Fletcher from Vancouver was out on Lake Okanagan with his daughter Diane when a strange animal cut across his bows. He said: "If I had not shut the engine off I could have run him over or jumped on his back, for the boat drifted to within 15 or 30ft of him." They were quite close to the shore at Gellatly Bay so they went to fetch their camera and they were also joined in the boat by Gary Slaughter of Kelowna, and once again Ogopogo surfaced.

Fletcher recounts: "I saw his whole length this time, about 70-75ft. I shut the engine off when we got near him and the boat coasted to within 50ft of him when I shot the first picture." The three of them stayed in the boat for the next hour and watched, and followed Ogopogo. "He would submerge, swim at least two city blocks, then surface, and all the while we chased after him." Fletcher would accelerate the boat toward the creature then cut the engine and coast as close as he could before taking a photograph of it.

The creature emerged over a dozen times and Fletcher got five pictures in all. They saw it stretched out and coiled up, and even coiled they estimated its length to be 40ft. Diane Fletcher described his skin as smooth and brownish. Like a whale's with small ridges on its back, and both she and Gary Slaughter estimated its head to be 2ft or more in length, flattened like

that of a snake with “two things standing up from the head like the ears of a Doberman Pinscher.”

Tales of such sightings reached the press, and between April 1977 and August 1978 the “Kelowna Daily Courier” the “Penticton Herald” and the “Vernon Daily News” carried a dozen reports of sightings including those of confirmed skeptics. One such skeptic was Harry Staines of Westbank who reported: “I did not believe it before, but we circled the thing in our boat, keeping it about a hundred yards away.” He described it as looking like a black eel about 35ft long which swam with an up and down motion which left “quite a wake.”

In 1977 another witness also had a near collision with Ogopogo. Erin Neely was water skiing on Lake Okanagan and she almost ran over him. She was so shocked that she let go of the tow line, fainted and almost drowned.

Ogopogo has also been caught on film. In 1968 Art Folden of Chase, British Columbia was driving home one August evening when he reached a stretch of road on Highway 91 which was high above the lake at Penticton where he was roughly 300 yards from the water. As he looked down at the lake he could see an object in the water so he stopped the car in order to film it using his cine camera with a telephoto lens and some film left over from a day making home movies.

To help conserve film he would stop whenever the creature submerged. The film he shot has been examined closely and, using the trees in the foreground as a guide, most investigators agree that the object in the lake is 60ft long, or more, and moving at considerable speed. One person who has seen the film many times is Mrs Arlene B. Gaal and she is in no doubt about its authenticity and says that it shows an unusual “form of life in Lake Okanagan.”

Ogopogo is one of the best known of the American lake monsters but it is certainly not alone, some of the other lakes which are claimed to house monsters are Lake Walker in Nevada, Lake Folsom in California and Flathead Lake in Montana which has produced so many sightings that a company has offered a reward of \$1,000 for anybody who catches a creature of any description, fish included, which is greater than 14ft in length.

Perhaps the best known, along with Lake Okanagan, is Lake Champlain which runs down from Quebec, Canada through Vermont and New York states, totalling 109 miles in length. It was named after Samuel Champlain



who discovered it in 1609 and, ironically, he was also the first man to see the monster who was nicknamed “Champ.” During the 1870s he scared the cream of New York society as they were enjoying a steamboat ride, and at the turn of the century he had a \$50,000 price tag put on his head by the showman P.T. Barnum. However, sightings of him are quite rare and this would seem to be true of most North American lake monsters when compared to their UK and Canadian counterparts, and even those off the coast of Newfoundland which were abundant in the early nineteenth century.

Champ, however, put in over two hundred appearances and is clearly not shy about who sees him. In 1883 the Sheriff of Clinton County, New York, Captain Nathan H. Mooney, was on the north west arm of the lake shore when he spotted a huge water serpent about 50 yards away from him. It rose five feet out of the water and its neck was around seven inches in diameter and curved like that “of a goose when about to take flight.”

Mooney also noticed white spots inside the creature’s mouth and he estimated its length to be around 25-30ft. Champ has been photographed, most famously in 1977 by Sandra Mansi of Connecticut, and her photograph showed what she described as a “dinosaur” with its head and neck six feet out of the water, and scientists who have examined it declare it to be a genuine original photograph, but they don’t know what of.

Another region with a strong and lengthy tradition of lake monsters is Scandinavia, and in 1860 an English clergyman and author, Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould, heard talk of the monster said to inhabit some of the Icelandic lakes. The creature was known as the “Skrimsl” and Baring-Gould spoke about it to “educated and respectable” lawyers and farmers who spoke of one particular Skrimsl. They described it as being 50ft long and it was similar in appearance to the monster of Loch Ness, and he wrote “I should have been inclined to set the whole story down as a myth were it not for the fact that the accounts of all the witnesses tallied with remarkable minuteness, and the monster is said to have been seen not in one portion of the lake (The Lagarflot) only but at different points.”

Baring-Gould also learned of a similar creature in Norway (a slimy, grey-brown animal) that terrified the locals around Lake Suldal, who had reported that its head was as big as a rowing boat.

Sweden’s Lake Storsso has long been said to be home to a monster, and at the turn of the century a zoologist, Dr Peter Olsson spent several years

analysing reports of sightings on the lake, and built up a picture of the monster, and said it was white maned and reddish in colour, and looked like a gigantic sea horse. Olsson regarded it as “the fastest and most fascinating of all lake dwellers” as it was said to be able to swim at great speeds of up to 45mph.

A Stockholm newspaper carried a report that three people had seen Lake Storsso’s monster when the “calm shining surface was broken by a giant snake-like object with three prickly dark humps” which was creating a wake as it swam parallel to the shore. Further sightings in 1965 prompted the local tourist board to use a colour picture of the monster in its brochures and to lay claim to a monster to rival that of Loch Ness.

Around 265 lakes world wide lay claim, or have laid claim, to a monster and 24 of them are in Scotland. They include Oich, Rannoch, Tay, Arkaig, Morar, Nahoon and Loch nan Dubhrachan on Skye. Like Newfoundland, the British coastline also has monster sightings, most famously the coast of Cornwall. In the mid 1970s a two humped, long necked sea monster made appearances in and around Falmouth Bay and it was christened “Morgawr” which is Cornish for “Sea Giant.”

In February 1976, a witness known only as Mary F managed to capture on film a creature that she estimated was no more than 15-18ft long as it played in the sea off Rosemullion:

*“It looked like an elephant waving its trunk but the trunk was a long neck with a small head on the end, like a snake’s head. It had humps on the back which moved in a funny way. The colour was black or very dark brown, and the skin seemed to be like a sea lion’s.... The animal frightened me.... I do not like the way it moved when it was swimming.”*

Much earlier than this though, the Victorians produced many sightings of mermaids and they held such mystery for the Victorians that many were faked by showmen to use as exhibits in their sideshows, even so, mermaid sightings continued well into the twentieth century, as late as 1947 on the Hebridean island of Muck, including one by the Mayoress of Peel.

Skeptics say that sightings of mermaids can easily be explained away as manatees, dugongs or even seals, but it was Britain’s lakes that would by far

out shine her coastal waters.

The Irish lake, Lough Nahooín, on the west coast of Ireland seem far too small at 100 yards long give rise to a monster sighting but that's exactly what it did. At 7am on February 2nd, 1968 farmer Stephen Coyne was walking along the shore of Lough Nahooín with his eight year old son and his dog when he noticed a black shape in the water. Thinking that it was his dog swimming he whistled for it to come back, but the dog came running from a different direction, and when it reached him, it began to bark at the shape in the lake. Coyne could now see that the shape was an animal with a long neck and shiny black skin, and when it plunged its head into the water he could see two humps and a flat tail. He estimated that the creature was about 12ft in length. It seemed to hear the dog barking and began to swim towards the shore, and Coyne, in fear, ran to the water to scare it away, and it did turn and swim away.

Coyne's son ran back to the farmhouse and brought his mother and the other four children and they all stood on the shore and watched the creature until it became too dark to see.

F.W. Holiday, an investigator who wrote a book on the Loch Ness Monster believed that both Nessie and Coyne's monster were some kind of giant slug, as Coyne had described the monster as having no eyes and horns like those of a snail on top of its head. Holiday decided to try and catch the monster of Lough Nahooín, and he and his team were armed with nets, support bouys and heavy chain. They sailed around the lake and fired rifles into the water to try and coax the creature into their nets, but after several days without success they gave up.

Holiday however, still maintained that there was a monster in the lake despite one glaring argument against it. Lough Nahooín is only 100 yards long and is full of trout. A creature the size of a crocodile would deplete the food supply in a matter of weeks, but could the whole Coyne family have been mistaken? Holiday's attempt at capturing the creature certainly wasn't the only failed attempt and is positively innovative when compared to the attempt made by the Japanese.

Issie is a Japanese lake monster which surfaced near a resort favoured by honeymoon couples, and in 1978 a special observatory was built and opened by the reigning Miss Hibiscus. Watchers then proceeded to pour sake into the lake in the hope that Issie would become intoxicated and come to the

surface.

It is almost as though the creatures will only put in an appearance when we are not ready for it and run and hide when we are and, like Ogopogo, the monster of Scotland's Loch Morar (named Morag) has got in the way of people on the lake.

In August 1969 two fishermen, Macdonnell and Simpson, were in a motor cruiser on Loch Morar when they collided with a hump backed creature that was about 25ft long. Macdonnell tried to fend it off with an oar, but it snapped, so Simpson shot at it, but the creature just slowly sank back down beneath the surface.

While there is evidence for there being a monster in some of these lakes, their cases pale into insignificance when compared to that of Loch Ness. Loch Ness is Scotland's longest loch at 24 miles but it is only up to a mile wide. It is also extremely deep as far as lakes go at up to 1,000ft in places, but because the loch is a receptacle for peat particles from forty five mountain streams and five rivers, visibility below a depth of around six feet is very low indeed, but despite the winter cold, the loch never freezes.

Monster sightings at Loch Ness date back to the sixth century when in AD 565 "Niseag" (to give it its gaelic name) was mentioned by the Irish Saint Columba who was trying to convert the heathen Picts, Scots and Northumbrians to Christianity. He came to Loch Ness from his monastery on the island of Iona, off Scotland's west coast, and he found some of the local people burying a neighbour who had been mauled by the lake monster while swimming, and had died from his wounds.

One of Columba's followers began swimming across the loch to retrieve a boat, when he was confronted by a "very odd looking beastie, something like a huge frog, only it was not a frog." Columba intervened and, with arms raised, he hailed the beast. "Go thou no further nor touch the man. Go back at once!" and according to the legend the monster fled at the words, and many who heard of the incident were duly converted.

Sightings of Niseag remained sporadic until the early 1880s when they became more regular, and people as diverse as a stonemason, school children, a forester and, for some reason, the monster was always affectionately referred to as a she. There were sightings and newspaper reports in 1912, 1927 and 1930 but it was in 1933 that Nessie achieved world fame.

In this year, a new road was built on the loch's north shore that ran

between Fort William and Inverness, and it was said that the drilling, blasting, vibrations and falling boulders roused Nessie from the quiet depths and she clambered ashore, roaming through the bracken to hunt for food, and this would concur with a famous sighting in July 1933 by a Mr and Mrs Spicer.

The Spicers were driving home to London when they saw a strange creature emerging from the bracken, carrying what appeared to be a young animal in its mouth. The creature lurched across the road, through the undergrowth and into the lake with a splash. The whole thing lasted for only a few seconds but Mr Spicer was able to describe the creature to reporters. He said that it was like a “loathsome sight” that looked like “a huge snail with a long neck.” He said it had a long undulating neck, little thicker than an elephant’s trunk, a tiny head, thick body and four feet or flippers.

Around this time an A.A. Patrolman also saw Nessie, and he described her as “a thing with a number of humps above the water line. It had a small head and very slender neck” and a third sighting in 1933 produced a photograph.

Local resident Hugh Gray’s picture was featured in newspapers and magazines around the world, but it was far from convincing, and the object shown was said by some to be a floating tree trunk, a log or a piece of wood carelessly discarded by the construction workers on the new road.

Whatever it is, it got the attention of journalists the world over and they descended on Loch Ness in hope of getting a clearer picture of the monster, and the legend of Loch Ness was born.

Unusual in sightings was that Nessie was seen on land by the Spicers and, as if to add credence to their story, she was seen on land again, this time by a local veterinary surgeon, Arthur Grant in 1934. Grant was making his way home by motorbike when suddenly in the road ahead of him was something lit in the moonlight. He recalled:

*“I had a splendid view. In fact I almost struck it with my motorbike. The body would be 15 or 20ft in length and very heavy. I distinctly saw two front flippers and there seemed to be two other flippers behind which it used to spring from the tail would be 5 to 6 feet long; the curious thing about the tail was that the end was rounded off, it did not come to a point.”*

Since a sighting in February of 1960 by Mr Torquil Macleod, Nessie seems to have stuck to the water. The water Bailiff of Loch Ness, Alex Campbell, has had 18 encounters with Nessie in his years in the post, one decidedly spooky encounter took place one night when he was out on the lake in a boat with Constable John Fraser of Inverness looking for poachers. Suddenly they felt a great surge of water and Fraser said “What in the name of heaven is that?” to which Campbell replied “It’s Nessie.”

It was after midnight and the night was dark and moonless so it was as dark as it could get, and for ten minutes the boat pitched and rolled in the dark. At one point it was rocking so much that the two men feared the boat would capsize. As the swell subsided a little, they could hear a noise which was like that made by a horse after a canter, and they listened to the heavy panting as it moved around the boat before slowly fading away as the lake around them became calm again. Campbell added that “We finished our journey with no trouble but we had had a bad scare.” He also says that:

*”My best sighting was in May 1954 right off the Abbey boathouse. That morning I was standing at the mouth of the river Hawick looking for what we call a run of salmon. I heard the sound of two trawlers coming through the canal from the west. Suddenly there was this upsurge of water right in front of the canal entrance. I was stunned. I shut my eyes three times to make sure I was not imagining things – The head and the huge humped body were perfectly clear. I knew right away that the creature was scared because of its behaviour. The head was twisting about frantically. It was the thud, thud of the engines that was the reason for its upset. As soon as the bow of the first trawler came within my line of vision, that’s when it was in its line of vision too, and it vanished out of sight, gone. I estimated the length of the body to be 30ft at least, the height of the head and neck above water level as 6ft, and the skin was grey.”*

Campbell’s last sighting came shortly before his retirement when he was driving past Cherry Island on the road to Inverness.

*“There was just one huge hump probably 8ft long and 4ft high. Then without any preliminary cavorting about it just shot off to the*

*other side of the loch. I was staggered at the speed. I had a wonderful view of the body. It did not alter course, but kept up this great pace leaving a wash about 3ft high.”*

Also in 1934 came one of, if not, the best known photographs ever taken of Nessie, and it is most often referred to as “The Surgeon’s Photo” as it was taken by a London gynaecologist, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kenneth Wilson. One of Wilson’s hobbies was photographing trains and he was armed with his camera and a telephoto lens and he was driving south on his way home from a holiday in Scotland. He stopped at 7:30am to stretch his legs on a slope 200ft above the surface of Loch Ness when he saw the water begin to swirl, and saw “the head of some strange animal rising.” Wilson ran back to his car to get his camera and quickly took four pictures, one of which clearly showed something rising out of the water and it was featured in the London Daily Mail and in countless publications since.

The magazine “New Scientist” carried a report that the surgeon’s photo showed an elephant swimming with its trunk in the air, and many people put forward other possible explanations, including many claims that it was a hoax, but for six decades Wilson maintained that it was genuine. It was examined by many experts who had varying explanations for it, and it was debunked by two researchers, Alastair Boyd and David Martin, and finally, in his declining years, Wilson admitted that it was a hoax he had made using a small model glued to a toy submarine.

Pictures and reports such as these helped to increase Nessie’s popularity and, after 1933, we entered the busiest period of Nessie sightings because, not only did journalists come in search of a story, but also curious holiday makers helped to make the area one of Scotland’s most popular tourist spots. Naturally with the extra presence and attention, the number of sightings also increased, so much so that between the years 1933 and 1974, three thousand people claimed to have seen Nessie, and some claimed to have heard her make a cry of “anger and anguish” when almost run down by a car.

One reason levelled for the rise in the number of sightings after 1933, besides the increased level of potential witnesses, was the rewards offered for Nessie’s capture, including £20,000 from Bertrand Mills Circus, and a huge £1 million from the makers of Black and White Whisky. Even the House of Commons became involved.

On November 12th, 1933 an MP called for an official investigation to settle this “monster matter” once and for all, but the government spokesman replied that it was “more properly a matter for the private enterprise of scientists aided by the zeal of the press and photographers.” Ironically, this debate took place on the same day that Hugh Gray took his infamous photograph. As well as parliament, Nessie’s fame also reached the royal household, as the Duke of York (later King George VI) addressed the London Inverness Association and told them that:

*“It’s fame has reached every part of the earth. It has entered the nurseries of this country. The other day I was in the nursery, and my young daughter, Margaret Rose (later Princess Margaret) aged 3, was looking at a fairy story picture book. She came across a picture of a dragon and described it to her mother: ‘Oh, look mummy, what a darling little Loch Ness Monster’”*

Sightings continued and Nessie became almost a part of the British psyche, with chancing holiday makers getting in on the Nessie act, and making some worthwhile home movies. Peter and Gwen Smith of Luton, England were on holiday and one day Gwen was idly gazing across at Urquhart Castle hoping to shoot some film for the family movie, when:

*“Suddenly this thing came vertically up out of the water, more or less where I was looking. I started filming and of course, I caught it just as it was going down. We stood for a minute and then it came up again and I started filming again, and then a third time.”*

Her husband had also been watching and he added:

*“The head rose up at least the height of a man. It was a good foot thick across the neck. The head seemed to me strangely rectangular. I watched it actually turn its head through ninety degrees as though it was looking directly at us or directly away from us. The last time it came right next to a youth who was in a boat. It came up very confidently as before, then suddenly, seemed to change its mind and withdrew very quickly as it perceived the boat. I am convinced if only because of the enormous length of the neck that it was no animal we are familiar with.”*



A chance sighting of Nessie wasn't good enough for everyone, and four firemen from Hemel Hempstead wanted to increase their chances of spotting her. For their 1975 trip to Loch Ness they built a 30ft long papier mache monster with an outboard motor, and they also had a recording of a mating call. The motorised monster held a two man crew as it sailed around the loch with the mating call sounding, but they found no sign of Nessie. Hardly surprising really, as the tape recording they were playing was the mating call of a bull walrus.

With hapless amateur attempts such as this, it is not surprising that no conclusive proof of Nessie's existence was found, but nevertheless they did receive coverage and help to boost the reputation of Nessie, and predictably it was soon the turn of the experts to step in and try their luck.

A film shot of Nessie in 1960 was shown to specialists at the Ministry of Defence's Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre and, after studying and analysing the humped object moving through the water, they came to the conclusion that something existed in the loch. They decided that the film showed "probably an animate object, 12 to 16ft long, 3ft high and 6ft wide travelling at 12mph, but their verdict was not as conclusive as that of David James, a highland Laird and a member of Parliament.

James was part of a panel discussing the Loch Ness Monster on a television program for Grampian and Border Television in February 2nd, 1963, and he had kept a two week, round the clock, vigil on the loch's shores as part of his role as the founder of the Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau. He told viewers of the program that the watch had been a success as:

*"On October 19th, 1962, in the middle of the afternoon, we had seven people at Temple Pier, and suddenly everyone was alerted by widespread activity among the salmon. After a few minutes the salmon started panicking – porpoising out in the middle of the loch – and immediately we were aware that there was an object following the salmon which was seen by practically everyone there for three or four minutes."*

At the end of the program the panel concluded:

*"We find that there is some unidentified animate object in Loch Ness which, if it be mammal, reptile, fish or mollusc of any known*

*order, is of such a size as to be worthy of careful scientific examination and identification. If it is not of a known order, it represents a challenge which is only capable of being answered by controlled investigation or carefully scientific principles.”*

That need for controlled investigation was met in August 1968 by a team from the Department of Electronic Engineering of Birmingham University who set up sonar equipment on one of the piers on the loch, and directed the scan at the south east corner. A movie camera photographed the cathode display screen every ten seconds, but for days there was nothing to be seen, until 4:30pm on August 28th when there was a thirteen minute spell of activity from the depths.

*“A large object rose rapidly from the floor of the loch at a range of 0.8km, its speed of ascent being about 100ft per minute. It was rising obliquely away from the sonar source at a velocity of about 6.5 knots, and was soon 1km away. Its upward movement had now slowed to about 60ft per minute. This object then changed direction to move toward the pier at about 9 knots, keeping constant depth. Finally, it plunged to the bottom at about 100ft per minute before rising again at 0.6km range, when it apparently moved out of the sonar beam and was lost to record. Meanwhile, a second large object had been detected at 0.5km from the pier which finally dived at the astonishing velocity of 450ft per minute. Both objects remained many feet below the surface.”*

One of the team, Dr. H. Braithwaite, wrote a magazine article on the sonar equipment in which he stated that:

*“The high rate of ascent and descent makes it seem very unlikely that the objects were shoals of fish, and fishery biologists we have consulted cannot suggest what fish they might be. It is a temptation to suppose they must be the fabulous Loch Ness monsters, now observed for the first time in their underwater activities.”*

The ball was certainly rolling by now and other teams took up where this one had left off, and each came with technology in abundance. In 1970 Robert Rines of the Massachusetts Academy of Applied Science took a Klein

Sidescan Sonar to the loch, and in the deeper water he detected several large moving objects, and later said:

*“We wouldn’t have been here if we didn’t have the suspicion that there is something very large in this loch. My own view now, after having personal interviews with, I think highly reliable people, is that there is an amazing scientific discovery awaiting the world here in Loch Ness.”*

The BBC got in on the act and sent a team equipped with a sonic depth finder to try to track Nessie down, and they did record a “mysterious object” at a depth of 12ft and they followed it to a depth of 60ft before it went out of range of the equipment. Experts from the British Museum and Zoological Society of London were asked for their opinions, and they blamed it on sturgeons, fin whales, sperm whales and, the old favourite with Nessie and Nessie photographs, a tree trunk.

The Americans again tried their luck in 1972 when an American doctor, along with Robert Rines through his Academy of Science, brought together American money and inventiveness when they used the Egerton Underwater Camera (favoured by Jacques Cousteau) and linked it to a Raytheon Sonar Scan. On the night of August 7th the equipment was picking up lots of fish which suddenly vanished off the screen and were replaced by a big, black trace, and one of the observers in the sonar boat went to fetch Rines who was in another boat. The man, Davies, said:

*“I don’t mind telling you that it was a rather strange feeling, rowing across that pitch black water knowing that there was a very large animal just 30ft below. It was the sheer size of the echo trace that was frightening.”*

The pictures were developed in America by Kodak and one of them became the famous “Flipper Picture” which Rines asserted showed the animal’s body and one flipper, but many failed to see the shot as being as significant as Rines made out. As an interesting aside, this photograph inspired the naturalist Sir Peter Scott to give Nessie a Latin name based on the rhomboid shape of the alleged flipper. He named her “Nessiteras Rhomboperyx” but this turned out to be a rather unfortunate name, as

somebody noticed that the letters could be re-arranged to read “Monster Hoax by Sir Peter S.”

Was this really a coincidental anagram, part of a conspiracy or a jibe at Rines? Either way, the flipper shot failed to have the impact that Rines had hoped it would, and the same can be said of the shot that Rines claims to show the head and neck of Nessie taken in 1975. Rines felt that the creature had bumped against the underwater rig, but when the team returned to New York they found nothing on the main camera, so there was no rush to develop the film in the back up cameras. Then, one morning, Rines was woken by the telephone at 3am and it was his colleague Charlie Wycoff who said, “My goodness. We’ve got it.”

Rines went over to look at the picture but, much to the team’s consternation, the pictures were leaked before the press conference and were not very well received, with most people saying that it was a stretch of the imagination to say that it showed Nessie’s head and neck, and that it was just the murky, peaty water of the loch, and if you looked hard enough, you could picture any image you fancied, almost like looking at the clouds in the sky.

Rines however, was not dissuaded by this and said: “We’re going to stick to it until we get a definitive enough set of pictures for the so called experts to identify what these animals are and then I think the world will love us.”

It may be that the very equipment we are using to try and track these animals is what is scaring them away, sonar and motor boats etc, so to try and compound this, Rines isn’t going to wait for Nessie to come to him, he is training a pair of dolphins to pursue her.

Certainly not everyone is convinced by the evidence, and in the case of British Zoologist Dr. Maurice Burton it is quite the opposite. Burton began by believing in the Loch Ness Monster and did so for thirty years before he had a change of heart. This was brought about by an incident one Sunday afternoon when almost the whole village of Foyers were standing, watching the monster swim in the loch, but Burton had earlier seen a small motor boat set out from the shore and had kept it in view in his binoculars and even taken photographs of it. He later questioned the villagers about what they had seen, and came to the conclusion that what they had been looking at was the same boat, but they were adamant that they had seen Nessie.

Burton now thinks that many sightings could be explained away as

motor boats, especially those which are of the monster moving at speed. He says that others could be otters, and points out that an 8ft otter was caught on the Shetland Isles in the last century, but it is difficult to believe that hundreds and thousands of observers, many of them experienced naturalists and fishermen, could be mistaken as to identify an 8ft otter or a small motor boat for a 40ft plus monster with humps and a long neck. He adds that the wash from a vessel can pass up to ten minutes after the vessel itself has passed, and that seals could get in to the loch from the sea or that gaseous rubbish could float up from the bottom of the loch, but could sonar be deceived in the same way or, for that matter, the fish that swim suddenly away?

One of the strongest arguments against there being a monster in Loch Ness is the fact of the loch's food chain, because despite the size of the loch, for the species to have survived, there would have to be a colony of creatures, and such a colony would deplete the food supply and starve, but it is a fact that there are fresh salmon in the loch. Mature salmon enter the loch from the sea via the River Ness, and more importantly they do so all year round, thus constantly replenishing the food supply.

It is thought that Nessie may also be able to make its way to the sea at will via underground tunnels, and film of underwater caverns would seem to support the possibility. Another idea is put forward by Loren Coleman who says that "There are enough reports of the larger loch creatures being sighted on land for us to assume they can cross from the seas to rivers and lochs." However, if these monsters do move about, what are they? There would seem to be three possibilities:

1. They are genuine creatures which have been misidentified or mistaken.
2. They are creatures which are unknown.
3. They are creatures which are not extinct as was previously believed.

Millions of years ago the seas were dominated by the predatory, fish eating plesiosaur, a long necked dinosaur with a small head on the end of a long neck which swam using its four flipper-like feet.

Along with the plesiosaur was the shark-like ichthyosaurus, and in time they are believed to have been suppressed by the aggressive 40ft long mososaurus. The zeuglodon is also considered by many to be a prime

candidate for the role of sea monster, and it is a prehistoric snake-like primitive whale, but the favourite still remains the plesiosaur.

The label “extinct” is not proof positive that a species has died out, but it reflects the currently accepted knowledge, and it is not unheard of for a species, long thought to be extinct, to turn up alive and well. It is not only possible but probable that there are undiscovered species living in the oceans, for example, in 1983 a new breed of porpoise, now named the “Cochito” was found in the Gulf of California. In 1966 a Hawaiian survey ship hauled up its anchor, and along with the anchor came a shark that was so different from other sharks that zoologists had to create an entire new family in order to accommodate it, and it became the third largest known species of its kind, and is now known as “Megamouth.”

As recently as 1983 a new species of killer whale, the Prudes Bay, peculiar to the Antarctic was discovered. More amazing than these though, was a discovery made in 1939 in a trawler’s net. There was a fish in the net which had first existed 300 million years ago and had been thought to have become extinct millions of years ago. That fish was the “Coelocanth” and further living examples were later found swimming in South African waters. As it swam, it was noticed that its fins didn’t move as a fish’s normally would but they actually moved in the order that a land animal would move its legs as it ran over land. It also only used its tail in order to escape from predators or to hunt prey and, like other ancient species, the coelocanth has a primitive, hollow backbone.

Is the coelocanth possible evidence of the prehistoric transition from sea to land animals in the evolutionary ladder? We know that the land dwelling dinosaurs died out very rapidly and fell prey to mass extinctions but we are not so certain about what befell the marine animals of the period, and if the coelocanth has survived through the eons, then how many other ancient species have survived along with it? Could they survive in their environment, or perhaps adapt to life at a greater depth where their environment would be far less likely to be affected by the changes occurring above the surface?

Only around a third of the planet’s surface is not covered by water, and if the polar ice caps were to melt, it is estimated that this would halve again. The Pacific Ocean alone is bigger than all of the land areas combined, and at its deepest point it is an amazing seven miles deep. This point is called the “Mariana Trench” which from top to bottom is taller than Mount Everest.

On January 23rd, 1960 Dr. Jacques Piccard and Lieutenant D. Walsh of the U.S. Navy broke the previous record for the deepest dive, which was 245ft by a fisherman in 1865, when they descended into the Mariana Trench to a depth of 35,802ft, and they described the bottom as a “waste of snuff-coloured ooze.”

As our oceans are so vast they could easily conceal many unknown creatures, and to give an idea of the scale of the matter, a trawler will sink its nets to a depth of only about 60ft, and until recently scientists believed that fish couldn't live at great depths due to the enormous pressure and the total lack of light, but a research vessel has raised a fish from a depth of 26,000ft.

Despite the total lack of light at that depth, the fish still retained two small eyes (possible evidence that its species had once lived nearer to the surface) so it is certainly possible that ancient and prehistoric marine animals still live at great depths. We know that giant creatures, much larger than any today, filled the oceans, such as enormous crabs and giant sea serpents, and in 1930 Dr. Anton Brun caught an eel larva at a depth of 1,000ft that was 6ft long. Based on the assumption that it would mature to 18 times its larval length (though some eels attain 30 times their larval length) this meant that Brun's eel would have matured to a length of 108ft.

This is fine for a huge sea creature, but what about a monster in a lake? If a prehistoric life form could have survived until the last ice age, then it could possibly have found itself stranded in a lake as the glaciers retreated and the Great Glen fault which divides the Scottish highlands opened up to the sea. This would mean that they would have had to adapt to living in fresh water in a relatively short period of time (in evolutionary terms) but that is by no means impossible.

The argument against Nessie being a plesiosaur is that she seems to spend so little time on the surface. She would have to live in the top 125ft or so, as there would be little or no food below that depth, and the water temperature would be too low for a cold blooded reptile. Also, reptiles have lungs and not gills, so it would have breath fresh air, and in order to do this it would have to surface at regular intervals.

To reproduce it would have to come ashore and lay eggs, and though it has been seen ashore, it has not been seen laying eggs and no traces of nests have been found, or the young making their way into the water. Another argument against Nessie being a reptile can be proven by simple

mathematics.

For Nessie to have survived through the years there would have to be a colony of a bare minimum of three creatures at any one time. The loch has a surface area of 45 square metres, that is 15 square metres for each creature. The surface area of the Mediterranean is 20,000 times more at 900,000 square metres and it contains the rare and endangered monk seal, of which there are between 300 and 600, at best one for every 1,500 square metres of water. In other words, 100 times the area for the Loch Ness Monster, yet the monk seals are seen frequently.

Like animals on land, we clearly haven't identified every species in the sea, so whether or not prehistoric creatures are still surviving, there are unidentified creatures in the oceans, and these would obviously be mistaken for something else or something unusual, and with the vastness of their habitat, there are ample places in which to conceal themselves.

Also similar to land animals, and even Bigfoot, is the fact that a dead or dying sea creature will, more often than not, apart from the few carcasses that are washed up, not even manage to sink to the bottom before one predator or another will get hold of them, and from sharks downwards, the animals in the sea will make an excellent job of disposing of the body, so there is very little, if any, remains to be found by humans, and probably none at all in the case of non-vertebrates.

This is all well and good when you are considering an ocean which takes up such a huge part of the earth's surface, but what about when we are considering a land locked lake, especially one so small as Ireland's Lough Nahooon at 100 yards long? It is very difficult to believe that every lake monster claimant is a genuine one, but there are some which are worthy of serious investigation, such as Ogopogo in Lake Okanagan, Champ in Lake Champlain and of course Nessie in Loch Ness.

For a lake to support a monster it must clearly have a well maintained food chain, such as the salmon supply in Loch Ness, and especially if the lake is to support a monster for any length of time, and if reports are to be believed, since AD 565. This is one of those phenomena that are, at first glance, totally unbelievable, but once you begin to look at the evidence you become less and less sure, and the alleged facts of a lake monster sighting can become almost humorous when the case is of the scale as Loch Ness and has become almost a part of the psyche and certainly become a great tourist



attraction.

Once a case achieves this kind of status, the people of the area then find themselves with a vested interest, and possibly from that point onward, the case must be taken with a pinch of salt, no matter how convincing the evidence might be. There is another possibility however, that is far more deep rooted than a mere trip to a lakeside in the hope of catching a glimpse of the monster within, and that is human nature. It is almost as if man has some inherent need to have something to fear, be it belief in Gods and Deities, catastrophes such as calamitous floods or creatures such as fire breathing dragons or monsters in seas and lakes.

Whatever the reason for this and, after considering all of the evidence on both sides, it seems that there is only one conclusion that one can realistically come to in the case of sea and lake monsters, and that is summed up perfectly by Arthur C. Clarke. He said that he “could believe a dinosaur in, say, the Matto Gross, but not in Central Park or Kensington Gardens” and that he wouldn’t take lake monsters seriously if it weren’t for Loch Ness. “The evidence for something in the Loch is overwhelming; whether it is an animal new to science is another matter. If you want my personal opinion - on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I believe in Nessie.”

# **POLTERGEISTS**

It would be pointless to waste time by trying to determine whether or not poltergeists exist because they have been encountered many times and investigated in great depth. They have also proven to be one of the easiest phenomenon to capture on film and they tend to show up quite regularly when the investigators are called in. It is also quite easy to show that genuine cases have no direct physical human cause and so hoaxes are easily eliminated from the equation. What we will determine to do is to find out what poltergeists are and just how the activity is caused.

The word “poltergeist” is German and translates as “noise ghost” or “noise spirit” and was defined by Dr. A. R. G. Owen in his book “Can We Explain The Poltergeist?” as one or both of the following which occur in a spontaneous way;

- The production of noises.
- The moving of objects by no known physical means.

The poltergeist noises may be either knockings, bumps or even voices, and the movement of objects may be a picture falling off a wall, ornaments thrown across a room, furniture moving and even levitation. Some objects are materialised, and in the case of Maria Jose Ferreira of Brazil, at her request, and in the case of William Winston and his wife in their home in Atlanta, Georgia the activity took the form of blood which would flow freely, one time covering the bathroom floor. When analysed the blood was found to be human type O which matches neither Mr. Winston or his wife who are the

only occupants of the house.

An earlier account of poltergeist activity dates from 355AD when a house was bombarded by stones while the walls emitted thumping sounds and it is interesting that western and the more civilised countries report more cases than others. Physical investigator Herward Carrington points out that if trickery were involved then we would expect this to be the reverse.

In the early cases the “victims” would look to a priest to come and banish the “evil spirits” rather than looking for a cause, but this would usually work, and it wasn't until much later that we began to look more deeply than witches and demons for the reason behind the phenomenon and it is now believed that the victim, or “catalyst,” is also the perpetrator as it has been noted many times that unlike hauntings the activity will centre around a person rather than a house or some other specific place or object.

The poltergeist activity will usually begin when a person is under some sort of stress, be it at work, at home or, more commonly, it is associated with the onset of puberty. One famous case involved a young girl named Shirley Hitchins who lived with her parents in Wycliffe Road, London. She had left secondary school early in order to go to work, as many of her friends had also done, and she had taken a job as a sales girl in a London department store and soon after her fifteenth birthday Shirley's troubles began.

She woke one morning to find a shiny new key lying on her bedspread, her parents had never seen the key before and it did not fit any lock in the house. The next few nights saw further disturbances for Shirley who had her bedclothes ripped off her while she was sleeping, and loud knocks rang out all around her bedroom walls. In the daytime these knocks in her bedroom would be accompanied by tappings and scratches all over the house, and heavy furniture would move around the house.

These disturbances continued for a few days until Shirley became haggard due to a lack of sleep and went to spend the night at a neighbour's house, that of Mrs. Lily Love, so that she may get a good nights sleep, but rather than remaining in her house, the activity followed her to her neighbour's house where she continued to be troubled by whatever it was that was harassing her. During her stay an alarm clock and china ornaments moved around on a shelf, a poker was thrown across the room and her watch was pulled off her arm and thrown to the floor. After these occurrences Shirley's father, a London Transport Motor man, decided that he would stay

awake one night and watch what happened, and he managed to persuade his brother to sit with him. Shirley went to bed in her mother's room and even before she fell asleep her bed began to shake and emit a tapping noise while her hands were in view above the covers. Soon afterward she told her father and uncle that the covers were moving, and when they grabbed them they found that they were being pulled with considerable force toward the foot of the bed. They struggled against the invisible force and saw Shirley go rigid and were amazed to see her rise six inches off the bed without support. Her father and uncle lifted her clear of the bed and the disturbances now returned to the mundane rapping noises. Shirley later said that she had felt a great pressure in the small of her back lifting her up.

The rapping noises would follow her, not only to her neighbour's house, but even on the bus on her way to work, and her colleagues managed to persuade her to see the store doctor who was skeptical until the raps happened in his own office. He was still puzzled by it when all of a sudden after a month of mayhem the disturbances left Shirley for good.

This isn't the only incidence on record of a poltergeist having an apparent awareness for time periods, a much earlier case happened in Tedworth, Wiltshire in 1662 when the town Magistrate confiscated the drum of William Drury who was a magician and was forced to leave town. Soon afterward, the drum began to beat all by itself and fly around the Magistrate's home, and the spectacle was witnessed by several people. As well as the drumbeats were the classic raps of the poltergeist, and these would go on for two hours every night. After several sleepless nights he had the drum broken into pieces but still it continued to beat, and now shoes began to fly around the house and ash trays and chamber pots were emptied onto the beds. Children were levitated and a horse had its rear leg forced into its mouth. The Magistrate called in the Reverend Joseph Glanville, Chaplain to King Charles II, to investigate and he heard the noises and drum beats himself coming from around the children's beds. When he was ready to leave he went down to his horse and found it sweating profusely and the animal died soon afterwards.

The Reverend also spoke to those who had witnessed the other phenomenon but he could find no natural cause until, in 1663, William Drury was arrested in Gloucester for stealing a pig. A Wiltshire man visited him in jail and Drury asked him what had been happening in Wiltshire, to which the man replied nothing. Drury then asked him "What, haven't you heard about

the drumming in the house at Tedworth?" and when the man said that he had, Drury told him that "I have plagued him, and he shall never be quiet until he has made me satisfaction for taking away my drum." Drury was deported for his crimes but somehow managed to escape back to England, at which point the temporarily silent Mompesson house was again disturbed by the noises. It is unclear what happened to the poltergeist next, there are stories that it continued to affect the house until it gradually faded away, and there are others that say it ceased suddenly, exactly one year after it had started.

Though not always so precise in time poltergeist activity will often stop by itself after an indeterminate period. One which remained for almost four years was known as "The Bell Witch" and it menaced the Bell family of Robertson County, Tennessee from 1817.

John Bell was a successful farmer who was both well known and well liked. He lived with his wife Luce and his nine children in their large farmhouse. One of his daughters, twelve year old Elizabeth "Betsy" was to be a key figure in the case which first began with knocks and scraping sounds that seemed to come from outside the walls and windows of the house. The sounds soon came inside the house and took the form of gnawing sounds on the bed posts, scratchings on the floor and flappings on the ceiling. They steadily grew in intensity until they seemed to shake the whole house. The "witch" soon became quite inventive with the various sounds it would make such as overturning chairs, throwing stones at the roof and dragging heavy chains along the floor. These occurrences, it seemed, would bother Betsy more than the rest of the family.

Soon it began to progress from just simply making sounds, and one night it woke Richard Bell by pulling his hair, immediately another one of the children, Joel, yelled in fright and Betsy began screaming, and after she retired to bed her hair would constantly be pulled. The family now decided to ask a friend and neighbour, James Johnson, for advice. He listened to the noises and formed the opinion that some form of intelligence lay behind them. He performed a simple exorcism, which seemed to help for a while, but when the activity returned it did so with a vengeance and turned its attention to Betsy to such an extent that her parents became greatly worried for her. It would pull her hair so hard that she screamed in agony and it would slap her so hard across the face that it left red marks on her cheeks.

Johnson now advised Bell to call in some more neighbours who then

formed an investigating committee and they would ask the entity to perform certain tasks, which it duly did, and its repertoire was once again expanded. When the children were walking to school they would have sticks and stones thrown at them, and eventually they became accustomed to it and made a game out of it, so that when a stick was thrown at them they would mark it and throw it back, and the same stick would again be thrown at them. Though this game was relatively harmless the witch soon became more violent and would punch them in the face.

Betsy began to suffer from fits of shortness of breath and fainting which would last for thirty minutes, and during the fit there would be silence, but once Betsy had regained consciousness, the witch would again begin to whistle and talk.

As well as the repertoire of noises the Bell Witch's voice had also developed. What had started out as a faint and inarticulate voice was now a quiet but distinct whisper. It was suggested that as during Betsy's seizures there was no talking, it was possible that she was producing the voice herself by ventriloquism, but a doctor placed his hand over her mouth while the voice continued and they were satisfied that she was innocent of producing the voice.

The words uttered by the witch developed until it was able to say, word for word, the sermons that the two local parsons would give on a Sunday and it would also imitate their voices. Not content with this it began to utter obscenities which the community found most distressing and it also proclaimed a hatred for "Old Jack Bell" and said that it would torment him all his life. From that time on his health began to deteriorate and he said that he felt a stiffness in his jaw as if he had been punched on both sides of it, his tongue swelled so much that he was unable to eat or speak, and these bouts of stiffness and swelling would last for as long as fifteen hours. He developed a nervous tic in his cheek which seemed to spread all over his body until he could no longer get out of bed and would lie there twitching convulsively in a state of delirium.

The witch wasn't as unkind toward the rest of the Bell family, in fact Betsy's mother, whom the girl adored, was bestowed with many presents of fruit and nuts which would materialize from nowhere and, on one of Betsy's birthdays, it said that it had a surprise for her and materialized a large basket of fruit, including oranges and bananas. Of the children Joel, Richard and

Drewry were often thrashed but were not too seriously hurt, and one winter when they were sitting on a sledge the voice told them to "Hold tight!" before it pulled them quickly around the house three times.

Betsy was now being tormented emotionally and she had become engaged to a neighbour named Joshua Gardner, but the witch would constantly try to break up the relationship whispering in her ear "Please, Betsy Bell, don't marry Joshua Gardner." It told her that if she did she would never have a moment's peace, and this persistent haranguing eventually succeeded in the break up of the relationship.

In the Autumn of 1820 John Bell had managed to get out of bed and go about his farm business which angered the witch, and one day his son Richard saw him fall as if he had been struck on the head. His face began "jerking with fearful contortions" and the boy replaced his father's shoes, but as soon as he did so they would fly off again. The two men were then surrounded by shrieking sounds and derisive songs which soon began to fade away, and as they did the contortions ceased and Richard saw that his father was crying.

John Bell accepted defeat and returned to bed where on December 19th he was found in a deep stupor from which nobody could rouse him. John junior went to the medicine cabinet where he found, not his father's prescribed medicine, but a "smoky looking vial, which was about one third full of dark coloured liquid."

When the doctor arrived the witch was heard to say " It's useless for you to try and relieve Old Jack - I have got him this time; he will never get up from that bed again." The next morning John Bell was dead. At his funeral as his coffin was lowered into the ground, the witch was heard to gloat by singing "Row me up some brandy,O."

The potion in the vial was tested on a cat which immediately went into convulsions and died, but instead of analysing the liquid it was thrown away and no satisfactory medical explanation has ever been given for John Bell's death, after which the activity faded until one evening it was as though a kind of smoke bomb went off and the witch said that it was going but it would return in seven years time.

Seven years later, as promised, the witch did indeed return but the activity now only consisted of scuffling sounds and the twitching of bedclothes. By this time though only Mrs. Bell, Joel and Richard lived in the

house and the witch soon grew bored and vanished again but this time forever, failing to fulfil a further promise to return in 1935 by which time a relative of the late John Bell owned the house. The case is still considered today worthy of study, and under investigation by parapsychologists the relationship between Betsy and her father was looked at closely. Dr. Fodor concluded that it was possible that as a child Betsy had been abused by her father, a practise surely not uncommon in such circumstances, and the arrival of the activity coincided with Betsy's puberty. Dr. Fodor considered Betsy to be quite sexually mature and forward.

If Betsy had in fact been abused by John Bell then the reason for him to be victimised by the witch is clear and the attacks on Betsy could be due to the guilt that she felt for hurting her father. Even if she had no knowledge of it at the time, she would have had such feelings when the abuse was taking place, possibly years earlier, and her own victimisation could have either been through guilt at having such awful feelings for her father, or it could have been that she felt guilty about the abuse, as many victims do blame themselves for their ordeal to some degree rather than blaming their abuser, or it may simply have been due to anger at the break up of her engagement.

Dr. Fodor cites an incident where he says that John Bell demonstrates a deep rooted guilt. One evening he went to dine with friends named Dearden yet he said nothing all evening and seemed depressed and confused. The next day he rode over to apologise to the Deardens, saying that his tongue had been affected as if his mouth had been filled with fungus. This, says Fodor, is representative of "self aggression."

What is interesting is that the occurrences don't coincide with the alleged abuse itself but lay dormant until Betsy's puberty when she underwent, as all teenagers do, great physical, psychological and hormonal change, and possibly began to understand the error of her father's ways. It seems the only conclusion, whether there was a history of abuse or not, is that Betsy herself was responsible for the poltergeist and it was noted by Dr. Fodor that the fainting and dizzy spells Betsy suffered followed by the voice are "very similar" to a medium entering into a trance.

There is another possible explanation for the persecution of John Bell rather than the abuse of Betsy that he was posthumously accused of. One day while outside he saw a strange dog-like creature sitting between two rows of corn and he took a shot at it. The witch had said that it was able to assume the



shape of an animal, so had John Bell actually tried to shoot it? Poltergeists are known to dislike aggression towards them, so had he managed to anger it in this way? Was it perhaps not Betsy at all but a spirit of some kind?

There is another case of a poltergeist centring around a young girl and resulting in death, but this time it was her own death. The girl was eleven year old Maria Jose Ferreira from Jabuticabal, Brazil, and the entity emerged in December 1965 and was friendly at first, bestowing her with gifts of flowers or sweets whenever she asked for them dropping them at her feet, but soon it turned quite nasty and would throw eggs and stones around the house and smash crockery. It began to vent it's anger on Maria and would slap her, bite her and throw furniture at her. One time she was nearly suffocated when she lay in bed and had objects placed over her nose and mouth, she had fifty five needles rammed into her heel at the same time and her clothing set on fire.

Her family called in a catholic priest to carry out an exorcism but this only made matters worse and objects began to fly around with an increased vigour and regularity. Like Shirley Hitchins she went to stay with a neighbour and was pursued there by the activity, and she had stones thrown at her wherever she went, and witnesses to the stone throwing remarked that the stones appeared to have a magnetic effect on one another.

Maria was taken to a spiritualist who contacted the poltergeist and it said that Maria had been a witch in a previous existence and she had caused much suffering so now it was her turn to suffer. It said "She was a witch. A lot of people suffered, and I died because of her. Now we are making her suffer too."

Again a form of exorcism was tried and an appeal was made to the entity but again it was unsuccessful and the disturbances continued for over a year until finally Maria was found dead after drinking ant killer mixed with a soft drink. She was Thirteen years old.

We can see how Betsy Bell could feel anger or guilt with herself but how could Maria Jose Ferreira generate such hatred for herself at such a young age? The entity was concentrated on her and nobody else who may have angered her in some way, so she must have had a deep self loathing, so much so that she drove herself to her own suicide. Had she really had a past life as a witch or did she take some terrible secret to the grave with her? Again though, like Betsy Bell, could it have been a spirit of some kind?

Allen Kardec wrote in his “spirit's book” that people who die suddenly or those that are not prepared for death by reason of wasted lives are often unaware that they are dead at all and they continue to wander the earth. These people are then able to influence like-minded people, and Kardec goes on to say that some "low spirits" are activated by malice and others are either mischievous or may cause physical disturbances by drawing energy from people - These are known as poltergeists.

Kardec clearly didn't go in for the human cause and he claimed that he was told by a spirit that they are unable to “take over” another person's body as it belongs to its owner, but they are able to actually "assimilate" themselves to a person who possesses similar qualities to them, and what's more, he was also told that spirits may dominate such a person.

Kardec went along with this and gives the example of a person indulging in sexual fantasy, he says that they may unwittingly provide a kind of pornographic film show for some homeless spirit which will then try to influence the person into providing further glimpses by putting sexual thoughts into their head.

The author Colin Wilson also supports the spirit theory and he suggests, as has been suggested before, that the person may be the source of the phenomena, but maybe not the whole “cause.” He uses the example of Maria Jose Ferreira to say that if her own subconscious aggressions drove her to suicide, such depths of despair would have reached the rebellious part of her mind and caused it to stop, rather than pushing her to the point of suicide so therefore, he argues, there must be another entity behind it, a spirit. He adds "You can use a knife to cut bread or to cut a man's throat, and so it is with the hidden powers of man. They can be turned to good or bad ends, though they remain the same powers. To produce a successful poltergeist, all you need is a group of bad spirits prepared to do your work for you, for a suitable reward, and a susceptible victim who is insufficiently developed spiritually to be able to resist."

Another very interesting case is that of seventeen year old Esther Cox in 1878 in Amherst, Nova Scotia who suffered a traumatic ordeal when she was led at gunpoint by her then boyfriend Bob Macneal into the woods where he tried to rape her, but when they were disturbed he was forced to flee.

Sometime afterward rustling noises were heard in the Cox's house, furniture was moved, small fires would break out inexplicably and Esther's

bedclothes would float around the room, all common traits of the poltergeist, but more unusual events were to unfold which would affect Esther much more directly. Her body became bloated and only returned to normal after a loud bang like a thunder clap was heard. She also received messages which were written on the wall, some of which read things like "Esther, you are mine to kill." The end to the activity came when Esther was imprisoned for arson after a barn fire.

Typically rape or attempted rape share characteristics with abuse in the respect that the victim often feels as though they share some portion of the blame so, could Esther Cox have tried to make herself feel and look unattractive to try and dissuade any further male attention, not being possessed by a spirit at all, but driven purely by herself somehow?

Not all poltergeist cases though are exactly what they seem, for example in 1906 a probate judge in Windsor, Nova Scotia experienced many strange occurrences in his town. He saw the headless "spirit" of a man, heard voices and often saw a barrel rolling around the town. Coins would drop in front of him as he walked into shops, objects were thrown about in the restaurant where he ate and lamps would throw out their bulbs in the barber's shop. A researcher named Hereward Carrington was sent to investigate but he didn't need very long to solve the mysterious happenings. Factory workers had rigged a chair to rock, speaking tubes were erected and the townsfolk had practised and mastered the art of throwing objects without moving their arms, one eight year old had even made a machine that caused objects to fly unaided, and so the whole town were behind a plot to play a trick on the judge.

Though not down to such trickery, a case in Wisbech, England in January 1979 was quickly explained in natural terms. The activity centred around a housing estate known as the Mount Pleasant Estate, and the residents there were beginning to fear the vibrations and rumbling noises that would shake their homes. Sometimes it would be so bad that ornaments would fly off shelves, and one thing they found puzzling was the regularity with which the bouts would strike, and usually during the evening they would be at their worst. The cause was found to be the local sewer system because the air relief valve had failed, and when it approached overload it would rumble and shake. This would be especially bad in the evenings when a commercial break was on the television and there would be a rush of people

using the toilet in the houses on the estate.

There have been many cases of such natural causes being responsible for all kinds of strange activity, but not all cases can be explained as easily, and many possible causes for poltergeists have been put forward and disproved, such as the geophysical theory put forward by psychical researcher G. W. Lambert in 1955. Lambert said that the activity attributed to a poltergeist was caused by the movement of water in subterranean streams under the buildings concerned which caused vibrations in the building itself. However Lambert's theory received a crushing blow in 1961 when Alan Gauld and A. D. Cornell "borrowed" a terraced house in Cambridge that was due to be demolished, and they placed objects, some hanging on the walls and others on shelves around the rooms of the house. They then attached a machine to a wall of the house which generated vibrations and also a sixty pound demolition hammer for extra vibrations was used. The house was then shaken and banged so much by the vibrating machine that cracks began to appear in the walls, but only a couple of the objects fell from where they had been placed, and no other poltergeist effects had been produced.

One example of poltergeist activity that I myself witnessed occurred in 1977 whilst staying with family friends in Manchester. It happened one afternoon when the son of the family told me about a record that had been bought for him by his late brother. The record itself was harmless enough, being Ken Dodd and the Diddy Men, but every time he played it, the ornaments in the room would begin to move so I asked him to put it on, which he was reluctant to do at first, but when the music started the ornaments did indeed begin moving unaided.

Straw dolls on the shelves were turning through 360 degrees, a shield held on the wall by a nail was spinning very slowly around on the nail, castanets hung on the wall began clicking and other ornaments around the room were moving around as though they had a mind of their own. All of this happened before even one song had finished, and as soon as he turned the music off, the activity ceased and we had to go around the room and replace the ornaments before his mother found out as she did not like him playing the record.

None of them were rigged in any way, though he did say that the castanets would sometimes click lightly if the window was open or the nearby fire was on, but no other explanation offered itself for the other

ornaments. It is interesting that the activity only manifested itself when the record was played and at no other time. Just as a footnote to this story, I also experienced automatic writing in the same room of the house.

So once again we come to the adolescent mind being the cause for poltergeist activity and an interesting case when considering this theory is that known as the Black Monk of Pontefract.

In September 1966 in Pontefract, Yorkshire fifteen year old Philip Pritchard and his grandmother were at home at 30 East Drive while the rest of the family were on holiday. It began when a film of white dust descended and covered everything, then mysterious pools of water would appear and a wardrobe moved out of the corner of the room, but when the rest of the family returned home everything was back to normal and remained that way for two years until all hell broke loose. Footprints appeared inside the house, keys flew down the chimney, jam appeared on the walls and doors and crosses were drawn on the walls. Ornaments, pans and bedding would fly around, furniture moved, a carpet sweeper began dancing and a roll of wallpaper reared up like a snake. The taps, instead of issuing water, began oozing green foam and the house began to shake and made loud crashes and a grandfather clock was thrown down the stairs.

The family called in a priest to perform an exorcism and he saw a candle stick float right in front of him. He was unable to do anything and told the family that there was something evil in the house and that they should move. When they tried to record the noises the plug was taken from the tape recorder. When an Aunt Maude came to visit she had a jug of milk poured over her head and she thought that it was the children playing a trick on her so the spirit levitated a pair of gloves in front of her. When she told them to go away one glove made a fist and shook itself at her and when she started singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" the gloves started mocking her by pretending to conduct her. Most of the goings on seemed to centre around Diane Pritchard and she was thrown out of bed numerous times, and when furniture moved it seemed to attack her. One time a crucifix flew off the wall and hit her leaving a red mark, but this was nothing compared to the time she was physically grabbed and dragged upstairs screaming, this time she was left with red finger marks round her neck.

Unusually with a poltergeist an apparition was seen, that of a black monk, he was thought to be a monk who was hung for rape in Tudor times

and he appeared shortly after Aunt Maude's visit. He was described as a tall man in a long, black robe and on one occasion it was seen to disappear through the floor. It was concluded that the black monk was a spirit who had been waiting, lying dormant, for the energy it needed to manifest itself in the house and it seemed to take this energy from Philip. It is thought that the monk was possibly hung on the spot where the house now stood, and it is interesting that the activity began when Philip was at puberty and again two years later when Diane Pritchard reached that same age and the activity stopped altogether in 1969. The activity and the house became so notorious in the area that local bus drivers would stop their bus outside the house and point it out to their passengers. It is possible of course that the sighting of the monk and the poltergeist were not connected but totally independent of one another, but Colin Wilson thinks otherwise, and it was this case which somehow convinced him that poltergeists were caused by spirits.

So far we've seen fairly standard behaviour from poltergeists but the repertoire goes far beyond this, there is even a case of a poltergeist saving the lives of those it was haunting. Derek Newman and his family lived in a flat in Sheffield, Yorkshire and they had been troubled for over a year by poltergeist activity until one night in January 1982 when the family were sleeping and were woken by a commotion coming from downstairs which sounded "like someone running round the lounge with a hammer." Annoyed at being woken Derek decided to answer the poltergeist and picked up a hammer, but when he opened the bedroom door he was confronted by thick smoke and dialed 999. The firemen rescued the family from the balcony as the flat was consumed in flames. Derek realises that he owes his life, and that of his family, to the poltergeist, but there are several questions to answer here. What started the blaze? Was it the poltergeist which then raised the alarm to save itself? Did the fire itself wake the poltergeist or was the poltergeist completely unaware of the danger and after starting the fire, continued with other activity oblivious and woken the family quite by accident? But the most important question would seem to be what was Derek Newman doing with a hammer in his bedroom?

An interesting case of a fire-raising poltergeist occurred in 1948 in Macomb, Illinois on the Willey family farm where brown spots would appear on the wallpaper. The temperature needed to cause the spots was estimated to be 450 degrees Fahrenheit and the spots would then burst into flames. The

problem became so bad that their friends and neighbours stood all over the house with buckets of water in order to put out the flames as they broke out, and the spots progressed from the wallpaper to the porch, the curtains and then to anything that would burn. The local fire chief said of the fires that: "The whole thing is so screwy and fantastic that I'm almost ashamed to talk about it" and representatives from the air force said that they thought either high frequency radio waves or bizarre radioactivity were causing the fires, but another expert said that if this were the case then the surrounding farms would also have been affected which they weren't. Arson investigators came up against the same argument when they gave their theory that combustible gases were accumulating in the walls of the house, but they overcame this problem by forcing a confession out of the Willey's niece Wanet. This confession was greatly criticised and it was said of Wanet that she must have had "incredible persistence, an unlimited supply of matches, and was blessed with exceptionally near sighted relatives and neighbours."

The opposite effect of fire is also produced by poltergeists but much less frequently, and that is the materialization of water, one such case took place in 1903 in the home of a public prosecutor in Ancona, Italy, M Marrauno. Both he and his two sons were hit by jets of water which came from the walls and ceilings, hats in the house were filled, beds were flooded and various liquids such as milk, wine and coffee were spilled on the floor.

Another case sixty years later followed Francis Martin and his family from house to house. It began in their television room when a wet spot appeared on the wall and began to spray water after a loud popping noise, and when they went to a relative's house it happened again. By the time the fire chief had arrived, five rooms in the house had been completely soaked.

When they returned to their own home the problem continued, and now the humidity in the house began to fluctuate even if the water supply to the house was switched off. The jets would last for about twenty seconds and would be roughly fifteen minutes apart: "There's a little tremor and then a 'whoosh' and then the water." Again, they left their own home to stay with a relative and again the water spouts followed them. The disturbances gradually faded away and the cause for them was never found.

Whereas a "fire-raiser" would seem to drive people from their home, and "water senders" are generally harmless and seem to be more of a nuisance than anything else, there is a type of poltergeist which apparently has every

intention of harming its host, and that is the biting poltergeist which, like the water sender, is quite rare. There was one particular case which occurred in 1962 in Indianapolis in the home of Mrs. Renata Beck, her mother Mrs. Lina Gemmecke, an immigrant, and her thirteen year old daughter Linda. The first visit from the poltergeist came on March 10th, the birth date of Mrs. Beck's father from whom she had not heard in twenty years. The activity began, as most do, with small objects flying around the house and smashing. Very quickly after this, Mrs. Beck got puncture marks on her arms and cried out in pain, almost straight away Mrs. Gemmecke also cried out and found that she had similar marks on her arms. Over the duration of the activity Mrs. Gemmecke received bites on fourteen separate occasions, the number of bites on each occasion varying.

Mrs. Gemmecke believed that the bites were caused by insects or spiders but the investigator W. G. Roll once saw her holding a crucifix against them. The only person not bitten by the poltergeist was thirteen year old Linda, but the women would often be bitten when Linda wasn't even there, and although both women were bitten it was Mrs. Gemmecke who was the main target, but suddenly on March 18th the biting attacks ceased. Unfortunately, however, they were replaced by raps which sounded all over the house.

This aspect of the case is not uncommon as often the poltergeist will change its tactics as though trying some other means by which to achieve its ends, which would seem to suggest that there is some sort of intelligence behind it.

Do poltergeists really have an ulterior motive? Do they make themselves known to achieve some aim on behalf of the person around which they centre, such as Betsy Bell punishing her father or Esther Cox punishing herself, or are they in fact created by something else, something far more supernatural? Harry Price famously distinguished between a haunting and a poltergeist in 1945 when he said that "The poltergeist is mischievous, destructive, noisy, cruel, erratic, thievish, demonstrative, purposeless, cunning, unhelpful, malicious, audacious, teasing, ill disposed, spiteful, ruthless, resourceful and vampiric. A ghost haunts; a poltergeist infests."

Further research was done in the 1970s by two the parapsychologists who had performed the experiment on the house in Cambridge, Alan Gauld and A. D. Cornell, and this time they analysed five hundred cases dating back to 1800 to find and classify poltergeist characteristics. During their research



they found that of all the cases;

- 64% involve the movement of small objects.
- 58% are most active at night.
- 48% involve raps and knocks.
- 36% involve the movement of large objects.
- 24% last for more than one year.
- 16% involve communication with an “entity”.
- 12% involve the opening and shutting of doors and windows.

Sarah Hapgood, the author on paranormal phenomenon, noted that in the northern hemisphere most cases occur in the Autumn and Winter months, and she suggests that there may be a possible link with S. A. D. (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Would a person need to have some disorder, perhaps a split personality, or could a sane and calm mind create poltergeist activity, and if so by what means?

The most likely answer is thought to be psychokinesis or P.K., (to move objects using the power of the mind alone) the power of the mind over matter, and one of the greatest exponents of P.K. in the world is undoubtedly Uri Geller but there have been many others.

Mostly they did their work at the extremely popular seances of the early 20th Century when Spiritualism was born, but many frauds were exposed and so they became fewer in number, but still there were many who could not be shown to be frauds and were later tested under laboratory conditions. Some of them put their abilities down to the help of the spirit world whilst others, such as Daniel Dunglas Home said they had no idea how they did what they did.

One example was a middle aged Russian housewife named Nina Kulagina who has been studied many times by scientists since her abilities were discovered in the 1960s by a Russian parapsychologist, L. L. Vasiliev, who was studying E. S. P. (Extra Sensory Perception) as part of his work as head of the Institute for Brain Research based in Leningrad, Russia.

Kulagina's talents had first come to light during a stay in hospital while she recovered from a nervous breakdown, when doctors had seen her reaching into a sewing box and picking out the coloured thread she wanted without looking. Out of curiosity they did a few tests on her and found that

she could indeed see colours by touching them with her fingertips. They also found that she had healing abilities and that she could make wounds heal very quickly simply by holding her hands over them. Coincidentally, Vasiliev was trying to train people to sense colours just by touching them when he found that Kulagina was very adept at it, and he felt that with proper training she could become even greater. It was during her training that Vasiliev noticed when she moved her hand over an object it would move slightly. He tested these new found abilities and subsequently found that she could move a compass needle merely by moving her hand over it, she could move small objects around on a table and she was able to move a single match out of a pile of matches and move it away from the others. She was also able to move objects even if they were placed beneath plastic or glass covers and she said that when she was doing these things she got a sharp pain in her spine, her eyesight blurred and her blood pressure rose.

Vasiliev died in 1966 and Nina began to work with other “experts” some of whom were from the west and had been intrigued after watching a film of her at work which had been smuggled out of Russia.

Two of those who saw the film were the American parapsychologists J. G. Pratt and Dr. Montague Ullman, the latter of which presented film of Nina's performances to staff at Maimonides Medical Centre's Division of Parapsychology (one of America's best). Ullman merely intended for the screening to demonstrate P.K. on video, one of science's rarest forms of psychic ability, but sitting in the audience was a young hematologist named Felicia Parise who worked at the hospital and was also one of their best E. S. P. subjects.

Felicia was impressed with the films and felt that with practise she also would be able to perform similar tasks, so she went away to practise and found that with concentration she could move objects even when they were placed underneath a glass bell jar. Further experiments were done with Felicia and she found that not only could she move a compass needle, but if the compass was moved away from the spot where she had affected it and then later moved back again the needle would again be affected and this effect would last for up to thirty minutes.

Felicia found that her P.K. abilities would also manifest themselves spontaneously and, eventually she felt that it was too much of a strain for her. She compared her talent to a musical gift that must be worked at and

practised but she was loth to show such dedication though she continued to sometimes affect objects unwittingly.

An experiment conducted on a group of children in the 1980s by Professor John Hasted of the University of London showed that many could demonstrate such powers, and in 1982 schoolboy Mark Briscoe was working with the “memory metal” Nitinol which will permanently hold it's shape, and if bent will revert back to it's former shape. One way to reshape it is to heat it to 900 degrees Fahrenheit, but Mark Briscoe altered it's form by simply stroking it. Another school child working with a bunch of paper clips sealed inside a glass sphere was able to tangle them into a huge knot without even touching the sphere, and it is these psychokinetic powers that are widely believed to be responsible for poltergeist activity.

Realistically speaking there are only two serious alternative explanations for poltergeists outside of P.K. but, by its very nature, it is an extremely difficult power to investigate with any great depth. So what else could there be behind the poltergeist phenomenon? Is it trickery or could it be some kind of intelligent force outside of our own understanding? Trickery cannot be ruled out in all cases, but clearly can be ruled out of others, and it is those with which we are concerned, but could it be, as was thought in the early days, some form of demonic possession. a person having their body possessed by “evil spirits?”

In one of the most influential books on the subject, “Possession, Demoniactal and Other”, published in 1921, T.K. Oesterreich dismisses the spirit theory totally. He says that it is always a case of hysteria or mental illness. However, he doesn't even accept the possibility of a multiple personality because he doesn't think that the human personality can split.

It is interesting in poltergeist cases that the “haunting” will follow a person rather than stay resident in one place, and that the person is usually undergoing some sort of stress, a problem at home, a problem at school, stress at work, a tainted past for which they are feeling guilty or, more often than not, puberty. It is true to say that at this time the body is undergoing the change from childhood to adulthood, and the changes taking place within the body are physical, mental, emotional, and hormonal and this process is perhaps second only to the female menopause. The majority of people are able to cope with all of these changes well and suffer no adverse effects, but others can not and do not, perhaps they need a release valve through which to

take out their frustrations.

It is true that poltergeists are quite rare and that makes them so much more difficult to document and research, but there are many examples of cases that have been researched, but we are not much closer to understanding them than we were years ago. We understand the possible causes of the poltergeist but do not know how the forces of the mind can influence solid objects and why some people create poltergeists without realising it, and somebody else with obvious problems may not.

I believe that it is the individual that is the cause of the activity and that they use P.K. to do so, in cases like the Bell Witch in order to create serenity in their mind by punishing those who have wronged them and bringing their own form of justice. Where there isn't a problem as serious as this, or the attempted rape of Esther Cox, then the onset of puberty alone may be all the trigger that is required to spark off the poltergeist within. So, does P.K. exist as a tangible force which is detectable, and can it be shown to be such a force?

We have seen several examples of people with the gift of P.K., but as I said earlier perhaps the greatest exponent of P.K. is the Israeli psychic Uri Geller. Geller is one of those people who is either loved or hated and, whether or not you believe him to be a fraud, he is still an enigmatic figure with an uncanny gift, whether that gift is the art of conjury or the harnessing of powers hidden deep within the mind, he has a gift.

Psychic researcher Dr. Anrija Puharich, described as "one of the most brilliant minds on parapsychology" heard many stories about Geller, and at their first meeting Geller got a woman to hold a ring in her hand and he then held his own hand over hers for thirty seconds. When she opened her hand the ring was broken into two pieces. Geller then wrote three numbers on a piece of paper and turned it over, he then asked Puharich to write three numbers as well, he wrote 4, 3 and 2. Geller turned over his piece of paper and on it were the same three numbers, he told Puharich that he had not predicted what he would write but transmitted his thoughts to him and told him what to write. He went on to change the time on Puharich's watch while it was in Puharich's hand, and he raised the temperature on a thermometer without even touching it.

On Geller's first visit to America he again broke a ring but this time more impressively. He was dining with astronaut Edgar D. Mitchell who had

carried out some E.S.P. experiments on his Apollo 14 flight which launched on January 31st, 1971 and lasted for nine day. Ironically these experiments were carried out with Dr. Puharich among others. Mitchell's secretary was wearing a gold ring and Geller asked her to take it off and hold it in her closed hand. He then waved his own hands over hers without even touching her, and when she opened her hand the ring had a crack in it. Over the next few hours the crack grew and grew until the ring eventually bent itself into an "S" shape.

The author Colin Wilson who now believes the Demon Theory has ironically seen P.K. at work when he met Geller in 1974 with a view to filming his life story and, along with a secretary, sat at a restaurant table. Uri gave him one of the restaurant cards and told him to draw something on it and he drew a picture of an imaginary animal he had invented for his children. As he was doing so he looked up and saw that Uri was looking the other way. When he had finished he covered it with one hand and Geller took another one of the restaurant cards and told Wilson to try and transmit the thought to him,. After a minute or so he said "It seems very complicated; is it a kind of amoeba?" and he began to draw it, starting at the same point as Wilson had, the right ear. He next performed the "trick" that he was to become most famous for, spoon bending. Geller would cause a spoon to bend and eventually break by simply stroking it, and he says that he derives power from metal and he was also able to wind the hands of a watch back by two hours and the date forward by two days.

Wilson had been warned beforehand to watch out for trickery as Geller had once been a conjurer and the author freely admits that he may have been able to bend the spoon and alter the watch by trickery but not reproduce the drawing. Geller would also appear on television and perform these same feats in full view of the cameras. On one occasion he took a gold spoon from the priceless collection belonging to the Marquess of Bath and, with no visible effort, broke it in two. He could affect Geiger counters, mend watches or break them and he also passed countless E.S.P. tests.

His first noted television appearance was on November 23rd, 1973 on "The David Dimbleby Talk-In" when he rubbed two broken watches and mended them, then bent the hands of one of them upwards inside the glass. While Dimbleby held a spoon Geller stroked it and bent it but this was nothing compared to the fork on the table in between them which bent of its

own accord, and even more amazing was an announcement by the producer of the show that they had received dozens of telephone calls from viewers who said that cutlery in their homes had bent while the programme was airing.

Some of Geller's more ambitious feats were the stopping of the Hochfelln cable car in mid air at the fifth attempt after he had taken up a challenge to do so. It was later found that the main power switch in the control centre had flipped off, but the "trick" had been done at such short notice that a conspiracy was ruled out. Another occasion when outside help was ruled out was on a trip from Spain to Italy on the liner "Renaissance" when the ship's musicians challenged Geller to stop the vessel. He immediately began to concentrate and before long the ship began to lose power and the engines died. The ship's engineers found a damaged fuel line but again Geller had performed the feat upon request and could not have caused the damage by any physical means.

Geller was also approached in London, where he was then residing, by an American games company who asked him to stop the most famous clock in the world, Big Ben, on New Year's Eve. Geller has documented proof of the request, and on the very next day, December 17th, around midday he went to Westminster to "experiment" and at 12-35 pm Big Ben stopped dead. Geller could not have got inside the tight security at Westminster and the clock is renowned for its accuracy and is also meticulously maintained, so again, he had no physical control over the clock.

The effects of P.K. on metal have been described as changing the structure of the metal itself, "as though the bent part of the spoon was a soft as chewing gum."

Two French investigators funded by a metals company used hallmarked metal objects and tested their "microhardness" before and after their experiments and analysed the metals' chemical composition. They found "local hardening" in the metals, and similar experiments performed found hardening as though "a strip had been exposed to crushing by a weight of five tons." but more interestingly they found that rather than external forces being responsible, the hardening was caused by "internal metal stress."

So if these powers exist where do they come from? It is believed that everybody possesses some level of P.K. ability but most never use it, some use it unwittingly in poltergeist cases and others are able to use it at will.

We know that the mind has a control over the physical body by using tiny electrical impulses but how could it have the same effect on household objects, cable cars and the most renowned clock in the world? It would seem that the human mind holds many secrets that we cannot yet explain, and it would seem that P.K. is just another one of them, and in the case of poltergeists it is not merely moving small objects after a period of controlled concentration, but it is an involuntary action which takes many and varied forms.

# PSYCHIC HEALING

Our health is something that we very often take for granted and so is the treatment that we receive when it fails. Typically when we develop an ailment we take the advice of a doctor who effects a cure, conventionally a physical cure for a physical illness and, more often than not, directly on the affected area. The patient is able to have this physical treatment explained and understand how it works but what happens when this cycle fails? Can the psychical take over where the physical has failed? How can a psychic healer succeed where a conventional doctor or surgeon has failed?

However much we know, or do not know, about psychic healing and what it is, there is no doubt that it has been with us for a very long time and it dates back certainly as far as Christ who is perhaps still the most famous healer of all. He is said to have effected cures for leprosy, allowed the lame to walk, given sight to the blind and, most amazing of all, given life to the dead, the most famous of those three cases being Lazarus. It is also a fact that in historic times, before advanced medicines, any doctor figure who was able to achieve results, by whatever method, would be held in high esteem and none more so than royalty.

From the Middle Ages to the Victorian era, the monarchs of both England and France were believed to possess what was known as the “Royal Touch” and they would heal people by the “laying on of hands,” the last recorded case being in 1825 and was performed by the French King Charles X.

Those with the Royal Touch were most often required to cure the disfiguring tubercular inflammation Scrofula, popularly referred to as



“King’s Evil.” The Royal Touch was however exaggerated as the condition Scrofula was nasty but rarely fatal and would often clear up spontaneously of its own accord but no doubt many a “doctor” claimed to have effected a miraculous cure.

Whenever healing is mentioned, one thinks of course about Lourdes in France, which has for years been associated with miracle cures, but rather than being associated with a particular healer, they do of course have a religious connection.

Ever since 1858 when fourteen year old Bernadette Soubirous experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes, it has become a place of pilgrimage for millions of hopefuls in search of a miracle cure for myriad illnesses. The patients are immersed in the grotto waters but, despite frequent reports of success, the church has certified only sixty-four cases as miracles. To satisfy the church that a miracle has occurred, the case must pass four reviews, three medical and one ecclesiastical, and must also satisfy seven criteria established by the church.

The original illness must be serious and under no doubt, it must be extremely difficult or impossible to cure and must have resisted all, if any, medical attempts to cure it. The cure must be sudden or extremely rapid and must also be permanent and perfect. Despite this rigorous screening the church has been criticized for recognizing some of the cures as researchers say that a lot of them involve psychosomatic or hysterical illnesses. The church however, which recognizes many cures as “remarkable” but not miraculous, is not concerned with such criticism and emphasizes that Lourdes is not a place for the production of cures but for spiritual renewal.

One such case occurred in 1962 when Roman Catholic Italian soldier Vittorio Micheli had known about his sarcoma of the left pelvis for thirteen months and his condition had deteriorated to such an extent that he was no longer able to stand or even control his left leg which was encased in plaster from hip to toe as his left femur had detached from his diseased pelvis. Micheli had also lost his appetite and the pain increased as his condition worsened. As a last resort he went on a pilgrimage to Lourdes where he was immersed in the baths and he immediately began to regain his appetite and also to experience less pain. Soon he had the feeling that his hip and femur were reattaching and, believing himself to be cured, he returned home. His doctor was skeptical and insisted that Micheli should continue to wear his

cast but, within a month he was able to walk again and X-rays taken two months later showed that the sarcoma had in fact receded and the pelvic bone was regenerated. Over a period of five years medical reviews showed that the sarcoma had completely disappeared.

There is however a darker side to religious healings as well. The “Christian Science Monitor” is an American national newspaper and broadcast service and there are Christian Science reading rooms around the globe, but Christian science forbids its followers from using secular medical care or medication and allows them only to use the power of prayer.

This faith, or maybe blind faith, can go way too far as a Christian science couple in Florida, USA discovered when they were convicted of letting their child die rather than take him to a doctor. There are other faiths that believe in the power of alternative cures, and healers can also use the guise of religion to avoid laws against practicing medicine without a license. Any form of healing though is not meant to replace conventional medicine but perhaps compliment it. It has been around for a long time but still nobody knows where the healing “force” comes from. It has been thought that there may be some kind of life force that the ancient cultures refer to and practiced.

The Ancient Egyptians called it the “Ka” the Hindus call it “Prana” and the Chinese called it “T’Chi.” Could it be that there is some kind of life force that healers can tap into or is it something else? This is one of the main debates within healing; is the healer doing the work or is it actually the patient?

Conventional medicine recognizes that a patient kept confident and in good spirits will heal more quickly than one treated like “an item on a production line” and we also have placebos which will work when a patient is not being given any treatment at all but, importantly, believes that they are, yet still they get better, so is this proof of the patient healing themselves rather than a gifted healer and could a healer therefore learn their trade rather like a hypnotist who practices, rather than being born with the ability? Similar to people talking nicely to plants and seeing them grow more quickly and more fully than those which have not been spoken to, or those that have been shouted at.

Whether the healer describes themselves as a spiritual healer guided by a spirit or as a faith healer guided by a God, a high percentage of those seeking their help are cured, which may suggest that the healer has less to do with the

treatment than the patient does, and it would seem that the confidence of the patient in the spirit world or in a God would have a big influence on whether or not a cure is effective. In fact, it could be said that the mindset of a person seeking the aid of a healer must hold some level of belief in the effectiveness of their treatment by the very fact that they seek them out. The power of suggestion is after all, a very strong force and an estimated 80% of asthma cases can be cured by hypnotic suggestion alone.

Tests have been done, including one which used the retired Hungarian Army Colonel Oskar Estebany. These tests were carried out by the biochemist Bernard Grad of McGill University in Montreal, Canada in 1957. Estebany was particularly interesting because he had discovered his gift while he was working with the horses of the Hungarian Cavalry. The experiment used forty eight laboratory mice which all had a sliver of skin removed. Sixteen of them were a control group and were left to heal naturally, sixteen of them were given healing treatment held in Estebany's hands twice a day for twenty days and the last sixteen were placed in incubators for the same period of time twice a day to simulate the body heat of Estebany's hands.

By the fourteenth day of the experiment, the wounds of the control group mice had begun to heal as expected, about a third of them had wounds less than half the size of the original wound and the rest were smaller still. Of the incubated group, half of them had wounds around half the size of the original wound and as a group they were healing more slowly than the control group, probably because the heat in the incubator would encourage the growth of bacteria. Of the group that were held by Estebany, the majority of them had wounds equal in size, but more often smaller, than those of the control group, and the three with the biggest wounds had wounds smaller than one seventh the size of the original wound, so as a group, they had healed more quickly than the other two groups.

The experiment was not intended to find out how healing worked, but whether or not it would work on animals who weren't aware of the auto suggestion involved. Perhaps though, these sixteen mice had felt comforted and secure while they were being held and, as we know from conventional medicine, this feeling of well-being has a positive effect on them.

This latter view is in accordance with Howard Gordon, co-author of "Miracle Man," who is not alone in the belief that it is the patient not the healer who effects the cure, and he says "I think the healer, at best, is a sort of

facilitator who is able to untap certain things that already exist in people.” But one man who certainly disagrees with this view is Dr Daniel Binor who observed a demonstration that would change the way he practiced medicine. He said of the demonstration: “My speciality is psychiatry, and I was convinced before that healing was no more than suggestion or wishful thinking or charlatanism but then I observed a healer bring about a physical change to a patient that I could not explain away. There was a lump under a young man’s nipple, which, within half an hour of laying on of hands healing, shrank by a centimeter – It went from being rather firm to being soft and from being tender to non-tender. There was doctor there and we agreed about the treatment.” Binor now uses elements of spiritual healing in his work.

Einstein maintained that matter and energy are two sides of the same thing, which modern physics would seem to support, and Binor continues: “I use the healing combined with psychotherapy. Many times when a person has a physical illness it’s because of tensions in the body, and through psychotherapy and healing they’re able to find understanding and, in many cases, relief.” He says that he doesn’t like to refer to it as “Faith Healing” because that implies that mice and plants and yeast would have to have faith in order to have change. I refer to it as “Spiritual healing.”” He goes on to say “When the emotions are released, the physical symptoms can clear up. The most spectacular ones are where very rapid changes occur but these are rare. I don’t want to go into these because the media have hyped them up and people have come to expect it to be always like this.”

If it is in fact the healer who effects the cure rather than the patient, then what about the following case where the healer had no idea about the power of her gift, let alone that she had one at all. At age nineteen, Rose Gladden discovered that she was a healer when, in the 1940s, she “had gone into a shop in London called Dyers and Chapman and found Mr Chapman who had collapsed, lying under the counter. I asked him what was wrong and he said ‘I’m in terrible pain. I have an ulcer’ Now, I didn’t know where that ulcer was. All I thought was ‘I wish I could help him’ and I heard a voice say ‘You can. Put your hand there.’ ‘But where?’ I asked myself ‘He hasn’t told me where this ulcer is.’ With that I saw a little star, just as if it had fallen out of the night sky, floating over his left shoulder and, as I watched, the star floated down and stopped on the top half of the stomach. Mr Chapman confirmed

that was where the ulcer was. As I put my hand there, I never saw, but felt, another hand come over mine and hold it steady. I felt my hand being filled with a tremendous heat. I couldn't move it away. It was as if it was glued to that part of the body. After a while, my hand was pulled like a magnet to his side and then away from his body. With that, he said, 'That's gone, it's marvelous. Your fingers felt as if they were holding the pain and as you took your hand across, the pain went with it.' I was absolutely overjoyed. I still didn't know you called it healing. I just knew I was beginning to realise why I was born and what I had to do was help people."

However, Rose's new found gift turned out not to be as easy to live with as she had first thought. Since her childhood Rose had been able to see things that others couldn't see and, during her twenties, she had psychic experiences that were so intense she thought she was going mad. She describes herself as a "Psychic" rather than a "Spiritual Healer" as she doesn't use a spirit guide in her healing but she does believe in the existence of a spirit world. The "stars" that she see on the body of the patient usually take the form of silver lines and spots and she has found that these lines and spots correspond with the same lines and "meridians" that are recognised by acupuncturists. She has also found that the area she is to treat is not always the spot which the patient indicates as being painful but that treating the spot would still effect a cure.

Rose is also able to see a person's "aura" which has been described by various people as "an envelope of vital energy which apparently radiates from everything in nature," a "spiritual sphere surrounding everyone," the body's "etheric double" and even the "astral body." No two psychics see the aura in the same way as they perceive the colours differently but they all see disturbances in it, and these disturbances can act as an early warning system as generally they precede the symptoms of an illness.

Rose Gladden however interprets the disturbances differently. She sees the physical maladies as the result of an imbalance in the aura rather than the aural imbalances being caused by pending illness and so she will treat the aura rather than the affected area and again this will effect a cure.

Walter J. Kilner observed that the human aura reflected a person's state of health and said that "Weak, depleted auras suck off the auric energy of healthy, vigorous auras around them."

In the 1963 book "An Outline of Spiritual Healing" the author, Gordon Turner, the British healer, makes a study of the aura which he is able to see

with his psychic powers. He says that the human aura is a complex one, which he sees as a changing pattern of rippling colour and which is dense near the physical body and fainter at the edges. Turner says that the emotions are registered in the aura as colour changes and illness makes it grow duller or produces patches of new colour. He goes on to say that “When a healer places his hands upon a patient, there is an immediate bleeding together of their auras. Within a few minutes all other colours that were previously observable become subordinated by a prevailing blue, which extends greatly beyond normal and seems to fill the room in which treatment is being carried out... It is still possible to see the colours that had denoted symptoms but these float away from the body of the patient and become surrounded by a yellow coloured light which seems to be spinning. What follows is for all the world like the action of a ‘spiritual Penicillin.’ The yellow light gradually overcomes the duller colour of the disease and it becomes flattened out and much less intense.”

Patients being treated most often report the sensation of heat and also tingling feelings “Something like an electric shock” and even seeing colours before their eyes when the healer touched them, and healers have also reported a feeling of “heavy air” leaving them, usually through their hands. E. Douglas took Kirlian photographs of the hands of a psychic healer and reported that the corona of light surrounding her finger tips flared whenever she thought of healing.

There is an extremely interesting case of a woman who would help her patients, not by healing them herself, but by acting as a clairvoyant and materializing a doctor. In 1916 a young woman named Isa Philips was planning her wedding day when she had a vivid and terrifying vision in which she saw her fiancé, Kit, shot and fall from his horse. Kit was, at that time, away on active service and, a few days later, she received news of his death and when a friend, Jack Northage, brought her Kit’s possessions he explained to her how exactly he had died, and the description matched her vision in every detail.

She had also seen Northage in her vision as he had gone to Kit’s assistance and they soon became friends and later married in 1919. Soon after her first vision, Isa began to hear a man’s voice which would warn her to develop her clairvoyant abilities. She became a widely acclaimed medium who was best known for her materialisations. At one séance in Doncaster,

England in 1940, ten sitters saw nineteen forms that materialised and also spoke to other spirits. In 1941 her spirit guide, Dr Reynolds, told Isa to stop her public séances and to concentrate on healings so she established a séance room, healing clinic and operating theatre in the grounds of her bungalow at Pinewoods in the grounds of Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire.

The meetings would start with prayer and would continue until the materialisation of Dr Reynolds. During one séance Dr Reynolds picked up a torch and aimed it at the operating table where there was a patient suffering from an acute duodenal ulcer. Two of the sitters were not wearing masks and the doctor told them to put one on before he began “operating.” He placed cotton wool swabs on the patient’s abdomen and assured him that there would be no pain, despite a lack of anaesthetic. He explained how he would “freeze” the affected area and pass his hand inside the body to remove the ulcer. Dr Reynolds asked if the patient felt any pain, which he did not, and he moved his hands to the side of the body and a gurgling sound was heard. Dr Reynolds said that “The ulcer was in a very bad condition, that it would not come away in a whole piece and that he was afraid of haemorrhage.” The pieces of the ulcer were brought out through what Dr Reynolds described as a temporary opening in the abdomen and he placed them on the swabs on top of the body. When the séance was over, the tissue was placed in a bottle of surgical spirit and later analysed and was found to be “an acute duodenal ulcer, containing brunner’s glands and showing from its condition that it was about to penetrate the intestine and would have proved fatal.”

Throughout the 1950s there were lots of similar accounts and cures and many of them appeared in the press. They stopped, however, after Isa was involved in a car crash and she ceased her materialisations and psychic surgery, though she did continue to heal the sick. For example, in 1967 the Scottish “Sunday Express” reported that a bus driver suffering from a stomach ulcer visited Pinewoods and was treated by Isa who massaged his abdomen. It was said to have “opened like a rose” and the ulcer was removed in two pieces. The patient told the newspaper “Before the operation, almost anything I ate gave me pain. An hour after, I was able to eat a five course meal. I haven’t had a twinge since.”

Joan Windsor of Williamsburg, Virginia is not a doctor, nor does she have any medical training. What she feels she dos have is the power of clairvoyance which enables her to picture a situation without knowing any of

the facts. She uses her power to diagnose and treat, and maybe cure, illnesses of all kinds, yet she does this without meeting her patients. They write to her and enclose a photograph of themselves, and it is the photograph that she uses to do this. She feels that every person has a unique vibration and this vibration is what she is able to pick up on from the photographs. Windsor has approximately seventy percent of her diagnoses and treatments confirmed by doctors.

One such case was of a woman, Joyce White, who was having trouble with her digestive system and whose doctor had been unable to diagnose any problem. Joan held Joyce's photograph after reading the brief letter which accompanied it and she was able to envisage a problem with the Joyce's spinal cord and which she felt was interfering with her digestion. Joyce's spinal cord had actually been damaged in an ice skating accident decades earlier and Joan suggested a simple change of diet and treatment for the old spine injury.

Perhaps the most famous distance healer was Edgar Cayce. Born in 1877, Cayce followed the stereotypical path in that he was able to see things that others could not, as well as the human aura from an early age. At 21 he had to give up his job as a salesman because of a chronic sore throat and bouts of laryngitis which resulted in him losing his voice completely and as a last resort he went to see the hypnotist Al Layne.

Layne tried to help but came to the conclusion that Cayce was immune to post hypnotic suggestion so he put him into a trance and asked him what was causing his illness and what might be the best way to treat it. At the end of the session Cayce was able to speak again and Layne suggested that they go into partnership in diagnosis and treatment. Cayce declined the offer and he soon lost his voice again. Taking this as a sign that to help others was his destiny, he decided to change his mind, and in 1901 he began to give readings, diagnoses and cures while in a trance but whenever he used the "gift" against his own principals he would lose his voice again.

Cayce pinpointed his own condition as partial paralysis of the vocal cords and suggested that the cure may be an increase in blood circulation to the area for a short time. Cayce is not alone in not being in control of his gift and it was as though it was merely using him as a conduit. By 1911 Cayce was working with a homeopath, Dr Wesley Ketchum, and a feature on him in the New York Times brought him to national attention and it was Ketchum



who now gave the treatments that Cayce prescribed. He began working by being hypnotised in the presence of the patient but later he was able to make a diagnosis with only the name and address of the patient and he would put himself into a trance.

Somebody, usually his wife, would then say to him “You now have the body of [Name and Address]. You will go over this body carefully, noting its condition and any parts that are ailing. You will give the cause of such ailments and suggest treatments to bring about a cure.”

Cayce believed that every cell in the body was individually conscious and that they could communicate their condition to his entranced mind. He was mocked for some of his ideas, such as his belief that he was a reincarnation of one of the angels who had inhabited the Earth before Adam and Eve, and later was a citizen of Atlantis, but as a healer he was highly successful. He found that the work was exhausting and he was warned that giving more than two readings in a day would kill him but he still averaged four a day after 1942 when the war brought him a lot of work, and after June 1943 he increased that figure to six a day. The effort finally took its toll on him and in 1944 he collapsed from exhaustion and within five months he was dead. He had referred to his impending death as a “healing.”

The most famous British clairvoyant healer was Harry Edwards, founder of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, in England, who was late to take up his new “career” as he didn’t perform his first healing until he was in his forties. Edwards had attended services at a spiritualist church to satisfy a friend and he was told there by a number of mediums that he possessed a latent ability as a healer, and next time he knew somebody who was ill, he should concentrate his thoughts on their recovery.

He soon found that a friend of a friend was terminally ill with tuberculosis and he promised that he would do what he could to help. He sat down and began to meditate and images came into his mind of a hospital ward and he found himself focused on the person in the last bed but one in the ward and he “sent out” a get well message as powerfully as he could. He later discovered that the ward, and the position of the bed in it, was just as he had imagined it and the patient had begun to feel better after Edwards’ attempt at healing. Within weeks he was up and mobile, despite the doctors having expected him to die.

Edwards’ second patient “was an adamant atheist and his wife dared not

to tell him that she'd sought spiritual help for him" yet the remote healing still worked and cured him of lung cancer.

It was on Edwards' third healing attempt that he first had physical contact with a patient and he was surprised at how it affected him. The patient was a young girl who was suffering from tuberculosis of the lung and when he put his hands on the girl's head, his "entire body seemed to come alive." He felt as though he was filled with energy and this energy flowed along his arms, out of his hands and into the young girl, and he felt himself telling the girl's mother that she would be up in three days which indeed she was, and when she was next examined, she was found to be completely cured.

These three healings convinced Edwards that he should devote himself to healing full-time and he gave up his printing business. In 1946 he established a sanctuary at Burrows Lea in Shere, Surrey where he could work.

During his prime in the 1950s Edwards was so renowned in healing that he was able to fill to capacity the 8,000 seat Royal Albert Hall where people would flock in the hope of being cured by him and he continued to work until his death in 1976 but his sanctuary was kept open and run by a group of healers.

Edwards believed that he had the direction of Louis Pasteur and Lord Lister in his work and his early healing took place in the Middle East during World War 2 when he was in charge of a crew of Arabs who were building a railroad and who were inexperienced workers so injuries were commonplace, such as hitting their fingers with hammers.

They found that their wounds would heal quite quickly if Edwards treated them and they gave him the nickname "Hakim" – Healer. He returned from the war thinking nothing of it and began to concentrate his efforts on the family printing business until 1935 when he was over forty. He came to believe that absent healing, or healing without the patient's knowledge, worked as well as, if not better than, direct healing after he began to receive so much mail and pass on healing thoughts so that he wouldn't have to physically see the senders of them all.

A good example of absent healing occurred in 1953 when Edwards healed a man known as Mr B. who was known to be suffering from a malignant cancerous condition of the throat. The patient had severe pain and

swelling, was unable to swallow and could only talk in a hoarse whisper. He had previously had a biopsy, which is where a piece of tissue is removed and examined, and he was due to be operated on in two weeks' time. When he discovered this, he telephoned Edwards and asked him to try absent healing. In the days that followed, Edwards says that "The pains left him and the swellings subsided; and his voice returned to normal." Two days before the scheduled operation, Mr B. requested another examination by the two specialists that had performed the original tests, and "after exhaustive tests and a fresh biopsy, they declared that all symptoms of the cancer has disappeared." Rather than prove to the medical establishment that healing worked, as Edwards had hoped, the two specialists said that the first biopsy must have removed all of the cancerous tissue.

Due to the rise in popularity of healing, there was also a rise in the number of hoaxers, some, but not all, in search of financial or personal gain and the parapsychologist, Dr Thelma Moss, who has tested healers under laboratory conditions and written the book "The Probability Of The Impossible" has drawn up several common characteristics in healers:

1. They don't know how they do it, most just talk of a sensation of heat or tingling.
2. They often haven't been taught to heal and most commonly discover their talent by accident.
3. They have no obvious control over their talent and seem to act merely as a conduit for the energy (whereas hoaxers will often come to believe in their own power).
4. They don't claim to be able to heal everyone and often only cure a small minority.
5. They often see themselves as working only where conventional medicine has failed, as a last resort.

So how do the hoaxers do it? The most obvious way at a mass healing where audience members are healed is for the healer to have placed stooges in the crowd to come up and feign an ailment. James Randi uncovered evidence of fraudulent healers at mass healings who were being fed information via microphones by their accomplices. Another phenomenon where simple hoaxes like this will not suffice is called Psychic Surgery,

where healers claim not only to heal a patient but to perform actual surgery on them.

Manila in the Philippines boasts many psychic surgeons who people may go and visit as part of a package tour. Psychic surgeons claim to perform operations where they may be seen to remove tumors by reaching into the patient's body without making an incision or using anaesthetics. As with many paranormal claims, there are those who have been exposed as frauds and perhaps the best way to catch a hoaxer is to film the "operation" where the action can later be slowed down and any sleight of hand can be exposed.

One film clip showed that when a "surgeon" was supposed to be inserting his fingers into a patient's body, he was actually kneading the patient's flesh with his knuckles and his fingertips are clearly visible. The blood and tissue supposedly removed during operations have been examined and found to be of animal origin. One such fraud was a wealthy and "successful" healer from the Philippines, Tony Agpaoa, who was investigated by a team of Italians in 1973. They found that the red liquid, alleged to be blood, was of neither human or animal origin, and that two renal stones removed from a patient, were actually lumps of salt and pumice, and what were alleged to be fresh fragments of bone and tissue had already begun to decompose.

Brazilian healer Arigo was born in Minas Gerais, Brazil and only attended school for four years, he developed no trade or profession and worked on and off as a labourer or farm hand. At the age of thirty he reportedly fell into a severe depression which was accompanied by nightmares, sleep walking and sleep talking. A local spiritualist told him that a spirit was trying to work through him, and so began his career as a healer, his first success being that of a local politician who was cured of an inoperable lung tumor.

For most of his twenty years as a healer, Arigo worked at a clinic in Belo Horizonte, which was visited by as many as 300 patients a day. Most of them he felt could be treated by conventional means so he sent them away. One of the many medical and paranormal experts who went to see Arigo at work was Puharich, who watched him perform in 1963 with a camera man in tow. After watching Arigo work for a while, Puharich offered himself up for surgery which Arigo performed with a pocket knife.

Puharich said that Arigo "took hold of my right wrist with his left hand

and wielded the borrowed pocket knife with his right hand.” He goes on, “The next thing I knew was that Arigo had placed a tumor and a knife in my hand. In spite of being perfectly conscious, I had not felt any pain, yet there was the incision in my arm, which was bleeding, and there was the tumor. The film showed that the entire operation had lasted five seconds. Arigo made two strokes with the knife. The skin had split wide open and the tumor was clearly visible. Arigo then squeezed the tumor as one might squeeze a boil, and the tumor popped out.”

Within three days, Puharich’s wound was healed, despite his not having cleaned it and only covering it with a plaster. Puharich was now convinced that Arigo’s gift was genuine and he made another trip to watch him where he observed him correctly estimating patients’ blood pressure without equipment, giving accurate diagnoses and naming complex drugs as treatments. He asked Arigo how he arrived at his conclusions and he replied “I simply listen to a voice in my right ear and I repeat whatever it says. It is always right.”

Arigo said that the voice belonged to a long dead German man who had attended, but not finished, medical school named Adolphus Fritz.

In 1971 Arigo was involved in a fatal car crash and, a year later, Puharich reported “Our nice modern equipment proved that genuine healing took place under bizarre conditions and unbelievable circumstances, clearly, we have a lot of research ahead of us.”

## REINCARNATION AND PAST LIVES

I have made a distinction between what we call past lives and reincarnation on the sole premise that a past life is generally only recalled while under hypnosis, but a reincarnation can be recalled consciously, and is in some cases an identical replay of the previous existence such as being born to the same parents, inheriting character traits and even dying at the same age in similar circumstances, and a past life is usually one lived years, and often centuries earlier.

Some religions believe in reincarnation as a matter of faith and this is especially so in Islam where it is believed that those who have led a good and honest life will return to earth in a higher existence, or caste, until they have reached the top of the spiritual ladder and achieved the state of “Nirvana” while other religions will shudder at the thought of such a “ridiculous” notion. The notion doesn't seem so ridiculous though when faced with some of the evidence and it is with some reluctance that people even consider the possibility of reincarnation as it goes against everything they have ever held to be true, and everything they expect or believe death to be. Is death really the end or is it merely one step on the ladder of existence that we all must climb?

It is often children who will dumbfound their parents by making a comment that obviously seems quite innocent to them, and many are the stories of mothers berieved of a child walking down a road with another child (born after the death of the first) and the child saying something like "This is where I was run over by that car" or while walking past a cemetery they will say "This is where I was buried and you were all crying" and they describe

the death or funeral of their late sibling who died before they were born, and speak in the first person as though it was they themselves and that they have returned.

One such case of a young boy remembering a previous incarnation is that which occurred in 1962 to Professor Ian Stevenson when he was told by a young Lebanese boy that a number of children in his home village of Kornayal talked about past incarnations, and he wrote a letter of introduction for Stevenson to give to his brother. It was two years before Stevenson was able to visit Lebanon and follow up the story, and he found enough evidence there in the village of Kornayal to publish an article in 1966 called "Twenty cases suggestive of Reincarnation" and one of those cases was that involving Imad Elawar.

Imad Elawar was born in Kornayal in 1958 and no sooner was he able to talk than he began mentioning the names "Jamile" and "Mahmoud" though nobody knew of the two people that he was talking about. He would also talk about a village called "Khriby" which was thirty kilometres away from Kornayal across the mountains.

One day when Imad was two years old, he was out walking with his grandmother when he rushed over to a man in the street and hugged him. The man asked Imad if he knew him and Imad replied "Yes, you were my neighbour." The man didn't know Imad but said that he was from the village of Khriby.

Imad's father didn't like the idea that his son was a reincarnation and so Imad would only talk about his past existence when his father couldn't hear him but he continued to tell his mother and grandmother about his past life and about the beauty of Jamile. He told them of a man who had had his legs crushed beneath the wheels of a truck and died soon afterward. He said that he could recall the accident vividly but he hadn't been able to see the man's face. As he grew older he would often express delight at being able to walk and begged his family to take him to Khriby but his father would flatly refuse to do so. This is where Stevenson came in, and he collected all the information he could from the boy, who was by now five years old, and he then travelled to the village of Khriby to see if he could verify any of the details that Imad had given him.

He found a local family called Bouhamzy and one member of the family, Said Bouhamzy, had been run over by a truck and had his legs crushed by it,

dying shortly afterward despite an operation. Stevenson was shown the house that Said had lived in but he found that it didn't match the house that Imad had described to him and nor did any of the details he had been given about Imad's life. Never the less Stevenson continued to investigate and found that Said had had a cousin named Ibrahim Bouhamzy who had caused an uproar in the village by living with his mistress, a young and beautiful woman named Jamile. Ibrahim's life had been cut short when he died in 1949 of tuberculosis at age twenty five and, for the final six months of his life, Ibrahim had been bedridden and unable to walk which had caused him great distress. Ibrahim, like Said, had been a truck driver and had been involved in minor accidents but he had been devastated by Said's death, and the Mahmoud that Imad had mentioned was found to have been an uncle of Ibrahim.

Stevenson found that Ibrahim's house matched that described by Imad and the man living in the house next door was the same man that Imad had hugged in the street. In total, Stevenson was able to verify forty seven facts that he had been given by Imad about his former life, and forty four of them matched details of Ibrahim's life.

On his return to Kornayal he managed to persuade Imad's father to let his son go to Khriby and on the journey there Imad was able to give seven details about the journey, a journey which he had supposedly never made before, and on arrival at Khriby he gave a further sixteen facts about Ibrahim's life, fourteen of which turned out to be true, and perhaps the most amazing of all Imad said that he had owned two rifles and so they went into the house that had been shut up for several years and Imad was able to go straight to the hiding place where one of the guns was still hidden.

Professor Stevenson's first published work was called "Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation" and was published in 1966, but over the years he has collected over a thousand cases like this, though few are so strongly convincing. Also impressive is the almost accidental way in which he stumbled upon it. Much of his work was done in India and not so surprisingly as Hindu and Buddhist religions are supporters of reincarnation, and, during one stay in the village of Rasulpur in Uttar, Pradesh, he was able to collect details about a possible case that had occurred in 1954 to a child called Jasbir Lal Jat who fell ill with smallpox and apparently died aged three, but as preparations for his burial were being made, Jasbir began to show signs of



life and soon recovered fully. It was a number of weeks before the boy could talk again, and over the ensuing weeks his family began to grow very concerned about him, feeling that his personality had changed. He now said that his name was Sobha Ram and that he was the son of a Brahmin family (a higher caste than his “real” family) called Shankar Lil Tyagi who lived in Vehedi some twenty miles away from Rasulpur, and he would also speak words used by the Brahmin caste and he refused to eat the food his family prepared for him.

His plight was heard about by a Brahmin woman who volunteered to cook the Brahmin food that he insisted on for him. It was several years before a Vehedi woman shed any light on the matter, albeit unwittingly, when she returned to her home village of Rasulpur for the first time since 1952 when Jasbir had been just eighteen months old, yet he was able to recognise her and she was told his unusual story. She reported the tale to her family on her return to Vehedi and the family of the late Sobha Ram came to hear about it. They were so interested that they visited Jasbir who was able to greet them upon their arrival and refer to them all by name, and he gave details about their relationship to Sobha Ram Tyagi and some details about their lives in Vehedi. He was also able to give an accurate account of how Sobha Ram had died after falling from a carriage during a wedding procession. Jasbir was allowed to go to Vehedi to stay with the Tyagi family where he was much happier than he had recently been in Rasulpur since his recovery.

Stevenson was able to compile a list of thirty nine facts about Sobha Ram's life that Jasbir mentioned before his visits to Vehedi, and thirty eight of them he was able to corroborate. The one fact that he was unable to corroborate was the most intriguing of all, that Jasbir said Sobha Ram's fatal fall was as a result of him being poisoned by some doctored sweets and he was also able to name his murderer. The Tyagi family had no way to prove this but they had always felt that Sobha Ram had been murdered, and quite unbelievably the time of Sobha Ram's death had coincided exactly with Jasbir Lal Jat's fatal bout of smallpox. Had Sobha Ram replaced him in his body after dying from his fall?

It is in a large percentage of cases that the alleged reincarnate has died a violent or sudden death and, as well as leaving mental scars and memories, it can also leave scars on the physical body. These are usually in the form of birthmarks on the “reincarnated” person's body where there were fatal

wounds on the body of the dead person in question.

Stevenson thought he had found the "perfect example of a reincarnation case" when he found a french village boy who had several birthmarks and who spoke of a former life and being killed by bullets hitting him where his birthmarks were. The boy was able to name his killers and said that one of them had accused him of cheating at cards beforehand. He was able to give his former name, the names of his parents, those of his siblings and that of a girlfriend. He also gave the name of the place where he had lived and where he had ultimately been shot. The boy would not learn the French language but spoke in a foreign tongue. He ate with his hands, but not the food prepared for him as he would ask for rice and hot curries. He wouldn't wear pants but wore a kind of sarong and he was extremely agile when climbing trees, claiming that he was once a coconut picker. He wanted to play cards and would ask for his favourite drink "arack".

His parents called in outside help and they found that the language he was using was Sinhalese, and the village he talked about was found to exist in Sri Lanka, and there had indeed been a coconut picker by the name he had given who had indeed been shot and killed before the French boy had been born.

Stevenson said that this case satisfies three important criteria, and they are;

1. Memories of the dead person's life.
2. Inherited traits.
3. Wounds and birthmarks.

This is by no means the only case of wounds or behavioural patterns manifesting themselves in a subsequent incarnation, there is also the interesting case of the young Indian boy called Titu who told his parents that he used to be the owner of a television and video shop along with his wife Uma. He said that the shop had been robbed and, in the process of defending his property, he had been shot and killed but he was able to identify his murderer. Titu's family decided to locate the shop that their son was talking about, and from his descriptions they were able to do so. When they visited it they found that it was indeed being run by a woman named Uma who said that yes, her husband had been shot during a robbery. Titu's head was then

shaved and he was found to have birthmarks on his head that were both the same size and in the same place as the entry and exit wounds on the dead man's body. The killer was tracked down and connected to with the robbery and was thus sentenced to imprisonment for the murder of Titu in his former existence.

We have seen some of the evidence for reincarnation but perhaps the finest example of it being alive and well today is to be found in Tibet, where the Dalai Lama is believed to be the reincarnation of the Chenrezi, the Buddhist God of grace, and this has been the belief since 1391. So far he is believed to have been reincarnated fourteen times.

Dalai Lama means “greatest teacher” and upon his death the Lamas of Tibet have the task of finding his reincarnation, which is a male child born after the death. When the thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933, he was three days dead on the throne when he turned his head to the north east. A star shaped fungus grew on the north east wall of his mausoleum and in the monastery's main court yard, a dragon flower grew by the east wall, and so the Lamas began a search in this direction, a search that would take them six years. In order to help them find their new leader they used Astrology, dreams and omens and finally they centred their efforts on a house in China and, when they finally entered the house, the boy they were seeking asked one of the Lamas for the Rosary that he was wearing beneath his disguise and he was also able to recognise other Rosaries, a drum and a walking stick that had belonged to his predecessor. They checked him for the birthmarks and moles that all the Dalai Lama carry and they were found to be in the right places and so he was taken from China to Tibet to begin his training. Is the Dalai Lama continually reincarnated and found by the Lamas, and if so, why?

It is, of course, based on religious belief but these same religious beliefs state that a soul need only return until it has attained a state on Nirvana. Has the Dalai Lama not yet achieved this state in over six hundred years? Could a suitable child always eventually be found to fit the necessary criteria if the search went on for long enough?

The basis of the Hindu belief in reincarnation is based on the “Wheel of Sansara” which, like the universe, has no end and no beginning and man can influence his “births” upon the wheel by his spiritual self or “Karma.” A good man will have a good Karma and be reborn in a higher caste and therefore be a step closer to his Nirvana. It is however not only the Hindus

and Buddhists that believe in reincarnation but some two thirds of the world's population and a recent survey in the U.K. found that 25% of Britons also believed in it, and this dates back to the depths of time as it was not uncommon for the ancient druids to lend money in the understanding that it would be paid back in a future incarnation.

Professor Stevenson has found a familiar pattern in the majority of the cases that he has looked at, usually a child of about two years of age will behave strangely and claim that he or she is somebody else and they will have vivid memories of a violent or sudden death. Other memories will include their previous name, address, occupation and the names of their family members, and these memories will reach a peak at the age of five or six and then begin to fade, until by the age of ten they are all but forgotten. The previous life is very often lived in the same locale as the present one or not far away, though there are a few cases of international reincarnations. Ninety percent of the statements made about the previous life will prove to be true and all of them are made while in a wakeful state.

There are curious examples of such inexplicable memories as thinking you have seen something before or a feeling that you have visited a place before. These continue into adulthood and are experienced by 70% of people and we refer to this phenomenon as “Deja Vu.”

Deja Vu experiences cover a wide spectrum and may vary from this sense of familiarity with a place to having a detailed knowledge of it, such as the lady who was visiting a house in Worcester and found an old doorway that had been covered up because she “knew” that it was there, or the French nurse who claimed that she knew of a sealed room at the top of a staircase in the castle's turrets at St. Germaine En Laye before she had ever visited the building. She was only proved to be correct after city documents were checked. Though very strange indeed these experiences are not necessarily proof of the existence of reincarnation which is generally taken to be a conscious recollection of a previous existence, but there are many more cases of subconscious recollections which we refer to as past lives, and which are recollected when the “patient” is under hypnosis. The most famous case, without which any talk of past lives is incomplete, is that of Bridey Murphey.

There have been countless reports of past lives dating from as early as 100 years ago, and some of which, from 1956 onward, were conducted live on television by Emile Franckel on a Los Angeles programme called

“Adventures in Hypnotism” but by far the most famous and detailed case is the one which brought the phenomenon of past lives to the attention of the public at large. It was the work of American amateur hypnotist Morey Bernstein of Colorado whose book “The Search For Bridey Murphey” wetted the public's appetite.

The “patient” was a lady called Virginia Burns Tighe, though she also used the name Ruth Mills Simmons, and she was at the time a twenty nine year old native of Madison, Wisconsin who had lived in Chicago from the age of three. She had never been to Ireland nor mixed regularly with Irish people and though this allegation was levelled at her she strongly denied it.

Virginia Tighe was regressed under hypnosis to two previous lives the first of which was almost impossible to verify as it was that of a child who had died while still in babyhood but it was the second life, that of Bridey "Bridget" Murphey, which was the ground breaker, and one which became a test case that possessed all of the typical features of such cases. They are that some of the facts recalled are confirmed as true while some are found to be incorrect, there are memories of insignificant, trivial details while major events of the time are forgotten and the patient undergoes a complete, and convincing, change of character to “become” the person they claim to have been.

Bridey Murphey was born on December 20th, 1798 to Duncan, a barrister and cropper, and his wife Kathleen who was granddaughter to Bridget. The Murpheys were a protestant family living at The Meadows, Cork. Her brother Duncan Blaine was born in 1796 and he later married Aimã’e who was the daughter of Mrs. Strayne whose day school Bridey attended when she was fifteen years old. Duncan was also a cropper of flax, hay, tobacco and corn, and one day he had cut himself with a scythe, the name of which Bridey could not remember. When she was ten years old she went on a trip to Antrim. Her friends were Mary, Katherine and Kevin Moore. In 1818 she married Sean (she pronounced it Se-an) Brian Joseph Maccarthy who was a catholic son of a barrister, nephew to a Mr. Plazze (the proper spelling of Blaize) who married an “orange” and was also the grandson of Mrs. Delilinan Maccarthy.

The newlyweds then travelled to Belfast by carriage through Carlingford, Mourne and Balings (Bailings) Crossing (the latter two of which did not appear on any map but which did exist), the glens of Antrim and

Doby (possibly Dovea or Dopy) a village on the old coach road not found on modern maps. Brian wrote about law cases in the "Belfast News Letter" and so he would have signed his name. Though she wasn't able to give her Belfast address she remembered that she had worshipped at St. Theresa's church in a street off Dooley Road whose priest was Father John Gorman and the church would have kept records of Bridget Murphey Maccarthy because all family details had to be put on the church board. Bridey did her shopping at Caden (Cadenns) house for women's clothes, Farris (for food), John Carrigan's greengrocery and she paid with pounds, sixpences, tuppences and copper halfpennies and she also knew of a big rope company, a tobacco house and described Belfast as being lit by "poles with lights on them." She also remembered three men at Queen's University, William Mcglone, Fitzhugh and Fitzmaurice. Bridey Murphey died on a Sunday in 1864 aged 66 after a fall downstairs that broke her hip, and she remembered that at her funeral a man played Uilleann pipes.

As the sessions of hypnotic regression continued Mrs. Tighe's Irish accent improved and she would use Irish words such as "brate" (properly "quait", a small toasting cup), "Ditch" (for bury which some experts questioned, but others maintained that it was used for mass burials after the 1845 -7 famine), "tup" (for fellow, which had no connection with Ireland in the 1800s), "slip" (for a child's pinafore or frock), "linen" (for a handkerchief made of linen, a word now obsolete in this context) and she used the word "lough" to describe rivers (a word now used only for lakes but in the 19th Century it was used for rivers as well).

Bridey was a good dancer and had learned the art at Mrs. Strayne's day school. She mentioned a dance called "The Morning Jig" and on one occasion when she was aroused from a trance but before she was fully conscious she danced The Morning Jig which ended with a yawn. She played the leer (lyre) but not very well and she knew songs like "The Londonderry Air" which was popular at the time and she also claimed to have read "The Sorrows Of Deirdre" which was published in both English and Gaelic (Erse) in 1808 and she also knew in great detail the procedure for kissing the Blarney Stone which was done in Bridey's day but seldom now apart from daring tourists.

Verification of facts as obscure as some of these is extremely difficult, for instance Bridey remembered her father being angry with her for pulling

straws out of the thatch on the barn, and obviously this would be impossible to check on. Registers of births, deaths and marriages were not kept in Cork before 1864 and so such records would be kept in the family bible which has never been found, so subsequently there is no record of a Bridey Murphey in Cork in 1798, however we can verify many of the details such as the tobacco grown in Cork and the act passed in 1793 which enabled Catholics to enter the legal profession. There is no known St. Theresa's church in Belfast at that time nor a Father John Joseph Gorman though there is a record of Carrigan and Farr in the Belfast city directory for 1865-6 but not any other year despite them being the only traders in food stuffs at the time. Though Queen's University was a protestant university no student or instructor was barred on religious grounds and there was in fact a Fitzmaurice and a Mcgloin (not Mcglone) there at the time, and the Uilleann pipes were customary at funerals due to their sombre tones.

When Morey Bernstein's book was published in 1956 it instantly became a best seller and started a craze of "Come As You Were" parties which people would attend wearing the garb that they would have worn in their former lives. Even worse was the tragic case of a young boy from Shaanee, Oklahoma who shot himself and left a suicide note which read; "They say curiosity kills a cat and I'm very curious about this Bridey Murphey story so I'm going to investigate in person."

The newspapers became filled with in-depth reports of the facts that were confirmed and those that weren't, and they began to suppose that though the facts were true she may have learned them in this existence and stored them subconsciously rather than recalled them from a previous incarnation, and so they began to delve into Virginia Tighe's past in order to try and discover from where she may have gleaned this information.

She may have read a book about it, she may have been in a room while the television was switched on and unwittingly picked up what was being said on it and stored it deep in her mind until she was hypnotically regressed. They found that Tighe had a childhood friend whose maiden name was Bridie Murphy, and also Tighe's aunt, who was called Marie Burns had at some point lived with her. The "Chicago American" tried to show that Tighe had got her accent and information from her aunt and Burns was described as being "As Irish as the lakes of Kilkenny" but Mrs. Burns was born in New York of Scottish-Irish descent and in his rebuttal Morey Bernstein wrote

"You could say that she was as Irish as the lakes of Kilkenny in as much as there are no lakes in Kilkenny."

An interesting epilogue to this story is that Virginia Tighe was also able to describe what had happened to her after she had died. She says that she remained in her home until the death of Father Gorman whom she could talk to, she was however unable to talk to her husband Brian who did not join her after her death, nor was she able to talk to her brother when she returned to Cork. She could travel from place to place simply by willing herself to be somewhere else and she met many people, some of whom she didn't know and others whom she did, including her little brother who had died while still young. Though relatives didn't always stay together her father and mother did meet. There was no difference between men and women but one knew the difference intuitively. There was no insanity, sleep, day, night, heat, cold, war, disease, old age, grief, pain, love, hate, family or marriages, senses, (except sight and sound) just "satisfaction." She was able to tell the future for people on the earth, and when it was time for her to be reincarnated she was told by "some woman."

It was found that at the time most of the information Tighe disclosed was unavailable across the Atlantic but it was still felt that she may have found it somewhere and "stored" it in her subconscious mind until she was hypnotically regressed. Would it be possible for somebody to unwittingly store this much detailed information and recall it years later under hypnosis? Apparently so because there was one case of a Canadian psychologist who put a patient through hypnotic regression, and while the patient was under he would write in a strange language which was found to be Oscan, a precursor to Latin, but when he was in a wakeful state he was unable understand what he had written or write anything further. When the case was looked into it was found that one day the gentleman had sat next to a man in a library who had been reading a book that was open at a page with an ancient Oscan curse on it and, with just one glance, he had memorised it subconsciously and was able to recite it under hypnosis, this process is known as "Cryptomnesia."

This ability is also used on occasion by the police in solving crimes where perhaps a witness may have seen a getaway vehicle and glanced at the number plate but failed to memorise it properly. When they are put under hypnosis they will be able to recall the number in full, and also remember any distinguishing marks on the vehicle such as scratches in the paint or spots of



mud on it. The problem with hypnosis though, as in the cases of alleged alien abductions and the stories the victims recount, is that while hypnotised the witness will say not what is necessarily the truth but what they believe to be the truth, and so it is possible that everything they say about their past life is just a figment of their imagination, and the correct details they give are perhaps just pot luck or could be something they have learned somewhere and then apparently forgotten all about. Should somebody be interested in, for example, the history of the Roman empire, would they then be likely to recall a past life as a Roman Centurion?

There was an experiment done in America by the psychologist Robert Baker on a group of people who had never been lost as a child. They were hypnotised and then asked if they remembered the time that they had been lost in a shopping mall and helped by an old lady. None of them had ever been in such a situation and yet they all recounted detailed stories of how they had become separated from their parents lost and they even came up with a description for the old lady. They had convinced themselves on some level that this was perfectly true.

So we know that our memories are not “fixed,” they can be altered in time, and another good way to show this is known as the “metronome experiment.” This is where you take a metronome that is ticking at a rate of once every second, and then tell somebody under hypnosis that it is ticking once every minute. When they are woken from their trance they will experience sixty ticks (one minute) as one hour and if you ask them what they were doing for that one hour they will come up with an hour's worth of fantasy. So if the conscious mind is able to create such intricate tales, then so too must the subconscious mind, and these pseudo memories can be so emotionally intense and so powerful that they are able to reduce the patient to tears or a state of panic.

The average person will have up to seven dreams every night, most of which will only last for a few seconds, and we will only usually be able to recall the first and the last, but the subconscious mind will be able to recall all seven of them and perhaps fill in some of the details itself and maybe then you can recite them under hypnosis as if they were true.

There are other, more easily confirmed, cases, such as more recent past lives than those in the Roman Garrisons or in 17th Century Ireland, but the irony with this is that the more recent the past life, the more freely available

the information on it will be to those who will recall it, so it is far easier to stumble upon it in every day life which rather defeats the object. The question then becomes; how much information can the mind hold, because rarely do patients experience just one past life but many of them spanning many many years and many eras in history.

It is interesting though that they always seem to have suffered from a violent or an unnatural death, and this is sometimes evident in their present life, for example, a person with a fear of water may well recall a past life in which they had died from drowning. Could this really be a lingering memory they have retained or is it just the brains way of coping with such an irrational fear, i.e. by trying to rationalise it through giving it a justifiable cause? There is an argument to say that rather than adopting such a fear from a past life we could be born with it by inheriting our memory as well as our genetic make up, for example could a person who has had a past life as a woman come back as a man and live as a homosexual? A similar argument is “retrocognition” or E.S.P. and says that we aren't genetically made with these memories but we store them while we are still in the womb, or telepathically from people around us, though this cannot explain the cases that have no connection with family or area. It is far more likely though that to some extent we will inherit our own parents' phobias via a far more down to earth cause. For example we will as a child copy our parents' behaviour in many ways, it is the way that we learn whether or not most things are good or bad, and if we constantly see our parents shying away from water or being reduced to a quivering wreck when confronted by a spider then we will automatically come to see these same things as dangerous or frightening.

However skeptical we are there is a case which would seem to cross all of the boundaries. It concerns an American girl who had a fear of water and was regressed to a past life during which she had been a young girl who lived by the banks of the Mississippi river, and she would sit by the water with her fiance and watch the paddle steamers float by. She suffered death by drowning in the waters she had sat next to so many times. In another part of America completely independently of this, a man was hypnotically regressed and he recalled the life of a boy who had seen his fiancée drown in the waters of the Mississippi. The two were brought together for a television programme having never met and continued to give details of their former lives as lovers which were confirmed by the other. Could this be the proof? It is certainly

more convincing than cases in which there is only one person, but what we have to look at is the manner in which the information is taken, for example, we know that people can be misled under hypnosis into, to name but one trick, eating onions because they think that they are apples, and many experts believe that the Bridey Murphey case should be discounted because of the way that the questions were asked. Rather than regressing Tighe to anywhere in particular, Bernstein said to her, "Go to some other place in some other time" and if Tighe was suggestible enough she could have easily taken this to mean that she should make up "some other place in some other time" rather than the one she may have been present in.

We've seen the most famous case of a past life, but there are many many more, one Welsh housewife, Jane Evans, recounted several past lives. One of them was that of Livonia, the wife to the Tutor of Constantine (later to be Emperor of Rome) in Britain in the year 4AD. During these sessions she gave many details which turned out to be taken, almost word for word, from the novel "The Living Wood" by Loius De Wohl which she claims to have forgotten reading. She also spoke of the life of a young Jewess in 1190 in York during the massacre of the Jews, in which she gave a wealth of information about York in the 12th Century, but which unfortunately turned out to be false and was in fact taken from a play which had been broadcast on B.B.C. radio. Jane Evans' past lives, though at first perfectly convincing were picked apart by researcher Melvin Harris who described them as "Looking more like a highly aerated Swiss cheese than evidence for reincarnation" so many were the holes in them.

So we can see the problems we have when looking for proof of past lives, but hypnotist Joe Keeton thought he'd found that proof when he regressed a woman called "Jan" and she became Joan Waterhouse, an eighteen year old who was tried for witchcraft at Chelmsford Assizes, Essex in 1556. She gave many accurate facts that were verified, including the existence of Joan Waterhouse and her appearance in the dock, however she gave the name of the reigning monarch as Queen Elizabeth I, when the monarch in 1556 was in fact Queen Mary I. The only place that Jan could have gleaned this information from was a contemporary pamphlet of which the only surviving copy was in the library of Lambeth Palace where Jan said she had never been, nor she said had she ever seen the document. However, the pamphlet had undergone a reprint and there was one mistake in it, the

reprint gave the year of the trial as 1556 (the year given by Jan) but the original document gave the year as 1566 by which time Mary I had been replaced on the throne by Elizabeth I for some eight years.

So it turned out that Jan had read, registered and forgotten the reprint until she was regressed and had recited it under hypnosis. So again we see the difficulty in trying to use the mind, a thing we don't fully understand, to probe its depths to prove that a phenomenon exists when we have yet to learn its powers and the way in which it works, and so until we do understand the mind we cannot prove without doubt whether past lives are genuine or not.

The essence of the question of reincarnation and past lives is, what is it that happens to us when we die? Can we somehow return and try again or not? If we take the part of us that would return and occupy another body as being the “soul” then we have to consider at what point around or after conception does a sperm and an egg require a soul? Is the soul present already in the sperm or the egg and merely evolves as the pregnancy develops? Surely not because the foetus must surely have a brain to be able to possess any kind of intelligence, i.e. its personality or soul, so where does the “soul” come from and what is it? Is there a “pool” of souls which somehow inherit a body while it is still in the womb or is a soul borne of physical matter where the physical and psychological meet? In this case there would be no pool of souls as such, as each pregnancy, be it miscarried, aborted or carried full term, would “create” a new soul at some point.

The other end of the cycle is of course death, the point at which the physical body, the “shell”, ceases to function. Does the soul also cease to function at the same point, or can the soul leave the body at some point around death, perhaps on a spiritual plain and continue its quest for Nirvana? If we believe that a soul is borne out of physical matter at early pregnancy then we must surely also believe that it dies when the physical body dies, unless of course this is the first life in one of many in which case the soul may become spiritual at the end of the physical body's life. Or if we believe that a soul is “adopted” by a physical body, or vice versa, in the womb then can we at the same time believe that the soul dies along with that physical body? Is conception the beginning of a soul's existence or is it merely one stage along the way, a kind of transition, and is death the end of a soul's existence or is it a part of the same transition? In short is it the end of the beginning or the beginning of the end?

It seems that to answer one question is to create five more to answer, and this part of life, and our opinions on it, is a very personal thing and an individual thing. Nobody can say who is right and who is wrong, what we can do though is give a considered opinion on it and this may tie in with a persons personal and religious beliefs or it may be entirely independent of them. We must bear points like this in mind when we are giving thought to our opinions and beliefs. If a soul does survive death then where does it go to, and more importantly can it go back to the womb? It is interesting that cases of reincarnation tend to concern people who have died violently, suddenly or unnaturally, and have come back as though they have yet to finish what they started on earth.

As I said earlier this is a very individual thing and my opinion is that reincarnation can and sometimes does occur, but when studying the evidence for or against the phenomenon it is very difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff, that is, can we say absolutely that the genuine cases are those that centre around young children who remember a former life when they are very young, but outgrow their memories as though they are not really meant to remember them at all? However, these cases are made all the more convincing when the child has birthmarks that correspond to injuries they sustained in their previous existence, and I believe that the criteria set by Professor Stevenson i.e. memories, character traits and birthmarks are not necessarily “vital” ingredients, but a case would have to be considered to be very dubious if it did not possess at least two of them.

The cases that I distinguished from reincarnation, i.e. past lives that are recalled under hypnosis, I do not believe are genuine and could be created in the mind in any number of ways, such as dreams about characters we would like to be, favourite historical periods and false truths such as the old lady in the shopping mall, and it is these situations in which we are most likely to forget relevant details but fill in trivial ones while convincing ourselves that it is true.

I don't believe that we can be born with an inherited memory although we are born with a certain amount of knowledge, or rather instinct, such as the awareness to suckle at the breast or to grasp with the fingers, or it may go slightly deeper than this. In his book “Reincarnation” David Christie-Murray makes the point that we may be able to learn to ride a bike more quickly than our great grandparents or we may be better able to master technology such as

computers, though it is very unlikely that this would go far enough for us to be able to inherit a complete set of memories, and though these past life cases often seem baffling at first glance there is often an alternative explanation, and one that is far more probable than having lived on earth, possibly several times before and being able to recall the details of those lives while under hypnosis. I believe that most cases we have seen are caused by cryptomnesia, a forgotten memory, and this would seem to be the most likely cause.

As for “genuine” reincarnation cases, I believe that the “reborn” soul takes possession of a body at some point (in the case of Sobha Ram who took over Jasbir Lal Jat's body it happened at age 3 when he apparently died of smallpox), though in the natural process I believe that a soul, or rather a personality or “awareness” is created, and that reincarnation is a fluke and a flaw which is not meant to happen, and yet does do so when the right circumstances are present. This would also mean that I don't believe in the spiritual journey of birth and rebirth on the Wheel of Sansara, or even the wheel of life, and the quest for Nirvana.

I think that in the "normal" process each new life creates a new personality (soul) and that this soul lives on after the physical body dies, and wherever it may go to, and that must be somewhere, it is meant to stay there and not return.

## SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION

For over three hundred years the debate has raged; does the phenomenon Spontaneous Human Combustion (S.H.C.) really exist and if so what is it? Can a living, breathing person just burst into flames without warning or any sign of outside cause and be reduced to nothing more than a pile of ashes and the odd indiscriminate body part, while leaving the surrounding area relatively untouched?

Scientists have been reluctant to admit that S.H.C. is real, as have coroners who tend to prefer to record an open verdict, but firefighters and police disagree, for it is they who examine the grisly scenes first, and they can offer no other possible explanation for the remains they find.

There are generally believed to have been dozens of S.H.C. cases in the last three years alone, but one pathologist, Dr. David Price, stated that he has seen a case roughly every four years. It would appear to be more common in the U.K. than it is elsewhere, but there is no obvious reason for this, though some people believe that the U.K. is criss-crossed by "Fire Leynes" and it is along these fire leyne that cases of S.H.C. occur. These same people also claim that S.H.C. occurs in cycles which they can predict, but if you want to find one of these people then don't bother to look in Birmingham, England in the year 2004 because you won't find them there!

The phenomenon has been around for a long time, and the first medieval reference to S.H.C. appears in "Acta" written by Thomas Bartholia, a Danish medical writer, and was published in Copenhagen in 1673. It was thought, in those days, that it was caused by alcohol, and that the victims were drunkards "who had saturated their bodies with spirits." Bartholia recounts the case of a

Parisienne woman whom he said "used to drink spirit of wine (brandy) plentifully for the space of three years, so as to take nothing else. Her body contracted such a combustible disposition, that one night, when she lay down on a straw couch she was all burned to ashes except her skull and the extremities of her fingers."

In the French town of Rhiems in the year 1725 Nicole Millet was found burned to death in an armchair, that was otherwise untouched by the fire, and her husband was arrested and convicted of her murder but on appeal the verdict was changed to S.H.C. which inspired a scholar, Jonas Dupont, to gather together all of the evidence that he could find for S.H.C. and he published his work in Leyden in 1763, it was entitled "De Incendis Corporis Humani Spontaneis."

One case of S.H.C. that is included in just about every article, magazine and book on Spontaneous Human Combustion first appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" in 1746 and it is that of the 62 year old Countess Cornelia Bandi in 1731. The Countess' body was found lying approximately four feet from her bed, which she had got out of, as the covers were turned back, or perhaps it may be more accurate to say that what was left of the Countess' body was found. Her arms and legs remained almost intact beside a pile of ashes and what was left of her skull. The authorities blamed her death on "internal combustion" despite the Countess having no close relationship with the bottle, but the gossip around the town was that she would often wash her body down with "camphorated spirit of wine" whenever "she felt herself indisposed." Perhaps the locals felt that there had to be a link with alcohol somehow, even if it was only that a person may be more careless and accident prone where fire is concerned, and doctors would warn their patients that drank to remain clear of naked flames, and obviously not to cool themselves with camphorated spirit of wine.

As the death toll rose, temperance movements began to warn of the perils of alcohol, and they said that death was caused by an inner fire which water could not extinguish. They burned from within and destroyed nothing else but the victim, and the smoke was different to any other as it would leave behind an oily, sticky soot deposit on anything it came into contact with.

As the phenomenon slowly became more accepted, many works of nineteenth century fiction alluded to death by S.H.C., some of the less obscure examples include Washington Irving's "Knickerbocker History of



New York“ (1809), Mark twain's “Life On The Mississippi” (1883), Herman Melville's “Redburn” (1849) and Frederick Marryat's “Jacob Faithful” (1833) in which Marryat based the account of the death of the hero's mother on a London “Times” report from 1832 which reduced the body to "a sort of unctuous pitchy cinder" but perhaps the most celebrated account of all the Victorian fiction is that found in Charles Dickens' 1853 book “Bleak House” in which the miserly and alcoholic villain “Krook”'s death is described in "sickening" detail. The account sparked angry reaction from many readers who wrote to Dickens claiming that he had given "currency to a vulgar error" but he responded by saying that he was merely speaking from experience as he had attended an inquest into just such a death when he had been a young reporter for the “Morning Chronicle” twenty years earlier.

The medical profession would come to consider Marryat's description as a classic one as it contained five features which are typical of S.H.C.:

- The victim was an elderly female.
- The victim was an alcoholic.
- A lamp (which may or may not have started the fire) was present.
- Nearby combustible materials remained untouched.
- There was a sticky residue.

The link that the highly moralistic Victorians made between S.H.C. and alcohol is now known to be unfounded, as any person who consumed vast quantities of alcohol would die from alcohol poisoning long before they became flammable, and the only possible connection is summed up by the investigator Joe Nickell who says that "alcohol may have indeed been a contributory factor [in deaths apparently due to S.H.C.] although not in the way some 19th Century theorists imagined. A drunken person would be more likely to be careless with fire and less able to properly respond to an accident."

The reality of the phenomenon was slow to gain acceptance, and it still has got to do so in certain circles, but as the number of occurrences increases certain facts come to light about who and when it will strike. For instance, it was found in a recent survey that most of the victims were middle aged females who would fall prey to S.H.C., with 58% of victims being female, 23% being over 70 years of age and over half, at 52%, being over 50 years of

age. They would most often be struck in the hours of darkness, with 51% of incidences occurring between midnight and 6am, and a staggering 75% between dusk and dawn in the twelve hours from 6pm to 6am. Still, doctors as a whole did not believe that it could happen, and a recent survey found that only 12% of the U.K. adult population believe that people can sometimes catch fire for no apparent reason. Doctors, being doctors, prefer to rely on alternative causes for S.H.C. such as carelessly discarded cigarettes or sparks from a fire, and as the Editor of the "Fortean Times" Bob Rickard says, "Faced with the alternative - a nightmare out of the dark ages - it is not surprising that they are accepted." but the evidence could clearly not be ignored.

Spontaneous combustion is known to occur in flammable materials such as coal, paper or straw without a direct source of ignition when a process called oxidisation occurs. This is when the oxygen in the air combines with the reactive surface particles which causes smouldering until there is enough heat to cause a flame. The process is very difficult to detect in its early stages because there is very little or no energy lost in heat or light before the flame itself appears - the flash point. Chemical reactions in other forms also produce heat such as the many bush fires we see each year throughout the world. Dr. Peter McCartney, a hyperbaric physician, has found that the Baobab tree of Western Africa will combust spontaneously when two of the chemicals stored in two separate chambers inside it come together. He has also found that old cannonballs when they are raised from ancient ship wrecks after many many years totally immersed in the salt water will generate heat when they meet the air. What is not clear is whether or not this heat is generated by the elements in the water reacting with the air, or the algae clinging to the relics, but even so the generation of heat and spontaneous combustion in flammable materials is quite far removed from the spontaneous combustion of the human body.

Throughout its early history the phenomenon constantly met with complete scientific rejection, for example in 1873 Dr. Alfred Swaine Taylor wrote "Principals and Practise of Medical Jurisprudence" in which he stated that: "The hypothesis of such a mode of destruction of the human body is not only unsupported by any credible facts, but is wholly inconsistent with all that science has revealed" and "In the instances reported which are worthy of credit, a candle, a fire, or some other ignited body has been at hand, and the

accidental kindling of the clothes of the deceased was highly probable" but by the time that the book had reached its 8th edition in 1928 the doubts are beginning to appear as the editor had added that while still "absolutely rejecting any doctrine of spontaneous combustion" "it must be admitted, on the other hand, that there are cases recorded by credible authorities which require some explanation to account for the unusual amount of destruction which has been produced in a human body by what are at first sight very inadequate means."

The "amount of destruction" varied from total to very minor, and in the book "Fire From Heaven" Michael Harrison looked at a particular case of S.H.C. and put forward a truly original, if not completely preposterous, idea which proposed that S.H.C. could somehow be linked to intelligence and that it would not strike the "better educated" and he used the case of a professor of mathematics at the University of Nashville, Tennessee, James Hamilton.

Hamilton was standing outside his house when he felt a stabbing pain in his left leg - "a steady pain like a hornet sting, accompanied by a sensation of heat." - He looked down and saw a bright flame shooting out from his trouser leg and he tried to beat it out with his hands but this had no effect. He knew that what was happening to him could not, or rather should not, happen, but also he knew that when a fire is deprived of oxygen it cannot burn, so he cupped his hands around the flames until they died and went out.

Fortunately, for the rest of us, it isn't only the "better educated" that survive an attack of S.H.C., there are several reports of other people who have also had a close brush with a fiery death. One such person was a nineteen year old computer operator from London, England named Paul Hayes. Hayes was walking through Stepney Green, East London late on May 25th, 1985 when he was struck. He described it as "like being plunged into the heart of a furnace. My arms felt as though they were being prodded by red hot pokers from my shoulders to my wrists. My cheeks were red hot, my ears were numb. My chest felt like boiling water had been poured over it. I thought i could hear my brains bubbling. I tried to run, stupidly thinking I could race ahead of the flames." After running he lay down on the ground and curled himself into a ball, and thirty seconds later the flames died as quickly as they had started and he stumbled into the nearby London Hospital and was treated for burns.

On November 15th 1974 Jack Angel stopped for the night in his mobile

home at Ramada Inn, Savannah, Georgia, and when he woke the next morning he found that his right hand was badly burned and blistered. He also found that he had similar burns on his chest, back, groin, leg and ankles. He had felt nothing during the night and clearly had not woken when it had happened, but he was more puzzled by the fact that his bedclothes and his pyjamas were left unmarked by the burns. He staggered out of his home into the motel building and collapsed to the ground. When he next woke he was lying, in great discomfort, in a hospital bed, and the doctors told him that his burns had originated inside his body but they had no idea how. They had also performed the necessary surgery which included the amputation of his burned hand and lower forearm. With the aid of a renowned Georgia law firm Angel sued the manufacturer of his mobile home for \$3 million in damages, but after three years of investigation including the complete dismantling of the mobile home the cause of the fire could not be determined.

Charles Fort of the "Fortean Times" recorded a case in 1929 of a woman named Lily White from Alberta, Antigua whose clothing would often burn to a crisp while leaving her skin completely untouched, and this happened with such regularity that she had to rely on hand me downs from family members, friends and neighbours in order to keep herself clothed.

It is often said that Tibetan monks can affect their bodies in many ways, and one such way they can do so is to produce an "inner heat" and there are many tales recounted by travellers about when they had walked past meditating monks deep in trance who were not being affected by the freezing cold air around them, or by the falling snow which melts the very instant it touches their skin, but how on earth can they do this? According to Hinduism there is an untapped reservoir of energy which lies in the "Astral Body" known as the "Kundalini". The Kundalini is represented as a coiled up serpent situated at the base of the spine, and it lies dormant unless it can be tapped into by practising "Kundalini Yoga." It is said that the astral body fits "hand in glove" with the physical body and the two meet at several major points on the body which are known as "Chakras."

The chakras are located at the base of the spine, the root of the genitals, the navel, the heart, the base of the throat, the "third eye" (between the eyebrows) and on the crown of the head, and when the kundalini is released the energy flows through these chakras.

Oriental medicine and acupuncture both locate the body's "Manipura

Chakra” or “Fire Centre” in the solar plexus, and an advanced practitioner of Kundalini Yoga can stimulate his chakra to such an extent that it will glow, and in the Tibetan practise of “Tumo,” adepts have been seen to generate so much inner heat that the snow around them will melt. Could this manipulation of the chakra rage so far out of control as to completely devour the body in fire? The discipline of Kundalini Yoga is between 3,000 and 4,000 years old, and practitioners seek to release the Kundalini in order that they can open up the vast areas of the brain which normally go unused.

It is a very long and complex process which takes many years of meditation to achieve and it is believed to be very dangerous both physiologically and psychologically, and students are warned only to practise under the guidance of a competent teacher. When the release occurs, after systematic physical exercise, concentration techniques, visualisation and controlled rhythmic breathing, the effects are said to be a warm feeling at the base of the spine, the “mulaphara”, which begins as warm and changes to hot, then a sensation of burning heat passes throughout the body. It is at this point that the "serpent fire" unless carefully directed can become a destructive force, and the tutor will guide his pupil to control the flow through his chakras. Though the majority of subjects can take years to reach this transcendental state, others can achieve it in a matter of weeks, but it is believed that it can also occur spontaneously without the subject having any practise at, or even knowledge of, Kundalini Yoga, so obviously they have no guidance through the dangerous process where the serpent fire is released.

A research scientist, Itzhak Bentov, has carried out some testing on this "awakening" and feels that the altered states of consciousness may be brought about by the effects of vibration frequencies on physiology, and he goes on to say that Kundalini energy could be released in anybody by environmental stimuli such as mechanical vibration or electromagnetic waves. These he says, can alter the "body rhythm" and "bio-magnetic field." He suggests that the Kundalini may be a development of the central nervous system, but could the influence of the environmental stimuli cause a sensation of great heat to such an extent that it may result in S.H.C.?

Generally the body temperature rises when a person enters a state of trance, and an Italian healer from the town of Foggia, southern Italy named Padra Pio, whose body temperature was usually slightly lower than most, would enter into a trance and his body temperature would rise off the scale of

a clinical thermometer to 118.4 degrees Fahrenheit, but this is far from hot enough to devour a body. It was also said of Pio that while in a trance he seemed to glow.

Some people have a high tolerance for heat, such as the nineteenth century medium Daniel Dunglas Home who would perform feats with fire such as handling hot coals as though he were wearing asbestos gloves. He would also take a hot lamp which he would hold a match against, and as soon as the match came into contact with the lamp it would ignite, he would then place the lamp between his lips and hold it there without feeling any pain or showing any signs of burning. Fire walkers are able to walk barefoot over red hot coals without burning their feet, but it has been shown that just about anybody can do this with practise and the right frame of mind, in theory at least, but there are those who take their abilities to the limit.

Gabrielle Moler and Marie Sonet were two "convulsionnaires" (those who claim to have undergone miraculous cures after experiencing convulsions at the tomb of a highly esteemed deacon known for his kindness and humility). Moler would put her face into a blazing fire and take it out again untouched, or she would put her feet in until her shoes and socks were burned away but her feet would be left unmarked. Sonet would lie over a fire with her head and ankles supported on stools and, wrapped only in a thin sheet to hide her nakedness, she would remain in this position for hours. As with fire walking this is a "trick" which can be learned, but fire raising, pyrokinesis, is a wholly different matter, nobody knows how or why a person may have pyrokinetic abilities.

An early reported case occurred in 1882 when Dr. L. C. Woodman tested and studied 27 year old Mr. W. M. Underwood from Paw Paw, Michigan who had "fiery breath," and the case appeared in "Scientific American." Mr. Underwood was able to ignite pieces of paper or handkerchiefs simply by breathing on them, and when he went on shooting trips he would gather together a pile of dry leaves and then breath on them to start a fire which he could use to dry his socks. He had discovered his "gift" by accident when smelling a scented handkerchief which burst into flames. Dr. Woodman could find no explanation for this but he was able to rule out trickery as he would take certain precautions before any experiment. He would make Mr. Underwood wash his mouth out thoroughly, wash his hands, and he would then examine him completely.

Another celebrated case of pyrokinetic ability happened in Hunan, China in 1990 when four year old Tong Tangjiang started to emit smoke from his trousers. His family examined him and found that his underpants had set on fire so they took him to hospital where he was treated for burns, but he "ignited" a further three times over the next two hours and in the process caused further injury to his hands, armpits and genitals. The doctors suggested that four year old Tong seemed to generate high amounts of electric current which increased when he was excited or agitated.

An earlier case of a young boy, this time a little older, happened in Formia, near Rome, in 1982 to sixteen year old Benedetto Supino who was reading a comic in a dentist's waiting room when it set on fire. From then on it seemed that everything Benedetto looked at caught fire. He would ignite books as he read them, he looked at a plastic object that his uncle was holding and it set alight, and he would walk past the furniture and it would begin to burn. Dr. Giovanni Ballesio, Dean of Physical Medicine at Rome University, investigated to see if Benedetto was generating high levels of electricity, but he found no evidence of it, and now Dr. Demetrio Croce is working with the boy to try and help him to control his fire raising abilities.

On December 12th 1983 in Livorno, Italy, pyrokinesis went on trial, or rather an exponent of it did, in the form of Carol Compton. Compton was a young Scottish nanny who stood accused of five charges of arson and one of attempted murder. She was escorted into court by armed soldiers and locked inside a steel cage that was usually reserved for terrorists.

Compton had begun work as a nanny the previous year and had been sacked from her first position in the Ricci household after three fires had broken out. The first one had destroyed the Riccis' living room, and the following two had occurred while they were all staying in temporary accommodation as repair work was carried out on their home. Carol was blamed for the fires despite there being no evidence to link her to them, in fact at the time of the first one she had been dining with the family in another room.

Next she took a position as nanny to three year old Agnese Cecchini whose wealthy parents worked in television, and on August 1st, 1982 the child's grandfather's bed was found burning, and the following morning Agnese was pulled tearful but unhurt from her burning cot. The police were called and Carol was arrested, charged and refused bail due to the previous

charges. Again there was no evidence to connect her to the fires, and again she had been sat in another room with the rest of the family at the time.

During her trial both the prosecution and the defence tried to steer clear of making any mention of fire raising and the supernatural but the media did not. An elderly clairvoyant told them that the spirit of an eighteenth century girl had given Carol the "power of fire" and the woman arrived in court shrouded in black, muttering incantations and brandishing a large crucifix.

The Jury heard evidence from a fire officer with 38 years experience in which he testified that the fires had been unusually hot and they appeared to have burnt downwards. His testimony was supported by that of Professor Vitolo Nicolo of Pisa University who said that "In all my years of experience of this kind of investigation I have never seen fires like this before. They were created by an intense source of heat, but not a naked flame." Forensic tests showed that both mattresses that had burned in the Cecchini house, though made from different materials, had burned in the same way, on the surface only, and neither had been started with a naked flame or any kind of fuel or chemical. The first fire that had destroyed the Riccis' living room apparently had its source at a wooden stool yet the stool itself was only slightly damaged, and this fire had also spread unusually in that it had moved sideways and downwards, and at one point even into a cupboard drawer.

Despite the lack of evidence connecting Carol Compton to any of the five fires, the jury returned after just six hours with a guilty verdict on two charges of arson and "not proven" on the count of attempted murder.

Though there is no obvious link between pyrokinesis and S.H.C. the two may or may not be connected. One characteristic that they both share is the swiftness and the intensity of the flames. In a case of S.H.C. the body is almost totally devoured, and what isn't devoured in the flames begins to decompose very quickly. The intensity of the fire is unimaginable as the human body is made up of approximately 75% water, yet it is reduced to a pile of ashes in a very short time. When contemplating this we must consider that in a crematorium furnace the temperature is maintained at at least 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit in a forced draught. If there is no forced draught then the temperature must be kept at 3,000 degrees for several hours, but even at 2,000 degrees there are recognisable bones remaining after a period of eight hours, so surely to consume a body as completely as S.H.C. does, the temperature must be hotter than this, but why then are surrounding



combustible materials not also incinerated, such as the chair the victim is sat in or the bed they are lying in?

A pathologist, Dr. David Gee of St. James' Hospital, Leeds had one of his papers, "A Case of Spontaneous Combustion" published in "Medicine Science and Law" (Vol. 5 1965), and in it he describes fully his experiments into what he calls "The Wick Effect". Ironically though Gee only mentions the term "Spontaneous Combustion" once in the article, and that is in the first paragraph.

He said that what may happen is that an elderly woman may collapse due to a heart attack or some similar affliction and land in the fireplace or near some other means of ignition, and since these cases usually occur in the winter the woman would be wearing a lot of clothing which will act as an external wick around the body which acts as the candle. As the fire burns part of the clothing it melts some of the nearby body fat which then soaks into the clothing and fuels the flames further which in turn melts more body fat and so on. He added that as the victims were most often women and their clothing usually ends around the knee area, this would explain why very often the feet are left untouched."

What Gee did was to coat a test tube with human fat and then in human skin to form an eight inch long "candle" which he then wrapped in cloth to simulate clothing. Gee's article continued "one end [of the fat candle] was ignited by a bunsen flame, the fat catching fire after about a minute. Although the bunsen flame was removed at this point, combustion of the fat proceeded slowly along the length of the roll, with a smoky yellow flame and much production of soot, the entire roll being consumed after about one hour." The candle burned in the draught of an extractor fan which ensured that an adequate supply of oxygen reached the flame, and the "much production of soot" indicates incomplete burning, and that the flame temperature was low.

Gee said that melted human fat will burn at 250 degrees Centigrade, which is true, but this is "clarified" fat without it's normal water content. Fat has a high water content and won't burn until enough of this water is "burned" off which leaves behind the "clarified" fat that will burn.

When asked if his candle had any bone in it Gee replied that it hadn't but the bone in the body would be saturated with fat in the same way that the clothing would, so it would burn using the same wick effect. This is not actually the case as the bone content will burn but the outer bone structure

will not absorb fat in the same way, and so it will not be destroyed, and bodies in all sorts of "natural" fires such as house fires or vehicle fires still have a largely intact bone structure, as do those which are burned in crematoriums which means that they then have to be crushed in a rotating drum with heavy metal balls in order to reduce them to ash.

Gee's candle experiment was performed in an environment with a forced draught of air providing plenty of oxygen and a bunsen flame applied for a minute, and it still only produced a low temperature flame which burned incompletely for an hour with mostly fat and clothing. It is very unlikely if not impossible that this concoction could be reduced to a pile of ashes when you add into the mixture bones, flesh and blood, and when you remove the enforced draught and add the ten and a half gallons of water found in the average human body. Despite its obvious flaws, Gee's wick theory was and still is widely accepted in many circles, but it doesn't really prove very much. For instance, it doesn't explain how people can ignite without a prolonged flame, or why they don't wake themselves up and put the fire out.

Two researchers, Vincent Gaddis and Ivan Sanderson, came up with a possible theory in which the mind state of a person can alter their "flammability." They say that it can begin with a feeling of loneliness, illness or some emotion that leads to a negative state of mind which affects the victim's metabolism in such a way that phosphagens are produced (phosphagen is a substance like nitro-glycerine which, in the right circumstances, is very combustible). They say that ignition could be caused by electricity in the atmosphere which may be generated by sunspots, magnetic storms or possibly even tectonic stress. Livingston Gearheart published an article in 1975 in the Journal "Pursuit" which showed that a high percentage of spontaneous human combustion cases took place at local peaks in the earth's magnetism and it is possible that this may contribute to ball lightning, which in turn may generate short radio waves similar to microwaves and radar equipment. Some S.H.C. victims appear to have been burned from the inside outwards which is the way a microwave oven works, and radar aerial sites are always fenced off because if you got too close to a powerful radar as it sweeps, it would cook your liver.

Let's look at some of the most celebrated victims and see some of the damage that S.H.C. can do. On the morning of December 5th, 1966, Don Gosnell entered the basement of an apartment building in Coultersport,

Pennsylvania to read the gas meter. In the basement his boots disturbed a pile of ashes in the corner and there was a light blue smoke with a strange odour hanging in the air. On his way inside he had received no reply to his calls, so he decided to look in on the old man who lived on the ground floor, Dr. John Irving Bentley. There was no sign of Bentley in the bedroom but there was more of the same strange blue smoke so Gosnell peered around the door to the bathroom, and he was confronted with a sight that he would never forget. On the floor was a hole that had been burned through the floorboards and exposed the joists and the pipes below. Around the hole there was a pile of ash, protruding from which there was the remains of the doctor's leg from the knee down, "like that of a mannequin." The retired Dr. Bentley had been a pipe smoker, but this could not by any stretch of the imagination, account for the almost total destruction of the body, and no heating or electrical faults were found in the property.

Another famous case is that of the elderly widow Mary Reeser. Reeser was originally from Pennsylvania, but when her husband died in 1947 she moved to an apartment at 1200 Cherry Street, St. Petersburg to be near her son Dr. Richard Reeser and his wife Ernestine. She found herself feeling very homesick for the large house and the wide social circle she had left behind in Pennsylvania, and also the hotter climate in St. Petersburg didn't agree with her. She was very upset at the fact that she was unable to find herself suitable accommodation in her home town, and on the last day of her life she went to Richard's house and offered to look after their youngest child while they went off to the beach. Out of concern for her they came back after only an hour and Richard found her sitting in a chair crying. She asked him to take her home which he said he would do as soon as he had had a shower, but by the time he had finished his mother had already left and begun walking by herself. Richard asked Ernestine if she would go and look for her, and when she did she found that she had already made it home so she stayed with her for about an hour before returning home. At around 8pm Richard went round to see her and he found her sitting in her armchair in her nightie while smoking a cigarette. She hadn't eaten and had taken two Seconal sleeping pills and Richard felt that she was content and relaxed. Her neighbour and landlady Mrs. Carpenter also visited her later that evening but found her to be upset and felt that it was because of a family feud, so to cheer her up she went to buy her some ice cream, but when she returned she saw

that Mary's lights were off, as was the radio so she decided not to bother her any further and retired for the night.

On the next morning, July 1st, 1951, at about 5 am Mrs. Carpenter was woken by a dull thud similar to a door slamming and she could detect a burning smell not unlike an electric motor burning too hot, so she turned off the water pump in her garage and found nothing else to be amiss. At 6:30am the newspaper boy arrived but didn't notice any burning smell, and at 8am a package arrived for Mary but the delivery man didn't know which was her apartment so he left it with Mrs. Carpenter who said she would deliver it for him, but when she did so she noticed that the handle on Mary's screen door was very hot but the door was unlocked, so she called out to the delivery man to go in with her but he didn't hear. Some painters working across the road "did" hear and one of them came over and looked around the door for her, but he backed out again and told her to call the fire service which she did before alerting Richard Reeser.

On the floor inside the apartment was a pile of ashes, a few teeth, a skull, a charred liver stuck to a piece of backbone, a large bone possibly from the hip and a velvet slippered left foot which Richard used to identify his mother's remains.

Though this case will always be connected to S.H.C. Dr. Richard Reeser believes that his mother had fallen asleep in the easy chair after taking two Seconal and dropped her cigarette end on to the chair which then went up in flames and destroyed both the chair and her body. This doesn't explain though, the strange nature of the fire which, as in S.H.C. cases, left a nearby pile of newspapers untouched, and Fire Investigators said that no ordinary fire could have possibly reduced Mary Reeser to ashes and left the newspapers untouched.

Another case where surrounding combustibles remained untouched occurred on March 22nd, 1908 in the seaside town of Whitley Bay. Margaret Dewar managed to summon neighbours when she found her elderly sister Wilhelmina upstairs in bed, she was severely charred apparently without waking as she lay in bed. The bedclothes wrapped around her had not been burned. At the inquest the coroner could not accept the evidence that Margaret gave and asked her to think again but she would not change her story, even after a policeman told the court that she had been drunk at the time. The court was adjourned to "give Margaret more time to think" and

reconvened a few days later. Obviously some pressure had been brought to bear on Margaret because she now said that she had been wrong and had initially found her sister downstairs, burned but still alive, and had helped her upstairs to bed where she had finally died. The court accepted this change of heart from Margaret and didn't concern itself with the matter of how Wilhelmina had ignited and continued to burn without the bed catching fire as well, nor was there any sign of fire anywhere else in the house.

Coroners still find themselves in the same quandry as very few cases actually refer to spontaneous human combustion, preferring to steer clear of it, and they look for other causes such as flying sparks, discarded cigarettes or children playing with matches, and this is hardly surprising really when you consider the evidence that they are faced with.

One theory that was doing the rounds in the eighteenth century was that a substance known as phlogiston was the principle or element of heat which was inherent in all matter, and this phlogiston could either be latent or operative. Whenever it was operative it was believed to be able to produce all the effects of combustion, however this theory didn't stand the test of time, so modern chemistry has tried to come up with a few. Various chemical reactions can produce explosive effects, for example, if metallic sodium comes into contact with water the sodium will explode violently, or if phosphorous comes into contact with air it will burst into flames. Could there be some sort of chemical reaction within the body which causes it to violently, and very suddenly, destroy itself, and if so then shouldn't it happen much more often than it does? We know that Doctor Price said that he came across it on average once every four years, but could it be more common than this? If so could many cases be hidden by the fact that S.H.C. is not recorded as a cause of death, but rather by an "open verdict" or "accidental death" but how common can it be? One statistic quoted is that 1938 alone saw no fewer than 17 cases, that is roughly one every three weeks.

So far we have seen several of the better known and more commonly quoted cases of death by S.H.C. but we have not yet seen an eye witness account, and there is a good reason for this, they are extremely rare. A report in the "Washington Post" on May 29th, 1990 said that an operating theatre at U.C.L.A. Medical Centre had to be evacuated in mid-operation as "the sheets just caught fire" and the patient, 26 year old Angela Hernandez, died. No explanation could be found for the sudden blaze, and the Fire Department

Chief, Pat Marek, formed the opinion that the fire was "bizarre." Another eye witness account comes from an American physician, Dr. B. H. Hartwell who reported what he saw to the Massachusetts Medico-Legal Society. Dr. Hartwell was driving through Ayer, Massachusetts when his car was flagged down and he was led into a nearby wood. There in the wood was a woman crouched down, she was engulfed in flames and neither he nor the other people standing there could see any cause for the fire.

It is possible that S.H.C. is far more common than it would first appear, and perhaps many more professional people, doctors, coroners and pathologists alike would report more cases if the phenomenon was more widely accepted and they weren't therefore putting their professional reputation at stake, and the irony is that they themselves could make it more widely accepted by reporting more cases. They could also hold valuable information regarding exactly what S.H.C. is and why it occurs, but more importantly how we could prevent it happening again.

Clearly, looking at the facts of the matter, the physical and practical side is that there is a very sudden and extremely intense fire that destroys the body very quickly indeed, and it is also very localised as it does little or no damage to surrounding combustibles. In some cases there is a possible cause of fire such as an open fire, a heater, the pipe and cigarettes smoked by Bentley and Reeser, but none of these could cause an "unconventional" fire, so there must be some cause that can, and I think that the most common sense solution is likely to be found within the human body itself.

Rather than a fire having fuel to burn and thus using it up in the process and also any other fuel it reaches, wood, paper, carpet, bed sheets etc., perhaps there may be some sort of chemical reaction which takes place within the body and this causes it to burn, not so much as we know it in the conventional sense, but to destroy itself through this chemical reaction being triggered, very suddenly and very violently.

At any one time there are an almost countless number of chemicals present in the human body, some of them are released by the brain such as endorphins, could it be, as has been suggested many times in the past, that S.H.C. is caused by a person's state of mind, i.e. loneliness, illness, tiredness or depression, or, like Tong Tangjiang who would generate electric current when he was agitated or excited, and not as was earlier thought due to a person's familiarity with the bottle. There is a case which may possibly

suggest an internal cause and not an external cause of a conventional fire.

John Heymer is a forensically trained scenes of crime officer with the Gwent Police C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) and in 1980 he was called out to a house fire at Ebbw Vale. The council houses on the Rassau estate were not centrally heated at that time, but he noticed how warm the house was despite the front door being open, and he began to suspect that a practical joke was being played on him when he could see no signs of the alleged house fire. An Officer pointed him to a closed door and told him that the fire was inside. What immediately struck Heymer was that there were no tell tale signs of fire having been in the room. Even before he had entered it he noticed that there were no deposits of soot around the frame of the door which are left as the smoke escapes from the room, and in fact the gloss paint work was as clean as it should have been. When Heymer entered the room, the lounge, he saw all that remained of Henry Thomas, a small pile of ashes, two disembodied feet and a discoloured skull. The remains were lying on a rug on top of the foam backed fitted carpet, and both the rug and the carpet had only been burned where they were in touch with the ashes, and both were also found to be saturated with melted human body fat.

Beneath the carpet were thermo plastic tiles which would be permanently marked if something hot is placed on them yet they were completely untouched, and the room was still, despite the sub-zero temperatures outside, emitting enough heat to warm the whole house even with the front door open. The chair that the victim had been sat in was burned to ash apart from a part of the right hand side of the wooden frame and part of the fabric cushion.

In the fireplace was a partially burnt fire and on the hearth was a bundle of sticks for starting a new one, these were untouched by the blaze as were the victim's plastic rimmed spectacles which also lay on the hearth. There was no sign of a hot coal having fallen out of the grate and staring the fire, and besides which the fire had gone out through lack of attention. Heymer is certain that it would not have burned very brightly because of the lack of air flow in the room which would also have contributed to its going out only half burned.

Heymer found that no smoke or soot had escaped from the room because the windows did not allow a draught in or out of the room, nor did the door which sealed very tightly when closed, so if the smoke couldn't escape then

air could not get in, so the only thing to have burned in the "sealed" room full of combustible materials apart from the chair was made up of 75% water, Henry Thomas.

Heymer came to the conclusion that Thomas had been sat in his chair when the fire had erupted and, as he had burned, he had ignited the chair which burned until it gave way beneath him and ceased burning, leaving part of it undamaged. Thomas had fallen to the floor but continued to burn until only ash remained - apart from his feet and blackened skull. From this he also concluded that the fire had begun in the region of Thomas' abdomen and burned outwards so the extremities were untouched. This left him with the curious and baffling knowledge that the burning chair and the fire in the grate had gone out due to a lack of oxygen in the room, possibly also making Thomas sleepy at the time, but meanwhile the body had continued to "burn."

Could Thomas have triggered it off himself somehow? The Post Mortem showed that he had been alive at the time that the blaze began which is evident in the pink colour of the remaining muscle tissue which shows that there is carbon monoxide present in the blood. This is caused when a person inhales "the products of combustion shortly before death." Surely this must be evidence of a "different" type of fire which is caused within the body and doesn't require an external supply of oxygen in the same way, and it would seem to disprove the "wick effect" as the rug and carpet were soaked in fat but didn't burn, which is of course the basis of Gee's theory.

Heymer came up with a theory that he feels may explain how such a blaze may operate, and this theory also seems to overcome what is often seen as the biggest stumbling block in S.H.C., the amount of fluids in the human body. He proposed that somehow the water could split into its two components of oxygen and hydrogen in gas form.

Hydrogen burning in oxygen produces a colourless flame, but if this flame were to consume something then it would burn in a variety of colours, the colour depending on the material being consumed. He goes on to say that the process of hydrogen gas burning in oxygen gas will produce as much water as it consumes, but this would be in the form of super-heated steam which will expand so much that it is forced up a chimney, leaving no evidence of it having been there apart from slight condensation on the windows.

Heymer also quotes the example of the 1989 B.B.C. Television



programme “Tomorrow's World” which featured a portable steel cutting tool that used water as its power source. One litre of water is able to produce 2,000 litres of hydrogen and oxygen per hour, and the tool which was easily carried with one hand burns a combination of hydrogen and oxygen producing about as much heat as a crematorium. This shows that the practical physics of it works, the problem is just how it could occur in the body of its own accord.

Another thought is that it could be caused by the digestive system which would explain why many fires seem to start in the abdominal region and peter out when they reach the outer extremities of the limbs. In a 1986 issue of “New Scientist” Sidney Alford, an explosives engineer, theorised that methane gas might be produced in the body. Outside the body it is produced by anaerobic bacterial decomposition and is what is known as “marsh gas.” Coal miners refer to it as “firedamp” because it becomes combustible when it is mixed with air and it is a major component of natural and coal gas. Rotting matter also produces phosphine which again combusts spontaneously when mixed with air, and in marshy areas it is known as “Will o' the wisp”.

The food that our stomach digests gives us the energy that our body needs to survive, and in starvation the body will lose a huge amount of heat which is what sometimes causes death. Could there some kind of “malfunction” which creates far too much heat and possibly combines with a combustible gas?

In cattle there is a condition which produces excessive amounts of methane gas in the gut, which bloats it so much that it causes great discomfort. This pressure can only be released by a veterinary surgeon making an incision to allow the gas, which is combustible, to escape.

Larry Arnold has suggested that the cause of S.H.C. could be a subatomic particle called a Pyrotron that vaporises the body by an internal subatomic chain reaction, a process known as “cold fusion.” The fusion of hydrogen atoms has been reported during the electrolysis of water with potassium salts which releases huge amounts of heat and it was publicly demonstrated in March 1989 by Dr. Martin Fleischmann and Professor B. Stanley Pons. However, when scientists tried to recreate their experiments and failed, it seemed that cold fusion was a bit of a “damp squib,” but there are varying opinions on it around the world.

While cold fusion is accepted as fact in Japan, other researchers in the

west have had their funding withdrawn, and Fleischmann and Pons continue their work in a research facility in southern France owned by the Toyota Motor Company. One physicist has speculated anonymously that "it seems likely that of the elements found in the body, potassium or sodium are the most likely to be involved in a fusion reaction. The tissues with the highest potassium levels are the brain, spinal cord and skeletal muscles, and this would suggest that the feet and hands would be least affected and the head the most.

If the process is nuclear it would start at a point, so in the case of potassium it would be the head, spine or skeletal muscles. It would be very hot, maybe incandescent, and this would hardly affect surrounding materials as a slow burn seemingly would, and it would all be over in seconds or a few minutes at most. There just might be residual radio activity and it would be surprising were there not, but there wouldn't necessarily be a lot."

Arthur C. Clark says that he believes cold fusion experiments are "tapping into" "zero-point energy" created by subatomic particles blinking in and out of existence."

While there are many chemicals and chemical reactions in the body, it is very unlikely that such an everyday process as digestion would be the cause for S.H.C. as it is quite infeasible for it to generate enough heat to ignite the gases present in the stomach, and as the process occurs almost continuously in every person, then there would surely be far more instances of it than there are. However, I think that a chemical reaction of some sort is the most likely cause for S.H.C., but just which particular one is difficult to say. Possibly it could be partly brought on by the activity in the brain which produces various chemicals under different circumstances, so it could be that certain moods are more dangerous than others. We know that it must satisfy certain criteria, i.e. It must envelope the body very quickly and quite completely. It must be very hot and it must leave very little evidence.

The possibility that such power of destruction is housed within the human body itself, like the ultimate parasite, is extremely worrying to say the least in that it means that spontaneous human combustion could strike any one of us at any time, and apparently without any warning.

## THE ASTRAL BODY

One hot August afternoon in 1965, parapsychologist D. Scott Rogo, author of the 1978 book “Mind Beyond The Body” then a student, was lying on his bed to take his usual after-class nap but, for some reason he was unable to sleep. He said “I began to feel oddly chilly and started to tremble. I flipped over onto my side, realising at the same moment that my whole body was pulsating and that I was almost paralysed.... An instant later I found myself floating in the air and, in another instant I was standing at the foot of the bed staring at myself. I made an abrupt about face and tried to walk toward the door to my room, which led to a hallway. I felt as though I were gliding through jelly as I moved, and I lost balance for a moment and almost fell over. Everything was blurred by a cloudy hue that enveloped a whitish form which I perceived as my body. A moment later I found myself awakening on my bed. But I also realised that I had never been asleep.”

This experience is far from an isolated case and they are commonly referred to as “Out Of Body Experiences,” “OBEs,” “OOBEs,” “OOBs” or, more formally, as “Ecsomatic States.”

The characteristics of an OBE are that the person is aware that they have become separated from their body, sometimes by a great distance, and they can perceive their body and its surroundings from an external viewpoint. They feel alert and aware and are usually extremely observant. Some feel that they are occupying a second body, maybe a double of themselves and this may or may not be visible to an onlooker. Some feel that this second body is transparent but intact, while others feel that they are a cloud of vapour or mist, a glowing ball or even a magnetic or electrical field. The form is also

said to generate its own light and many report seeing a luminous cord which connects them to their body. The form may walk, glide, float or fly and may remain around the body or even travel great distances, even sometimes through time and space. They may pass through matter such as walls and doors but are rarely able to touch and move objects.

The English novelist, William Gerhardie, had no prior knowledge of astral projection until it happened to him. He felt that he was waking from a dream and went to switch on his bedside lamp but he found himself “grasping at a void.” He came fully awake and realised that he was floating in mid-air. He was in full command of his senses and could see everything in the room, including his own body lying in bed. He tried to open the door but was unable to get a grip on the handle.

It is interesting the way that Gerhardie describes the cord which linked him to his physical body, he said that it was like “the strong broad ray of dusty light at the back of a dark cinema projecting onto the screen in front” and it seemed to illuminate his face on the pillow and seemed attached to its brow. “The sleeper was myself, not dead, but breathing peacefully, my mouth slightly open.” Gerhardie travelled about the house, making careful observations about where objects lay, which windows were open and which curtains drawn, all of which he found to be correct in the morning.

All through his experience he was aware of the cord that connected him to his body “like an umbilical cord, by means of which the body on the bed was kept breathing while its mold wandered about the flat.” At one point he became afraid that something might happen to sever the link with his body, but he wrote: “I felt it hovering over my old body on the bed, drab disappointment came back to me, ‘Not yet’ I said, and again I flew off. When I flew this swiftly, my consciousness seemed to blot out and only returned when again I walked or moved at a reasonable speed.”

While Gerhardie claimed to have “flown” around his house, 26 year old Martha Johnson experienced a long distance OBE on January 26th, 1957 where she “floated” to her mother’s house 926 miles away and in a different time zone.

When she arrived there she found herself in the kitchen and her mother was also there. Martha took a couple of steps toward her but then abruptly returned to her body and, on looking at her bedside clock, saw that it was 2:10am. She soon received a letter from her mother, who had known nothing

of Martha's OBE. In the letter she described that she had gradually become aware that Martha was standing in the kitchen, typically with her arms folded and her head slightly tilted to one side. She had started to say something to her but she had suddenly disappeared. She noted in the letter how nice Martha's new hairstyle was and she added that it had been "ten after two, your time."

It is almost as if the psychic reality and the mundane world were incapable of co-existing. Skeptics say that OBEs can be explained away as any one of a handful of things such as dreams, hallucinations, self-delusions, ESP, psychic episodes and of course, the old faithful, hoaxes.

In the 1970s, Dr. Dean Sheils, then an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin, analysed data from some 71 non-western cultures to explore their beliefs in OBEs. He found that a belief existed in 95% of them and he also found that their respective ideas and descriptions are "strikingly similar." Typically they say that "something" leaves the body, mostly during sleep or unconsciousness, but the experience is easily distinguishable from ordinary dreams, and is spontaneous, though some do claim to be able to project – Astral Travel – at will, but this is not specifically a trait of non-western cultures.

For example, at the turn of the 19th century, Ed Morrell was sentenced to life imprisonment in San Quentin, but in 1909 he won a pardon and was then released. He later wrote a book about his ordeal entitled "The Twenty-Fifth Man" and in it he describes the worst period of all as when he was falsely accused of hiding guns in the prison and, in order to try and make him reveal their whereabouts, the jailers placed him in the notorious "bloody straitjacket." This was a garment that covered the whole body and was fastened so tightly that it induced a feeling of "suffocation similar to the experience of being buried alive."

He would have water poured on him so that the jacket would shrink and become even tighter still, and he likened the experience to being "slowly squeezed to death" One of his sessions in the jacket lasted for as long as 126 hours, and Morrell recalled the stabbing pains, gradual numbness and the bodily excretions that ate into his skin like acid. He added that it made being "squeezed to death by a giant boa constrictor pale before the death terrors of the jacket."

His first session in the jacket left him in a state of despair unlike any

other but it was his next episode that was memorable for different reasons. As he lay in pain on the floor of his cell, he felt his consciousness slowly leave the body and float outside the prison walls, and he felt himself gliding “into the living, breathing outside world” and whenever he “returned” to his cell he would feel refreshed.

Morrell’s inexplicable ability to withstand his torture mystified the prison warden and so he ordered the guards to place a second jacket over the first, but still, whenever he was released, the guards would find him in relatively good spirits. It could be said that Morrell’s experiences were merely a subconscious reaction to his predicament and that he didn’t necessarily leave his body at all, but he was later able to corroborate events that he said he had witnessed on his excursions. A change of prison warden saw his release, first from five years of solitary confinement and then from prison and he never experienced an OBE again.

A similar claim was made by the British secret agent, Odette Hallowes who looked forward to her OBEs when she was captured and tortured by the Gestapo during World War 2. Whenever the pain got too much she would leave her body and watch the sadists below her do their dirty work while she remained free of any physical pain.

It appears to be a frequent claim that OBEs can be used to avoid pain and suffering but they are not always voluntary. An eminent British anatomist, Sir Auckland Geddes, became suddenly ill with gastroenteritis and, by the next morning, he was so ill that he was unable to telephone for help. He accepted the probability of death and even began to consider his final financial affairs before he felt his consciousness slip out of his body. He was then able to look down where he could see his own body lying in bed, and even everything in his house and garden. He was also able to see various sites in London and Scotland and wherever he directed his attention. He said “I was free in a time-dimension of space, wherein ‘now’ was in some way equivalent to ‘here’ in the ordinary 3 dimensional space of everyday life.”

Geddes saw his daughter come in to his bedroom, look at his body and hurry to the phone. “I saw my doctor leave his patients and come very quickly and heard him say, or saw him think, ‘He is very nearly gone.’” He saw the doctor inject his body with camphor and “was drawn back and I was intensely annoyed, because once I was back, all the clarity of vision disappeared, and I was just possessed of a glimmer of consciousness, which

was suffused with pain.”

In 1965 and 1966, an experiment was carried out by Dr. Charles T. Tart to see whether or not OBEs could be instigated intentionally. Tart’s subject was a successful Virginia business man and electronics engineer, Robert Monroe, who had experienced vivid ONEs since 1958 and who claimed to be able to induce them. Monroe was placed in a makeshift laboratory bedroom where his heartbeat, eye movement and brain waves could be monitored. He was intending to leave his body and “project” himself into an adjoining control room where there was a randomly selected five digit number on a shelf above eye level.

Monroe found the monitoring equipment uncomfortable and he was unable to relax enough to be able to induce separation until the eighth and last time of trying, when he claimed to have had two separations. In the first he moved from the control room “through a darkened area” and came upon two men and a woman who were talking. He felt disoriented and couldn’t see too well so he returned to his body and tried again. On the next attempt he separated and rolled off the bed and floated to the floor, slowly went through the door into the control room but couldn’t see the lab technician at her usual place, but passed out of the room, without noticing the five digit number, into a brightly lit corridor where he could see her talking to a man he didn’t recognize.

Monroe became aware of some discomfort and returned to his body to find that he had a dry throat and a sore ear. He called to the technician to report his OBE and she confirmed that she was indeed in the corridor with a man he didn’t know, her husband. Tart could come to no solid conclusions about Monroe’s alleged OBEs but did say that his studies showed that OBEs are not “beyond the pale of scientific investigation.”

Robert Monroe went on to set up “The Monroe Institute for Applied Sciences” in Richmond, Virginia and he now also claims to have “bumped into” other astral travelers, had out of the body sex and even re-entered a corpse by mistake.

Robert Monroe doesn’t use the word “Astral” when writing about OBEs but he believes that he has visited different “planes of reality” which he calls “locales 1, 2 and 3.”

- Locale 1 is the physical world we live in.

- Locale 2 is the “thought world” which is “the natural environment of the second body.”
- Locale 3 “Seems to interpenetrate our physical world, yet spans limitless reaches beyond comprehension.”

Locale 2 contains what we call heaven and hell and Monroe claims to have met the dead there, and he believes that the “human personality survives the transition of death” and continues in Locale 2.

Locale 3 is a physical and material world with a civilisation based on different technologies to ours and with different customs. A lot of what Monroe claims to have seen in locale 3 stretches the imagination to the limits, such as people, roads, businesses, cities and all signs of civilisation but no sign of the use of oil, electricity or internal combustion, giving rise to the opinion that science there is less advanced than our own, but it cannot be a period of our past history because our science was never at the stage that Monroe describes in Locale 3.

It is interesting to note though, that since Monroe’s book was first published in 1971, theoretical physicists working in advanced quantum mechanics have hypothesised that there are multiple universes which are similar but can be transversed by “transition events,” of which one kind may be OBEs.

In their 1929 book “The Projection of the Astral Body” Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington describe several ways in which it is possible to induce an OBE. They all involve lying on your back with your eyes closed, and you may then imagine rotating your point of view in the imagination around a central axis so that you are looking at your feet or at the length of your body. Another way is to drift off to sleep while holding an imaginary sensation of you going up in a lift. A third way is to go to bed thirsty and while you go to sleep, imagine yourself going to the kitchen to get a drink and picture yourself at the sink.

There have been many studies into OBEs, and Celia Green of the Institute of Psychophysical research in Oxford, England published some results of her work in her 1968 book “Out-Of-The-Body Experiences.” Her study was based on a questionnaire completed by 326 people who had experienced one or more OBEs.

She found that over 60% had had only one OBE, 18% had had between



2 and 5 and 21% had had over 6. The group surveyed were made up of people of all ages and the results also showed that people had less OBEs as they got older. Those who had had more than 1 were often in childhood when they occurred, and those who had had only 1, most often had it between the ages of 15 and 35. Most of those in the study, 80%, did not have a vivid OBE but a feeling of “disembodied consciousness,” 32% under anaesthetic or after an accident, 12% during sleep, 25% under conditions of psychological stress and the rest while awake and active.

This would seem to suggest that a lot of people experience some kind of OBE but few are very lucid and easily remembered astral journeys. One such brief experience reported in the survey was that of a man who wrote “During the morning while driving fast along a road the drone of the engine and vibration seemed to leave my motorbike like a zoom lens in reverse and was hovering over a hill watching myself and my friend tearing along on the road below and I seemed to think ‘I shouldn’t be here, get back on that bike!’ and the next instant I was in the saddle again.”

Another was reported by a waitress who had just finished a 12 hour shift and had missed her bus, so she set off walking and “The next I registered was of hearing the sound of my heels very hollowly and I looked down and watched myself walk round the bend of Beaumont Street into Walton Street. I - The bit of me that counts - was up on a level with Worcester College Chapel. I saw myself very clearly – It was a summer evening and I was wearing a sleeveless Shantung dress. I remember thinking ‘So that’s how I look to other people.’”

In these two reports, and other similar ones in the survey, there is no mention of the form taken by the outer self, the link with the physical body or the feeling of great freedom. Despite this, both had a distinct notion of a second self, “the bit of me that counts,” the “disembodied consciousness.” As surveys show, most OBEs happen at times of pain or stress and there is a particular type of OBE which is referred to as an N.D.E. (Near Death Experience) and these are OBEs which occur during surgical operations, after accidents or during serious illness. A 1982 Gallup poll found that 8 million Americans have experienced an NDE. They are believed to occur when a person actually dies and their soul leaves their body on its way to wherever it goes, but if they are revived and brought back to life, their soul returns to their body and they can later recall their experience.

They have been reported with regularity since recent medical advances have meant that people can be clinically dead – with no heartbeat and no breathing – and then be brought back to life, in fact 40 minutes after the heart stops beating, electricity can still be detected within the body. One wonders what may happen if, in the future, we can revive people after they are brain dead. Where will they have been to?

In the past, NDEs have been blamed on hallucinations brought about by oxygen deprivation to the brain or by anaesthetic, but many who have NDEs are not deprived of oxygen or under anaesthetic and, conversely, many who are do not have NDEs. The term itself was brought about after the publication of Raymond Moody's 1975 book "Life After Life."

In April 1916 a medical officer attached to the 2nd Brigade of the Royal Flying Corps in Clairmarais, France was responding to an emergency casualty report from another airfield. He jumped aboard a plane with a pilot and they made a hurried take off, but before they had gained adequate height or speed, the pilot made a sharp turn and the plane lost its upward thrust and began to fall out of the sky. The medic remained unusually calm and found himself wondering which wing would hit the ground first and later recalled "suddenly I was looking down on my body on the ground from some 220ft vertically above it." He had been thrown clear in the impact and was lying on his back, apparently unconscious, though he had a feeling of pleasant awareness.

Looking down from above, he could see the uninjured pilot and two senior officers run toward his body and bend over it. "My spirit, or whatever you like to call it, hovering there, was wondering why they were bothering to pay any attention to my body, and I distinctly remember wishing they would leave it alone." He also saw the ambulance pull out of its hangar and stall; the driver get out, crank the engine and get back into his seat; the medical orderly run out of the field hut and jump in the ambulance, but he had obviously forgotten something as he ran back to get it, and the ambulance then continued on its way." He then felt himself "and it was most definitely me, and not something else" moving away from the airfield at great speed. He had a sense of moving toward a nearby town, then far beyond it toward the open sea and, as he wondered about this, he felt "a sort of retraction" and he was hovering above his body again. He became aware that a medical orderly was pouring a stimulant down his throat and he opened his eyes and was back

in his body once again.

Later, as he reflected on his trip, he thought that he may have imagined the journey out to sea, but what about the actions that he had seen near the hangars and around the crash site, actions that were later confirmed to be correct by his commanding officer who made discreet enquiries on his behalf. The medic still felt that he may be considered bizarre or unusual so he wished to remain anonymous, but he clearly wasn't "bizarre" as he later became consultant physician to the Royal Air Force, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

In 1964, David Taylor and a friend were spending the final weeks of their tour of East Africa in Tanzania. Taylor said "We had been driving through the game park and had just turned on to the main road to Moshi. It was dusk and I was sitting half asleep in the passenger seat.

I was suddenly woken by my friend who was delighted to see the first vehicle we had come across in six hours, driving down towards us. Either my friend or the other driver must have been half asleep, for within seconds the two vehicles drove smack into each other.

As the two vehicles collided, I suddenly found that I was watching the scene from several yards up in the air, as if I were suspended above the road. I saw our own Land Rover colliding with a large lorry, and I watched as I was thrown from the Land Rover. My friend then climbed out unhurt and came back to examine my body. I also saw the lorry drive off. I remember thinking that I looked a terrible mess lying there on the road and could well be dead.

The next thing I knew was coming to in Moshi hospital. I had been unconscious for two days with serious injuries. I told my friend what I had seen and he confirmed that it was indeed a lorry that had run into us and that it had driven on. I had only been saved because another car had come down the road afterwards and taken me to hospital.

The whole experience, even after all these years, has left me incompletely unafraid of death."

This feeling of being unafraid of death must surely be experienced by those who experience the more typical NDE, that is, those which feature the "dark tunnel" and the "bright light" alleged to be a glimpse of what lies beyond, a glimpse of heaven.

Typical of such an NDE is the one that appeared in November, 1979 in a

journal article that featured the experience of Mrs Iris Lemov who went into hospital for a routine operation. She recalled “I was brought back to my room after surgery and was speaking to my nurse, when a strange separated feeling between my body and my brain occurred. High above my body I floated wondering why so many doctors were round my bed.” Mrs Lemov had slipped suddenly and unexpectedly into a coma and, as she watched, her heart stopped beating, though it seemed to her only that her face had gone pale. All of a sudden, everything went dark and she was sucked into a long, black tunnel with a light at the end of it. She reported; “I felt frightened and excited as I neared the end of the tunnel, I felt peace, without pain, and free. The light at the end of the tunnel was bright but easy on my eyes.”

When Iris came out into the light she found herself in a peaceful valley which she described as “a sight to behold. There was velvety green grass and calmness. Music coming from nowhere made me feel comfortable and I began to feel as if I belonged. I saw figures of people dressed in shrouds coming toward me and they called me by name. This man with a white beard told me to go back – your family still needs you – enjoy your life. This beautiful man was my grandfather who died two years before I was born.”

This account is extremely typical of NDEs, and another is that experienced by an American airline pilot, George Jehn, who crashed his car into a bridge. He remembers the ambulance arriving and the paramedics pronouncing him dead, and then he says that everything went white and he felt himself in a tunnel, heading towards a bright light. He says that “It was beautiful. It was just a feeling of total, total love that enveloped me.” Before he reached the light, he says that he found himself standing in front of a guy. “He looked at me, I looked at him, and he was a friend of mine.” He recognised him as a friend called Tom who had died five years earlier. “Tom looked at me and said: “You’ve got to go back, George. It’s not your time yet.” And Jehn returned to the hospital to find himself on a ventilator.

It isn’t all a bed of roses though, with people going to green pastures and comforting light. One account given to Dr. Margot Grey was of a person who apparently briefly visited hell. He said “I found myself in a place surrounded by mist.... There was a big pit with vapour coming out and there were arms and hands coming out trying to grab mine.... I was terrified that these hands were going to claw hold of me and pull me into the pit.”

Another report, this time given to Dr. Raymond Moody, described the

person travelling toward the light, but as they did, they passed a place where there was terrible desolation, full of “washed out” partly human forms with a crushed, hopeless demeanour who appeared to be shuffling around, not knowing where they were going, who to follow or what to look for.

Both of these kinds of hell have also been reported by other people and as Dr. Michael Rawlings put it “It may not be safe to die.” Though reports such as this do exist, they are quite rare, and in fact, far, far rarer than NDEs that talk of heaven and peace and light. One man reported “I thought I was dead, and I wasn’t sorry that I was dead, but I just couldn’t figure out where I was supposed to go.”

There is one particular example of an NDE that contains all the typical elements and it was featured twice on BBC Television. In late Autumn 1968, a young girl named Durdana who was aged 2 had an NDE. She had been ill for some time and even began to become paralysed as well as suffering from bouts of vomiting and blindness. Durdana’s father was an Army doctor posted in the foothills of the Himalayas, and he took his daughter to the military hospital some miles away for tests which proved inconclusive. It was thought that her condition may be the after effects of a viral encephalitis which had claimed the lives a dozen children in the area.

One day he received a message from an orderly that his wife had called to say that something had happened to Durdana. As she had been very ill the night before, he raced home fearing the worst, and when he got there he looked down at Durdana lying in her cot in the garden but his hasty examination found no signs of life. He said to his wife “She’s gone.”

She picked her up and carried her inside the house and one of the orderlies who had accompanied Durdana’s father home left to get some equipment in order to perform the emergency measures that were mandatory under Army regulations. Her father treated her “knowing that they were unlikely to have any effect. While doing so, I found myself repeating, half consciously, under my breath: ‘Come back my child, come back.’”

As a last resort his wife poured a few drops of Nikethamine – a heart stimulant – into her mouth but it trickled out of her mouth and down her cheek, but to their surprise Durdana opened her eyes and told them that the medicine tasted bitter. As he again examined her, her vital signs began to reappear.

A few days later, when she was somewhat recovered, Durdana was in

the garden with her mother who asked her “Where did my little daughter go to the other day?” and she replied “Far, far away, to the stars.” She then asked her what she saw there and Durdana replied “Gardens.” When asked what she saw in the gardens, she said that there were apples, grapes, pomegranates and streams. One white, one brown, one blue and one green.

Her mother then asked her if she saw anyone there, and she replied “Yes, my grandfather was there and his mother and another lady who looked like you.” She was asked what they said and she replied “Grandpa said he was glad to see me, and his mother took me in her lap and kissed me.” She then said that she “heard my daddy calling me, ‘come back my child, come back’ and I told Grandpa that daddy was calling me and I must go back. He said we would have to ask God, so we went to God and Grandpa told him that I wanted to go back. ‘Do you want to go back?’ God asked me. ‘Yes’ I said, ‘I must go back. My daddy is calling me.’ ‘Alright’ said God, ‘Go’ and down, down, down I came from the stars, on to daddy’s bed.”

Her father found this interesting because Durdana had not been in his bed at the time, or any other bed. When she had regained consciousness she was in no state to realise where she was, but her mother was more interested in her meeting with God and she asked her what God was like: “Blue.” She answered. Whenever they would ask her what God looked like or for more details Durdana would always give the same answer, blue.

During her recuperation Durdana stayed in Karachi with her mother and they visited several relatives in the area. While visiting one of her uncles they were drinking tea and chatting and Durdana walked around the room and she suddenly exclaimed “Mummy, mummy! This is my grandpa’s mother. I met her in the stars. She took me in her lap and kissed me.” She was right about who was in the photograph but the lady had died long before Durdana was born, and there were only two photographs of her in existence, both of which were in the uncle’s home, to which she had never been before.

Later, the family moved to London and their story attracted the attention of the media and Durdana was featured in the BBC programme “Everyman” in 1980. Before the programme they were visited by the Producer, Angela Tilby, who noticed some paintings that Durdana had done, and she suggested that she should try to paint what she had seen “in the stars.” The BBC again featured Durdana, this time on their “Pebble Mill At One” programme and this time her paintings were also shown which sparked a new twist in the

story.

The day after the programme was shown, her father received a telephone call from a lady called Mrs Goldsmith who was one of his patients – a well-read, intelligent German-Jewish woman. She said that she had seen Durdana on TV the day before and she said that she would like to see the paintings again as she had had a similar NDE to Durdana.

She said “I nearly jumped out of my chair when I saw this picture on the television” and she added, “My God, I’ve been to this place.” It turned out that she had not only been to the actual spot that Durdana had painted but she recognised everything that was in the picture and also described things that were not in it. She and Durdana sat and talked about what was round the bend in the stream and the location of other streams that Durdana had described to her mother.

Durdana felt that she was very happy while she was in the stars, and only returned out of a sense of duty as her father was calling her. She had felt a sense of freedom, as though she was everywhere at once, and could reach anywhere she wanted to. There was no apparent source of light, but everything seemed to have its own luminescence, and physical objects were ethereal images which seemed to have no substance or weight. She feels that her experience may somehow reflect her own expectations and commented that “If I had been a Martian, perhaps I would have been sent to a replica of Mars. There, perhaps God would have appeared red.”

If all this were so, how could Mrs Goldsmith have recognised the scene in Durdana’s painting? Did she actually recognise it or is it a little too convenient that she was actually one of Durdana’s father’s patients?

To help to try and define NDEs, researchers have come up with what they call the “Core Experience” and this is a standard set of events which take place when a person is briefly clinically dead, and every NDE is a variation on this core experience, featuring some, or all, of the following:

1. As people begin to die they feel a blissful sensation.
2. As clinical death occurs, they have an OBE, floating above or around their body.
3. They go into a mist or dark area, most often a tunnel with a light at the end.
4. They pass with increasing speed along the tunnel.

5. As they enter the light, they are greeted by a relative or religious figure such as Jesus.
6. The scenery around them is often a garden or rural scene.
7. Soothing music is playing, though from an invisible source.
8. Their lives will flash before their eyes as if in a movie sequence.
9. A relative, a figure or a voice from the light will tell them to go back.
10. The return is usually instantaneous and the person feels pain, either from their injuries or from people treating them.
11. They will no longer fear death, express a greater interest in spiritual things and less in material things, but conventional religions may lose their former appeal.

This consistency would tend to suggest that there is some truth in the existence of NDEs but parapsychologist, Dr Susan Blackmore, has suggested that NDEs are so similar, not because of any spiritual or psychological reason, but because our brains are built in the same way. She says that NDEs could be the brains way of lessening the trauma of death, but if this were true, then how and why did it evolve or learn to do it? Also, if that were true, how does the return after resuscitation take place?

The instruction to “Go back” isn’t something you would expect to find in a response to impending death. Much more useful to us would surely be a method to help us cope with pain or bereavement, so why do we not have one of these? It has been suggested that they may be a cultural thing, for example, Japanese reports feature seeing a wide river, while in Indian NDEs the person may be told that there has been a clerical error, and that somebody else of the same name was actually supposed to die that day. The world over there are features of NDEs that will be absent from those of other religions and cultures, so they may be a facet of cultural upbringing.

Carl Sagan points out that in times of great fear or dread it is natural for the human to revert to the foetal position for protection, is the notion of the astral body also a similar proposition of a return to the womb, where we consider ourselves to be at our safest? Sagan wrote that “Every human being has already had an experience like that of travellers who return from the land of death; the sensation of flight and the emergence from darkness into light; an experience in which the heroic figure may be dimly perceived, bathed in radiance and glory. There is only one common experience that matches this



description. It is called birth.”

New York psychiatrist Dr. Jan Ehrenwald wrote; “OOB experiences are expressions of man’s perennial quest for immortality; they are faltering attempts to assert the reality and autonomous existence of the soul. A deliberate challenge to the threat of extinction.” D.Scott Rogo pointed out that “Just because the OBE may be a method of defying death does not mean that it is a purely symbolic and/or hallucinatory experience. The fact that man has a psychological need to believe in an afterlife does not automatically mean that we do not survive death.

The astral body is said to exist in what is called the astral plane, which includes the everyday world and beyond, and possibly even surviving death. So, could the mind help to cope with the trauma by detaching itself, but still having a “mental awareness” similar to ESP, no longer constrained by the body, perhaps having all its power unleashed? Maybe then it could perceive and later recall the physical events occurring around the body while it is temporarily dead.

Cynics say that NDEs are a result of the drugs given to patients, a lack of oxygen to the brain and a religious upbringing, but Dr. Tony Lawrence, NDE researcher and lecturer in psychology at Coventry University, argues that drug induced hallucinations are usually random and would never be so consistent, and he adds that people from many cultures describe heading toward a bright light.

This would be a good argument against NDEs being a hallucinatory experience, but what about OBEs? Surveys have found that roughly 25% of people have had at least 1 OBE, while Dr. Charles Tart found that among marijuana smokers the figure rose to around 44%. Does the marijuana merely open up the mind so people are better able to perceive OBEs or does it actually cause them?

There is also a clinical answer put forward for NDEs, and that is the damage caused to the visual cortex. It is this cortex which sends visual signals from the eye to the brain, and at death, this system begins to break down as the neurons die and cause tiny sparks on the visual cortex. This is done in a circular pattern from the centre of the cortex, and so the brain would pick up a signal of a bright light surrounded by blackness, the light at the end of the tunnel.



# THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

Whenever we hear mention of the term “Bermuda Triangle” we think of ships and planes which vanish into thin air never to be seen again, of a patch of sea that is best avoided, of compasses that spin wildly and of lost radio contact. What is it about the area of sea that lies off the coast of Florida that evokes such vivid imagery and is its reputation justified?

The triangle was first noticed by the reporter E.V.W. Jones who looked at many disappearances of vessels and saw that they all occurred within a relatively small area off the Florida coastline. The term itself was coined by the author of a book on sea mysteries, Vincent Gaddis, who also referred to it as the "Triangle of Death."

It is made up by the area which lies in between the three points of Miami, Puerto Rico and of course Bermuda and, since 1945, over 100 ships and planes are said to have vanished there with over one thousand lives lost. The disturbing thing though, is that the losses are total, with no signs of either wreckage, debris or bodies.

The U.S. Coastguards who patrol the area are familiar with the weather conditions they experience there, and they claim to “know” every stretch of water. Most of the vessels they are called to rescue are stranded due to bad weather, strong currents or just bad judgement on the part of would be sailors, and they say that, contrary to popular belief, they don't have any U.F.O. sightings to report.

They describe these waters as the boating capital of America as they play host to hundreds of boats, especially in the summer months, which is also the time of year when the thunderstorms can appear at very short notice

indeed with the seas turning from calm to waves of eight feet high and winds up to hurricane level, all of which are easily capable of capsizing a boat. If you throw into this hostile mix the fact that you have inexperienced sailors taking a boat out for the first time, or worse still, those who dine out locally and then use their place mat with a map of the area to try and navigate their way to the Bahamas, then you have a recipe for disaster. Especially when you consider that the Gulf Stream can carry you north at anything up to four miles an hour, and if you can't see land, you wouldn't even realise.

However, it isn't such mundane mishaps as these which lend the Bermuda Triangle its reputation, it is often the much more amazing tales of military aircraft and large ships which are quoted, such as the tale of the two planes pursuing a U.F.O. which swallowed them up. This is the stuff of mystery, intrigue and romance that serves to increase the notoriety of what is after all just a stretch of water much like any other in the world.

One of the triangle's most famous cases of all occurred on December 5th, 1945 to "Flight 19" when five U.S. Navy Avenger torpedo bombers left Fort Lauderdale on a routine training flight. Each plane should have had on board an officer pilot and two crew members, but one of the crew members had had a premonition of disaster and stayed away. The projected flight was around five hundred miles and each plane was carrying enough fuel for one thousand miles of flight, but the five aircraft and the fourteen men were destined never to return, and every year since 1945 a memorial service is held at Fort Lauderdale in commemoration of flight 19.

At the start of the flight there were no expected problems as the weather at the 2pm take off was good and the forecast was clear. The five Avengers were well maintained and in regular use at the time and the pilots were highly trained. They were on a combat training exercise over the Atlantic, and all was apparently going well until about 3:15pm when the commander of the flight, Captain Charles C. Taylor, radioed in to say that they were off course and could not see land. When asked to give his position he said that he could not. It was soon clear to the tower that the pilot's instruments were not working correctly as they could hear the conversation passing between the other aircraft and they were saying that their instruments were "going crazy" and they all had a different reading.

Don Poole who had trained the pilots was present in the tower at the time, and Taylor told him that he thought that he was in the Gulf of Mexico.

Poole knew that he was nowhere near it, but still Taylor could not work out where he was. Soon communication became difficult because heavy static began to obscure transmissions and Poole told Taylor to head west, if his compass wasn't working properly he should fly toward the sun and this would bring him back to land somewhere along the Florida coast. Either Taylor didn't hear him or chose to ignore him as he kept altering course, flying west for a while, but then turning east again when he thought that he was in the Gulf. A rescue boat was put on standby and the man on board, Jim Ward, was listening in on the conversations between the tower and the planes and was awaiting instructions. He heard Poole tell Taylor to fly toward the sun, and that way even if he was in the Gulf of Mexico he should still hit the coast of Texas. He asked Taylor how much fuel he had left and Taylor estimated that he had enough for about twenty minutes further flying time. The twenty minutes ticked slowly by with still no sign of the aircraft returning, and those on the ground knew that they must be down, but they had no idea where.

Rescue planes were sent, one of which was a twin engine Martin Mariner with thirteen crew on board, and this plane, like the five it sought, was never seen again. A total rescue operation involving over three hundred planes and many, many boats failed to find any clues as to the fate of the five missing Avengers and their fourteen crew, or the Mariner and its thirteen crew.

Captain Richard Roberts led an official investigation into the incident, but still no aircraft were found, and nor was any explanation for their loss. John Myhre of Florida believes that he can explain the loss of Flight 19 and "update" the official report made by Captain Roberts. His work took him fifteen years and he has calculated the wind speed, ocean currents and weather conditions of the day, and he is confident that he knows both where the planes went down and when.

He says that the wind direction and speed were not the same as they had planned and Taylor was confused. They flew into a bad storm system, which was further complicated by nightfall, and on their final known course they were heading for the Florida coast and would have made it back but for Taylor running out of fuel at 6:04pm. Once Taylor ditched, Myhre believes that the remaining planes flew in different directions in a last desperate attempt to reach dry land, and each aircraft now lies on the ocean floor below the spot where it ran out of fuel.

For a time it looked as though the five planes had been found on the sea bed but the planes found proved not to be those from Flight 19, and others raised aircraft have also been found not to be the five in question. The missing Martin Mariner which has also never been found may have a rational explanation for its disappearance as this was a notoriously dangerous model, and the crew of the ship "Gaines Mills" reported seeing the aircraft catch fire in mid-air and plummet into the sea where it exploded on impact. This report was supported by the crew of the U.S. aircraft carrier "USS Solomons" who watched as the plane disappeared from their radar screens.

To add to the confusion there is a lot of misreporting on the case of Flight 19, and in his book about the Bermuda Triangle Charles Berlitz (grandson and heir to the phrase book founder) reports the last transmission from the lead pilot as "Don't come after me! They look like...." when in fact it was "We will have to ditch unless landfall.... When the first plane drops to ten gallons we all go down together." This kind of misreporting is apparently common with Berlitz and comes as no surprise to researcher Larry Kusche who says of him that "If Berlitz were to report that a boat were red, the chance of it being some other colour is almost a certainty."

Time after time, when the Bermuda Triangle is discussed, the same phrases seem to crop up; "lost radio contact," "compasses spinning out of control" and "vanished without trace." Many of them appear in the "Miami Herald," of which Doug Clifton was executive editor, and he is also an avid collector of tales concerning the Bermuda Triangle, such as those which Berlitz lists in his book. Twelve of these are major vessels which have completely disappeared, and seven are of ships found floating Mary Celeste-like, abandoned and undamaged.

For example, the "Rosalie" was found in 1840, abandoned with its sails set and its cargo intact, but there are far earlier cases than this, such as the "Sea Venture" in 1609 which was carrying English settlers to Virginia but was shipwrecked off the island of Bermuda. On September 1st, the vessel's longboat set off on the 500 mile trip to the U.S. coast for help but was never seen again. In 1750, five Spanish treasure ships were caught in storms off Cape Hatteras and three of them completely vanished with no signs of debris or survivors.

More recently, in 1962, a large U.S.A.F. Boeing Stratotanker took off from Langley, Virginia and headed east for the Azores. Soon afterward, the

control tower received weak radio signals from the plane, and when these stopped a full scale rescue was launched but it was in vain as no sign of the aircraft or its crew was ever found. Even more inexplicably on March 23rd 1962 the massive 20,000 ton freighter "Anita" vanished without trace. The Bermuda Triangle doesn't seem to respect age or experience either, as one of the world's most experienced sailors, Joshua Slocombe, and his yacht "Spray" vanished off the coast of Miami, though Slocombe's son feels that this was just an unfortunate accident and was nothing to do with the Bermuda Triangle.

Not everybody though is so unlucky, some do manage to escape, such as the "USS Tigrone," an American submarine, which, despite being fitted with sonar and radar, went miles off course and collided with a reef. However, this was apparently not an unusual occurrence in the navy, and at the time sailors did not think it strange. One man who can count himself very lucky indeed is Chuck Wakely.

In November 1964, Wakely was flying solo from Nassau to Miami, a flight he had made before, and as he climbed to 8,000ft he noticed a faint glow coming from the plane's wings, but he assumed that it was just an optical illusion perhaps caused by the aircraft's cockpit lights being reflected through the tinted windows. After about five minutes the glow got brighter until he eventually had difficulty in reading his instruments because of the glare. His electronic equipment began to develop problems and so he had to operate the controls manually. The wings were now glowing blue-green and looked "fuzzy" and Chuck was having so much trouble controlling the plane that he let go of the controls and allowed it a "free rein" as the glowing increased and became blinding. Eventually though, it began to fade until it disappeared altogether and the instruments again began to work properly, allowing him to safely complete his memorable flight, but even more memorable than Wakely's flight was that of businessman Bruce Gernon who commutes regularly all over Florida in his private plane.

During one flight he saw a cloud over the Bahama bank with a "tremendous build up of electricity inside it." As he flew deeper into the cloud he could see more and more electrical activity, but he said that it wasn't like lightning, "they were just bright, pure white flashes." Gernon was flying along what seemed to be a tunnel in the cloud that was just wide enough for his plane, and it seemed to have some "sort of silver lining." At the other end

of this "tunnel" he could see clear blue sky which he tried to concentrate on and fly towards, and when he was clear of the cloud he could no longer see either the horizon, the ocean or the sky, but just greyness, and he thought that he was in some sort of "electronic fog." He tried to find his exact position but neither he nor his co-pilot were able to calculate it because all of the planes instruments were malfunctioning.

At the side of them, huge slits had opened up showing clear blue skies, and they were able to make contact with air traffic control who told them that they were much closer to Miami than the two men had thought possible, so Gernon checked his watch and the aircrafts clock and saw that he had only been airborne for about thirty minutes which would have put him a full ninety miles away from Miami.

Gernon believes that he had flown through some kind of vortex that had shifted "through time and space by about one hundred miles or thirty minutes, or both."

These strange clouds that Gernon describes actually feature in many tales of disappearances and unusual happenings in the Bermuda Triangle, and it is this which lends the supernatural or extra-terrestrial reputation to the area, and people talk of the clouds concealing U.F.O.s that abduct crafts and their crews. Another experience of such a cloud, only this time at sea level, occurred in 1966 to Captain Don Henry who was the owner of a salvage company in Florida. Henry was on board a tug that was towing an empty petroleum tanker, and the weather was calm and clear, but suddenly the compass needle began to spin clockwise and the sea became turbulent. Henry "couldn't see where the horizon was, the water, sky and horizon all blended together." All the electrical equipment on board stopped working, and the generators continued to run but would produce no power.

Behind the tug, the tanker had vanished beneath a cloud of fog and Henry signalled full speed ahead, but he felt that something was holding them back, until suddenly the tug pulled free but the tanker remained hidden underneath the fog for a few minutes until the tug pulled it out. The tugboat's generators now began to work normally again but all of the batteries on board were dead, even those that were in the crews torches, and they had to be thrown away.

We know that a compass will behave oddly near a magnet or a mass of iron ore, but there is no known way to suddenly drain a battery of all its



power or to prevent a generator that is running from producing electricity, if there were it would be of enormous benefit militarily, so how could this have happened?

The Bermuda Triangle is not alone in its capabilities to “devour” ships and planes as there is another area which also claims to possess this ability, and it is known as “The Devil's Sea.”

The Devil's Sea lies in the Pacific Ocean 800 miles south east of Japan in between Iwo Jima and Marcus Island, and perhaps it doesn't attract the same media attention as its American counterpart because it is neither on the immediate coast or in a very busy area. There was always said to be a higher than usual incidence of losses in the Devil's Sea, but it reached a peak between 1950 and 1954 with nine ships disappearing without trace, and these losses prompted the Japanese Government to declare it a danger zone. In 1955 they sponsored an expedition to the Devil's Sea, and a group of scientists set sail on board the ship “Kaiyo Maru No. 5”. Almost predictably neither the ship nor the scientists were ever seen again.

Ivan Sanderson is an avid collector of all things strange and he keenly follows reports of strange incidents. One day he marked the Bermuda Triangle and the Devil's Sea on a map, and he found that both of them lie between thirty and forty degrees north of the equator and are approximately the same size. He also looked at other so called “Devil's Graveyards” and found that there are twelve such areas which lie symmetrically around the world, two of them being the north and south poles, and Sanderson suggests that the Bermuda Triangle is the most notorious because it is in one of the busiest parts of the world.

Of the twelve Devil's Graveyards that Sanderson found, he noticed that most lie where warm and cold currents collide, and they are “Nodal Points” where the surface and the subsurface currents turn in different directions, and he suggests that the difference in temperature and direction could cause magnetic vortices and thus interfere with compasses. Unfortunately this is not supported by any evidence, and doesn't explain the land locked Devil's Graveyards that he found. Nor does it go any way towards explaining any of the ships that are found floating devoid of crew when they are in perfect working order. What was needed was a fresh line of inquiry.

In April 1963, the crew of a Boeing 707 saw what looked like an atomic explosion in the sea and they watched as the water rose up into a great mound

half a mile wide. The pilot checked with the coast guard to see if there had been an earthquake, but he was told that there had been no such occurrences in the area, so what could it have been?

Azerbaijan has many of what are called “gas spouts” which can push mud and water up to the surface from twelve kilometres underground to form five hundred metre high mud mountains, and in one area alone, up to twenty thousand cubic metres of methane gas is released daily, and in 1947 the Purugay mud volcano released over five hundred cubic metres of methane rich gas and fifty thousand tons of rock fragments.

Such gas seeps occur, not only on land, but also on the sea bed. They can be used to help locate oil and gas fields, and the southern Caspian Sea was one of the first to be exploited. Ship's Captain, Kishi Mytallimov, has been sailing the Caspian Sea for over thirty years and he has seen many of what he calls mud volcanos from the surface. He says that they are unmistakable and you can see the water "boiling" and gas and mud coming up to the surface. He says that the ones he has seen are usually only about one and a half metres high but can be up to five kilometres in circumference.

Doctor Chingfz Muradov is a diver in the Caspian and he has also witnessed a release of gas, but his view was from underwater as it happened during one of his dives. He says that it is not a steady flow and nor is it localised, but is spread over a whole area, not from one mud volcano. Muradov says that some of the bubbles were small, others big, and there were huge ones which were like a column of gas, and it was as though the sea was boiling. The effect that this gas being released into the water has is that the water's density is reduced and the effect that it has at the surface can be devastating. It means that the water will give less support to passing ships and may possibly sink them.

Tests have been done in the wave tank at Texas A+M University, the largest in America, with calibrated and weighted ships. The model ships are floated on the surface of the wave tank and gas is released from the bottom of the tank as the ship passes over it. The result of these tests is that time after time the ship is sunk as it gets reduced support from the water as its density is decreased by the gas.

As early as the mid 1970s, Doctor Richard Maciver, a geochemist and scientist in the gas and oil trade for thirty years, knew that gas leaks could sink a ship, and his tests at the Institute of Oceanographic Studies in England

proved it, but he was puzzled as to how a gas seep could account for bringing an aircraft down, but he says that the solution came to him from a most unlikely source, his daughter's asthma.

One day Maciver's daughter brought home an air ioniser (negative ion generator) and switched it on in her bedroom. When Maciver passed his hand over the top of it he noticed that the hairs on the back of his hand and arm would stand on end. He read the instructions that came with the device and he found that it emitted clouds of negative ion air, and this negative ion air can also be found near "agitated water" i.e. waterfalls and bubbling streams, so in the event of an underwater gas seep the surface becomes "agitated" and so there would be masses of negative ions in the air which creates a magnetic field. This magnetic field would in turn affect the passing aircraft's compasses so that they behaved erratically. Could this magnetic field also be responsible for draining batteries or stopping generators from producing power? Electrical motors do make use of magnets so theoretically a magnetic field well interfere with them.

Maciver then thought back to his school history lessons and how thousands of early nineteenth century miners had lost their lives due to underground methane gas which was ignited by their lamps or sparks they made as they worked.

As methane gas is much lighter than air it rises rapidly, so a plane would fly into it and, either the white hot exhaust or a tiny spark, would ignite it and destroy the plane. If it didn't catch fire then, like the ships, it would suffer a loss of uplift from the lighter than air gas and this may also bring it down.

It would be quite feasible for an aircraft to ignite gas as a similar event occurred in 1979 in western Siberia as two trains passing each other in a valley that was filled with escaped gas somehow ignited it, causing the deaths of a thousand people. He also suggests that these clouds of ignited methane gas could explain the reports of strange clouds and U.F.O.s seen over the Bermuda Triangle which he believes is not so individual in the actual elements found there, but the volume of traffic both on the sea and in the air serves to make it appear so.

Maciver goes on to say that once the plane is damaged it would hit the water and sink to the bottom where it would be buried by the sediments as they settle back into the hole left by the escaped gas, thus covering all traces of it. This has been the case with several floating drilling rigs and drilling

ships which have been sunk by gas seeps while drilling into gas and oil deposits and have then been buried in the crater which is left by the escaped gas as the ocean floor settles back over them concealing them completely.

Professor Richard Selley, head of Geology at Imperial College, London, says that we know more about the dark side of the moon than we do about our sea beds, but there are ideas about both how the methane is created and ultimately released. The build up of methane is caused by dying marine life which sinks to the bottom, and the water pressure combined with a low temperature, only about one degree or so, creates gas molecules surrounded by water molecules which “trap” the gas as though in a cage. They are then known as “hydrates,” and they can be made from almost any gas and not just methane, and for this creation of hydrates to take place you need four ingredients. They are gas, water, the right pressure and the right temperature.

These conditions can be found in areas of permafrost, and it is widely estimated that there could be something like 1016 m<sup>3</sup> (ten thousand trillion cubic metres) of methane hydrates built up around the continents.

They can be trapped on the continental margins by sediment build ups where shallow waters drop quickly to great depths. Warming of the water or more probably movement in the sediments or the continental shelf itself can cause a release of the gas, and testament to this movement are the transcontinental communication cables which are several inches thick, yet which would break with relative regularity.

Could there be, beneath the waters off the Florida coast line, a deposit of methane hydrates? It is certainly very possible, but if that were the case and these gas blowouts are the cause of the disappearances within the Bermuda Triangle, where are all the accounts of blowouts which haven't caused a sinking, and where are all of the accounts from ships and planes that have had a scrape with disaster or merely witnessed a gas seep? Should there not be a higher incidence of lucky escapes? One would have thought that there should be more near misses and eye witness accounts of lucky escapes than of actual disappearances, but this does not seem to be the case. Why also was there an upsurge in incidents since 1945 and in the Devil's Sea between 1950 and 1954? Is it due to a higher rate of movement in the continental shelves, or is it due to a higher volume of traffic in the area of Bermuda since 1945 and in the Devil's Sea after 1950, and falling again when the Japanese Government declared it a danger zone and sponsored an investigation in 1955? If it is

either of these two things then how do we explain the tunnel that Bruce Gernon flew through before finding himself far closer to Miami than he really ought to have been?

The truth is that you don't have to go to the Bermuda Triangle to find tales of people being moved forward in time and distance, so it isn't an exclusive phenomenon to the triangle.

It has been pointed out in the past that the Devil's Sea is a storm in a teacup as its legend is based upon the loss of only nine ships in a period of five years in an area of unspecified size, and eight of the nine missing ships were fishing vessels, only one of which had a radio transmitter, so is there really a Devil's Sea at all? In the 1970s there were reports that a U.S. Investigator discovered that the term "Devil's Sea" was not a familiar one to Japanese Maritime Officials, and so must be a legend borne out of a few over-zealous newspaper accounts. So are the occurrences in the Bermuda Triangle natural or are they supernatural?

A gas seep could be a perfectly natural cause, but could it reproduce all of the symptoms we see in cases of disappearances? The seep would release gas which could easily sink a ship that was sailing along the surface above it by lowering the density of the water and thus giving the ship less buoyancy, and the agitated water at the surface creates negative ions and thus a magnetic field which would interfere with compasses. As the gas, possibly methane, rises into the air it would affect the airflow over an aircraft's wings and this could be enough to bring it crashing down, but otherwise it may be ignited by the aircraft and eye witnesses may describe this as lights in the sky, fire in the sky or a flash in the sky, in short a U.F.O..

The ship or plane would then sink to the bottom of the sea, and all traces of it would be hidden as it falls into the crater left behind by the gas and is covered by the sand as it resettles over it again.

So it could happen theoretically, but the answer must surely lie with the world's largest insurer of ships and planes, Lloyds of London, who keep records of their shipping losses on file for decades.

Norman Hooke at Lloyds Maritime in Colchester, England, investigates various claims and one classic example he remembers is that of the "Marine Sulphur Queen" which left Texas and sailed through the Gulf of Mexico and then out into the Atlantic where it was lost sometime after passing the tip of Key West. At the time, and for some time afterwards, it was thought by many

to be another victim of the Bermuda Triangle when no bodies or wreckage could be found by search and rescue teams. However, sometime later, flotsam was found, and this included a life ring from the ship which had been carried north by the Gulf Stream, so Lloyds obviously considered it to be a normal, run of the mill marine casualty.

The deciding factor though, is likely that Lloyds have got no reason to consider the Bermuda Triangle in any way mysterious, because in their records they find, statistically speaking, no greater incidence for the loss of vessels in this area than in any other large expanse of water in the world, and if anybody ought to know, it would surely be them.

So it would seem that a whole realm of folklore is exactly that, invented by over-zealous or romantic reporting of shipping and aviation losses in what is one of the busiest areas of the world for both sea and air traffic.

## THE GIZA PLATEAU

Of the seven wonders of the ancient world, only one remains in existence today and that is the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and, like the great monument itself, the debate which surrounds it is far from gone as well. Just the mere sight of the colossal, ancient structure alongside its two neighbours is enough to evoke high emotion and awe, and the more one looks at them in detail, the more questions one finds to be answered, not least of all about the people who built them, the ancient Egyptians.

The Egyptian civilisation lasted for around 3,000 years, far longer than our own has yet achieved, from around 3100 BC to around 300 BC, and a scholar-priest named Manetho divided it up into dynasties which are loosely based on families of ruling kings, known as Pharaohs. There are thirty two dynasties in all and they are divided into “kingdoms” which is not a geographical term but refers to a “unified state” with clear government. The periods in between these kingdoms (The Old Kingdom, The Middle Kingdom, The New Kingdom and The Late Period) are known as intermediate periods (The First, Second and Third).

Egyptologists believe that before the ancient Egyptians civilization the land was inhabited by Stone Age warriors who were positively primitive in comparison to these civilized Egyptians.

A lot is made of the religion of ancient Egypt and the Egyptians were a truly spiritual race who famously believed in the afterlife. Not only did they believe that once a person died they went on to the next world, but they went to great lengths to ensure that they were able to do so. This is why the rulers of the land, the Pharaohs, were mummified to preserve their bodies, and also

why they took so many of their possessions with them, including works of art, religious texts and symbols and even slaves who apparently went with them willingly. The Pharaohs and their entourage were originally buried in squat, rectangular tombs known as mastabas but they soon changed to using pyramids, and one man who thinks he knows why is Karel Drbal.

The pyramid shape is believed by some to possess certain properties and Drbal, a Czech radio engineer, read in the 1940s the work of a Frenchman named Antoine Bovis who had built a model of the Cheops pyramid and used it to counteract decomposition and encourage mummification of food and dead animals by placing them beneath it. Drbal believed that the pyramid shape contains energy which could cause a razor blade placed beneath it, along the east-west line, to become a living entity and recover its sharp edge. Drbal claimed to have tested his theory and obtained successful results, but others who have since repeated his experiments have not had convincing results.

Another pyramidologist, Dr Carl Schleicher, of Mankind Research Unlimited in Washington DC also tested the power of the pyramid form by placing black eyed peas beneath a pyramid. He placed some more under a cube and more still in the open air. Schleicher claimed that those under the pyramid grew 1.5 times faster than those under nothing and 1.129 times faster than those under the cube, but again, similar experiments performed by others, this time the horticultural department of the University of Guelph in Canada, failed to achieve results and they concluded that pyramids have no effect on the growth of plants.

Another man thinks he has a far more practical reason for why the pyramid shape was used, and that man is Dr. Farouk El-Baz. El-Baz surveys the desert on behalf of the Egyptian government looking for water and he is convinced that the ancient Egyptians learned by trial and error that the only structure that will remain for any length of time in this hot and windy environment is a pyramid. El-Baz has been working in the desert for twenty years and he says that, as you look around parts of the desert, you see nothing but flat sand blown into the occasional dunes and then sticking out of this, you will see a pyramid. Some early pyramids here were built with stepped sides and then they tried to build one with smooth sides, but their gradient was too steep and they cracked. The ruined pyramid of Meidum has in it cedar beams which suggest that the builders knew it needed more support to



stop it from collapsing, so they later incorporated these lessons they had learned into their future projects. El-Baz however, feels that they went from stepped sides to smooth sides so that they could decorate the outside walls and write on them.

There is evidence to support the fact that they wrote on the outsides as one of the Giza pyramids still has smooth limestone left clinging to it, and on this limestone are signs of red paint, but it is unlikely that this is the sole reason for a change of design. The Great Pyramids at Giza would appear, at first sight, to be the result of a learning curve, and are thought to have been built around 2500 BC. By the time the Egyptian civilization reached its third dynasty and through to its sixth dynasty (2686 BC – 2181 BC), the settled period known by Egyptologists as “The Old Kingdom,” there was a good standard of living under a well-run government and there was little or no threat from abroad, so they were now able to utilise their natural structure made from coarse rubble set with clay mortar and faced with a layer of fine grained white limestone from the quarries at Tura which was thirty kilometres away, across the river Nile.

Later, a 4m thick casing of limestone was added to all four sides which finished 60cm short of the top edges, and this formed a small step. Shafts were dug along the east side to lead to the Royal Family’s burial places and, in order to conceal them, an extra 8.5m was added to this east side, thus making the mastaba rectangular. It seems that at this point Imhotep decided on a different design and the height was increased with three accretion walls being added, each one lower than the next resulting in the first known stepped pyramid.

The pyramid itself is part of a complex of buildings and many doubt that such a level of architecture could be achieved with a development process but there are signs in the construction that it is part of a learning curve. Rather than the customary mud brick, they used stone blocks about the size of a house brick due probably to their ease of handling as they were so far unable to quarry or transport the huge blocks found in later structures. Supported or engaged columns were also used because of doubts about the strength and stability of free standing columns.

Next came the step pyramid at Meidum, 50km south of Sakkara, and this was probably intended for Humi (2637 BC – 2613 BC) the last king of the third dynasty and, like the king, it also marked a transitional stage between

the third and fourth dynasties in the evolution of the pyramid.

The Meidum pyramid originally rose to a height of 93m with a base that was 145m square, and was built on a central core of masonry with accretion walls, each higher than the one outside it, thus forming a stepped pyramid. The steps were then filled in and the whole structure encased in Tura limestone to create a true pyramid. As in other third dynasty pyramids the blocks of the accretion walls were not bonded together but relied on friction for stability. This proved to be insufficient and at some point, probably during the New Kingdom (1550 BC – 1070 BC), it collapsed, and today it looks like a tower surrounded by a mound of rubble and is known locally as “The False Pyramid.”

What makes the Meidum site stand out in particular is that both the pyramid and the surrounding buildings were to become standard in their appearance and location. The pyramid has its entrance in its north face, there is a satellite pyramid, probably for a queen, and on the pyramid’s east side is a memorial temple from which a causeway leads to the edge of the site to valley temple in which the king’s body would be prepared for burial.

The valley temple is also connected by canal to the Nile, along which the king’s funeral procession would have sailed. Since mastabas had been replaced by pyramids for the kings themselves, mastabas would now be built around the pyramid for nobles, its proximity to the pyramid reflecting the status of its owner.

Huni was succeeded by his son Sneferu (2612 BC – 2589 BC). Sneferu was married to Hetepheres, the daughter of Huni and his chief queen, while he himself was the son of Huni and Meresankh, a secondary wife, and it is probably for this reason that he was named as the founder of the next dynasty, the fourth.

Sneferu chose Dahshur, 48km north of Meidum, for his pyramid site where he had two built. The first, the Red Pyramid, or the “Shining Pyramid” is the earliest known structure to have been designed and built as a true pyramid. Its angle of incline at 43° 40” is shallower than the later adopted 52° shows perhaps the caution taken on the part of its builders to ensure that it remained stable. The second pyramid, to the south, is the “Southern Shining Pyramid” and, like its counterpart, it was originally 104m high but it is unusual in the respect that its lower portion is inclined at 54° while its upper portion is inclined at 43° 22”.

The reason for this is not clear but it is thought to be so that the pyramid could have been finished in haste as it would have needed a smaller volume of stone to complete. Predictably this pyramid is known today as “The Bent Pyramid” and it was also cased in Tura limestone but, unlike others, it was not laid horizontally but at an angle sloping towards the structure’s centre, and this provided much better cohesion, and as such most of it is still in place, making it the best preserved of all the pyramids.

Sneferu’s son and successor was Khufu (2589 BC – 2566 BC) and his pyramid at Giza is the largest ever constructed, so impressive was its size that it was given the name “The Horizon” and it remained the world’s tallest building for almost 4,500 years when the so called temporary construction, the Eiffel Tower, was built in 1889.

Its original height was 146m (the top 9.5m are now missing) and it has a base area of 13 acres. Again it was originally encased in Tura limestone and is estimated to contain some 2,300,000 limestone blocks weighing between 2.5 tons and 15 tons. It contains three chambers, one cut into the bedrock beneath it and two built into the superstructure (the King’s Chamber and the Queen’s Chamber) the King’s Chamber being reached via the 46m long and 8m high gallery, and it is possible that there are other internal features yet to be discovered. Around the base of the pyramid are five pits, two of which were discovered in AD 1954 and AD 1987 and contained dismantled wooden boats. 651 components have been assembled to form a magnificent vessel measuring some 43.5m long, which was possibly used in the funeral procession. It is the oldest large boat found anywhere in the world.

Khufu was succeeded by his son Djedefre (2566 BC – 2558 BC) and he was in turn succeeded by another of Khufu’s sons, Khafre (2558 BC – 2532 BC), who also chose Giza for his pyramid. Its ancient name was “The Great Pyramid” though it was smaller than that of his father at 143m. It still retains a lot of its Tura limestone casing at the top and its granite casing at the bottom.

Khafre’s valley temple is devoid of decoration and its walls are made of granite blocks or limestone faced with granite which came from Aswan on papyrus rafts, a journey along the Nile of around 1,000km.

The third pyramid at Giza is that of Khafre’s successor Menkaure (2532 BC – 2504 BC) and is smaller by half than the other two at 70m tall. It was originally meant to be encased in costly Aswan granite but this is only the

case with the lower sixteen courses, the rest being cased in limestone, despite it being thought that the twenty eight year reign of Menkaure should have been long enough to complete the full granite casing. Known as “The Divine Pyramid” it is possible that its smaller stature is due to the royal exchequer being depleted by the enormous projects that preceded it. These three pyramids were the last great pyramids to be built, and perhaps the fact that the fifth dynasty pyramids ranged between only 43m to 70m in height could be accounted for by the fact the enormous scale of their predecessors had not saved them from grave robbers, and if size couldn’t, perhaps magic could.

Userkaf (2498 BC – 2491 BC) chose his site as Sakkara but he placed his memorial temple on the south side of the pyramid rather than the east so that it would be bathed in sunlight all day long, great religious emphasis of course being placed in the sun. The last ruler of the fifth dynasty, Uas (2375 BC – 2345 BC) has made his pyramid a landmark as it is the first to have inscriptions on its inside. These inscriptions are the oldest religious writings in the world and are known as “The Pyramid Texts.”

The three Giza pyramids are perhaps the most enduring feature of Egypt, and they are generally known by the names of the Pharaohs they are associated with: Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure (Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus in Greek) and there is much debate as to how these immense structures were built by such an ancient race.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, said that the Great Pyramid was built by 100,000 slaves working in three month shifts, but this is most likely to be the total number of men on the project during Khufu’s reign. A rate of roughly 5,000 per year for 23 years. It has been estimated that 4,000 of these could be accommodated at the site with another 1,000 for quarrying and transporting the blocks. One of the most often touted methods for the physical assembly of the pyramid blocks is that they were rolled on logs along huge ramps built up the side of the pyramid, but an American engineer, Robert G. Moores Jr, estimates that for a large pyramid made up of 1.8 million blocks, each weighing 2 tons, to be built in 20 years working 10 hours a day, 300 days a year, you would have to lay a block every 2 minutes, which would mean that the ramp theory is impossible. This is of course aside from the fact that building the ramps to the top of the pyramid would be almost as big a construction job as building the pyramid itself.

There is a surviving example of how pyramids were made and it comes

from Heroditus who said that they were built using wooden machines. It is thought that a team of workers would use one to lift the blocks with ropes and pulleys from one step to the next and so on up to the top. Bob Lowdermilk has reconstructed one of the machines from the ancient description and it has eight levers (one in each hand for four men) and each lever gives a 20:1 advantage so the four men could lift a 5,000lb block up 2.25 feet (the average step height on the Great Pyramid) in about 20 to 25 minutes. As the block was lifted another man would insert wooden supports beneath it, and when it was at the right height it would be slid across off the supports and into place.

Though this method is described in ancient texts it isn't without its flaws, and in truth nobody knows for certain how the pyramids were built. In 1987 Dr. Zahi Hawass found a cemetery within a mile of the pyramids and the graves in it are those of the men who built them. He even found the gateway through which they would have walked to work. In the cemetery are thousands of graves and well-kept tombs and it is known as "The Workmen's Village." The graves are marked with the worker's position, such as "Director of Building Tombs" and "Overseer of Site of the Pyramid." The six hundred bodies in the poorer tombs show just how difficult their task was as all of the skeletons show signs of stress in the spine, but Hawass says that the workers in the cemetery were not slaves, as slaves would not have had such valuable stones to use on their tombs and, more importantly, they would not have been allowed to be buried so close to the tomb of the Pharaoh.

Hawass also says that there are six types of tomb there, including step-sided and smooth sided pyramids, aping those of the Pharaohs, and it is said that up to ten thousand people had lived and died there, possibly the slaves being buried elsewhere, away from the Pharaoh. Similarly, the village of Deir el-Medina, close to the valley of the kings, was built in the eighteenth dynasty to house the workmen of the royal necropolis, and family documents from the village prove that these workers were not slaves either but they were skilled craftsmen who lived well by the standards of the time. Such was their position that they were apt to revolt when they felt it was justified, and during the twentieth dynasty there were instances where their supplies were either late or non-existent and when their complaints fell on deaf ears they went on strike.

Returning to Giza, the pyramids share the site with another enduring symbol of Egypt, and that is the Sphynx, Abu el-Hol (Father of Terror in

Arabic). The word sphynx is derived from the Greek word shespankh meaning "Living Statue" which originally referred to human-headed lions that guarded the gates of the underworld. Made up of a huge lion's body with a man's head, the Sphinx is 240ft (73m) long, 66ft (20m) high (as high as a six storey building) and 46ft (14m) wide. If the purpose behind the pyramids is shrouded in mystery then that of the Sphinx certainly is, as it is fairly anonymous as far as references to it in the hieroglyphics go, be it about how it was built, why it was built or who it was built by. In ancient Egypt, sphinxes were guardians who protected sacred places like the entrances to tombs and temples, and the Great Sphinx sits as though guarding the pyramids of Giza. In ancient inscriptions the symbol of the sphinx served as the giver of life, the director of truth and the eternal leader of the upper and lower world.

Through the ages it has been thought to represent many things, the ancient Greeks thought it represented occult wisdom, the medieval Arabs thought it was the father of terror, but some say that it began as nothing more than an outcrop of rock that nobody knew what to do with. Lanny Bell, Associate Professor at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, says that it is the remains of an old quarry which, rather than destroy, the Egyptians sculpted.

Mark Lehner, also of the Oriental Institute and the Harvard Semitic Museum, says that it not only has the power of the lion in its body but also the head of, not just any man, but the ultimate man (the Pharaoh) wearing the head scarf folded in the way that only the Pharaoh is allowed to wear it, as the sign of divine rule over the natural world. Lehner also says that it was built at the same time as the second pyramid, that of Khafre, possibly as a guardian to it.

Many think that its face was built to represent Khafre, and Rita Freed, Curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, says that there are many similarities between the face and that of the statue of Khafre. The square jaw, arched eyebrows and high cheek bones prompt many to think that it was built during the fourth dynasty (at the same time as the pyramids) and another to date it is to look at the rock from which it is carved. The bottom layer is hard limestone while the middle layer runs from hard to soft and the head is made from a strong building stone which is why it was weathered less than the body.

Mark Lehner says that it is obvious that the Sphinx and the pyramids were built at the same time and he says the evidence for that is found in the way that it is set out, the materials used and the architecture, which he says is fourth dynasty (the time of Khafre). He says that the Egyptians did not distinguish between art, writing and architecture, so the Sphinx could be considered a huge hieroglyph. The Egyptologists view of the ancient civilization is that the Old Kingdom when Giza was built, collapsed in 2100 BC, and with it died the grand pyramid constructions and the work on the Giza plateau.

The period known as the Middle Kingdom died out five hundred years later, in 1600 BC, and there then followed a period of neglect at Giza which saw a thousand years of sand blowing over the monuments and burying the Sphinx up to its neck. This also the period of the grave robbers who committed the most heinous crime imaginable, which went against the entire Egyptian belief system, as to raid a tomb was to kill the person in the afterlife, and yet people were robbing the tombs of their Pharaohs who were akin to gods.

The New Kingdom was born, and this became Egypt's "Golden Age," almost a thousand years after the construction of the Giza plateau, the Egyptians celebrated the re-emergence of a powerful monarchy. They erected monuments to the past and, to try and stop future grave robbers, they looked for a more secret site for tombs, and they found it 450 miles south along the Nile, opposite the then capital, Thebes, at the Valley of the Kings, where there was a natural mound.

The pyramid shape was still important to them however, and if you stand in the Valley of the Kings and look towards the end of the valley, you will see the top of the holy mountain, and this mountain peak serves as on giant pyramid to overlook all the tombs in the valley. It was at this time, during the New Kingdom, that restoration work was done on many of the works of the Old Kingdom, and there is a tale that Tutmoses was out hunting and stopped to rest in the shadow of the Sphinx's head, and he heard a voice which told him to uncover the body of the Sphinx and he will gain his seat on the throne, which he duly did.

Tutmoses was not a crown prince so he would not naturally inherit the throne, but there is evidence to suggest that he killed his older brother in order to become king and then made up the prophecy to hide his crime. He

did however fulfil the rest of the alleged prophecy and restore the landscape, and built walls to try and keep the sand off it in the future. He also had the face of the Sphinx and its head dress painted, and traces of the paint can still be seen today.

In 525 BC the Persians invaded Egypt and in 332 BC Alexander the Great invaded and made Egypt a part of the Greek Empire, and for some time the Romans and the Greeks were agreeable to the Egyptian ways of worship and even carried out some repairs on the Sphinx. Though the statue itself was maintained, the foreign influences served to swamp the belief system and the Sphinx's religious purpose became lost in time. By AD 2 it was all but gone, and the Sphinx became the creation of the gods. Under Christian influence the Sphinx again fell into decline, and in the fourth century AD, as the temples were closed or destroyed, and the last of the hieroglyphs carved in stone, the ancient Egyptian culture ended, and the Sphinx was again buried up to its neck in sand.

By AD 640 Egypt was an Arab nation and the Sphinx's meaning, and that of the mummified Pharaohs was forgotten, not even the traces of paint still visible on the face of the Sphinx gave away its importance. One man, an Arab doctor named Abdul Latif, in AD 1200 wrote:

*“A little more than a bow shot from these pyramids is a colossal figure of a head and neck projecting from the earth. The body to which the head belongs is said to be buried under the earth. On the face is a reddish tint and a red varnish. The face is remarkably beautiful, the mouth in particular has a charming expression. It seems to be smiling gently.”*

Early in the fifteenth century another Arab, this time a historian, reported that someone, angry that people still believed and indulged in ancient Egyptian mysticism, smashed off the nose, though there are also reports that a sheik ordered that the “pagan smile” was wiped from its face by cannonballs. In 1798 Napoleon came to Egypt with not only an invading army but also a team of surveyors and scholars who reconnoitered the ancient monuments, and it is even rumoured that Napoleon himself took a few pot shots at the Sphinx's face.

True or not, Napoleon did serve to open Egypt up to Europe and he also



found the Rosetta Stone, a black rock on which many hieroglyphics told of ancient Egypt and its secrets. It wasn't until relatively recently, 1925, that the Sphinx was once again uncovered by a French archaeologist named Emile Baraize. It took Baraize a full ten years just to remove the sand alone. Photographs of the Sphinx before this operation seem strange but they do allow one to gain some insight into what a mammoth task Baraize undertook.

In the last hundred years alone the neck has been eroded by several inches and today we continue to carry out repairs on one of the world's most long lived structures. This is the popular belief about the Giza plateau and Egyptologists cling to it, but more recent theories are far more grandiose than this. The Royal Astronomer of Scotland, Charles Piazzi Smyth, made some discoveries in 1865, he found that the base of the Great Pyramid divided by the width of a casing stone equaled 365 (the number of days in a year). He also calculated that a pyramid inch (0.25 of a paving stone) was also one ten millionth of the earth's polar radius. He applied the pyramid inch to every dimension of the Great Pyramid and made a spectacular supposition, he claimed that by counting each inch as one year, he could calculate all of the principal dates in the earth's past and future.

Smyth's calculations and theories appeared in a book, which sold quite well, but they were mocked and debunked by scholars who penned a new term to describe him, a "pyramidiot." The ideas put forward by others however, are far more sensible than this, and if true, will change the way we think about not only the Egyptian civilization, but about civilization in general.

The idea is being put forward by construction engineer Robert Bauval and writer Graham Hancock, and they ask the question: If the three Giza pyramids were built for the same purpose as other pyramids (as tombs) why were there no mummies or treasures found in them? Why were there no inscriptions to say which Pharaoh they had belonged to? Bauval also has grave doubts about the Egyptologists' opinion that the ancient Egyptians were preceded by primitive Stone Age man, and yet they were infinitely more skilled than their predecessors, and able to build perfect structures just to house a dead king.

There is debate, not only about the kind of civilization that preceded the Old Kingdom, but also about when the Egyptian civilization began. T.G.H. James, former keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum says that:

*“The first truly historical period is that which begins with the invention of writing and it is generally known as the Dynastic Period. It is a period extending from about 3100 BC to 332 BC and it derives its name from the thirty one dynasties into which the successive kings of Egypt were divided in a scheme preserved in the work of Manetho, a priestly historian who lived during the third century BC.”*

He says that those which flourished before this and displayed some of the characteristics of the early dynastic Egyptians are known as “Predynastic.” Those that date from before the Predynastic Period are usually referred to in the same terms used in European prehistory, i.e. Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic. So there were the beginnings of Egyptian civilization in 3100 BC, before that were only “unlettered cultures” with some “civilized” characteristics, and before that was only “Stone Age” savages (Paleolithic meaning “Old Stone Age”).

Professor Walter Emery agrees with James by saying that the writings of Manetho are of “immense importance and form the framework on which Egyptian history has been built.” Manetho’s work continues to be relevant today because it is so accurate due to it being based on “much older documents, or king-lists, to which, as a learned priest he had access.” What’s more, other such lists have been discovered and translated and in general they support Manetho. From these works it is clear that there were “three distinct eras of kingship remembered:

1. When Neteru (“Neteres” or “Gods”) ruled Egypt – an epoch that culminated with Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis.
2. The era of the “followers of Horus,” the Shemsu Hor, who took the divine rule through to a human Pharaoh named Menes (Narmer) – the legendary “unifier of the two lands of Upper and Lower Egypt.”
3. After Menes came the “dynastic” kings who were catalogued in the king-lists.

Egyptologists place Menes’ rule in 3000 BC and refer to him as the first king of dynastic Egypt, but they do concede that he must have been preceded by predynastic rulers in both Upper and Lower Egypt, but they do not accept

that the “Neters” and “Followers of Horus” in the king-lists (and given credence by Manetho) were historical individuals. They rather see them as being gods and the “Shemsu Hor” as being merely mythical kings in a mythical land. Thus they disregard parts of the same lists and records which disagree with them. Egyptologists argue that the Giza necropolis is a result of around a hundred years of development beginning at the step pyramid of Djoser at Sakkara, then Meidum, then Dashour and then Giza, but Bauval and Hancock say that there is evidence which casts doubt on this sequence. They ask what the implications would be if it could be shown that the work on the pyramid of Khufu had begun some 1,300 years before his birth and had been substantially completed 300 years before his accession to the throne.

They say that this evidence does exist and was published in 1986 by the Pyramids Carbon Dating Project directed by Mark Lehner. Lehner collected fifteen samples of mortar from the masonry of the Great Pyramid and these samples were chosen because they contained fragments of organic material which, unlike stone, can be carbon dated. Two of them were tested in Texas and the rest were tested in Zurich, and Lehner was surprised by the results. He said:

*“The dates run from 3809 BC to 2689 BC. So generally the dates are .... Significantly earlier than the best Egyptological date for Khufu .... In short, the radio carbon dates, depending on which sample you note, suggest that the Egyptological chronology is anything from 200 to 1,200 years off. You can now look at this almost like a bell curve, and when you cut it down the middle you can summarise the results by saying our dates are 400 to 450 years too early for the Old Kingdom pyramids, especially those of the fourth dynasty .... Now this is really radical .... I mean it’ll make a big stink. The Giza pyramid is 400 years older than Egyptologists believe.”*

Despite this, no stink has been caused as the results have been ignored by Egyptologists. There are roughly a hundred pyramids in Egypt, the last one to be discovered was that of third dynasty Pharaoh Sekhemkhet in 1950, and there are known to be two more lying buried beneath the desert sands, that of Mankauhor (The pyramid which is divine of places”) and that of

Neferkare (“The enduring and living pyramid”) and perhaps there may yet be more still.

The Giza pyramids though are unlike any others in Egypt in that the ones preceding them in the third dynasty are mountains of crumbling brick, and those from the following fifth dynasty are piles of rubble. Hancock likens this to man building a Model T Ford, then a Porsche, then a Penny Farthing, and he says that “It really doesn’t make any kind of sense.” It had been said that they must have either lost their motivation or built them for a different purpose, and Hancock adds that if they were merely built to act as tombs, why were they constructed so precisely in both their locations and their dimensions? Surely these three particular pyramids, unlike those that preceded and succeeded them, served some higher purpose, and we can see the effort that went into their construction when we take a closer look.

The Giza plateau lies almost exactly a third of the way between the equator and the North Pole on the 30th parallel (Latitude  $30^\circ$ ) and the pyramids are aligned north to south and east to west. In fact the Great Pyramid has its meridional (north-south) axis aligned to within  $0.05^\circ$  of true north-south (more accurate than the Meridian Building at the Greenwich Observatory, London) which is offset by  $0.15^\circ$ .

The base of the Great Pyramid covers an area of thirteen acres, enough to house the cathedrals of Florence, Milan, St. Peters in Rome, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s Cathedral. Its side measurements show incredible accuracy and consistency, the north side measures 755ft 4.9818in, the east side measures 755ft 10.4937in, the south side measures 756ft 0.9739in and the west side measures 755ft 9.1551in. The four corners of the base also show a miniscule margin of error, as the deviation from right angles is  $0^\circ 00' 02''$  at the north west corner,  $0^\circ 03' 02''$  at the northeast corner,  $0^\circ 03' 33''$  at the south east corner and  $0^\circ 00' 33''$  at the south west corner. The angle at which the sides of the pyramid slope even appears to be deliberate, and Bauval says that it shows a great mathematical knowledge, as to achieve these results the sides need to slope at a constant  $52^\circ$ .

The value of Pi (the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter) and its value to two decimal places (3.14) was originally thought to have been discovered in 3 BC by Archimedes, thousands of years after the pyramids were built, yet the pyramid incorporates it into its design. The designed height of the Great Pyramid at 481.3949ft bears the same relationship to its

base perimeter at 3023.16ft, as does the circumference of a circle to its radius, i.e.  $2 \times \pi \times 481.3949\text{ft} \times 2 \times 3.14 = 3023.16\text{ft}$ ).

The Great Pyramid is also a mathematical model of the Northern Hemisphere on a scale of 1:43,200, i.e. height at  $481.3949\text{ft} \times 43,200 = 3938.685$  miles (11 miles less than the earth's polar radius which is 3949 miles). Likewise, the pyramid's perimeter at  $3023.16\text{ft} \times 43,200 = 24,724.94$  miles (170 miles less than the equatorial circumference of the earth which is 24,902 miles). An error of only 0.75%.

Five hundred years ago our own civilization wasn't even sure that the earth was round, and even today there are some that doubt it, namely the "Flat Earth Society," and it wasn't until three hundred years ago that we knew its true dimensions, yet this pyramid was supposedly built 4,500 years ago. Curiously the pyramids built in Mexico also incorporate the value of Pi in their construction.

The Egyptologists don't deny any of this, they merely say that it wasn't done intentionally. What makes this unbelievable accuracy in construction all the more astounding is that the pyramid is not built on a level surface but is in fact built on top of a natural mound, which is estimated to be thirty feet tall (as tall as a two storey house) and is in the centre of the pyramid's base, of which it occupies 70%.

The pyramid was not only built over the mound but incorporates it into its design as it contains a subterranean chamber and a well shaft. The subterranean chamber is 100ft below the plateau and precisely under the apex of the pyramid. The descending corridor connecting it to the original entrance in the north face is 350ft long and does not err from being perfectly straight by more than a quarter of an inch. Feats like these would surely test even modern day engineers and builders, so how on earth could it have been achieved by men just emerging from the Stone Age?

Inside the pyramid there are four main features, the underground corridor and chamber (which may pre-date the pyramid), a room called the Queen's Chamber (which is built precisely on the centre line), the enormous 8m tall and 46m long "Grand Gallery" which leads up to the fourth feature, the King's Chamber.

The walls of the King's Chamber are made of granite from Aswan, which is a thousand miles away, and inside the chamber is a big sarcophagus, also made of granite, but the sarcophagus is one inch bigger than the

chamber's entrance. It is also so skillfully crafted that it too would test modern engineers and machinery, and drilling expert Chris Dunn says that it is an incredible piece of work.

The Egyptian method of drilling would be to use a bow tool drill, but to cut into granite with one of those would take far too long, and he says that they would have needed some kind of power tool, which of course they didn't possess. Dunn goes on to say that if we were to do this today we would advance the drill by one five thousandth of an inch for every revolution of the bit, but by close examination of the granite he says that it was cut by a drill advancing much, much faster than this.

Bauval and Hancock admit that Dunn's theory is controversial but they cannot explain how the granite was cut. Also in the King's Chamber is another mystery which the two men feel has never been answered properly, until they came along that is. In the north and south walls of the King's Chamber are identical, almost square holes which run in a straight line from the King's Chamber to the outer walls of the pyramid. There are also two identical holes in the Queen's Chamber, again one in the north wall and one in the south wall. Egyptologists say that these four shafts were for ventilation purposes but they are, like the rest of the pyramid, cut precisely, and Bauval and Hancock say that so much effort has gone into their construction that they must serve some higher purpose. In support of this argument is the fact that the two shafts in the Queen's Chamber were closed at both ends.

The average cross section of the shafts is 23cm x 22cm and they range in length from the northern shaft of the Queen's Chamber at 24m to the northern shaft of the King's Chamber at 65m. To show the amount of effort that went into creating them, one needs only to note that they were not cut once the pyramid was built, but were made step by step as the pyramid was erected, incorporating them. What would have been a relatively simple operation had the shafts extended horizontally, was made immeasurably more difficult by the fact that they extend at a constant inclined angle. Those in the Queen's Chamber were only discovered relatively recently when, in early 1872, Waynham Dixon was studying those in the King's Chamber and decided to look for similar features in the Queen's Chamber. It is said that Dixon found a crack in the southern wall where he thought the shaft might be and instructed his workman, Bill Grundy, to make a hole with a hammer and steel chisel, and soon he had broken through. Dixon then measured a similar

position on the northern wall and again Grundy broke through with his hammer and chisel.

These two shafts are also closed at the other end, unlike those from the King's Chamber which open at the exterior pyramid wall. It is also reported that Dixon probed the Queen's Chamber shafts with a chimney sweep's rod (part of which snapped off) and found three artefacts; a rough stone sphere, a small two pronged hook made of metal and a fine piece of cedar that was a foot long and had notches cut into it. These were then exported to England, later in 1872, but before the end of the century they had disappeared. Bauval and Hancock say that the purpose of the shafts is more symbolic or ritualistic than practical and, in order to find that purpose, we must turn to the world of astronomy.

It is often said that the Egyptians did not have a detailed knowledge of astronomy, but among the hieroglyphs is a chart which shows the stars of the night sky, including the twelve signs of the zodiac. Unfortunately the chart, painted on a ceiling, shows the stars and the constellations as animal forms in the sky, and the painter opted for artistry rather than astronomical accuracy, which makes it difficult to determine which animal represents which modern constellation. Nevertheless it does show a keen interest in the heavens, and in particular what form the stars took.

In 1963 an American astronomer, Virginia Trumble, was asked by a researcher from Egypt to see if the four shafts pointed at anything in the heavens, and she found that few things aligned with them, but the main one which did was Orion's Belt. This lined up approximately with the shaft in the southern wall of the King's Chamber. Bauval found it astonishing that nobody investigated this further so he used a computer to recreate the night sky as it would have appeared in 2500 BC when the pyramid was built.

To the ancient Egyptians the constellation of Orion represented their high god of resurrection, Osiris, and again using the computer, Bauval watched as the three stars of Orion's Belt cross the north-south line and culminate at the meridian Circa 2500 BC. At the era known by Egyptologists as "The Pyramid Age" a number of alignments take place as each of the shafts is targeted at a star as it culminates at the meridian.

From the Queen's Chamber the northern shaft is angled at 39° and points at Kochab (Beta Ursa Minor) in the Little Bear, a star associated with "cosmic regeneration" and immortality of the soul. The southern shaft is

angled at  $39^{\circ} 30'$  and is aimed at Sirius (Alpha Canis Major) in the Great Dog, a star that is associated with the goddess Isis. From the King's Chamber the northern shaft is angled at  $32^{\circ} 28'$  and is aimed at Thuban (Alpha Draconis) in the constellation of the Dragon (the ancient Pole Star) and a star associated with "cosmic prophecy and gestation." The southern shaft is angled at  $45^{\circ} 14'$  and is aimed at Alnitak (Zeta Orionis) the lowest star in Orion's Belt which the Egyptians associated with Osiris.

These stars, and those around them, were afforded great importance because they were visible all year round and therefore never "died," whereas other constellations would disappear below the horizon, notably Sirius (the star of Isis) which would disappear for a period of seventy days every year. This seventy day period of invisibility emphasizes the ancient Egyptian cult of rebirth and was seen as a cosmic preparation for astral rebirth and, naturally, was matched to the period of embalming and mummification. The great significance of this can be much better appreciated when one considers the Egyptian creation myth, to which Osiris and Isis were very much central.

Every civilization has its own creation myth and the Egyptians were no different. Theirs was very important to them and they repeated it in pyramid texts on the walls of pyramids and tombs and they saw each new Pharaoh re-enacting it.

In the beginning, the great sun god Ra looked down on the newly formed land, and he sent one of his grandsons, Osiris, to live among its people to teach them to be good and civilized, and so Osiris, both man and god, walked the land with his consort Isis, and it became a beautiful place. The brother of Osiris, Set, became jealous of him and killed him, then cut his body into fourteen pieces and scattered them all around Egypt. The heartbroken Isis roamed the land and found all of the pieces, bound them together with muslin cloth and brought his body back to life just long enough for him to impregnate her. He then rose to the heavens and left Isis hiding in the bulrushes where she eventually bore a son, Horus, who grew up to avenge his father's death. Isis, her earthly mission now complete, joined Osiris in the heavens, and so it turned out that the stars represented events on earth.

This story is also where the act of mummification has originated from, Osiris (the god of resurrection) being wrapped in linen for his next life, the eternal life, in the stars.

Each mummification is a re-enactment of the original event performed



by Isis, and each new Pharaoh saw themselves as a direct descendent of Osiris. Part of the mummification process is described in some of the oldest religious writings in the world, the Egyptian “Book Of The Dead” and this process is known as the “Opening Of The Mouth” ceremony. This is where the mummified Pharaoh would have life breathed into him so he could take his place among the stars. Bauval thinks that the opening of the mouth ceremony would be performed in the Queen’s Chamber, and during the proceedings the Pharaoh would be placed upright, and it would be his consort and his mortal son who would have to cause the new life to stir in him. It would be vital that this was done at precisely the right moment, at the dawn rising of Orion, thus the Pharaoh is reborn in the heavens at the same time as Osiris. The son and consort would perform the ritual with an iron implement in the shape of the Little bear, Ursa Minor, whose primary star is Polaris, and commonly it would be meteoritic iron. At the moment of the dawn rising, the son would use the iron tool to break the Pharaoh’s lips open and another one to open his mouth wide, and the new life is breathed into him and he takes his place in the heavens.

Bauval thinks that there may have been one final ritual for him to perform, that which Osiris had finally performed for Isis, to impregnate her, so that there will be a future Horus, an heir to the throne. He suggests that the Pharaoh would be stood upright, facing the shaft in the Queen’s Chamber’s southern wall, probably with an erect phallus attached, and his seed would follow the path of the shaft to Isis.

We can now see the importance of the seventy day invisibility of Sirius during which the events in the heavens mirror the events in the stars. During the seventy days the powers that were needed for the rebirth of the cosmic Horus king were building up in the “womb” of the goddess Isis. The beginning of the period marked the beginning of the journey of Horus into the underworld, and at this point the celestial Horus (the sun) would be near the head of Taurus (the Hyades) on the right bank of the milky way on its journey around the ecliptic, symbolizing Horus, embarking on his barge and sailing across the “winding waterway.”

As the solstice and the rebirth of Sirius (the heliacal rising of Sirius in the east) approaches, the sun continues along the ecliptic, depicting Horus nearing some goal. As the rising comes, the sun is now in the constellation of Leo, in between the “paws,” so the celestial journey of the sun and that of

Horus end in between the paws of the Sphynx. Again this journey is referred to in the pyramid texts which Bauval says holds the key to the pyramid's secret but he adds that they have been misunderstood by Egyptologists who interpret them as a sun religion, but Bauval says that they are not a religion of the day and the living but a religion of the night and the dead. He says that they tell us that the king becomes a star in the kingdom of Orion:

*“The king shall go aboard the bark like Ra on the banks of the winding waterway .... The winding waterway is flooded .... You cross thereon to the horizon, to the place where the gods were born .... You may cross the winding waterway .... May you fall in the eastern side of the sky, may you sit in the .... Horizon .... Summons is made to me by Ra .... As Horus, as the horizon dweller .... The doors of the sky are thrown open for Horakhti .... The doors of the sky are thrown open at dawn for Horus at the east .... Go to .... Herakhti at the horizon .... On the eastern side of the sky where the gods are born.”*

The ancient Egyptians believed that their creation myth, Zep Tepi (the first time), was an actual historical event and that it was re-enacted in the sky. They didn't believe that the creation and the period immediately following it (the time of Osiris, Horus and Ra) took place in some mythological Garden of Eden, but in a real place, and that place was in the huge triangular region just south of the apex of the Nile delta, encompassing Heliopolis, Memphis and Giza. The point of this triangle sits at latitude 30°, the Giza necropolis.

Something puzzled Bauval about the layout of the three pyramids and that was that two of them are of a similar size and in precise alignment, but the third is much smaller and is not in alignment. Again he wondered why, amid all the effort and precision on the plateau, this pyramid should be offset to the left. Jean Kerisel, General Secretary of the France-Egypt Association, has studied the terrain around the site of the smaller pyramid and he says that there is no topographical reason for it to be offset. There is no structural reason why it could not be built in line with the other two either, so there must be some other reason for it, and he says that it may be astronomical.

The answer to the riddle came to Bauval quite unexpectedly one night when he was camping in the desert with an Egyptian yachtsman. The

yachtsman was showing Bauval how to find the rising point of Sirius by using Orion's Belt as a guide, when he casually mentioned that the belt was not actually a straight line, and as Bauval sat in the desert looking up at Orion's Belt, he knew that he had the answer.

There are two bright stars in alignment and one smaller, fainter star offset to the left, just as with the three pyramids, but not exactly the same. The Book Of The Dead once again takes on great importance and, in particular the mention of the Milky Way (the Winding Waterway) which is a long band of stars both old and new which can be seen meandering its way across the night sky alongside Orion, just as the Nile meanders its way across the desert alongside the three pyramids in the formation of Orion's Belt.

To add strength to his theory, Bauval also looked at the other two remaining fourth dynasty pyramids which are to be found some way from Giza, one to the north at Abu Ruwash and one three mile to the south at Zawyat-Al-Aryan. Astonishingly, these two pyramids, in conjunction with the three at Giza, form a more complete picture of the constellation of Orion. The pyramid at Abu Ruwash representing the star "Saiph" and the pyramid at Zawyat-Al-Aryan representing the star "Bellatrix." So the Egyptians of the fourth dynasty were recreating the constellation of Orion at, and around, Giza, creating their own version of heaven on earth.

Once again though, there is a difference in the alignments, and once again Bauval enlists the help of the computer to see if he can find a time when the alignments did match. The stars and constellations that we see today are not in the same position in the sky as they were during "The Pyramid Age," and this is due to a cycle known as precession. The earth spins on its axis which is inclined at  $23^\circ$ , and this axis is itself moving very slowly, at a rate of  $1^\circ$  over a human lifetime. For the axis to complete a full cycle and return to its starting point takes 25,920 years. From our observation point on the surface of the earth we see precession as a difference in a star's altitude (declination). For example, it may begin its precessional cycle at its nadir close to the horizon and over time rise higher and higher until, 13,000 years later, it reaches its zenith and then starts to slide back down again along its sliding scale.

We are able to identify a point in time by looking at a star's position on its precessional scale. Likewise if we were to list a star's declination at the meridian today, then a future civilization could use this to identify our point

in time, our epoch.

Bauval uses the computer to find a point in time where the alignments of the stars of Orion's Belt and the three pyramids match up. He goes back to the time of 2500 BC when the pyramids were built, but still the alignments are wrong, so he decides to continue regressing in leaps of 500 years at a time, and he finally finds a match in 10500 BC, long before the Egyptian civilization began. Coincidentally the epoch of 10500 BC marks the nadir of Alnitak (Orion's Belt), 12,960 years later, AD 2500, marking its zenith.

Graham Hancock believes that the Egyptians must have "inherited" the pyramid idea from another, earlier culture that existed in 10500 BC. He is not saying that the pyramids are 12,500 years old, he is merely saying that they are a legacy of that time, and he finds the Egyptologists' idea that the Giza pyramids were built by a civilisation in its infancy crazy because there is an enormous amount of knowledge and wisdom gone into their design and construction. He says that they clearly mark the end of something and not the beginning of something, and he holds the same opinion about the Sphinx.

Egyptology claims that the Sphinx was built 4,500 years ago, at the same time as the pyramids, but Bauval and Hancock, and now a growing number of assorted people, believe that it was built far, far earlier than this, 8,000 years earlier to be precise, but there is one fundamental flaw in their belief, and that is that in 10500 BC it has always been thought that there was no civilization sophisticated enough to have built it. Unfortunately the Sphinx is not able to be dated because the radio carbon dating technique cannot be used as it only works on organic materials and the Sphinx is carved out of rock.

In 1992 Mark Lehner contradicted himself at two different forums: At the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science he said "There is no direct way to date the Sphinx itself because the Sphinx is carved right out of natural rock." and in the Cambridge Archaeological Journal he wrote: "Although we are certain that the Sphinx dates to the fourth dynasty, we are confronted by a complete absence of Old Kingdom texts which mention it."

This last observation is a crucial one as it means that we have an enormous, yet anonymous monument, about which the Egyptologist Selim Hassan wrote, in 1949: "No definite facts are known" Egyptology claims that the head and, in particular the face, of the Sphinx is that of Khafre and they use this "fact" to date the monument to his time (The Pyramid Age) but it has

been said that “We do not attribute the building of London’s Trafalgar Square to Nelson just because his statue stands there.” So even if the Sphynx’s face is that of Khafre it certainly doesn’t mean that he built it, or had it built.

To try and unravel the mystery of the anonymous monument Professor Mark Lehner enlists the help of photogrammetric data and computer graphics and, in April of 1991, his article in National Geographic magazine read:

*“Zahi Hawass, Director General of the Giza Pyramids, invited me to join his excavation (around) the Sphynx in 1978. During the next four years I led a project to map the Sphynx in details for the first time. We produced front and side views with photogrammetry, a technique using stereoscopic photography.... Computers have taken the records further. Maps were digitized to make a 3D wireframe model; some 2.6 million surface points were plotted to put “skin” on the skeleton view. We have constructed images of the Sphynx as it may have looked thousands of years ago. To create the face, I tried matching the views of other sphynxes and Pharaohs to our model. With the face of Khafre, the Sphynx came alive....”*

This is countered by the fact that all this really means is that Lehner created a wireframe image of the Sphynx “as it may have looked thousands of years ago” not how it did look, and he then projected the face of Khafre onto it using the only known surviving statue of Khafre as a guide. However, it has been said that “The same computer technique could be used to ‘prove’ the Sphynx was really Elvis Presley.”

In 1993, in order to find their own answer, Bauval and Hancock combine forces with writer John A. West and Lieutenant Frank Domingo, a forensic artist with the New York Police Department, a man who works with faces every day of his working life and is an expert in identification. Domingo also compared the Sphynx to the statue of Khafre but he came to a very different conclusion. His report stated:

*“After reviewing my various drawings, schematics and measurements, my final conclusion concurs with my initial reaction, i.e. that the two works represent two separate individuals. The proportions in the frontal view, and especially the angles and facial protrusion in the lateral views convinced me that the Sphynx is not*

*Khafre.*”

He goes on to say that this “facial protrusion in the lateral views” allow him to draw another, more astounding conclusion. He says that not only are they not from the same person but they are not even from the same race.

John A. West is not surprised by these results and he has some ideas of his own which he bases on the physical appearance of the Sphynx today. The head of the Sphynx is not in proportion to the body, it is much smaller, and it has been said that this is because of the many, many years that the body has been buried in the sand while the head has been above ground level and open to the elements. West says that the head is smaller than the body but is in much better condition, and even though it is made from a much harder limestone than the body, he still describes the difference in erosion as “extreme.” He concludes that this suggests that at some point in history the head has been recarved, and thus “is not original to the Sphynx.” This is certainly possible because the head has spent so long above ground that anybody could have worked on it at any time, so it could theoretically represent any Pharaoh from any time since its conception.

The likelihood that the head has been reworked is also shown in the “subtle discrepancy” which exists between the axis of the head and that of the face. The head being oriented due east but the facial features facing somewhat north of east. The gaze of the Sphynx as the positioning of the pyramids prompt Bauval and Hancock to continue with their theory that the whole Giza plateau is a kind of astronomical marker to the skies as they appeared in 10500 BC, and to do this they stand on the plateau looking out over the horizon.

From their vantage point the horizon is uninterrupted from 360°, and the rising points of the sun and the stars can clearly be seen. When the sun rises it does so with a constellation behind it and, in our own epoch, on the spring equinox it rises with the constellation of Pisces behind it, as it has done for approximately the last 2,000 years. However, the age of Pisces is now coming to an end and then we will enter the Age of Aquarius. It takes exactly 2,160 years for the equinoctial point to pass through one constellation or “house” of the zodiac, and we can trace back to a period of time and see what house of the zodiac the sun was in.

In 2500 BC, when other alignments on the plateau are not correct, the

equinoctial sun rose in Taurus (the bull) but it would be ludicrous to think that a Pharaoh would build a marker to this event in the form of a lion in 2500 BC. So when did the spring equinox occur in front of the lion? When was the Age of Leo? Not surprisingly it began in 12960 BC and ended in 8800 BC. So, in 10500 BC on the vernal equinox, when the other alignments take place, the east gazing Sphinx would see the sun rising in front of its celestial counterpart, and in this epoch another spectacular conjunction takes place. As the sun breaks the horizon, another constellation is pinpointed in the south along the meridian, and that is Orion, in particular Alnitak of Orion's Belt.

There is another question about the Giza plateau and the positioning of other features found there. There is a sloping causeway which leads from the central pyramid and alongside the Sphinx, but this causeway lies not along the east-west line, but just  $14^\circ$  south of it, so is this intentional or is it an error surrounded by perfection? If it is an error then it isn't the only one as the causeway of the Great Pyramid is also  $14^\circ$  off the east-west line but to the north, and the causeway of Mekaure's pyramid, and the Sphinx's gaze, point due east.

So what could be the reason for these differences in alignment? On the spring equinox the sun rises due east, on the summer solstice it rises  $28^\circ$  north of due east and on the winter solstice it rises  $28^\circ$  south of due east, giving a total variation of  $56^\circ$ . The points midway between these solstices and the equinox are what astronomers call the Cross Quarters, so that one causeway and the Sphinx point at the equinox and the other two causeways point at the cross quarters. To say that all of these details is a coincidence is a nonsense, so what the Giza plateau is, is an astronomical pointer to an age, in 10500 BC, 8,000 years before the Egyptian civilization had begun.

Armed with this knowledge John A. West looks at the Sphinx to try to determine its age and history. In particular he looks at the erosion on the body, which is far greater than that on the head, and he says that it wasn't caused by wind and sand but by water as it poured in sheets over the enclosure wall, leaving rounded contours.

The kind of erosion caused by wind and sand can be seen all around Giza, but that around the Sphinx is very different, and Egyptologists concluded that the flooding of the Nile had caused it, but West disagrees. He says that the regular Nile floods would fill the Sphinx's enclosure from the

bottom like an enormous bath tub and would leave a pattern of erosion with the more severe damage at the bottom of the monument and the top of the enclosure as the water seeps from the Nile and runs over the edges into the pit. The erosion on the Sphinx however is worst at the top. Here it is more rounded and takes the form of many rivulets which run down the sides of its body from top to bottom, so clearly, the water came from above.

West also looks at some of the earliest repairs done to the Sphinx and he finds that they needed some three feet of stone and brickwork to be repaired, and the Egyptologists claim that this was done when the Sphinx was only three hundred years old, but for the stone to have eroded by three feet in three hundred years is an absurdity because if this was the case and the Sphinx was built in 2500 BC as they claim, then at the erosion rate of one foot per century, the Sphinx would have disappeared by the sixteenth century AD.

For West to put his theory to the test we must find out when, if ever, there was a vast amount of water in the Nile valley. Quite predictably the answer is around 12,000 years ago, after the last ice age. During this time there had been millions of square miles of ice covering the northern hemisphere, and for some reason within 2,000 to 3,000 years it melted. The ice that covered America and northern Europe was two miles thick, and when it melted it caused flooding of cataclysmic proportions, and Egyptologist Tekra Hassan explains that at about 10500 BC exceptionally high waters covered the flood plain, the Nile delta and the Nile valley.

West has a theory about the history of the Sphinx and, like that of Bauval and Hancock, it does not accord very closely with the normally accepted facts. In the years before the Giza plateau became desert it was a fertile plain (this much we do know) and it contained a prominent outcrop of rock which the people of the time carved, possibly the head of a lion or of a god, and as the time passed, the shifting weather patterns brought torrential rain to the area signaling the end of the ice age, and the rain and torrential floods eroded the body into virtually what it is today.

When the rain finally stopped, the area dried up and became part of the Sahara Desert, and sandstorms buried the statue up to its neck, thus protecting its body and the signs of weathering for thousands of years while the head continued to be exposed to the elements and wear away. As the erosion of the head continued, it began to wear away its design and was possibly recarved. Certainly it was recarved by the fourth dynasty Egyptians



who uncovered its body, but rather than recarve it in its original form they did it in their own image, so Khafre didn't build the Sphinx, he recarved it, and this recarving of the head would account for it being on a much smaller scale than the body. It would also seem to account for Domingo's theory that the Sphinx and Khafre are not of the same race, as man's distant ancestors did indeed have a more laterally elongated face with a more prominent brow and jaw, Domingo's conclusion being that "the angles and facial protrusion in the lateral views" allow him to conclude that the two are from different races.

To help West prove his theory, Bauval and Hancock look to another structure which they say may also date back to 10000 BC as it shows similar signs of erosion to the body of the Sphinx. It was discovered early in the twentieth century, buried under sand five hundred miles south of Giza at a place called Abidos. It sits fifty feet below the level of the surrounding temples, and Hancock describes it as an anonymous structure that seems to date to no known epoch, and he wonders if it is just one of many that lie buried deep beneath the desert sands, waiting to be discovered. The building's walls were originally bare, but Pharaohs later came along and added hieroglyphics to them.

Bauval says that further proof of their claims can be found in the Egyptian creation myth, which holds that the earth was once covered with water and out of the water rose what they call a Primeval Mound upon which creation began, and it is as though the pyramids are a replacement of the primeval mound and the moment of creation, the time of the gods.

There are texts which tell us that Giza is the place of creation and so what better place to build a monument to it. Egyptologists say that these arguments put by Bauval, Hancock and West are not convincing enough and they raise too many problems, such as there being a civilization then nothing, then a new civilization again. They say show them an inscription or any other object that proves it, but West says that this is like telling Magellan, after he had sailed around the world, show us some other men that have sailed around the world, and he adds that what he is looking at is the line of civilization into history which may not necessarily have been a straight one from "stupid old cave men to smart old us with our hydrogen bombs and striped toothpaste." It may turn out however, that there is indeed further evidence to support them that has yet to be discovered.

A number of ancient Egyptian inscriptions and papyri make reference to

hidden chambers such as the Chamber of Archives and the Hall of Records, and legend tells us that “there exists a single subterranean chamber under the Sphynx with entrances to all three pyramids .... Each entrance is guarded by statues of amazing abilities.” Texts also tell us that the gods concealed a “great secret” at Giza, and one particular text in the Berlin Museum refers to the Egyptian god of wisdom, Thoth, who was said to have described the mysteries of heaven in his sacred books. Hancock refers to it as a treasure map that almost, but not quite, marks the spot.

The text also tells of how Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid, sought in Heliopolis a mysterious black box that contained the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth, but what was the mysterious black box? The Ark of Thoth? What was the wisdom that Khufu needed in order to construct his pyramid? If such a black box exists then where is it? Could it be hidden somewhere in the Great Pyramid or possibly beneath the Sphynx?

In 1977 the U.S. National Science Foundation funded a project at Giza to search for underground chambers around the Sphynx using ground penetrating radar, resistivity measurement, magnetometry, aerial photography and thermal infra-red image enhancing technologies. According to the S.R.I. (Stanford Research Institute) who were involved with the project:

*“Several anomalies were observed as a result of our resistivity survey at the Sphynx .... Behind the rear paws (north west end) we ran two traverses. Both traverses indicate an anomaly that could possibly be due to a tunnel aligned north west to south east.”*

Two further anomalies were also noted, deep in the bedrock “In front of the paws of the Sphynx.”

In 1978 the S.R.I. again provided funds for a more detailed survey of the Sphynx enclosure and the nearby Sphynx temple. They decided that should any anomalies be found they would cut holes into the bedrock and insert borescope cameras. Several holes were thus explored but proved to be just natural cavities. In 1980 Egyptian irrigation specialists were drilling close to the Sphynx and reached a depth of fifty feet before they hit something hard and massive. Once they had freed the drill and raised it they found that with it they had brought a lump of Aswan granite that is only found five hundred miles away to the south.

In the early 1990s, in a survey led by Professor Robert Schoch of Boston University, Thomas Dobecki, discovered a large rectangular chamber approximately 15m x 12m and about 5m below the surface in between the front paws of the Sphinx. However, this survey was brought to an abrupt halt in 1993 by Dr. Zahi Hawass, but it was not the only detailed survey of the area.

In 1986 two French architects, Gilles Dormion and Jean-Patrice Goidin obtained a scientific license to conduct an exploration inside the Great Pyramid after persuading senior officials at the Egyptian Antiquities Organization that there could be a “hidden chamber” behind the west wall of the corridor which leads to the Queen’s Chamber. The E.A.O. surprisingly gave permission for Dormion and Goidin to drill a series of small holes, and they found a large cavity filled with “unusually fine sand.” The Egyptologists were not happy and put a stop to the project. Then, in 1988, a Japanese scientific team led by Professor Sakuji Yoshimura used “non-destructive techniques” with electromagnetic waves and radar equipment, and they too found a cavity off the same passageway very close to where the two Frenchmen had drilled. They also found a large cavity behind the north west wall in the Queen’s Chamber and a “tunnel” outside and to the south of the pyramid which appeared to run underneath it. Again though, the Egyptian authorities intervened and the work was halted.

Egyptologists seemed to be uninterested in these findings and considered them to be features that were “abandoned” during construction. In particular they were most uninterested in the shafts, but one man who disagreed was a Munich based German engineer named Rudolf Gantenbrink who, in 1991, submitted a proposal for videoscopic surveying of the shafts to the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo. Before this, however, in August 1990 the E.A.O. commissioned the G.A.I. to install a ventilation system in the pyramid, a process that would involve cleaning the two shafts of the King’s Chamber which, unlike those in the Queen’s Chamber, emerge on the outside of the pyramid. After this cleaning they could install high powered fans to increase the air flow. Soon after he accepted the commission, Rainer Stadelman, Director of the G.A.I. received Gantenbrink’s proposal for an exploration of the Queen’s Chamber shafts using a high tech miniature robot which would be remotely controlled, have a high powered spotlight and a video camera which would relay images back to a monitor, and he handed the

scheme over to him. However, before he began ventilating the King's Chamber shafts, he set to work, in February 1992, on exploring the Queen's Chamber shafts, and in particular the southern shaft. By mid May 1992 he had penetrated the shaft to a depth of seventy feet, a shaft which Egyptologists had said was only thirty feet long, but now, he was called away to work on the main project, to ventilate the King's Chamber.

Since those shafts are open at both ends, this was a much simpler task and Gantenbrink was able to use a different device called "Upuaut 1" which was like a small sledge that could be hauled up and down using cables and pulleys at both ends of the shafts. This job finished, he now built a new robot that was better able to cope with the difficult task of exploring the Queen's Chamber southern shaft.

While the new robot was being built he took a film crew to cover the start of the operation, but he hadn't obtained the necessary permits, so first Stadelman and then Gantenbrink approached Dr. Zahi Hawass who granted them "verbal permission" to film, and then the exploration resumed.

By March 1993, everybody's patience and money was running low and Stadelman withdrew his support but Gantenbrink forged ahead alone. On March 22nd, coincidentally the spring equinox, at about 10am, Upuaut 2 was 180ft up the "30ft" shaft when it reached a sharp settlement in the floor which took an hour to get past. At 11:05am and at a distance of 200ft into the shaft, the floor and walls became "polished" and the robot reached a "door." It was made of stone and was complete with two corroded copper fittings which had allowed it to be slid into place, but would prevent it from being opened.

The G.A.I. made no announcement about their discovery, apparently because Stadelman was unable to decide what form such an announcement should take. Meanwhile Gantenbrink returned to Munich with his equipment and video tapes, and the story was broken by the British media, in particular the London Independent on April 16th, 1993, and the others soon followed and continued to run the story for weeks. There were two sides to the story though, and Dr Hawass at first said "In my opinion this is 'the' discovery in Egypt" and he expressed the hope that scrolls or other records to do with the "religion" of the builders and maybe the "stars" could be behind it.

On the other hand, Mrs. Christine Egoron, Rainer Stadelman's secretary at the G.A.I., came out with a most damning statement when she said to the

press that there was nothing behind the story, and no chamber at the end of the shaft. The “air channels” didn’t point at anything and Gantenbrink’s robot was only “to measure the humidity of the pyramid.”

Soon afterwards, Dr. Stadelman himself issued a statement which said “I don’t know how this story happened but I can tell you this is very annoying. There is surely no other chamber .... There is no room behind the stone.” Amid all this, Gantenbrink then made attempts to restart his work on the door but was prevented from doing so, namely by Dr. Hawass who was, by this time, singing a different tune and now saying “I think this is not a door and nothing is behind it.”

Gantenbrink has had numerous meetings and press conferences cancelled and he has even offered to train an Egyptian to operate the equipment but his offer was turned down, prompting him to say that “The search for truth is too important to be ruined by a silly political game. My only hope is that they will soon reach the same conclusions.” To try and diffuse the situation, Dr. Helen Whitehouse of Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum said that “The team working on the door are waiting for better equipment. The days when Egyptologists went crashing into a room are long over.” She adds “Who knows what’s behind the door? It would be foolish to guess.”

Hancock says that we need to know what is hidden at Giza, be it in the pyramid or beneath the Sphinx because the ancient texts tell us that it is of enormous importance and it will be an astounding revelation about the origin of human civilization.

So, in time all of these mysteries may be answered for us, and not just those surrounding the Giza plateau but also possibly questions that we have about other ancient civilisations such as the Maya, the Aztecs and who knows, maybe even the Atlanteans?

What is for certain is that Egyptologists and other fields of study will need to reassess their opinions and views, and possibly sooner rather than later, because new technology is already being used to try and date the Sphinx. How does it work?

When a rock is cut, the newly exposed surface begins to accumulate upon it, chemicals which are made by cosmic rays hitting the earth, and by examining these chemicals we can see how old something is, and this technique can obviously be used on non-organic materials, unlike the carbon dating technique, and preliminary tests do show the Sphinx to be older than

previously thought.

So what of West's proposed earlier civilization, could it be true or not? The dynastic Egyptians certainly had a great understanding of astronomy, but did any preceding civilization have such a knowledge? If the dynastic Egyptians didn't carve the leonine Sphinx, then a Neolithic race must have done, and so precisely that it looked upon the spring equinox taking place in front of its celestial counterpart.

The lowest point in the processional cycle of Orion's Belt (the nadir) the "first time of Osiris" occurred in 10500 BC, and it is this point in time that is fixed on the ground at the Giza necropolis by the southern shaft of the King's Chamber.

Bauval and Hancock felt that this, and the alignment of the Sphinx, could not be put down to chance. They have also come to the conclusion that the site was "completed" in 2500 BC, but may have been "established" physically 8,000 years earlier, perhaps in the form of low platforms where the pyramids now stand, or perhaps the mound that the Great Pyramid is built on. They also say that the knowledge may have been handed down to the astronomer-priests of Heliopolis by the followers of Horus, as the Egyptian astronomers were much revered by both the Greeks and the Romans, because as early as 5 BC, Herodotus (the "Father of History") attributed to them the discovery of the solar year and the "invention" of the twelve signs of the zodiac which he says that the Greeks later borrowed. He wrote "In my opinion their method of calculation is better than that of the Greeks."

In 4 BC Aristotle also recognized the knowledge and expertise of the Egyptian astronomers "whose observations have been kept for very many years past, and from whom much of our evidence about particular stars is derived." The fact that there was this long established knowledge is shown by Plato who recounts how the Egyptians had obsessed over the stars "for 10,000 years or, so to speak, for an infinite time," and by Diodorus of Sicily who visited Egypt in 60 BC and said that "The disposition of the stars as well as their movements have always been the subject of careful observations among the Egyptians" and that: "They have preserved to this day records concerning each of these stars over an incredible number of years."

So if the knowledge was handed down, and possibly the Giza legacy as well, it must be possible that the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom might have seen their predecessors as gods and built, or completed, the Giza plateau as a

testament to them and their creation myth with Osiris and Isis.

The fact that there is such precision all around the site shows that they were built for some supreme reason, but to this day nobody knows how. Graham Hancock believes that there is evidence, not only here but in other parts of the world as well, both physical evidence and written evidence, that there was once an ancient civilization with an advanced knowledge of technology that was wiped out, probably around the end of the last Ice Age, perhaps the most famous of all being the lost continent of Atlantis.

Whatever the truth of it, if one looks at the precise positioning and construction of the pyramids, one cannot help but wonder, with a smile and tongue placed firmly in cheek, whether or not Von Daniken could have been right when he said that the earth was visited by intelligent aliens in the distant past, who helped our civilization along and taught us many things, but he couldn't have been right ..... could he?

## **"THE MAN WHO IS NOT A MAN"**

Bob Rickard, Co-editor of the "Fortean Times," observed: "At the turn of the century it was generally thought that there were no more big animals to be discovered, only little ones - and they didn't matter. Yet. At the beginning of this year there was a new tree kangaroo found in Papua New Guinea and a new kind of ox and a new kind of deer found in an area in Vietnam which had been bombed with "Agent Orange." It makes you wonder."

He couldn't have been much closer to the truth if he'd tried, because it truly does make you wonder. It makes you wonder just how many more animals there are for us yet to discover. Especially when you consider that there are still, even today, vast tracts of land that remain unexplored by man, some of it uninhabitable by man, but that is not to say uninhabitable. Most notably of all, the two thirds of the planet's surface that is permanently under cover of water, but even in populated areas there are certain animals that are rarely seen.

What about the more remote regions? The jungles of South America, The North and South Poles, mountain ranges, the Siberian Taiga and last, but by no means least, the vast forests of North America. The fact is that as time goes by, man is populating more and more of the planet's surface, and what was once the sole premise of wild animals is now explored, mapped and often looted, and the number of places that animals can live unmolested are becoming fewer and further between. Yet there are apparently places that man does visit frequently, in some cases on most weekends, such as the forests of America's Pacific North West where all and sundry don warm clothing, a gun belt and go hunting in search of the abundant wildlife. It



seems amazing that so many hunters can occupy the landscape, and yet still the legendary “Bigfoot” remains one of the most talked about and longed for trophies of all time, if it exists at all that is.

Everybody has heard of Bigfoot. The mythical ape-man that walks upright, is covered in hair and is both very heavy and very strong, but is he real or is he not? Is he a distant relative of man or is he a remnant of man's past? If the stories are to be believed then he makes his home in the dense woodland and seems to be quite shy where man is concerned, being reluctant to pose for photographs, and rather inconveniently choosing not to lie down and die where his body can easily be recovered. It is obvious that Bigfoot will not come to man, so man must go to Bigfoot, and increasingly he is doing just that. During the 1950s, woodsmen and loggers working their way deeper and deeper into the forests began to return with reports of a "strange ape-like creature" and during this time, in The Cascades, they found huge footprints and it was then that the creature that was believed to have made them was nicknamed "Bigfoot."

In the summer of 1958, giant footprints began appearing near road-making equipment at Bluff Creek, Northern California over several nights, and the workers who found them became quite fearful. The San Francisco press got hold of the story and it grew from a local matter into a national story which heralded the birth of the modern Bigfoot era.

Like the tribes of Africa, the natives of North America talk of Bigfoot, not as a myth, but as a real creature who is just nothing more than simply elusive, and they have long believed in a creature they call "Sasquatch" which is a man-like beast that lives on the edges of civilisation. This folklore grew into rumour and the world began to debate the existence of such a creature with only the moulds made from its footprints to go on. Many of these casts turned out to be hoaxes and this is very damaging to the reputation of the apparently genuine ones. This is also true of the Bigfoot hair samples which have been found to be hoaxes. One of the more crude attempts turned out to be nothing more than the hair from a child's “Barbie” doll.

Bigfoot prints have been found and analysed in different parts of the world, the U.S.A., Canada and as far afield as Russia, and from all of these prints certain things become apparent. A typical print is 16 to 18 inches (41 to 46 cm) long and 7 inches (18 cm) wide. The foot is not arched like a man's, except for smaller ones which are presumably from younger animals, as

though the foot flattens out as the creature grows older and therefore heavier. There is a double ball at the heel, unlike the single ball of a man's foot, which is a sign of a foot designed to support great weight, and this is also shown by how far the foot sinks into the ground. This combined with reported sightings of the animals height would suggest a creature weighing anything up to 1,000lb (454 kg).

The prints show no signs of the claws which are found on an bear and, in 1982, a set of prints found in the blue mountains along the Washington - Oregon border showed more detail than ever before, and they were cast by U.S. Forest Service workers. Made in a very fine soil that was slightly damp, they were very detailed and it was even possible to see ridges on the skin underneath the toes and on the soles. These details are rather like fingerprints and are only found on the feet of the higher primates.

Since they were cast, the moulds have been examined by forty police fingerprint experts, all of whom came to the conclusion, that the footprints must have been made by one or more genuine creatures - Bigfeet. Not everybody agreed though, anthropologists and primatologists say that they were made by a human foot which had somehow been enlarged, possibly by using a latex mould as latex will expand by 50% when it is soaked in kerosene. This expansion would not only expand the overall size of the foot but would also expand the size of the ridges in relation to it, but the fingerprint experts said that the ridges were spaced like those on other primates.

With appetites being whetted in the 1950s, Tom Slick began organising expeditions to try and track Bigfoot down. Slick was an oil millionaire and he spent a fortune in his search during which he found footprints and droppings, but in 1962 he was killed in a plane crash and, after his death, the fruits of his four year search for Bigfoot mysteriously went missing, and this included not only the records of his expeditions but also his samples of evidence as well, and it would be 30 years before anybody would pick up where he had left off. That man was Grover Krantz.

Krantz is an anthropologist based at Washington State University, and he risks his professional reputation by undertaking such work. This is because he is convinced that Bigfoot is real and he also bases his opinion on footprint casts that he has. Where some people's offices or laboratories are adorned with hunting trophies or pictures, Krantz's are adorned with his moulds of

Bigfoot footprints. Krantz has categorised seven different characteristics belonging to the prints and he has published five of them in various journals, but he won't reveal the other two so he can continue to use them to help determine fakes from genuine prints, much like the police will withhold certain details about a murder which only themselves and the murderer will know. Among the five that Krantz has revealed are flat feet which are wide in comparison to their length, toes almost equal in size and what are called "dermal ridges" which are the lines that make up like a fingerprint.

One print that Krantz has was taken from where the maker of the print had stepped on a stone, and the stone has pressed itself into the foot quite deeply, yet the dermal ridges around the stone are unbroken which means that a hoaxer would not have been able to make the print with a mould by rocking it from side to side over the stone.

Another man who collects foot print samples is Bob Titmus who has explored British Colombia's remote forests in search of Bigfoot and, again the year 1958 is of significance, as it was then that Titmus saw his first footprint on a makeshift road. He has been a hunter all of his life and has hunted from Alaska to Mexico and many places in between, and he has tracked Bigfoot prints and feels that only a real, living thing could have made them, and certainly not a man or a machine. Titmus' walls at home are also, like Krantz's, full of his moulds, but the evidence doesn't stop there because as well as footprints there are many eye witness accounts of the creature itself, and Titmus is one of those who has had such an encounter.

He was following a set of tracks in 1963 when he arrived at a remote canyon on the Rockies of British Colombia, and the memory of what he saw that day remains with him now as vivid and clear as the day on which he saw it. He had heard rumours of Indians having shot a Bigfoot in the area many years before, but what he saw was not one Bigfoot but three. Titmus watched as they climbed a rock face, and he said that they climbed "hand over hand" using foot holds as well, much the same as a mountaineer would. When he returned from his trip he relayed the tale and like many before him, and others to follow, he was ridiculed by all but one man, and that man was John Green, a Journalist and former newspaper publisher in British Colombia.

Green had followed Bigfoot reports in the press and, since 1958, he has collected over 3,000 eye witness accounts from the U.S.A. and Canada, and in some cases he has obtained sworn affidavits. Most of these sightings

occurred in America's Pacific North West, but some are from as far afield to the east as Arkansas. He admits that some of them are hoaxes, but he is convinced that by far the majority of them are genuine and when he heard of what Titmus had seen he tracked him down. Despite all of the footprints, all of the sightings and all of the research done on Bigfoot, he still remains elusive, but there are some very determined men who won't rest until they have found Bigfoot and are able to prove that he exists. One such man is Peter Byrne, an Irish born hunter who has at his disposal two helicopters, a jeep, a Toyota Land Cruiser, an international scout, a snowmobile and a van which he calls the "Bigfoot Mobile Base" as it houses a lot of his equipment. Part of the equipment are biopsy darts which are fired at an animal and will take a blood sample while still allowing the creature to walk away afterwards, but he has not needed to use them as of yet.

A regular journal, Bigfoot News, is full of sightings and encounters, the number of which seems almost infinite, yet obviously there are hoax sightings just as there are hoax footprints using anything from shaped Wellington boots to moulded strap on casts. Some witnesses are unreliable, for example, the man who gave the colour of the creatures eyes when he had only witnessed it from a distance of over 300 yards. There are countless tales of hunters catching a glimpse of a hairy upright creature walking like a man but a certain percentage of these could be explained away as common bears, which heavily populate the area. Some talk of the creature as having turned to look at them, apparently out of curiosity, and then walking away. The witnesses say that they don't feel threatened in any way by the creature, more often than not they feel as though it is merely as interested in them as they are in it, and this lack of hostility and sense of almost kinship was experienced by an Indian man called Muchalat Harry in 1928. Harry told Father Anthony Terhaar, that he had been kidnapped by a male Bigfoot and carried back to a "camp" where there were around twenty of the creatures including some younger ones. They did him no harm, and when they seemed to have lost interest in him he managed to escape, and he then met Father Terhaar when he arrived at Nookta on Vancouver Island clad only in his torn underwear and with his hair turned white by the experience.

This is not the only kidnap reported, another account was given by Albert Ostman who found his experience much more frightening. It happened in 1924 but he didn't report it until almost 34 years later in 1957 when the

Bigfoot phenomenon began to achieve world acclaim, which may cast a little doubt on his story as he may have been seeking the fame and fortune that just such an encounter can bring, and he certainly wouldn't be alone in that. Ostman claimed that he had been picked up while he was in his sleeping bag and carried for several miles where he was then held "prisoner" by a family of four Sasquatch – father, mother, son and daughter - for a period of six days (the alien abduction case of the Bigfoot world).

So with footprints and sightings why do we not yet have conclusive proof that Bigfoot is real? Grover Krantz says that "Even if none of the hundreds of sightings had ever occurred, we would still be forced to conclude that a giant bipedal primate does indeed inhabit the forests of the Pacific north west" and to prove that it does he says that all he would need would be a single lower jaw bone, and he advises anybody who sees a Bigfoot to shoot it as proof. He, himself, drives around "Bigfoot Country" with swivelling spot lamps on the side of his car and with a high powered rifle.

Some people claim to have taken his advice, such as the two men out coyote hunting in 1966 who shot what they thought was a giant "gorilla-like" animal at Jackson Hole, Wyoming. They ran over to it to see what it was they had shot and saw that it was a huge, hairy animal with a bare face, huge hands and huge feet. It was so man-like that the two men thought they had shot some kind of local freak and they fled.

Another man who shot a Bigfoot also fled, but not straight away, he took a little persuading. In 1922 Fred Beck was mining with some companions on Mount St. Helens, Washington when they saw a group of what appeared to be giant apes and they began firing at them and shot one. For the next few nights their camp was bombarded with stones and rocks until they decided to give in and move their camp elsewhere.

Often, when the creatures are shot, it is in remote areas which makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to bring the carcass back to civilisation, and sceptics say that Bigfoot can't exist because not only have we not seen one that has been shot, but we have not seen one that has died a natural death, but this point is answered by the fact that man very rarely comes across the body of an ordinary bear that has died naturally. This is because their natural instinct is to take cover when they feel vulnerable so that they are not caught by predators, and when they do die the body will be disposed of relatively quickly by scavengers. There is said to be a multi-million dollar reward for

the first person that captures the first Bigfoot, alive or dead, not to mention book deals, newspaper exclusives and radio and TV interviews, and fortune seekers from all over the world go in search of the fame and fortune that this potential discovery will bring them with little more than a rifle slung across their back. It is this which makes faking a Bigfoot sighting a very dangerous practise, as anybody running around in a big hairy suit is taking their life in their own hands. Anything that moves in the forests is likely to be shot at, and even some things that definitely don't move, which the bullet ridden road signs are testament to, as people use them for target practise. So, sensibly, people on hunting trips choose not to opt for stealth in camouflaged clothing, but will wear bright colours so any prospective gunman will know that what they are looking at is not an animal trying to conceal itself, but a fellow hunter in a gaudy checked shirt.

There is a big question over what a Bigfoot would eat, and a logger from Estacapa, Oregon thinks he may have found the answer. One day he was walking along a path at Tarzan Springs when he heard a noise, he said "I was screened by the trees, but through them I could see these three huge figures digging in a rock pile. They looked just like Bigfoot is supposed to; hairy, huge hands and very powerfully built. There was a big one with a female and a young one. They were lifting rocks out, the big male one, and digging down all of six or seven feet. Then the male reached down and took out a nest of rodents and ate them. " When investigators later went to the site to investigate, they found thirty or more holes with rocks that had been moved. There was also a lot of rodent wildlife in the area such as marmots, which are known to hibernate in nests under rocks, and it had been October when Thomas saw the Bigfoot family.

Just like we had the alien abductions of the Bigfoot world, we also have the alien autopsy video of the Bigfoot world. On October 20th 1967 there came one of the most talked about pieces of film since the advent of the cine camera, that of a Bigfoot taking a walk through the woods. Bob Gimlin and Roger Patterson had set out on a hunting trip with the intent of capturing Bigfoot on film, and they had set out for Bluff Creek in the Trinity National Forest 260 kilometres north of San Francisco because it had gained a reputation for sightings over the years. For a week they roamed the area, and Patterson had been filming the scenery before they, or rather their horses, saw anything. They were riding towards a creek when the two horses were

spooked, Patterson fell to the ground, and they soon saw what had bothered their horses. Patterson picked up his camera and began filming a Bigfoot that was on the other side of the creek, and it paused and looked back toward them. Meanwhile Gimlin had picked up his gun and was aiming it at the creature just in case it should decide to attack them, but it merely turned and continued to make its way back into the forest. As it did so, the film in Patterson's camera ran out.

Patterson licensed the film worldwide, and made a lot of money out of it, but Gimlin never made so much as a cent from it, but even so he still maintains that it is genuine and, with Patterson now dead, he would surely have more to gain by admitting that it was a fake, if indeed it was.

The film has undergone intense scrutiny by experts in many fields, and it comes out of these tests rather well, if not with flying colours. Grover Krantz has examined it in minute detail, frame by frame, and has compared it to other sightings, and from this he has concluded that the gait of Bigfoot is different to that of a man. Bigfoot walks by leaning slightly forward at the hip, and though it swings its arms like a human it bends the knees slightly when it puts the forward foot down, and Krantz says that this is out of necessity for a creature of its size, weighing more than 500lb.

Dr. D. W. Grieve, a reader in biomechanics at the Royal Free Hospital, London has examined the film very closely and has compared it to films of humans walking at the same location. By doing so he has come to the conclusion that the creature in Patterson's film is 6ft 5in tall, still possibly a human in a disguise, but the hips and shoulders are too wide to be a human, and the overall size of the creature would suggest a body weight of around 280lb (127kg). The length of the stride is around 42in (1.07m) which is not too long for a man to make, but it would be very difficult to do it with the fluidity of movement and the natural look that is seen in the film. Grieve said that if the film had been shot at 24 frames per second then it could be showing a large man, but if it had been shot at 18 frames per second, then no human being could have made the movements shown. He concluded, "My subjective impressions have oscillated between total acceptance of the Bigfoot on the grounds that the film would be difficult to fake, to one of irrational rejection based on an emotional response to the possibility that the Bigfoot actually exists." His conclusions on the film are that: "If it is a fake, it is a very clever one."

Three senior Russian scientists, Doctors Bayanov, Burtsev and Donskoy, came to roughly the same conclusions and said that "We can evaluate the gait of the creature as a natural movement without any of the signs of artfulness that one would see in an imitation." Bayanov and Burtsev said that the creature had an ape-like head and almost no neck, and its tracks show that it walks with less weight on its heels than a man would, with its legs slightly bent, and there is no arch in the foot. Dmitri Donskoy says that the gait is that of an animal with enormous weight and strength, and the movement is fluid and confident. "At the same time with all the diversity of locomotion illustrated by the creature of the footage, its gait as seen is absolutely non typical of man."

The biggest problem with the Patterson film is that nobody knows at what speed the film was shot, 24 or 18 frames per second, and both speeds would produce markedly different results when screened, and some say that the footprints found at the scene would suggest a creature much taller than 6ft 5in and with a stride longer than 42in.

America isn't the only country to play host to the apeman legend, Australia is another, and its own version of the Sasquatch is known as the "Yowie" which is seen mainly in the areas around New South Wales and Queensland, and has been seen by settlers from well into the last century and by Aborigines for much longer. The Yowie is far from outgoing but it is not exactly timid either as George Summerell discovered on October 12th, 1912 when he was out riding near Bemboka, New South Wales. He came upon a Yowie bending down to drink from a creek, and as it heard him approach it rose up to its full height which he estimated to be about 7ft. It bent down again to finish its drink before picking up a stick and walking away.

Summerell noticed that there were lots of footprints around the creek which indicated that the creature, or others like it, had been in the area before. They also showed on closer examination that the creature only had four toes which had also been the case with other prints found around the world. The Yowie also shares two other characteristics with Bigfoot and other mythical creatures, and those two are that it has little or no neck and the ability to emit a foul smell, apparently at will.

Another Australian to experience this foul smell was a National Parks worker who was cutting timber near Springbrook, Queensland when he saw "this big, black, hairy man-thing" about 12 feet away from him. "It had huge



hands and a flat, black, shiny face, with two big yellow eyes and a hole for a mouth. It just stared at me and I stared back. I was so numb I couldn't even raise the axe I had in my hand. We were staring at each other for about ten minutes before it suddenly gave off a foul smell that made me vomit - then it just made off sideways and disappeared."

Africa also has its fair share of man-beasts, and not surprisingly either, as the continent is referred to as the "cradle of mankind," the place where "Homo Sapiens" are known to have evolved, and also because it has such huge tracts of wilderness where an elusive creature could live quite safe in the knowledge that it would seldom come into contact with man. Africa also has fossils of hominids called "Australopithecines" which first appeared 3 million years ago. Could some of them have survived undiscovered in Africa's remote regions? It would appear that there are different kinds of apeman in Africa which may or may not be part of the same species, or perhaps some could be the result of cross breeding with various types of gibbon or baboon.

The first kind is the "Kakundakari" of Zaire, the "Fating'Ho" of Senegal and the "Agogwe" of Tanzania which are the slenderest of the Australopithecines. The smallest is the Agogwe which is russet coloured and man-like, and it is said to also mix with other primates such as baboons, possibly evidence that it is related to them? The more robust are the "Kikomba" of Zaire and the "Wa'ab" of Sudan which, it is believed, could be surviving examples of "Homo Erectus."

There is a very famous example of a South American creature which caused great controversy at the time, and still does today, because some believe that the whole episode is an elaborate hoax. It took place when a team of twenty geological surveyors had set out on an explorative trip but, after three years, their number had been drastically reduced by disease, venomous animals and the poisoned arrows of the hostile natives. The remaining handful were making their way along the Tarra River on the Venezuela-Columbia border in 1920 when they saw, coming out of the foliage ahead of them, a pair of five feet tall ape-like creatures walking on their hind legs. When the animals, one male and one female, saw them they became agitated and began tearing at the vegetation before they defecated into their hands and threw it at the bemused party. They then moved forwards as if to attack but one of the team shot at them, killing the female, but the male ran away. The

geologists examined the body and made some notes before photographing it, but unfortunately a lot of the pictures were lost later on in the expedition when their boat capsized.

On their return to Europe the team's leader, Swiss Geologist Dr. Francois De Loys, showed the surviving pictures of the animal to the French Anthropologist Professor George Montandon who was sure that it was an "old world" ape and he gave it the name "Ameranthropoides Loysi" (Loys American Ape), but some others were not so sure. They said that it was some sort of spider monkey without a tail, and some said that it was a "set up" with a real spider monkey with its tail hidden or removed.

The creature was shown sat down on a packing case with a pole beneath its chin to support its head, and it was said that the picture showed little or no background so that no sense of scale could be gained to prove whether or not it was a real spider monkey, which would not grow anywhere near the height De Loys claimed his creature to be. It was proposed that the packing case it was sat on was a specially made small one to make the creature look larger in comparison to it, and Montandon had a reply for every question that was asked of him, but science as a whole was not convinced, and De Loys' ape was always doomed to be surrounded by controversy.

Not wanting to be the odd one out, Russia found that it too had a legendary apeman and it was called the "Alma." The search for the Alma is said to be more continuous and scientific than that for any other similar creature, but it must surely have a long way to go to beat the Americans. The Alma has been sighted in Siberia, the Russian Steppes and the Caucasian Mountains, and reports tell of a man-like creature.

Many of the sightings on record are by World War Two prisoners and refugees fleeing the Germans and Russians, and in the book "The Long Walk" Slavomir Rawicz describes his 4,000 mile escape from a Siberian labour camp into India. He tells of the meeting he had with a male and a female Alma which blocked his path for over two hours, forcing him to take a detour. Similarly, a Pole, Mr. Wiktor Juszczuk, was escaping from a Soviet prison camp when he was captured by the Chinese and, during this time, they told him that they would regularly put food out for the Alma. Mr. Juszczuk was watching as they put out a piece of fish and a large loaf of black bread, and he says that the Alma "loped through two feet of snow right up to the table. Then it sat on its haunches, grabbed the loaf and ate. He must have

been seven feet high. He had a broad nose and slanting eyes, small and staring. I have never seen such a powerful looking creature: long body, short legs, his chest, shoulders and arms covered in red-brown hair, but his hands were just like human hands. He spent a couple of minutes eating the bread and part of the fish, gave a few animal grunts and then ambled off."

The Alma is said to inhabit inaccessible areas from the west of the Soviet Union to the Altai and the Gobi desert in Mongolia, and the reports of it describe not the ape-like features of the Yeti but rather human-like features. This is borne out by the experience of geologist M. A. Stronin in 1948 when he was prospecting near the "Tien Shan" and made camp with his two Khirgiz guides. He was woken at dawn by their shouting that the horses were being stolen. He looked and "saw this figure behind the horses. It was standing upright but the arms seemed longer than a man's. I shouted 'Hey! Why are you trying to rob us?' The figure turned at the sound of my voice and calmly walked away from the horses." Stronin described the reddish hair and the upright stance as he chased it, he said "It wasn't quite human, nor quite animal, but even though it was in my sights, I couldn't decide to shoot what might have been some kind of man."

One man who did shoot an Alma is Moscow factory chief G. N. Kolpachnikov who was leading a reconnaissance mission during the 1937 Japanese invasion of Mongolia. Two sentries on guard duty saw two silhouettes descending a hill and, when the figures didn't respond to their calls, the two men fired and hit them both. The next morning when it was light Kolpachnikov went to look at the bodies and he couldn't believe his eyes. Lying on the ground were "not enemies, but strange hairy creatures more like an anthropoid ape. But I knew that there were no anthropoid apes in the Democratic Republic of Mongolia." He was told by an old man that wild men were sometimes encountered in the high mountains, and the bodies were about the height of a man with an irregular covering of reddish hair which often the skin could be seen through. The faces were very human-like with prominent eyebrows. Like the Bigfoot carcasses, an Alma has never been brought back to civilisation, and again for logistical reasons.

Dr. Myra Shackley of Leicester University has collated a lot of evidence about the Alma and she is one of the world's leading experts on Neanderthal man who was supposed to have died out 40,000 years ago, and she believes that the Alma may well be a surviving example. In the summer and Autumn

of 1979, Shackley went to Mongolia to find further details of the Alma, and she said "I think I was probably the first European for years, perhaps the first European ever, to penetrate some of those mountains." "Nor do the Mongolians go there. They have no reason to, and in any case they are afraid of the creatures that live there." Shackley found Neanderthal tools in a high river valley though they were not recent ones. She says "The pattern of Neanderthal sites which have been excavated across Soviet Asia accord very closely with the sightings of the Alma." "If Neanderthal man were to have survived it would most likely be in exactly those areas where the Alma has been most persistently reported. It may seem bizarre, but could it be that Neanderthal man is alive and well and living in Outer Mongolia."

It is said that good Alma sightings go as far back as 1879 when the great 19th century explorer Przhevalski, who discovered the wild Mongolian horse named after him, saw several wild men, "covered with hair and uttering inarticulate cries."

When Bigfoot mania was sweeping America, in 1958, an expedition was sent to find the Alma, and it was organised by the Soviet Academy of Sciences and was led by K. V. Staniukovich and Porchnev. Though they didn't find the creature itself, they did find many witnesses who told them of the meetings they had had with them. One such tale was a multiple sighting by multiple witnesses when, during a spell of harsh weather, a whole village came under attack from stone throwing Alma who came into the village and stole food supplies, obviously driven to desperate measures by their weather depleted food supplies rather than doing it out of malice or hostility.

Expert opinion on the Alma is hard to come by, as is a lot of information from within Russia, but over the years a profile of the Alma has emerged. The young are born without hair which grows sparsely as they get older so, on adults, the skin can be seen through it. The head has a cone shaped crown, the teeth are human-like but larger and with the canines more widely separated. The hands have four fingers and an opposing thumb which means that, like humans, they can grasp objects, but they don't always use the thumb to do this as they will also grasp things between the fingers and the palm. They can run as quickly as a horse, swim very well in strong currents and climb trees. Like other apemen they have, or can produce, a strong and unpleasant odour. They sometimes shelter in holes in the ground and warm themselves around abandoned fires. They eat small animals and vegetables,

are mostly active at twilight or in darkness and breeding pairs will remain together. There are even tales of albino Alma. Whereas Bigfoot footprints are not human-like, Alma footprints are but on a larger scale, and prints have been found and collected, as have hair samples and droppings, mostly by a French born Moscow Doctor, Marie Jeanne Koffman and Dr. Bayanov, who have made their work and their findings available to the west.

There was another foreign apeman that was made available to the west but, along with the Patterson film, it vies for top spot in the most controversial evidence stakes.

On March 23rd, 1969 the "Sunday Times" carried an extended report with the headline "IS IT A FAKE? IS IT AN APE? OR IS IT... NEANDERTHAL MAN?" The story continued; "A strange ape-like creature frozen in a block of ice is providing American anthropologists with one of the most intriguing questions they have faced in recent years. Is it a fraud, a freak or is it a form of human being believed to have been extinct since prehistoric times? One thing is certain; it has two large bullet holes in it. Just as a precaution, the F.B.I. have been called in."

Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans, a Belgian Zoologist who has written about many rare animals during his career, and made it a rule not to discount even the wildest rumours of strange animals, was invited by science writer Ivan Sanderson to view the "Iceman" in New Jersey. It was then in the custody of a Minnesota showman called Frank Hansen who said that he believed the Iceman had been found floating in a block of ice in the Bering Sea and had been bought in Hong Kong. Hansen, a former Air Force pilot, also said that he believed the Iceman had been in the ice for centuries, but Heuvelmans knew that if a creature is frozen in ice at death it will start to decay very quickly, and the frozen mammoths found in Siberia had only survived the passage of time because they were preserved in bog ice which has antiseptic qualities.

Heuvelmans' excitement grew as he examined the block of ice in Hansen's trailer with a torch. The man inside was 6ft tall with white wax-like skin covered in brown hair. The neck was short, the torso barrel shaped, and the long arms ended in huge hands. One arm was bent at an odd angle, apparently broken, and there was a large hole in the left eye, and Heuvelmans came to the conclusion that the creature had recently been shot with a high calibre rifle. He suggested that as it was shot it had raised its arm in defence

and the bullet had passed through it, breaking it, before hitting the creature in the eye. He couldn't see the back of the head but Hansen told him that it had been shattered. The feet suggested an ape of some kind as the big toe was unable to move independently and freely like a thumb, but the soles were too wrinkled yet more padded than those of a man.

Heuvelmans considered the options; he felt that it would have to be a very ambitious hoax to recreate the hair, and in some places the ice had been scraped away to give people a closer look. In one particular spot, enough ice had been removed to allow a rotten smell to escape. The figure could have been a kind of "Frankenstein" monster made up of different animals stitched together, and such hybrids were not uncommon in travelling shows such as fake mermaids, but Heuvelmans had no idea where a hairy human head, limbs of a giant ape, body of a giant ape or the unusual feet could have come from. Could it then have actually been a Neanderthal man? The long arms, short neck and barrel chest, large hands and feet are all in keeping with an early hominid, and the long second and third digits of the feet are indeed similar to what we know of Neanderthal man.

Following his examination of the Iceman Heuvelmans suffered several sleepless nights with his mind in turmoil. He felt that as the creature had been shot recently it could open up the possibility that there could be a race of such creatures still living in the remote parts of Asia. Despite attempts to buy it, Hansen would not part with the Iceman, so Heuvelmans asked the Washington "Smithsonian Institute" for assistance and they set up an investigating team, as did the F.B.I. who said that if a human-like being had been shot then it may be possible that a capital crime had been committed. Heuvelmans published his findings in Belgium which provoked huge enthusiasm from the zoological and anthropological worlds who felt that they were on the verge of one of their greatest discoveries, but their enthusiasm was short lived as things took a mysterious turn.

Frank Hansen said that the Iceman didn't belong to him but to a wealthy man whom he refused to name, and the owner had now taken possession of it, but an agreement had been made which allowed Hansen to exhibit a replica, and it was this replica that the Smithsonian Institute were allowed to examine, and not surprisingly they came to the conclusion that the Iceman was a clever hoax, a rubber fake made in Hollywood. Why they weren't told at the time that it was a replica is not clear, but they weren't the only ones to

lose interest in the case as the F.B.I. also dropped their investigation after saying that they didn't have enough evidence to continue. For Hansen it was not the end of the line as he continued to exhibit the Iceman in Canada, but it is not clear whether or not he was exhibiting the genuine Iceman or the replica.

When he tried to return to the United States with the iceman it was seized by Customs officials who said that he didn't have the correct documentation to return a hominid to the country. Hansen told them that it was a "fabricated illusion" but he refused to allow them to have any samples as he said it would ruin his exhibit. Eventually, after telephone calls to his senator and a lawyer, he was finally allowed back into the U.S. with it where he continued to show it at carnivals for some time until Spring of 1970 when he said that his contract with the owner had expired and he had taken possession of it.

There is another account which says that Hansen disposed of the Iceman to avoid the furore that surrounded it, but obviously in this account he would be the owner.

Most zoologists now feel that it was a clever hoax, Heuvelmans only examined it in a dimly lit trailer but he still says that what he examined for 3 days in 1968 was a real body which was probably shot in Vietnam during the war and smuggled into the United States in the corpse bags which could be marked "NOT TO BE OPENED" to hide horrific injuries and mutilations.

If Hansen is to be believed then only Heuvelmans examined the real iceman and everybody else examined the replica, or was the replica story only invented to allow him to return to the U.S. with it, or was it to allay talk that it was only a hoax and the real one was conveniently elsewhere? Also convenient is the fact that it was Heuvelmans who was chosen to examine the genuine Iceman and not any other expert in the world, perhaps because of his past record, that he would be more likely to believe that it was genuine than dismiss it as a hoax, and he had gone on the record as saying that in the past.

Though the Yeti should strictly come under the same heading as the rest of the mythical apemen, it seems somehow more fitting to give it a heading of its own, if for no reason other than the mental images which the mere mention of the name "The Abominable Snowman" conjures up in all of our minds.

The Yeti is probably the most famous of all the apemen, which is

surprising as it inhabits the most remote area of them all, the mountains of the Himalayas, though this is also an advantage as it means that its footprints are made in the snow which often shows them better than the mud which preserves Bigfoot footprints, and apparently the Yeti has adapted well to his environment as he blends in with his snowy environment with his light, almost white, body hair.

Early sightings of the Yeti include one in 1921 by British climbers at an altitude of 5,000 metres up Mount Everest when the party's sherpa guides saw figures in a snow field above them. The guide referred to them as "the man who is not a man" which was mistakenly translated as "the abominable snowman." When the group reached the snow field the creatures had gone, but the legend was born and the Yeti gained world wide notoriety from this brief encounter.

In 1960 another British climber, Sir Edmond Hillary, ventured to the Himalayas on a scientific expedition, and one of his aims was to track down the Yeti. What Hillary found was footprints in the snow and he concluded that they were the tracks of an animal, most probably a bear, and that they had grown in size and become distorted when the snow both in and around them was melted by the sun. He concluded that the Yeti was nothing more than superstition.

Yeti footprints were first photographed in 1937 and there have been many examples of them seen and photographed since and, just like Bigfoot, has a controversial piece of evidence in the form of the Patterson film, so too does the Yeti in the form of "skull caps."

On March 27th, 1954 the "Illustrated London News" carried the story of a noted anthropologist, Professor C. Von Fä»rer-Haimendorf, who had discovered a skull cap among other ritual objects in a small Buddhist temple at Pang Boche village. It was a piece of tough skin with sparse, brown, bristly hair, and it was in the shape of the crown of the head. The Professor doubted that it was genuine and said that it was more likely to be "a piece of hide from another part of the body, moulded into its present shape while still fresh and pliable." There are believed to be several of these skull caps in existence and one was also seen by Sir Edmond Hillary in 1960 when he set out on an expedition with Desmond Doig. The expedition was sponsored by the American "World book Encyclopedia" and went to an area renowned for Yeti sightings where they stayed for ten months. They took with them trip-wire



cameras, time lapse cameras and infra-red cameras, but despite all of their equipment they failed to find anything conclusive, but there was some excitement when they were able to persuade the villagers of Khumjung to lend them their scalp for six weeks.

Hillary, Doig and the scalp's minder, Khunjo Chumbi, set off on a world tour that took in Honolulu, Chicago, Paris and even Buckingham Palace, and at every stop they showed off the scalp, and Chumbi would imitate the high pitched howl of the Yeti for the press. The scalp was examined by experts who said that it was probably the hide of the Serow goat, but since the expedition Doig has changed his mind and now believes that the Yeti does exist, he says "After all, we may not have seen a Yeti, but we didn't see a snow leopard either and we "know" they exist." Of the scalp though, Doig didn't change his opinion as he now has one of his own. He says that he was once near the Sikkim border when he met a tribesman wearing a similar one on his head and he told Doig that they are frequently made to be worn as warm hats.

There are occasional reports from the New China News Agency that Chinese soldiers have shot and eaten a "snowman" but, like Russian Alma reports, the details are not very easy to come by, and so it is mainly the regions of Nepal and Tibet that boast encounters with the Yeti.

The lead climber on the 1979 British expedition to conquer a 14,840 ft (4520m) Himalayan peak found footprints in the Hinken Valley and heard "scream-like calls" which the sherpas said was the Yeti. It is interesting to note that the sherpas seem to talk of the Yeti so matter of factly as though its existence should never be under any doubt, and the Abbot of the monastery at Thyangboche in the shadow of Everest tells of the Yeti that are casual visitors to the monastery garden.

Generally the opinion of the sherpas is that the Yeti are timid and harmless, but the "Sunday Times" in 1974 reported that a 19 year old yak herder, Lakhpa Domani, was tending her herd when she heard a noise and turned to see a huge ape-like creature with black and red-brown hair, large eyes and prominent cheeks. The animal picked her up and carried her to a stream but dropped her when she began to scream. It then turned its attention to the yaks and it killed one with heavy blows and another by twisting its horns to break its neck. The report was confirmed by local police and a photographer who recorded the animal's footprints.

Like Bigfoot the Yeti's footprints give us a good idea of its size and weight, and a set of prints found by the R.A.F. squadron leader Lester Davies were "sunk in about 5 or 6 inches. With cine camera and rucksack, I was weighing about 12 stone and only went in about 1 or 2 inches. I thought, this thing is huge!"

In 1978 Lord Hunt found Yeti footprints that were 14 inches long and 7 inches wide, and he described them at the Royal Geographical Society in London when he made a speech. He said "We were in a side valley below Everest. It was late in the evening and getting dark when my wife and myself came across the tracks. They were very fresh indeed, and I will even say that they were certainly made that day. There was deep snow on a rather steep little slope and the creature was a heavy one, because he had broken through hard crust on which we could walk without making an impression through the snow at all. The prints were oval, elongated. I put down an ice axe to measure. They were 14 inches long and just about half as wide."

This wasn't the first set of prints that Hunt had seen and it certainly wasn't the last. He has also heard the Yeti's "high pitched yelping cries" several times, and he came to the conclusion that he "can find no other explanation but that there is an unidentified creature still to be discovered."

Doig has spent thirty years in and around "Yeti country" and speaks many of the local languages, and he says that the sherpas talk of three types of Yeti, and the Bigfoot hunter Tom Slick also went in search of the Yeti and came to the same conclusion, that there is more than one type of unidentified creature roaming the slopes of the Himalayas.

The "Teh-lma" (little man) is quite small at 3 to 4 feet tall and runs around collecting sticks, and Doig feels that this is almost certainly a kind of gibbon, although zoology says that they don't venture north of the Brahmaputra River in India. they live in the valleys eating mainly frogs and insects, and their fur is a dark red colour with a slight mane.

The other two types are the real contenders for the title of Yeti, and the first is the "Dzu-teh" (hulking living thing). It is large, far bigger than a human, with a dark shaggy coat, flat head, long arms with powerful hands and large feet with two pads under the first toe which points away from the other toes. The Dzu-teh don't live in the Himalayas but in Eastern Tibet and Northern China, but there is some confusion about its eating habits. Some say that it is a vegetarian while others say that it will attack and eat cattle which is

why Doig feels that this is really a Tibetan Blue Bear, which is itself very rare and which no Westerner has seen closely. Doig did obtain a Blue Bear skin from a Bhutan monastery which he sold at Christie's for £1,200 in 1978, and the auctioneer said that "It has been suggested that this very rare skin is that of the Yeti or Abominable Snowman." There are still only a few known Blue Bear skins, and scant other bits and pieces including a skull and some assorted bones.

Doig once met a Tibetan lady who told him that there had been a Blue Bear at Panchen Lama's zoo in Shigatse, Tibet, but unfortunately for the bear, and in fact the rest of the animals there as well, the zoo was swept away in a flood.

Cryptozoologist Loren Coleman says that "The toe structure is the clue. If you have a creature leaving prints that resemble your hand, it is an ape. If the unknown's footprint looks like your tracks would, it's more man-like, woman-like, hominid." "I do not believe that the Yeti (an ape) or Sasquatch (a possible humanoid) are directly related to man. We are indirectly related to them in the same fashion that we are indirectly related to gorillas or chimps." He also pointed out that both the plant and animal species in the areas of China and in the Pacific north west of America bear an uncanny resemblance to one another, are related or are the same. He also notes that the Dzu-teh of China and the Yeren are "strikingly similar" in the configuration of the pads and toes. Could Yeren and Sasquatch be related or even separate communities of the same animal? If so then a leading candidate is a species of giant ape called "Gigantopithecus" that lived in southern China until it became apparently extinct 500,000 years ago.

Gigantopithecus was a sort of hybrid between man and ape on a large scale, males weighing about 800lb and females about 500lb which makes it the largest primate that ever lived. It did not follow the path of the smaller primates that would still swing through the trees because it was too big and heavy so it walked upright like a human and, like man, it lost its tail which it had no further use for. They had ape-like faces with a retreating forehead and blunt nose and a human-like mouth and jaw. They were covered in body hair but did not make tools as they were not as intelligent as humans and they probably didn't live in close social groups, so some of their traits were more human-like while others were more ape-like.

The other contender for the role of Yeti is the "Mih-teh" which is man

sized with a conical head on a stout neck, a jutting jaw and a wide, lipless mouth. It has black or red-brown fur and its footprints show short, wide feet. It is often described as the "original" Yeti, and they are said to eat plants, small animals and birds which they hunt in the high mountain forests, but they are also considered by some to be man eating and quite savage. It has the classic reversed toes and prowls at anything up to 20,000ft (6,100m) or higher.

Doig says of the Mih-teh: "In 1961 we dismissed the Mih-teh as pure myth. I now think we were wrong. I've often shown sherpas, who claim to have seen the Mih-teh, a sort of identity parade of different bears, humans, drawings of neanderthal man and Gigantopithecus, gorillas, chimps, gibbons and the orang utans. Invariably, though they have no knowledge whatsoever of the great apes, it is an ape they point to, usually an orang utan. We know from fossils that the orang utan once lived in northern India. Who knows? There are still immense jungles which could conceal whole tribes of Yetis. Perhaps their rare excursions to the high slopes are, as Abba Bordet suggested, in search of water. It can be very dry on the upper margins of the forest.

So, are we any nearer to the answer after all this or not? Are there man-like creatures living in the world's remote points, and if so what are they? Remnants of our own ancestry or distant cousins? Perhaps we will find out sooner or later when a body is found and recovered, and scientists feel that this may be sooner rather than later, because as populations increase and civilisations spread they cover more and more of the earth's surface, but zoologists believe that all the world's large creatures have already been found, but by the same token some of them proved to be very elusive until quite recently. For example, the mountain gorilla of Africa wasn't seen until 1901, the giant panda wasn't discovered in China until a skin was found in 1869 but the first Westerner to see was as recently as 1936, yet, interestingly, at the time of their respective discoveries both animals had long been considered, like Bigfoot and the Yeti, to be local folklore, and in fact 40% of all known mammals have been discovered in this century.

One cryptozoologist, Richard Greenwell, believes that Bigfoot is a real creature that prefers to remain living in peace away from prying eyes, and he also believes that he is nocturnal, which is another reason why he remains so elusive, but the idea of such a creature living on the outskirts of humanity is

far from a recent one. The principal has been around for thousands of years from the epic of Gilgamesh in ancient Babylon to the English tale of Beowulf, and this romanticism has added to what began as folklore, but is now very much regarded as the truth by locals and sherpas alike.

As each year goes by there seems to be more and more evidence to support the existence of the Yeti, and as we've seen the main part of the evidence is the footprints in the snow, and to date nobody has ever satisfactorily explained the existence of footprints made by a creature much heavier than a man which walks for great distances on two legs, and doubters ask whether an animal could survive and find food at such high altitudes, to which the believers quote the examples of the lynx, the woolly wolf, the ibex and the yak, all of which have been seen at more than 18,000 ft (5,490m).

It is argued that the footprints could come from a much smaller creature such as a mountain goat or langur monkey, and that they have been distorted by the sun melting them. The langur monkey is known to live at high altitude but was discounted as a culprit by the zoologist at the Queen Mary College, London, W. Tschenezky, who analysed the footprints and made casts which he compared to a gorilla, fossil man and modern man. He noted the unusually large second toe and the very small metatarsal bone and came to the conclusion that they were made by neither a bear or a monkey, and nor would these details have shown up on a distorted, melted footprint. Most zoologists say that a creature such as Bigfoot or the Yeti cannot exist, but perhaps the best known of all, Charles Darwin, provided the basis for the creature with his talk of the "Missing Link." Tschenezky says that "all the evidence suggests that the so called snowman is a very huge, heavily built bipedal primate, most probably of a similar type to the Gigantopithecus."

In a remote cave in China in 1989, anthropologists found the teeth and bones of a bipedal animal much larger than a man that had been there since Pliocene times, and from the remains of the animal they reconstructed a creature that was over two metres tall and weighed over 540 kg and it is this creature which they named Gigantopithecus. They put forward the idea that man and Gigantopithecus shared the same ancestry, but 11 million years ago, somewhere down the family tree, they split and became different creatures. This idea was that Gigantopithecus and Homo Erectus shared the earth some two million years ago, and this idea was further boosted when the remains of Homo Erectus were also found in that same Chinese cave, and more

importantly these remains also dated back to Pliocene times.

Grover Krantz thinks that while Homo Sapiens descended from Homo Erectus, simultaneously so too did other creatures descend from Gigantopithecus and that we still share the earth with those same descendants, so we are, as with modern primates, not on the same branch of the evolutionary scale, but on different branches that meet in history.

Bigfoot sightings are most commonly of a creature roughly the same size as Gigantopithecus, eight feet tall, hairy, wide shouldered and slightly ape-like in its facial features. If the creatures did exist in east Asia then they could have crossed to north America over the land ridges that formed during the ice age, which is clearly possible as this was the same route that was taken by the early Americans.

If you fly from northern India to Nepal you will see below you range after range of hills and mountains which are for the most part uninhabited by man, and in America's Pacific north west there is square mile after square mile of dense forest with up to 50 miles in between the roads that weave their way through it. Since World War Two there have been over seventy aircraft which have gone missing without trace in the area, and so there is a joke that not only is Bigfoot alive and well in the Pacific North West, but also another creature that feeds on stray aircraft, so if an aircraft can go missing it is not surprising that a shy and elusive creature could evade capture for so long, but what about a dead Bigfoot?

Krantz says that the reason we have not yet found a dead Bigfoot lying conveniently at the side of the road is down to natural instincts. Most animals dying a natural death will hide themselves away where they will not be interrupted by natural predators and scavengers, and Krantz has also asked many hunters, game wardens and park officials how many bones they have found from ordinary bears which have died a natural death, and the total number is zero. For now though we must rely on the numerous footprints and brief sightings by hunters and climbers.

There can be little or no doubt that there are creatures that we have not yet discovered, and why should it be the case that they must be for example, insects, birds or fish? Why is there such a fuss and even fits of giggling when it is suggested that there could be an undiscovered creature which may resemble ourselves? Is it for the same reason that we giggle at the thought of alien beings resembling us or the deep fear that we are not alone? Or is it that

we may not be quite as “superior” as we would like to think?

You also have to ask yourself the question: Would so many "experts" in their field, with so much to lose, spend their working lives and their spare time working on something that has no possibility of coming to fruition? One more thing we mustn't forget is that we ourselves were once living in remote areas, timid of our surroundings, looking for food and probably living in close family units, so is it so ridiculous to suppose that such a being could still exist today, largely unchanged in its adaptation to its environment? Obviously not, as there are other animals alive and well which are wholly or largely unevolved from ancient times, the best examples being sharks which are vastly unaltered from their prehistoric ancestors, or crocodiles which, like sharks, have only reduced in size through history, an excellent case of nature getting it right first time.

These are easy examples to accept because they bear not the slightest resemblance to man himself , but an animal that is well adapted to its environment and therefore not in need of any major evolutionary changes could quite easily be man-like, as we consider ourselves to be at the top of the evolutionary chain as well as the food chain.

So therefore no, it is not too far fetched to suppose that Bigfoot, the Alma or the Yeti could exist, and probably it would be more surprising if such a creature did not exist.”

## THE ROSWELL INCIDENT

During the summer of 1947, America was gripped by U.F.O. fever. The craze was started on June 24th by Kenneth Arnold who was flying over Washington State's Cascade mountains searching for a crashed military plane, hoping to locate it and pick up the \$5,000 reward offered to anyone who could do so. During his flight he spotted up to nine Unidentified Flying Objects in the skies with him. He spoke later of the tremendous speeds at which the objects were travelling, and he was the first person to describe U.F.O.s as "Flying Saucers" when he said that they "flew the same way as a saucer would if you were to skim it across the water."

The experiences related by Arnold set the ball in motion, and reports were coming in thick and fast and from far and wide. Not one of these many reported sightings however were as incredible or as fascinating as the chain of events which were to unfold on July 2nd at Roswell, New Mexico.

During a severe thunderstorm that night "something" crashed into the desert. This is not under dispute. What is under dispute is just what it was that had crashed.

A ranch hand called William "Mac" Brazel heard a loud crash during the night and, on checking the fields and perimeter fences for storm damage the next morning, he saw debris scattered over an area  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile long and several hundred yards wide. Mac took some of this debris and showed it to his neighbours, but as he had no telephone it was three days later, on his next visit to town, when he reported the matter to the Chaves County Sheriff, George Wilcox, who in turn informed the nearby Roswell army airfield (renamed Walker Air Force Base after World War Two). The town and the



base are about 75 miles from the debris site, and the matter was looked into on July 7th by the base Intelligence Officer, Major Jesse Marcel, and Counter Intelligence Agent Sheridan Cavitt. It was Marcel who took some of the debris back to his house overnight and then to the base the next morning. During July 8th troops were deployed to the site of the debris both to guard it and to clear away the public who had amassed there, many of whom were playing with the various pieces. Troops were also sent to another site which had been located some 40 miles away and which contained the wreckage of a "saucer."

It was believed that the site Brazel had found was possibly the scene of an explosion or a collision, and that the second location was where the craft had come to rest, again the public were present here as well as local firemen. Later that day a press release came from Roswell Army Airfield which was authorised by the base commander Colonel William Blanchard - later a Four Star General - and was given to Lieutenant Walter Haut, the Public Information Officer, to give to the press. The press release said that the military had been "fortunate enough to gain possession" of a "Flying Disk."

Word soon spread over the news wires and, in no time at all, Roswell became the centre of the world's media attention. All the phone lines out of town were jammed in the rush to get the story and newspapers from all over the west of America carried it on their front pages.

Some of the debris was placed under guard at Roswell while Marcel was escorted by military police as he boarded a B29 bomber with other samples and set out for Fort Worth, Texas (now known as Carswell Air Force Base). Fort Worth was home to the 509 Squadron, an elite force of bombers and the world's only combat trained atomic bomb group at that time. It was also the home of the Enola Gay, as well as being the Army's centre for Technological research, and was the place that captured German and Soviet military hardware were dismantled, studied and sometimes reverse engineered. It is believed that a small amount of debris was also sent to Washington to be seen by President Truman.

It was at Fort Worth that General Roger M. Ramey awaited Marcel's arrival and immediately took command of the situation. The suspense was almost unbearable as the world awaited the press conference to be held there. There was however to be a huge disappointment as Major Marcel, Lieutenant General Ramey and Colonel Thomas Debus were photographed examining

the wreckage of a weather balloon having said that it was this which had crashed into the desert at Roswell.

The next day, July 9th, the press carried the story that the earlier reports had been mistaken and that what Brazel had found was really a downed weather balloon. The debris by now was continuing its journey to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, again under military police escort.

Amid "Flying Saucer" fever, and all the other sightings around America at the time, the story should and would have died down and eventually become old news but for the deceit and covering up now in evidence, and after the press conference those who had been present at the second site knew that what they had seen was not a weather balloon, among them were local fireman Dan Dwyer and Sherriff Wilcox.

The saucer lay in the desert and many civilian witnesses, as well as all those present in their official capacity, saw the bodies of several "small humanoids with unearthly features," approximately 4 ft (1.2m) tall. Three were still inside the craft, one was half in and half out and another was completely thrown clear. Yet another was still alive and walking around the crash site looking sad. Dwyer described the beings to his family as "not from this world, little people, not human. Two dead, and one walking around." Another witness described them as looking like a fourteen year old child but with a head too big for their body, and a slightly pink skin with a grey hue.

The craft itself is described by forensic sketch artist, Bill McDonald, who was called in by the military to reproduce both the craft and its occupants using similar methods to those employed by the police when they construct pictorial profiles of suspects. In order to do this he had to work with the witnesses directly. He says that the craft was not in actual fact a saucer as such but was more like a stingray, about 25 feet wide and 28 feet long. The bottom of it from wing tip to wing tip and head to toe was not a smooth surface but was like a honeycomb, with hexagonal sections that glowed when "powered up". He compares the shape of the craft to the Stealth Bomber and Project Aurora, and it is likely that if this strange craft was to be reverse engineered anywhere, it would have been done at Wright Patterson.

Back at the crash site, the bodies were beginning to rot, especially those outside, so they were put into body bags and removed to the base hospital. There they were placed in sealed wooden crates and stored in the middle of hangar number 84 under close guard until they could be shipped out the next

day, also possibly to Wright Patterson. There are also witnesses who saw the bodies inside the hangar, one was a politician seeking re-election and his driver who had come to collect him, the driver says that he saw through the hangar door that one of the creatures was still alive.

Local funeral director, of The Ballard Funeral Home, Glen Dennis, received a phone call from the base from a man who identified himself as a military officer, and Dennis was asked questions about bodily fluids, preserving dead bodies and other medical matters. He was also asked if he had in stock any caskets from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet in length which could be hermetically sealed (airtight and waterproof). He explained that he had two in stock as always and he was asked how soon he would be able to get any more. Unable to do so at such short notice, he decided to drive over to the base to see if he could be of any assistance there.

On his arrival he saw an old female friend of his who was employed at the base. She told him to "Get out of here. You'll be in a lot of trouble" and this was despite Dennis having the contract for transporting sick airmen to and from the base. He was escorted roughly away after glimpsing the bodies through a door that was left slightly ajar. The next day, this time in town, Dennis again met the lady friend who told him that she had transcribed the autopsies, and she told him of a toxic smell which had made all those present feel ill.

Some of the original debris, which Brazel had found earlier, was seen not only by his neighbours but also by Major Marcel and his family when he had taken some home. His son, Dr. Jesse Marcel Jr., still remembers that time today, 50 years later. Marcel Jr. is a former flight surgeon in the Air Force and he is now a physician in Montana, he is also one of the most important surviving witnesses in the case. He remembers the day that his father came home very excited with some of the debris and showed both himself and his mother in their kitchen. His father would often bring home old balloons for him to play with, so he knew what they looked like, and this one was certainly not a balloon. Some of it seemed to be beams of some sort which were made out of metal, but some people say that they were in fact wooden struts from a balloon, but as a boy Marcel had made many balsa wood models so he knew the difference.

They were all amazed at how light it was, yet it wouldn't burn or break, and some of the material was very like tin foil but if it was bent or crumpled,

it would return to its former shape. It was "like nothing" they'd "ever seen before." When they held it in their hand they couldn't feel it and when they dropped it on the table it would spread out, rather like mercury. The strangest piece of all that Marcel remembers is what he refers to as an "I beam" like a short girder, 12 to 18 inches long. What made this piece stand out from the rest was that it had purple or violet letters on it but he didn't notice them until he held the piece up to the light as they were only faint. After they had looked at the debris his father put it back into the car and they retired for the evening.

Marcel Jr. didn't see his father the next day as he was at Fort Worth, but when he did see him again he no longer looked excited, and he got the family together and told them that they must never talk to anybody about what they had seen. This was obviously after the press conference that had been held, although Marcel did admit in private that the debris found by Brazel and that shown at Fort Worth were not one and the same.

It was nearly forty years before he would again ask his father about the I beams that they had seen that July day, and his father replied that they had indeed had purple figures on them, he also asked him if there was any chance that there could be some more lying in the desert, to which he replied "No, they went out there and they vacuumed the place up." Marcel junior says that he will never forget what he saw, and that it opened his eyes about the universe and what's out there.

To add yet more fuel to the fire of conspiracy were threats from the military to various people, such as the radio station K.S.W.S. which had first broadcast the story of an alien craft which had been authorised by Blanchard. The boss of the station, George "Jud" Roberts was told (allegedly by the pentagon) that there would be "a lot of trouble" if any further "Saucer" stories were broadcast, and he was also warned that the station could, and would, be taken off the air "permanently, the next day." Other witnesses threatened were the daughter and wife of Dan Dwyer. The daughter, Frankie Rowe, was interviewed by a military officer who asked her if she had seen any of the debris herself to which she replied she had. He told her that she hadn't and again she said that she had and they began to argue. He took out his baton from his belt and started to slap it into the palm of his hand while saying that she didn't see or hear anything, and he told her that there are things "they" can do. He told her that he could take her out into the desert and that it was a large desert, and nobody would ever find their bodies, and he said that the

only way they would ever be left alone is if she agreed to never speak about the matter again, and she did eventually agree.

Mac Brazel, the original witness, was now being "escorted" everywhere he went for days after the incident until eventually, much to the surprise of everyone, he changed his version of events and supported the weather balloon story. Less than a year later, Brazel, a lowly ranch hand, had moved out of town and opened his own food storage facility. His fellow witnesses believed that his silence had been bought, enabling him to finance his new business venture. Brazel's son Bill, now a surgeon, claims that his father Mac was sworn to secrecy and would never tell.

The story passed down over the years through the Wilcox family, first from Sherriff Wilcox to his wife and then from her to her granddaughter, is that Wilcox was told by the military police that if he ever spoke out about what he had seen on that July day, then both he and his family would be killed but despite all this, and the testimony of over one hundred witnesses, the government's story held water for almost thirty years.

It is important to note though, that in 1947, the Vietnam war was yet to happen, Watergate wasn't even a Hotel and the Iran Contra affair was 40 years in the future, so at this period in history if your government told you that it was a weather balloon that had crashed into the desert, then a weather balloon it was, the notion of your own government lying to you was not even entertained, it was only in the years to come that people became more skeptical and were far more liable to ask questions.

In the late 1970s, Jesse Marcel came forward and told the world what he had really seen decades earlier. This was in a recorded interview with the nuclear physicist and U.F.O. researcher, Stanton Friedman, who is widely accepted as the man who "broke" the story after a TV station manager told him of Jesse Marcel who was then residing in Homer, Louisiana. The manager and Marcel were Ham Radio "buddies" and the ensuing video taped interview turned out to be everything that Friedman had wished it to be, as Marcel talked about how the debris had been switched and that what he had found was not a weather balloon. He also spoke in depth about one particular piece, he said that it was metal, no thicker than the foil found in a pack of cigarettes, yet he couldn't burn it, bend it or even dent it with a 16 pound sledgehammer.

Not long after this "confession" in 1981, the highest ranking officer ever

to comment publicly on the affair, by now General Thomas Debus, (originally photographed with Ramey and the weather balloon at Fort Worth) finally admitted, in a home video, that the balloon story was a cover up which Ramey had been ordered to set up.

Frank Kaufman, Master Sergeant at the airfield at the time of the incident was, in 1947, on "classified duties," the nature of which he can't divulge. He tells of seeing erratic movement on the radar screen which was followed by a flash and then nothing. He went to the sight to see what the "blips" were and he describes a scene of rough terrain with no roads where he saw a glow like a halo from 200 yards away. What he saw was "neither a plane or a missile, but a strange craft 20 - 25 feet long." He also describes the bottom of the craft in the same way as other witnesses, with hexagonal sections all across the bottom of it, and he says that he saw the beings as well, one half inside and half outside the craft and another thrown clear, he also adds that there were "three more dead inside" and he insists that the cover up went right to the top, "right to President Truman."

The fact that Truman was involved and aware of what was happening at the time in New Mexico is supported by two documents which surfaced in 1984. On the morning of December 11th of that year, Los Angeles TV producer, Jaime Shandera, opened his mail to discover that he had been sent two official documents from an anonymous source which, if genuine, would shake the very foundations of the American government and ensure that the general public would never believe another word they ever said. The package Shandera received contained photocopies of documents dated September 24th, 1947 (just twelve weeks after the crash in the desert) and November 18th, 1952 and both were signed by Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower respectively.

The first document was a classified executive order from Truman to the Secretary of Defence James Forrestal and it authorised him to, after consulting nuclear scientist Dr. Vannevar Bush, establish a board of qualified personnel to be known as the "Majestic 12," "Majic 12" or simply "MJ 12." This group of experts were to be answerable only to the president and their job was to investigate the case of the "Flying Saucer" which crashed into the desert at Roswell in that same year. Among those rumoured to be on the Majestic 12 committee, the last surviving one was Dr. Jerome Hunsaker who died on September 10th, 1984, ironically just 3 months before the documents

were received by Shandera. Was this just a mere coincidence or had somebody been watching and waiting for him to die before sending the two documents, when nobody could either verify them, discredit them or be available for questioning? Even if this was the case then surely the members of the committee who did pass away would be replaced at the earliest convenience. Though many people doubt the authenticity of the two documents, many of these same people believe that the Majestic 12 committee did exist, and for the very same purpose of investigating the events at Roswell and possibly other alleged alien crash sites.

The alleged recipient of the order from President Truman, James Forrestal, was known to be "very concerned" about the events at Roswell and their implications, and allegedly the other members of the committee became duly "concerned" about him as he made it common knowledge that he felt the public had a right to know about such matters, and he insisted on seeing any "crashed saucers" himself. Did they however become concerned enough about him to kill him or have him killed?

During a stay at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Washington D.C. to recover from over exhaustion and stress, James Forrestal was found dead, the cause was apparently suicide. He left no suicide note or any other letter, but what he did leave was a set of diaries he had recently been working on. That he was writing them was apparently common knowledge, and they contained descriptions of everything he had seen, heard and learned during his time on the Majestic 12 Committee. Those same diaries are now in the possession of the authorities and kept under the heading "Classified."

The second document received by Shandera supported the first and was a briefing for the newly elected president Eisenhower, and it provided information on both the members and the progress of the Majestic 12 committee. Jaime Shandera didn't make the receipt of these documents public until three years after he had received them, he claimed to have contacted a high ranking military official who had confirmed that the documents were indeed genuine. This "highly placed" official however turned out to be a lowly Sergeant, who in the past had been convicted of falsifying official documents. Tests were carried out on the letters and it turned out that the letter dated 1947 had been printed on a machine manufactured by Smith-Corona which had not gone into production until 1963. What's more, the signature on the bottom of the document was believed to have been

photocopied from a letter from Truman to Vannevar Bush which had been written, ironically, in 1947. If the first document was a fake then it follows that the second document must also have been a fake as it referred to the earlier "faked" Truman letter.

By now the government had decided to stick to its story of a military experiment in the desert. In New Mexico around this time tests were indeed under way in the desert at White Sands Proving Ground using V2 rockets for research into missile technology. The V2 rocket was invented by the Germans who came to White Sands to test them for missile use and for research into the space program. It's known that animals were used in some of these rocket tests, but it is doubtful that they were carried out as early as 1947, or that the rockets could have flown all the way to Roswell from White Sands. Marcel felt that had a rocket been the cause of the debris in the desert then somebody would have been looking for it, and in the bleak terrain in which it lay it would not have been missed from the air. The reason nobody was looking for it is because, at that stage, nobody knew it was there so it wasn't one of theirs. When one of the V2 rockets had gone astray and landed in Mexico it had been found relatively quickly and, more importantly, it had not been kept quiet but was made public, as were other such tests at the time even on new aeroplanes.

The next development in the story, which was by this time nearly fifty years old, came in September 1994. The American Cable Network was about to show a dramatization of "The Roswell Incident" which brought about perhaps the most dramatic and, at the same time, inexplicable u-turn by the U.S. Government. They finally admitted that the debris shown at Fort Worth had been switched as Marcel had said all along, and what had actually crashed in the desert was not in fact a weather balloon. What they now said it was, was a test flight for "Project Mogul". The debris in the desert was the remains of Mogul test flight No. 4.

Project Mogul was a high altitude, constant level balloon that was designed to detect Russian missile movements and explosions by radiation. As an ironic twist, the Mogul balloons were classified top secret in 1947 and also bore hieroglyphic markings as described by original witnesses of the debris. By 1994 the official logs recording test flights for Project Mogul were no longer classified. However no entry is made for flight No. 4. The reason for this, according to the government, was that no entries are made for



unsuccessful flights, yet several other "unsuccessful" flights are entered in the log.

Just a year later came two more twists in the tale. New Mexico congressman, Steve Schiff, who had been trying in vain for years to find the truth, became fed up with the lack of help from the Defence Department so he decided to launch an enquiry through the government watchdog agency, the General Accounting Office, (G.A.O.). When the G.A.O. report was completed it stated that all the outgoing messages from Roswell airfield for the time in question had been destroyed without authorization. The destruction of documents must itself be documented, giving details of both who is doing the destroying and for what reason. No record of either could be found. Besides this the original records were permanent documents never to be destroyed and would have shown how military officials at the base were explaining to their superiors elsewhere just what was going on at the time, both on and around the base. Schiff has also yet to gain an answer to his question, why was a mere weather balloon escorted by armed guards and military police, and he continues to this day in his attempts to discover the truth and to have that truth made public.

Stanton Friedman also continues that same quest and comes up against similar oppositions at every turn. He applied under the freedom of information act to have released an 18 page document which was a report on U.F.O. data. He expected to see a little, if not a lot of censorship on the document he received, but what he got was in fact 75% blackened out but, despite some dramatic developments in the past, the best was yet to come, or was it?

Ray Santilli owns a small music and video distribution company in London, England, and he was looking for, and obtaining, 1950s Rock n Roll footage when an elderly American gentleman he was dealing with told him that he had something else to show him. It was from a retired American cameraman who claimed to have been working for the government in 1947, and who claimed he had shot a film under their instruction, both at the scene of the Roswell crash where he saw the recovery of both living and dead alien bodies, and later at one of the autopsies at Fort Worth. At the crash site itself there were three live beings who were crying and clutching a small box to their chests.

Santilli claims to know the identity of the cameraman and to have been

shown around his home where he saw all of his military memorabilia including photographs and enrolment and discharge papers, but he refuses to disclose his identity. The cameraman claimed to have filmed many secret projects around the late 40s and early 50s for the military and that he had high level clearance to do so. Santilli says that the cameraman wishes to remain anonymous as he does not want the attention that recognition would bring as he is now over 80 years old and in his declining years, and also because of tax reasons as he has received money in return for the film. After Santilli had obtained the film he returned to London with it and then contacted BUFORA (British U.F.O. Research Association), and he maintains that he has only brought it into the public domain and not created it. He says that if it is a fake it is down to the cameraman and not down to him.

The quality of the film is poor, but were it genuine it would have been shot using a hand held camera with no focus facility and the cameraman would have been fully "suited up" making his movements clumsy. He would also have been further hampered by his visor steaming up and the fact that he would have had to keep moving around in order to aim the camera, so it is not surprising that the film is of poor quality and seems amateurish. Although Santilli will not reveal the identity of the cameraman, he did provide samples of the film for dating analysis, but reports that the film was a fake continued to dampen the blow of this earth shattering evidence. A curly telephone cord seen in the background was originally thought not to have been invented as early as 1947, but this however turned out not to be the case as the phone was a Bell Standard Model from 1937. A General Electric clock on the wall is also from the same era, and incidentally the time span of the autopsy using the clock is around two hours, concurrent with a genuine autopsy. The film stock itself was dated and found to be from three possible eras, 1927, 1947 or 1967, so this also possibly tallied with correct era, but does the filming method also tally? In the opinion of Paoli Cherchi Usai, Senior Curator of Motion Pictures at Eastman House, Rochester, New York it does, and in his opinion it was shot in the late 1940s or early 1950s and he adds that it would not be possible to create such a fake.

Allen Daviau was the Director of Photography on such films as E.T., Bugsy, Empire of the Sun and Congo and he believes that the Santilli film regularly goes out of focus to mask certain details which would identify it as a fake, but Dr. Roderick Ryan, who also claims to have been a cameraman

during the 40s and 50s on similar duties to the man who shot this film, says that the cameras they used were Filmo cameras made by Bell and Howell which didn't have a system to maintain focus. Daviau replies that the cameraman seems to have a knack for missing the best shots and cites one instance where the alien's skull is being cut into, and the cameraman is purposely positioned in such a way that nothing can be seen closely, and he keeps moving all the time.

Ryan responds that the cameraman has to keep moving to keep out of the way of the surgeons as he is there merely to record an important event rather than to provide a close up detailed account of it, in his own words the cameraman is not there to "do pretty pictures." So, film and cameraman aside, in the opinion of the experts is this a real alien body or is it the body of a human made to look like an alien, or could it be a human who has suffered the effects of radiation in a secret experiment? To find out we turn to the world's leading pathologists.

Dr. Chris Milroy is a senior lecturer in forensic pathology at the University of Sheffield, England, and his ability to determine cause of death has made him a much sought after witness in murder cases the world over.

Dr. Cyril Wecht is a past President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences who has performed or supervised nearly 40,000 autopsies, and he says that he has never done one on a body resembling that in the film.

The body in the film fits the classic mould of an extra-terrestrial in that it is smaller than a human, though still of a humanoid form, it is slim and with small facial features, apart from the eyes which are very large in comparison to the head and are covered in a black membrane. The ears are set very low on the side of the head and there are no obvious genitalia or breasts. Wecht says that this gender defect is similar to a chromosomal one found in just 1 in every 5,000 human births where there is a lack of feminine chromosomes and so there is no sexual development, but sufferers of this disorder very rarely survive into adulthood, and in fact 99% abort before birth. The body's hands and feet have six digits on them and this also is a chromosomal and genetic defect which is found quite commonly in animals bred too closely together and is known as polydactily. Would it be feasible that a human suffering from all of these defects could survive into adulthood? Milroy says that it is very unlikely and it would be extremely rare, yet he wouldn't be surprised to see it.

A journalist, one of several who got a sneak preview of the film, reported that the surgeons appeared to be cutting into the body and removing organs, then placing them in buckets without having any real close look at them. This is hardly the behaviour of medical experts performing an autopsy on an alien being for the first time, and Milroy feels that if this were an autopsy on an alien being it would last for far longer than the two hours which elapse on the wall clock in the background. This and other small details contribute to make the film seem not so earth shattering after all.

Wecht has trained many people to perform such operations and he feels that the men working in the film are either pathologists or surgeons, and he adds that the equipment they use and the way they use it is concurrent with the time period of 1947. Looking at the internal organs of the body, Wecht cannot see a liver when the body cavity is opened, and when the brain is revealed, its surface is not highly convoluted like a human brain but is smooth, and Milroy says that the brain is definitely not human. Wecht is certain that the body is not human, merely humanoid, and he adds that if anybody has faked the film then they should be working in Hollywood, and that is where we now turn to, to find the leading film makers in the world to see if such a body, while it is not human, could be the work of hoaxers, and one of the leading special effects teams in the world is that of Stan Winston the Academy Award Winning creature designer of the alien in the Alien films and the dinosaurs in the film Jurassic Park.

Winston's first thought was that the body was not real but was a prop, but he adds that it is extremely difficult to simulate the cutting and bleeding aspect of such an operation, and if it is a fake then he would be very proud indeed to have created it. Both he and his team analysed the film to see whether or not they could do a similar job in a studio. One of the things that they were most impressed with was how uniformly the blood seemed to flow out of the cuts and drip down the body, whereas in a film it would tend to spurt unevenly out of hidden pipes and this is one thing that they have never been able to recreate very accurately.

When the scalp was cut into and peeled back from the skull, this was again the case with the surface of skull being very uneven and not at all smooth yet it appeared to be uniformly wet and with no sign of any pipes. The specially made skin that is used in films today is a silicone mixture and was not freely available in 1947, and those who use it today only use it for

making blockbuster movies.

The Autopsy film was given general airing in August 1995, and again failed to convince people of its authenticity, and many said that they now believed it to be a fake. When Kaufman was shown it he said that he didn't remember the beings having six fingers, but he also said that the hieroglyphics on the debris also shown are the same as those he saw in 1947, whereas Jesse Marcel Jr. feels that the I beams shown seem smaller than those he saw in 1947, and though the letters themselves look the same he says that the ones he saw in 1947 were not raised above the metal's surface. Another pathologist shown the film said that in his opinion, he is 98% sure that the film is a fake, but the other 2%, he isn't sure. He adds that the body shown isn't that of a human being. Frank Kaufman's last word on the matter is that he is "1000% firm" (sic) that what he saw in the desert in 1947 was an alien craft and alien beings. He adds, "As Ripley would say, believe it or not."

Ray Santilli maintains that the film is indeed genuine. He adds that if he were to produce a hoax on such a matter as important as this, then he would be able to produce a far better, and much more convincing one than this, and he's certainly in the right profession to be able to do so.

A source close to the pentagon says that reports have, or soon will, come to light which will explain everything, but if he is referring to the Mogul explanation given in 1995, then again this failed to satisfy the world's curiosity. Perhaps the best evidence we have or ever could have, would be film footage, however, the Santilli film, due to its bad publicity and poor quality, has served not to convince us of the alien crash site story, but to make us doubt it all the more. One thing is for sure however, we know that something crashed in the desert at Roswell on July 2nd 1947, but we still, almost half a century later, cannot say for sure what it was. Perhaps we never will know for sure, because as the years go by, memories fade and death takes away, one by one, all of the first hand witnesses, until there comes a time when all we will have left will be investigators trying to dig up the past.

One such investigator is Kevin Randle who went to Roswell to follow the story, expecting to be there for a couple of days before finding out that there was nothing much in it. Indeed it looked that way for a couple of days, until he managed to locate Bill Brazel, and it was then that he first realised the sheer scale of the story he was working on. During the course of his

extensive research he has carried out 2,500 to 3,000 interviews with over 500 witnesses.

Don Schmitt is an investigating author who co-wrote "The U.F.O. Crash At Roswell" with Kevin Randle, and he has over 500 sworn affidavits or video depositions from people who say that what was recovered from both sites was not manufactured on this earth, and he himself is convinced that what crashed was a craft from space.

Both men have flown over the sites where the debris was found, and describe them as being open pasture land with good visibility for miles around, and if what had crashed was a secret military project then they could not have failed to notice it from the air and would have found it in no time.

We must consider each bit of evidence in turn and, after raging on for half a century, this story has come to be treated as the definitive U.F.O. story, and has everything for both believers and sceptics alike. There is no doubt that something crashed in the desert, or that Mac Brazel heard the impact, then the next day discovered the wreckage on his land. Surely a ranch hand would know at least a little about metals and their properties, yet not only he, but also one of the town's firemen, Dan Dwyer, were baffled by the discovery, being unable to distinguish exactly what it was they were looking at, having never seen anything like it before.

The details up to this point are clear and the chain of events only becomes clouded once the military become involved. As they admitted in 1995 the debris was switched, so therefore what crashed in the desert was not a weather balloon as they had first said. Whether it was an alien craft of some sort or an unsuccessful Mogul test flight, the government were lying. What was it that was so important and secretive that they felt they had to lie to the public and keep the truth from them? If they were prepared to admit to Project Mogul's existence in 1995, why were they not prepared to do so in 1947 as it was no secret, even then, that America and Russia were extremely "concerned" with one another's technological advancements, especially military ones.

If it was Mogul test flight No. 4, successful or not, then why wasn't it logged as all the other test flights were? Or was this just a convenient cover story to coincide with the release of the TV drama series Roswell?

It is a known fact that animals were used in some of the V2 rocket tests, but if one of the rockets could have flown as far as Roswell, could animals,

even those found in a crashed rocket have been mistaken for alien beings "not of this world?"

Then there is the testimony of several military men. Kaufman is sure that he saw an alien craft and alien beings. Marcel admits that the debris was switched under military orders, so that what we saw at the press conference held at Fort Worth was not the real debris which Brazel had found. Debus also admits that the balloon story was a cover up, further damaging the military's credibility, and making whatever they have to say on the matter, past or present, very hard to believe. Also, what can we make of Brazel's "fortunate" change of circumstances? The original witness, first on the scene, and yet later he will say nothing of what occurred there, or why he had changed his opinion of what he had found on his land the day after the storm. We also have the testimony of Glen Dennis, another professional man who became unwittingly involved in something extremely sensitive, sensitive enough for him to have been roughly escorted off the base where he was both known and had worked on many occasions. Why also did Dennis receive an order for three child sized coffins?

Over one hundred civilian witnesses, the Sheriff, a fireman and police officers said that they had seen an alien craft, and Director of investigations, Don Schmitt, says he has over 500 sworn affidavits and video depositions from witnesses who say that it wasn't a balloon. One of these is Robert Shirkey, who at the time was an army pilot stationed at Roswell, he had seen, in the course of his duty, many balloons of various descriptions, and he saw this particular "balloon" being loaded onto the plane and he says that it "was not the same material. It was not a weather balloon." It was only the military which said otherwise until later when Marcel, Debus and Kaufman admitted the truth. The only non-military witness to say that it wasn't an alien craft was Mac Brazel, and even he had said at first that this was the case, and he only changed his mind after his "official escorts." We also have the threats made to people like George "Jud" Roberts at Roswell's radio station and Sheriff Wilcox. What could be so important to have an officer of the law threatened with death?

Why were supposedly "permanent" records at the base destroyed? The one piece of evidence which could have given us details of what was happening and how it was being dealt with at the time is now gone for good. Why was the destruction of these vital records itself not recorded, flouting

military procedure with a blatant disregard?

Then we have to consider what is perhaps the most dramatic piece of evidence of all, the film footage uncovered by Santilli. There is no mention of anyone filming the crash site at the time, or the autopsy when it was glimpsed through the doorway by Glen Dennis. The film itself fails to convey the feeling of incredulity, awe and wonder which surely would have been felt by everyone concerned when carrying out autopsies on alien beings for the first time. If it was indeed shot in 1947, then why did it only surface in 1995? Surely the cameraman, or Ray Santilli, would have had access to it much earlier than this.

Overall, the evidence suggests that there was a crash during a thunder storm. Brazel found the wreckage, reported it to Sherriff Wilcox who told the army at Roswell. As soon as the army become involved there is confusion as to the real facts, but no doubt that they didn't want the world to know what they had in their possession, and they covered their tracks by destroying the outgoing messages from Roswell base. For this reason alone we should be concerned about why information is concealed from us, and why the government should take such trouble to cloud "our perception of a phenomenon which they have always denied exists."

Mac Brazel's "fortunate" change of circumstance seems very suspicious and we surely cannot accept it at face value, but we must also be inclined to believe the testimony of Marcel, Kaufman and Debuse, all of whom were closely involved with the case as it was unfolding.

On balance it is quite convincing that something "not of this world" crashed in the desert at Roswell that night in July. Despite travelling all the way from wherever it came, it was foiled by an electrical storm. We know from other U.F.O. stories and witnesses that in the presence of U.F.O.s there is interference with engines, TV, radio and other electrical equipment so they must interfere with one another somehow. So could the craft then have suffered some sort of serious malfunction caused by the atmosphere of an electrical thunder storm?

If we accept then that a craft was found, then we must surely believe that not only the craft was found, but also the bodies of the occupants because of the phone call to, and the questioning of, Glen Dennis. Whether or not one of the beings was still alive is, in all probability, a moot point, but certainly it could be possible. Faked evidence and hoaxes tend to do great damage to



cases like this, but whether or not the Santilli film is a fake, and opinions are certainly divided on it, it does not do enough in this particular case for us to doubt what supposedly occurred fifty years before the film came to light. The film could even be another one of the Governments elaborate plots to discredit the rumours and once again try to kill off "The Roswell Incident", this time hopefully for good, by once again shrouding it in mystery and giving people more reason to doubt that anything extra-terrestrial occurred there.

The latest word from the authorities on the subject came in 1997, around the fiftieth anniversary of the original incident. On the night of March 13th of that year many witnesses saw strange lights flying in the night sky over the south western states of America, and this sparked a response from the powers that be. This time they said that the bodies found at Roswell in 1947 were not alien beings, they were merely dummies which were used in parachute tests, and that people must have got their dates mixed up because these parachute tests were not carried out as early as 1947.

We must be getting closer to a conclusion to the matter as now they are prepared to admit for the first time that bodies were present at the scene and not just wreckage of whatever kind. The question still remains though, can we believe anything they tell us now or ever again?

## THE SIBERIAN EXPLOSION

At 7 am on June 30th, 1908 a fiery object entered the earth's atmosphere somewhere over western China and Mongolia and headed toward the Tunguska forest in the Siberian Taiga 2,200 miles east of Moscow. Hunters and fishermen saw an object in the sky that was brighter than the sun and moving at high speed. Travellers on the Trans-Siberian railway saw a fiery ball moving in the sky from south to north.

There followed an explosion that sent a fiery column up into the atmosphere, and people in the village of Vanovara saw a light on the horizon followed by a mushroom cloud. A series of thunderclaps followed that were heard over 500 miles (800 kilometres) away and a train driver in Kansk stopped his train thinking that one of his freight cars had exploded. The shock wave came next, and seismograph machines around the world registered a sizable tremor and an air blast that went twice around the globe. At Irkutsk (550 miles from the epicentre) the needle quivered for almost an hour.

In England, on July 3rd, the "Daily Express" carried reports of tennis being played at ten o'clock at night and of luminescent clouds seen over Europe and North Africa. For weeks the nights were as bright as day and the light was described as "pink" and "yellowish-green". People in London were able to take photographs and read books outdoors at midnight.

A letter to the editor was published which came from a golfer at Holcombe, Ingleby that said that it had been light enough for play on the links course at Dormby House Club, Brancaster, Norfolk during the night, and one night "I myself was aroused from sleep at 1:15am, and so strong was the light at this hour that I could read my book by it in my chamber quite

comfortably." The letter continued, at 4:15am the whole sky was salmon pink and birds began the dawn chorus. Another report in the paper said that "the extraordinary running of night trains over the Grampian Hills without lights had taken place for the first time on record."

At first the lights were mistaken for the Aurora Borealis (the northern lights) but it soon became clear that this wasn't the case. Proper investigation however had to wait a while, namely for the end of the First World War, the loss of a Tsar and for the Russian Revolution.

The recently installed Bolsheviks set up "The Academy of Science" in Petrograd to investigate meteor falls on Russia, and in 1921 they commissioned an astronomer and meteorite expert, Leonid Kulik, to investigate the explosion of 1908, and he began by gathering press clippings, eye witness accounts and meteorology reports. The Irkutsk paper "Sibir" described it as "a most unusual phenomenon of nature" and it carried an account gathered from eye witnesses;

*"In the village of Nizhne - Karelinsk in the north west high above the horizon, the peasants saw a body shining very brightly (too bright for the naked eye) with a bluish-white light. It moved vertically downwards for about ten minutes. The body was in the form of a "pipe" (i.e. cylindrica). The sky was cloudless except that low down on the horizon in the direction in which this glowing body was observed, a small dark cloud was noticed. It was hot and dry and when the shining body approached the ground it seemed to be pulverized and in its place a huge cloud of black smoke was formed and a loud crash, not like thunder, but as if from the fall of large stones, or from gunfire, was heard. All the building shook and at the same time, a forked tongue of flame broke through the cloud. The old women wept, everyone thought that the end of the world was approaching."*

Nizhne - Karelinsk had been 200 miles (320 kilometres from the epicentre).

Kulik read reports that said things like "fiery heavenly body," "a flame that cut the sky in two" and "a pillar of smoke," and reading such reports brought home the scale of the explosion. Had it happened at sea, the tidal

waves would have rivalled those when Krakatoa had erupted and swept away 36,000 people. Had it struck just six hours later it would have wiped out St. Petersburg, six hours after that, New York, but thankfully it had struck one of the most remote regions on the planet, and while this would hamper the investigation, it meant that not one life had been lost.

His appetite well and truly wetted, and convinced that a meteorite held the key to the solution, Kulik set out on the first expedition to find the blast site, which can now be reached by helicopter, but at that time was a much more arduous journey. Backed by the Academy of Sciences he left Petrograd in 1927 on the Trans-Siberian railway and disembarked at a small station at Tayshet in March of that year. Using horse pulled sleds he and his team headed for the village of Dvoretz on the river Angara, and then on to the tiny village of Vanovara, about 100 miles from the blast site. Vanovara was nothing more than a small trading post, and the local Mongol fur traders whose hunting territory extended up the Tunguska river could still clearly remember the explosion even after two decades.

During their brief stay Kulik enlisted the help of two local men to act as guides, Okhchen and Potapovich, whose brother had been deafened by the blast that also carried his tent away, and during their time with them they were able to glean further insight into the events of 1908 from the locals.

One man had been standing on his porch, and the blast had knocked him clean off it so hard that he had lost consciousness. His daughter and her friend came running back from the stream after hearing the explosion and found him lying on the ground. Another man was carrying out some repairs on the rear of his house when he felt a sudden hot blast which burned his ears so much that he ran inside the house with his hands clasped over them.

The landscape that stood between Vanovara and the blast site was extremely hostile, and any villages that used the river for transport and trading were built right on its banks so as not to extend very far into the forest. Even today when new cities such as Bratsk were built in the forest, and for strategic reasons the new railway across the Taiga, modern machinery struggled through the cold and the snow of winter, and the heat and the mud of summer. So into this terrain Kulik set off with his horses again, but found that they were struggling to negotiate the snow, so he bought some reindeer, loaded them up and set off yet again. Within two days he and his party were having to hack their way through dense forest with axes. Eventually they

reached the quieter waters of the upper Tunguska and its junction with the river Chambe and the river Mekirta, and as Kulik stood on its south bank, he caught his first sight of the damage that the blast had done, and what he had now waited for six years to see.

From where he stood there were a number of small hillocks profiled against the sky, and they had been stripped of trees. Kulik climbed to the top of a nearby ridge, which he would name Khladni Ridge, to get a better view of the area, but none of the team were prepared for the sight that greeted them. It was a sight that they would never forget, for as far as the eye could see (about 12 to 16 miles (20 to 25 kilometres)) every tree without exception lay flat on the ground facing to the south east with almost regimental precision. Before the blast the forest had been very dense with no clearings but now it lay devastated, flattened to the ground. The new trees which had grown since the explosion were still only small and covered in snow, so even then, a full twenty years after the blast, the devastation was crystal clear for all to see.

While he was beholding the site before him, Kulik was struck by a thought, because all of the trees lay facing in the same direction, this could not be the centre of the blast, this was only the edge of the damaged area, so he knew he must press on to find the epicentre. However, his two guides refused to go any further so he was forced to return to Vanovara to find new ones, and while he was there they built wooden boats to cross the rivers which had been swelled by the spring thaw, and it was June before he once again reached Khladni Ridge.

They now followed the line of the trees north west, clambering over and under the fallen trunks until they came to a natural amphitheatre where they made camp. The next day Kulik climbed around the top of the "bowl" until he was sure what he had found. All of the fallen trees around them now pointed away from the bowl, so at last he knew that he had found the blast's epicenter and he would call this "cauldron" as he referred to it, The Tunguska South Swamp, and he had travelled 37 miles (60 kilometres) from the edge of the damaged area, at Khladni Ridge, to find it.

All this time Kulik had felt that the blast and the crater he had now found had been caused by a meteorite impact, and he saw nothing here to change his mind. In the 1920s this was quite a brave supposition as only a few people in the world believed that a meteorite could reach the earth and cause such

damage, and later Daniel Baringer would buy the 500 feet (150 metre) deep, 50,000 year old "Devil's Canyon" crater in the Arizona desert in order to try and prove that it had been made all those years ago by a meteorite. Indeed he would go on to prove that very thing. The "Devil's Canyon" meteorite had pulverised on impact and the fragments had been scattered, so Kulik now looked for any debris in the south swamp. He wrote;

*"The area is strewn with dozens of peculiar flat holes varying from several metres to tens of metres across and several metres also in depth. The sides of these holes are usually steep, although flat sides are also encountered; their base is flat, mossy, marshy, and with occasional traces of a raised area in the centre."*

Due to their depleted provisions there was no time for the team to investigate any further so they set off on the return journey living off the land until they got back to Vanovara. On the way back to Leningrad, Kulik vowed to lead another expedition and find the meteorite debris in the pits, but what he didn't know was that these pits were a common occurrence in the Taiga, apparently caused by ice rising to the top of the peat and melting.

On his return he told of the mass devastation that he had seen, and the Academy of Sciences agreed to finance a further expedition which was joined by the eminent cameraman Strukov from Sovkino, but this second trip seemed to be doomed from the start: Kulik's raft overturned in the rapids and he was almost swept away by the strong current, a moment that Strukov caught on film, as well as other tricky crossings full of slipping feet and near over balancing, the difficulty of working under mosquito veils and the sweeping panoramic views, Strukov seemed to catch every important moment on film, a film record we still have today. Several members of the team fell ill suffering from boils and vitamin deficiencies and were forced to return early. Equipment used to look for iron meteorite traces in the pits failed to provide convincing results, and Kulik returned empty handed, apart from Strukov's film footage of course, and it was this footage that would again convince the Academy Of Sciences to fund yet another expedition. On this third trip Kulik and his team dug trenches and pumped out the pits up to a depth of 118 feet in places, but these excavations would not provide a single trace of a meteorite despite the team staying there for the summer of

1929, through the winter, and into 1930.

The cold weather saw Krinov, the expeditions Deputy leader, lose a toe to frostbite on a trek back to collect supplies, and another man fell prey to appendicitis. The team were by now beginning to think that their excavation of the holes was futile as all other meteorite strikes had yielded the kind of fragments they were searching for, yet despite all of their efforts they had found nothing. One pit was found to contain a tree stump at its base, proving that it could not be a meteorite crater, and Krinov's photograph of this was kept hidden from Kulik, who was by this time a man obsessed in his hunt for a meteorite, and who would consider no other possibility.

He was also further frustrated by the fact that an aerial view of the area was beyond the logistical capabilities of the day, and yet again he returned to Petrograd empty handed, with no physical trace of the meteorite that he was so adamant had caused the blast.

Tragically the Soviet Union now fell under a "dark era" known as "The Great Terror" where literally everybody came under threat of denunciation, exile or execution as Stalin took out his vengeance on the Bolsheviks. They were removed along with senior members of the Red Army and thousands of old party members until, in 1937, Stalin had removed all opposition to himself and Kulik was once again safe to set out for the south swamp for the fourth time. This time however Kulik got his aerial survey and scientists were fully able to assess the vastness of the damaged area. They found that the devastation was spread over 770 square miles (2,000 square kilometres) yet they noticed something that Kulik could not have failed to do, but he clearly did not attach as much significance to it as he should have done. In the middle of the devastated forest were a large number of trees left standing, though they had been stripped of their branches by a down ward blast.

They also found that there had been two blast waves, first the explosion itself and then a ballistic wave, followed by fierce but short lived fires and some flash burning. What they did not find was any sign of an impact, that something had actually hit the ground, and this, combined with Kulik's lack of success at the scene, seemed to show that it could not have been a meteorite that had caused the explosion and the ensuing damage. A curious discovery was that the trees in the area seemed to show in their rings a period of accelerated growth shortly after 1908, in some cases up to twelve fold, while other trees in that part of Siberia did not.

For a second time the mystery had to take a back seat while Europe fought World War Two, and despite being over 50, Kulik volunteered to fight as Hitler's forces moved ever closer to Moscow, in fact reaching its suburbs. In the fighting Kulik was wounded, captured and died, as did many of those who had accompanied him on his trips to Tunguska, and the war ended with an event that was decidedly tragic, yet ironically would serve to kick start the Tunguska investigation and throw new light on what the scientists had found. That event was of course the dropping of the bomb "Little Boy" on Hiroshima. Scientists could now see a distinct comparison between the damage done at Hiroshima and the damage done at Tunguska all those years earlier.

American observers noticed that right at the blast's very epicentre there had been relatively little damage done to the buildings of Hiroshima and some remained standing like the trees at the south swamp - upright yet hit by a downward blast - and also the trees that survived the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima showed a period of accelerated growth after 1945, and this was evident in the rings in their trunks which are much closer together than usual. In addition to that, both sets of trees also showed more damage on the side nearest to the blast while remaining relatively undamaged on the other. It was now that the eye witness accounts from Siberia took on a whole new meaning; "a flame that cut the sky in two" and "a pillar of smoke." Had these been the first ever recorded sightings of a nuclear explosion and its resulting mushroom cloud?

The Russian scientists already knew that the Tunguska cloud must have reached high up into the atmosphere because it was seen from so far away, but they did not expect to find that it had been up to 1,000 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb. Perhaps this is an exaggerated estimate, but only 18 square miles of Hiroshima were flattened compared to the 770 square miles at Tunguska. The similarities were too close to ignore but surely Tunguska could not have been a nuclear explosion because nobody in the world had nuclear technology in 1908, and in fact it was July 1945 before Dr. Robert Oppenheimer's atom bomb was exploded at Almagordo, New Mexico. The first wartime atomic bomb was that at Hiroshima, and there are surely no nuclear explosions in nature without man's intervention, but still the evidence for it kept on surfacing. The reindeer at Tunguska suffered burns, but were these the same as those suffered by the cattle at New Mexico when the dust



clouds from the atomic tests hit them? When Russian, American and British H-Bombs were tested in the 1950s it was noticed that they produced extraordinary aurora lights on the opposite side of the earth and disturbances in the ionosphere.

In 1908 the British explorer, Ernest Shackleton, was in the Antarctic at the magnetic opposite of the earth to Siberia, and he was camped by the volcano Mount Erebus where both he and his team remember witnessing an extraordinary display of aurora lights though they did actually occur both before and after the explosion. Dr. Nikolai Vasilieyev of Tomsk University says that he knows of no phenomenon other than a nuclear blast that produces these effects at magnetic opposites.

Using the recent evidence obtained from Hiroshima, Nagasaki and other test sites to make a statement that would seem to put Kulik's meteorite theory to bed once and for all, they were able to conclude that the explosion over the south swamp had been an "air burst," that is, whatever had caused the blast had exploded above the ground rather than on impact with it. They concluded that it had taken place at an altitude of 5 miles (8 kilometres) and armed with all these new findings the first expedition since World War Two set out in 1958, by which time it was possible to fly to Vanovara, but from there it was still necessary to use the precarious boats and reindeer for the journey's final leg. By the time the team reached the site they found that nature had been trying to recover for 50 years and the new trees that Kulik had seen hidden beneath the snow were by now fifty years old, but despite this new growth the devastation could still be seen clearly.

The 1961 and 1963 expeditions were led by the geophysician, Dr. Alexsai Zolotov, who came to the conclusion that the explosion had been a nuclear one, but the post war trips yielded some samples that Kulik and his team had failed to find. These samples were tiny particles that were found both buried in the soil and embedded into the trees. They were packed and sent back to be analysed and they were found to be extra-terrestrial, being made up of magnitite and silicate, but the magnitite contained too much nickel to be from the earth. Also recovered by Zolotov and his team were other elements seldom found on earth such as ytterbium.

Expeditions to the scene have since been led by Dr. Vasilieyev, and at the site he has been investigating what he terms as "electromagnetic chaos," geophysical and biological effects that are not characteristic of meteorite

falls. He says that;

*"There have been the most violent genetic changes, not only in plants but in the small insect life. There are ants and other insects quite unlike anywhere else. Some of the trees and plants just stopped growing. Others have grown many times, many hundreds per cent faster than they were doing before 1908."*

Vasilieyev also says that there have been no unusual levels of radiation found, while others say that radiation levels were high. However, these tests weren't done until 1960, and the now evident radiation could be due to Russian atomic tests done during the 1950s and 60s, but he does say that there was an electromagnetic storm of huge proportions. Former expedition leader Zolotov feels that there are only two possible explanations for an object exploding in mid air, and they are;

1. because of energy from within the object itself.
2. from natural energy caused by its movement.

From these two possibilities he concludes that it was a nuclear explosion caused by an artificially made object, and he disagrees with a theory that was first put forward in the 1930s, but ridiculed at the time for being too far-fetched. It was the theory of an Englishman, Frank Whipple, and it was that for the first time in recorded history the earth had been hit by a comet. Zolotov says that this cannot be the case because the object was moving far too slowly to be a comet. He says that if it had been moving at a speed great enough to cause an explosion due to its movement, in theory at 30 kilometres per second and with a mass of 1,000,000 tons and 100 kilometres across, it would have left a long streak of damage through the forest 100 kilometres wide before it exploded. Zolotov is not alone in thinking that the object was an artificially made one as there are many people who believe that what exploded was an extra-terrestrial aircraft, a flying saucer.

The main evidence for this theory was the eye witness accounts, but there is some confusion about these accounts themselves. There were two distinct groups of witnesses, and these two groups each say that they saw the fiery object flying on different trajectories. It was deduced from various accounts that the object had entered the earth's atmosphere and become

visible somewhere over Lake Baykal and then travelled from south east to north west as it plunged towards the earth. It was during this descent that it was believed to have changed direction. Aerodynamics expert A. Y. Monoskov analysed many accounts about the flight path and the subsequent explosion, and came to the conclusion that it had performed a 375 mile arc and had slowed down, but more importantly it had altered course twice.

This evidence was picked up on by Ufologists who said that obviously it was no meteorite or comet but a craft of some kind, and they say that the samples found at the site are not consistent with meteorite falls and match no matter found on earth. Ufologist and investigative author on Roswell, Kevin Randle, asked a friend of Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Dr. James Van Allen, about the traces of Caesium 137 found at the site, and Van Allen blamed them on Russian Atomic tests, he then asked him if a comet could slow down or alter course twice, Van Allen said that it couldn't but neither could a space craft in distress. However, it turned out that no eye witness had actually seen the object changing course despite over 700 giving their account.

The two groups of witnesses were where the confusion arose because those in the western area apparently saw the object on a different trajectory to those witnesses in the Baykal area, but this fact seems to have escaped people like Zolotov who insist that the craft must have vapourised and left behind only the tiny globules of magnetite and silicate.

The damage done to the forest around the epicentre did not spread out evenly in a circular shape when viewed from the air as it should have been with a normal explosion but was more elongated, as was the object described by some witnesses, i.e. cylindrical or pillar-like. Most importantly they say that it was moving far too slowly to be a celestial body, possibly as slowly as 1 kilometre per second which is no faster than some military aircraft, and they say that if it was a nuclear powered craft, all the other anomalies found in the south swamp would be explainable. The Ufologists have even come up with a reason for why the craft was here, they say that it must have been low on water supplies and was heading for the largest body of fresh water in the world, Lake Baykal.

There was clearly no shortage of theories, and in 1973 came the strangest to date. A. A. Jackson and M. P. Ryan of the Centre for Relative Theory at the University of Texas said that the earth must have been hit by a black hole, and they even formulated mathematical calculations to show that

the black hole would have passed straight through the earth and come out on the other side somewhere in the Atlantic between Iceland and Newfoundland. Despite scouring Icelandic and Newfoundland newspapers and ship's logs, no reports of any unusual activity could be found, but could a black hole have actually caused what is now known to have been an air burst? If it couldn't, then could the anti matter theory of Clyde Cowan and Hall Crannell of the Catholic University at Washington, and C. R. Atluri and W. F. Libby of the University of California explain it instead?

Anti matter is the exact opposite of matter, and destroys matter whenever they come into contact with one another. It is believed that anti matter may exist out in the depths of the universe, and again calculus came to the rescue of a struggling theory. There was one however, that not even advanced mathematics could rescue, and that was one printed in the previously respectable Leningrad newspaper "Svesda" in March 1964, and the article was written by Genrich Altov and Valentina Sureleva, who said that the eruption of Krakatoa had sent a blast of radio waves shooting far out into space, and that some intelligent beings in the constellation of Cygnus had received these radio waves and had mistaken them for an attempt at communication. They then sent back a message of their own in the form of a laser signal that was far too strong and damaged the earth, but not surprisingly this doesn't explain the fiery object, the air burst, or the samples found at the site.

Dr. Vasilieyev and Professor Dolgov (who examined the samples taken by Vasilieyev) say that the evidence points most likely to the blast being caused by a comet as they have found large amounts of Hydrogen, a typical cosmic element, and large amounts of carbon dioxide which seems to make up the heads of comets in its frozen state, and they have also found methane which is yet another component of comets.

Comets are one of the most fascinating of all celestial bodies and are believed to come from a huge cloud of comets around the edge of the solar system called the Oort cloud. They are a mixture of ice and dust which fly around the solar system on an elliptical orbit and for most of their journey they are invisible to us until they get near to the sun which begins to melt them. This melting creates a cloud of gas and dust around them, and this cloud is then blown by solar winds into a long tail which always points away from the sun even if the comet is travelling in that direction.

The solid part in the comet's centre is called the nucleus and this is usually under 6 miles (10 kilometres) across. The cloud is called the head, or the coma, and this can be up to 600,000 miles (1,000,000 kilometres) across, but the tail can be hundreds of millions of miles long. The dust that the comets leave behind as they melt near the sun is the cause of meteor showers as the earth passes through this dust which gets burned up in the Earth's atmosphere. The smaller particles are burned up and are known as meteors and those that don't burn up completely and make it through to earth's surface are called meteorites.

The first question is could a comet or meteorite enter the earth's atmosphere and plummet toward the earth without being noticed until just before it exploded? Secondly could the explosion create the effects of a nuclear blast like those at Tunguska?

We need only look at the battered surface of our own moon to see that there are many collisions in space, so obviously a comet could come into contact with a planet and it is widely believed that it is just such an impact that may have brought about the downfall of the dinosaurs 60 million years ago, but our atmosphere protects us from many potential catastrophic collisions by burning up or deflecting possible "invaders," whereas the moon, which has little or no atmosphere, is littered with many craters where it has been hit by meteorites in the past. It is possible that the asteroid belt, found between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, is the remains of a planet that was destroyed by an impact deep in history that broke it apart.

Hughes and Brown say that, contrary to popular belief, nuclear effects can be reproduced naturally as it happens regularly during solar flares. They say that a comet could explode when it meets a mass of air equal to its own mass, and this explosion would be similar to a solar flare producing radio activity. The clouds of dust created during the explosion would spread out around the earth and reflect the sun's light thus creating the bright nights experienced around the world in 1908.

This theory is the favourite of most scientists, but could a comet with a coma of many thousands of miles across have approached, however close to the sun's glare, undetected? The fact is that it could do if it approached in the day sky on the sunward side of the earth. Two British scientists, John Brown of Glasgow University and David Hughes of Sheffield University, say that if a comet approached the earth from low in the dawn sky it would be very

difficult to detect, and they quote the example of the comet "Mrkos" which had rounded the earth and was heading away from us before it was eventually spotted.

Before the advent of radio astronomy we were unaware that there were streams of undiscovered meteors because they were hidden in the daytime sky. The best example of such a meteor stream is the one first discovered by Lowell in 1947, the  $\beta$  Taurids, (Beta Taurids) and what is interesting about the  $\beta$  Taurids is that the earth passes through them every year on June 30th (the day of the Tunguska explosion) and in 1908, shortly after the Tunguska explosion, Japan experienced an unusually high meteorite fall, so obviously some of the meteors in the  $\beta$  Taurid stream had entered the earth's atmosphere. Surely then one of them must have been responsible for the blast at Tunguska. There are two things we can learn from this case, and they are that:

1. Comets and meteors may have a much closer link with one another than we previously thought.
2. That this catastrophe could happen on any June 30th.

All that we can do is hope that when rather than if it happens again, it does so over some other remote area of the planet, and once again does not take even a single life.

## UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Before we can examine the evidence for and against U.F.O.s, we must first rid ourselves of the popular misconceptions associated with them. A U.F.O. is just that, an Unidentified Flying Object, any object in the skies whose identity is unknown. It may after investigation turn out to be nothing more interesting than a weather balloon, a hot air balloon, a jumbo jet or even an unusual cloud formation, but at the first sighting though, people are reluctant to label them as a U.F.O. despite this being exactly what it is, the misconception being that to do so would be admitting to the existence of “little green men” and “flying saucers.”

Is their reluctance to do this a sign of healthy skepticism or is it just plain ignorance? What we must bear in mind when looking at the following cases of U.F.O.s is that we are talking about something which may have a perfectly reasonable explanation such as a balloon or terrestrial aircraft, but there are those where no such rational explanation is forthcoming at the present time, maybe in the future these cases will also become identified flying objects, but until we know for sure what we are talking about, we must refer to them as U.F.O.s.

U.F.O.s have been around for a long time and we can trace their history right back to the early days of man's existence on the planet, indeed when the first men saw for example the sun, moon and stars, they too would have been U.F.O.s, and as man learned more and more about the world he lived in, they would become identified and no longer considered a thing of mystery. This may well happen in the future to some of the current cases we have on file as we are still learning about our surroundings and will continue to do so in the

future. If we take a look at some of the early reports of U.F.O.s we can see one common denominator, that the people of the time describe them as things which are in the grasp of their technology and within the scope of their experience.

For example the earliest recorded sighting of a U.F.O. dates right back to 1450 BC, it was described as a circle of fire in the sky with no head, and the breath from its mouth had a foul odour. Over the following days there were more of them in the sky, one of the witnesses was the reigning Pharaoh Thutmose III. These sightings would most probably have been taken as a sign from the gods, and let us not forget that there are many who say that the star of Bethlehem was in fact a U.F.O. and not just a mere star brighter than all the others moving across the night sky.

There are many records of sightings of U.F.O.s by the Romans, but unfortunately the records weren't written until many years after the sightings occurred. The descriptions are of a spark which falls from a star to the earth growing to the size of the moon before shrinking again as it returns to the sky. Other sightings are described as daylight in the night sky, or "night suns." Roman sightings from around the fourth century are of "ships in the sky" over Italy, and an Indian record from before 500 BC talks of machines. Obviously they were a common enough occurrence to be given a name, and that name is "Vimanas" which were said to be able not only to fly but to be controlled by pilots.

In the twelfth century in England a group of French churchmen saw, in Christchurch, Hampshire, a dragon coming up out of the sea breathing fire, additionally some modern U.F.O. reports describe U.F.O.s as coming up out of the sea. Also in the same century, again in England at St. Osyth, Essex a dragon was seen to rise up and leave fire behind it in the air and burn a house and its outbuildings to ashes. Just as dragons in medieval times were a mythical creature said to be able to fly, so as time moves on the description of U.F.O.s also moves on and the technology now becomes more advanced. A feature of U.F.O.s is that as we advance in our own knowledge, so too do they but on a parallel course, yet always marginally ahead of us, always remaining on the verges of our understanding, never leaping too far ahead to leave us behind but likewise never too slowly to allow us to catch up, and where they were once described as dragons able to fly, they then become known as balls or rings of fire, often seen to be spinning such as the ones



witnessed by many people over the former capital of Japan, Kyoto which were seen in 1606 and were said to be hovering over Nijo Castle. As time moves on again they become known as aircraft able to fly faster and faster and with more agility than our own aircraft.

Though the sightings of balls of fire continued, they now became various colours including black, blue and blue-red, later they diversified to cover discs, crosses and one case of two huge cylinders which were engaged in a battle over Nuremberg, Germany on April 4th, 1561. Another battle occurred just five years later over Basel, Switzerland on August 7th, 1566 this time between two black sphere shaped objects.

A marked change began to occur around the end of the seventeenth century, at the time known as “The Age Of Reason,” where people were looking at the skies in a different light, and with a more “logical” and “scientific observation.” On December 9th, 1731 Thomas Short described a dark red cloud which had intense beams of light underneath it that moved around slowly before stopping. He then describes how hot the air became and, though it was winter, he was able to comfortably remove his shirt.

A sighting over Kilkenny, Ireland and one over Romania were described as a meteor even though the Romanian meteor split into two halves and then reformed back into one. The Romanians took this to be a sign, whereas elsewhere it was referred to as a meteor. As technological developments were made by man, his inventions were often mistaken for other things until people came to know them and know what they were. In the nineteenth century, as airships became a more and more common form of transport they were frequently mistaken, and people described seeing cigar shaped objects which seemed to be carrying something beneath them. Reports even described how sometimes the craft would land and human type figures would emerge from them. As rockets and missiles entered into service these too were often mistakenly identified, and reports came flooding in from many countries including Sweden, Greece, Portugal and Belgium.

Slowly over time we have found that a lot of cases can be identified and explained away by what now seems like obvious explanations. There are however many which we have not explained and are still classed as U.F.O.s. What we must now try and do is not only try to answer the question what are U.F.O.s, but also the question where do they come from? We can only do one at a time though, and we will look at many sightings and close encounters, all

will share at least one characteristic even if it is only that whatever occurred is certainly very strange.

There were frequent sightings of U.F.O.s during World War 2, for example on December 13th, 1944 the Associated Press reported strange silvery balls flying over the western front and said that they could be German allies from space. American bomber pilots often saw these “strange craft” over the Pacific so regularly that they made up a nickname for them. They called them “Foo Fighters.”

The “modern” era of flying saucer reports began with a vengeance in 1947 in America. On June 24th of that year Kenneth Arnold, a private pilot, had an experience which was to change his life and begin for him what became a fascination with U.F.O.s and would inspire him to co-write a study of U.F.O.s with Ray Palmer called “The Coming Of The Saucers” which was published in 1952. It is Arnold who was inadvertently responsible for the term “Flying Saucer” which was taken out of context by a reporter from his interview after seeing several U.F.O.s over Washington States Cascade Mountains on the East coast of America.

Arnold was an experienced pilot and part time Deputy Sheriff, he was also a member of the Idaho Search and Rescue Mercy Flyers and Flying Deputy for the Ada County Aerial Posse. He was flying over the mountain range in search of a lost military C46 transport plane which had crashed in the area with thirty two men on board, and for which the military had offered a five thousand dollar reward for the person or persons who could locate it. In particular Arnold was in the area of Mount Rainier at about 9,200 feet when, during a 180 degree turn, “a tremendously bright flash lit up all the surfaces of my aircraft.” His first thought was that he was about to collide with another aircraft, but the only other aircraft he could see though was a Douglas DC4 Airliner which he assumed was on its way to San Francisco, and he wasn't even close to it. His next thought was that it had been the sun until he saw another flash and saw where it had come from. Flying to his left, very close to the mountains were nine bright objects over Mount Baker. Arnold first took them for aircraft flying in formation, but he could see no tails on them and he estimated that they were about a hundred miles away from him and flying across his own flight path. Using his own instruments and Mount Rainier and Mount Adams as markers he calculated that they were travelling in excess of 1,700 mph. No aircraft around at this time could fly at anything

approaching this speed, in fact in that same year the sound barrier (750 mph) was broken for the first time by a jet aircraft. Arnold knew that these were like no other aircraft he had ever seen before because of the way he flew. He said that: "They flew in a definite formation but erratically.... their flight path was like speed boats on rough water, or similar to the tail of a Chinese kite that I once saw blowing in the wind." He also said that they were "tipping their wings alternately and emitting those very bright blue-white flashes from their surfaces" though he thought that the flashes weren't actually from the aircraft, but rather "the sun's reflection from the highly polished surfaces of their wings."

After his encounter with the craft, Arnold landed at Yakima where he discussed it with other pilots, and then left to fly back to his starting point at Pendleton, Oregon. It was there that Arnold described the craft as "Flying like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water." A journalist, Bill Becquette, got this mixed up and coined the phrase "Flying Saucer." It was also at Pendleton where Arnold again calculated, this time with other pilots, just how fast the craft had been travelling. However conservative they were in their calculations they couldn't get the speed below 1,350 mph.

These were by no means the only such sightings of similar craft at the time, let's not forget that the events at Roswell, New Mexico occurred less than two weeks later. In April a meteorologist who was tracking a weather balloon saw an object shaped like a saucer fly past it. On May 5th over Washington, a silvery object was seen falling from the sky and disintegrated before it hit the floor. On June 12th another formation was seen over Weiser, Idaho by another pilot by the name of Rankin, only this earlier sighting was made up of ten craft, as opposed to Arnold's nine, and a later sighting by yet another pilot flying over Nevada was of nine or ten craft. Could these have been the same ones that Arnold saw?

There may have been another witness to Arnold's sighting, as around the same time a prospector in the Cascades saw his compass needle going haywire as he was looking at a group of U.F.O.s in the sky. No fewer than 850 reports of U.F.O. sightings were received between June and mid-July of 1947 by the U.S. authorities from all over the United States and this sparked action from the U.S.A.F. who, in September 1947, wrote to J. Edgar Hoover stating that they had checked all the current Army, Navy and Air Force secret projects to see if any of them could be responsible for the spate of U.F.O.

sightings but they had found nothing. One incident which happened on January 7th, 1948 near Godman Base, close to Fort Knox, Kentucky would again wake the military up to the seriousness of the situation.

Captain Thomas Mantell was flying the leading plane of a group of P51 fighters who were on a training mission when they were scrambled to investigate a U.F.O. that had been reported by a number of nearby residents. As they approached the official altitude limit for their aircraft, which had no oxygen cylinders for the pilots, all but Mantell gave up the chase, and he radioed in to the tower to say that he could “see something above and ahead of me, and I'm still climbing.” He described the craft by saying “It looks metallic and is tremendous in size and appears to be moving about half my speed.” Still pursuing it he said to the tower “It's above me and I'm gaining on it. I'm going to 20,000 feet.” He was at 22,000 feet when he last called the tower. Mantell was last seen at 3:15pm continuing to climb. His body and disintegrated plane were found later that day ninety miles from Godman Base, his watch had stopped at 3:18pm, due to his altitude and the lack of oxygen he would have blacked out. The official line on the matter was that Mantell, a skilled veteran pilot, had gone to his death chasing the planet Venus.

Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, Chief of Project Blue Book from 1951 to 1953, wrote a book called “The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects” which was published in 1956, in it he said that at the time of Mantell's encounter the planet Venus would not have been visible, and this, in addition to rumours that he had been shot down by a U.F.O., sparked the military to change their minds and say that after reconsidering the evidence the altitude, size and speed of the craft, what Mantell had actually been pursuing was a weather balloon. This incident in 1948 was to herald the birth of “Project Sign” whose objectives were to examine and evaluate the many U.F.O. reports and to try and determine whether or not the sightings were of extra-terrestrial craft.

Another key figure in those early days of U.F.O. mania was George Adamski. Adamski was born in 1891, and was moved to America aged 2 when his family emigrated from Poland. He became interested in astronomy and wrote fictional stories about space travel, many of which he had rejected when he tried to get them published. In the 1950s he lived near the Mount Palomar observatory in California, and he would spend many hours watching

the night sky through his own 15 inch binoculars and 6 inch reflector telescope which he had set up at his home. Adamski believed that the other planets in our solar system were inhabited, and he became convinced of this one night when watching a meteor shower on October 9th, 1946. He and several friends saw a “large black” “space craft” hovering above the ridge to the south of Mount Palomar. Every night after this sighting, Adamski sat up waiting to see another U.F.O. and between 1950 and 1952 he took a number of photographs of some of the craft he saw. Some of them he took through his telescope.

His new found fame enabled him to begin giving lectures on U.F.O.s and extra-terrestrials and it was through this that he heard rumours of U.F.O.s landing in the deserts of California. So on November 20th, 1952 Adamski and his secretary, Mrs. Lucy Mckinnis, and Mrs. Alice K. Wells met up with Mr. and Mrs. Al C. Bailey and Dr. and Mrs. George H. Williamson on the road near Blythe, California, and they all went into the desert in the hope of seeing a U.F.O. land. Adamski chose the day at random but said he had a hunch as to the best spot in which to lie in wait.

As the group ate lunch, or shortly after they had finished, they saw what they had come to see, a huge, silver, cigar shaped object with no apparent means of levitation or propulsion. The craft then travelled towards them and stopped. Adamski was adamant that the ship had come to see him but felt that they were too close to the road for the ship to land, so the group moved on to a dirt track and drove into the desert while all the while the ship followed them. They stopped when Adamski found a suitable spot and set up his equipment having brought his telescope and camera. He felt however that he would stand a better chance of making contact if he were alone and sent the others back out of the way, telling them to keep watching.

As they retreated the events were to be interrupted by the arrival of several military planes which tried to circle the aircraft. At this point the craft shot upwards out of sight, the planes left and Adamski waited.

After some time there was a bright flash and “a beautiful craft appeared to be drifting through a saddle between two of the mountain peaks.” The craft settled on a ridge and was photographed by Adamski, some minutes later a figure appeared and beckoned to him so Adamski apprehensively made his way toward it.

He described the figure as having long blond hair which blew in the

wind, the figure was 5 feet 6 inches tall, about 135 pounds and apparently male. Its skin colour was like a sun tanned Caucasian's, the face was round with a high slightly slanted forehead and cheeks and it had calm green eyes and a finely chiseled nose. "He" was wearing a brown one piece jump suit with no visible signs of zips or fasteners, no pockets, a broad waist band and a high tight collar. His shoes were red with blunt toes and the overall apparel gave a feeling of being a uniform.

It was as Adamski got nearer to the figure that he realised he was looking at a man from another world. Adamski claims the figure told him via signs and telepathy that he was from the planet Venus. He said that Venusians were worried because radiation from atomic bombs on earth would not only destroy life on earth but could also harm other planets as it made its way through space. He explained that the cigar shaped craft was the mother ship, and the craft he had come in was one of its scout ships which was powered by magnetism. He told Adamski that not only Venusians but other people from our solar system and beyond were visiting earth, some were in fact already living here among us undetected. Some craft had been shot down by earth craft and so they now only landed away from busy cities and towns, not only for this reason but also so that they wouldn't panic people. He declined to being photographed but allowed Adamski to take a closer look at the outside of his craft before climbing aboard and floating away.

Shortly after this encounter Adamski claims to have had a strong telepathic urge to visit Los Angeles and, on following this urge, he met two of the earth dwelling humanoids he had been told about. He says they took him into the desert and aboard a craft where he met more of their people and took part in debates with them.

The other witnesses to the first desert encounter who had been watching Adamski through binoculars all signed sworn affidavits to support Adamski's story, though later some of them changed their minds about what they had seen. Adamski however continued to go from strength to strength, now claiming to have been on the dark side of the moon and to Saturn where he also saw a population of humanoid figures. We must bear in mind that at this time we didn't know that all the planets in our Solar System could not support life but we did know as early as 1932 that Venus may not be able to support even low forms of life such as vegetation. Surely a keen astronomer like

George Adamski would have known this, and if making the story up would have chosen either another planet in our solar system or even a planet from beyond it.

We can see as time goes by and we get more tales of contact with aliens that they claim to come from further afield. Is it that because they have travelled further than other visitors they have taken longer to reach us? Is it because they can see that as we acquire more knowledge of the universe, they tell us that they come from places quite near us that we don't know, but can associate with, or is it that as our knowledge increases, hoaxers have to name planets further afield as the origin of life forms they have made contact with? Adamski's claims were by far the most outrageous at the time but history will show they are certainly not the only reports of contact. Over the ensuing years Adamski continued to take photographs of U.F.O.s and also wrote many books about his encounters with aliens and his trips in their craft. Many of his books became best-sellers and he made several television appearances making his name famous the world over, even touring Europe giving lectures on ways of the Venusians. There are tales that he even met Pope John XXIII on May 31st, 1963 though of course the Vatican deny this meeting.

Adamski produced some more pictures of alien craft, this time though they were different from his usual material. They showed craft with apparently three ball shaped protuberances in a triangular formation on their underside, and very similar craft to these were reportedly seen in England at around the same time. One in the Lake District at Coniston in 1954, one by a family in Warrington, Cheshire and also one as recently as 1987 in Rochdale, Lancashire, but despite these and other corroborating sightings, by 1965 Adamski wasn't without his critics. Many claimed that his photographs were nothing more than "crude fakes" using small models, and as his stories became more and more outlandish people began to doubt his credibility, and his trips around the moon over wooded valleys and snow-capped mountains began to stretch the realms of the imagination a little bit too far. His tales of inhabited planets in our own solar system were proved impossible even before his death in April 1965 and, but for his photographic evidence, Adamski would have been made a laughing stock far sooner, though the many cigar and saucer shaped objects have been compared to many household objects such as lampshades, chicken feeders and vacuum cleaner accessories. If this wasn't bad enough, Adamski's accounts were found to

have been adapted from his early rejected fictional material and he blamed President Roosevelt's economic policies in the 1930s for his predicament, he said that: "If it hadn't been for Roosevelt, I'd never have had to get into saucers."

Another key figure in the history of U.F.O.s, so far dominated by Arnold and the outcast Adamski, was a man with very real experience in the matter of space and astronomy, rather than being self-taught like Adamski, he was a university astronomer and in the late 1940s was offered a post which he gladly accepted as a government consultant on Project Sign. He was Dr J. Allen Hynek (1910 - 1986). His position with the government required him to examine literally thousands of U.F.O. cases and he was then, and still is today, considered to be the world's leading authority on U.F.O.s. His book "The Hynek U.F.O. Report" was published in 1977, four years after he founded the "Centre For U.F.O. Studies" whose "Journal of U.F.O. Studies" and "International U.F.O. Reporter" are widely respected the world over. He also accepted an invitation to appear in the Steven Spielberg film "Close Encounters Of The Third Kind" a film based on many accounts of encounters with aliens and alien craft, in it Hynek played a cameo role as a scientist whose beard is stroked by one of the aliens.

Hynek looked at U.F.O.s in a scientific way and eventually became convinced that U.F.O.s were not a figment of the imagination or a whimsical phenomenon but that they had a very real cause. Project Sign was soon to collapse, in 1949, and was ridiculed by the United States Air Force (U.S.A.F.) as its conclusions were supported by the extra-terrestrial cause of U.F.O.s. Sign was replaced by "Project Grudge" which was itself succeeded by "Project Blue Book" which was, like its predecessors, based at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, and which ran until 1969 with Hynek still very much in the fore. The head of "Project Blue Book," Major Hector Quintilla Jr., said in a television appearance that the aims of the project were:

- To ascertain whether the U.F.O. phenomenon represents a threat to our security.
- To ascertain whether the U.F.O. phenomenon exhibits any technological advancements that could be used for research and development.



Project Blue Book was closed in 1969 after examining 3,201 cases and its verdict was that there was no threat and there was very poor data on the whole. Of those 3,201 cases each one was categorised and given a quality evaluation, and 21% of them were listed as unknown, this is quite apart from the 10% of cases that were listed as insufficient evidence. It was also found that the better the quality of evidence, the more likely the case would be listed as unknown yet, despite these figures, the Secretary of the Air Force said that “On the basis of the report, no object such as those popularly described as U.F.O.s have ever flown over the United States.”

Though Hynek was convinced that U.F.O.s had a very real cause, he himself doubted that that cause was extra-terrestrial and turned down an offer to advertise an American beer, of which he was a fan, as the script implied that this was the case. His own opinion circa 1984 reads:

*“It is far from certain that U.F.O.s represent a single phenomenon, despite the similarity in patterns of reports from all over the world... Perhaps I may intrude my own opinion on these matters, based on more than thirty years of study. I believe that the U.F.O. phenomenon is in some way directing us to consider an aspect of reality of which we have been hitherto largely unaware - an aspect, indeed, that may eventually be incorporated into our science and may prove to be of great value to the progress of mankind.”*

In 1981 in Chicago, Hynek said to the author Reuben Stone that he believed U.F.O.s were directed by some kind of intelligence, but “That intelligence may be our own.”

One of Hynek's sayings was that in investigating U.F.O.s, whenever you looked for an answer, you got a hundred questions instead. In 1973, well into his career as a U.F.O. “expert,” to aid himself and others in the categorisation of U.F.O. sightings and encounters, Hynek constructed the following “Richter scale” of the varying types of encounter, starting with the less intense encounters, and ending with multi-racial communication:

1. NOCTURNAL LIGHT - Any light seen in the night sky, unaccounted for by aircraft, astronomical bodies, meteors or any other rational explanations.
2. DAYLIGHT DISC - Any object seen in the daytime sky, such as discs,

cigar shapes, egg shapes or ovals.

3. RADAR VISUAL - A U.F.O. seen on radar, and witnessed simultaneously by the human eye.
4. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE FIRST KIND (C.E.I) - A U.F.O. seen within 500 feet of the witness.
5. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE SECOND KIND (C.E.II) - A U.F.O. which leaves marks on the ground, frightens animals, causes burns or paralysis, interferes with engines, television or radio.
6. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE THIRD KIND (C.E.III) - A sighting of the craft's occupants, as well as the craft itself.

Dr. Hynek was satisfied with these six categories and was reluctant to add any more, being skeptical about their existence outside the minds of the percipients. However he did add a further two categories as he felt unable to simply ignore the hundreds of reports of such incidents. He always described them as having “High strangeness.”

7. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE FOURTH KIND (C.E.IV) - The abduction of a human being for the purpose of intrusive and often embarrassing tests.
8. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE FIFTH KIND (C.E.V) - The communication of information between races.

Throughout his years of studying U.F.O.s, Hynek explains that the reason for the lack of scientific progress is the constant lack of funding for his work from the government. He adds “It is my contention that hard data may well have been present in many U.F.O. cases but their discovery and definitive establishment have repeatedly gone by default for lack of professional treatment.” He became convinced through his years on the various projects that the U.S.A.F. didn't want to explain things, just explain them away. However he didn't suspect a cover up, the impression he got was that “They just didn't care.” When Blue Book was wrapped up in 1969, Hynek was sure that there had been no real attempt to answer any fundamental questions.

One such case where Hynek would dearly have loved to have answered these questions is one where he was convinced that there was no hoax

involved and he wanted to find a natural explanation for it. It occurred on April 24th, 1964 at 17:45 and Hynek says that he is convinced that “a real physical event occurred.”

The encounter was experienced by thirty year old police officer Lonnie Zamora from Socorro, New Mexico who was on duty at the time and in pursuit of a speeding car. During the chase Zamora heard a loud roar and spotted blue flames in the sky. The flames were low and appeared to be coming from an area which Zamora knew contained a hut used for storing dynamite, so he gave up the chase and headed towards the flames.

As he neared the site he arrived at a deep gully from where he could see the flames rising up and hear the roaring sound which became lower and lower until it stopped completely, along with the flames. He could see an elliptical object which was apparently supported on legs. His first thought was that it was an overturned car and he called in on his radio for assistance with a 10-40 (an accident). He could now see two humanoid figures beside the craft, one of which turned to look at him in surprise. They were wearing one piece suits and he thought at first that they were children due to their small stature, and on spotting him they got back inside the craft. Still at this point inside the car and wearing sunshades over his glasses Zamora got out for a better look, as he did so he dropped his microphone and bent to pick it up. While he was bent down the roar started up again and he looked back toward the object and saw that the blue flames were coming from underneath it. As the craft rose he noticed that it had a red symbol on it but he could see no doors or windows. He prudently decided to keep the patrol car between himself and the craft which had now become silent and was moving away from both him and the hut at great speed. Zamora quickly sketched the insignia from the craft while it was still fresh in his mind.

He wasn't the only witness to the craft as many others had seen blue flames in the sky, though only two people, a couple, saw a craft of a similar description to Zamora's. It might also have been seen by Sergeant Chavez who had responded to the 10-40 put out by Zamora had he not taken a wrong turn. When he did arrive at the scene he found Zamora staring down into the gully at the smoldering brush and scrub. The two officers then walked down into the gully where they found that the bushes, though smoldering, did not feel hot. They also found four marks on the ground that had apparently been made by the legs of the craft. These marks have been found to have been

made by a heavy object, but to this day no such object has been identified, and the ground in the area and the four marks were devoid of traces of radiation, chemicals and exhaust gases. Chavez circled the indentation marks with stones to prevent them from being damaged until they could be examined properly, and by a stroke of luck an F.B.I. officer was in town that day on other business and both the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. became involved, and thus Hynek was called in.

It was Hynek who tracked down two witnesses who on that day had been travelling through the state and had remarked to the garage owner about the “low flying aircraft.” One of the men described seeing an egg shaped object emitting smoke, while the other just saw the smoke from the scrubland. It is interesting to note that it was fourteen years before Hynek managed to track down the two men, yet they could still recall the day with such clarity. This encounter wasn't only a favourite of Hynek's but also one which Major Hector Quintilla found to be more convincing than any other which he had looked at. A further comment from Hynek was that “Of all the C.E.IIs this is the one that most clearly suggests a nuts and bolts physical craft.” What is also interesting to note is that, following Zamora's encounter, White Sands acquired a further 883,910 acres of land, spreading North and East encompassing the Landing Site, possibly showing that the military wished to conceal something by not allowing further access to the site.

This isn't the only case where a number of witnesses saw a craft which landed and left evidence behind it. Passengers on a train near Padriesko, Moscow in 1984 saw a U.F.O. land near to the side of the track in a clearing. Tests done on the site later by a Biologist, Professor Yuri Simiakov, showed that this, like other similar sites, was completely devoid of life, even microscopic life, and that living creatures will not enter the area. Simiakov also found strange electromagnetic effects in spiral patterns, and curiously that time apparently speeds up in the area. When he tested the soil samples he had taken he found that they contained tiny spheres, and when these were analysed he found that they ranged from the unknown to common parts of filter systems.

Another multiple witness sighting, again in America though much later, is most interesting as it satisfies more than one of Hynek's categories. It occurred on October 10th 1990. At around 9pm of that day the residents of Skibo, Minnesota reported seeing lights in the sky (categories 1+2) over the

Hoyt Lakes area. Two police officers went to investigate and saw, as did others, numerous objects of “indeterminate shape.” The objects would hover before darting about and then stopping to hover again (category 2). Just over an hour after the objects were first reported the Federal Aviation Authority's air traffic controllers at Duluth, the nearest major airport to Skibo, confirmed that they were picking up radar echoes from the Hoyt Lakes area (category 3) and continued to monitor them for a further hour. They were also caught on radar (again category 3) by the local National Air Guard who saw between 3 and 5 objects intermittently in a roughly circular formation.

Another “professional” witness (category 2) was the pilot of a commercial aircraft at eleven thousand feet and he could see the objects forty five miles to the east of Hoyt Lakes. He reported seeing two unidentified lights at what he estimated to be 10,000 feet and he described them as a deep glowing red and they were a few miles apart. Checks carried out confirmed that there were no other aircraft in the area at the time. The radar echoes received by both Duluth and the National Air Guard cannot be explained away by any known weather conditions or atmospheric effects, and besides which no unusual such circumstances were witnessed at the time by those around Hoyt Lakes.

It was by now painfully clear that U.F.O.s were here to stay and the reports continued to flood in. The most common among sightings were, and still are, saucers, ovals, discs, eggs and cigar shapes. One particular cigar shaped object was witnessed by Adamski over his house, though no other witnesses were present. Another was either a triangular shape or as was later thought, a circular shape with a triangular formation of lights on the underside. Many photographs of such sightings are in existence, some more convincing than others, but lots of those which were at one time thought to be authentic photographic evidence have later been shown to be faked, and some of the methods used to produce fakes are more “crude” than others. The less convincing photographs, and most common among fakes, show just a blank patch of sky with the object somewhere in the frame. These are the most difficult of pictures to test for authenticity as there is nothing else in the frame to give us an idea of the scale of the object, it could either be a large object a long way away, or a small object very close. It is also difficult in these instances to get any real idea of effects of the light on any other objects to aid us determine for example the time of day, the colour of the object in

comparison to other objects such as trees or houses, the speed of the objects movement and whether it is dull or shiny. The most tricky to determine though is the size, as mentioned earlier, and there have been many cases of hoaxers photographing car hub caps and camera lens covers on pieces of string, one enterprising photographer who fooled the experts for many years, before finally admitting he had fooled them, had stuck small cardboard saucer shapes to the outside of his window and photographed them from the inside of the house.

The easier pictures to examine are those with objects in the foreground such as buildings, though even these can be difficult to determine, especially if the object is moving and therefore blurred in the frame. Even better now though is the advent of the video recorder and then the camcorder which, rather than giving a still frame picture, gives us a continuous moving picture with zoom lenses able to show wide angle shots with foreground and then zoom in for close up shots without stopping the film. The more modern cameras also show, usually in one corner of the picture, the date and the time of day to the second, enabling us to see whether or not it is one continuous shot or if the film has been tampered with. We can also use this to check whether or not there were any other terrestrial aircraft in the area at the time, if not then we couldn't be looking at an airship, a helicopter, a plane, a balloon or possibly even a cloud formation. If there were other aircraft in the area at the time then we could be looking at some such mundane object or better still we could be looking at a U.F.O. with more than one witness, one witness being an experienced pilot who was able to lend a "professional" opinion.

What is interesting about the more recent sightings is that we seem to get them in spates followed by a relative lull before we get yet another wave of sightings. Some of the waves of U.F.O. sightings we have seen have occurred in America both in the late 40s and early 50s and then again in the early 70s when the people of the southern states witnessed over a hundred in a week between October 11th and 18th. Over north and central Europe in October 1954, and again over Europe, in particular Belgium between November 1989 and March 1990, and shortly after this in Mexico from July 1991 for the remainder of that year. These particular sightings brought Mexico City to a standstill while everybody, including police, stood and watched, as did all of Mexico when the scenes were televised. Why we should get these waves

nobody has any idea but they do seem to be no accident, maybe aliens saturate an area until they attract too much attention and then move on to somewhere else.

The wave known as the “Gulf Breeze” sightings received massive publicity and were both praised and scorned by people who saw the many photographs taken of the craft seen between November 1987 and May 1988 at Lake Okobogee, Gulf Breeze, close to Pensacola Naval Air Station, Florida. The basis of the Gulf Breeze sightings was one man, Ed Walters, who claimed to have been abducted many times for the purpose of being constantly monitored by aliens who implanted a small probe in his skull, though when doctors looked for it with x-ray machines they couldn't find it. Under hypnosis he said that they had abducted him a final time to remove the probe and all traces of their ever being here as he had attracted far too much attention to them. Ed Walters was the main character in the spate of sightings but he wasn't the only witness to see U.F.O.s in the area over nearby Shoreline Park and Gulf Breeze, there were reports from hundreds of witnesses, one witness seeing up to 170 U.F.O.s. Though the majority of the sightings have been attributed to the local air base, others haven't. Walters came under close scrutiny because of the many photographs he took, and they would eventually appear to prove to be his downfall. Walters refused to do a television interview, or show his pictures for U.K. television, but they have been examined by many experts on the other side of the Atlantic.

The camera that Walters used for his first thirty or so pictures was a Polaroid 108 which is notoriously easy to double expose. It is possible to photograph an object against a plain background, and then take a photograph outdoors and the object will appear on the resulting exposure complete with background. Investigators have created shots very similar to Walter's in this way, however Dr. Bruce Maccabee is a government research physicist who has been researching extra-terrestrial intelligence for 25 years and he has computer analysed Ed Walter's photographs and he is satisfied that they are not fakes, but then again Maccabee is a believer in U.F.O.s and is the author of many scientific papers on them.

Investigative reporter Mark Curtis likens the Ed Walters case to the three strike rule in baseball, i.e. three strikes and you are out. Strike 1 was when a styrofoam model of a U.F.O. was found in the former home of Ed Walters. Strike 2 was when a man called Tommy Smith came forward and said that he

had witnessed Walters taking double exposure photographs, and strike 3 was when Curtis was able to recreate Walter's photographs using fraudulent methods.

There are many cases of people taking what may be a genuine spate of sightings and using them to gain notoriety for themselves, this happens not only in U.F.O. cases but in various other phenomenon as well, and it is a shame that the hoaxers seem to gain more attention than the apparently genuine ones who are seeing a truly puzzling phenomenon. Whether or not the other sightings at Gulf Breeze were of “flying saucers” or something else is not clear, but in the area at that time there were tests under way on what are known as U.A.V.s, (Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles), an airborne craft that was to be used for reconnaissance and secret observation, what we might call a drone today.

As plain old boring sightings were increasing, there were more interesting and more interactive encounters occurring, one such encounter took place on December 29th, 1980 when Betty Cash, Vickie Landrum and her seven year old grandson, Colby Landrum, were driving along Highway FM 1485 on their way home to Dayton near Houston, Texas after dining at nearby New Caney. After a while at around 9pm the car entered a pine and oak forest and Colby saw a bright light over the trees ahead of them which was looming larger and larger until it became what Vickie later described as “a diamond of fire.”

Betty stopped the car and the object hovered over the road about sixty yards in front of them, occasionally emitting a burst of flames and rising a little before returning to about twenty five feet off the ground. The three witnesses got out of the car to get a better look at it as the object was lighting up the trees and the road all around it. It appeared to be made of a dull rather than a shiny metal and had a row of blue lights around its centre. It would occasionally give off a beep and it was emitting a tremendous amount of heat. Vickie and Colby got back in the car at his request but Betty remained outside until the object rose and moved away. When she went to get back into the car she found the bodywork was hot to the touch, so hot in fact that she couldn't touch it with her bare hands. They heard a further noise from above and saw that it was a group of helicopters which seemed to appear from all directions and Betty thought that they were attempting to surround the object.

The three of them continued their journey for a further five miles and



could once again see the craft though only in the distance, surrounded by the helicopters of which they counted twenty three. Within the ensuing hours all three of the witnesses fell ill and developed “painful swellings and blisters.” They also suffered stomach pains and blinding headaches. Colby was covered in a sunburn like rash and Vickie's hair began to fall out and Betty's eyes swelled to the point that she couldn't see and was taken to hospital. Over a period of weeks all three had suffered some hair loss and sore eyes, and though their hair regrew it was different to the hair they had lost, and none of them ever returned to their former health. The doctors who treated them said that their symptoms were synonymous with high levels of electromagnetic radiation in the bands of ultra violet, microwave and x-ray.

The craft in this case appears to be similar to that witnessed by Zamora, and similarly both caused lasting effects on either the environment or the witnesses with the flames that emitted from its underside. What is also apparent is that the military wished to conceal both sets of events as local airfields, both civil and military, denied knowledge that any fleet of helicopters had used their facilities or showed on their radar.

Vickie believed that they had witnessed a craft either owned by, or pursued by, the military and attempted to sue the U.S. Government for 20 million dollars, but the case was dismissed as no craft matching the descriptions given by the witnesses is “owned by, operated by or in the inventory of either the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force or N.A.S.A.” What didn't come out in court was whether or not the military knew what the craft was, so despite the court case, the origin of it still remains a mystery.

Could it be a military craft? Could it be an alien craft pursued by the military? Or even more outrageously, but a belief more popular than ever among Ufologists, is that the military are aware the craft was alien and were trying to hide their knowledge of U.F.O.s, or better still their collusion with them.

It is not only the military in the U.S.A. who encounter U.F.O.s, but militaries elsewhere, a Russian pilot saw a light in the sky that was closing in on him, and it eventually made contact with his plane which then went into a steep dive. He managed to land safely and found that there was damage to the wing on his plane. There aren't as many reports from Russia about U.F.O.s as there are from other countries in the “free world” but there must have been many encounters such as this in the past above the former Soviet Union

because the authorities felt so strongly about them that they have implemented a “No Fire Policy.”

There was a momentous case that occurred around military installations in Britain, though the bases that the events occurred near are U.S. bases. The following case is considered to be a landmark case of U.F.O.s being experienced by the military, not only once but over a period of time. The events unfolded at Rendlesham Forest near Ipswich, Suffolk, and the case is now considered by many to be the equal of Roswell and the events that unfolded there.

Rendlesham Forest is near the U.S. bases R.A.F. Woodbridge and R.A.F. Bentwaters which are three miles apart, and the events occurred over several nights. Due to punch and counter punch the exact dates have become blurred, but the witnesses and their consistency, reliability and clarity seem very genuine and for this reason the case is considered as certainly the best to occur in Britain. In Edward Ashpole's “The U.F.O. Phenomenon” the case is given priority and is the sole topic of chapter one, a chapter called “The Best U.F.O. Report.”

At approximately 3am on December 27th, 1980 a bright light was seen by several villagers as it flew across the sky. It was also seen on radar by a British Base near Norwich and was lost to radar in the area around R.A.F. Woodbridge. Two U.S.A.F. security guards saw something come out of the sky and “drop” into the forest, so three patrolmen, including two sergeants, went out of the east gate at Woodbridge and entered the forest where they saw on the ground a bright luminous triangular shape, possibly a cone shape about 9 feet (3 metres) wide at the base and about 6 feet (2 metres) tall. The object lit up the surrounding forest with its bright light, and had a pulsating red light on top with blue lights at the base. It appeared to be either hovering or standing on legs, and as the three men approached it, it rose and moved through the trees toward a farm where it frightened the animals before quickly flying away. It was seen again about an hour later around the base's perimeter, though only briefly, and was also seen on radar by Bentwaters whose impression was that the object had crashed. The site in the forest was investigated the next morning at dawn and the men saw a hole through the tree tops where branches had been broken as if a heavy object had fallen from the sky. At the spot where the cone had been stationary were three indentations in the ground in a triangular formation. The area was also tested

for radiation and the levels were found to be highest around the marks in the ground.

Now is where the dates become confused as some say the next sighting was on the next night and others say it was two nights later, but whichever it was, the sighting was considered serious enough to disturb Colonel Charles Halt at a dinner party. Halt was then a Deputy Commander at the twin bases and was later promoted to Base Commander, a post he served for a further 4 years. He was told that the U.F.O. had returned.

Halt assembled an investigating team and they returned to the forest, taking with them equipment to record the events. Halt is heard on tape to mention a large sun-like object which seemed to drip smaller white lights from it which showed red, green and blue lights and that moved erratically through the sky. These objects caused distress to nearby animals and as the large one moved through the trees it was followed by the men. Every so often as they followed it a bright light would beam downwards from its underside and it appeared to pass straight through solid objects such as the trees and at one time a truck.

Several of the witnesses say they saw alien beings with large heads and big eyes which seemed to be suspended in mid-air beneath the craft inside the shafts of light. It also appears that at least one of the airmen suffered a loss of time and found himself elsewhere in the woods when he “came to.” The classic symptoms of an abduction case.

Another of the airmen, Sergeant Jim Penniston was one of those who went to investigate the first night's sighting and said later “The air was filled with electricity. You could feel it on your skin as we approached the object. It was about the size of a tank.... triangular in shape.” Colonel Halt said of the second nights encounter: “If we hadn't made the tape, even I would have trouble believing what happened that night.” As well as the tape Halt had erected huge floodlights called “lighttalls” but they failed to operate, as did the replacements they brought in, and also the walkie-talkies they were using.

Another of the witnesses present at Woodbridge was Larry Warren, whose military record was classified after his honourable discharge in 1981, and whose re-entry into the Air Force was barred as his record stated that he couldn't fully extend his right arm - a fact he says is simply not true. Warren says that the object just materialized out of an explosion of light rather than being seen to fly, and this is not the only case of such materializations of

craft, one sighting in August 1980 by a woman in Medway, Kent was of two humanoid figures inside a bubble which appeared out of a misty fog that emitted a sickly smell. What is interesting about this case is that, rather surprisingly, the details haven't been shrouded in mystery, rather the opposite, reports and statements issued by Halt have been made public, and even the tape recording of the nights events has been made available.

Conspiracy theorists speculate that, rather than admitting the existence of U.F.O.s, the authorities are making available a gamut of evidence which will confound and amaze the public into disbelief, thus ending the U.F.O. problem. Another less cynical explanation is that the authorities are fully aware of the existence and technology and are slowly but surely bringing this to the attention of the public rather than via a short sharp shock, so are we being fed information or misinformation?

What is interesting about the Rendlesham Forest case is the loss of time suffered by at least one of the airmen and the fact that they “came to” in another part of the forest with no recollection of how they had got there. As I said earlier, this is the typical scenario of an abduction case where the victims often later realise that a journey has taken them longer than it would normally do, or they have no memory of a particular part of the journey. More amazingly some people find strange marks on their bodies.

The first alien abduction case to become famous, though not the first to occur, is that which occurred on September 19th, 1961 to Betty and Barney Hill. The couple were driving through their home state of New England on their way home from a holiday near Niagara Falls, it was late at night and they had stopped for dinner before continuing their drive along Highway U.S. 3. They passed through a village called Lancaster and shortly afterward Betty noticed a bright light near the moon in the sky ahead of them. She told Barney about it and he told her it was probably just a satellite, but they continued to watch the light which continued to get brighter and brighter, and appeared to be keeping pace with the car and flying up and to the right of them. When Barney stopped the car he looked at the light through his binoculars and realised that it was no ordinary celestial body. They continued their journey once again and Betty became worried and considered spending the night in a Motel and returning home the next day. She carried on watching the object through Barney's binoculars while he drove and saw the object was “Like a big pancake” and was far too big to be a helicopter as

Barney had earlier thought and that it had two rows of windows around it. Barney again stopped the car and walked over a field to within a distance of 50 feet (15 metres) of the object and could now clearly see that it was occupied by at least a dozen beings which he thought were looking at him. He became frightened, as did Betty who could no longer see him, so he ran back to the car and leapt in driving away as fast as he could. They could hear beeping sounds like a microwave oven but could no longer see the craft and the car began to vibrate. They had a feeling of drowsiness come over them and as they continued their drive the drowsiness passed and they noticed a road sign which pointed to Concord 17 miles away, but Concord was 35 miles from where they had seen the U.F.O.

They drove all the way home that night and they arrived there without further incident, but the next morning Barney became angry with Betty when she kept on talking about the previous night, and Betty also found that their car had very shiny spots on it, as though somebody had polished parts of it. She even telephoned the Air Force and reported the incident to them, reluctantly Barney also spoke to them and they were told that a number of other witnesses had reported a U.F.O. in the area. Over the ensuing period Betty began to suffer from vivid nightmares and Barney's health also began to deteriorate, a fact they both connected with their close encounter.

Betty now became fascinated with U.F.O.s and began reading about them, she read a book by Major Donald Keyhoe called "The Flying Saucer Conspiracy" and even wrote to the author, relaying her experience to him. As a result of her letter she was visited by a lecturer who was on the staff of the Hayden Planetarium in Boston, Walter Webb, who was skeptical when he arrived, but left convinced that they were telling the truth, and that's what he told NICAP (National Investigations Committee) who then spoke to the Hills themselves, and it was during this interview that they realised that there was an unaccounted for period of time. They found that the journey had taken the Hills two hours longer than it normally would have done, even allowing for the time that they had briefly stopped. They also had no recollection of seventeen miles of the journey, so they returned to the site a number of times in order to try and remember what had happened to them there, but they found they had no recollection of it and try as they might they could not prompt their memories to recall it.

The Hills also told their story to a church discussion group in September

1963 and then decided to consult a well-known Boston psychiatrist, Dr. Benjamin Simon. In 1963 Barney began psychiatric treatment and was put under hypnosis, at which time he began to recant tales of alien abduction. Betty was also now hypnotically regressed, independently of her husband, and corroborated her husband's account of events. They both said that they had been forcibly taken aboard a space craft by grey humanoids with pear shaped heads and large eyes where they were given an intimate, and at times very embarrassing, medical examination. Betty was told that it was a pregnancy test which was performed by inserting a needle through her navel, a test not available to "Earthlings" in 1961. Such a device, a lamaroscope, a long, flexible tube containing fibre-optics, was developed about 10 or so years later as a way to test for Downs Syndrome in unborn babies via the amniotic fluid and for removing ova for fertilization as test tube babies. Betty was also given a guided tour of the craft and was shown a map of where the Alien's world was, and she was able to draw this map while under hypnosis.

The psychiatrist who performed the regressions, despite the very detailed accounts given by the Hills and the fact that at times during his regression Barney had to be restrained, isn't convinced that what they said under hypnosis is necessarily the true account of events, but merely what the Hills believe to be the truth. He says that it is highly possible that they did indeed encounter a U.F.O. and their abduction was a figment of their imagination possibly triggered by some unsettling incident during the journey. The fact that they both made up the same story is not surprising as they weren't regressed for a long time after the sighting and they both had read a great deal of material on U.F.O.s in that time and would have certainly talked to each other about both what had happened and what they had read. Interestingly, Barney had also watched an episode of the television series "The Outer Limits" which had featured an alien being who spoke using telepathy just days before he described one during a hypnosis session. The fact that they may have seen a real U.F.O. is backed up by Pease Air Force Base who tracked one on radar at the same time and place as the Hills encounter, and also there was the physical evidence left behind on their car, but more importantly the map that Betty Hill drew in 1963.

Using the map astronomers began to look for the star system in space and they reasoned that the majority of stars they felt could support life giving planets were located in the obscure southern constellation of "Reticulum,"

but three of the stars in that system were not discovered until 1969, and yet Betty Hill's map showed them clearly. Astronomers at Ohio State University used a computer to place the stars in the constellation in their correct positions, somewhere beyond the double star system of Zeta Reticuli one and Zeta Reticuli two. These are to be found 220 trillion miles, 37 light years from Earth, and the computer drew a map of them which was an almost exact replica of the map Betty Hill had drawn.

The Hills ordeal was transcribed in a book by John G. Fuller, and this started the abduction craze with many people now coming forward with similar claims that they too had been abducted. One famous case happened in 1975 to a logger called Travis Walton who was with six of his colleagues on their way home to Sholo, Arizona when they all saw a bright light through the trees. Walton got out of the truck and walked towards the light which now they could all see was a metallic saucer with spotlights beneath it. The craft was humming, almost below the threshold of hearing and was lighting up the forest around it. It started to move and Walton got down to hide behind a log as his colleagues began shouting at him to get back into the pickup truck. He turned to run back to it and as he did so he was hit in the chest area by a bluish beam of energy like a bolt of lightning and thrown through the air before falling back to the ground. Fearing Walton was dead, his colleagues drove quickly away and stopped a short distance down the track where they talked about what had happened and decided to drive back to find him, but when they got back to the spot where he had disappeared they could find no sign of him, and an organised widespread search of the area also failed to find him.

Travis says that he was taken aboard the craft and examined by alien beings with large heads and eyes, no hair and pale grey skin and he was so terrified that he screamed the whole time, which he felt was a couple of hours. He started swinging at them and they held their hands out to him and left the room, but standing in the doorway was a figure he took to be a man and he was led down a corridor into a room where there were other people like the man. He was laid down on a table and they covered his face, at which point he lost consciousness until he woke in the cold and dark, lay down with a light above him which then shot up into the sky. He found he was lying in the spot where he had been captured. Travis Walton had been missing for five days. Both he and his six colleagues have all stuck to their story for

twenty years, and have all taken, and passed, lie detector tests.

The aliens that people regularly began to describe as their abductors were all very similar, whereas those described by abductees before the release of John G. Fuller's book had all been markedly different. So if people are creating, be it intentional or not, stories of abduction it seems that they may be “borrowing” details from this and other sources. The many reports of abductions share common details, mostly those of lost or unaccounted for hours, medical tests and the taking of body samples, some even include accounts of inter species intercourse, and some abductees say that it has not only happened to them once but many times over a period of time, as though they are being continually monitored and examined.

The real problem with abduction cases is that they are only recalled under hypnosis, which is itself an unreliable and marginally understood phenomenon. The craze was again kick started in 1977/8, the year which saw the release of one of the most popular films of the time, Steven Spielberg's “Close Encounters Of The Third Kind” which was based on several real accounts of encounters with U.F.O.s and featured, as mentioned earlier, Dr. Hynek in a cameo role, and it seemed that plain old sightings were no longer big news and abduction was now the norm. The film began a spate of books and spin off films and got worldwide media attention and abduction now became such a problem, especially in the United States, that help groups were set up for the victims. It seems that every day another victim comes forward, and a recent survey found that 10% of Americans believe they have at least seen a U.F.O., but then again another survey found that 17% of American students would hit themselves in the face for fifty dollars.

It is believed among abduction circles that the phenomenon has been around for centuries and there are as many as twelve different types of aliens described on a regular basis by victims. The most common are known as Greys. Greys are around nine feet tall with large, black oval eyes and are said to be “quite sweet looking.” Many believe that the greys have agreed treaties with earth governments who trade with them and turn a blind eye to abductions in return for grey military technology. Another group are the Blues who also have large oval eyes. The blues are said to be trying to talk governments out of dealing with the “evil” greys. The greys though seem angelic when compared to the Reptoids who emanate from near the constellation Draco. The Reptoids control some greys via implants and have



a tendency to eat human flesh. However fantastic this may all sound, there are many people who believe it to be true and swear by it.

Like the phenomenon of U.F.O.s themselves, abduction has been with us for a long time. In medieval times people would claim to wake in the night to find a “devil” in their room, and it was not uncommon for nuns in their nunneries to claim that they were raped by such “devils” to explain their pregnancies. These “creatures” became known as “incubus” or “incubi” and it is true to say that in the majority of abduction cases, the actual event occurs in the bedroom during a state of waking or falling asleep, and these “dreams” are called “hypnogogic hallucinations” and they can also occur when the percipient is just tired.

One of the big players in the field of alien abduction is a New York painter and sculptor, Bud Hopkins, author of “Missing Time” and “Intruders” who believes that aliens may maintain a relationship with generation after generation of contactees. Hopkins became more and more interested in the concept of missing time in the late 1970s and he began his work believing that Betty and Barney Hill were unconscious self-deceivers, and though he had himself seen a daylight disc in 1964 he was unable to accept the idea of alien abduction, but the more he investigated the phenomenon the more he came to believe it, and in “Missing Time” in 1981 he speculated that perhaps thousands of people may have had U.F.O. abduction experiences, and that those who are abducted have the same experience many times in their life, and their purpose he claims is to create human hybrids.

One of his “subjects,” a woman named Andrea, told him how she was “floated out of her bed” into a U.F.O. and, as she sat on a table, a long needle was pressed up her nose which caused her pain as it broke through the top of her nasal cavity, and when she woke in the morning back in her bed there was blood on her nightgown and bedclothes from a bad nose bleed. Stranger still was Andrea's experience when she was thirteen years old and still a virgin. She became pregnant and didn't even have a boyfriend. She had dreamt that she was having sex with a man with no hair and “real funny eyes” and in the morning when she woke, her underwear was wet as was the bed. She went on to say:

*“... and after a while my stomach started to grow. My mother took me to a gynaecologist, and I was pregnant. I couldn't believe it. My*

*father was furious and asked who did it to me, he wanted to get even. I told him it was a weird man in a dream, with funny eyes and a big head, and you know, Bud, the gynaecologist said I was still a virgin. I still had my hymen.”*

One of Hopkins' most detailed studies, and equally one of his most baffling cases, is that of a woman who wrote to him via his publisher after reading “Missing Time” and who Hopkins calls Kathie Davis.

One evening in 1983 Kathie Davis was about to go out to a neighbour's house when she noticed that the door to the pool house was open and the light was on, despite her having closed the door earlier on. She mentioned it to her mother but neither of them were worried about it, and before she left she checked them again and saw that the light was now off and the door closed, but the garage door was now open, and this was always kept closed.

When she got to her neighbour, Dee Anne's house she telephoned her mother who told her that she had seen a “big light” by the pool house which had moved across the garden to the bird feeder where it had grown to two feet in diameter. This phone call prompted Kathie to go back to her house and take a look around the garden where she found her dog hiding underneath a car. Later her neighbour also came over with her eleven year old daughter Tammy and they all went swimming. They found a burned patch on the ground about eight feet in diameter where nothing will now grow, and the bird feeder, which was once full of birds, often rare ones, is now avoided by wildlife and nothing will grow near there. Hopkins felt that the burning of the grass indicated that some sort of landing had taken place, and in a later telephone conversation he asked Davis to have a closer look around the burn mark, and she found four small holes about three inches deep some two feet beyond the edge of the circle.

Her letter went on to cover a couple of incidents that had occurred to her sister Laura whom she described as a “realist, very level headed and not much imagination” and who was driving past a church one day when she got a compulsion to pull into the car park behind it where she saw something silver hovering over her at about the height of a telephone pole with red, green and white lights that flickered on and off. She turned down her radio to see if it was making any noise and the next thing she remembers is driving home in the dark. The next incident was 10 years later when she went to a

hypnotist to try and lose weight, but the hypnosis had the opposite effect and she woke one night to find that she was deaf and dumb. She went to hospital where she was given tranquillisers and eventually she improved, though she still took comfort in eating and it made her feel better when she was eating. She telephoned her hypnotist to ask him why she should be feeling this way but the sound of his voice enraged her so much that she felt compelled to kill him.

Kathie's letter ended by saying that both she and her mother had found scars on their legs that looked very similar, she went on, "I don't remember when I got mine, but it seems like I had it all my life... At first I only had one scar but now I have two, on the same leg." Hopkins was fascinated by the letter and felt that Laura had been abducted in the church car park and her hypnosis session had reawakened hidden memories of it, and in a telephone conversation with Hopkins, Kathie told him of a disturbing dream she had had shortly after her marriage at age nineteen. There were two strange, grey faced creatures with large heads and pitch black eyes that seemed to shimmer liquid-like, stood by her bed, and one of them was holding a small black box with a red light on it. Together they stepped forward and one of them gave her the box and told her that at some time in the future she would see it again and she would know how to use it. Hopkins asked her if she had ever actually seen her a U.F.O. and she cited an incident when she was a teenager and had been driving in a car with two friends when they saw a flashing light in the sky and one of them said it was a U.F.O. As it came closer they "all got a creepy feeling" and they stopped to have a closer look but Kathie couldn't remember what happened next. Hopkins asked her if she could call her friend to see if she could remember any of what had happened, and she was surprised to hear that she did remember a little more than Kathie did. Dorothy remembered stopping the car and getting out to look at a light on the ground, which Kathie had no recollection of, but when she got home that night she found that several hours of the night appeared to be missing.

Hopkins would later visit Kathie at her home in Copley Woods, near Indianapolis, and he would not only interview her, but also Dee Anne and Tammy about the night they had gone swimming. Dee Anne had felt that something was wrong as soon as she had entered Kathie's yard "like somebody's just watching us" and Tammy had felt nauseated when she went into the pump house to change into her costume. As they were swimming

they all began to feel sick and when they later drove to a fast food restaurant to eat, they all felt too ill to eat so they drove back home again.

Kathie became increasingly worried about her experiences but Hopkins told her that these type of cases generally tended to stop once somebody starts to investigate them, but Kathie's didn't. In fact on October 13th, 1983, ten days before she was due to visit Hopkins in New York, she had been lying in bed when she felt she heard somebody calling her name, but it seemed to be inside her head rather than outside. She rushed to call a friend of Hopkins called Sue whom he had put "on duty" should anything further happen, and after this she woke her mother who told her to take some aspirin and try to sleep. She carried her son Tommy into her room with her and sat watching television until she became drowsy and went to sleep, and a little while later she was woken by her mother who told her that she felt that somebody had called her name, and at that moment they heard a humming sound "like a truck with its engine running" coming from outside the house, but they could see nothing and they soon went back to sleep.

In the morning Kathie woke feeling strangely exhausted with a stiffness in her arms, shoulders and neck as though she had been lifting weights, a complaint her mother also made. When Kathie looked at her bed clothes she found that there was blood on them where her neck and where her lower back would have been.

Her trip to New York went ahead and she spent the time there telling Hopkins more about herself, explaining that she had suffered many health problems since being a young child. She had begun to menstruate at seven, had high blood pressure at ten, her gall bladder was removed at fourteen, she had suffered from hepatitis, almost died from pneumonia, had her appendix removed, had an asthma attack, needed medical attention for an irregular heartbeat and spent two weeks in traction when two of the vertebrae in her back somehow fused together, what was unusual about this was that they were extra vertebrae which "normal" people don't have. When she was seventeen she met the man who was to become her husband and she fell pregnant, a fact she had confirmed by a doctor, so she decided to move her wedding forward by a few months, but soon afterward she began to menstruate normally again, and further medical tests showed that she was no longer pregnant. She had not had an abortion and she had no signs of miscarriage, she had simply ceased to be pregnant.

Hopkins now wanted her to undergo hypnosis and this was performed by his associate, Dr. Clamar. At the first session she described how she had awakened one night to find two small grey faced figures standing beside her bed, and at the next session she described more fully the incident where she had been handed the small black box, saying that first of all she had had a probe pushed up her nose until it seemed to break through the skin near her sinuses and she could taste blood, but when she had looked up into the large black eyes she had felt reassured. A similar case with the nasal probe was described to Hopkins by a girl from Kentucky who told him that when she was five she had had a long probe with a ball on the end inserted into her nose, and Hopkins feels that the ball may be left inside as some sort of implant, and this was brought to mind by another one of Kathie's encounters.

She was woken one night by a scream from her son Robbie's bedroom and she ran to see what was the matter. She found Robbie lying awake and looking shocked and told him that he must have had a bad dream but he told her "Mommy, this ain't no dream." He had seen a man with a big head come in through the wall and into the closet, he had not let the boy move and he had told him that he wanted his brother Tommy. One week later Kathie went into boys' room and found Tommy covered in blood from a nose bleed in the night. She took him to a doctor who found a small hole high up in his sinuses and the doctor told Kathie that he had probably pushed a pencil, or something similar, up his nose. Hopkins' opinion was that on the first night when Robbie had awoken, the men had then inserted the probe into Tommy's nose, and the night that Tommy had had the nose bleed it may have fallen out again.

More than two years later, in 1986, Kathie dreamt that she was lying on a table with her nightgown pulled up under her breasts while a man examined her. He asked her telepathically how she was feeling and she replied "Kind of crampy." He then patted her on her stomach and told her "That's good" and she went back to sleep. The next morning when she woke she found her underwear on top of the bedclothes. That day she felt pain in her lower abdomen and this was significant because this was supposed to be the day that she menstruated. Hopkins felt that the "man" knew this and had come to take away her ovum, and he compared this to the testimony of Betty Hill who had had a long needle inserted through her navel, and Barney Hill who said he had had a sperm sample take from him. Hopkins would write:

*“Above all, in none of these cases involving either men or women do we have what can be called a basically erotic experience. The descriptions are invariably of a detached, clinical procedure instead, even if some of them result in more or less involuntary ejaculation.”*

“Now all of this leads to the unwelcome speculative inference that somewhere, somehow, human beings - or possible hybrids of some sort - are being produced by a technology obviously - yet not inconceivably - superior to ours.”

One thing that helped convince Hopkins that his ideas are true happened during a visit with Kathie in Copley Woods when she said something that took him completely by surprise. He made a remark to her about how lucky she was to have two boys like Tommy and Robbie and she stopped the car and said “Budd, you know I have a daughter too. I know I have a daughter. I think I've seen her. I know what she looks like.” and on her second visit to New York, something else that she had said to him earlier took on a greater meaning than he had first realised. It was to do with the night she had been driving with her two friends and they had seen a U.F.O.

It took place at about the time that she met her future husband and she can only recall being “frozen” in the car, but her friend Dorothy can recall getting out of the car, and they both remember the other girl, Roberta, crouching in the back seat refusing to look, and Kathie's memory then goes to her arrival home, later than usual. When Kathie was hypnotically regressed she could recall the events in further detail, and she said that the girls were looking up into the sky at the U.F.O. which looked like “an airplane with the strobe things on it” and there was a sudden flash in the car which made them all feel cold. Everything went black and she wanted to get out of the car but was unable to move because her arms and legs felt cold and heavy and her back felt stiff, it was as though she was being held down by some invisible force. She remembers getting out of the car and standing next to Dorothy as they watched something float away in to the sky.

Taking her back to the point of the flash in the car, Hopkins suspected that she may have been abducted first and then returned to the car while Dorothy was taken. Kathie recalled a pain that “makes my stomach hurt. It feels like my legs are being pulled off my body from the waist down.”

Asking her where the pain was she continued “Where my uterus is, down low, like I'm going to have my period. It's hard, it hurts. It's like a toothache... Oh it feels like someone's pushing on me real hard... Wiggling and pushing right in there.” Hopkins believes that this is the point at which she is impregnated, and that the baby was taken away the following March when she found herself menstruating after finding she was pregnant.

Possibly, and probably, connected to this particular episode is another incident that was recalled by Kathie under hypnosis. She was lying on a table and she says that “I just want to scream.” Hopkins asks her if she wants to scream because of the pain and she says, in a high pitched wailing voice, “No! It's not right, it's not fair. IT'S NOT FAIR! IT'S MINE! IT'S MINE! I HATE YOU. I HATE YOU! IT'S NOT FAIR!” and obviously Hopkins feels that this is the point where her baby is taken away, which was backed up by another account that Kathie gave in which she explained what she had meant when she told him that she had a daughter.

She recalls waking in a place that was “all white” with several “little grey guys” around her. She stood up and one of them put its arm round her waist as if to comfort her, and at this point a little girl came into the room with two more grey men:

*“She looked to be about four. She looked about Tommy's size... She was real pretty. She looked like an elf, or an... angel. She had really big blue eyes and a little teeny-weeny nose, just so perfect. And her mouth was just so perfect and tiny, and she was pale, except her lips were pink and her eyes were blue. And her hair was white and wispy and thin... fine... real thin and fine. Her head was a little larger than normal, 'specially in the forehead and back here... The forehead was a little bigger... but she was just a doll. And they brought her to me. And they stood there, and they looked at me. Everyone was looking at me. And I looked at her, and I wanted to hold her. She was just so pretty, and I felt like I just wanted to hold her. And I started crying...”*

Before the girl was taken away, Kathie was told that she would see her again. She also recalled that the grey man she thought of as the child's “father” held her hand “and I feel all kinds of things... sad and warm, and

care and distance... and goodbye... and lonely... I feel lonely too.” Consciously she says that as the man held her hand she felt a lot of emotions, one of which was guilt, and Hopkins feels that this could be the man's guilt rather than her own.

Bud Hopkins has come in for a lot of criticism in his line of work, mainly because of the kind of sessions he holds to get the information from his subjects, and it is felt that they are giving him what he wants and not necessarily what is true. It has been said that they are being rewarded for providing details and so they will strive to do so all the more. Psychologist at the University of Washington, Elizabeth Loftuss, says that there is no better way to do this than when a person is at their most susceptible, when they are relaxed, i.e. when they are under hypnosis.

Whatever the truth is about alien abduction, it must surely be that there is far too much evidence in favour of it to merely discount it, but is it a genuine phenomenon or is it just the strange workings of the human mind?

It seems that nowadays any phenomenon which can't be explained away at one time or another will be linked to aliens. A good example of this is Crop Circles, another is Cattle Mutilations, which came to the fore in late 1973, though isolated cases were noted in the late 1960s, coming after the dawn of “abduction fever” and now there are several thousand cases reported every year. The epicentre of cases was Minnesota and Kansas where farmers were reporting that their livestock, mainly larger cattle, were being killed in weird and wonderful ways. The animals showed no signs of struggle, no knife or bullet wounds, yet often they were completely devoid of any blood. It also seemed that the animals had been bled elsewhere as the surrounding area was clear of both the missing blood and any sign of footprints, even in a case of one carcass found in a mud hole.

The most puzzling aspect of the phenomenon is the fact that the bodies were missing various organs such as eyes, ears, lips, assorted glands, rectum and genitalia. If this isn't weird enough, the operations had been done with apparent surgical precision. Attempts at explanation were many and varied and included death from unknown phenomena, natural causes and the careful mutilations being caused by scavenging animals. Some of the cows examined were found to have died from a common cattle ailment known as black leg, though this doesn't explain the mutilations. A more popular theory was the involvement of Satanic Cults, though this couldn't explain the lack of



footprints especially in the mud hole, it was as though the animal had been dropped from above. In 1975 police thought they had got the breakthrough when they found a blue satchel which contained a pair of surgical gloves, a scalpel and a cow's ear. However no finger prints were found and the ear matched no reported mutilation.

By the late 1970s the number of mutilations had risen into four figures and they had now occurred in all the main U.S. farming states. An official report followed a year-long enquiry led by Ex Federal Agent Kenneth Rommel, and the two hundred and ninety seven page report concluded that the mutilations were due to predators and scavenging animals, needless to say this didn't satisfy many people, but officially the case was closed. In 1989 the author, Linda Howe, and a pathologist analysed tissue samples taken from wounds and concluded that the animals had all suffered from heat induced changes along the incisions and suggested that this may be caused by a laser being used to cut the flesh.

A momentous event which was eventually blamed on U.F.O.s occurred on November 9th, 1965. A blackout on the east coast of America plunged 80,000 square miles and 36 million people in and around New York into darkness from 5-30 pm to 4 am the following day, trapping nearly 800,000 people in elevators and on underground trains, while many air passengers were forced to circle darkened airports. It is a fact that human kind will strive to make the best out of every situation, and this was backed up by the statisticians who noticed that nine months later they were experiencing a baby boom.

Two days later it was announced that the problem had been caused by a break in the power line from Niagara, but checks found this not to be the case. Next it was announced that the problem was a remote control substation at Clay, New York, but repair men at Clay could find nothing wrong. The press briefly reported a story but later dropped it. The report was based on the evidence of a pilot, Weldon Ross, who had been approaching Hancock Field at Syracuse just before the blackout occurred when he had seen, below him, just over the power lines near Clay substation, a huge red ball of light about 100 feet across. This statement was backed up by a student pilot who had been in the plane with Ross at the time. It was also supported by another witness, Robert C. Walsh who was the Deputy Commissioner for the Federal Aviation Agency in the Syracuse area, and he had seen the same ball a few

miles south of Hancock Field. Other witnesses, pilots included, reported seeing two U.F.O.s over Pennsylvania shortly before the blackout with Air Force fighters in pursuit.

Investigators found that the blackout had been caused by the grid being drained of power in some sectors while being overloaded in others, and the safety controls which had worked under similar strains before had failed to work this time.

In 1968 the Atmospheric physicist James Macdonald claimed, during a House Committee on Science and Astronautics, that U.F.O.s were responsible, and he charged the Federal Power Commission with evading the evidence connecting U.F.O.s to the blackout. As the accusation was made in Congress it was entered into the Congressional record. Unfortunately however, his outburst created a storm of criticism from his colleagues who denounced him as a crank, and on June 13th, 1971 James Macdonald was found shot through the head with a gun at his side. The official verdict was suicide.

Other experts claimed that other, similar blackouts were also caused by U.F.O.s, including one in London in the very same month, and they supported their claims by saying that U.F.O. activity was often seen shortly before or during the blackout.

Another mystery sometimes associated with U.F.O.s and aliens, though far less often than most, is "The Missing Link." That is the link between man as we know him today and the primates that we are believed to have evolved from. Fossilised remains of primates have been found, as have those of primitive man, but never the remains of the evolutionary stage in between, i.e. the "Missing Link."

Some people believe that abductions are the result of us being monitored by aliens, others go one step further by saying that, not only do they monitor us but they also help us in our daily lives by showing us their technology and how to use it, but of course that is once we are here on earth, surviving and able to accept their help. Many people also believe that the fact we are here at all is thanks to them and that life on earth exists due to their influence, and continues to survive with their help. The missing link has not been found because it does not exist, and that is due to genetic engineering on the part of our "overseers" who "engineered" us so that we appeared in the form we take today, human beings.

If these phenomenon can't be easily attributed to U.F.O.s, then there is one which almost certainly can, and that is "Men In Black" or M.I.B.s. The encounters with M.I.B.s occur at some time after a person has had an encounter with a U.F.O. and usually quite soon afterwards. The term is used quite loosely as there is sometimes a woman as well as men, and they generally visit witnesses of U.F.O.s and try to discourage them from telling people about what they have seen. The M.I.B.s are described as being tall, foreign looking, possibly slightly oriental as they tend to have slanting eyes, dark hued or tanned skin, and at least one was said to be wearing lipstick. They wear black suits and hats, black shoes and socks with white shirts. Their clothes leave a lasting impression on witnesses due to their immaculate condition as they are always well pressed and spotless.

Their mannerisms also leave a lasting impression as they are unusual to say the least. M.I.B.s rarely if ever smile and their movements are described as "awkward" as is their speech which seems as though it is not natural to them and they usually talk in short and formal sentences. They are very business-like and formal, even to the point of being menacing. People who encounter M.I.B.s are left with an overall feeling that they are not entirely human.

When the M.I.B.s are seen to arrive in a car it is always a prestige car such as a Cadillac, a Jaguar or a Rolls Royce and, like their clothing, the car is black and always immaculate even though it is often an old model, sometimes one that has been out of production for a number of years. If the registration number is checked later it is always found to be non-existent, as are the numbers on the identification cards they carry. Often they claim to be working for the military or the C.I.A. and openly proffer their I.D. Cards.

The usual chain of events is that soon after a witness sees a U.F.O. they are contacted by M.I.B.s, sometimes over the telephone, but more commonly in person. What is interesting in some cases is that the M.I.B.s make their appearance too soon after the sighting for the authorities to have investigated the matter properly, and often even before it has been reported to them. They have a disturbing amount of knowledge, some of it personal about the witnesses, who they usually contact when they are alone, in one case minutes after the witness had bid farewell to company. They ask about what the witness saw and heard and what they thought it was. If they say that they think they saw a U.F.O. the M.I.B.s will try to dissuade them, saying that it

could not have been and must have been something else. If the hint isn't taken by the witness about what it was or was not and about not telling anybody else about it, then the M.I.B.s will resort to threats against them and their family. It is often these threats which make the witness suspicious of the motives of the M.I.B.s and report them to the authorities, who deny all knowledge of any of their operatives paying such a visit, though even if they were government operatives they would still presumably deny all knowledge of them. There are however no known records of these threats ever being carried out.

A famous case of M.I.B.s was experienced by fifty eight year old Dr. Herbert Hopkins, a doctor and hypnotist, who was investigating the abduction case of David Stephens and his son John Hopkins in Maine in 1975. One evening in September 1976, Hopkins' wife and children had gone out to see a movie, leaving the doctor alone in the house, when the phone rang. The caller identified himself as Vice President of the New Jersey U.F.O. Research Organisation and asked Hopkins if he could discuss the abduction case with him in person to which Hopkins agreed. When he had replaced the receiver he walked to his back door to switch on the porch light to make it easier for his visitor to find his house from the car park, but by the time he had walked from the phone to the back door, his guest was already walking up the porch steps. Hopkins is quoted as saying that he could see “no car, and even if he did have a car, he could not have possibly gotten to my house so quickly from any phone.”

The visitor was dressed in a black suit with black hat, tie and shoes and a white shirt, all of which were immaculate, his first thought was that “he looks like an undertaker.” When he removed his hat he revealed a bald head and it was now that Hopkins noticed the man had no facial hair at all including a lack of eyebrows and eyelashes. The one item of clothing the man wore which wasn't black were his gloves that were grey suede, and when during their conversation he brushed his gloved hand across his lips Hopkins noticed that the glove was smeared with lipstick. It was at this point that the conversation took an unusual turn. The man said to Hopkins that he knew he had two coins in his pocket and asked the doctor to give one of them to him. He did so and the man held it in the palm of his hand, Hopkins saw the coin go in and out of focus then slowly vanish and the man said that “Neither you nor anyone else on this plane will ever see that coin again.”

As the conversation on U.F.O.s continued, the visitor's speech seemed to slow down and he shakily got to his feet. He told Hopkins that his energy was running low and he must leave. He walked unsteadily down the porch steps and Hopkins saw a light much brighter than a car's headlights and he could hear no engine sound. When Hopkins' family returned home they saw marks on the driveway but they were in the centre of the drive rather than at the edges like car tyre tracks would be, but by next morning they had disappeared. Hopkins decided to comply with his visitor's wishes, that he erase all of his tapes of the hypnosis sessions he had carried out during his investigation, thus erasing all his hard work, and all at the request of this strange visitor. Hopkins later found that the New Jersey U.F.O. Research Organisation did not then, or had ever existed.

A few days later, Hopkins' daughter in law, Maureen, received a phone call from a man who claimed to know her husband John and asked if he and a friend could visit them. John however claimed not to know them and agreed to meet them at a restaurant before bringing them into his home. The couple, a male and a female, though not dressed in black were wearing old fashioned clothes and the Hopkins' noticed other certain oddities about the couple, such as the woman's breasts which seemed to be set very low, her legs which seemed to join her hips in a peculiar way, and both seemed to walk in very short steps and tended to lean forward as they walked as though they might fall at any moment. They offered the couple drinks, which were accepted though went untasted, while they asked the Hopkins' a number of questions, some of them intimate, but some as dull as their preferred tastes in television viewing. Throughout the conversation the man had been constantly "pawing and fondling" the woman and asked John if he was doing it correctly, at one stage when John was out of the room the woman asked Maureen how she was made and whether or not she had any nude photographs of herself. When they stood to leave the man seemed unable to walk and his companion seemed unable to move around him and she asked John to "Please move him, I can't move him myself." The couple then left without further comment.

Though some believe M.I.B.s to be a hallucination there is one case which would seem to put pay to that theory, and it is that of Fireman Jim Templeton. On May 24th, 1964 Jim had been photographing his daughter on a marsh in Cumbria, England and at the time saw nothing unusual, but when he got his pictures back from developing he saw the figure of a man in a

spacesuit behind his daughter. The pictures were analysed and the verdict was that the man was either very tall or was floating above the ground. Double exposure was ruled out as the girl's head obscured part of the man, and the prize of free film for anyone who could explain the picture was never claimed. Years later, in 1990, the picture was blown up for use in an advertising gimmick by a local copying firm, and clearly visible were a clear visor over breathing tubes and ears. It was in that same year that the first connection with the figure to U.F.O.s was made after Templeton was visited by Men In Black, interestingly not as soon as the picture was taken or developed but only when it was connected with U.F.O.s after being blown up twenty six years later.

Templeton was driven in a black Jaguar car by two men carrying I.D. cards who claimed to be government agents. They took him back to the marsh and asked him many questions including a lot about the behaviour of any animals that had been in the area on the day that he had taken the photograph. He refused to believe their story that he had merely photographed an ordinary man on the marsh at which point they became annoyed and drove away, leaving him to walk the five miles back to his home.

Whatever the cause or origin of M.I.B.s they are certainly very peculiar. They have access to personal information long before anyone else, some of it not available by "normal" means. Their behaviour suggests a non-human origin as though they are merely imitating humans and some suggest teleportation and extra sensory perception. They prove never to be who they say they are and they drive immaculate though old cars with false number plates and make no apparent attempts at covering their lies and false documents, and their threats to witnesses and their families are never carried out. One such threat was: "If you want your wife to stay as pretty as she is...." Some people claim to have been almost run over by cars after a visit from M.I.B.s but then anybody regularly walking down a busy high street could make the same claim.

It is interesting to note that no M.I.B.s have ever been experienced by somebody who hasn't seen a U.F.O. beforehand or had some kind of close encounter, and for possibly this reason alone, like cattle mutilations they will be forever linked with U.F.O.s whether it is justified or not.

So now we have clearly seen that U.F.O.s exist, but what are they and

where do they come from? There have been an estimated 14 million U.F.O. sightings in the last forty years, surely some of these have been, or will be explained away, but that would still leave an enormous number of so called visits from outer space. One conservative estimate is that one in twenty sightings cannot be put down to natural causes such as planes, balloons and the like, so out of 14 million sightings, that leaves 700,000 to be explained.

An interesting possible explanation for abductions, and one which comes from an unusual angle, is offered by Peter Brookesmith in his book "U.F.O.s Where Do They Come From?" Brookesmith suggests that aliens seen in abduction cases are an image created by the mind which have their origin in the womb. In the book he compares both a U.F.O. shape with the disc shape of the six day old human ovum attached to the uterus wall, and a typical humanoid figure with a child in the fetal stage, showing that the figure is diminutive in size with a frail appearance, the head is large in proportion to the body, and in turn the eyes are large in proportion to the head. Some sightings mention under-developed or webbed hands, the ears, nose and mouth are small and there are no obvious genitalia, nor is there any body hair and the skin is pallid. If we bear these facts in mind and then add the fact that child birth is one of, if not, the most traumatic times in our lives for both mother and child, and could easily cause a mental scar which stays with us all our lives, then we add what Dr. Benjamin Simon said when regressing Betty and Barney Hill.

He said that abductees may well encounter a U.F.O., but the abduction stage may be caused by some unsettling moment during the encounter, and maybe the encounter itself. Could this be the cause of the vision of a humanoid figure, along of course with medical equipment and embarrassing tests? This would assume though that we can remember, possibly subconsciously our time in the womb, we do know however that we have a certain awareness whilst inside our mothers, and that this is a part of our conditioning, enabling us to recognise and respond to our mothers voice, and when we see her face for the first time to put the two together and treat them as our mother.

The other, and more common, theory is that we are being visited by those who share the vast universe with us, and if we are to consider whether or not U.F.O.s are the craft of alien beings from other planets, we must put things into perspective and try to appreciate what a mammoth task travelling

across space would be.

In our solar system alone there are around 10 billion stars and, like our sun, itself a star, some have planets in orbit around them, our sun having nine or possibly more orbiting planets, though we know that none of these nine contain or could support life. It is certainly possible that ours is the only planet in the whole universe which does support life, though the odds for this must surely be as high as those against. Even if we do accept that it is possible for there to be other inhabited planets, we must look at the distances one would have to cover to travel from one to another in a space craft. We can get some idea of the scale of the universe just by looking at the immense size of our own solar system alone.

If we imagine that the sun is the size of an average grapefruit, about 110 mm (4 inches), then in comparison our earth would be the size of a pin head at a distance of about 12 metres (39 ft) away (larger than the width of a tennis court). The largest planet in our solar system, Jupiter, would be the size of a small marble at just 11 mm (0.4 inches) across and about 61 metres (200 ft) away. The furthest known planet from the sun is Pluto, which in our scale would be the size of the full stop at the end of this sentence and could be found 460 metres (1,510 ft) away (the length of four football fields). So we can gain some impression of the vast distances that are involved in space travel and we automatically assume that if aliens did possess the ability to travel such distances, they would want to come and visit us, possibly time and time again.

People on earth have been searching for, and trying to contact, alien beings for years, the first man to propose such an idea was Charles Cross (1842 - 88) who suggested sending a message to Mars using flashing lights, though nowadays we use the S.E.T.I. Programme (Search for Extra-terrestrial Intelligence) and its successor Project Pheonix. These projects used, and we continue to use, radio telescopes to send out and receive aliens' signals on up to 240 million channels simultaneously. It is possible that aliens don't communicate as we do but by some other means, and if the victims of Close Encounters are to be believed then telepathy is a distinct possibility, or it may just be that we are impatient and we haven't been waiting long enough. The truth is actually quite depressing.

The most advanced way that we have at present of sending messages through space is by radio waves which travel at the same speed as light, that



being 186,000 miles per second, or 670,647,600 mph, but rather than measure it in these terms with such large numbers we use light years, that is the distance that a ray of light travels in a year, which is roughly 6 million million miles. Long before we thought of sending radio messages to alien beings, indeed long before Kenneth Arnold started the modern U.F.O. era, we had been unwittingly sending radio waves out into space in the form of the very first radio programs to be broadcast to those fortunate enough to have a radio set to receive them on about seventy years ago. This means that the first ever radio signals from earth are still only seventy light years away from us. If we then consider that the centre of our own galaxy is three hundred light years away then it is not at all surprising that we have yet to receive a reply to our attempts at communicating, that is assuming that our signals are understood and then replied to in the first place.

Once we had started deliberately attempting communication by radio we began to listen to the universe in 1960, and Dr. Frank Drake of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia began by listening to the two nearest stars most like our own sun, Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani, with the observatory's 87 ft radio telescope. On the wavelength he was listening to, he heard nothing, but now larger telescopes are used to monitor wavelengths throughout the spectrum from radio to ultra violet and from distant galaxies. When we first started sending our own communications from earth we didn't aim at one spot in space but transmitters sent out signals as the earth rotated and so the signals swept the universe like lighthouse beam. There are estimates that in order to make contact with anybody in space we will have to search as far as 1,000 light years away or search 100,000 stars, but so far we have only covered less than 1,000 stars. To help to make the search for life a little quicker, on March 2nd, 1972 we launched a communication in the form of Pioneer 10 which was a probe sent through the orbit of Mars to rendezvous with Jupiter before heading out of our solar system. It will continue its journey for 2,000,000 years before it reaches the star Aldebaran and for another 10,000,000 years before it reaches the planetary system of another star, unless of course it is found first. On board Pioneer 10 is a gold-anodised aluminium disc that shows a map of our solar system and also pictures of a naked man and woman so that anyone who should find it in space will know where it has come from and who sent it. It also contains instructions on how to play it, and

when it is played, whoever finds it will hear sounds from earth including hello in several languages.

We are always led to believe that the powers that be are skeptical about finding life elsewhere or being visited by other life forms, but why is it that people are so reluctant to believe that it is possible? Why do we come up against a wall of ignorance about visits from aliens when we ourselves are trying to visit other places in space. We have already visited the moon, and Mars is set to be the next target, but what if somebody else out there is trying to do the same? What if we were to find a similar probe sent by somebody else into the deep recesses of space in the vain hope that somebody may find it and know that they are not alone? It is pure hypocrisy to reject the notion of extra-terrestrial life and visits from such, when we are striving to do that exact same thing ourselves. Are we fearful of discovering once and for all that we are not as intelligent as we like to think we are? What would it do to us to discover that we are not the most advanced civilisation in the universe? This is a genuine phenomenon when modern man on his journeys of discovery around the world came across primitive tribes and civilisations which immediately spelt the end for them. This is known as the “Conquistador Syndrome” and it has been seen to exist many times.

For example what would happen if we were to be shown a new source of energy by an alien race that meant that we were no longer dependent on oil resources? The economic structure throughout the whole world would collapse overnight, but despite our fears, the search for life goes on, and we have been sending out radio messages to various star clusters, in particular to the M13 cluster in the constellation of Hercules which contains many hundreds of thousands of stars, so it is a fair bet that if there is indeed life out there then it may well exist here. There is however one setback, M13 is 25,000 light years away, so the signal will take until the year 26, 974 to get there, and if there is a reply forthcoming, of which there is no guarantee, then it will reach us another 25,000 years later. It is for this reason that S.E.T.I. and Pheonix were set up as we would stand a greater chance of communication if we try to receive signals which are already on their way to us from elsewhere. Disappointingly though in its 10 years so far, S.E.T.I. has only ever received one possible transmission that has passed all the “acid tests.” It was received between September 9th and 11th, 1988 and it was far more powerful than anything else we have received but it has not been

repeated, which is unfortunately one of the criteria necessary before we can officially class it as an intentional signal from another race.

There is a school of thought that believes we have been visited by alien beings, not just recently, but also way back into the far reaches of time, and one such proposer of this theory is the author of a book published in 1968 entitled “Remembrance of the Future” which was translated into English and called “Chariots of the Gods.” The book sold more copies than any other book apart from the bible with over seven million sales worldwide making its author a millionaire. The author was Erich Von Daniken, and he proposed that Earth was visited thousands of years ago and many times and that ancient civilisations were influenced by these visitations. Von Daniken looked at the different types of pyramids being built around the world by different races, some of which were strikingly similar, yet these races were previously thought to have been primitive, and he looked at many examples of ancient art engraved in stone and suggested that these engravings contained pictures of space men and their craft. These interpretations by Von Daniken were a little far-fetched to say the least and many people condemned him and his work as flights of fantasy, hardly surprising really when you consider one suggestion he put forward for contacting extra-terrestrials. He said:

*“One audacious but perfectly reasonable idea: A gigantic equilateral triangle would have its 600 mile long sides sown with potatoes; in this enormous triangle a circle would be sown with wheat. In this way a vast yellow circle, surrounded by a green equilateral triangle, would appear every summer. Incidentally, a most useful and productive experiment.”*

When Von Daniken was imprisoned after being found guilty of fraud and embezzlement while running a hotel in Switzerland his reputation was done untold damage, and even more so when some of the stone tablets that he had claimed had come from biblical times were found to have been faked, and the American science program “Nova” tracked down the man who had made them. Von Daniken also claimed that the Mayan civilisation had known that the Venusian year lasted for 584 days due to information they received from extra-terrestrials, but in fact it lasts only 225 days and only appears longer when the planet is observed from the earth, so obviously the Maya had

merely observed the planet themselves and counted the days until they saw it again.

Von Daniken also wrote about the Egyptian pyramids and how they may have been built by an alien race as the constructions were so complicated as to be beyond the capabilities of a human race at that time. He is certainly not alone in this argument, even today, but in his argument he somehow managed to come to the conclusion that rope didn't exist in Egyptian times, yet many tomb paintings depict men using ropes and he also managed to multiply the weight of the blocks in the pyramids by five. He theorised that the famous lines on the floor of the desert in Peru, the Nazca Lines, were used as landing strips and parking spaces for spacecraft, but he fails to mention that the lines are barely scratched onto the loose surface of the desert floor and would be blown away by any wind caused by aircraft turbulence, and they have only remained undamaged since 500 AD because the desert is windless. When facts like this were put to Von Daniken he said that in fact it was alright to tell lies about things if you were merely trying to convince people of the truth.

Though for the large part his theories were discredited along with him, there are many who believe the basic theory that Von Daniken based his work on was a sound one, and there are other good examples of ancient close encounters. One such example is reported by Robert Temple, an American with a degree in Oriental Studies and Sanskrit.

Temple made a detailed study of the African Dogon tribe from the Republic of Mali, 300 miles south of Timbuktu in the former French Sudan. The Dogon people have many traditions and most of them are centred around a star which they call "Po Tolo" (the seed that forms the staple part of their diet and whose botanical name is "Digitaria"). Po Tolo lies in the constellation "Canis" - which is why it is also referred to as the Dog Star - and its name of Digitaria is significant in that this is the smallest seed known to the Dogon.

Temple found an account of the Dogon people published in 1950 in the "Journal De La Societe Des Africainistes" called "A Sudanese Sirius." It was written by two French anthropologists, Marcelle Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen, who had lived with the Dogon from 1931 for a number of years and had learned the truth behind many of their traditions. In 1941 Griaule was initiated into their religious secrets and told that fish like creatures called

“Nomo” had come to Earth from Sirius to civilise earth's people. In the detailed account Temple found the following passage:

*“The starting point of creation is the star which revolves around Sirius and is actually named the Digitaria Star, (Sirius is visible in the winter as the brightest star in the southern sky and is often called the Dog Star while its smaller companion is often referred to as The Pup) it is regarded by the Dogon as the smallest and heaviest of all the stars; it contains the germs of all things. Its movement on its own axis and around Sirius upholds all creation in space, we shall see that its orbit determines the calendar.”*

If the fact that the Dogon knew that the stars revolved on both an axis and an orbit and that the orbit took fifty years to complete is not startling enough, then consider the fact that Sirius B - Sirius' orbiting star - is not visible to the naked eye and was only discovered in the last century. It is 8.7 light years away and was thought to exist from the middle of the 19th Century but it was not actually discovered until 1862, and was not described in detail until the 1920s. In fact it was only in 1928 that Sir Arthur Eddington proposed the theory of the existence of white dwarves, but it wasn't until 1970 that Sirius B was photographed and astronomers found that it was almost concealed by the brighter Sirius and that it was actually a white dwarf, which is the smallest visible star in the universe, and it was also historic in that it was the first white dwarf to be discovered.

Just as the Dogon said, Sirius B is the smallest seed in the universe which is why the name Digitaria is so fitting as a white dwarf is extremely dense, it is the size of the earth but the weight of the sun, and one cubic foot of matter from it would weigh 2,000 tons. The Dogon said that it was made of a metal and is so heavy “that all earthly beings combined cannot lift it.” They were also correct about the elliptical orbit of Sirius' dark companion that takes fifty years to complete. It is possible that the Pup was much brighter 5,000 years ago and there are ancient records of it being described as red, and though it is true that red giants will eventually become white dwarfs, this process is an extremely long one and could not take place over the time scale of 5,000 years.

Sirius is the brightest star in the sky and was the basis of the Egyptian

calendar so it is understandable that the Dogon, among other civilisations, would have traditions and myths based around it, but it is interesting that they consider Sirius to be less important than its almost invisible companion Sirius B, but how could they come to know so much about it long before it was discovered, and yet be so accurate in their information?

As can be expected there are arguments about just how this “primitive” tribe could have come by this information, and it is suggested that the Dogon merely gained their knowledge from their ancestors which were the Egyptians from before 3200 BC. It is also argued that the evidence of Sirius B being red seems to be over 5,000 years old and that it infers contact in the past between earth and beings from another planet, and there are estimates that this contact could have been made between 7,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Dogon tradition also names “Nommo” as the founder of civilisation who came from Sirius B to set up society on earth, and the Nommos, they say, are similar to “Oannes” who in Sumerian and Babylonian tradition is the demigod leader of the amphibious “Annedoti” creatures that brought civilisation to earth.

The opposing argument is that the Dogon themselves were visited, and it is true to say that they also knew of details about our own solar system, such as the sun being dry and dead, that Saturn had rings, that the planets revolved around the sun, that the earth spun on an axis and that Jupiter had its own moons. They refer to the home of the Nommo as a star but they must mean a planet, they referred to them as Gods and they drew diagrams of the craft they arrived in and say that they landed in a place north west of where they now live, incidentally this is where the Dogon originate from.

If either of these arguments are to be believed, then just 8.7 light years away is a planet in the region of Sirius that is host to amphibious creatures far in advance of ourselves that have visited earth and possibly still observe us. What is interesting about this account is that where Von Daniken was proposing his own ideas, Temple was merely quoting the accounts of the two anthropologists that had lived with the Dogon, been initiated into their religious rites and learned their traditions from them personally.

Astronomers have so far failed to locate a planet in orbit around Sirius, but if there is one there it would need to be a long way from the star as the Dog Star is many, many times brighter than our own sun, so any planet too close to it would be too hot to support life, but our own telescopes may not be

able to see it as we only spotted Sirius B because it causes perturbations in the orbit of Sirius. If life did exist on a planet near a sun as hot as Sirius then it would probably be a hot and steamy planet, so any life which evolved there would be most likely to do so in its seas, should they have any that have not evaporated, and which would be much cooler than the air. Though these potential life forms may be able to spend time on land, they would have to remain close to water to keep their skin moist and help to maintain their body temperature.

The fact that we are only so far able to send and receive radio signals over vast distances and not manned space craft is perhaps quite depressing, and we are obviously many years from manned missions heading for the far reaches of space as the technology that we possess at the moment will not even carry us to the furthest planet in our own solar system, and even if one of our craft would make it as far as Pluto, then a new born baby placed inside at launch would die of old age long before the planet Pluto was in sight, but should we eventually make it to a distant planet, how would we feel if we were to find it devoid of life?

When a friend of Arthur C. Clark became the Deputy Director of the C.I.A. he gathered his scientists together on his very first day in office and said to them: "What's the truth about U.F.O.s?" They told him: They were positive that there is lots of intelligent life out there in space, but they don't have a shred of evidence that proves it. There is a way however that we can calculate the probability of there being life elsewhere in the universe, and that is by using what is known as the Drake Equation, and the equation is as follows:

- $N = R_p N_1 i e L$  = The number of life forms out there.
- $R$  = The rate of star formation, i.e. more stars = more potential for life.
- $p$  = The fraction of those stars that have orbiting planets.
- $N_1$  = The number of those planets that are potential abodes for life.
- $i$  = The fraction of living things that give rise to intelligence.
- $e$  = The fraction of intelligent life forms that create technology.
- $L$  = The length of time that these life forms last (i.e. are they destroyed by cosmic events, war etc. Are they detectable? Do they waste energy in emittance or are they too intelligent?)

The value of N grows constantly as we make more cosmic discoveries, for example seven new planets were found between 1996 and 1997, one of which was almost as big as Jupiter. The latest estimate for the number of galaxies in the universe is 50 billion so the number of detectable civilisations is calculated at 100 million million;

i.e.  $N = 100,000,000,000,000$ .

Let's take a few steps forward; we've got to a planet and we've found other forms of life, what form would they take? Nobody talks of Close Encounters with beings other than vaguely humanoid ones, be they green, grey, blue or Reptoid. It is a fact though that life will always try to adapt and evolve in its continual struggle to survive. For instance if a creature has the ability to communicate by telepathy and so has little or no use for ears, then their ears will be small and under developed or maybe even non-existent. Many aliens are described as having large oval eyes, could this be the result of living in a world with little or no light? If a planet has a gravity much greater than our own, then the creatures who live there would possibly be quite flat in appearance with strong internal bone structures, external shells or exoskeletons, whereas a world with a very low gravity would spawn creatures which are often airborne and must have ways of controlling their movements during their long periods of flight and would also have little use for strong bones and shells but more need for highly developed muscular tissue. Many people believe that we on earth have a largely dormant capability for telepathic communication which we sometimes hear of people using, but we rather use our mouths and ears and eyes to communicate with each other, and it is curious how aliens are able to cope with conditions on earth, i.e. temperature, air content and gravity with apparently no great difficulty.

There are problems with accepting that U.F.O.s are of an extra-terrestrial nature, for instance even if they could make it to earth and back, why would they continue to visit us and then leave without making apparently proper contact? There are many reports of beings seen taking samples of plant life, rocks, soil and even sea water, and however credible it may sound, animal organs and human bodily fluids, but why go to all that trouble if they don't want to make contact with us? Could they be afraid of the Conquistador



Syndrome?

Another interesting feature of U.F.O.s is that in abduction cases, and also when Adamski spoke to the Venusians and they explained where they came from, it is always just beyond the bounds of our own technology and knowledge, never too far ahead so as to leave us behind and bemused, but never too close for us to fully grasp, and if we were to compare the learning curve of our own technology and knowledge with that of our visitors then we would find them very similar, though ours would always be one step behind and never quite catching up, though we do try. Could they be trying to guide us by seeing that we are nearly on the verge of a discovery and they then give us just enough information to help us along?

Despite our feeble attempts at space travel, it is widely believed that astronauts on space missions have encountered alien craft, and should extra-terrestrials be aware of our efforts to travel across space then it would surely be in their interest to monitor our progress. There is a school of thought which believes that lunar landings didn't continue, not because of lack of funding or the rechannelling of funds into other ventures, but because the astronauts encountered other life forms during these missions. There have also been numerous reports of manned space craft merely orbiting the earth encountering alien vessels.

The details of the former Soviet Union's attempts at space flight are clouded in secrecy as it is thought that in their haste to beat the U.S. into space, a feat which they achieved, they cut corners and many cosmonauts died in their quest on missions doomed to fail before they even left the ground. One craft which did make it into space and back again was Voskhod 1, whose crew of three had requested that they be allowed to stay in orbit because they wanted to investigate further some things which they had seen from their craft. Indeed their journey around earth was intended to last longer than it did, and many believe that it was forced down by U.F.O.s but the official story is that the cosmonauts had wanted to look further at the Aurora around the Antarctic, however they are unlikely to admit to a technical failure so perhaps we will never know.

There are also in existence many photographs taken from outer space aboard our own craft of what usually appears as "strange lights." The rational explanation is that they are reflections of the sun caused by the craft themselves, either by their structure or the windows. One such photograph

though is shrouded in mystery, it was taken by James Mcdivitt aboard Gemini 4 on June 4th, 1965 while he was passing over Hawaii. The picture, which was released by N.A.S.A., shows two fuzzy sources of light, and he was told that he had seen his own booster rocket in orbit but he doubted this and was adamant that the pictures he was shown and the one released, were not the same ones which he had taken. He added that his pictures showed a large object shaped like a beer can, and it also seems that N.A.S.A. were aware of this swap. Mcdivitt then looked through all the pictures which had been taken during the flight and he could see none which showed the object he had photographed.

Another photograph which was taken from space, but this time not by an astronaut, was of the Martian surface and it appeared to show a mountain in the shape of a human face, and this argument is used by some who say that a civilised race must have made it. The image though is not a “natural” one as it has been beamed back to earth and enhanced many times, so if the computer sees an image it will make it clear. There is a counter argument which says that the face isn't there at all as the human mind will always try to see symmetry where there isn't any, so we look at it and see something that isn't necessarily there. Even if there is a feature which looks like a face on Mars there are many to be found on Earth as well and these are perfectly natural occurrences. The best one is a Canadian Island called Point Bernard Shaw which, when viewed from the air, looks uncannily like the famous writer, including the hair line, beard, nose, mouth and eye sockets, and this don't forget is a completely natural feature formed by the winds and the rains over many years.

Evidence which cannot be easily substituted as photographs are the radio communications between the astronauts and the men on the ground, many of which are picked up and recorded by radio hams and enthusiasts as they occur and make very interesting listening. One example is from the crew of the Apollo 11 mission who were asked by N.A.S.A. “You sure you don't have anyone else in there with you?” after they received mysterious sounds over the radio. An Apollo 12 crew saw what they thought to be lunar module panels moving away from them but were puzzled by this as one seemed to be moving much faster than the others. They were told by mission control “Well let's assume it's friendly anyway OK.” Though N.A.S.A. insists that comments like this are made in jest and are aimed to relieve the great amount

of stress and tension involved in space flight, it is also certain that any compelling evidence that what is being said isn't a joke would be edited out of the transcript that is released to the public.

A recent alleged close encounter by astronauts occurred after the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. The shuttle involved was Discovery on flight No. STS 29 on March 14th, 1989, and it wasn't until a fortnight later that the story was broken by the press. Reporter Donald Ratsch was listening via the Goddard Amateur Radio Club to the transmissions between Houston and the shuttle, and at 06-35 he could clearly hear the words "We have a problem.... we have a fire" and indeed it was later found that there had been a fire on this flight and some electrical problems. Seven minutes later, at 06:42, Ratsch heard the sentence "Houston, Discovery... we still have the alien space craft under observance." Ratsch was recording these transmissions and the tape clearly contains the above communication, but what is not clear though is whether or not the tape itself is genuine, N.A.S.A. are not saying that they said these things in jest, they are simply denying that they ever said them at all.

There are many people and U.F.O. researchers who think that the U.S. "Star Wars" Program was designed to warn us of not a military invasion on earth but an invasion from beyond the Earth, and the shuttle Discovery again had a close encounter two years later, in September 1991, when N.A.S.A. cameras aboard the shuttle filmed what is said to be a Star Wars weapon being fired at a U.F.O.. The film shows a U.F.O. emerging out of the Earth's atmosphere and flying towards the top left hand side of the picture when there is a bright flash from the bottom left and, as the U.F.O. takes evasive action and flies out into space, a bright streak shoots across the screen from the bottom left and passes by the spot where the U.F.O. had been. Dr. John C. Kasher is a Professor of Physics who worked on the Star Wars Program and he says that the footage does indeed show a Star Wars weapon being fired, while N.A.S.A. say that it shows ice particles affected by the rockets on the shuttle, or perhaps waste being jettisoned from it. Kasher responds by asking: "Could either of these move slowly in one direction and then suddenly stop for half a second before moving away quickly in another?"

Earlier we have looked at the scale of the universe and some of the problems we have with travelling the vast distances involved at the speeds we are capable of at the moment, so we would obviously need to be able to travel

much faster in order to reach the parts of space where we may find other forms of life, but we have no proof that it is possible to travel at such massive speeds as they would need to be at least equal to light speed.

The great expert on such matters has long thought to be Albert Einstein whose "Theory of Relativity" is considered to be correct according to all the evidence we have amassed thus far. Einstein said that "near" light speed is the highest attainable because when an object approaches light speed, its energy is no longer converted to kinetic energy but to mass, so an object travelling at light speed would have infinite mass. Once again however there is an exception to the rule. What if a particle were to have no mass, then it must surely be able to surpass light speed? Massless particles are known as "Tachyons" but whether they exist or not is not known for certain, but it is highly possible when you consider the very complex laws of quantum physics. The other big factor is "time dilation" i.e. the faster you go the slower that time will run, so a clock on a craft travelling at light speed will run slower than a clock elsewhere.

We have equipment called particle accelerators; low energy accelerators can hurl objects around at 0.44 of light speed, and high energy accelerators which have a circumference of seventeen miles or more - the largest being in Geneva, Switzerland - can hurl electrons and anti-electrons much more quickly than this, in fact at 0.99999999995 of light speed. Objects travelling at this speed have been found to have a mass 100,000 times greater than when they are at rest, and one particular particle, a "meson," with a life span of 2 millionths of a second was accelerated to half-light speed in 1961, and its life span was increased by 50%. This is obviously only a small amount but it goes to show that so far Einstein is indeed correct, but even if we were able to send a manned space craft through space at these speeds, it is still far too slow for our purposes.

We often hear talk of parallel dimensions to our own, that there is more than one universe and that all exist together but on different "planes" and that U.F.O.s could come from these parallel universes, a possibility which would seem to be supported by the coin which was made to disappear in front of Herbert Hopkins' eyes to another plane. If this were the case would the U.F.O.s as they appear do so in a cloud of gas, as described by some witnesses rather than being seen to fly to a particular spot? And could it also explain how M.I.B.s can appear so suddenly, again as witnessed by Hopkins.

Stranger still is the theory that U.F.O.s and their occupants are in fact an evolved state of man as we know him today, and that they, or in fact we, have mastered the art of time travel and are visiting ourselves in the past.

A more rational possibility is the “Tectonic Stress” theory, and it is the brain child of Professor Michael Persinger, a neuroscientist, who theorises that tension and stress below the surface of the earth can create, due to electromagnetism, distant lights in the sky, and can also interfere with the electromagnetic activity in the human mind. He theorises that apparitions of U.F.O.s could be caused in this way, and similarly so too could apparitions that appear as ghosts. The brain tries to make sense of these apparitions and so they appear as space craft, aliens, angels and of course ghosts.

It seems that electromagnetism, radiation and microwaves play a large part in U.F.O. theory, and a physicist / engineer James McCampbell who used to work at N.A.S.A. has examined thousands of U.F.O. reports and notes that these energies are present in almost all. Interference with car engines, electrical interference, heat and burning and radiation sickness are all consistent with high levels of microwave radiation. Also consistent with this is the humming and high pitched sounds, strange odours and a metallic taste. Disturbingly some witnesses who have got a little too close to U.F.O.s have been found during autopsy to have been cooked on the inside, consistent with microwaves, and less extreme cases of this are cars becoming hot to the touch and minor sun burns.

Working with Dr. John Derr, Persinger looked at a spate of U.F.O. sightings in Colorado to try to prove his theory, and he went a long way towards doing just that. In 1963 a munitions factory pumped hundreds of millions of gallons of toxic waste in to a two mile deep well, and in doing so they unwittingly lubricated a fault system, and over the five years that the pumping went on, there were over 1500 earthquakes reported as the plates rubbed together. This created a slow ripple effect of minor tremors which emanated out from the factory at speeds of 30 to 80 miles per month. These tremors were monitored as they spread out, and it was found that just before they entered an area there were reports of U.F.O.s in that area, and a clear cycle was spotted which ran; injection - lights in the sky - earthquake.

The process of creating lights by friction is called “Triboluminescence” and has been studied by Dr. Alan Mills of the University of Leicester. Light can be created by simply rubbing two pieces of quartz together in a darkened

room and many other minerals also achieve the same results. Another way is to crush the crystals, and this can be done with something as simple as a sugar lump. There is one problem however, the light is only created at source, that is, in the exact spot where the friction occurs, so when two pieces of quartz are rubbed together, the light appears in between them, and when the sugar lump is crushed it gives off a light as it disintegrates. Nobody knows how this light could manifest itself above ground but that is not to say however that it does not do so, and there is obviously a clear connection between lights in the sky and earthquakes, but again nobody knows why one should precede the other. We now move to Washington State, U.S.A. where this whole U.F.O. episode started with Kenneth Arnold in 1947, but this time however we go particularly to the Yakima region where there have been many reports of various phenomenon such as Bigfoot, strange sounds but most commonly balls of light.

The reports come from the lookouts who work in the area watching for forest fires, and as such they have to report every light they see, even those in the sky. One such lookout is Dorothea Sturm who, in her thirty five years there, has seen over a hundred lights and strange objects in the sky, and it is here that Persinger and Derr again used their theory to explain them. The pair found the area to have many faults in the ground, and studying the sightings they found that lights were most often seen over these local faults. More interestingly they found that the sightings were more frequent in the time before a local tremor took place, but this explanation does not explain all U.F.O. sightings, and probably not even all the reports of lights in the sky, but it could well explain many of them.

Persinger also looked at abduction cases to see if these experiences could be created by some kind of strange electromagnetic field, possibly also caused by the same Tectonic Stress. To do this he built a dark, sound proof chamber in which the patient would sit while wearing a special helmet. This helmet would generate a weak magnetic field which can be controlled by a computer so that Persinger is able to control the shape of the electromagnetic wave that it transmits through the brain. During his experiments the kind of thing that the patients would report feeling were. The feeling that they were floating through a tube, floating in a cave, feeling detached or feeling that another mind was talking through their own. They would feel as if they were spinning, their body was vibrating or something were moving through their

body. Some would experience a sudden recall of childhood memories while one particular wave pattern caused them to feel as if they were dying and some of them would see the “white light.” Throughout the experiment they would know that they were alone in the room but would still feel as if somebody was in with them, and they would feel as if they were being pulled, pushed and prodded. Could people in a state of semi sleep confuse these feeling and images with an alien abduction?

Whereas Persinger used his tectonic stress to account for the electromagnetic field that could cause these feelings outdoors, paranormal researcher, Albert Budden, looked for a link with high tension power lines and radio waves. He feels that certain people may be more sensitive to these than others, and of the fifty cases he has researched he has found that most of the people involved have had, at one time or another, some sort of electrical experience such as being hit by lightning, being near a lightning strike or they have been electrocuted, and he says this may cause some kind of permanent damage to the body and the mind (the permanent damage could explain why abductees feel that they are taken many times and monitored constantly). Budden has found that this is not only true for alien abductions but for other psychic or electrical phenomenon as well, such as a television switching itself on when a person is near it or tingling sensations in the body. Again this could explain some of the cases that have so far gone unanswered, but surely not all of them.

Theorists on the propulsion methods of U.F.O.s have a very difficult task as U.F.O.s are seldom seen to be propelled by “engines” and are often noiseless. A common theory is that they may harness the power of gravity, and Dr. Frederick Alzofon proposed that such a theory is the more likely.

Scientist Kenneth Behrendt from New Jersey has been investigating the propulsion systems of U.F.O.s since the early 1980s and has been trying to quantify the forces needed to propel a craft at the speeds that have been related to him by witnesses. His calculations are as follows:

If a craft thirty two feet in diameter hovering near ground level rises and disappears out of sight in ten seconds in a clear sky it would need to reach an altitude of 20.83 miles. If it accelerated uniformly, any crew on board would experience an inertial force of 68.38 Gs and would reach a speed of 15,000 mph. If the 32 feet wide craft weighed a mere ten tons its engines would need to produce a force of 1,368 million pounds at 27.36 million horsepower or

20,000 megawatts, this is equivalent to twenty 1,000 megawatt power plants at peak output. Behrendt says that a craft of this size would be unable to produce such power, therefore he surmises that any craft moving at these speeds must be a massless craft, or free of the forces normally imposed by gravity.

In 1951 at Draakensteen Mountain, South Africa a close encounter took place and the witness, an engineer, was told how the craft he saw was powered. The beings he spoke with told him that their craft didn't have an engine but used a system which nullified gravity. To do this they used a tube which contained a heavy fluid that circulated around it creating a magnetic field. At the speed of light this fluid is subjected to radiation so that when the fluid is leaving the tube, it is already entering again at the other end.... its relative speed is infinite.

Another propulsion system was explained during an abduction case in October 1974 in Aveley, Essex where the man of the family was told that the ship had two propulsion systems, one for use in space which fired vortices of ionized particles via an ion drive, but this was too dangerous to use inside an atmosphere, so they would use an older and safer method that converted the magnetic poles of particles outside the craft to the same as those inside the craft's core. This process creates a thrust, and a rapid cycling of the process creates a drive force. One side effect of this, he was told, is that it can create unusual visual distortions to an outside observer, these include a pulsating craft, a shape changing craft and even invisibility by filtering light from the surrounding objects through a field and creating a hologram of the scenery.

If we take a giant leap and suppose that such propulsion systems can be achieved with the right technology, and that aliens have already found us and continue to visit us, then the big question which begs an answer then becomes: Why?

One theory is that they are taking samples from earth, and indeed many have been seen digging earth, taking rocks and even pumping sea water, in fact a U.F.O. was seen in 1980 off the coast of Brazil descending toward a second craft on the surface of the sea, these two craft then joined after apparently signalling to each other by changing colours and then moved upwards into the sky as one. There are many tales of sample taking aliens who rush away when discovered, in 1919 in Iowa an entity rushed back to its craft and flew away in such a haste that it collided with the tree tops. In



Canada in 1914, a craft apparently syphoning sea water through a hose flew away almost leaving behind one of its crew which clung to the side of the craft.

It is not just rocks and water that they seem to be interested in but also animals seem to hold a certain fascination for them. In Cheshire, England in 1978, beings were seen taking a cow's measurements, and in Sussex, England a dog was the object of their interest but the owner palmed them off with a china model rather than part with his pet. However they were apparently more successful in Yorkshire, England in 1980 when policeman Alan Godfrey said that during his abduction he saw a black dog on board the craft. Stranger still is the testimony of a man in Spain in 1978 who was told by alien beings that they wished to examine his dog, but while he was there they may as well take a look at him also.

Another theory for the attentions of alien craft is that their craft are in need of repair as was telepathically communicated to ambulance driver Reg from Yorkshire, England when he woke to find tall beings in his bedroom. He was told to lie on his bed and when he did he had a feeling of floating upwards until he felt he was inside an object. He was then examined by a probe and told not to ask any questions as he was an "insignificant being.... like a worm." He was also told that, to them, time was different, and a thousand years were to them "but a day." There was no further mention of repairing the craft and it is thought that this was just a ruse to get him to cooperate with them as shortly afterward he was returned to his bed.

Witnesses have watched beings repairing their craft at, among other places, Brazil and New York, and it is believed by some that the craft at Rendlesham Forest was damaged as it hit the trees and the entities in the shafts of light in the woods were carrying out repairs, and of course let us not forget the crash at Roswell, though it was obviously a little too late to repair "that" craft after it had landed.

There is a school of thought however that these repairs are set up to make the beings seem fallible and therefore less "frightening" to us, as a race which could build a craft to travel to earth from wherever they come from would surely not need to seek human help to mend it, beside which, the ratio of U.F.O. landings to breakdowns is much higher than one would expect.

Another theory is that they are curious about us and wish to observe us and find out just what makes us tick. This was apparently the case when Herb

Schirmer, a Police Officer (later Police Chief), was in his patrol car in December 1967 in Ashland, Nebraska.

At around 2-30am on December 3rd Schirmer went to investigate when he heard a commotion coming from some cattle and saw an object in the road in front of him. Thinking that it was a broken down truck he switched on his spotlight, and caught in the beam was a disc shaped object. Schirmer drove toward it and it took off. Thirty minutes later at 3 am, Schirmer's report stated that he "saw a flying saucer at junction of Highways 6 and 63, believe it or not!" After making his report he felt thirsty and tired and could feel a buzzing in the back of his neck where there was a strange red mark. At the time Schirmer was unaware that fifteen or twenty minutes had passed which were unaccounted for, and investigations into the missing time led to hypnosis sessions which seemed to explain, as far as Schirmer was concerned, the missing minutes.

Apparently when Schirmer had shone his spotlight on the object in the road it lifted off the ground and landed again near some electricity pylons. He now suffered some sort of interference as his spotlight, engine and radio failed to work. When he looked up he saw a group of beings walking towards him, they were "typical" in appearance being under five feet tall with grey white faces, large eyes and thin lips. One of them operated a device in its hand which gave off a beam of light and the patrol car was surrounded by a green mist. Schirmer passed out and awoke again outside his car and spoke to the beings.

They asked him if he was a watchman and if there was a power station or a reservoir nearby, he declined their offer to shoot at their craft which they now lead him over to, and both asked and answered questions about each other. Some of the things they told him were that their craft was an observation ship and they had been watching humans for a long time, they said it was made of magnesium and was powered by harnessing the forces of "Reversible Electromagnetism" which in turn harnessed the power of gravity. They told him that they were sucking power from the overhead electricity cables which they used to create a defensive force field when close to the ground, and it was this that caused interference with car radios and engines. They then showed him an object, about the same size and shape as a car wheel hub cap, which was a remote flying sensor that relayed pictures back to the craft and was used to look at an area before they landed. The reason for

this particular visit was to collect animal samples for a breeding analysis program. A possible precursor to the many human samples later taken in the many abduction cases and, as mentioned earlier, alien technology not making leaps ahead of ours, as animal genetics was less of a mystery to us than human genetics in 1967.

They then told Schirmer that they were worried about how hostile we humans were as they had been shot at by military aircraft. They would try to act randomly when visiting earth as they knew that world powers and governments would try to look for patterns in their operations and try to predict their next move, obviously they didn't want this and did not appreciate being shot at. They would also erase human memories of encounters with them to ensure that they, and their actions, remain shrouded in mystery so we knew that they existed but did not know enough to interfere with their observations and experiments. It is well within their capabilities to destroy us as a race but this is not their intent and they wish to continue observing us long term. Indeed they said that they would contact Schirmer a further two times. The interesting thing about his encounter is that it was apparently duplicated in detail thirteen years later in Todmorden, West Yorkshire in 1980, and this time it occurred again to a police officer, the earlier mentioned Alan Godfrey, who, like Schirmer, was checking on livestock, suffered engine and radio failure, saw a beam of light and was told that he would be visited again and “lost” fifteen or twenty minutes in time.

As well as observation and research it seems that our guests are even going so far as to apparently cure witnesses of disease, in one case even treating a diagnosed terminal stomach cancer. The case occurred in Rio De Janeiro to the daughter of a rich man who, in August 1957, had failed to respond to treatment. She was moved to Petropolis, a place in the country air, and on October 25th was lying in bed in great pain under the influence of the painkiller morphine. However she was not alone in the room and all those present saw the room lit with a bright light as a disc hovered outside. Two beings emerged from the craft and entered the room where one touched the head of the girl's father and apparently received information from him on his daughter's illness. They moved over the girl's stomach which began to glow with a blue light and illuminate her insides like an x-ray. They pointed an implement at the infected area and some minutes later turned the machine off and left the girl in a deep sleep. The implement they used looked a little like a

laser, which of course did not exist in 1957. The same being then again communicated with the girl's father using telepathy and told him that they would leave a small hollow object with thirty small white balls inside. They were to give her one of these balls every day until they were all gone, and all they asked for in return was that all those present in the room kept quiet about what they had seen, to which they all agreed, and in due course the girl made a full recovery. The story was later told by one of the family's servants who was present at the time but who would not give the name of the family.

It would seem in some cases that the alien beings wish to help us in some way, though not always as directly as in the above case, one predominant message seems to be our destruction of the planet by industry, car exhaust fumes and other abuses of the atmosphere by nuclear energy, both in bombs and in the production of electricity. One farmer, Gary Wilcox from Newark Valley, New York, encountered two alien beings who warned him of the dangers of global warming and told him about the hole in the ozone layer. This may not seem so extraordinary, but the encounter occurred in April 1964 when no scientist had even given a thought to the ozone layer. Earlier warnings of danger received from alien beings throughout the 1950s had been predominantly concerning the nuclear holocaust, and it is almost as if the beings wish to help us preserve the earth as much as we do so that they can continue to monitor us, and a recurring feature of close encounters is the further visits that the witness or witnesses will receive.

Witnesses have been told many tales by alien beings and they can be as unusual as an offer to inject a special glue into cracks in the earth's crust, or as mundane as introducing viruses and diseases to us which would cause confusion among the us and slow down our advancements in certain technological fields in which we were making progress too quickly. They are concerned that we must be fully aware, and have full knowledge, of what we are doing. Whatever their reason for wanting to help us preserve the earth it seems apparent that this is certainly one of their intentions. One witness in Edinburgh in 1980 was told that: "This was our planet before you and we will not allow you to destroy it. If you try we will send a warning that will shudder the earth. Only the innocent will survive." Maybe it is for no reason as complicated as these, but only a wish to preserve a part of the universe they share with us, and they want to help their neighbours to survive and nurture it. One witness was told that he "didn't know how lucky he was to

live here” as the earth was one of the universe's treasures as it supported myriad life forms which few other planets could sustain.

Apart from some of these reasons for us to warrant alien attention, by far the most predominant is the testing and sample taking of human subjects, some as unlucky as Carl Higdon from Wyoming who was told by his abductors that he was unsuitable for their purposes. He felt that it was because of his forty one years of age and his vasectomy making him unable to breed, in fact any abduction case which doesn't feature the taking of samples or breeding may be viewed as unusual and certainly in the minority.

So who takes U.F.O.s seriously? It would appear that not only do some members of the public and witnesses to sightings but various world leaders as well. For example, imagine the possibilities available to the first nation to gain access to, and be able to use, alien technology. The scope is almost unimaginable, and certainly it looks as though the U.S. Government has no intention of letting anybody but themselves gain this knowledge first, that is if they don't already possess it. Call it what you will. The Pig Farm, Paradise Ranch, The Box, Groom Lake or, more common on aviation radio frequencies, Dreamland, but its most common name however is Area 51.

Area 51 does not appear on any map, military or otherwise, and even if you did manage to find it, you would not be able to get anywhere near it and certainly not close enough to see it. Even military pilots are forbidden from entering its airspace, and though its existence is denied there are signs around the boundary which read “RESTRICTED AREA,” “U.S. AIR FORCE INSTALLATION,” “PHOTOGRAPHY OF THIS AREA IS PROHIBITED” and “USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORISED.”

In truth it lies where it has been for over forty years, along a discreet trail beside Highway 375, ninety five miles north of Las Vegas on the desert shores of the dried up Groom Lake and it consists of barracks, hangars and of course an airstrip. It is at this airstrip that six unmarked jets known as “Janets” land every day carrying around 600 employees from Las Vegas. It is believed that the installation was developed so that the Government could secretly work on technology it had obtained from crashed flying saucers without anybody troubling them and it forms a part of Nellis Air Force Base, the other three parts being the Tonopa and Nevada test sites (where top secret nuclear tests are carried out), Nellis bombing range (where planes and weapon systems are tested), and Nellis Military Airport. If top secret

“saucers” are being tested here, then Nellis air traffic controllers would certainly know about it.

One radar operator says that she witnessed a classified flying disc test at night in the desert a few miles from the base along with a group of other people, who didn't know each other, and who weren't wearing any name tags or insignia, so nobody was talking to anybody else. There were ten to fifteen discs which glowed orange on their underside and performed many manoeuvres which she describes as sophisticated, so much so in fact that she felt that the pilots must have been extra-terrestrials. After the tests she was taken to a medical facility she felt must have been at Area 51, and there she was laid down on a stainless steel table and told in a dead pan voice to “Keep calm” by a man who was walking around the room holding a hypodermic needle, and very quickly he had injected something into her neck.

It has taken her over ten years to come forward with her story as she could never talk about it before, but the more she does the easier it becomes, and she feels that this is because she was given a very strong “suggestion” not to talk about it and this worked for a long time.

Area 51 was the birth place of top secret U.S. military projects such as the U2 spy plane, the Blackbird spy plane, the SR71 and of course the F-117A or Stealth Bomber. It is now believed that tests are under way on Project Aurora, an aircraft whose existence is officially denied yet was accidentally mentioned in a Pentagon report. Aurora is an aircraft alleged to be capable of reaching speeds of up to 5,000 mph or Mach 8.

Another example of the secret testing, and possibly the best one, is the Avro Car which was launched in total secrecy in 1965. The Avro Car was, to all intents and purposes, a flying saucer. It was a manned, disc shaped craft which was first tested in Canada in 1960 and the film footage of it being flown is now declassified after the project was scrapped in the late 1960s after swallowing up millions of dollars with no reason given. What is interesting about the Avro Car is that these tests and developments were happening at the same time that Project Blue Book said that they were not, and Nick Pope, formerly of the Ministry of Defence, says that the technology we are in possession of is always five to ten years ahead of that which is on public display, but he also says that any new aircraft is not flown over public areas but over classified ranges, so any U.F.O. seen by the public is not our own. Chris Carter of “The X Files” fame has heard many of these new

aircraft being tested from his home, he says "I've tracked their sonic booms.... the Government won't tell you where they come from...."

The testing and other research is paid for by the "Black Budget," which doesn't appear in any federal allocations so that it can't be traced, but the United States is by no means alone in the practise of running a black budget. The budget for Area 51 is rumoured to be somewhere between 1 and 1.5 billion dollars every year, and in the year 1996-97 the U.S. will spend over 11 billion dollars on research, development and testing of secret weapon systems of all kinds, far more than any other country. The budget for Area 51 is boosted, allegedly, by the expensive tastes and eating habits of the staff who indulge in such delicacies as frogs legs, king crab and filet mignon washed down with mineral water at \$50,000 per month. One Colonel is believed to have his own Israeli grapefruit flown in at a cost of \$25 each. These facts fade almost into insignificance when compared to the mother of all rumours, that Area 51 is home to no fewer than nine recovered U.F.O.s which are studied, and more importantly, tested at a facility on the base called S-4.

Eye witnesses to these tests in the skies over the desert tell of seeing strange lights in the sky, disc and triangle shaped craft performing unearthly manoeuvres such as travelling at great speeds, mid-air halts and exceptional acceleration. In 1988 aviation writer James Goodall quoted a retired Air Force Colonel in "Gung Ho" (an American military magazine) by saying that the Colonel had told him "We have things that are so far beyond the comprehension of the average aviation authority as to be really alien to our way of thinking." Clearly a most unfortunate use of the word "alien."

George Knapp, a local newsman and Ufologist, says that rumours of recovered alien craft have persisted around the base since the 1950s and most of them were only rumours, though two of the many which persist are one in 1953 of a recovered disc shaped craft whose cockpit was too small to accommodate a man, and one of a disc shaped object in the sky being escorted by helicopters in 1978.

Both rumours were refuelled in 1989 by a technical engineer called Robert Lazar who claimed that he had worked at the S-4 part of Area 51 for a few months in 1988, he said that he had held a position thirty eight levels above the Top Secret "Q" Clearance that he had held at Los Alamos Laboratory while working on Defence. Lazar appeared on K.L.A.S. TV. News and shocked the world when he claimed that he had been working on

Reverse Engineering one of nine recovered alien craft to see how its propulsion system operated. He did not know how or when the craft had arrived at the base but thought that it was not the victim of a crash, and he said that it had actually been test flown. Its nickname on the base was "The Sport Model." Lazar cannot prove his academic record as he says that it has been destroyed by the Government, but he can produce Government pay slips for the time that he claimed he was at Area 51.

The recovered craft's existence wasn't common knowledge around the base and was only on a need to know basis, and may not even have been brought to the attention of Congress and the President himself, although Dwight D. Eisenhower was believed to have been shown extra-terrestrial technology, and Ronald Reagan had also been heard to make references to it. Jimmy Carter however was denied access to U.F.O. data after his election campaign in which he had vowed to pursue the U.F.O. mystery after having seen several himself. One source said on the matter: "Guests in the White House come and go every four to eight years, but the C.I.A. goes on forever."

Lazar's claims were not technically impossible but later became somewhat discredited when he was found to be involved in a brothel, and some of his academic credentials failed to check out. British Ufologist Timothy Good feels that Lazar's story is basically true, and said "that he needed to make the story more credible, but of course, once people realise that he's exaggerated about something, they tend to throw the baby out with the bath water." Lazar claims that his employers knew of his background and his contacts within the U.F.O. community, and possibly of his creative C.V., but were interested in his capabilities as an employee, and then of course should he go A.W.O.L. he would be easy to discredit, yet at the same time he would be credible enough to be believed, thus carrying on the confusion and mystery. This would of course be unnecessary if the base didn't exist, but then again if it didn't exist, how could a former employee take legal action against their former employers there.

The process has proven difficult and has been ongoing since 1994 when a total of five former employees, and the widow of a sixth, all represented legally by Jonathan Turley, initiated legal action against the Pentagon and the Environmental Protection Agency. They are suing over exposure to burning toxic waste which took place throughout the 1980s. The waste, they allege, was burned in open pits and was classified material. The symptoms that they



all suffered from were a skin rash which could only be removed with sand paper, and the man who died, Robert Frost, had suffered from this same rash. A hazardous chemical expert Professor Peter Kahn was given a tissue sample from the body of Frost and commented "My only reaction is, what on earth has this man been exposed to?"

One of the victims appeared on an ABC World News bulletin with his face in silhouette and his voice disguised, and concluded his interview by saying "The running joke was, the place didn't exist so consequently anything could occur there." The danger of course was that all are facing imprisonment if found guilty of breaching national security, so they aren't allowed to tell doctors of their place of work or the nature of the work they do or did.

The government admitted that they did indeed have "an operating location near Groom Lake" but that it was nameless, and they took steps to ban the use of the terms "Area 51" and "Dreamland" from all court proceedings, though Turley noted that the name Area 51 appeared both in the Pentagon's in-house newspaper and in the congressional record.

The case is ongoing but it was severely hampered by Sheila Widnal, U.S. Secretary of the Air Force, whose affidavit stated that any details revealed in court would be of grave consequence to national security, thus destroying the case for the prosecution, and then Turley was prohibited from owning a copy of the operating location's security manual, despite the press, the justice department and anybody surfing the Internet being able to gain access to it. Turley is quoted as saying "The Soviets have pictures of it, kids in Nevada play with the planes that fly from it.... but it doesn't exist."

At around the time that this case came to light, the pentagon reclaimed a 4,000 acre patch of land which had offered the best and most accessible vantage point of the site, and this added to the land they had already previously bought up around the area. They then released a statement saying that they needed this extra land to ensure the safety and security of operations, but that they "don't have U.F.O.s out there, what goes on out there is classified." Whatever classified means, it is obviously very sensitive, and anybody foolish enough to climb for ninety minutes to the top of a hill side with a telescope will be met by armed private security patrolmen in white jeeps bearing government plates, wearing camouflaged uniforms with no insignia and carrying walkie-talkies. The lucky ones just face a fine of up to \$5,000 or a prison term. Some people however will not be put off by these

minor details and many make the trip, stopping just short of the boundaries. The nearest town to the site, Rachel, nothing more than a few trailers, has a population of only one hundred people, and one hostelry called The Little A' le' Inn which houses thousands upon thousands of such visitors every year.

Rumours continue to abound regarding Area 51 and the work carried out there, the latest of which concerns the B52 Stealth Bomber which is rumoured to possess anti-gravity capabilities, these particular rumours being started by scientists whom the powers that be had tried to silence. Even scientists who hadn't worked on the Stealth project claim that the aircraft possesses a strange design and some equally strange capabilities. So are the U.S. Military in possession of recovered U.F.O.s and their technology, or are all the rumours exactly that, just rumours? The saying that there's no smoke without fire springs to mind. If not then why the need for such drastic measures to ensure security, and why the apparent obstruction of justice in the high courts?

So we've looked in detail at many tales of U.F.O. sightings, close encounters and the ensuing chaos, secrecy or denial, but are we any nearer to solving the problem than we were before, have we learnt anything, or have the facts simply become too muddled to fathom?

In similarity to the ghosts questions there is likewise no doubt that U.F.O.s do exist, and this is plainly clear in the context of them being objects in the sky which are, at least at one time or another, unidentified, but like the misconception with ghosts being the spirits of the dead, are U.F.O.s actually space ships of alien life forms from other worlds, and is the admittance to the existence of U.F.O.s to admit that we are being visited by little green men? As Mac Brazel's character said in the film "Roswell:" "They ain't green." The evidence for and against is before us, so we must now sum up, draw our conclusions and make up our minds about one of, if not the most fascinating questions the world has yet to properly answer.

The question is not really whether or not U.F.O.s exist because they clearly do as we have seen testified by many witnesses, men, women and children alike, and of all ages from all walks of life, surely all of these people can't be wrong, nor can they all have an ulterior motive for lying about it. Obviously what a lot of the cases are, are merely M.F.O.s, Misidentified Flying Objects, but as we saw earlier we have some 700,000 cases to explain away from just the last forty years. The fact that U.F.O.s are with us and have

been for many years is clear to see, so what we must look at is what they are, we are not concerned here though with those which may be balloons, planes, tricks of the light or cloud formations, the ones we are concerned with are those 700,000 that can't be explained away as such.

The possibilities are several, though we can narrow them down, especially if we consider that U.F.O.s are not a random phenomenon, they do not move with a random pattern though they are sometimes erratic, they are seen to hover, to land, to take off and to avoid military aircraft sent to intercept them. These are clearly not the reactions of a random force of some kind but of a controlled object, so who or what is controlling them? Presumably, and it is by no means a huge presumption, they are being controlled by the beings which are seen inside or in the vicinity of the craft themselves, an alien race of some kind.

So what we now have is a manned craft flying around in our skies, the origin of which we do not know. Not all are apparently manned, for example the U.F.O. seen at Rendlesham Forest seemed to drip smaller ones from it which later rejoined it, and a Russian pilot had his aircraft “buzzed” by a small object which had separated from the larger one he had been sent to identify, and when he avoided it he saw it “re-enter” the mother ship. Could these be monitoring probes of some sort like the ones that Herb Schirmer was shown, or a smaller version of the craft Adamski claimed to have seen but on a smaller scale? This would explain some of the other sightings of U.F.O.s where just a small unidentified light source is seen rather than a larger craft of some sort, and might suggest that the area is being checked out before the craft themselves come, or the beings risk being seen taking their samples.

The problem now is where do they come from? Are they humans from the future, our descendents come back to see us in the ultimate history lesson? Unlikely as we would surely see many more similarities between us and them rather than the humanoid figures we now see. Are they beings from another planet in our own solar system? This is certainly the most popular theory and the one which receives most attention.

The chances of there being other life forms in the universe, bearing in mind the number of solar systems, stars and possible planets, have to be at least a safe bet if not a mathematical certainty, and there cannot be a problem with the thought that we are not the only form of life in the universe. The problem we have with these other life forms being the answer to U.F.O.s is

just how do they manage to travel all the way to earth across space. The problem is not only with the actual journey itself, but at least one expert is of the opinion that if a craft were to approach earth, there are so many people and so much technology watching the skies, both amateur star gazers and professional organisations, that the approach and arrival of such a craft would be immediately seen once it got in the near vicinity, and could not remain secret from the public for more than twelve minutes, and certainly no longer than fifteen.

Of course this would be if they were to be visible during their approach and using conventional propulsion systems which some have been seen to do, for instance by Officer Zamora, but only during landing and taking off, not in mid-flight, during which they seem to possess no apparent engines as such. Could they possibly “leap” through space by harnessing the powers of natural sources such as gravity, or perhaps a more controversial theory is that they may use what is known as wormholes, which are not yet proven to exist, but are believed by scientists to be a possibility. Wormholes are a phenomenon proposed by New Zealand mathematician, Roy Kerr, who, using Einstein's theory of relativity showed that a spinning black hole could contain a wormhole which is a space-time bridge that joins different places in space and time in the universe. The problem with using these as a regular means of travel is that by their very nature they are unstable, emitting vast amounts of radiation which would fry any object unfortunate enough to get too close, and they then have a nasty habit of closing, trapping anything caught inside. Therefore any craft that was brave, or foolish, enough to try and utilise a wormhole would need two things:

1. Some way to counter the radiation.
2. Anti Gravity capabilities to prevent the wormhole from closing.

Kip Thorne, a physicist, showed in 1985 that the laws of sub atomics can allow for an anti-gravity force but the problem is actually creating it in the first place. That leaves the problem of the radiation which Chinese theorist Li-Yin Li suggests can be at least tamed by placing a “perfectly reflecting ball” at each end of the wormhole. He does not however tell us how he intends to get them there in the first place.

So should we manage to overcome these minor problems, would we be

allowed to use wormholes by the laws of nature, time travel being full of potential paradoxes? For example going back in time and killing your mother on the night before you were conceived. As with everything though this has also been accounted for by theorists and experts such as David Deutsch and Michael Lockwood who suggest that Quantum Theory would allow time travel but only to a parallel universe in which any actions taken would have no bearing on our own universe.

This is the other main possibility for the origin of U.F.O.s, a parallel universe, though it is one which receives less press than the “universal brothers” theory. The suggestion is that U.F.O.s and their inhabitants are from such an alternative universe and are able to commute between theirs and our own at will. It has been theorised many times that there may be an infinite number of universes in which every eventuality is played out, for example in our own universe we may have got out of bed on time, but in another we may have overslept. In another we may have just been in time to catch the bus to work, but in yet another we may have missed it and had to walk.

Many people have attempted to come up with theories about how parallel universes exist and the conditions to be satisfied to travel between them but none have really come up with anything solid, though by the very nature of the material any theory is bound to sound incredible to the point of being beyond belief. If scientists, theorists and philosophers are giving it so much time is there a modicum of truth in it? It is likely that one of these two possibilities holds the key to U.F.O.s, the fact that craft can visit us and then apparently disappear afterwards shows us that the technology they use is far superior to our own, and whether they come from outer space or from a parallel universe, we the public are still a long, long way from knowing the truth. There are almost certainly people on earth who do know the truth and have no apparent intention of divulging their knowledge. Possibly some of these people are the staff at Area 51 or, perhaps more accurately, some of these people are some of the staff at Area 51. The fact that there is a military installation there is advertised by the signs telling us to keep out and has been admitted by the military themselves, but this is not what we are interested in and what we want to know is just what goes on there.

The facts are that many new military aircraft have been developed at Area 51, so obviously research into genuine new projects is conducted there,

and those new aircraft would need to be tested in the skies above the base, so no doubt this work is genuine and bona fide, but is that as far as it goes? Having legitimate research and development would certainly be an excellent cover for more covert work and would help to divert attention from U.F.O.s should they be housed there as well as the U2 spy plane, the B52 and the stealth bomber.

It is an obvious fact that rumours will always start, escalate and be passed on and added to until their source is undetectable, and it eventually becomes indistinguishable from the truth, but it is also a fact that there is no smoke without fire, and there are certainly no court proceedings, even in the adoptive home of litigation, without somebody feeling that they have a strong case, especially when that case is against the whole back bone of a nation as large as America.

Why would a military base be built in such an inaccessible part of the country and then the land for miles all around it be bought up and patrolled so heavily if not to conceal something extremely sensitive? Other operating installations can make do without all these precautions so what makes Area 51 so special? It has been rumoured many times that the Majestic 12 wished to build such an installation to use for their objectives in researching U.F.O. technology, and of course there are myriad rumours that this is indeed what takes place there, and given half a chance the six former employees would testify in court to that effect were they not facing a possible jail term for breaching the official secrets act.

The latest rumours about Area 51 are those which concern “Project Aurora”, said to be Americas latest super plane, which, as mentioned earlier, does not officially exist, but we have heard mention of it in official documents, we have heard of some of its alleged capabilities and we have even seen sketches of what it is supposed to look like. This latest development is said to use U.F.O. technology in order to be able to achieve some of these unique qualities, and to a greater extent than the F-117 Stealth Bomber. Of course most of what we hear is just rumours but that has been the name of the Governments game over the years, releasing information every so often, but the tactics they employ are to release false information from reputable sources and genuine information from easily discredited sources with “questionable” backgrounds and vice versa so that they can't be accused of not releasing information. We are unable to decipher what is the truth and

what is lies, but if the U.S. Government are in possession of recovered U.F.O.s then it is almost certain that Area 51 would be where they are kept and tested.

There is a popular theory that in time the authorities will reveal what they know to the public and that they have already begun to do so by giving us information from disreputable sources and false information from reputable sources, both of which are as good as one another in their view, and that this is part of their plan to allow us to get used to the idea of not being alone. Once they feel they have achieved this they will start to release more information from more and more reputable sources when they feel that the public is able to handle such knowledge, and if this is the case then it is certainly taking them a long time to gently prepare us for the confirmation of what we already suspect. This would seem to be borne out by the experience of twenty seven year old Robert Suffern, and later his wife, of Bracebridge, Ontario which began on Tuesday October 7th, 1975 when Robert received a phone call from his sister who lived nearby. She wanted him to investigate a strange glow that she could see inside a barn, which he duly went to do in his car, though when he got there he could see nothing out of the ordinary. Deciding to put his sisters mind at ease he began to drive toward her house, and on his way there he saw a dark disc shaped object about twelve or fourteen feet wide on the road in front of him, but before he had stopped his car the object "went straight up in the air and out of sight."

Suffern decided to turn around and head home, in his own words "I was scared" but as he headed home he saw a humanoid figure about four feet tall with "very wide shoulders.... out of proportion to his body," it was wearing a silver grey suit and a helmet. The figure walked out into the road in front of Suffern's car and he hit the brakes, causing the car to skid on the gravel road, narrowly avoiding a collision with the figure which then ran to the side of the road and jumped over the fence in such a manner as to give Suffern the impression that it was weightless before running into the field and out of sight.

He continued to drive home feeling very shaken by the incident, and he felt no better when he looked out of a window and saw that the U.F.O. had come back. It was now flying slowly along the road where it circled an electricity pylon before flying upwards again in to the night sky.

Suffern said of the affair "I know what I saw, but I don't care if I ever

see that creature again” and he would have been happy to let the incident die down, but an investigator, Harry Tokarz, tracked him down in July 1976 while he was working on a documentary about U.F.O.s in Canada and paid the Sufferns a visit. They both agreed to talk to him as long as he used no recording equipment but merely spoke to them “man to man,” however, an account of the visit did later appear in CUFORN's Journal “The Pulse Analyser.” It was the journalist's opinion that Robert Suffern was “an individual who carefully measures his thoughts” and his wife was “a home bred country girl, quick to air her views.”

After the original October encounter with the craft the Sufferns received a telephone call in November during which they agreed to a meeting, and a police car arrived on December 12th carrying three men in uniform whose credentials showed that they were from the Canadian Forces, the U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon and Naval Intelligence, and once comfortable inside the house they proceeded to answer any questions that the Sufferns asked them about the U.F.O. sightings. Their answers were immediate and without faltering giving the impression that they were, as they said, answering in truth. They told the Sufferns what the U.F.O. was, where it had come from and why. The impression they gave was that the authorities had been working with the aliens since 1943 when, during an experiment commonly, though not officially, known as “The Philadelphia Experiment,” the Navy had accidentally bridged the gap between two dimensions using electromagnetic fields concentrated on the destroyer U.S.S. Eldridge (DE 173). Believed to be present was Albert Einstein whose “Unified Field” theory was the basis behind the principle of making objects invisible.

The men apologised to the Sufferns for the incident and said that it had been a mistake, Robert thought it must have been a secret military craft but no, they said that it was a saucer with a malfunction. Mrs. Suffern was still skeptical about the whole thing but her mind was put at rest when the men quoted the exact time to the minute at which all of their sightings had occurred, a detail that the Sufferns had told nobody about. Possibly the visitors could have been M.I.B.s, but rather than try to dissuade them from the U.F.O. theory they supported it and told them that this is indeed what they had seen, nor had they arrived in an old black classic car but a police car, nor did they wear black or act unusually and they gave the Sufferns no impression that they were anything but human. They also confirmed a third



sighting of the craft on the Suffern's property again giving the precise time of the sighting, and again saying that this one had also been an accident.

One must wonder why the military would go to the trouble and risk of visiting the Sufferns and explaining it to them, could it be through a fear due to Robert almost running over the figure in the road and the serious repercussions that would have ensued if he had not managed to avoid it, or on the other hand could this be an example of them supplying genuine evidence through unreliable sources, after all the Sufferns were just “simple country folk?” Understandably though, in return for their frankness they asked the Sufferns to keep quiet about what they had been told, and Robert did so out of “moral reasons” and not because he is bound by the official secrets act, and they had only opened up to the investigator after a slip of the tongue by Mrs. Suffern, and then only casually got slowly around to discussing the incident as though it was no big deal.

As a footnote, the investigator claims to have evidence that shows the Canadian and U.S. Authorities had conducted medical and psychological checks on the Sufferns earlier than the December meeting to assess just how they would react when they were told just what they had seen. Whatever the purpose was behind the military's co-operation it was almost successful in putting the matter to rest, but not quite, and again we have a parallel universe as the “source” of U.F.O.s rather than another part of our own universe, and we are slowly seeing more evidence that the parallel universe holds the key to U.F.O.s, and they are able at will to “leap” between universes appearing, as seen by some witnesses, in a cloud of gas relatively undetected, but if they have the ability to do so why would they continue to do so without making much more contact with us. In the short term of course, the desire to explore and gather knowledge would be too great to ignore and this quest for knowledge would continue, possibly making a few trips and then trying to analyse what they have found. Could this also explain the waves of sightings we get over the years?

The main reason for their visits must be research such as taking samples of rocks, water and possibly even animals and human tissue rather than to get repairs done on their craft, or to preach to us about how we are destroying our planet. The question then is how much do the authorities know about, and assist, our visitors? We have seen evidence that the military, in America at least, have been escorting these craft, and we have also seen evidence that

they deny all knowledge of them, but what exactly is their “working relationship?”

Some people believe that they have an “agreement” in which they give us some knowledge of their technology and in return we turn a blind eye to their abductions of humans and possibly even supply them with animals as well, but if the cooperation was that great, then they would surely be able to get all the samples they would need without them taking the risk of being seen by the public, so surely the relationship cannot be all that close. This is also borne out by the fact that we don't yet have a craft of our own which can perform aerial feats to match theirs, or is this just part of a joint plan to slowly bring us round to accepting the knowledge of their existence by letting us see their craft and the occupants, and planes like the Stealth Bomber and the unofficial Aurora using a little more of their technology than their predecessors?

This eventuality though doesn't seem very likely, especially if we have been known to shoot down their craft, and if bases like Woodbridge and Bentwaters at Rendlesham Forest are visited by crafts which mystify them, besides which could we really develop such a close relationship with an alien race if we can't even work with each race on our own planet, as the wars that rage all over the planet demonstrate? It is therefore hard to believe that we are as close to our visitors as we would like to think, and that whenever one of their craft crashes, we swarm all over it in an attempt to learn all we can from it and its occupants. This may have been the case for many years, and that over this time we have gleaned bits of information from such crashes and that research is under way to try to understand and operate the technology we discover, though it seems that we are still a long way from fully understanding it, and we are not fully aware of the implications of what we are doing. This would be why our guests are still seen by the public as they collect their samples and monitor and observe us, but do they actually abduct us or are abductions a scenario created by some “unsettling incident.”

What is certain is that they seem very real to the people who experience them and they truly believe that they have been experimented upon and examined medically. The reasons for these tests, if they do take place, are clear and the reasons that people are told they will be revisited are clear. It is so that they can be monitored over a period of time. Also clear are the reasons why the events are wiped from the memories of the victims, but what

is not so clear is just why, if the events are to be wiped from their memories, do they get a guided tour of the craft, are showed how the craft are powered and told that they are worried for our environment and the way in which we treat it?

If the abduction is the creation of the distressed mind, then could the fears for the environment be the subconscious fears of the abductee? And if this is the case then also the tour of the craft and how they are powered must also be the creation of the mind, but these technical explanations are a little too close to the truth to be the creation of the distressed mind of a person with no apparent technical knowledge. Having said that, it is puzzling as to why a person would be told that they must try to help save the planet and then have the warning wiped from their memory.

The real difficulty when dealing with abductions is that they generally only become apparent when the victim is hypnotised, and as we said earlier this is a complicated and relatively misunderstood phenomenon in which the person will say what they perceive to be the truth, rather than what is the actual truth, though of course they will have no awareness that these are not one and the same.

As for cattle mutilations, they are certainly intriguing but on the evidence so far, it is less and less likely that they are the work of predators and scavengers that leave perfect surgical incisions and no signs of their ever having been at the scene.

One thing is for certain, we can't ignore the 40 million sightings that we have had of U.F.O.s and nor can we ignore the fact that there is one sighting every three minutes somewhere on earth. U.F.O.s are here now and they will be here for the foreseeable future, at least until "they" have got what they are looking for, just what that is, is unclear, but surely if they had some ulterior motive, they could have achieved their aims long before now. Perhaps they do only wish to observe us and our "strange" ways while examining our planet, and who's to say, if some of the rumours are true, then maybe some people from earth have visited their world and perhaps are still there now, though for the foreseeable future we will simply never know and it will remain, as many stories are when connected with U.F.O.s, as speculation based on rumour.

## SOURCES

- BOOKS** Ashpole E. - 1995 - The U.F.O. Phenomena (Headline, London)
- Bartholomew A. - 1991 - Crop Circles, Harbingers of World Change (Gateway Books, Bath)
- Becklake S. - 1994 - The Official London Planetarium Book Of Space (Virgin, London)
- Berlitz C. - 1980 - The Philadelphia Experiment (Granada Publishing, St. Albans)
- Boar R. + Blundell N. - 1991 - The World's Greatest Ghosts (The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, London)
- Brookesmith P. - 1988 - U.F.O.s, Where Do They Come From? (Macdonald and Co, London)
- Canning J. - 1984 - Great Unsolved Mysteries (Arthur Baker Ltd, London)
- H. Charlesworth and Co. Ltd - 1989 - The Revised English Bible (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press)
- Christie-Murray D. - 1981 - Reincarnation, Ancient Beliefs and Modern Evidence (David and Charles Ltd, Newton Abbott, Devon)
- Evans H. - 1984 - Visions Apparitions Alien Visitors (Aquarian Press, Wellingborough)
- Goldman J. - 1995 - The X Files Book of the Unexplained Vol 1 (Simon and Schuster Ltd, London)
- Grey E. - 1988 - Presidents of the United States (Hamlyn, London)
- Hapgood S. - 1994 - The World's Great Ghost and Poltergeist Stories (Foulsham, Cippenham)
- Healey T. - 1983 - Strange But True, The World's Weirdest Newspaper Stories (Octopus, London)
- Hough P. + Randles J. - 1991 - Looking For The Aliens (Blandford, London)
- Neil W. - 1970 - The Bible Story (Collins, London)
- North A. - 1996 - The Paranormal (Blandford, London)

Parker M. - 1983 - The World's Most Fantastic Freaks (Octopus, London)  
 Pascall J. - 1987 - God, The Ultimate Autobiography (Ebury Press, London)  
 Randles J. - 1993 - Aliens, The Real Story (Robert Hale Ltd, London)  
 Randles J. and Fuller P. - 1990 - Crop Circles, A Mystery Solved (Robert Hale Ltd, London)  
 Roberts Henry C. - 1982 - The Complete Prophecies of Nostradamus (Nostradamus Co, London)  
 Rogo D. Scott - 1979 - The Poltergeist Experience (Penguin, New York)  
 Smoot G. + Davidson K. - Wrinkles in Time, The Imprint of Creation (Little, Brown & Company, London)  
 Smyth F. and Stemman R. - 1991 - Mysteries of the Afterlife (Bloomsbury Books, London)  
 Snedden R. - 1996 - Astronomy (Parragon, Avonmouth)  
 Spencer J. - 1991 - U.F.O.s The Definitive Casebook (Hamlyn, London)  
 Stone R. - 1993 - Encyclopedia of the Unexplained (Bookmark Ltd, Leicester)  
 Stone R. - 1993 - Mysteries of the Mind (Bookmark Ltd, Leicester)  
 Underwood P. - 1986 - This Haunted Isle (Javelin Books, Poole)  
 Von Daniken E. - 1969 - Chariots of the Gods (Michael Heron and Souvenir Press, London)  
 Watson P. - 1981 - Twins (Hutchinson + Co, London)  
 Welfare S. + Fairley J. - 1980 - Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World (William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd, London)  
 Wilson C. - 1996 - World Famous U.F.O.s (Parragon, Avonmouth)  
 Wilson C. + Evans Dr. C. - 1995 - World Famous Strange But True (Paragon, Avonmouth)

**MAGAZINES, PAPERS AND JOURNALS** Focus, The Magazine of Discovery - February 1996 - Gruner and Jahr (U.K.) – London  
 Focus, The Magazine of Discovery - May 1996 - Gruner and Jahr (U.K.) – London  
 Focus, The Magazine of Discovery - June 1996 - Gruner and Jahr (U.K.) – London  
 Focus, The Magazine of Discovery - July 1996 - Gruner and Jahr (U.K.) – London

Focus, The Magazine of Discovery - September 1996 - Gruner and Jahr  
(U.K.) – London

Proving God's Existence II, The Cosmological Argument - Brian Davies O.P.  
(Blackfriars College, Oxford)

The Unexplained - 1980 to 1983 – Orbis

[www.jamesonline.net/mysteries](http://www.jamesonline.net/mysteries)