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Mundane roads?

Strange things – ABCs, Black Dogs, UFOs – can appear in the most ordinary settings

Paranormal Encounters on Britain's Roads

Phantom Figures, UFOs and Missing Time

Peter A McCue

The History Press 2018

Pb, 176pp, notes, bib, ind, £12.99, ISBN 9780750984386

Peter McCue cites several experiences from my 'Old Man of Halsall Moss' (OMHM) article [FT328:32–39]. However, this very good book approaches the subject of weird stuff on our roads from an angle different from mine and others'. Sean Tudor (of Blue Bell Hill fame) and I have tended to focus on phantom hitchhikers /jaywalkers and other road ghosts, particularly in one (broad) location.

Peter has taken the admirable stance that the apparitions experienced on our roads may be part of the same phenomenon, which can manifest in a kaleidoscope of different ways. He adds in phantom vehicles and aircraft, Alien Big Cats, Black Dogs, mysterious light phenomena, UFOs, 'Missing Time', and vehicle interference.

This 'horizontal' approach means that he sets out a wide range of experiences, and allocates them according to type, rather than location. Consequently the various OMHM experiences that I wrote about are spread across different chapters. This approach means that Peter does not go into too much detail about most of the events/experiences. There were many cases that I was unfamiliar with, which was tantalising because I wanted to know a lot more about them! Fortunately, the excellent

notes, bibliography and index mean that the reader can follow up the cases with ease.

Peter is a clinical psychologist, and this comes over in some of his evaluations. Nevertheless, he presents the material in an open-minded way, reflecting that he is a cautious believer in the reality of the phenomena. As a good fortean, he is convinced that strange things happen, but he is by no means certain how and why.

The first chapter usefully brings together descriptions and definitions of the different paranormal manifestations and theories he later refers to: ESP; physical effects; and apparitions

and haunting. The latter touches on subjects such as alternative realities and 'psychic internets'. Therefore it can act as a helpful reference point in its own right.

Peter inserts his comments and theories about specific cases immediately after their

descriptions, so the reader is regularly considering the quality and consistency of events and evaluating potential causes and explanations.

Some may find that there is a slightly academic hue, but I found Peter's conversational style and his approach made the book very readable. Many names quoted will be familiar to *FT* readers, as will some of the topics and cases covered. The book manages to be interesting to general readers and to those with a special interest in paranormal and UFO matters. It highlights that strange things can happen anywhere and in the most mundane of settings. This is a useful addition to your fortean bookshelf, a book you can lend to friends to pique their interest and widen their horizons.

Rob Gandy

★★★★★

