

PR94 contents



STAR GATE

Dr Sonali Marwaha, co-editor with Dr Edwin May of the *Star Gate Archives*, details the US Government's twenty-three-year-long research programme on psi.

POLTERGEISTS

John Fraser asks 'Are Poltergeists the Only Provable Paranormal Phenomenon? And Ghosts a "Mere Shadow" When It Comes to Tangible Evidence?'

GHOST HUNTING IN FILM

Media Studies expert Simon Bacon examines the history of technology and ghost hunting in film from *Photographing a Ghost* (1898) to *Insidious: Chapter 2* (2013).

GHOST HUNTING WORKSHOP

Ashley Knibb reports on the first joint workshop on ghost hunting held by the Society for Psychical Research and the Ghost Club in London last year.

editorial

Dr Leo Ruickbie
Editor

In this issue, I am privileged to be able to bring you part one of a comprehensive overview of the US Government's research programme on psi. From 1972 to 1995, various US militaries, agencies and departments contributed funding to a series of exotically codenamed projects, from Gondola Wish to Star Gate, that attempted to harness psi in the interests of US national defence. It is written by Dr Sonali Marwaha, who, along with Dr Edwin May, was one of the compilers and editors of the monumental four-volume *Star Gate Archives* that assembled and made sense of the CIA's release of the declassified files from 2000 onwards. Considerable controversy remains around the project. While some believe that it was ultimately abandoned due to the lack of results, Dr Marwaha argues cogently that the project produced objective evidence of psi. In the next part, she will examine the operational aspect of the programme conducted at the US Army's Fort Meade base in Maryland.

The rest of the issue covers ghost hunting in some of its various guises. SPR Council Member John Fraser asks whether cases of alleged poltergeist activity provide the only provable evidence of the paranormal, as opposed to ghosts in particular, with reference to his own investigations, notably at The Cage in St Osyth. Our film expert Simon Bacon returns to give us a wide-ranging analysis of the portrayal of technology and ghost hunting in film from the late Victorian period to the early twenty-first century, showing that we do not need to prove that the paranormal exists for it to be an important cultural force. Finally, the PR's event reporter Ashley Knibb reports on a workshop on ghost hunting held jointly by the Society for Psychical Research and the Ghost Club last year, which also saw the launch of the Society's revised version of the *Guidance Notes for Investigators of Spontaneous Cases*.

Announced in my last editorial, the SPR's new book project – *Is There Life After Death?* – is now well underway. After releasing the call for chapters, I received an astonishing number of proposals, ninety-three in little over a month. Whilst this showed the tremendous interest in the subject, with space for only around a quarter of these, it also meant many difficult decisions were required to produce a balanced and coherent final selection. With the chosen authors now working away on their chapters, I am looking forward to reading what promise to be excellent contributions towards understanding one of the key questions at the heart of the Society's endeavours. Ψ

It is possible for readers to take part in the SPR's *Is There Life After Death?* book project. One of the book's contributors, Walter Meyer zu Erpen, has an online survey on 'Does Spiritualism Prove Life After Death?' at <https://survivalresearch.ca/spiritualism-survey/>. Please sign up to make your views known – there is a deadline, so act now.

