

= Lobster ( magazine ) =

Lobster is a magazine that is interested primarily in the influence of intelligence and security services on politics and world trade , what it calls " deep politics " or " parapolitics " . It combines the examination of conspiracy theories and contemporary history . Lobster is edited and published in the United Kingdom and has appeared twice a year for 32 years , at first in 16 @-@ page A5 format , then as an A4 magazine . Operating on a shoestring , its distinguished contributors include academics and others . Since 2009 it is distributed as a free downloadable PDF document .

According to the Hull Daily Mail , Lobster ' investigates government conspiracies , state espionage and the secret service . ' In 1986 the magazine scooped mainstream media by uncovering the secret Clockwork Orange operation , implicated in trying to destabilise the British government . Colin Wallace , a former British Army Intelligence Corps officer in Northern Ireland , described how he had been instructed to smear leading UK politicians . Questions were asked in the House of Commons and an extended scandal ensued .

The current curator of the CIA Historical Intelligence Collection , Hayden B. Peake , notes that the editors of Lobster see it as " member of the international brotherhood of parapolitics mags , " the other members being Geheim ( Cologne , Germany ) , Intelligence Newsletter ( Paris , France ) , and Covert Action Information Bulletin ( USA ) , and is " distinctive in its depth of coverage , its detailed documentation , and the absence of the rhetoric " .

In 1989 , Lobster published names of 1 @,@ 500 citizens said to be working in intelligence . The magazine was denounced in the House of Commons . The editors replied that all published details could be found in local libraries . The magazine has also carried detailed analysis of " fringe " subjects such as UFOs and remote viewing .

= = History = =

= = = Founding = = =

In 1982 , an American newsletter about the Kennedy assassination , Echoes of Conspiracy , put Robin Ramsay and Stephen Dorril in touch with each other because of their common interest in the JFK assassination story . A few months later , they decided to launch a magazine , and in September 1983 , they published 150 copies of The Lobster priced at 50p . Ramsay later described himself and his associate : " Dorril is a Freudo @-@ anarchist , with Situationist tendencies ; and Ramsay is a premature anti @-@ Militant member of the soft old left of the Labour Party " .

The inaugural issue stated its aims as " a journal / newsletter about intelligence , parapolitics , state structures and so forth [ .. ] there is no copyright on the material in The Lobster [ .. ] we hope to break even at the present price of 50p , but we may not [ .. ] should appear 6 times a year " . From Issue 5 onwards , the cover dropped the definite article and became just " Lobster " .

Publishing frequency Lobster dropped to four issues in 1984 and three issues in 1986 and 1987 , before settling down as a bi @-@ annual from 1988 . The Lobster logo ( see illustration ) , first appeared in issue 20 in November 1990 and was designed by Clive Gringras .

= = = Format and costs = = =

The first 8 issues of Lobster are A5 paper size ( 148 × 210mm ) format , growing to A4 ( 210 × 297mm ) from Issue 9 in September 1985 . The magazine was originally typewritten , reduced on a photocopier , pasted @-@ up and printed on a Gestetner off @-@ set litho duplicating machine . Around issue 17 , the magazine was type @-@ set on an Amstrad PCW using Wordstream and from Lobster 27 , on an AppleMac with Claris Works . Lobster Issue 57 ( Summer 2009 ) was the last hard copy issue . Issue 58 ( Winter 2009 / 2010 ) was the first available without charge . The magazine is published from Ramsay 's home in Hull .

Lobster is published not @-@ for @-@ profit . The Independent on Sunday quoted Ramsay that

the magazine " .. always broke even , as I would put the price up if it started losing money . The readers paid whatever I asked " , which the newspaper commented " Sounds a fine business model " . Robert McCrum in The Guardian quotes Ramsay as boasting that Lobster is " the only left @-@ wing journal to pay for itself " .

= = = The Dorril / Ramsay split = = =

In March 1993 , The Independent newspaper noted that the founders of Lobster had fallen out , and that " The break between the two men began in December when Ramsay told Dorril he was removing his name from the Lobster masthead and would run the twice @-@ yearly magazine alone . " The London Evening Standard reported that Ramsay had told his readers that Dorril also planned to produce a magazine called Lobster . After producing Lobster Issue 25 , they each produced their own version of Lobster Issue 26 . Dorril recalls a different version of events . Dorril 's website indicates that his Lobster Issue 31 ( October 1996 ) was the last published . Alternative media expert and Professor of Media and Culture at Edinburgh Napier University , Chris Atton , notes that Dorril 's Lobster concentrates on the activities of the British and US security services , while Robin Ramsay 's Lobster casts its net wider to encompass histories of fascism , the JFK assassination , the Lockerbie bombing and the military 's medical experiments on service personnel .

= = = Name = = =

The name of the magazine , " Lobster " , has attracted multiple interpretations . Dorril recalls that " We wanted the magazine to sound not pompous , and as a teenager , he would invent names for punk rock groups . ' Lobster ' was just one of his favourites . " Ramsay recalls that " The name " Lobster " was Steve Dorril 's choice . I couldn 't think of an alternative and I didn 't think the name mattered . As far as I know it had no connotations for Dorril ; indeed as I remembered it , the absence of connotations was part of its appeal . "

= = Controversy = =

= = = Operation Clockwork Orange , Colin Wallace and Fred Holroyd = = =

Lobster published the first account of the Colin Wallace affair , also known as Operation Clockwork Orange , about the plot by disaffected members of Britain 's Security Service , MI5 , to destabilise the Harold Wilson Labour Government , and to smear politicians such as former Tory prime minister Edward Heath . The editors of Lobster described the revelations as Britain 's Watergate and the biggest story since World War Two . The revelations were subsequently confirmed by former MI5 officer Peter Wright in his book Spycatcher .

= = = = Political fallout = = = =

In late 1986 , questions were asked in the UK Parliament concerning the matters in Lobster . Then Labour Party Member of Parliament for Hull North , Kevin McNamara , brought up the issue in the House of Commons , asking the Prime Minister , Margaret Thatcher , to refer the matter to the Security Commission , and asking then Attorney @-@ General and Conservative MP Michael Havers , to ask the Director of Public Prosecutions to investigate allegations published in Lobster and prosecute Colin Wallace for revealing details of secret service operations against Her Majesty 's Government . Both declined . Two weeks later , Labour MP Tam Dalyell asked the Prime Minister why she would not refer the matter to the Security Commission , but she said that she had nothing more to add .

= = = Who 's Who of the British Secret State = = =

In 1989 , British journalist Richard Norton @-@ Taylor reported in The Guardian newspaper , that Lobster was planning to publish " a list of the names and brief biographical details of more than 1 @,@ 500 past and present officials involved , according to the publishers , in covert activities " . A year later the article appeared in Lobster Issue 19 , and another appeared 18 months later . Although The Guardian noted that the Government was considering making the publication of such names a criminal offence , then Lobster co @-@ editor Stephen Dorril noted that " All the names and details .. have been compiled by research in their local libraries or have already appeared in published books . ' No inside knowledge or breach of official secrets was needed ' " 10 years later , Ramsay was quoted in the Hull Daily Mail , that " At the time it was a way of sticking two fingers up at the Government " .

= = = = House of Commons criticism = = = =

Subsequently , Lobster was denounced in the British Parliament . Then Conservative Party Member of Parliament for Wycombe , Ray Whitney , criticised the publication of the names in the House of Commons on 21 December 1988 in a debate on a proposed Official Secrets Bill , when he commented that :

" A small obscure magazine published , I think , in Hull and called , would hon . Members believe , Lobster makes a practice of publishing names of gentlemen who are alleged to be members of the security services . That creates danger and I am sure that my right hon . Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup shares my deep apprehension about that sort of practice being allowed to continue . "

In his book , Politics and Paranoia , Ramsay criticised Whitney 's role as the head of the Foreign Office 's Information Research Department which Ramsay described as the " State 's official , anti @-@ left psy @-@ war outfit " , and had omitted to tell the Commons before denouncing him .

= = Contributors = =

In addition to co @-@ founders Robin Ramsay and Stephen Dorril , contributors have included :  
Dan Atkinson , a British journalist and author  
William Blum , American author and historian  
Mike Carlson , broadcaster and writer for The Guardian and the Independent  
Colin Challen , the Member of Parliament for Morley and Rothwell from 2001 until 2010  
Kevin Coogan , American investigative journalist  
Alex Cox , a film @-@ maker  
Richard Cummings , an author , playwright , theorist and critic  
Mark Curtis , investigative journalist and author  
Anthony Frewin , writer and assistant to Stanley Kubrick  
Robert Henderson , British writer  
Jim Houghan , author of Decadence , Spooks , and Secret Agenda  
John Newsinger , author and professor of History at Bath Spa University  
David Osler , a British author and journalist  
Greg Palast , author and a freelance journalist  
Jan Nederveen Pieterse , Professor of Global Studies and Sociology at the University of California , Santa Barbara  
Dave Renton , historian and political activist  
Paul Rogers , Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford  
Peter Dale Scott , a former English professor at the University of California , Berkeley , and a former diplomat  
Michael John Smith , convicted of espionage  
Giles Scott @-@ Smith , Professor of Diplomatic History of Atlantic Cooperation at Leiden University .

Kenn Thomas , conspiracy theorist , writer , editor & publisher of Steamshovel Press

= = Themed and special issues = =

Lobster has published a couple of themed or special issues , including :

= = Regular sections = =

A number of regular sections have appeared in Lobster over the years :

= = Reception = =

In 1998 , the Hull Daily Mail described the magazine as " a tiny but influential fringe political journal " . In 2001 , the magazine Red Pepper wrote that Lobster " .. succeeds on the quality of its writing ... articles are well researched ... human , passionate and honest ... " , the Fortean Times ( who also syndicated a regular Lobster column by Ramsay ) wrote that it was " ... immensely engrossing reading , ... an essential purchase for anyone interested in the machinations of the secret state " , Green Anarchist magazine wrote that Lobster is " ... an invaluable resource , and deserves to be widely read and much studied " , and Direct Action magazine described it as " a good read ... very revealing and worth it , just for the pub talk " .

Journalist Robert McCrum in The Guardian describes Lobster as " .. a left @-@ wing journal that offers succour to conspiracy theorists [ .. ] a brave , bright beacon , a Quixotic piece of typically English amateurism that keeps the professionals on their toes " . The Independent newspaper has described it as a " delightful and worthwhile publications , more footnote than story , that [ .. ] delivers a comprehensive picture of a clandestine world which the Establishment would prefer remained secret " .

Trade Magazine PRWeek describes Lobster as a " Hull @-@ based intelligence magazine and conspiracy theorists ' bible " , and the Conspiracy Encyclopedia described it as " the most influential publication in the parapolitical underground " . Irish historical writer , Tim Pat Coogan , in discussing a TV programme about Captain Fred Holroyd in relation to the Collin Wallace affair , noted that " some of the best writing on the Holroyd case is contained in smaller journals published contemporaneously , notably Lobster , Private Eye , and , in particular [ Duncan ] Campbell 's own series [ .. ] in the Statesman " .

Professor of Media and Culture at Edinburgh Napier University , Chris Atton , notes that a reference at the end of an article in Lobster led to the founding of the activist librarians ' group Information for Social Change . CIA curator , Hayden B. Peake notes that a British journalist described " much of its content its impenetrable " , but that it was also intriguing .