

# NORTHERN UFO NEWS

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## J R Comments:

I will not even bore you with the traditional ritual of 'late again' excuses. *They exist, of course, but what the heck! Let us just get on with producing as many NUNs in 1998 as I can and remind you once more that you do not pay for a year's subscription but for six issues. Just rejoice in the fact that at this rate some of you will not be renewing until the next century. Now there's a promise you don't get every day!*

Elsewhere in this issue I will say whatever I am at liberty to say about the dramatic progress (some may well feel regress) of the Rendlesham Forest case. Unfortunately, at this point I am limited in what I can reveal -which is a great pity because the news is vital. But I hope to be free to say something, at least, before I send this issue to the printers.

Regardless of the above, one thing is clear - the new revelations about Rendlesham are not positive ones, if you consider this case to be prime evidence of an alien landing.

The events that have gathered pace in this case since late last year have really set me thinking hard about where this subject of ours is heading. More than one or two UFOlogists have told me since Christmas that they feel the answer is towards the dustbin - and fast.

There are various reasons for this mood of pessimism. Some of it is, I suspect, sheer reaction to the overkill media blitz that this field has endured. The X-Files audience we attract in droves have an utterly different expectation to that of those who have stood by UFOlogy during its long exile in the wilderness.

Indeed, many X-Philes, as we might term such folk, have unrealistic expectations. They assume that cosmic conspiracies ooze from the woodwork and are reinforced in that belief by honourable UFOlogists like Tim Good and Nick Pope. These men write well argued books and do so honestly, but I feel they inadvertently create the impression that real life is a feature length episode of the exploits of agents Mulder and Scully. Frankly, the truth - as many will tell you - is that our field is often more like the exploits of Mildew and Scummy.

What on earth am I talking about? Well, quite a lot really.

There is, of course, the sad obsession with power, money and ego-boosting that has really taken a grip on the subject. Today - as one long term UFOlogist and writer of a number of well respected books told me in justifying why he has virtually quit - there is little reward for integrity. To paraphrase him - if you do serious work and come up with rational ideas, few want to know - or at best you get paid a pittance to be treated by the media as a kook. If you are willing to churn out dark tales about underground bases where fleets of spaceships reside then someone will pay you a fortune and the media will regard you as a hero. How can we hope to go anywhere with that attitude? It is, he said, terminally deflating to the art of UFOlogy.

But there is more. Not only do we face the prospect of hoary old and unproven tales resurrected whilst covered in fungus but we live in times when far too many scumbags are willing to do and say anything to get their own way.

Recent weeks have seen various examples. Tim Matthews, who is on the verge of publishing what may well prove the book of 1998, revealing what may be the hidden truth behind the triangles that have flown over the north west and East Midlands of late, was hit by a nasty barrage of despicable smearing.

This campaign, launched anonymously (a sure sign that the people behind it don't have the guts to come out into the open) attempted not only to paint him as a double government agent but may well have put his family at risk.

I am not going into details here and whatever the truth about Tim's political past there is no excuse for the tactics used against him. These same people made the mistake of trying to put the audience off attending a conference organised by Tim in Southport in January with the claim that I was refusing to be there because of these tales. Rot! I happily participated. Those who wish to spread lies for their own ends ultimately get nowhere. The conference was a success and well attended.

There has also been an article doing the rounds that makes scurrilous (not to say libellous) accusations against various people -including myself. This 'UFOlogy is Dead' diatribe is one of the most absurd pieces of trash I have ever read, packed full of statements so easily disproven that it makes you wonder why anyone would dare write it. Of course, the truth is, as Tim Matthews discovered, scumbags do not need to prove anything to easily con the paranoid UFO mob into taking them seriously.

However, we must see through these attempts at subversion. For there are more important issues at stake. UFOlogy needs all the strength it can get from the rational folk who have been willing to fight their way towards the truth. Anyone who does not tow the line, it seems, is perceived by some as the enemy. Because the enemy is largely speaking out from a basis of factual debate these critics cannot win by logical argument so they resort to the only thing that they believe can achieve their ends -they throw mud, attempting by deceit to put off those who might listen to common sense by believing that some huge plot is alive.

There is no plot. The conspiracies that are most deadly to the UFO community do not emerge from the CIA or MoD. They are very much home grown and spread by a few evil minded so-called UFO buffs who want their own way and are determined to demolish the image of good people by lies in order to get it.

We have to stand up to them in a united front Whilst millions think that UFOlogy is a fool's paradise we have to show that good research, sober investigation and realistic interpretation of evidence is alive and well in Britain today. More than ever those who swim against the tide have to practice their backstroke.

There is a war underway. That war is not between humanity and alien invaders out to destroy the earth. It is not between the forces of darkness and light. It is not even between the establishment and beer swilling would-be Fox Mulder's desperate to foil their plot and then sell the movie rights to Sky. No - this war is between two opposite worldviews about the UFO mystery. One seeks to learn the truth by following the evidence where it will lead and the other knows the answer intuitively and will stoop to anything to make sure that this is what the world gets to see. Sadly, for some, that does not only involve character assassination, but the cover up of unpalatable truths and a substitution of belief and desperation for facts and acceptance of what is proof and what is not.

Northern UFO News will continue to present the evidence as it appears. If that evidence supports exotic ideas (as sometimes it does) we will not be afraid to say so. If, as rather more often, it points squarely at more modest solutions, even perhaps negative explanations, then we will say that too - loud and clear.

UFOlogy cannot survive without the few that are willing to be brave, honest and true. I hope that we can count you amongst that number. If not, this is not the magazine for you.



## NEWS ROUND-UP:

### *Howards End: Election cover-up alleged*

The general election was over before last summer began; but it seems we all missed the great UFO cover-up battle between the parties. At least, according to reports in January.

I was aware, from the group UFO Kent, that there had been a sighting on 8 March 1997 near Hythe, Kent. I could have carried details in the last NUN, and did report it on UFO Call soon afterwards. But frankly it was no big deal.

In essence a woman journalist driving through Lympne in the early hours heard a humming noise and got out of her car to see an oval object with lights cross a field. There were other sightings that night in Kent, but the debate was as to whether it might have been a plane or helicopter. It may, or may not, have been.

The decision to resurrect this fairly simple sighting comes because someone has figured out that the UFO flew near the home of then Home Secretary, Michael Howard. In fact 'near' is a bit of a euphemism here because most of the reports were miles away; although the Lympne one was rather closer. On this basis we would have to consider sightings over Wimbledon as 'near the Queen's home', I guess.

Whatever, the reporter, naturally enough, wrote the thing up for her own paper 'The Folkestone Herald' and then, a few days later, PM John Major made the foolish decision to call a General Election. What could the Conservatives do? They knew that a story linking a senior minister with aliens would destroy the (er) not exactly massive hopes of being re-elected. So the cover-up followed.

Or did it? I saw Derek Sheffield, author of that odd book about the Belgian wave, saying of the government that 'there is one hell of a cover-up going on here'. But the local paper, far from covering this sighting up, gave the thing lots of coverage last March. That is why I put it on UFO Call. Editor Melody Foreman flatly rejected any claims that they were put under pressure to suppress the story and certainly nobody attempted to make me change the UFO Call message either. Not a great cover up!

In truth what seems to have happened is this. The timing of the sighting and the election campaign that immediately followed created two things. Firstly, there was a dumb decision by the Conservative Party to play it down and ignore media questions for fear of embarrassment. Secondly, as - far from being kept in the dark - the Labour party knew all about the matter - it became an in joke in Westminster that Howard, if re-elected would let in many 'illegal aliens'. Not the ones from some third world country, but the ones with grey skins and big eyes.

In other words, the story probably was taken way too seriously by the PR staff of the government - who have confirmed that they acted upon it. Had they played along and laughed like everyone else nothing would have happened.

As a result we have now seen created what I expect is an entirely spurious legend about an alien conspiracy that will live on in UFO folklore. Already Kent Euro MP, Mark Watts (Labour, naturally) is launching a campaign to end government UFO secrecy - telling the Daily Mail - of this conspiracy that it is all 'very mysterious'. He adds - in my view showing how far many others will jump in future 'if someone like the Home Secretary is subjected to a close encounter you would expect there to be a comment from someone.'

But hang on - someone saw a flying object that may or may not have been a UFO. The closest it got was over fields in the same town where the minister lived. Just how does that translate into Michael Howard meeting with little green men? See what I mean about the gulf that is forming between evidence, proof and lurid speculation in today's UFO world?

Sadly the once respected newspaper the Daily Mail are one of the biggest culprits. They publish some right old tripe about the subject these days. So much so that I have withdrawn my services, having for a couple of years regularly written pieces for their column 'Answers to Correspondents'. I was sorry to do this as I do not blame that column's editor, James Black, with whom I have got on very well. But I simply could not justify supporting a paper that seems to have lost all ability to discriminate properly when writing about UFOs.

***The new 'Midnight Books' Winter 1998 catalogue is out now and as usual has many great bargains. Pages of new, old and hard to find second hand UFO books, paranormal titles, videos and magazines.***

### ***Surveying the Paranormal:***

The Mail, who else, recently reported on two quite different surveys about the paranormal. The results were intriguing.

In the first, just before Christmas, the study was reported by the psychology department of the University of West of England (masterminded by Dr Sue Blackmore, of course). They had questioned 6238 people and found - to no great surprise - that 70 per cent of women (but only 48 per cent of men) believed in ESP.

However, they admitted that some results were not as expected. The psychologists had assumed that those who believed in psychic events would be the ones unable to well judge the odds of an unusual event occurring by chance. The theory went that they would ascribe the outcome of a strange, but merely random, incident to supernatural forces. In fact, this did not prove to be the case. The 'believers' were no worse judges than the sceptics.

One very interesting UFO related result was in the question about scar marks on the leg. These are often reported by abductees as proof of alien abuse during spacenapping and said by researchers to be rare. Ten years ago in 'Abduction' I urged people to check this out as my survey suggested that many people found odd little scars when asked. They had probably occurred during childhood scrapes, such as falling off a bike, so the prevalence of these marks in abductees was far from persuasive.

This new study revealed that more than one third of the population (34 per cent) had such a scar - which, in my view, proves exactly what I predicted in 'Abduction' and which many famous researchers have scoffed at ever since without bothering to run the test for themselves.

Then, in early February, the Mail carried front page headlines about their own survey (this time of only 1000 people). Whilst focusing on psychic beliefs and astrology it did ask 'UFO questions'. At least after a fashion!

In general expected trends were proven. More women than men believed in things like life after death (61 per cent as opposed to 42 per cent). But a surprise was the finding that beliefs were higher amongst professional groups of society than working class cross sections.

The UFO questions were, true to form for the Mail, quite dire! They asked whether people believed in or had experienced 'extraterrestrial life visiting earth', then further questions as regards to whether this was hostile or friendly. Pathetic, sloppy, loaded questions!

What was the outcome? Against the trend more men than women answered yes to these questions. One third of men thought aliens had landed, as opposed to under a quarter of women. Few had direct experience and none of the 20 who did experience any hostile intent!

These questions, of course, tell us nothing much about UFOs. Not that this stopped the Mail citing Quest UFOlogist Tony Dodd as their prime example of a witness to back up the survey. Regardless of what you think of his 60 UFOs, the point is that this falsely tied their poorly worded survey directly to the UFO mystery via a hardly typical witness. This reinforced all the old stereotypes and is exactly what is so woefully inept about today's media.

It is interesting, however, to compare the beliefs in and experience of other paranormal phenomena to see how 'UFOs' compare.

***Belief in (Male/Female) % Experience of (M/F)***

|                |       |            |
|----------------|-------|------------|
| Precognition   | 38/41 | 17/21      |
| Ghosts         | 34/42 | 11/14      |
| Psycho-kinesis | 29/38 | 4/5        |
| Past Lives     | 21/29 | None cited |
| ET visitors    | 33/24 | 3/1        |

As you can see the really interesting results are not simply that male bias (reinforced by the X Files on TV where Mulder hogs the limelight despite Scully being a far better investigator!) Also there is a huge discrepancy between the numbers who believe and the percentage of believers who have any first hand reason to do so. Half the people who think you can see into the future do so because they have experienced it (or, you may suggest, see into the future because they believe you can - but either way there is a correlation). One third are linked in the same way as regards to a belief in ghosts and the sighting of them. Even belief in God (63 per cent) is matched by 14 per cent (more than a fifth) who cite some direct experience.

Yet look again at those figures for aliens on earth. Only one sixteenth of those who say they believe claim to have any experience of ET on earth. True, there may be people afraid to report their alien contact. But still this result shows astonishingly well to what degree those who profess that aliens have visited earth do so as a matter of faith, rather than as a result of first hand evidence. For what else persuades them? That more people have experienced God first hand than supposedly have seen aliens should get a few UFOlogists out there thinking hard.

***The man from the ministry:***

A few readers have asked me to comment further on the 'Nick Pope' references last issue, where I noted that there is a case in his new book (*The Uninvited*) about witnesses 'Peter and Jenny' that he really ought to have said more about.

I was being discrete, giving Nick chance to come clean for himself. He has yet to do so, but as Andy Roberts has not held back from reporting the facts I will do so here.

In late 1995 I saw a pre-publication copy of Nick's first book *'Open Skies, Closed Minds'*. This included a case that did not appear when the book was published. Because I knew that he was working on a book about alien abductions I assumed that it had been removed to appear in that sequel instead. Indeed it did but with a difference. When published in 1997 in *'The Uninvited'* the name of the male witness given in the original MS was changed to the fictitious one that hid his real identity in the final book.

So what, you might ask? Writers sometimes do have to protect witnesses in this way. Perhaps Nick just felt it necessary or was asked by the witness for anonymity. Well, no, because in the original draft it was indicated that the witness driving through Florida and having a strange encounter at a toll booth was the author - Nick Pope - himself!

One can only presume that somewhere between the manuscript I read in late 1995 and the appearance of *'The Uninvited'* in mid 1997 it was decided that readers should not be told that Nick had an experience that might even have been an abduction.

But why? It occurred before he took the job at Air Staff 2A - a job he took on as a sceptic, according to the media line used to promote Nick's association with the field. We might reasonably ask whether Nick informed his MoD bosses at interview about his Florida experience given its possible relevance. Moreover, if he considers it important enough to warrant several pages in this book did it really have no influence on his attitude towards UFOs *before* he took the job at the MoD?

I have had something of a moral dilemma over this. On the one hand I did not think it was my place to tell this story, as I only know about it as a result of chancing to see his original MS. On the other, after someone else broke this story and Nick refused to confirm or deny it when pressed it seemed rather futile. At the X Files conference last Summer when we were both lecturing I asked Nick myself whether he realised this tale was getting out and he merely added that he did, but would avoid commenting on it. Again he chose not to say I was

mistaken. Of course, if I have got this wrong, then I will apologise. But I am pretty certain my memory is correct here and I am reporting only what is in the original draft.

Having thought about this carefully, I think it is only proper that now that Andy Roberts has gone public that I report what I know. I cannot, of course, answer the questions as to why these events have occurred as they have. Only Nick Pope can do that. All I can tell you is that I read what I did in the original MS and the same story is in print in 'The Uninvited' with the true identity of the witness hidden,

If indeed Nick Pope is the man involved in this case then I do not think he should be holding back the facts. He had two options -publish the story in full or not publish the story at all. Had he declined to report this incident at all in his book, then I would have considered it fair enough. He wished not to talk about the incident and I would respect that wish. But I do not believe he can have it both ways. Having made the free choice to publish this tale his readers have a right to know whether the witness in that car by the Florida toll booth really was Nick Pope or not. And if it was he should explain how it affected his thinking whilst taking on the job at Air Staff 2 A.

As readers know, I like Nick Pope and respect his stand. However, he cannot avoid the questions posed by this alleged encounter in Florida and I think he now owes us the truth.

Either confirm it was you, Nick, and explain why you chose to hide that fact from readers, or tell me I have got this wrong and misread the first draft of your original book and I will freely apologise. But do not simply refuse to comment because that merely makes people think that you have something to hide.

### ***A day on the moors:***

Connect, the West Yorkshire group run by Nigel Mortimer, are offering discount prices for groups on their 'Ilkley Moor UFO Tour'.

The tour comes in three categories. Option 1 at £6 covers a guided tour of UFO sites on the moor, amidst a UFO window area where the infamous 'Ilkley entity' photo was taken. This runs from 11 am to 3 pm. Option 2 adds a fish and chip tea at a total cost of £10. Then for £18 you also get an evening bus trip starting at 8 pm which will take in the NSA base at Menwith Hill and include a sky watch. Local accommodation can also be added.

Groups of three can get the discount with the full day, for example, costing them only £40 instead of £54.

The tour is scheduled to run on Saturday 14 March 1998 but other dates may be added later.

### ***ET: The Musical!***

It had to happen, I guess. A musical comedy about alien abduction is about to debut in Blackpool!

Described as "a play with music, songs and vaudeville type comedy" it is said to 'portray Amy's adventures with the aliens and based on reported stories of abduction and the UFO phenomenon.'

This rather bizarre idea is the brainchild of Alan Hilton, who is producer and director. Original songs are by Jan Land. Alan Hilton notes that he intends the UFO content to be taken seriously but the whole thing is purposefully set in a jovial manner in order to allay any possible fears of the audience.

If you find it hard to imagine how this is going to work then go along to the world premier at the Blackpool Grand Theatre on Sunday 29 March 1998 (7.30 pm) with tickets priced from £6 to £13.

If you cannot make it to Blackpool then you may still get a chance to see this remarkable production. In the summer it goes on tour to St George's Theatre Great Yarmouth (15 - 20 June), Theatre Royal Margate (29/30 July, 5/6, 12/13 & 19/20 August) and the Players Theatre in London's West End on 7 & 21 September and 5 October (all 1998).

Dates at the Theatre Royal Brighton and at the Edinburgh Festival are to be arranged.

Intriguing news from Spain is the creation of a scientific foundation to study UFOs and strange phenomena.

Called 'The Anomaly Foundation' this has been officially approved by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture as a nonprofit making body. It becomes the first of its kind in Europe, possibly the world.

Research director is the noted UFOlogist Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos who explains that this organisation has been launched by *'a group of experienced UFO researchers and supported by a large array of investigators, experts, qualified individuals, scientists and others. They have decided to offer to the community their bibliographic assets, archives, experience and dedication, as well as their financial assistance and know-how to make viable this project.'*

The new body will be independent of Spanish UFO groups and will serve to promote scientific study of UFOs and related issues, preserve, manage and make accessible libraries of books and magazines, archive files and bequeathed legacies from UFOlogists and researchers. It is built around an academic magazine in Spanish (translated as *'UFOlogical papers'*) and will also finance case investigations and offer research grants and scholarships.

V-J says of the new team that already it is showing *'an outstanding example of maturity not commonly seen in the UFO field'* in which leading researchers are abandoning their own groups and management structures *'to merge into a high magnitude project'*.

Within its first few months of operation the foundation has gathered under one roof several libraries, totalling 1200 volumes, and nine separate national archives of files. It has also built up sufficient funds to have computer equipment that can offer data retrieval services and is about to award its first batch of grants. These grants are as follows: A £500 award for the best case investigation file each year. A £500 sum to the best media article or broadcast on the subject each year. Most importantly £700 to finance the best proposal for a UFO research project in any academic environment each year (that is a college or university). This must adopt scientific methodology within one of a range of fields (including physics, medicine and sociology).

These ideals are little short of splendid I have been suggesting for some time that Britain badly needs a similar minded organisation. Indeed, the magazine *'New Ufologist'* was created in 1994 with a very similar purpose. It has been successful thanks to the dedicated efforts of people like Paul Fuller, Joe Dormer and Rod Haworth; although it

has not been able to procure the kind of money needed as yet to award grants.

This is because British UFOlogy is essentially selfish and sees any altruistic centre like the Spanish Foundation as a challenge to the individual omnipotence of various groups. To succeed here the leaders of major UK groups would need to come together and see the value of joint efforts forging something that they cannot do alone. Sadly I do not see that day on the near horizon given the factional, frankly petty, nature of some of Britain's UFO hierarchy. No names. No pack drill. They know who they are, but frankly don't give two hoots.

Meanwhile V-J is requesting contributions and any sum over \$40 US (about £30) will receive the Spanish language journal for a year. Good luck to this excellent venture.

#### ***A touch of Irish:***

Late last year I spent a pleasant couple of days in Dublin at the first ever Irish UFO conference financed by Quest and organised so well by IUFOFRA (Irish UFO and Paranormal Research Group). Excellently marshalled by Anne Griffin and Pat Delaney this is a model of how to run a national group.

Their chief investigator Dermot Butler and his colleague Brendan Donohue have just published the first in what I hope will be many coming reviews of Irish UFO activity. Hopefully soon there will be a full sized book.

For now take a look at 'Irish Case File Update' a 36 page booklet that includes reports on the major cases studied by the group. There are mid air encounters, military sightings, flaps and waves. Also included are MoD letters, maps and copies of press articles. If you have any interest in what goes on just across the Irish Sea then you need a copy of this publication.

Marketed at £2.50 you can get hold of a copy from IUFOFRA. More sense than you will get out of the British Whitehall, that's for sure!

**Triangulation:**

By now there can be few unaware of the flying triangles that have - to paraphrase a SKY TV show - 'plagued UFOlogy with their suffering'. The debate rages as to whether they are alien visitors, of the sort being test flown under ET tutelage at Area 51, or secret government aircraft. Tim Matthews at the Lancashire UFO Society has championed the latter and his book 'UFO Revelation' exposing mountains of research is coming later this year. It ought to help us decide one way or the other.

New triangle sightings continue to occur. 1998 has already generated several - the most interesting being the one over the M56 near Warrington, Cheshire (see elsewhere in NUN). Last autumn, following a Red Rose Radio appeal the Lancashire group found themselves uncovering a new flap on the coast west of Blackpool. The most intriguing reports came in 'live' at 23.30 on 9 October 1987 when several listeners reported lights hovering over Blackpool. Not - one assumes - the illuminations! Alerted by these sightings many people in the area from Lytham to Fleetwood looked seawards and called back to confirm they could see something out there as well. 100 calls eventually came in.

Then came a call to the station professing to be from a Royal Navy seaman. He said that he was aboard a vessel in the Irish Sea and at that moment was watching a large well lit UFO head towards his ship. Local fishermen later called to confirm they saw it too.

Was this supposed call from the Navy a hoax? It seems not, since Eric Morris (a former Navy man himself) checked for the UFO group and discovered that *HMS Shetland* was indeed patrolling the coastal waters involved at the time. It appears that whilst the MoD were reluctant to be too specific, this ship was strategically located because of the Conservative Party Conference that was occurring in Blackpool that month.

Full details of this 'night of the UFO' are yet to be released but it presents an intriguing picture. Of course, the Question remains - and will no doubt lead to intense speculation - as to whether the large UFO here observed was from somewhere else spying on the Tories, or whether it was deemed politically expedient to have the best aerial defence available at Warton on show.

Meanwhile, a new venture 'Project Flying Triangle' has been launched to create a computer based record of all sightings. Jointly coordinated by Omar Fowler of PRA in Derby, Ron West of the Essex group and Victor Kean from Germany, they offer a search facility to anyone wanting to track sightings and correlate with their own reports. Software laws prevent them from releasing copies of their programme.

Victor told NUN the 'FT Database' shows that the triangle *'regularly travels through UK airspace and follows certain flight paths. Its main focus is the nuclear power stations at Dungeness, Bradwell and Sizewell and we have tracked it during many of its working periods (sunset to sunrise) visiting all three in turn.'*

The team were puzzled when they lost track of the FT after leaving Sizewell somewhere off the East Anglia coast. Then a witness at Lowestoft called Ron West to provide a diary record of sightings of the triangle over 1994 -1997. These show how it hovered over the sea both before and after visiting Sizewell and then disappearing. They note the claim in 'Left at East Gate' that there is an extensive underground tunnel system with an exit near Lowestoft. Is that how the FT vanishes so quickly, they wonder?

**Droning On:**

During my recent excursions to East Anglia promoting 'UFO Crash Landing' I was fortunate to meet a local military engineer who was able to solve a 14 year old case!

Long term readers of NUN may recall that in mid April 1984 there was a major wave of close encounters. These included a landing in North Wales where the military arrived by helicopter and searched for something and a classic sighting over a caravan park at Saltfleet on the Lincolnshire coast. These, I am reliably informed, were almost certainly part of a major military exercise. Saltfleet, for example, is right by the firing range at RAF Donna Nook.

However, the case that is 'solved' involved a large floating grid like object seen by a stunned scientist as she drove near the base at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. This UFO was a drone - a remotely piloted craft flown by electronics and used as a practice target for attack. It went crazily out of control and the RAF took some time to get it back in harness. They were happy people thought it was a UFO as it saved red faces!





## MAJOR ARTICLES

### ELSEWHERE

The newsstand magazine boom seems to be waning. *UFO Reality* has folded and the writing seems to be on the wall for *Sightings*. In January they called their monthly columnists to report that they could no longer afford to pay them the £50 fee. They also told the editor he was no longer required. Nick Pope pulled the plug immediately and announced in the February issue that this would be his last column. Jon Downes and myself both volunteered to carry on writing for free to help the magazine survive. The offer was temporarily accepted but then we were told that to cut costs all human input was being ended and the publication would struggle on 'in house' using material extracted by computer from the inter-net. It remains to be seen whether they pull this odd plan off, but without writers and original UFO content it is hard to see how this once impressive magazine can win back enough lost readers to continue.

Unofficially, I am told that shop sales for all the UFO magazines have plunged in recent months by 50%. This matches the impression gained by those organising conferences. Attendance is certainly less than it was a year or so ago. It was probably inevitable that too much of a good thing would ultimately lead to a reaction against the subject. And I never quite figured how Britain sustained so many magazines for the 'X Files' audience.

*Encounters* survives with the backing from Uri Geller. How long that situation will last we shall see. *UFO* - the daddy of them all published by Quest - looks in little danger and being closest to the UFO movement and a product of it will I am sure carry on. As indeed will *Fortean Times* (having the backing of John Brown Publishing) and a loyal quirky readership it seems impregnable too. For now!

*The X Factor*, launched a year ago by Marshall Cavendish, still appears bi-weekly and is aimed squarely at the X Files fan, through the title and its conspiracy mindset. But it still attracts some of the top paranormal writers in the UK and so has at least a short term nature in front of it. However, it is fascinating to compare its style and content with the only similar part-work in UK history - *The Unexplained* - more than a decade ago. How times have changed in the past 15 years!

I am not sure what the situation is with 'Abduction Watch', Kevin McClure's fine new monthly commentary on the excesses of alien contact research. I have not seen an issue since number 5 before Christmas. I hope it is still going as it was a refreshing change.

A similar caveat for 'The Armchair UFOlogist' - Andy Roberts irreverent and gutsy assassination of all that UFOlogists find holy (and he finds full of holies - if you see what I mean). Issue 2 appeared in the autumn dated Septobnocember (if you don't understand that you'll never get Andy's wicked humour). Each page was a different colour and it commented without fear on the lot - from Princess Di to the BUFORA conference. Andy is going through a tough time so I hope it lives on in its 'as many issues as I publish when the fancy takes me' format at £8 per year or £1.50 for a sample

### *UFO Times 45*

New editor Dave Newton makes a valiant attempt to take over from Mike Wooten. The print quality has deteriorated, but there is a good stab at involving outside comment with an article on earthlights by Paul Devereux, Dave Clarke on Pennine UFOs and a new column on abductions by Kevin McClure. I am delighted to say this is a very promising start to a hopefully new era.

### *Magonia 61 (editor John Rimmer)*

There has been a promising upturn in *Magonia* of late as well. Some new writers are adding fresh input to the social commentary behind the UFO stories; although at times it is still extremely literate (often not the same as readable!). A fascinating look at the secret life of two early UK UFO writers and my long assessment of Larry Warren and Left at East Gate is included as promised in the last NUN.

### *Awareness 22/7 Nov 1997 (Contact UK)*

Not many magazines report on skywatches these days, but Contact does. A real old fashioned feel to this publication with sightings, planetary positions, conference reports etc. Quant.

### *Naro Minded Oct 1997 (NARO)*

Another magazine that has come on in leaps and bounds and is now one of the top group publications on offer. Speaks sense and critiques the stupid things we say and do. The variety of articles - from photos, to triangles, to MIBs, and so on is a treat. Naro minded this mag is not!

New venture from the Merseyside group and it gets off to a good start Quite a range of articles from an interesting assessment of MIB tactics to an intriguing follow through on a witness charting how they coped after an encounter. Plenty more on Merseyside UFO & ghost cases.

**OVNI (PRA)**

The Derbyshire group have cut production to bi-monthly but the newsletter continues to report on local sightings and present articles from overseas. The Jan/Feb 1998 issue has coverage from Florida and Guatemala.

**Phenomenal News 7 (SEMR)**

Like many publications these days this covers more than just UFOs and has a lot of ghost, life after death and anomaly type stories. But it does good investigation and includes UFO sightings too. It has common sense as well.

**Phenomena Scotland 1 (Malcolm Robinson)**

Similar title and format to the above but not to be confused. This is really the welcome return of Enigmas edited by Malcolm Robinson; although it's a pity the title has changed Still it is much as it was with reports on UFO cases, ghost hunts, how Steven Spielberg may join forces with SPI to hunt for Nessie and so on. Welcome back.

**SUFOG Dec 1997 (SUFOG)**

This local mag scores because it has easily the best media coverage on offer. Aside from regular comment on press and TV items it catalogues all UFO press stories spotted each month. Useful.

**Dragon Watch 6 Dec 1997**

Much general stuff from Peruvian starships to holograms but oddly little about Welsh UFOs given this is the Welsh Federation mag. Why?

**IFOPRA Summer 97**

Lots of news stories on UFO and related activity connected with Ireland Informative.

**IUR ( CUFOS, USA)**

The Center for UFO Studies continue to produce what may well be the best UFO journal in the world Like much of American UFOlogy its obsession with Roswell gets a bit irksome. In the Fall 97 and Winter 98 issues we have a good critical demolition of the 'aliens were crash test dummies' saga and a minute assessment of balsa wood glue! Better fare concerns Bill Chalker's superb case study of the 1966 Tully landing (the first crop circle - or not, as he insists), lie detectors in UFOlogy, a full appraisal of new CIA admissions on their role in UFOs and a lot more. Any serious UFOlogist *has* to get IUR.

**MUFON Journal (MUFON, USA))**

Now that editor Dennis Stacy has left it remains to be seen where MJ will go. Undoubtedly the best value UFO mag (£20 for 12 by 24pp glossy monthly issues cant be bad). Dennis ensured that the ETH viewpoint so prevalent in MUFON was not overwhelming and kept the journal lively, honest and readable. He will be missed His last issue (Nov 97) has the first news on the Mexico City UFO video (either definitive proof of spaceships or a superb hoax Place your bets now). Also a look at US military mind control experiments. Get this and IUR and you'll be up to date with American UFOlogy.

**Dead of Night 14 Dec 1997 (editor Lee Walker)**

Where else are you going to find killer caterpillars, actors meeting ghosts half way up a mountain, fairy sightings, werewolves, oh yes and UFOs, all from a Merseyside perspective. This is the sort of magazine to take on holiday for a real good read A rare treat.

**Journal of Meteorology**

Probably the only mainline science mag that usually has content of paranormal interest. Thanks to editor Dr Terence Meaden there is often a new ball lightning case to intrigue. In the Dec 97 issue we have two worthy pieces. New cases of spiked lightning and an angel hair case with photos - from Wiltshire in October 1997.

It seems hard for most people to believe that crop circles still merit huge attention. The media lost all interest in 1992 when Doug and Dave claimed they had hoaxed the whole thing. They had not, of course; although hoaxing was seen to be far more common than most had suspected. But the fascination goes on.

All of the original circle magazines launched a decade ago survive as do annual conferences and societies. The primary group is the CCCS (Centre for Crop Circle Studies) and their quarterly is called *The Circular*. It is glossy and filled with wonderful pictures of the now extremely pretty and highly complex formations that appear each summer. Whilst still supporting the view that some circles are real and still with stuff scandalously attacking Meaden as a dope they do take a more restrained view than in the past. The Summer 1997 issue, for instance, has a superb expose of the infamous August 1996 'UFO creating a crop circle' video - proving beyond much doubt it is a hoax plus who did it and why.

Meantime, what used to be the old enemy of the CCCS - Paul Fuller's *The Crop Watcher* shows signs of heading more towards the same middle ground adopted by the CCCS. Paul has given up as editor, to concentrate on 'New UFOlogist'; although he remains involved in his first love. New editor (an anonymous Peter Kendall I believe!) has a new cover design and runs the words crop and watcher together as one. But otherwise the journal reads much the same with its irreverent rumours and fun interviews. The UFO news that was taking over more and more space of late has gone and 'Cropwatcher' will now be a pure circle magazine once again. The new editor also promises to publish any well argued theory and to make the mag seem less like a supporter of Dr Meaden. Watch this circle.



### BOOKS OF THE MOMENT

*Beyond Roswell*  
300pp Hardback by Michael Hessemann & Philip Mantle £15.99 Michael O'Mara

There will be few readers unaware of my rocky association with one half of this authorship duo and my experience of Mr Hessemann is well described as terrible. I will not go into detail, but I cannot imagine a co-authorship more difficult for me to write about with fairness and objectivity. But I will try.

This book came during the year when the Roswell case was 50 years old and as such there were several titles produced on the story. I can at least report that this is easily the most visually appealing and the best designed book. It has an unusual large size, much text, dozens of photos, many in colour and is well stocked with footnotes to aid researchers.

Nor is this the only good news. The chapter discussing problems with the Mogul balloon theory sets the data out so well and gives the chance for the Mogul project scientist to tell his story that I found myself more persuaded by that answer than any other presentation I have read on this case. Although I suspect this was not the intended effect on readers.

Sadly, the good news pretty well stops there as the rest of the book strives to vindicate MJ-12, secret government studies, Dreamland, the relevance of ancient texts and the Roswell autopsy footage. This is all done with evident sincerity and reasonable marshalling of data but in a way I found increasingly hard to take too seriously knowing the evidence as I do.

Most amazing is the apparent news that the infamous Roswell autopsy footage was not -it seems - of the Roswell crash but another one at Socorro a month *before* even Kenneth Arnold saw his UFOs. Evidently these amazing alien flying craft cross the galaxy without a hitch but the pilots then don't know how to fly once they hit earth's traffic restrictions and keep crashing.

That said, the book has undoubted merit because of its many colour shots from the autopsy film. I don't think that film is real just as I don't think a spaceship crashed at Roswell, but if I had a choice between contributing dosh to Mr Santilli to buy his video and a similar sum to purchase this book then its no contest At least this one looks good on a bookshelf.

*Randles Rating 35%*

I have been looking forward to this book ever since Nick announced that he was writing it. I consider him to be one of the best of the new generation of British UFOlogists and was eager to see his first book. He received a large sum to write this (and a new one due in the Spring about the Freedom of Information data from the USA). Nick Pope endorses the title in a foreword. So does it pass muster?

Sadly, I was just a little disappointed. I think he has suffered because of this remarkably ET orientated publisher with their evident desire to reach the most lucrative market. That means careful documentation and assessment of alternative, rational solutions for stories get sacrificed in favour of support for more sinister interpretations, even when they do not really deserve such precedence. However, this should not imply that this is a bad book. It is not. The author knows his stuff and has scoured the PRO (Public Record Office) for years gathering data about British government investigation. He has also interviewed witnesses and provides plenty of documentation to build up a picture of what they did and did not do. Inevitably, because of the 30 year rule banning release of data onto the PRO we know a lot more about what happened then than since the late 1960's.

The problem is that the PRO files really do not tell a very exciting story. To justify the shout line for the book 'The British government's top UFO secrets exposed' rather a lot of inference has to be made about what was going on behind the ineptitude shown by the scraps of paper that emerge. These often simply reveal lack of investigation, little interest in UFOs and a complete failure to appreciate any subtlety behind the data that is revealed

To the MoD - rather like to the media - UFOs were often a straight choice between spaceships and nonsense. Once you figure out they are probably neither the problems really start. Unfortunately, there is precious little sign the MoD during the 1950's and 1960s had the slightest clue that anything like this was going on. As such they did one of two things - ran scared of an alien invasion that never came or ignored the data after a cursory glance as not being of defence interest. Neither represents a massive secret being exposed, so it is necessary to assume they are really hiding some fantastic truth and knowledge. Perhaps even spaceships.

Whilst I have no doubt that the MoD have done more than they say about UFOs, often this is because of their erroneous assumptions and - more importantly - their need to use UFOlogy as a scapegoat to hide their own technology and innocent perceptions of it.

The thing that worried me the most about this book is the selective presentation of some of the cases. The Llandrillo crash, for existence, ignores data I found (and have not kept secret) that suggests there could have been a mishap involving an RAF plane. Instead the only data cited from me is a somewhat dubious tale I was told 16 years ago (not about this case). It is one that I had forgotten all about it until I read it again in this book and has not featured in my articles, about Llandrillo in recent years.

Worse comes elsewhere. Although several pages are devoted to the claims that the RAF crew in the 1956 Lakenheath encounter saw UFOs and filmed them with their gun camera, just a few lines are given to the near total refutation. This came when I tracked down and talked to three of the four aircrew who were involved. This at best turns the Lakenheath case on its head. I don't know what it means, but the views of the three men involved get less attention - is that because they don't support the more dramatic interpretation of the case?

Then there is the case of the sightings in Staffordshire during the late 1980's. These were covered in NUN and readers may recall that we established how they - and quite a few of these early triangle sightings - perhaps even the Belgium wave that followed - resulted from military mid air refuelling exercises in the lead up to air strikes on the middle east. Of course, those findings are not what the readers of this book want to hear, so it isn't what they get.

By the time we reach a 'UFO crash' on the Staffs moors where NUN is cited as the source I was getting rather concerned. Certainly the case was real and Nick has summarised some of the facts from the NUN piece (issue 152 if you want to check). Unfortunately, he has also omitted some points in the same NUN story which partly mitigate against the case being unsolved. That point should surely have been included; although selection of data whilst parts of the tale are forgotten is a failing of most UFOlogist/writers (myself not excluded).

Nick has a bright future. He will be a leading UFOlogist for years to come. I just hope he learns lessons from this promising first book.

*Randles Rating 70%*

Possibly one of the most unexpected double acts in recent years! Brookesmith - noted sceptic and former editor of 'The Unexplained' (see last NUN editorial) joins forces with earthlights champion Devereux in a book light years away from the usual softback fare produced by this publisher.

It is a large format hardback with lots of illustrations. Generally it is well designed and full of colour photos. Aimed at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it arrived very late but is probably the best book of its type issued last year.

Given that neither man believes in aliens - and indeed Brookesmith has long been outspoken against the excesses of what he seems to consider myth-making writers such as (well pretty much everyone) you should be in no doubt that this book is not going to appeal to many potential readers. It pulls no punches and when it comes to UFOlogists no turn is unstoned as they say. All of us are attacked in some fashion.

Viewed as a series of essays on some of the sacred cows of this subject it is excellent. It poses straight questions seen perceptively and for that reason alone deserves to be read by all. You may not like most of what you read You may dispute much of what is alleged But you will admire the way in which two men who are in different ways outsiders to our field have -with a sympathetic awareness of UFOlogy - cut through much of the clutter that those of us more deeply involved often fail to see.

Not this book is free of problems. I saw quite a few. I was truly amazed, for example, at their coverage of crop circles. This, in fact, is credited to Montague Keen (just as another chapter on 'big screen UFOs' is credited to Nigel Watson) but I was ill at ease with some of Keen's points. He utterly misunderstands the early years of crop circle data - probably because he was not involved - and seems to have no inkling about historical circle evidence, writing off Terrence Meaden for lack of data that is actually easily visible out there but which these writers have not bothered looking up.

This seriously undermines the book for me and I wish the primary authors had written about circles for themselves. Had they done so then I suspect they would have done their homework rather better. As it is they are guilty by inference of the very faults that their book -often rightly - levels against other writers.

The discussion of the Quantock Hills case is seriously flawed. It is a great pity that the authors seem unfamiliar with the BUFORA case investigation. They have fallen into a trap by failing to study the original data - and this was

easily available. Odd as they attack others for doing precisely that.

Suffice it to say that this was a first rate investigation - one of the last undertaken before I was ousted as BUFORA's Director of Investigations. I fought to get money to fund medical studies. Ken Phillips as prime investigator did a marvellous job but these authors seem to have made no effort to dig out the key facts on this story. As such their representation of it is very misleading. If I had done this then Brookesmith would be tearing me to shreds - as he sought to do when demolishing 'UFO Retrievals' in Fortean Times recently.

Yet, whilst I can certainly see such serious problems, they largely stem from these two men not really being UFOlogists. They seem well read outside the field and yet Brookesmith in particular exhibits a dislike for some parts of UFOlogy. As such he is noted for instance, for denouncing NUN as being one magazine he does not read because it is just a minor little parish journal of no consequence. Sadly that snobby attitude may extend to much of the serious UFO literature and means, of course, that these writers miss out on a lot of what is really going on.

That is their problem, of course, but they have to put it right if they expect UFOlogists to listen in future. Had they read NUN, or UFO Times, instead of just Fortean Times and Magonia they would not be so out of touch with some of the evidence and the discussions as they seem to be.

Yet, these are quibbles - not minor points, but quibbles nonetheless. Overall I have to say that this is an impressive tour de force that probes more deeply into some of the important issues that beset our subject than 99 out of every 100 books that get published these days.

Of course, the big test will come when we see who takes them seriously - if anyone -and who does something about the shortcomings of the subject they cogently report. The sad thing is that the only ones likely to pay much attention are the few UFOlogists already pretty well aware of the problem but unable to forge a solution because they are so badly outnumbered. These authors may be foolishly ignored as ill informed debunkers by the rest of the UFO community.

*Randles Rating 80%*

What sort of books can we expect to appear during 1998?

Simon & Schuster look set to continue their UFO blitz with two new titles. Nick Redfern's sequel to 'A Covert Agenda' is already written and due in April - titled 'The FBI Files' it will do for the USA what his first book did for the UK. The month afterward they publish a new alien abduction book from David Jacobs 'The Threat'. What with a new Nick Pope book (a novel!) due late in the year they are certainly out to maintain their role. All of these will be in hardback at around £16; although expect a paperback edition of 'The Uninvited' in the summer. Dare we hope that in it Nick Pope will tell us the real story about the Florida case?

Tim Matthews will be publishing his book about secret aircraft and their link with UFOs, notably flying triangles, in the autumn. Its title is 'UFO Revelations' and the publisher is Blandford - in softback at around £9.

Not sure of any others as yet, but these are unlikely to be the only UFO related titles to come our way.

As for my own output for 1998 - here's what I know so far.

You may see a strange little hardback with a black cover, pink markings and a giant question mark on the front. Title 'The Paranormal'. I was led to believe it was only going to be retailed in museum stores. This has no author name on the cover and when it does inside it is spelt wrong! It is printed on what looks like toilet paper and has lots of cartoon like drawings inside. This is a light hearted look at the paranormal produced, as I said, for Museum Quilts and supposedly exclusive to museums. It has somehow escaped into a few large stores.

In January my book 'UFO Crash Landing?' (or 'Friend or Foe?' as I prefer to call it) appeared from Blandford at £8.99. This is my attempt to bring the Rendlesham Forest case right up to date. The first print run sold out fairly quickly but new copies should be in the shops by the time you read this.

Later in the year Peter Hough and I will be bringing out a new paperback edition of 'The Afterlife' and I will also be publishing in the autumn a brand new, fully revised and updated edition of 'The Paranormal Sourcebook'.

As for original material, Robert Hale will be publishing my next book later this year. This one is titled 'Something in the Air' and probes the spate of mid-air close encounters.

### *Quiz Time*

Obviously the competition set in the last NUN was too tough for most of you. So I am setting a different quiz. There are fewer questions this time so even if you do not know the answers it ought not to be too hard to guess.

Also note which of the prizes you wish to receive. The highest number of correct answers (even if that is just one!) for each requested book will win that title. If it's a tie then a draw will be made.

The books on offer are 'UFO 1947 -1997' - the splendid anthology edited by Hilary Evans and Dennis Stacy, my new book 'UFO Crash Landing?' and a rare US edition of my book 'Men in Black'. So you have three chances of winning. You can submit as many answers as you like.

A number of authors of UFO books have also turned their hand to writing fiction. Below are the descriptions of three published stories. All have appeared in either book form or a published magazine. All that you have to do is decide which of the UFO authors listed below wrote the story and match correctly. Even if you use a pin you'll probably get one right and that might just win. So have a bash.

- (1) Alintel - the story of the true agency behind the UFO mystery which has major sociological repercussions for humanity.
- (2) A gruesome tale of a tailor and his customer who wanted a made to measure suit but expected that the tailor would modify the suit - not him!
- (3) 'A tale of two settees' - an everyday story involving furniture, murder and a strange life form.

Authors:- (in alphabetical order) Budd Hopkins, Peter Hough, Dr J Allen Hynek, Nick Pope, Jenny Randles, Nick Redfern, Whitley Strieber, Dr Jacques Vallee.



### Sandyhurst Sightings: Ball Lightning Tales?

Thanks to a physicist at famed Sandyhurst College near Burnley, Lancashire, we have two good cases. He comments that he thinks they are interesting examples of that little understood phenomenon - ball lightning.

The first is in the school annals and dates from 9 November 1891 (yes 1891!) The witness, one of the students, notes that at 7 pm he was standing by a window when he saw a ball of light fall toward the field between the seminary and the college. Initially, his descent was very gentle, but it then sped up until it reached the height of a second floor window on St Mary's Hall. At this point it began to grow in size like a bomb exploding in slow motion. With the swelling the brightness increased and then the object simply disappeared in an instant.

The other case was reported by Mr H - a school master at the college. His account says that he was located in the Berwyn Mountains of North Wales not far from the infamous 'UFO Crash' site at Llandrillo. This incident preceded that case by many years, however, taking place in the autumn of 1940 (or possibly 1941).

Whilst out walking he was caught in a violent thunderstorm on the side of a hill with a scooped valley below. Ahead of him - perhaps 300 feet distant - a bolt of lightning struck a tree with a sharp explosion of noise. Almost immediately a sphere six inches in diameter appeared from the direction of the strike and began to bounce across the ground towards him like a rubber ball.

Climbing the hill, under its own energy and not the force of gravity, the object rolled in a parabolic path and hit the ground every ten or twenty feet, climbing up to about three feet in height with each 'rebound'. Every time it hit the ground there was no sound, but a puff of greyish smoke or vapour was emitted. The object got to within about 50 feet of Mr H before it suddenly vanished. This allowed him to have a good look at it at close proximity. He says that it was completely round and was a smoky grey colour.

There are some recent UFO cases very much like this one, notably one at nearby Bacup.

### UFOs over Antarctica:

Another report from a university professor - Dr Peter Beck (see what good company you all keep!) This time his subject is politics and one of his specialist areas of research is the study of the archives declassified regarding survey missions to Antarctica.

Here are some of the events he has uncovered.

On 7 June 1962 at 01.05 there was a sighting at the Hallett research station (72 N 170 E). Seen on a bearing of 250 degrees the brilliant light was said to move slowly towards the south at an elevation of 30 degrees. Dr Beck notes that a report by the US government concluded that this was simply a misperception of the planet Jupiter. He adds that this planet was at only five degrees elevation but there was evidence of a mirage effect creating the distortion. Stuart Campbell would no doubt be happy.

Fifteen days later, at 03.03, an object was seen by a team known as 'Detachment Alpha'. They tell of a bright light leaving a smoky vapour trail. The light was only in view for a couple of seconds but the trail persisted longer. The conclusion was that this was a bolide - a fireball meteor. The secret report adds the interesting point that some UFO sightings may well be explained as the smoke trail left by this meteor, distorted in shape by high altitude winds. These can remain in the sky for 30 minutes - long after the very brief fireball has gone. So if someone simply sees the aftermath they could well be puzzled by this grey object in the sky.

However, probably the most interesting case came on 7 July 1962 at 11.15 - again from Hallett station. An observer on the roof saw a very intense light heading towards the base. At first he thought it might be a flare. But it headed over them and was now seen to be the size of a basketball. As it moved silently over the top of the station two smaller lights, one at the front and one at the rear, were visible. A trail of light was seen to emerge from the rear.

This object headed on a course from WSW to ENE and when about 10 degrees over the eastern horizon there was a sudden flare of light and the object vanished over the horizon.

The conclusion reached by the US government about this case is rather more difficult to sustain. They again argue that it was probably a fireball meteor. Certainly the possibility cannot be ignored, but the steady nature of the lights and the motion do not seem consistent with that option.

***Data supplied by IUFOPRA***

On the night of 30/31 March 1993 there was a multiple witness sighting over south west England, South Wales and Ireland. At the time it was quickly concluded that the majority of the reports about two bright white headlights side by side were the result of a Cosmos satellite burning up high in the atmosphere. There is no doubt that this re-entry occurred at the time in question. By all logic this should be the answer to all these sightings. But logic is not everything in this case.

Doug Cooper, the BUFORA AI who did a splendid job investigating most of the sightings, found several where the witnesses saw something that just could not have been the satellite re-entry. He concluded this because they saw what they saw up to several hours different from the known burn up of this object at around 1.10 am on 31 March. This view was given a boost when Nick Pope, then the man at the MoD, confirmed to BUFORA (of which I was then Director of Investigations) that he also had cases that did not fit. So he felt something other than the Cosmos burn up was involved. He says as much in 'Open Skies, Closed Minds' describing a case from a Shropshire air base of what in all other respects appears to be the same re-entry.

In 'UFO Crash Landing' I discuss this problem in some detail, because of how it ties in with the Cosmos re-entry known to have occurred on the night of the first Rendlesham Forest sightings. It is rather baffling, because you must either have one of two equally worrying consequences. Highly qualified witnesses (such as police officers, RAF personnel etc) are seriously misreporting obvious details of such easy to check features like the time so that in fact they did see the re-entry but describe it so severely out of kilter that this diagnosis appears impossible. Or a UFO - aware that the re-entry was occurring that night - disguises itself to look like it and uses the natural event as a smokescreen for its activities.

All common sense tells us which option one ought to accept. The latter seems too fantastic. But the rogue cases during the March 1993 wave are so significantly odd that this is not quite as easy to do as you might expect.

Of course, the alternative seems absurd, doesn't it? But now - thanks to the Irish group IUFOPRA - we have the official file on one of the most important March 1993 sightings and it puts the question right back into the melting pot.

The now released government report is signed by Commander H O'Keeffe of the Air Corps at Baldonnel, near Dublin. This is headed 'Unidentified Airborne Sighting 30 March 1993' -

itself misleading as it infers the sighting was the day before it happened, but explicable in a convoluted way as will soon become clear.

O'Keeffe explains that he was captain of an Air Corps Dauphin aircraft flying from Baldonnel to Finner Camp in County Donegal. They left Dublin late on the 30<sup>th</sup> (although actually it was 00.30 into the 31<sup>st</sup> if you use the time as it was being counted in Ireland and the UK). The sighting itself did occur on the 31<sup>st</sup> by whatever means you determine it (the report says 00.10, but it was by normal measurement 1.10 am). Yet the date of the 30<sup>th</sup> still wrongly appears on the official report!

O'Keeffe reports that they were at 1500 feet 10 miles east of Mullingar when the sighting occurred. The sky was clear and star filled. Both he and the co-pilot saw a light that resolved into two white lights at a fixed distance apart. These closed on them from the two o'clock position and tracked across from NW to SE. All six Air Corps crew aboard saw the object as it moved past them. The lights left behind what seemed to be vapour trails. After about two minutes the object/s passed to their rear and the crew at the back of the aircraft saw them disappear. They felt that two aircraft were responsible - identity unknown.

Dublin Air Traffic Control had advised during the sighting that no known aircraft should be crossing their path. Shannon Radar confirmed this, on request by the crew who were adamant they had seen something. Because of the 'traffic conflict' situation O'Keeffe then called Shannon ATC by phone on landing at Finner to officially report the incident. He was then told that the control centre had received several sightings by ground witnesses in Askeaton and Bantry of what seemed like the same phenomenon. Moreover an Iona Airways cargo flight crossing the Irish Sea off the Welsh coast had heard the Dauphin make their report and had backed them up - stating that this crew assumed the white lights were a high flying military aircraft.

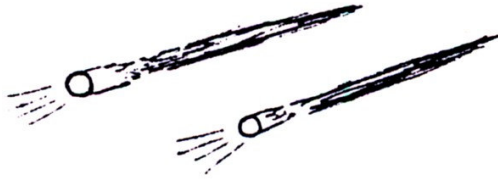
We now know, of course, that this was not military traffic. There is no real doubt it was the same object seen from England Wales and even from France - notably by police patrols. The one assumed to be the Cosmos burn up. But as can be seen here even well qualified witnesses never surmised that option. They were sure they had seen aircraft of unknown origin.



Any analysis of this sighting without additional data from so wide an area flounders - partly because of the dating and timing in the report. It was the added data that suggested the Cosmos solution. But that is made more curious by a second sighting released in the same file.

This involves Captain D Cotter of the Irish Naval Support Squadron. He fills out the standard Irish government UFO report form on 1 April - the next day after the sighting. Surely it is impossible for serious errors to be made so quickly? But here is what Captain Cotton says.

He reports driving through the village of Newcastle, County Dublin, at 1.10 am when he saw something through the car window and so stopped to get out and look more closely. Cotton reports 'two bright white lights' with a gap between them and 'in perfect line abreast formation'. They headed NNW to SSE at an estimated 5000 feet. He added 'there was a definite contrail (dark) stretching behind both lights for a few hundred feet'. His sketches clearly show what he witnessed.



There can be little doubt that this is another sighting of the same phenomenon. The time matches. The description is exactly the same. It is perfectly in line with various English sightings - even the extreme ones in which witnesses spoke of 'two Concordes side by side' or a catamaran in the sky - which is a neat description of two lights with dark trails behind them flying in tandem. See the report on Doug Cooper's investigations in NUN 160.

However, there is one huge problem with Captain Cooper's report. He dates the sighting twice in it and on both occasions says that it happened on 28 March - three days earlier than we know that it did if it was Cosmos burning up! Just how could he be so wrong and so soon after the incident?

I don't have an answer to this question but it is easy to see how this case judged in isolation would never be regarded as a sighting of the Cosmos burn up. Why should it, we would argue? Surely a military witness would know the difference between yesterday and four days ago? But here we face the same real dilemma. Either he saw a UFO that mimicked the re-entry or he was

utterly and wildly wrong in his official written report.

There could be significant lessons for the Rendlesham Forest case here (see later this issue) because one of its major perennial problems has been the dating. We now know that the two key sightings were on 25/26 December and 27/28 December 1980 - but the official written statement by Colonel Halt was compiled only a few days later - apparently from all the military witness statements. Yet Halt's report released in 1983, gets the two dates completely wrong as well - sowing the seeds of confusion that have dogged this case ever since and even persist up to last year's publication of Larry Warren's story in 'Left at East Gate'.

It seems inconceivable that such mistakes could be made by trained witnesses so we tend to assume that they do not happen and we therefore look for more sinister explanations. But surely in the case of Captain Cotton it seems that we have to conclude that he did see what everybody else witnessed and thus - somehow - got the date so wrong that it appears to alter the entire basis of his sighting.

Perhaps there is a broader lesson there for UFO investigators faced with puzzling cases.

#### **Fishermen see triangle off Scottish coast Case 9618 14 February 1996 Near Berwick**

This interesting report on a flying triangle case has been chased for some time with limited success. What we do know is as follows.

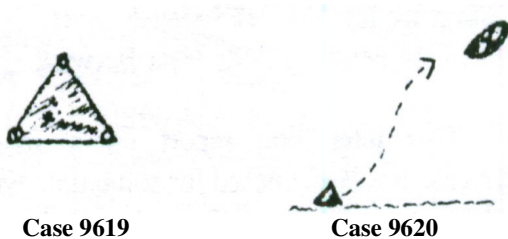
On this night the crew of a fishing boat in the North Sea south of Berwick spotted a strange aircraft. It was a dark triangle studded with red lights and with none of the usual aircraft lighting. As the object moved silently past at slow speed the ships weather radar detected a target and allowed them to pass this information by VHF radio on to a sister fishing vessel nearby. They also saw the object - described as the size of a football field - and picked it up on radar. The triangulation of these blips provided limited data being unsophisticated set ups.

It was at first assumed that this might be an airship, but this was rejected as the bouts were 70 miles off shore and airships do not fly so far from land. Then a military solution was presumed but the MoD deny having any aircraft flying in the area. Odd really since the area in question is one used for low flying exercises and the coastguard told the local paper that there had been an RAF Nimrod up that night as they saw it but did not know what it was doing.

Is this one of the best cases so far of the alleged secret aircraft said to be named HALO?

If Hollywood were to represent UFOs as they truly are then here would be no doubt that the traditional flying saucer image seen so often would be replaced by a flying triangle. It is far and away the most common sighting these days. This one is almost a dead ringer for the Scottish fisherman case just recited

The witness comes from the wonderfully appropriate Hala estate of Lancaster. One can imagine a BAE Halo pilot flying over there just for the fun of it! He says that the object was easily visible against the dark sky as a jet black triangle with a red light at each apex point. It was seen turning in a circular motion and heading from the Morecambe Bay area towards the Trough of Bowland This is an area that fits perfectly for a test flight out of Warton - supposed home of the Halo project. Which - for new readers - is officially none existent, but has provided so much consistent UFO data in recent years it seems hard to deny.



#### Fairy Across the Mersey?

Case 9620 8 July 1996 21.45 Wallasey, Wirral  
Report by Tony Eccles/Mark Glover MARA

With apologies for the hijacked song title to Gerry Marsden (who once told me about his own UFO sighting from the Wirral - but that's another story!) Yet again we have our old (or rather new) friend back.

Witness Mr J is a tradesman who lives in a house overlooking the Egremont Promenade and out to sea north eastwards across Liverpool Docks. He was talking on the phone to a friend in France when he idly noted a matt black triangular object on the horizon/water line.

Trying to puzzle this out as he talked, he considered a boat, or a sail, or a log, but dismissed them all. Then - upon looking again - saw it as a dark oval and presumed it was a moth on the window. Happy it was only a few minutes later that his eyes returned to the sky to see that this thing, whatever it was, still appeared and was clearly outside, climbing skyward.

After failing to get nearer the window because of the limited cord on the phone he alerted one of his lodgers, who was sat in the room with his back to the window. This man - Mr S - immediately indicated astonishment and (expletive deleted!) asked what it was!

Mr J now got off the phone, after explaining why, and rushed to get his binoculars. Mr S continued to watch the dark object climb upwards and head away to the north. By the time Mr J was back it was just a dot fast disappearing. No obvious explanation has been found for this phenomenon, but if it was rather further in the distance then assumed then it would have been over the Southport area where many of the triangle sightings in 1996 and 1997 took place.

#### Llowarch sees the light

For some years the Cambrian News had a column on strange things written by an anonymous columnist called Llowarch. I have reported some of his delightful tales in NUN in the past. But now he has become a witness. In fact he saw UFOs twice in September 1996, during a mini wave in west Wales.

The real name of Llowarch is now known to be Keith Stevenson (not the same when you know that is it?) At 21.45 he was driving through Swyddffynnon when he spotted a round yellow ball of light He stopped the car to check, but it was definitely not a farm light.

Three days later whilst walking the dog at 05.00 through Pontrhydfendigaid he saw a similar light cross the sky from south to north. Llowarch was backed up by another report later in September from a man at Pencader who observed a ball of white light silently fly in from the south. It glowed and flittered across the sky heading towards Brechfa. Five minutes later an identical phenomenon occurred.

Is it possible that there has been a new flap of earthlights activity in this area? There have been reports in the Aberystwyth area before - including the famous 'Religious Revival' wave early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century reported in the book 'Stars and Rumours of Stars' by Kevin McClure. Many of the lights seen then in the presence of fervent acolyte Mary Jones (and given godly interpretations at the time) sound remarkably like these new encounters.

Paul Devereux believes the area to be technically active and a prime candidate for earthlight activity. So who knows?

**Case 9622 19 September 1996  
14.45 Scarborough, Yorkshire**

Mrs C was hanging out her washing when she spotted a white oblong shape over the North Bay area. After looking at this a second one appeared at some distance behind the first and it seemed connected or tied in some way to the original object. A few moments later both appeared to just vanish in the sun filled sky.

It seems possible that this was a military aircraft carrying a target drone out to sea for a practice exercise, or, less likely, two aircraft linked for a refuelling exercise. My guess is that they reflected the bright sunlight and created the illusion of a cigar shape. This is quite common with high flying aircraft on bright days. When they turned away from the sun they seemed to vanish because the reflection ceased.

**Case 9701 28 February 1997 Accrington, Lancs**

Several residents in the town and nearby Huncoat reported a white circular object above cloud with lights rotating around it. Although local checks brought denials from various suspected nightclubs there is virtually no doubt this is a laser powered searchlight display bouncing off low cloud. Possibly someone much further afield was using one. They can be seen for 30 miles. Or a local establishment was using one illegally and did not wish to admit to it

**Photographing UFOs over Scotland**

**Case 9702 7 June 1997 23.45 Ullapool, Scotland**

A spate of sightings in the Ullapool area has led to some interesting photographic results. A bright white light was seen heading from Evanton towards the Rosemarkie TV transmitter. It appeared sharp edged and was silent as it sped across the sky and disappeared into a cloud. An amateur astronomer also saw it from Alcaig as it came from the direction of Ben Wyvis. He claimed to have never seen anything like it before.

Meanwhile in Ullapool itself the owners of a grocers store were able to film an object. Seeing a group of people watching the sky whilst making deliveries in St Valery, the owner Mr M rushed home, alerted his wife and took out the camcorder. The object was still hovering over the mountain Beinn Ghobhlach and was emitting flashes of red and blue as it sank down. They were successful in getting two minutes of film.

The suspicion is that they were filming a bright planet. This is enhanced because another witness in the town took several photographs of the same object with her 35 mm camera but nothing came out. The camera would not have been able to

record a star-like light unless a long shutter speed was set.

It is not unusual for witnesses to suspect 'foul play' by the UFO, as here, when in truth it is simple optics that is the problem. The camcorder on the other hand fails to focus on the point source and creates a large fuzzy image that looks far more impressive than the 'UFO' really was. This process appears to be exactly what has happened here.

**Skimming UFO over Skem**

**Case 9703 8 October 1997 21.17 Skelmersdale, Lancs Report by LAPIS**

Mr and Mrs O were driving north through the town (known as Skem) in the flat land of the Lancashire coastal plains. Suddenly a row of white 'house lights' appeared to their left as if out of nowhere. There was mist in the air. The lights crossed their path and Mrs O wound down the sun roof to look directly up, seeing the object that silently skimmed their roof at low height. She is adamant that if it were a plane it was landing on top of them.



The object was only dimly seen as a dark shape, like a V, with a red light at the front and the white lights on the edge. There was no green light anywhere, and they looked for one to try to convince themselves that it was just a plane. The lights finally headed off to the right and only Mr O saw them well after that. At 21.20 the car turned right and expected to see the object ahead but, after losing it for a few seconds during the turn, there was no sign of it. The times were accurately recorded as Mr O had asked the time just before the sighting took place.

**Stop Press: The triangles still fly**

As I close for press another sighting of the flying triangle has been reported. This one is under investigation by NARO but was reported to me by the witnesses via Jodrell Bank within five hours of it taking place. This was on 9 January 1998 at 06.35 and the location was the M56 motorway near Preston Brook, Cheshire.

Preston Brook is, of course, noted for its association with the Wonderland window (see 'Mysteries of the Mersey Valley') (special offer on this on page 6 if you don't have it).

The two witnesses were driving to an appointment in the Midlands when they saw two white lights over the sliproad assumed to be on an aircraft heading into Manchester, as they had seen in this area often before. But as they closed and then drove under the thing they realised their error. The object was a large dark triangle with complex rotors underneath, white lights at each apex and a red glow from the base. It was silent

### TOWARDS THE TRUTH IN RENDLESHAM

I promised to say what I could - so here goes. Apologies to my source if I say too much, but I think he will understand the importance of this matter and the need to get to the truth.

'UFO Crash Landing' is an attempt to set out what we know about this case from the testimony of the key people involved. I concentrate on building a picture of the case as represented by the testimony of several important civilian witnesses and three important military personnel. They are Sergeant Jim Penniston and Airman (later Sergeant) John Burroughs and the deputy commander, later full commander. Colonel Charles Halt.

Through a careful reading of their story via various interviews, and really trying to figure this case out I believe that I have documented a consistent account. This establishes the main course of the two primary events. Readers of the book will see that I reach a number of conclusions aside from - at last - getting the chronology right I show why the 'comets in the sky' seen from 21.00 on 25 December are vital. I conclude that some of the things seen on the famous second night are probably the result of misperception. Maybe a lot is. Undoubtedly this set of events is less important than the first night

As the incident on 26 December is most significant I tried hard to set it in context. I established that there were four people involved Burroughs had been at the East Gate with one other witness whom I knew was called Budd (I call him Parker in the book but we now know his real name was Budd Steffans). Then two others arrived to 'sort out' the sightings reported by these first men. They were Penniston and his driver, whom in the book I name as Kavanasac. In fact we now know this is spelt Cabanasag.

In the book I explain that Steffans (Parker) remained at the East Gate and only saw the arrival of the UFO. This is true. According to Penniston they entered the forest to have their close encounter and left Cabanasag behind as a radio relay. As such he saw nothing. Neither Steffans nor Cabanasag have yet come forward to dispute that version. This remains true, but a UFOlogist that I cannot name has obtained original testimony of these men. He kindly sent me copies of this crucial material but I cannot yet publish or discuss it in detail for very good reasons. The data emerged just before Christmas (long after the book was in print). Its devastating. Thankfully the basic story is much as I identify it but we now know some very disturbing things.

In 'Crash Landing' I report that Burroughs and Penniston both undersold their story when they officially reported it on base and explain why. So it is no surprise that their accounts are much less dramatic than their verbal testimony offered in recent years. But Steffans and Cabanasag equally tell of there only being a few lights and Cabanasag claims to have had a much deeper role in the case than his colleagues have let on. Even worse these original accounts allege that Burroughs, Penniston and Cabanasag chased another UFO through the forest for many minutes and failed to identify this until the very end when they realised it was just the lighthouse.

This shocking story - if it is true - has never been mentioned by either Burroughs or Penniston, or indeed Halt. The news does not solve the case but must make us question afresh whether the primary UFO could have been the lighthouse after all, as some of the newly revealed evidence does undoubtedly support.

I hope I will be free to say more soon.

### *Northern UFO Network Groups in Region*

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| SPI        | Alloa Scotland  |
| SEMR       | Bridge of Allan |
| SRUFO      | East Colder     |
| NUFORA     | Newcastle       |
| Connect    | Ikley           |
| NLUFOIO    | Morecambe       |
| LUFOS      | Lancaster       |
| LAPIS      | Blackpool       |
| MARA       | Liverpool       |
| NARO       | Gatley          |
| PRA        | Derby           |
| SUFOG      | Rugeley         |
| Federation | Rhyl, Wales     |
| IUFOPRA    | Dublin, Ireland |