

Jenny Randles

UFO REALITY

A critical look at
the physical evidence



By the same author

UFOs: A British Viewpoint (*With Peter Warrington*)

UFO Study: A Handbook for Enthusiasts

UFO REALITY

A critical look at the physical evidence

Jenny Randles



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TO TRISTAN AND MELISSA, WITH ALL MY LOVE

'Mystery creates wonder; and wonder is the basis for man's desire to understand.'

Neil Armstrong, first man on the moon

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Introduction: Somebody Saw Something

Reach down, silvery ships from the stars – I know you're there.
I know you'll understand me – You can take me anywhere.
I know you must be there.
Al Stewart from his *Modern Times* album

On 15 May 1980 a young teacher, Gareth Hughes, saw a UFO. It was not a particularly noteworthy event, except perhaps for the witness himself. But this was his first UFO, and first encounters are likely to be memorable.

Gareth was returning to his home at Moreton on the Wirral peninsula. It was twenty to one in the morning. Traffic was light on the M53 motorway, which normally ferries busy travellers to the urban centres of Birkenhead and Wallasey. Spotting a white blob by the side of the road, he slowed down, just a little curious. As he rolled on, under the bridge which carries off a sliproad, he found himself face to face with a weird black visitor. Hovering low by a fence stood a strange, foreboding shape, projecting beams of white light that cut off mysteriously in mid-air. At the rear of two conical projections came pinkish/red flames. The intruder was silent and stationary as he hastened the mile or so home, glancing back once or twice to assure himself that it was really there. It seemed so ridiculous—a flying saucer right on top of the motorway! Bundling his mother into the car, he drove back to the location. He saw plenty of fields and sleeping houses through the blackness of the night. But no UFO. Whatever the thing had been, it had now completely disappeared.¹ (See Figure 1).

This experience encapsulates the UFO enigma, a mystery which has stood the test of time, defying all our explanations, both exotic

and mundane. It seems to exist quite independent of our theories to describe it. Precisely what it is appears to be far less important than the simple fact that it is there. It is bigger than its explanations, and perhaps that is a clue to its real nature.

The bare facts of the Gareth Hughes encounter, as I have just outlined them, form part of a remarkably vast ocean of data. This sea is wider than the Pacific and yet in the main uncharted. The enormity of the UFO problem is something to be grappled with. Literally a *million* or so people, from every country on earth, have had experiences akin to that of the Wirral teacher. Often they are less amazing, sometimes even more fantastic. Generally they are just about as puzzling.

As Albert Einstein said, though not about UFOs, 'Somebody saw something.' The question is: what? It might be thought that this is a simple, logical and scientific process. Perhaps it ought to be. If we were dealing with reports of unidentified mushrooms, then it no doubt would be. Comparisons would be made with known fungi and, if the evidence was strong enough, a new type of species would

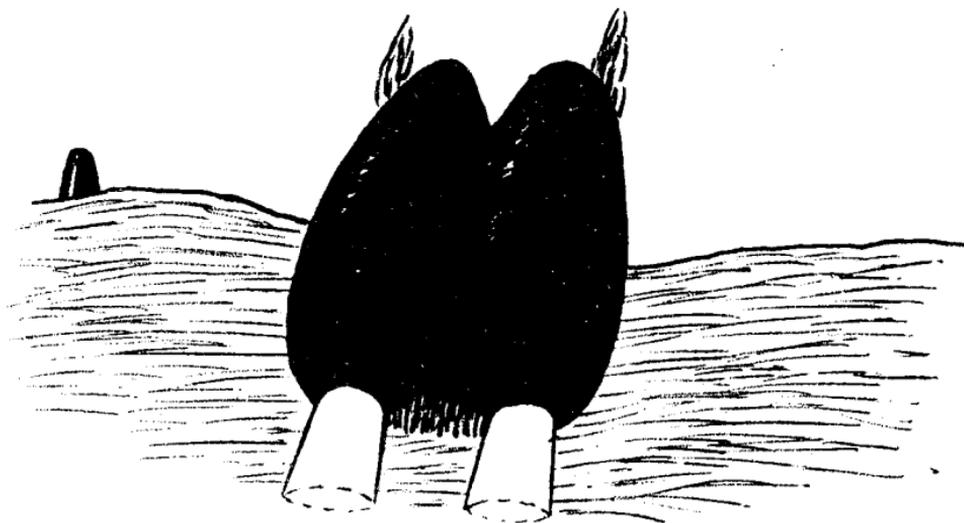


Fig. 1: The M 53 UFO, 15 May 1980

be added to the list, based on the collective testimony which had been gathered together. This does not happen with UFO reports, mainly because UFO reports are emotive things. They conjure up instant pictures of alien invasions, which is rather unfortunate. It is one reason why I dislike the term UFO. It implies an artificial origin. I prefer UAP (Unidentified Atmospheric Phenomenon). But UFO it is, to almost everybody, and convention dictates that I follow suit.

We can show how the 'science' of Ufology diverges from scientific principles by considering our example case. Whilst the sighting itself is real, the following personalities (I stress) are not, for reasons which I trust are obvious.

Gareth Hughes might have had the misfortune to be visited by Billy Bodge-up, from the local UFO study group, the Investigation Department Into Observed Travelling Spaceships, which abbreviates to IDIOTS. Billy would gleefully write up this sighting in his duplicated magazine (whose circulation list varies from small to microscopic, according to how much pocket money is left over to allot for such purposes). He will seize on the fact that there is a weather observatory on the hill above the motorway. You might think this will be because of its potential for generating further witness or revealing some interesting scientific data readings. But no. His piece, entitled 'Visitor from Space Studies Moreton', refers to how the *aliens* in their *spaceship* hovered over the observatory, because it was a *window area* for them to focus on. The visitors were evidently studying our road traffic, perhaps analysing our primitive modes of transportation, as a prelude to mass contact where they will give us the secrets of their anti-gravitic interstellar flight. Nobody takes much notice of his carefully planned thesis, but his cat does find that it makes a really nice bed!

This sounds silly. But in fact presumptions like this, on just as grand a scale, are made time and again by ufologists who would never dream of associating themselves with our friend Billy. Yet, remember, Gareth Hughes made an accurate and unemotional report. He spoke of no aliens or spaceships. He saw only an anomalous object, which puzzled and a little unnerved him. To anthropomorphize, or even deify, it in this way, is the biggest single mistake a ufologist can make—and we all make it! None of this is to say that Billy is wrong. He may, of course, be right, or at least partially right. But where, oh where, are the justification, the

scientific method and the logic?

We now take the opposite extreme. A self-styled expert, Professor Ivan Answer, appears on the scene, determined to solve this latest challenge to scientific omnipotence. He *knows* UFOs cannot possibly exist. They are all just misidentifications, or fantasies, or hoaxes, or whatever. Anything at all but real, anomalous events. Yet Ivan then proceeds to tell the local media that as a scientist he is trained to study puzzling phenomena and to learn from the lessons they teach. Having gone through school and university and graduated to the realms of the learned, he forgets that there are things that even he does not know, and the 'UFO', as one of these, is a threat. It has to be explained, for his own peace of mind and the sake of his paradigms.

So what does Ivan do? He makes blithe assumptions and ignores basic facts. The witness was 'obviously tired'. He must have followed the expected human trend and 'grossly overestimated the size and proximity of the object'. By concluding that the sound of the car engine would drown out any noise from the object (preferring to forget that the witness says he wound down the window and leant out), he can reach a solution that seems plausible to him, even though he has stretched and pulled at the available evidence to do so. And so, 'obviously' this was a helicopter. If he is told by Billy Bodge-up that he checked and there were none there, according to the local airport, he will smile and say 'So what?' Just because no helicopter has been traced does not mean that one wasn't there. And since it seems more sensible to accept that a faintly possible and grossly misperceived helicopter must have been present, than it does to believe in an apparently unknown phenomenon, most people would have little doubt whose side to take. Ivan will emerge victorious.

Clearly both these extremes are unproductive. We need to find a middle-ground position. It is such a sad fact that much too often the only serious protagonist of truth is *not* the ufologist and *not* the sceptic, but the witness.

There have been hundreds of books written about the UFO phenomenon. I have read most of them, and any choice of which are best would be both personal and difficult. But I wish to single six out, because they have a hand in shaping this present volume.

1) What is usually called the 'Condon Report', a mammoth 1969

study commissioned and sponsored by the US Government. It has been much maligned and accused of being the front to a whitewash operation. Its conclusions are certainly excessively negative, although this was due partly to the limited questioning stance it adopted: 'Are UFOs alien spaceships?' But it did provide the first scientific evaluation of the phenomenon and contains over fifty case studies (a third of which it could never explain). There are also a number of specialist papers on peripherally related topics, such as optics, radar and statistics.²

2) *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* by Edward J Ruppelt is a marvellous antidote to the above, if read immediately afterwards. That is, if you can find a copy, as this remarkable book was never widely published after its initial 1956 release. Ruppelt was head of the US Air Force Project Blue Book between 1951 and 1953, and this is a diary of his time there. It contains many exciting, though little known, cases. A reader who comes away from this believing UFOs do not exist would have to be ultra-sceptical.³

3) A recent work, published in 1980, reads something like an updated Condon Report – or rather an updated version of how the Condon Report should have been. It is by an open-minded American astronomer-cum-ufologist, Allan Hendry, and is notable for many reasons. It picks up on the previously ignored question of the cases which *are* identified. Rather than consider these as trash to be thrown away, he reasoned (as is obvious with hindsight) that they *must* be important because ninety per cent of UFO data consists of them! He compared the two sets of data and in this way called into doubt the whole nature of the UFO phenomenon. The book was a sceptic's paradise and is widely used by them as proof of their case. But it was not proof, and Hendry knows full well it was not. He still thinks there is something lurking in the UFO data. His methodology has earned him the distinction of producing the only UFO book revered by both sceptic and open-minded UFO proponent alike. In that case it *has* to be important.⁴

4) One of the earlier books to be written was by the famous Swiss psychologist, Dr Carl Jung. In 1959 he psychoanalysed the UFO phenomenon and came up with answers to questions we are only just beginning to frame. He viewed the enigma in social terms, predicting a trend which is now highly fashionable in serious UFO circles. He considered its effect on humanity as a whole, making no presumptions about the stimulus for the resultant 'myth'. It is quite

clear that there are two entirely different dimensions to the UFO question. There is the primary stimulus and the resultant socio-myth. Others, such as Jerome Clark, Loren Coleman and Jacques Vallée have built on Jung's ideas, but this book remains unsurpassed for its perceptiveness, even though in concrete terms it tells us very little.⁵

5) In my opinion one of the most adept UFO theorizers is an American journalist called John Keel. At times his ideas reach out towards unacceptable extremes, and he certainly rides off on his own euphoric waves, but he has been the innovator of trends of thought so often that we must listen to him, so long as we do not take his concepts too seriously. He was the first to question the material reality of UFOs and search for something in a higher level of awareness. I do not accept all that he writes – far from it – but he stimulates the mind, and that is something we must have in order to counteract the atrophication of scientific method.⁶

6) Finally, what might seem a very strange choice: a book by one of Britain's best science-fiction writers, Ian Watson. It is fiction, based on UFO contact at the deepest levels, but it is very clear that Watson intends the book as far more than that. It superbly caricatures the phenomenon and dips into the seas of consciousness in search of an explanation. It is quite the most brilliant insight into the complexities of the UFO which has yet been conceived.⁷

As I set out to write this book, I suspect I share the excitement which I hope you might feel, as you prepare to read it. I have been involved in the UFO field for more than a dozen years and have seen frustration creep over me. We seem to be chasing our own tails, round ever-decreasing circles. I now take on a new impetus with this return to first principles, and I feel the thrill of the hunt and promise of discoveries lying in wait. My intention is to lay aside all my past presumptions and let the evidence dictate what it will. Right now I have no idea where this book will lead me. I cannot foresee what its conclusions will be. But *the prospect* dangles enticingly, like a dazzling jewel in the dark ahead . . .

1

Problem? What Problem? We Have a Problem?

'Neither you nor I know whether it is true, but nothing is more important than finding out.'

Dr Pierre Guerrin, a French scientist who studies UFOs

The UFO phenomenon is worldwide in extent. Consider the following random selection from recent issues of *Flying Saucer Review*, henceforth FSR.¹

The many islands which make up the Philippines are famous for their beauty and their sugar, though not probably for UFOs. But in May 1979 a strange object was seen near the village of Upper Baracatan by an American scientist and six hundred natives. The round object hovered for twenty minutes over a mountain, emitting strobe flashes from two appendages underneath. The Filipinos were terrified and ran away to their huts, unprepared for this demon in their skies. But the scientist studied the thing through binoculars and said that it was as if something was inside the 'craft' taking photographs of them. There has hardly been a full-scale investigation of this event (UFO society travel expenses do not stretch to field trips half way round the world), but Ahmad Jamaludin, the researcher who collated the information, is a correspondent of mine, and so I believe the story to be trustworthy.²

If six hundred untutored natives do not sound like good witnesses to you, then what about the pilots and crews of no less than *seven* different commercial aircraft? On 11 November 1980 this did in fact happen, in the skies above north-eastern Spain. As veteran pilot Commandante Ramos, in charge of an Iberia Boeing 727, said: 'We were just in the last few minutes before sunset. Behind us, big

clouds were building up, and ahead of us, towards Barcelona, it was already night. And, at 6.40, when we were about 108 miles from the Barcelona VOR (radio beacon), "it" appeared.' 'It' turned out to be a green 'soap bubble'. At about the same time, and quite independently, three other Iberia 727s, a British Monarch Airlines plane, a TransEuropa aircraft and an Air Taxi, *en route* from Majorca to France, all saw the same thing in the same general area and reported it. No radar confirmation was received, but Iberia flight 810 had to take evasive action as it flew past. Iberia flight 1831 flashed its landing lights in signal and received the response of the UFO instantly disappearing, and people on the ground at Barcelona Airport claim to have seen the green thing swoop down low over the runway and shoot into the sky. According to investigator Juan Benitez, one witness said to him: '. . . it is totally impossible for a machine that does all these things to be anything else but controlled by some type of intelligence.'³

America is, of course, the land most often associated with UFOs. One of their best-researched reports of UFO contact from 1971, was on the Palos Verdes peninsula in California. Two men in their twenties remembered encountering a bizarre object like a giant brain, sitting on the road in front of their car. They suffered some ill effects and fled in terror. One man later claimed to have received messages from the brain and to have been transported into a room where he was shown holographic images and warned of a future war in which nuclear weapons would be used. He was given much specific information about this war and told that a 'translator' had been implanted into his head which would be triggered when the time was right. He and the other contacts worldwide were part of a gigantic chain reaction which would be switched into action when the moment came. Through independent regression hypnosis, much interesting information, sometimes consistent, other times not, was obtained from the two men, and the implications were fully evaluated by the experienced researcher Ann Druffel.⁴

Switching cultures, from one of the rare investigators in the Soviet Union (UFO investigation is somewhat suppressed by the Communist state) comes an instance involving a high-ranking and respected officer in the Russian army, who in late May/early June 1978 came upon entities by the shores of the Pyrogovskoye Lake. They wore dull-coloured cellophane-like garments and led him to a 'room' where they gave him some 'salty lemonade' to drink and had

a long talk with him. They claimed to come from space, said they were observing the earth but could not interfere and eventually decided to clear his memory of the events. They only partly succeeded in this task. He found himself back where he had first met them, his mind somewhat hazy and with an apparent time distortion. The comparisons between this case and similar 'close encounters of the fourth kind', the world over, do seem remarkable. And yet there seems little likelihood that the officer had ever heard of such things as alien contacts. Detailed investigation verified, to experts' satisfaction, that the case was genuine, and so it seems to be an incredible class of human experience whose origin we have yet to understand.⁵

Let us come full circle back to Britain. Here, all types of UFO experience have been reported, and we shall come across some in the course of this book. For present purposes we will content ourselves with a case which is interesting but fairly straightforward. It has been thoroughly investigated by the UFOIN member Omar Fowler and colleagues at the Surrey Investigation Group into Aerial Phenomena (SIGAP). At 2.40 p.m. on the bright afternoon of 27 August 1979, a chief flying instructor and a student pilot from Sandhurst military college had just taken off in a Cessna 150 light

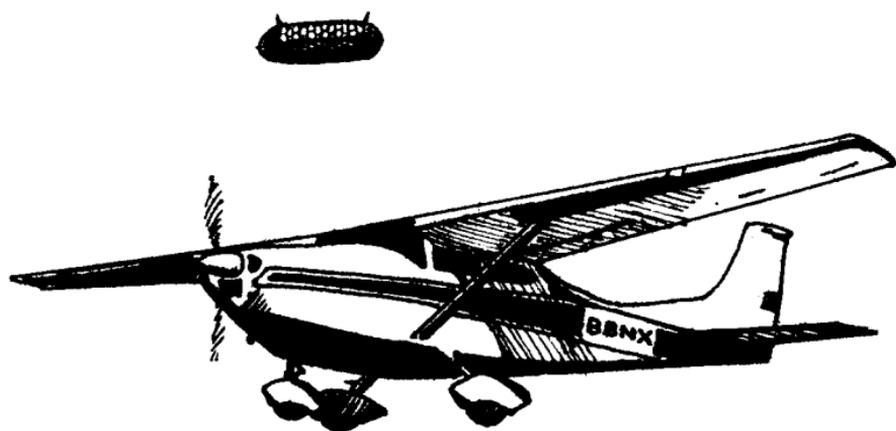


Fig. 2: Mini-disc aircraft chase in Surrey, 27 August 1979

plane from Blackbushe Aerodrome, near Camberley. At two thousand feet they encountered a flying 'doughnut', and, with the plane twisting, turning, circling and climbing, they pursued it as it seemed to play with them for five minutes, clearly displaying controlled flight. It was silvery and metallic looking, about a foot in diameter and with a 'hull' consisting of hexagons. It rotated once every four seconds. They lost sight of it as it flew off behind them.⁶ (See Figure 2). There is some suggestion that this might have been a gas-filled toy balloon caught up in the aircraft's slipstream, but this idea requires a number of assumptions. In any event, this time period appears to have been one when UFOs had a good deal of fun playing 'tag' with aircraft. There was an aircraft chase in Spain that November, and a third independent mini-UFO aircraft chase that was reported in FSR by myself and Ron Sargeant (an aero-engineer from the airport responsible). Once again, in this case there was an instructor and a student pilot flying a Cessna 150 (coincidence?). They had taken off from Barton airfield, near Manchester, early on 11 December. In this case two small discs were seen to fly past their aircraft, and moments later to return, going in the opposite direction.⁷

I could continue for the rest of this book, and several others, choosing any country that you care to mention, but I think the point is made. Even a cursory glance at this random sample is enough to suggest that we *do* have a problem. Of course, they *could* all be misidentifications. And so could the thousands of others I did not choose. But this seems an unlikely explanation, and even were it true, then it would mean that airline pilots, scientists, army officers and countless ordinary people are seeing mini-UFOs and alien creatures when they are not really there. If that is not a problem, then I am sure I don't know what is!

Remember that any UFO book picks and chooses prize examples. There are the most interesting of the ones available, or even those which happen to fit an author's theories. The less interesting cases, even if they swamp the author's star choices, are relegated to a pile of statistics. If they get mentioned at all, that is. Most often they are conveniently subjected to bibliographic amnesia and dismissed as 'irrelevant'.

Allan Hendry showed the folly of this in his book to which I referred.⁸ Following his example, I am going to try to consider the whole problem. Of course, when we come to specific sections,

dealing with photographs, physical traces and so forth, I *will* cite examples from the world record, deliberately selected because of their high calibre or interest. These evaluated reports, considered unknown and of a high quality, I shall henceforth refer to as 'primes'. However, as a constant check to ensure we do not see things out of perspective, I will refer to something I shall call 'The JR Set'. This is a compilation I have made myself from the files of the organization NUFON (Northern UFO Network): UFO Research North.

NUFON is a freelance network that links together local UFO societies in the north of Britain (down roughly to a line south of Birmingham). The number of associate groups varies because they tend to come and go, but it averages about a dozen. Their standards of work swing from the extremes of generally good and sometimes excellent to the often poor and occasionally dismal, but the overall level is quite consistent. As it is one of my tasks to edit *Northern UFO News*, the network's regular newsletter, I have to keep a cardex file of all incoming cases (the originals of which are housed at the HQ in Nottingham, where the local study group make them freely available to researchers). I have chosen five years, 1975–9, since they display a good degree of consistency of the data input and also include average years (such as 1975), low years (such as 1979) and peak years (e.g. 1977, when a British wave occurred). Reports stem only from the geographical area covered by NUFON (about sixty per cent of the UK), and the total ranges between 146 (for 1979) and 323 (for 1977). The grand total for the five years is 1,051 reports.

I call this data 'The JR Set' because I have personally evaluated these 1,051 reports and assigned identifications. I have been strict. If a group identify a case, I do not overrule them and naturally adopt their identification. If they do not, and it proves impossible to judge, as is unfortunately all too common, then I classify the report as 'insufficient data'. But if an identification is strongly suggested (even when I cannot prove it), then I go by my own instinct and adopt that explanation. I have assigned 'TRUE UFO' status to a report only if there seems no other reasonable alternative, and also only if the investigation has reached level A or B on the scale of investigation NUFON assigns to its reports (see Figure 3). Even so, on this basis, 155 reports were rated 'TRUE UFO'. That is 14.8 per cent. A full check on the identifications can be found in Figure 4.

LEVEL A	On-site investigation by experienced investigators
LEVEL B	Follow-up interviews only, or full investigation but by inexperienced people
LEVEL C	Witness fills in official report forms of some kind but no follow-up
LEVEL D	Written account by witness only, no follow-up at all
LEVEL E	Entirely third-hand data, e.g. press cuttings

Fig. 3: NUFON levels of investigation

Aircraft	312	Electric sparks	3
Insufficient data	111	Airship	2
Meteor	84	Insect swarm	2
Star	57	Aurora	1
Balloon	53	Dog	1
Satellite	48	Film fault	1
Helicopter	38	Frost	1
Optical phenomenon	20	Fungii	1
Venus	20	Jupiter	1
Birds	20	Lens flare	1
Moon	18	Mist	1
Hoax	17	Model aircraft	1
Flares	14	Sunspot	1
Ball lightning	12		
Clouds	11		
Psychological	10	TOTAL	896 (85.2%)
Ground lights	9		
Vapour trails	9		
Fire	4	UFO	155 (14.8%)
Kite	4		
Firework	4		
Space debris	4		

Fig. 4: Identifications of all reports in the JR Set

This percentage of unknowns is higher than that produced by both Hendry and the US Air Force studies (theirs were around ten per cent), but not significantly higher. Jacques Vallée noted one probable reason for this.⁹ Studies tend to have individual characteristics related to the mode of data collection. The Air Force received data via air bases, and Hendry a good deal via the police. Obviously people are more likely to relate a different range of experiences to amateur UFO societies, such as those which comprise NUFON.

One of the difficulties of the Hendry study was that 79.15 per cent of his data were classified as nocturnal light (what I would call 'low definition'), and only 9.6 per cent were close encounters. In his terminology (adopted direct from the outdated version coined by Allen Hynek), a close encounter involves a close-up sighting, often with effects of some kind, but not necessarily so. For a report to classify as a close encounter in my scale of qualification, it has to involve some degree of interaction between phenomenon and witness, or phenomenon and environment. On this rather more strict definition, there are still 13.1 per cent close encounters in the JR set, and so this much higher proportion of high strangeness data is almost certainly a contributory factor in the increased percentage of unknowns.

Whilst Hendry has made us aware of the danger of forgetting the identified cases, this point must bear out the judgement of UFOIN (UFO Investigators Network), a kind of sister team to NUFON, which operates on a national scale and employs only experienced investigators. UFOIN concentrates on high strangeness cases and so generates a far higher proportion of data which are subsequently classified as 'TRUE UFO'. I will use several UFOIN cases as examples in specific sections, since they may be considered as 'primes'.

What am I trying to do? I have thrown statistics at you, quoted provocative and interesting cases. Yet am I trying to prove that UFOs exist? Not really. That, according to my definition of a UFO as simply a phenomenon apparently not explained (see *UFO Study*), must be reasonable, and I doubt if many will quarrel that UFOs in this sense *do* exist. Whether or not they are potentially explainable is quite a different matter. Also, proof is a relative thing. What constitutes proof to one person may be purely circumstantial (or even coincidental) to another. And what constitutes

proof of one thing does not constitute proof of another. Mankind is notoriously inconsistent on this point.

As Peter Bottomley says in an interesting article.¹⁰ ‘Do you believe that America has put a man on the moon? . . . “Of course I do” a man would reply. “Why?” you ask. “I’ve seen the films” he might reply. Does “seeing the film” then constitute proof? Because if it does our troubles are over. Just think how much “proof” we have on celluloid . . . Of course, the Americans wouldn’t fake something like the moonshots would they?’ (Readers who have seen the successful movie *Capricorn One*, which concerned the USA faking a manned mission to Mars, will realize that Peter’s point is far from inconsequential). He continues: ‘What all this boils down to is a universal desire not to accept anything which might upset man’s position as the centre of all creation. A far more exacting standard of evidence is demanded of ufology than of any other subject. I have heard it said, “I won’t believe in flying saucers until one lands in my front garden”. Would that same person refuse to believe in nuclear missiles until one landed in his front garden?’

It is perhaps a mark of how right Bottomley is when one remembers that the number of people who have seen a nuclear explosion, or who know for certain that man went to the moon (through intimate involvement in the space programme), is *dwarfed* by the number who claim to have seen a UFO, and probably competes very closely with those who say they have met UFO occupants. Yet nuclear explosions are doubted by nobody.

I do not expect to prove a thing, because for some that proof would be too uncomfortable.

I set the question ‘Why do you believe UFOs exist?’ as a theme for contributions to an issue of *Northern Ufology* (another NUFON publication). The submissions were interesting. The point was often made that one accepts proof only with personal experience, but proof can surely be a value judgement. Invariably when I am interviewed about my interest in UFOs there is an automatic assumption that I *must* have had a convincing sighting in order to believe. This is not so. The evidence is my only motivator.

Lord Clancarty (better known as prolific UFO writer Brinsley Le Poer Trench) told me that he was most impressed by military witnesses, of whom there are many. If the military take a problem seriously, then one can be sure that there *is* a problem. Charles Bowen, editor of *FSR*, argued that ‘where there is smoke there must

be fire.’ The overwhelming mass of data, even if most of it is spurious, has to point to a spark of ignition. Patricia Austin suggested that it was important that UFOs have exhibited several characteristics later seen to be on the threshold of scientific discovery, although I am far from convinced that this has ever clearly been pre-emptive of our own discovery of this particular piece of knowledge. And author Hilary Evans nicely summed up the choice by suggesting that one had to decide whether or not some of those who *seem* to be sincere and *seem* to be credible and have reported what *seem* to be artificial and real phenomena, genuinely have done so. He concludes that, in cases where a group of quite independent people report, in consistent fashion, a phenomenon which they all perceived and which behaves significantly *unlike* a standard phenomenon and yet in clearly artificial manner, then all of his ‘seems’ are apparently vindicated. As we do have such cases, he feels justified in regarding the existence of UFOs as proven.¹¹

In my contribution ‘Proof or delusion?’, I gave two main arguments why I ‘believe’ in UFOs:

1) ‘The reports are consistent in basic essence. Some types of UFO (not all) manifest the same in Russia, Africa, Bognor Regis and so on, despite vast differences in social status. Of course there are divergencies, and the final report is always diluted by natural (and individually varying) psychological and sociological trends. The most logical explanation for the same basic type of report originating from so many divergent sources is that all percipients are responding to the same stimulus.

2) ‘The phenomenon generates consistent psychological and physiological responses. A close encounter invariably generates responses “x”, “y” and “z” (or at least one of these). We do have an objective *fact* here, and it *is* objective, and not entirely conditioned by what we read or believe. Cats, dogs, horses and the like do not make a habit of reading *Flying Saucer Review*. Yet animals exhibit the same type of psychological responses. It is clearly logical to assume that they (and the humans on other similar occasions) are reacting to a *real* stimulus.’

This seems to offer, at the very least, hope that a search through the haystack of UFO data will eventually produce one shiny needle, and very possibly more. To those who think UFOs a waste of time (and there are many), I would put up these arguments to challenge their dismissals, which have often been hastily erected in their

defence without really bothering to *think* about the problem. And the foregoing arguments are by no means all that there are. Specific research, often by practising scientists such as Drs Jacques and Claude Poher, tend to point in the same direction.¹²

So, whilst to my satisfaction there is proof of a real phenomenon (UFO, or UAP – call it what you will), I am *not* out to show this, except by inference. Neither do I intend specifically to prove the existence of ‘exotic UFOs’ (UFOs which are the product of one of the speculative exotic hypotheses, such as extra-terrestrial visitations or psychic projection images). Rather, I intend to lay before you the evidence, assessing it with you as critically as I can. That, then, can be the basis for our decision.

To aid us in this quest it will be useful to consider the four basic types of evidence which we have.

a) *Circumstantial*. The circumstances surrounding the UFO phenomenon seem to provide evidence of reality. For example, the fact that this is a global enigma, and yet consistent. Or the fact that it is independent, to some extent, of cultural differences. This is the lowest level of evidence. We have considered it already and will not examine it beyond this introductory section.

b) *Testimonial*. This is the second level of evidence, which we shall probe in the second part of this book. It concerns the internal mechanics of the phenomenon, its effects (both physical and psychological) on both witnesses and surrounding environment. It goes beyond the circumstantial but still relies on the testimony of the percipients. Whilst circumstantial data might be considered third-hand, testimonial will be regarded as second-hand.

c) *Causative*. In the next section we will move up a stage to causative evidence, which can be termed first-hand data. Here the phenomenon is allegedly responsible (‘allegedly’ being a key word) for objective and analysable semi-permanent effects of one kind or another. They are undeniably real things and *appear* to be caused by the UFO phenomenon.

d) *Substantial*. Finally we shall make our closest possible approach to proof, although it is really nothing more than a further set of first-hand data. This is evidence of a substantial nature which is, in one way or another, potentially available for scientific dissection. Obvious examples would be photographs, movie-film and radar-trace records. Rarer still would be artefacts or bits of metal claimed to come from crashed UFOs.

there are indications that even they have their doubts. Yet, if we insist too dogmatically that the sceptics are wrong, we must be wary of falling victim to the same psychological drives as they exhibit. Believers *need* to believe, and usually not just in UAPs. So the very least we can do is take the sceptics more seriously. We must make an effort to climb off our hobby horse and stop insisting we are right and they are wrong. Sometimes life doesn't quite work out that way.

2

The Needle in the Haystack

'It's like I'm panning for gold nuggets and finding only grains.'

Peter Warrington, in a private conversation

One of the worst failings of human society is to trust in omniscience. One of the worst failings of a UFO investigator is to trust in himself. I have learnt this home truth more than once, and it has sometimes led to my attracting not a small amount of sometimes hostile controversy. Of course controversy is a way of life for any author, and especially if one chooses to write about things such as flying saucers. In the UFO world it is very easy for one's motives to be misread, and emotions tend to climb rather high. Controversy occurs because different people can, and do, put widely different interpretations on the same set of data. For the public to know who is right is usually impossible. The ufologists themselves often do not know if a report is to be trusted or not. Probably in most instances the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

In December 1976 there was a local flap of sightings in Staffordshire. Some interesting reports were made and investigated locally by a team headed by Derek James. Derek was a man I knew well and trusted, so, when he submitted a full yet concise account of the events, I took notice of it. One of my tasks with the magazine *FSR*, for which I work, is to provide up-to-date summaries of UK sighting activity. I prepared an article on the spate of Staffordshire reports, which *FSR* chose to title 'North Staffordshire flap with humanoid report.'

The 'humanoid' report was a case dated 31 December. It involved

an elderly lady, sixty-five-year-old Nellie Richardson, at Bignall End, a village (or really housing estate) overlooking open farmland to the north and west. She was awoken by a loud bang and found bright yellow light flooding into her bedroom. Going to investigate, she saw an oval object, hovering low, which Derek and his team found was 'the size of a nine-inch dinner plate held at a distance of ten feet'.

As her alarm clock had stopped, Nellie went downstairs and confirmed that it was 2.45 a.m. She then reset her clock and went back upstairs. She claims that the object had now moved slightly and filled one quarter of the window. It seemed to travel towards her and darken as she watched for over an hour. Before it vanished, she said that two figures 'like toy soldiers' were moving about in front of it.

At about 4.15 a.m. her thirty-one-year-old son arrived home from a restaurant and saw his mother's distress. He had viewed the object himself whilst driving home, 'like a glowing orange ball moving north-west towards Crewe'. Both witnesses observed the final few moments as the object seemed to recede and disappear.

At face value this seems a relatively interesting experience. There is even the footnote that the family cat was found on the windowsill, apparently staring out at this big orange blob. In *FSR* I summarized the incident as factually as I could, along with all the others, but of course I had to rely on the report which was submitted. Personally, I suspected the possibility that the object might have been the moon, as there was a general similarity, and in long-duration cases such as this it is instinct to suspect an astronomical source. But the idea was only half-hearted because I found it hard to imagine two witnesses being independently fooled by a sight as familiar as this, even if the moon were low down and subject to the common optical illusion where it is bloated beyond its normal proportions. Nevertheless, I made a rough check and referred to my calculations in the article. I found that the moon was not at full phase (when it is most often mistaken for a UFO) and in fact set at that location well before the alleged time of 4.15 a.m. Derek had seemingly thought of this possibility too. He had consulted Dr Ron Maddison of Keele University, a former director of the lunar section of the British Astronomical Society. When he offered no explanation, it seemed, to me, safe to conclude that the case was unidentified.¹

But sadly I was too trusting, not only in all those connected with

the case but also in my own calculations. It never occurred to me, for example, to find out the position of the moon in the sky—although time was the enemy (as so often is the case) and it is naturally impossible for me to check every detail of every case submitted for inclusion in *FSR*. I dismissed the moon explanation far too readily, as events were to prove.

Some months later a report was anonymously circulated to several leading UFO societies. It was headed 'The Institute for the Evaluation of Anomalous Phenomena' (a body of which nobody had ever heard). As no name or address was attached to it, no reply was possible. The report quoted the relevant section of the *FSR* article and gave precise calculations for the moon. The bearing was 294 degrees, whereas Mrs Richardson had at one stage estimated 290 degrees for her UFO. Since the weather was clear and the moon had set at 3.18 a.m., it would seem impossible for the witness *not* to have seen the moon at 2.45 a.m. and just after. Yet she had not claimed to. Since the night was frosty, the moon image might well have been distorted by ice on the window glass, perhaps even enough to fool the cat! And Mrs Richardson does wear spectacles.

The major remaining problem concerns the younger witness. Why did he mistake the moon, arrive home an hour after it had set and still apparently see it as a UFO? The report had some answers to offer. It suggested that, from a reconstruction of the incident, Mrs Richardson was unsure about her initial estimate of an hour and a half observation time, now believing it to be around forty minutes. This is vital to bring it in line with the moon possibility. They thus concluded that the son, who had gauged the time from a wall clock in a restaurant, had *misread* this by a factor of one hour. He had arrived home at 3.15 a.m. not 4.15 a.m. and thus seen the setting moon, distorted and through tired eyes.

This does seem a good piece of detective work which, whilst leaving some points open to doubt, offers a plausible solution to the case. The humanoids, it was guessed, were nothing more than a telegraph pole in line of sight, silhouetted against the body of the moon!

Whilst one would congratulate the 'Institute' for its research, one had to question why it chose to publicize it in such a strange manner, blocking all further debate on the matter by remaining anonymous. In addition it did not only accuse both the investigators and myself of slipshod thinking (a charge which in fairness must have partial

justification) but extended this to suggestions that we had deliberately perverted the truth to perpetuate a mystery! Now the plain facts of the matter show that this has no support whatsoever. Mistakes may have been made, but they were mistakes which could have been made by anyone under the circumstances. So why did the authors of this Institute report have such a desire to prove that ufologists are fantasizers?

Things remained dormant for three years until *Skywatch* magazine suddenly decided that the time was right to resurrect the report. It reprinted the *FSR* account and the Institute's evaluation, with the comment that it illustrated how investigators abuse data.²

In their next issue I naturally answered this charge, pointing out that I was prepared to accept the moon explanation but adding: 'It would appear possible that the moon *did* somehow trigger some kind of experience – psychological or parapsychological but . . . to dismiss it simply as the moon is akin to discovering a diamond and throwing it away because it is not a sapphire. Why did this happen – and how?'"³ This seems quite reasonable comment to me. People do not normally make such gross misperceptions of something so ordinary as the moon, and we are failing in our duty if we cast aside the real questions such a case poses simply because it was not a 'UFO' (in the rigid sense in which some understand this word).

Unbelievable as it might seem, immediately after this a respected British researcher replied saying that he had conjured up the phantom institute (thus explaining why nobody had ever heard of it) to fight against the 'perpetrators of pseudoscience' (notably myself). He also made light of my suggestion that it was worth knowing why the moon was so distorted, if indeed it was.⁴

It's not enough to examine cases reasonably well. Immediately you can see that the sceptics have plenty of fuel for their fires – not only with our data but also in the way that we handle it all.

This is an example of something which may well filter out a stage two in our flow diagram. During the course of this book you will meet a few examples of things which do not even get past stage one, being in fact deliberate fantasies or hoaxes. But it may surprise the reader to learn that hoaxes are relatively very uncommon.

I could cite case after case where some factor or combination of factors has led to distortion, to a greater or lesser extent. The culprits are sometimes witnesses but more often the media and not infrequently honest (and usually competent) UFO investigators –

including, as the reader has seen, myself.^{5,6} The dangers are so marked that one can be forgiven for wondering if the sceptics might not be right after all. Just how can we be sure that not all reports would filter out at stages one and two in our sieve, if we had all the resources and all the luck needed to determine the truth? If the moon can be so easily mistaken, just what else gives rise to mysterious UFOs?

The honest answer to this vital question is that we *cannot* be sure. But there is a little more evidence than the mere circumstantial that leaves us pondering. Even Allan Hendry, in his mammoth book which stresses this point, felt that some cases do ultimately stand up.⁷ These would be the 'primes'. There does seem an intuitive difference between the best of the unexplained cases and those exaggerated IFOs which fail to pass through the filter. It is a definite, if intangible, factor which is rather like our normal conscious ability to isolate dreams from real events.

Let us look at a problematic case which remains unexplained and try to see the difference (if any). We must take the word of the investigators, of course, who in turn place their trust in the witness that this is neither deliberate hoax nor fantasy. If it filters out, then it will be at stage two. This might seem a dangerous supposition, and perhaps it is, but there are some grounds for accepting it. No obvious motivation for a fake seems to exist. There was no publicity. The witness holds a good position, and this might be jeopardized by any dubious revelations. In addition, all UFO studies (by both sceptics and believers) agree that the percentage of reports attributable to hoaxes is probably no more than one or two per cent.

The sighting occurred on 23 April 1977 at Mickleover, Derbyshire, and involves an aircraft engine inspector for Rolls-Royce. He had often been engaged in the test-flying of new aircraft. That night he had been out with his wife and father-in-law but drank very little because he was driving. He reached home at 11.55 p.m. and put the car away alone. Before going indoors, he paused to look at the sky (something he does fairly often, being a bit of a star-gazer). The night was cool, calm and perfectly clear. Suddenly there was an explosion of light, and he saw an object plunge out of the sky. It was a typical UFO disc shape with protuberances and indentations. It fell at an incredible speed in a steep dive which seemed doomed for disaster. The outer rim glowed, as if from friction, and sparks flew from its surface. Miraculously it swooped out of its dive moments

before the anticipated impact and traced out a graceful 'S' curve in the sky, slowly decelerating as it did so. The glow stopped, as if it had now cooled, but returned as it swooped once more into another dive, which shallowed out in the exact same fashion. Then it climbed away in another 'S' curve.

The man had now been watching for some ten seconds. The object having approached him within a few hundred feet, appeared several times the apparent size of the full moon. He lost it behind his garage but rushed onto the lawn to watch it re-emerge. It was now clearly metallic and had sprouted flimsy 'butterfly' wings. It made a series of wobbling manoeuvres, as if steadying its course and further slowing down. The wings also vanished with the first 'wobble'. Eventually the object was lost to view in the distance, having been in sight for about half a minute. It had made a swishing sound, as if displacing air, and the witness was convinced that it was under intelligent control and subject to 'G' forces well beyond those any human pilot could survive.⁸

Now this report is essentially crazy, for, if a real object had entered our atmosphere above Derbyshire, hundreds, if not thousands, of people would have seen it. Yet nobody else apparently did. On the other hand, how can we possibly explain this as a misidentification (e.g. of an aircraft), no matter how grossly distorted? The unbelievable performance and precise description make this totally out of the question. We have an all-or-nothing situation here. Either this man is not telling the truth or he saw a TRUE UFO. One may be tempted to accept the first option, but, to do him justice (and all the others like him), we *must* consider the other option too. So what could he have seen? This is not the time to answer such a question, but it must be thought remarkable that a man involved in test-flights of aircraft should see a UFO with wings (almost unheard-of) which performs exactly like an aircraft on a test-flight. It even comes complete with details such as the frictional heating, a point one might expect someone such as this witness to anticipate but which no other witness, that I am aware of, has ever described. The link between witness and UFO is far too close for comfort and has to be taken into account in any interpretation of the phenomenon.

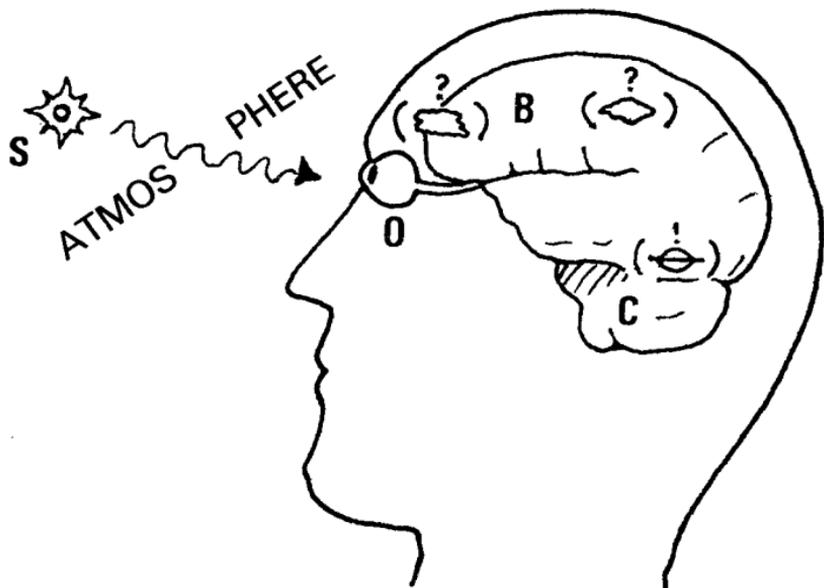
Can we really believe that this was an incredible misperception of something ordinary, or possibly some kind of 'waking dream'? It could have been fuelled by his own beliefs (which did include UFOs

as spaceships). Even with the hypothetical influence of alcohol, is a straightforward explanation really tenable? Some researchers, such as John Keel and Dr Jacques Vallée, would probably cite this as a good example of how the phenomenon loves to play games with its witnesses. Indeed if the witness *is* describing a real experience, then this explanation is almost forced upon us. Others might say it is a case of 'acceptance levels', the phenomenon tailoring itself to what a witness anticipates, or expects, to make the contact easier to appreciate. But are we jumping to conclusions? Why does nobody consider the possibility of a new breed of 'jumbo' moth? Is this not as feasible as an alien spaceship?

When dealing with an investigation, we have to remember that there are four stages at which problems can occur. The original stimulus (e.g. Venus, the moon or a genuine unknown) is the 'UFO EVENT'. A witness perceives this by way of his senses as a 'UFO SIGHTING'. This step brings in many difficulties of perception (such as in the above case the *possible* influence of even minor amounts of alcohol on observational skills). The witness then goes on to discuss it with others (subconsciously modifying his story through memory defects, exaggeration, fitting in with what others want to hear and so on). He is now giving the 'UFO ACCOUNT'. And before the outside world comes to study the data, an investigator acts as a medium (and 'investigator' could include the reporting media). This adds numerous other preconceptions to the story, and the resultant 'UFO REPORT' is actually a composite of many influences.⁹ (See Figure 6).

I believe this process is extremely important and far too often overlooked by those who consider UFO REPORTS. In the last case I have seen the UFO ACCOUNT (i.e. the statement by the witness), but just how far can we go in terms of exaggeration between the EVENT and ACCOUNT? The question we must ask ourselves is this. Is it so unthinkable that in the Mickleover case an ordinary aircraft, or moth, or bird reflecting streetlights, could follow this route and become an aluminium disc venting sparks and swooping in dangerous 'S' curves? I have to admit that I don't know the answer!

In late June 1978 NUFON received a number of reports of two lights, sometimes described as vague shapes, even once as 'flying fish'! Investigation showed these to be two stellar objects (in other words one star and one planet) in unusual close formation. They



S = STIMULUS . . . THE UFO EVENT

Passes through atmosphere (possibility of distortions, mirages, inversions, etc.)

O = SENSORY ORGAN . . . decodes the incoming stimulus as a UFO SIGHTING

[Possible biological malfunctions, e.g. myopia and colour blindness, lead to distortion. Limitations of the sense organ impose distortions]

B = BRAIN . . . receives data via optic nerves and perceives the sighting

[Quality of perception affected by any other influence on the brain's functions . . . e.g. alertness, tiredness, other incoming stimuli]

C = CONSCIOUS MEMORY STORE . . . files perceived data and interprets it according to mental set, beliefs, attitudes, possibly modified by opinions expressed by others with whom the perception is discussed.

This data now forms basis of the UFO ACCOUNT

Along comes UFO investigator and manipulates the data again, through personal stages B and C, before giving the world *his* UFO REPORT (⊕)!

Fig. 6: From stimulus to UFO report: the pitfalls of perceiving reality

were prominent for a time in the south-western sky.

Taking this as the **EVENT**, we can examine one sighting of these 'lights' and take it through the chain discussed above. In fact it comes from Lincolnshire and was investigated by Nigel Watson and David Johnson of the Scunthorpe UFO Research Society. The date was 3 July 1978 and there were three witnesses: a married couple (aged twenty) and the seventeen-year-old sister of the husband. She had been on holiday in Skegness, a coastal resort, and the couple were driving her back to Scunthorpe through Market Rasen and the surrounding open countryside.

It was after 11 p.m. on a mild night with patches of clear sky. One of the girls spotted the two lights and asked, 'What's that?' the husband, who was driving, dismissed it at first as lights on a farmer's plough but then thought that it might be a Harrier jet from one of the many airbases nearby. He stopped so that they could take a look. Getting out of the car, they saw that the lights were over some fields to the south-west and tried to make out what they presumed to be a vague shape behind them. 'I don't know what the bloody hell it is, but I don't like it!' the man cried. In some panic they drove off, watching rather frantically as the lights (now 'UFO') paced the car.

They decided against taking a B-road short cut and stopped by a farmhouse, hoping to take sanctuary there should the UFO approach. But it seemed to recede and vanish in the south (probably behind cloud). They drove on, but now it was following again. They watched it through gaps in trees and noticed that, as they passed through lighted villages, it dimmed and faded out (as, of course, did *all* the stars). Their interpretation of this was that it did not want to be detected! Eventually they reached 70 m.p.h. and lost sight of it near home. They were so upset that they called the police.¹⁰

Now this is the **ACCOUNT** given of the **SIGHTING**. There was no major deviation, largely because the time-lag between interview and event was short – less than forty-eight hours in fact. The **REPORT**, written subsequently by Nigel Watson, was objective but did not uncover what seems to have been the root event.

It is clear that the main problems here arose between the **EVENT** and the **SIGHTING**. If one strips the description of its emotional floss, and with the lucky hindsight of the previous sightings, we can explain this case as a misidentification of the stellar objects. Lincolnshire is extremely flat, and above it the stars seem to stand out as living things amidst a totally black background. This parti-

cular star/planet formation was unusual. If one couples this with the tension and fear it generated, plus the belief that the lights were part of an object which was chasing the frightened witnesses, and then add that only part of the sky was clear so that the objects would continually appear and disappear in and out of cloud, one is left with an inevitable outcome. What was described fits readily into an exaggerated misidentification, and most people in the same circumstances would have responded the way these witnesses did. Stars do seem to follow cars, but one is not usually fooled by the illusion because one does not usually think that the stars are anything other than stars. Simply by vesting in them animate properties, or making them lights on some 'object', perfectly ordinary behaviour takes on whole new dimensions of strangeness. In view of this, the reader might not find it odd to learn that car chases of this kind are rather common in Lincolnshire. Indeed, they are most often reported from areas of flat, open countryside in many counties. This correlation seems to have been missed by ufologists, but its implications would appear fairly obvious.

This process of reading a shape into unconnected lights is an extremely common illusion to which we are all subject. It is well illustrated by Figure 7. Look at the dots and no doubt you will see no more than a random jumble. But if I now tell you that these dots are in fact a picture of a cow, then you will see it. Each time you look, you will see a cow. It is almost impossible not to! But, of course, it remains just a collection of dots. Psychologically, the witnesses in Lincolnshire 'knew' that the dots (stars) were part of a UFO. So this is what they saw, and afterwards could not help *but* see. Nowadays we have become conditioned to think of the UFO as one alternative for a strange thing seen in the sky. It may not be our first option, but it is often one of them. And that is all it needs to be.

I could now regale you with a parade of visual illusions. Figure 8 is typical. Most people see a central white triangle. But the triangle is not really there. Yet, even though we *know* that no triangle is present, we still see it. Illusions are more powerful than logic. An experienced airline pilot with years of training, excellent eyesight, a huge IQ and a degree in logic would still see this illusion, just as he would see a pencil bend when placed in a glass of water. It is a nonsense to dismiss the possibility of perceptual error merely because of the calibre of the witness.¹¹

Just one more example will be given to define a further point.



Fig. 7: What does this picture show?

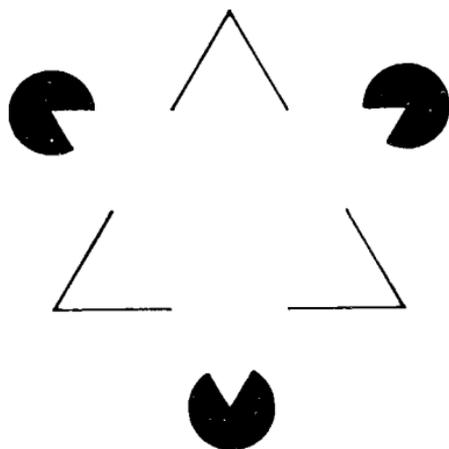


Fig. 8: The phantom triangle
(illusion)

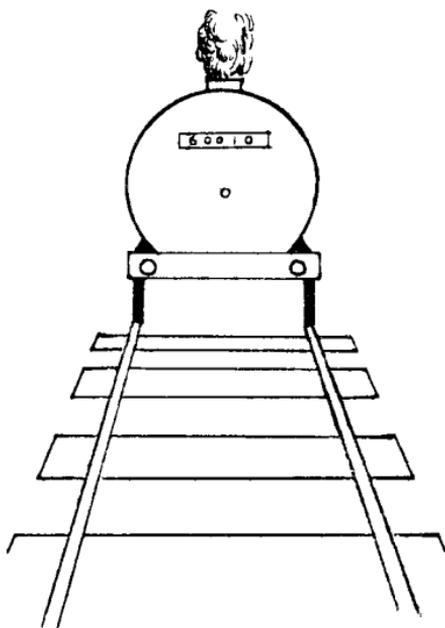


Fig. 9: What is this?

What do you see in Figure 9? I am sure almost everybody said: 'A train approaching along a railway track.' Yet how can that be? This is a two-dimensional image which cannot possibly show a three-dimensional scene. The reason why we see a train is because we interpret what we see in the light of past experience, and a train is the most likely explanation for the image in this drawing. Yet when we view an image with which we have no familiarity, our interpretation has a great deal to do with both context and belief: where we are at the time; what we believe about things in the sky; what our personal interests are and the store of information we carry in our head. Since for some years now everybody has been steeped in the UFO mystery, directly or indirectly, it should not be surprising that people read a UFO context into something in the sky they cannot explain.

This process is perfectly self-perpetuating. Once the object is seen as a UFO, it takes on UFO attributes. The original EVENT then becomes a more complex and sometimes badly distorted SIGHTING.

It is not very surprising, therefore, that when an unusual atmospheric event took place on the night of 31 December 1978 everyone, but everyone (*except* most ufologists!), began to think in terms of a UFO.

This night was, of course, New Year's Eve, and so thousands of people were out and about at 7.05 p.m. The skies over Britain just happened to be clear, and this combination led to hundreds of potential witnesses to the strange spectacular about to unfold. I soon realized that, if its source could be found, we had here a unique controlled experiment. We could analyse just how far a known stimulus could become exaggerated. This would give us invaluable insight into the likelihood of gross exaggeration in the one-off events, such as that at Mickleover.

An official explanation was soon put forward by the Ministry of Defence, after several false starts which included stars and meteorites. They said that this slow-moving fiery object was the re-entry of a booster rocket from a Russian satellite (COSMOS 1068) which was launched on 26 December. It had burnt up over northern Europe, and small pieces of debris had fallen to earth in western Germany. Most ufologists accepted this explanation, but a few did not. Others, such as the North Lincs UFO Investigation Group, did a fine job of collecting data and making no premature decisions.^{12,13}

It is clear that, since COSMOS 1068 *did* re-enter that night and was spectacular over Europe, this has to be the primary source of the sighting. Of course, it remains perfectly feasible that other observations of more puzzling phenomena were swept into our hands by the widescale publicity this case provided. What is more, it is a fact of life for ufologists that mass-witness sightings over a vast area (from Scotland to Germany in this instance) *never* seem to be TRUE UFOs. TRUE UFOs have always been isolated in space and time (such as the Mickleover spectacular, which generated only *one* witness). But, even if we accept the COSMOS 1068 solution, the case remains one of the most important on recent record – although most of my colleagues, along with the sceptics and the media, have dismissed it as ‘irrelevant’.

I have collected a large number of reports, mostly from various NUFON investigators and for the purpose of this chapter have analysed a hundred of them. They come from schoolchildren, housewives, scientists, airline pilots, police officers and so on. They present a surprisingly consistent picture.

Of those who gave a time, only three were wildly inaccurate. One witness, in Failsworth, Greater Manchester, insists his sighting occurred at 9.00 p.m. although he is clearly in error. Another group claimed 6.15 p.m., which seems to be an error of one hour. And a third at Ormskirk, Lancashire, described what was apparently the same object at 6.45. I suspect, however, that at least this last one might have been a different event altogether. It is the only one which ascribes any kind of sound to the object (a humming). All the other sightings (ninety-seven per cent of them) range between 7.00 and 7.20 p.m., with the majority centring on 7.05 (which is known to be approximately the correct time). So witnesses were mostly very accurate in this respect. Indeed one of the most suspect times, 7.20 p.m., was made by police officers in Hertfordshire, allegedly from reading their station clock!

Direction of travel was also remarkably accurate. It was known to be approximately north-west to south-east, and eighty-seven per cent of those who estimated this were more or less correct. Only two gave completely erroneous impressions (although these witnesses were in open country where it is very easy to lose one’s bearings at night).

Duration of observation varied, as one might expect. Some people will have spotted the object well after it had first appeared.

Others will have lost sight of it because of buildings or other obstructions, or merely left it whilst it was still visible. However, very few people estimated less than one minute. Three estimated as long as ten minutes, and the overwhelming majority centred on two to three minutes. This is long enough for any thought of a meteor to be ruled out, as meteors are transitory in the order of seconds, or tens of seconds at the very most.

It should not be surprising that estimates of the object's size were useless. They varied from 'a pea held at arm's length', through 'a quarter the size of the full moon' (actually quite accurate), to 'ten times the size of a low-flying jet aircraft!' This was inevitable. Gauging the size of an object in dark sky, when its height is just a subjective guess, is quite impossible. Most people thought the phenomenon was low, because of its *apparent* size, and suggested a few thousand feet. Even air-traffic controllers at Manchester Airport were quoted as estimating four thousand feet. In fact, the true height must have been in the order of *miles*, rather than feet, which threw any meaningful size estimates into the realms of pure fancy.

However, when it comes to describing what the object looked like, witnesses gave an excellent consensus. Most agreed it was white, yellow or pale orange. Nearly all referred to a rounded cone or cylinder with a long trail or streamer behind it. Other reported colours were very rare. We did have descriptions such as 'tadpole' or 'sausage', but nothing which is not perfectly acceptable, especially as we know that the object did alter shape during its passage. Some people did draw a series of dark windows or port-holes. In fact many said the object resembled a 'railway carriage blazing with light from its windows'. There was, in fact, a train of burning debris passing across the sky in sequence, and there is a well-known psychological process (akin to the one we discussed earlier about the stars) where a chain of lights is seen as windows on a darkened body. Readers are referred to my previous book *UFO Study* for some of the drawings which show this fact.

What is very important is that *nobody* described anything which was ridiculously out of keeping with the phenomenon (such as a silvery disc). Most fortunately we have a piece of movie film to act as an objective comparison. This was taken by Paul Rimmer in Morecambe, Lancashire, and his attendant description of the object was one of the most accurate of all (probably because the film stimulated his memory and prevented later distortion). *None* of the

reports referred to 'flying saucers'. Nobody claimed that the object did anything too out of the ordinary (one man did say it hovered, and a couple of others reported a slight change in direction, but both are minor illusional effects unimportant in the context of the overall reports). Nobody described any psychological, or physical, or physiological responses, which they linked to the 'UFO'. One account, from Birmingham, did refer to a barking dog, which was what led to the witness going outside to see the object. But the connection of this with the UFO was not seriously proffered – and in any case the dog might well have been disturbed by the thing. A lot of humans were!

I believe that the fortuitous re-entry of COSMOS 1068 makes some very telling points about the UFO phenomenon. On the basis of this evidence it would seem clear that there is *not* a universal, or even widespread, tendency towards gross exaggeration. Here was the perfect opportunity for people who were viewing a rare sky phenomenon for the very first time to get carried away and fall prey to all the tricks of the imagination. Indeed, New Year's Eve is a time noted for its more than normal consumption of alcohol, in which case we might have expected excessive exaggeration. What is more, on that same night a major radar and movie-film case occurred in New Zealand and was given lead coverage on TV and in the Press over the next few days, so people had the perfect 'UFO climate' in which to misinterpret what they had seen. The fact that none of this happened, contrary to what the sceptics would have us believe, and the fact that just about the only people who tried to link this British event with the New Zealand film were the media men, both point significantly to a major conclusion. People tend to describe reasonably well the objective basis of what they see, even when under external pressure to do otherwise. Quite a few even put forward their own rational explanations. No fewer than fifteen thought it was an aircraft on fire and about to crash. Many others included 'a rocket on take-off', 'a distress flare of some kind' and several 'bright meteors'. Of course many did finally settle on the possibility of 'UFO', which under the circumstances was more than reasonable. Yet even they did not get carried away, and talk of 'spaceships' was minimal. There was *no* serious misrepresentation of the original stimulus.

This human reaction, endeavouring to explain things in rational terms, is well known amongst ufologists (if not sceptics). Allen

Hynek terms it 'the escalation of hypotheses'. The witness will substitute possibility after possibility, dismissing each in turn, before he settles on the one of 'UFO'. This may be an acceptable option, but it is not the *reason* people report strange things.

No doubt somebody, somewhere, did view COSMOS 1068 in exotic terms. But the plain fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of people described it faithfully and factually. And my study is not an isolated one. William K. Hartmann did one on the re-entry of the Russian ZOND IV some years ago.¹⁴ His results were almost identical in every respect. Indeed, forty per cent of the witnesses in this case (in a more space-conscious America and at a time when the space race was more in people's minds) correctly identified the phenomenon as a satellite re-entry.

So where does this leave us? With something of a paradox, I fear, for we have seen that in isolated instances gross misidentification does seem to take place. Yet this is not representative of the vast majority of the population. With reservations, and with constant reference to some important psychological processes (of which more students of ufology should take note), we can say that witnesses *will* give reasonably accurate accounts of a phenomenon observed. This does not explain why the pattern was not followed at Bignall End, for example. Was it merely a case of super-susceptibility, and, if so, how rare is this? Or is there more to it than that? Either way it makes these grossly distorted IFOs of much more interest, and I would argue that ufologists ought to pay rather more attention to them than they have in the past.

If we take an isolated report from the COSMOS 1068 data, could we trace it to the original source? Bear in mind that in most UFO reports there are not hundreds of supporting witnesses, so we *are* dealing with an isolated instance. I think it fair to say that this would have been possible, and this gives impressive evidence that UFO accounts are, in most cases, reasonably close to the initial stimulus. But this evidence does not prove the point. Perhaps all close encounters are gross exaggerations. I think the data argue clearly against this, for there are basically too many of them. On the indications of COSMOS 1068 and ZOND IV data, each of these gross exaggerations should produce a hundred or more well-reported IFOs whereas the true figure is far below that – perhaps no more than a tenth of it, in fact. What is more, the sociological profile of the close-encounter witnesses does not differ from that of the

IFO witnesses (Hendry found this). This makes it somewhat difficult to justify the theory of super-susceptibility. It seems rather more plausible to argue that at least some close-encounter UFO events are *not* wildly exaggerated. They relate to a stimulus fairly close to the one claimed in the witness account.

It has not escaped my notice that the acceptance of this last sentence is little short of an admission that real UFOs exist!

The residue that is left after sieving out the IFOS contains a much higher proportion of 'effects' of all kinds. The number of IFOS which contain such effects is very small, as witness the COSMOS 1068 affair – just one spurious instance of animal disturbance.

Dr Jacques Vallée has done some work which he claims shows that IFO reports do not share the same parameters as the residual UFOs. In particular he quotes the duration of observation, which for IFOS peaks at different points than it does for UFOs. Allan Hendry challenges this view with statistics of his own (and I feel it has something to do with the fact that UFOs, if they *are* all reducible to IFOS, would be a mixture of many phenomena which would peak at *different* durations). However, Fred Merritt of the Center for UFO Studies has used the massive UFOCAT computer file and appears to have vindicated Vallée.^{15,16}

Vallée and Dr Claude Poher have also studied the number of UFO reports in relation to the clarity of the atmosphere. They find the expected result. The clearer the atmosphere, the greater the incidence of UFO reports. This implies that UFOs are at least the result of a real stimulus and not an hallucination.

Finally, if UFOs were a product of misidentification, due to enhanced susceptibility, one would expect the peaks and troughs in the sighting record to bear good relation to the degree of popular interest in the subject. And yet surrounding the release of the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and massive world-wide interest in UFOs, there was *not* a huge increase in sightings. UFO investigators received unprecedented publicity. In Britain, for example, the *Daily Express* newspaper ran, and heavily promoted, a UFO Bureau for two weeks. Thousands of letters poured in, and a large number of reports resulted. *But* the great majority were of quite old sightings which the witnesses now felt willing to talk about. Despite the movie, despite the climate of interest and belief and despite the number of people out looking for them, there was no UFO wave. 1978 and 1979 were only average years for UFO

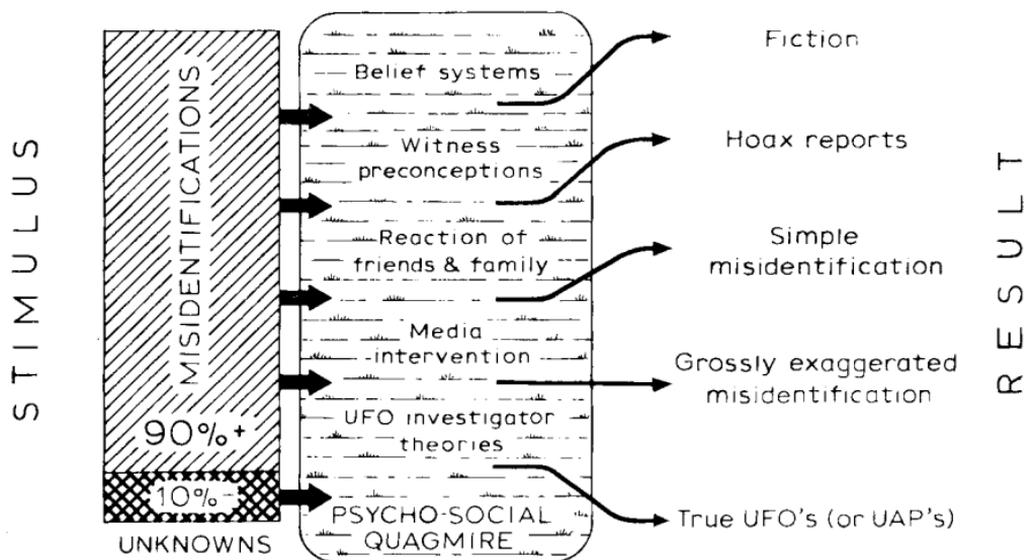


Fig. 10: The passage of a stimulus through the psychosocial quagmire

sightings, and 1980 even recorded a modern 'low' in the number of observations. When Steven Spielberg followed with the even more popular *E-T.: The Extraterrestrial*, in 1982 UFO reports were at a rock-bottom level and *stayed* there.

As a further illustration of this, in 1974 there was a nationwide radio series in France which nightly for many weeks discussed UFOs and sightings. There was considerable interest. On one night a nationwide skywatch was announced, and listeners were asked to call in with their sightings. Unfortunately for the ufologists, 1974 was not a particular busy year for UFOs. Unfortunately for the sceptics, the publicity again failed to manufacture sightings. The radio station did not receive more than a handful of them, and nothing at all that they regarded as significant! Once more there were no grossly distorted misidentifications.¹⁷

If we take the evidence of this chapter together, it seems to point toward two important conclusions, which in a sense are contradictory. There *is* a psychological component to the mystery – a tendency towards exaggeration which seems to stem from the social need to believe in UFOs. But this does *not* solve the UFO enigma – indeed very far from it. The real problem shines through this haze like a beacon, somewhat distorted at times but clear enough to

make its presence certain. One does have to battle with all the distortions. Psychology and sociology are the ufologist's bane. For him it is not so much a question of looking for a needle in a haystack but rather of deciding just how much the initial stimulus has become tainted by its passage through the psychosocial quagmire. (See Figure 10). With all the pitfalls, such a decision is far from easy.

3

The UFO Matrix

'But it is there; we cannot forever refuse to study it.'
Drs Jacques and Janine Vallée

NB: This chapter may be omitted by the less committed reader. See the note in the final paragraph.

One of the first things which science does when confronted with a new problem is to start producing definitions and then classify, group and break down the phenomenon. Attempts to do this within ufology have been limited and usually floundered because of their presumptions. Bob Morrell has frequently pointed out our lack of agreed definitions and has often berated those which I have adopted for the purpose of my books.¹ But I am not a scientist, and when I define things I do so for the benefit of myself (usually) and my readers (quite often). They are simply attempts to make my work more logical and structured.

Bob is quite right that more stress should be placed on the complex difficulties of this work. In August 1979 an International Committee for UFO research was formed at a BUFORA congress in London, and it has taken on this mammoth task. Involved with it are some of the best brains in UFO research, such as Drs Hynek and Maccabee from the USA and Dr Bertil Kuhlemann from Scandinavia. As I write these lines, little progress has been announced, but there is a new determination to get there in the end, which is at least something.

Jacques Vallée was the first seriously to attempt to classify UFO reports into various groups. His system defined types on the basis of behaviour. But by far the most widely adopted scheme was that devised a few years later by Allan Hynek. This used description of

the phenomenon as its basis.² A light-source only became a 'nocturnal light' (often abbreviated to LITS: 'light in the sky'). A definitive shape was afforded the status of a 'daylight disc'. And when entities were seen in association, the last of three stages of close encounter was defined. Hynek's 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' has become a household phrase thanks to the intervention of a certain Hollywood film-maker.

But Hynek's system was never intended to be scientific. He proposed it in much the same way as I have proposed my own definitions – for the purpose of *his* book. It is rather limited and has proved somewhat inadequate and ambiguous, especially in the light of the decade of research which followed its creation. So, in deference to the Doctor's excellent work, Peter Warrington and I made some modifications and extended the system. It became more narrowly defined in its internal features, more accurately descriptive and slightly more broadly based.³ It would be fair to admit that this revision has had very little impact on the UFO world, which is a pity because (whatever its undoubted failings) I am quite sure it is superior to the original conception. So, whilst I shall continue to use its phraseology (such as 'low definition' and 'instrumentally detected', plus my own *more* strict derivation of the various types of close encounter), I felt that the time had come to move on and try a different approach.

I am not suggesting a radical new classification scheme. I do not expect wide adoption of my ideas. Nor do I make any claims that this is the scientific system we have all been waiting for. Rather it is something which suits the needs of this book, but which I do feel has useful applications on a broader level. So, from here on, the book will follow what I shall call 'the UFO matrix'.

The chapters from now on will look at the data under the three remaining areas of evidence (testimonial, causative, substantial—see Chapter 1). Step by step we shall examine the various reported effects, from psychological disturbance, through physiological factors, to substantive data such as photographs and movie films.

This is all very well and fits the aim of my study, but one has to realize that any single UFO case could have *several* of these parameters. A close encounter of the third kind (Hynek definition henceforth CE3; and CE2 and CE1 for the other types) *could* possess certain CE2 effects (e.g. ground markings). In addition the UFO might have been tracked on radar. And so on. The categor-

ization of such a complex case, placed alongside a brief observation of a strange figure across gloomy fields with no effects at all, shows one of the gross inadequacies of the Hynek system. The Randles/Warrington modification is somewhat better, for we propose the addition of code letters (e.g. Tr – traces, /R – radar, which would make the first case a CE3 /R TR, as opposed to a simple CE3 for the latter). But even this fails to overcome the fundamental flaw of such systems. For our first case is *not* just a CE3. It is a CE3 *and* a CE2 *and* a Radar/Visual (or Instrumentally Detected) *and* a daylight disc (or Medium Definition) *and* may well have been seen as a light in the first place, to be also a Low Definition (LITS)! Our second case remains *only* a CE3.

The best way to illustrate this factor, and take it into account when studying individual or collective data, is to design a matrix. There are many ways this could be done. My method involves six types of UFO event, each given a code letter. Whilst it would be interesting for others to inspect this concept and decide how it might be more generally applied, for the purpose of this book I have chosen types which have more in common with Vallée's original system than with either Hynek's or the Randles/Warrington modification.

The six types are as follows:

- VISUALS (V) . . . straightforward enough, a visual sighting of a UFO.
- RESPONSIVES (R) . . . a phenomenon which seems to respond to the percipient.
 Four subtypes are defined:
 R1: where response is *implied* (i.e. UFO reacts to witness action)
 R2: where the phenomenon pursues the witness
 R3: where the phenomenon causes immobilization
 R4: where the phenomenon responds to animals
- LANDINGS (L) . . . obviously, where a UFO lands, but again with subtypes:
 L1: where the landing has *no* apparent effect

- L2: where the landing involves physiological effects
 - L3: where the landing affects nearby animals
 - L4: where the landing leaves residual traces
- EFFECTIVES (E) . . . where the phenomenon has an interactive effect, with:
- E1: the witness
 - E2: the environment
 - E3: mechanical equipment
- OCCUPIEDS (O) . . . where occupants are seen in the presence of a UFO (I would be cautious of accepting occupants seen without a UFO), i.e.:
- O1: those who simply fly by or are *observers*
 - O2: those who take samples – *samplers*
 - O3: those who repair or are *technicians*
 - O4: those who examine, question or are *analysts*
- CONTACTS (C) . . . where contact occurs between phenomenon and witness, i.e.:
- C1: by means of a simple meeting
 - C2: with some kind of assault or force
 - C3: abduction into a UFO
 - C4: abduction with memory of same repressed from the consciousness
 - C5: contact by non-verbal means (e.g. by automatic writing)
 - C6: contact by way of a vision or dream

I know that this scheme, with its twenty-two subtypes, must seem terrifyingly complex on first appearance, but then no simple system would cope with the enforced complexities of this phenomenon. It does seem to me to provide a good basic language to describe most important aspects of a UFO encounter, and learning this language is a small price to pay for its benefits. Besides, in most terms, the six broad types will be sufficient to undertake valuable research, with the subtypes merely refinements. You should appreciate that R1, R2, R3 and R4 are *all* basically RESPONSIVES.

Using this method, a case where a UFO landed, disgorged entities and left marks on the ground would be termed a VLO. If we want to be more precise, and if the entities did nothing but stand around and then depart, we could further define it as a VL401. In a matrix this case would be entered in all three sections (V, L and 0), rather than just the generalized CE3 bandwidth.

We can similarly describe the first case met in this book (the one on the M53 at Moreton). This would be a VR1 (the UFO response implied by its seemingly lying in wait and dipping towards the passing vehicle).

At this point you might well be wondering why there is any need for the V (Visuals) category, since ninety-nine per cent of UFO sightings will involve the sighting of a UFO (that seems logical!). But there *are* certain events (most notably C6 cases) which are of great interest in our studies because they seem to possess a UFO context, but which do *not* involve any UFO. A good example is the 'spaceman' at Risley, Cheshire, seen to walk through a security fence, having caused a van radio transceiver to explode and stimulated burns on the fingers of the witness.⁴ This would be an R1E1E2E3O1C5 (or REOC in short terms), but *not* a V.* One may use the matrix to compare all cases in a set of data which possess the same attributes. So in that event it is important to remember that, in one sense, the complex landing with traces correlates with the Moreton sighting (both are Visuals) but *not* with the Risley case.

If you have any difficulty in remembering the six basic categories in the order in which they come (which is important) – Visuals, Responsives, Landings, Effectives, Occupieds and Contacts – try using the mnemonic for their initials VRLEOC (Very rich ladies eat orange cake).

To turn our list of categories into a matrix, we need a horizontal axis. This then gives us a series of boxes into which crosses can be placed, thus filling out the *relevant* boxes. (See Figure 11). The six points on the horizontal axis are: IFO (for identified objects), UFO, photograph (INST/P), movie film (INST/F), radar track (INST/R) and detection by other instruments (INST/D). Any cases will fit into up to five of these categories (obviously it cannot be *both* IFO and UFO). Then again it may simply slot into just the one (i.e. IFO or UFO). Where there is insufficient data, I would recommend the

*The underlining of E1 and E3 here shows how I distinguish between temporary and permanent effects. Permanent (hence analysable) effects are of more value and so need to be demarked in a set of data – hence their underscoring.

	IFO	UFO	INST/P	INST/F	INST/R	INST/D
Visual	★	★			★	
Responsive R1 R4	★	★			★	
Landing L2 L3		★ ★				
Effective E1 E2 E3		★ ★ ★				
Occupied O4		★				
Contact C4		★				

Fig. 11: Presenting UFO data in matrix form

case be regarded as an IFO for purposes of the matrix, or not matrix-coded at all.

What does this give us? Some might say a complicated mess! Personally, I believe the method provides a surprising wealth of information about our cases, enabling us to compare data far more comprehensively, at a glance. We have seen how important the relationship between IFO and UFO can be. Here we can compare cases of IFO and UFO with otherwise identical matrix patterns. Or we can compare all cases that include, for example, the R code (i.e. Responsives). Hundreds of ideas emerge from the concept. It virtually sets research projects in motion for us! For example, how many C (Contact) cases have radar confirmation? How many have movie films attached? How does this compare with the number of R (Responsive) cases with similar matrix boxes? Many other uses will become evident as I utilize the matrix patterns within my JR set data throughout the remainder of this book.

Obviously the idea comes into its own with the (now growing) use of computer technology in UFO research. But manual comparisons of case matrices are simple enough. I hope some people might find

this suggestion worth the time and effort it requires.

If you found this chapter heavy going, do not worry. It is not indicative of what will follow! But it was necessary diversion and bears with re-reading until you grasp its contents. You can continue and follow my arguments even if you do not understand or absorb this chapter. When you see references such as VR1, all you need do is check back to the table on page 54, if you wish.

4

The Terror of the UFO: Psychological Responses

'I was scared stiff . . . and I somehow knew that if I didn't shake this horrible feeling off me I was going to pass out or drop dead.'

Witness describing his close-encounter experience

The re-entry of the COSMOS 1068 booster rocket (see page 44) provides us with a useful cross-check for what we should regard as 'normal' psychological responses to an unknown phenomenon. Fear (though mild) was, of course, one of those responses. In the case of the satellite, one of the chief reasons for this fear was that witnesses regarded the object as a personal threat. In other words they thought it was something, such as a burning aircraft, which might fall out of the sky. Yet in most cases they simply displayed curiosity and puzzlement, which did sometimes extend to fear. But in the main I was very struck by the distinct difference between the emotional reactions of the COSMOS witnesses and those of most observers of UFO close encounters. By far the most common statements of COSMOS witnesses were: 'I've never seen anything like it,' 'I was awestruck,' 'It was beautiful' and 'I was very puzzled.' I found only one description of an acutely anxious state where the witness (alone and out in open country) said he was 'very disturbed'. Such reasonably straightforward responses contrast markedly with some of the psychological states we shall meet in this chapter. And this must be considered very interesting, because the COSMOS 1068 re-entry is perhaps the most spectacular, unusual, potentially disturbing and even dangerous phenomenon which a witness might be expected to perceive in modern British skies (with the possible exception of a True UFO!).

Taking this as a good example of emotional response to a physical stimulus, consider now the general response to a mental one. Occasionally we awake somewhat disturbed by nightmares, but this distress seems to be deep inside and evaporates rapidly as the mind adjusts to the rationality of the real world. Quite often we can dream of very harrowing situations and yet suffer relatively little adverse reaction. From this we have a standard to measure reaction to UFO experiences – though it is in a sense unfair because people respond differently. It seems a reasonable premise if we accept that UFOs are encountered by a broad cross-section of the populace.

One of the most promising recent areas of UFO research has been the correlation of contact cases with hallucinatory images known to modern psychology. Attempts have been made to prove that many forms of experience, where the witness allegedly communicates with an alien, can be explained as hypnagogic or hypnopompic* states. Such imagery occurs on the threshold of sleep and contains many features in common with most cases in the C category (especially C4, C5 and C6). It is very easy to confuse this with reality (temporarily), and it is estimated that a very high percentage of the population (probably close to a hundred per cent) undergo such hallucinations at least once in their lives. Certainly it does not imply mental instability. I have had several hypnagogic experiences myself.

Australia has been the home of much the best work in this field. Mark Moravec has shown how many of these cases bear classic hallmarks of psychotic disturbance. For example, 'the most common delusion of paranoid schizophrenics is a paranoic fear of being influenced and controlled by outside forces.'¹ He goes on to draw up a list of features which, if found in a contact, should suggest a psychopathic causation. These include: hallucinatory hearing of one's own name being called, disembodied voices, a distorted self body-image, isolation, difficult personal or work relationships at the time, and a recent break or trauma in a person's private life. He shows how these can be found to a significant degree in detailed study of such contact cases but admits that there are puzzlers which still beg questions.

One of the most inexplicable contacts involves 'Dr X', an exceptionally qualified observer who underwent a very detailed inter-

* Hypnagogic occurs between sleep and wakefulness; hypnopompic between waking and sleep.

relationship with the UFO phenomenon in France. This involved a spectacular sighting, messages, highly unusual physiological effects which persisted for some time after the event, and a multitude of paranormal experiences (see Chapter 7 for more details of this important case). Apart from the calibre of the primary observer, this event is impressive because there was a second witness (the doctor's very young child), who saw the object and suffered most of the after effects. It is extremely improbable that this child could have been part of a delusion, and so this case would pose major difficulties even were it unique in the literature (which it most certainly is not).²

So Moravec finds himself justified in wondering if it is not sometimes true that the psychopathic disturbance the investigation seems to highlight does not result *from* the experience rather than lead *to* it. Nevertheless he contends that *at times* there is clear evidence that the contact is the result of psychological factors, even though this is decidedly *not* the same as stating that all contactees (or even most of them) are mentally disturbed.

Keith Basterfield is another Australian in this line of work. He notes that many features in contacts are precisely the same as those found in hypnagogic images, which might be thought of as out-of-control dreams projected onto a dark environment, whilst one hovers on the brink between sleep and consciousness – indeed, it is not uncommon for percipients to believe that they *are* awake. Examples of such features are the sudden appearance and disappearance of the image, enhanced or unusual qualities of the lighting, and quite atypical emotional responses (e.g. *total* lack of fear or stress in the face of highly stressful conditions). Research psychologist Dr Sue Blackmore of Bristol University has also pointed out how some features of the contact (e.g. a common reference to travel along a tunnel or tube of light) are noted in deathbed visions, out-of-the-body experiences *and* general hallucinations (suggesting a common hypnagogic explanation).³

A good example occurred at Ivy Tanks, South Australia, in 1973. A woman passenger in a semi-trailer fell asleep in the early hours and awoke at about 3 a.m. She heard a male voice call her name and suggest she look outside. By the road she could see an egg-shaped craft which was alight with a brilliant white glow. It was so unusual that she could not compare either glow or colour with anything she had ever seen before. Two vague figures were associated with it.

The 'UFO' vanished and she 'came to'. She then inquired of the driver as to what he had seen, but he told her that they had passed nothing at all by the side of the road. No doubt many people who have engaged in long, late-night drives on empty roads or motorways have had similar hallucinations. When my fiancé, Paul, and I were returning north after a five-hundred-mile motorway trip (mostly on deserted roads), we both had to fight hard to overcome tiredness, and at one point Paul 'saw' an 'imaginary' wall in the middle of the road ahead.

There is nothing in the Ivy Tanks experience to contradict the theory of a hypnagogic image. Of course, the situation would have been very different had the driver seen this UFO too. And enough cases exist, where this does happen, to urge caution in being sweeping about such matters. In any case this still leaves open the question as to why this woman saw this image at that particular time. Hilary Evans, discussing the problems of such cases, poses: how do we tell whether a case comes from within (and is thus psychological) or whether it is somehow external in origin?⁴ He suggests four key questions we might ask of a case: a) How real is the entity (or UFO)? b) How rational is its behaviour? c) How witness-orientated are the details of the experience? and d) How motivated was the witness to experience such an event?

On this basis we can look at the Mickleover case from Chapter 2. In at least three of Hilary's points this *does* imply an internal origin. But we can also see how impossible accurate assessment of UFO data must be, unless adequate information is supplied on the personal background and motivations of the witness. These are emotive areas, and sadly such information is available in too few case studies. In a sense this is a reflection of how few psychologists take an interest in UFOs. In contact stories in particular they are ignoring a treasure-chest of information in their midst, for here we have evidence for strange psychological experiences which occur on a grand scale, to witnesses who otherwise have perfectly stable backgrounds.

Mickleover does suggest that not only contacts might be explicable as hypnagogic images, for this was a simple visual. However, at times the characteristics prove very difficult to evaluate. Take this example.

It was 11 October 1977. The location was Heanor, Derbyshire. Mr C awoke at 2.25 a.m., but his wife went on sleeping. Getting out of bed, he explored the house to discover the source of a puzzling

RESULTS OF A STUDY INTO 70 CONTACT CASES

		Bedroom Visitor Contacts	Other Contacts	None Contacts
Average No. of witnesses per case		1.14	1.38	2.19
Percentage of reports between	00hrs and 08hrs	72%	21%	38%
	08hrs and 18hrs	6%	35%	10%
	18hrs and 00hrs	22%	44%	52%
Motifs in the witness account . . . as percentage of reports in which the motif occurred	'Need witness to appear'	22%	NIL	<1%
	'Reason for visit imminent earth catastrophe'	28%	10%	<1%
	'Medical examination'	11%	21	NIL
	'Aliens will return'	22%	27%	NIL

Fig. 12: 'Bedroom visitor' close encounters, compared with other UFO contacts and non-contact cases

whining noise. He found nothing. He noticed that the noise was louder in his bedroom and, on looking out of the window, saw a bright circle of light 'like a dinner plate'. His instant reaction was 'My God! They've dropped the bomb.' In such circumstances one might expect him to run, try to protect his family or at least awaken his wife to say goodbye, but he did none of these things, and, despite his roaming the house and putting on the light (not to mention the whining sound itself), his wife remained fast asleep. What Mr C *did* do was to get back in bed and hide under the blankets, and, when the world did not end with a bang, he promptly went to sleep and left the thing outside his window! Next morning he felt a little embarrassed at his behaviour and laughed at himself.⁵

Whilst there is no way to be sure, this clearly *could* have been a hypnagogic hallucination. The crucial factor which may have decided the issue is not referenced in the investigator's report. Did Mr C leave the bedroom light on, and if so was it *still* on in the morning? What we need to decide is whether he really got out of bed to turn it on or whether he only dreamt that he got out of bed. And even if he did see this object, was his response abnormal or

might someone really have reacted in the way he did? At least one person has commented to me that hiding under the bedclothes is a perfectly reasonable reaction to the threat of imminent explosion.

My own work in this area has suggested that there *is* a clear group of cases (variously labelled 'bedroom visitors', 'false awakenings' and so on) which are in fact remarkably consistent, in view of the notorious inconsistency of much UFO data. I made a detailed study of seventy CE4 cases (all of which were Contacts) and found what was close to proof that they were subjective experiences. They were almost exclusively single-witness events. They had an enormous concentration during sleep hours (11 p.m. to 6 a.m.) with a marked peak at between 2 and 3 a.m. And they tended to occur either in the bedroom or in a lonely environment with limited sensory input.⁶ (See Figure 12). Since these conditions are optimum for hypnagogic imagery, it certainly seems reasonable in my view to regard a class of UFO phenomena as tentatively identified as such. Indeed, cases such as Heanor and Micklover might well indicate that this category contains mostly contacts, but not exclusively contacts. Very possibly we have come close to solving a good part of the UFO enigma, even though we do not yet know the psychological reasons (or *presumably* psychological reasons) why these images occur.

But just how much of the UFO enigma have we solved? Even in my selection of seventy CE4 cases, only twenty-six per cent were reasonably explained in this way. This still leaves seventy-four per cent of contacts in need of an explanation, and I am sure that this percentage is considerably higher for other forms of UFO experience. So, whilst we have undoubtedly made great headway to recognize the existence of these hallucinatory cases, there is still work to be done – and in any event there are plausible arguments that even some of these hallucinations are stimulated from the outside by the same source responsible for other, more objective, UFO phenomena.

In the spring of 1974 a young mother and lithographer awoke at her Stoke-on-Trent home at 3.30 a.m. (note the time – yet again): she wanted to go to the toilet. As she arose from bed, she saw a weird object in the eastern sky. It was dome-shaped, with a flat base, and possessed four rectangular windows which poured out yellow light. The object lit up in a slow and repetitive sequence, window following window, then the base, then the right, left and top edges, and so on. At the culmination point of each sequence the

whole object was a spectacular blaze of light. The effect of this remarkable occurrence was hypnotizing, gluing the woman's eyes to the UFO. Meanwhile it seemed to be moving closer, as acute terror built up in the horrified witness. Midway through the twenty-minute encounter, as the approach of the object became obvious, she called her husband, and he awoke to see it also. They gazed out, helpless, as it seemed to head directly towards the bedroom window, growing menacingly as it did so. As it seemed to reach within a few feet of the pane, the witnesses threw themselves onto the floor, covering their faces, terrified that it would smash straight into the glass. After moments of silence and no impact, they dared to peek up again. The object had vanished. Stoke-on-Trent is a highly populated city, but I expect that by now you will not be too surprised to learn that nobody else reported this object!⁷

One can contrast this case with the incident at Heanor. Of course there are many similarities, such as the lack of corroborative witnesses and the fact that the woman did not flee the house instead of throwing herself onto the floor. But the presence of a back-up witness and the lengthy duration of the experience makes a hypnagogic explanation rather improbable, and here there was just the kind of fear reaction one might anticipate. But why were they drawn towards the object? What was the point of the compulsive lightshow? It is tempting to equate this with an attempt by the phenomenon at hypnotic induction, and this is by no means the only case of this nature which I have come across. But if there was hypnotism, what was the purpose and who was the hypnotist?

If you find this acute level of fear surprising, then consider the fate which befell one unfortunate witness. A teenaged boy named Trevor was on holiday with his family in mid-Wales, on 22 July 1975. They were to inspect a cottage near Machynlleth, but Trevor, as a quiet lad, preferred to walk off alone across the country and to climb the grassy slopes of the nearby Wylfa Hill. At the summit he met a very strange object sitting there before him. Frightened, he ducked behind a boulder and observed the most incredible sight of his young life.

There was a domed disc with transparent top, flashing colours he was unable to recognize. Inside it were two pulsating lumps of jelly which behaved like animate beings formed from small, white corpuscular discs. A side flap came down in the object, and one of the 'jellymen' undulated along towards this exit. Not surprisingly,

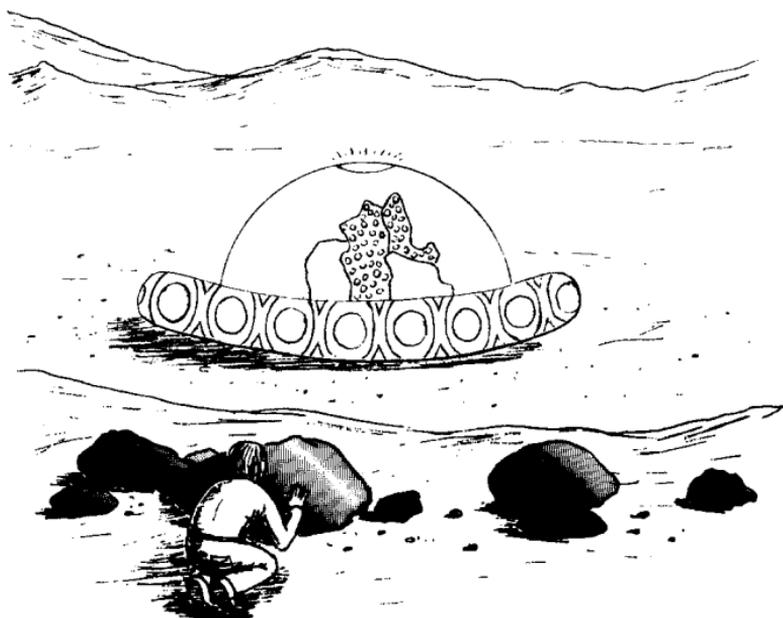


Fig. 13: The 'Jellymen' encounter, Machynlleth, Wales, July 1975

Trevor panicked and fled down the hill, shouting to his father to come and see the monsters. His father passed this off as a game and did not follow, but he saw his son climb back up and then lie on the grass out of sight from the depression below him, staring at something unknown. After just a few seconds, Trevor rushed back down to his father looking totally petrified and screaming: 'A jellyman got out of it!' He dragged his father back up the slope, but there was nothing there.

Trevor says that on the second brief sighting he saw the object pulsate the colours of the surroundings (sky blue, grass green and so on) and, in a process he is quite unable to describe, disappear by blending *into* the background. (See Figure 13).

Not surprisingly, the family treated this as a 'dream', and on the surface it does sound like the most bizarre of science-fiction tales. But little did they know what lay in store. Trevor's character rapidly deteriorated. He became morose, short-tempered and aggressive. The day after the experience he lost the use of his voice. A local doctor diagnosed tonsillitis (which, of course, it may have been). On his return to England a few days later, his voice came back, but he became blind in one eye. Progressively the blindness grew worse

and switched to the other eye, then back again. Then he became totally blind for a period. In June 1978 (three years after his encounter), researcher Andy Collins and psychologist Graham Philips visited the family in study of the case. Trevor, now almost adult, was still partially blind, and he had been under psychiatric care since shortly after his return to England. The psychiatrist treating him knew of his experience on Wylfa Hill and agreed that, whatever its reality status, *it* and its attendant shock may well have been the reason for the blindness, as if the boy's subconscious were trying to prevent him from seeing such an incomprehensible thing again, by literally stopping him from seeing. Certainly the psychiatrist was convinced (as was Graham Philips) that the illness was psychosomatic and could easily have been induced by a severe shock.⁸

A sceptic might be tempted to argue that Trevor had become mentally ill before the trip to Wales and that his 'sighting' was an early hint of this. But both Graham Philips and the boy's psychiatrist doubt it. Trevor has had no other hallucinatory experiences and behaves as would someone *forced* into a psychotic state by an experience of acute terror with which his mind could not cope. Accepting such an explanation presents us with truly horrific consequences. It means that, *whatever* lies behind the UFO experience, it can be disturbing to such an extreme that it can radically (and perhaps permanently) damage the mental and physical health of a witness unfortunate enough to confront it under the wrong circumstances. And it is even more disturbing to realize that few (if any) people are doing anything at all to prevent this from happening to you or me tomorrow.

This incident is *extremely* rare. Such severe psychological disturbance does not result very often. But it is also not unique. In *UFO Study I* I discussed an example where a whole family were terrified by a complex series of contacts (involving entities, bedroom visits and physical sensations). They ended up huddled together in one small room, too afraid to leave each other's presence. Luckily they got over this terror without too much psychological damage, although an experience as extreme as this is bound to have left its mark on their minds.⁹

The testimony of qualified doctors and psychiatrists is all too rare in the analysis of the UFO phenomenon. But think on this case, for it contains a signed statement by the examining doctor, plus

voluminous sworn testimony and affidavits from the witness, his family, employers, neighbours and workmates. It stems from an intensive investigation conducted within hours by the local *gendarmerie* and points unmistakably towards only one conclusion. Something real and extremely terrifying *did* take place.

The witness is a twenty-one-year-old shopworker, Antoine Severin, who lived on the French island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean. The date was 14 February 1975, just after midday on what (in the southern hemisphere) was a summer's day.

Antoine was a quiet, well-liked man who was due to marry soon after the encounter. He read very little, never visited the island's one cinema and led a fairly spartan but happy life. For some days prior to his one and only strange experience he had been plagued by a faint 'beep beep' noise which seemed to follow him about. That day, as he walked home from work, the noise lured him into a field, where he met a landed disc-like UFO and four small entities wearing shiny suits and radio antennae. They seemed to be scraping soil from the ground. Suddenly there was a powerful flash of light and a blast of air which knocked Antoine to the ground. He was able to look up as the strange object shot into the sky with a whistling noise.

The man returned, ashen-faced and exhausted, and collapsed in a state of severe shock. A doctor was called and later a psychiatrist, because by this time (a few hours after the sighting) he had lost both his voice and his sight. This persisted for five days. Gradually Antoine recovered both speech and sight. The doctor signed a statement for the police investigation saying, in part, ' . . . I found him to be in a state of extreme exhaustion and prostration, with anxiety, partial loss of the faculty of speech, and staring eyes. The condition seems to me to involve a crisis of a pithiatic nature, produced in the course of some intense emotional shock. What the latter may have been it is difficult to say, but it was real, for the patient had previously shown no symptoms whether of a neurological or a psychiatric nature.'¹⁰

A further interesting aspect of this case (unknown in Britain before its publication in *FSR* during 1979) is that Antoine suffered dizzy spells and temporary loss of consciousness on each of two occasions, in the weeks following his encounter, when he led investigators to the field where the incident took place. This same factor is a little-known feature of the trauma experienced by Ken

Edwards at Risley, Cheshire, after his horrific CE4. Ken had been struck by a lightbeam emitted by a mis-shapen 'entity' and suffered both a loss of consciousness and severe emotional shock. Over the course of the next few weeks, when he returned to the location, he felt his head 'swimming with thoughts' and once passed out for a few moments. Eventually he had to take a diversionary route to avoid passing the site, just as Antoine was forced not to visit his field for a while.¹¹ This avoidance of areas associated by the mind with severe shocks is actually quite normal. To me it is a further vindication of the reality (certainly to the witness) of the basic experience which they have undergone.

Of course the *degree* of reaction which a witness experiences will vary according to many factors. Nigel Watson proposed a method of analysing events and discovering which components lead to which types of psychological response. He suggests that we consider four key areas: 1) The strangeness of the event itself. 2) The environment the witness is in at the time. 3) The state the witness is in prior to the encounter and 4) The previous beliefs and preconceptions of the witness.¹² It is easy to see how a young, impressionable boy or a rural man with no knowledge of things such as UFOs, alone and thrust into sudden confrontation with an extremely unusual object which threatens him in some way (by emitting a lump of jelly or sending out a blast of heat), could easily be put into a state of very severe shock. Ken Edwards, too, was alone, at night, on a lonely road, when he was hit by a beam of light from the 'entity'. The cause and effect of these experiences, in psychological terms, are perfectly consistent with them all being *true*!

We must now compare the above cases with one further experience which also generated an extraordinary reaction, although the stimulus was not nearly so strange. Yet this apparent anomaly is explicable, for the witness possessed a background which helps us to understand. I quote from his letter to me regarding incidents which took place in Nottinghamshire:

'The UFO bug bit me hard at 4.25 a.m. on 26 August 1977. I had a sleepless night and had been thinking too much of various things, worries mainly . . . I am aged fifty-two, married with four children, an ex regular soldier (infantry) and have served in various hot spots – and now classified disabled through army service with "Anxiety Complex" – high blood pressure etc.' He goes on to describe seeing silent, pulsing white lights moving through a calm, starry sky. There

is nothing in his report *not* attributable to the observation of either aircraft or satellites, criss-crossing the dark night sky. But the 'sighting' induced him to watch regularly and keep a log. In this he recorded thirty-five sightings. He began to speculate about a Russian 'killer satellite' which was engaged in orbital space battles, thus explaining what he was observing. This is a significant point, showing how he came to fantasize (probably through anxiety) on what were actually perfectly straightforward sightings. However, to continue in his words: '25 November 1978 . . . At 4.30 a.m. It came into view . . . a white star-like light . . . then my eyes couldn't believe it. It had got considerably larger like I was looking up directly under a saucer . . . I then felt fear and knew that I couldn't go through [with] watching it, with my binoculars. I felt my right side of my head go numb. I then dropped my binoculars, which were slung around my neck, but I felt I couldn't care less about them. My right arm went numb. I was scared stiff. I had a feeling of impending doom . . . I tried to think of something nice or to activate my brain back into doing something normal. I picked up an ashtray. Put it down. Picked up a book. Tried to read the title out loud. Went into the kitchen. Turned on the tap. Silly little things . . . about six or seven minutes later I felt my right side of my head starting to clear . . . After about ten minutes I realized I could feel my arm come back to normal. But I felt I had been given a warning. So I burnt all my log books . . . never watched no more from that day onwards'.¹³

This was, of course, the resurfacing of his 'Anxiety Complex', which is just what the doctor told him when he reported his experience. A specialist he was sent to advised the same. His character changed. He lost two stones in weight. He took up quiet hobbies, such as gardening. It does seem fairly certain that he never did see a TRUE UFO (or even a killer satellite). But that is scarcely the point. The experiences he did have were real to him, and the effect on his life was no hallucination.

Once again we find ourselves entering the realms of the sceptic. For here what seems like a misidentification generated severe psychological disturbance. But the differences between this experience and those suffered by Trevor, or Antoine, or Ken Edwards, are highly significant. Not only was there a pre-existent cause for the disturbance, but the witness described what he saw without gross distortion (just as the normal rule suggests). He described satellites as looking like satellites (through binoculars and tired eyes, they

can easily look like a saucer). The phenomena at Machynlleth and Réunion are either/ors. They *cannot* realistically be misidentifications. And *if* Trevor or Antoine or Ken Edwards did not grossly distort what *they* saw, then something which is greatly disturbing is afoot in this world.

But let us turn to the JR Set and see what misidentifications it can offer us with psychological reactions. I will cite two interesting examples, out of only ten possibilities (that is less than one per cent of the overall JR Set – the complete number of cases in the set with psychological disturbance being 3.4 per cent).

16 April 1979. St Helens, Merseyside. A twenty-year-old man, returning home on his motorcycle at 1.30 a.m., saw a ball of orange fire, with a tail, whistle across the sky and drop vertically (tail now upwards). It was in view about fifteen seconds. Despite this being a mild night, the man felt cold and shivery. He reported it to the police, thinking a meteor must have landed nearby. But this is very unlikely as nothing was discovered and the change of direction, noise and duration are not characteristic. But a flare or firework is certainly feasible, even though the police traced none. If we remember Nigel Watson's 'fear factors', then we see that a young man, alone in the early hours of the morning, believing that a meteor is crashing down onto his home town, is well entitled to feel a little scared. Note again how he neither distorts his description nor decides he must have seen a UFO.¹⁴

21 April 1979. Liverpool, Merseyside. Close to the last case in time and location, two young men saw a ball of orange light fly across the sky at 9.50 p.m. It dimmed through yellow to white with a fuzzy aura around it. They shone a torch up at it and say it responded by flaring into brilliant, spiky light. It continued to move silently out of view. The younger boy shook uncontrollably with fear and awoke next day with a pounding headache, probably from tension. Although they claim that they phoned Liverpool Airport and were told that no air traffic was in the vicinity, this description does precisely fit an aircraft switching on its landing lights or turning towards the witnesses and thus revealing them. Since aircraft are very common over this area, and it could easily have been going into Manchester Airport rather than Liverpool, this seems a fair assumption. But again note how the report is so free from distortion, despite the terror, that it suggests its own explanation.¹⁵

I will add a third case which is more recent and outside the JR Set.

It occurred on 14 August 1980 at Cleethorpes, Humberside. A twenty-one-year-old man woke, 'for no apparent reason', and saw a bright object in the south-eastern sky. He watched it for an hour as daylight washed over the heavens. It remained still. Since Venus was a very prominent object in the sky at that time, and as the witness apparently did *not* see this in the south-east, then we must conclude that the 'UFO' was Venus. He described it quite well, but the impulse to look at it must have been an illusion. Or perhaps its bright light caught his eye as he entered a lighter phase of sleep (as we all do many times each night) and thus caused him to wake fully to see what it was.¹⁶

Clearly we can see how the evidence is following the pattern we have already discovered. Generally speaking, witnesses do not exaggerate to the degree necessary if we are to explain all close encounters as wild distortions of normal stimuli. In addition, the strangest close encounters create psychological effects which are wholly consistent with what we might anticipate.

What are the most commonly reported psychological responses? In my sample of seventy contact cases I found, hardly surprisingly, that fear was number one. Often this fear was coupled with the use of a lightbeam by the entity or from the UFO. The use of the beam seemed to induce either paralysis or calm in a significant number of instances. Indeed, a sensation described as 'subdued calm' or 'I felt oddly unafraid after that' was only slightly less prevalent than overt fear. This is certainly interesting, for here we are not talking about hypnagogic type experiences. The reaction of young Gaynor Sunderland is a good example.

Gaynor came upon a landed UFO and entities in a North Wales field during July 1976. Immediately she felt very great fear (which she relived under regression hypnosis – something very difficult to fake). But then she felt herself go 'light-headed' (remember Réunion and Risley), and she became cold and shivery. But all of a sudden she 'knew' there was no need to be frightened and felt very calm.¹⁷

This extremely consistent response (bolstered by the third most common contact reaction, one of feeling 'in a trance' or 'not of this world') has yet to be explained by a psychological process. The only other sensible possibility which seems to be implied is that whatever is responsible for the phenomenon is somehow capable of controlling the emotional state of the witness.

Curiosity is often a prominent reaction, and it can lead to some embarrassing moments. One man and wife were so intrigued by the UFO they saw from their St Helens home that they took off in pursuit – driving their car away without pausing to change out of their nightclothes. A diligent ‘bobby’ put paid to their excursion when he stopped them to investigate this strange nocturnal mission.

A feeling of the witness of being ‘singled out’ is another common emotion. It seems to be a kind of symbiosis between witness and UFO. This often results in the observer becoming ‘transfixed’ by the UFO (as in the Stoke-on-Trent case, where we speculated that the pulsing lights might have been hypnotizing the unsuspecting victim).

The following report illustrates a number of these features. It concerns Jean Findlay, who set out to catch a bus in Poole, Dorset, at 9.01 on the morning of 6 December 1980. Suddenly she felt the often-described urge to ‘look up’: ‘It was almost as if a voice in my head told me to do so,’ she commented. When she did this, she found herself looking at the archetypal UFO (a saucer with a dome on top) hovering above some trees. She felt ‘spellbound’ as her eyes were drawn to this spectacular object. It then emitted a beam of light, rotated once and shot away. She looked instinctively at her watch and was surprised to find that ‘time had flown by.’ The experience had lasted four minutes, although it had seemed much less. During this period of hovering, in a busy urban area during the morning ‘rush hour’, everything had ‘gone quiet’ and she saw nobody about at all. She felt as if the UFO had chosen her alone to view it, and on a cold, chilly morning she says there was a feeling of ‘peace, calm and warmth’.¹⁸

If this last experience were unique, it would be interesting enough, but it is in fact remarkably common and consistent. I have little doubt that it represents one of the most significant aspects of the whole intriguing enigma. How on earth could such an event possibly have happened without others seeing it? Did the UFO have any reality in the external world? Why was Jean’s mind melded with the UFO to create such a sense of calm and timelessness? What happened during the minutes of ‘contact’? I suspect that when we have reasonable answers to all these questions we shall be very close to a solution to the UFO phenomenon.

For those tempted to think that this last experience, and those like it, can be brushed aside with the convenient word ‘halluci-

nation', the following case broadens the puzzle.

Susan Hissock and Leonard Walker, a young couple in Peckham, South London, were setting out to walk to a pub on the fine night of 1 October 1977. Once outside, they found the street oddly quiet, and there, just in front of them, 'spanning the width of the entire road', was a large black triangle with red and white lights. It gave out a sound reminiscent of a humming hairdrier. As they began to walk towards it, Len asked, 'What the hell is that?' They came closer, and it started to move in their direction. 'Run,' Len shouted, becoming terrified. He did, but Sue remained still, now almost directly underneath the oncoming object. She says she just felt 'calm and unafraid'. Len says she looked 'mesmerized'. He bravely rushed to her rescue, grabbing her and dragging her back to the porch of the house they had just left. The object moved overhead and flipped out of sight across the rooftops. Len still felt shaky the next day when they reported their encounter to the police. Sue, however, was left with the feeling that this was not the closest encounter she would experience, although the next one might occur when she was alone. How does one believe them? Yet investigator Margaret Fry counterposes, 'How does one disbelieve them?' How

36 Events (IFO, IO = 28%) Photo/Radar = NIL

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
VE 1	Only	7	8
VE 1	Plus		
	R1	5	1
	R2	1	0
	R3	7	1
	R4	1	0
	L1	2	0
	L2	3	0
	L3	—	—
	L4	—	—
	E2	6	0
	E3	3	0
	O1	6	0
	O4	1	1
	C4	1	0
	C5	1	0
	C6	2	1

Fig. 14: JR Set matrix: cases involving deep psychological reaction

indeed? There is no obvious reason to make up such a tale, and its similarity with the previous case (and many more like it) is remarkable. One can hardly call it a misidentification. Just what can one misidentify which spans the width of a road and practically sits on your head! Yet – in South London on a fine night at 8.15 p.m. There should be hundreds of witnesses to this event, but there were no others. We can feel pretty certain we have a mystery here.

Whilst one may wish to think in sociological terms when taking an overview of this situation it is not so simple to examine an individual case and explain it as a by-product of some kind of grand delusion. For in a single case we have real human beings reporting fairly well a very strange and terrifying experience. It will take more than clever theories to persuade them that what they underwent was a 'psychological' experience. I know – I've tried it.

In this chapter we have seen how the UFO phenomenon generates considerable degrees of emotional response. We have found that some IFOs do this as well, but not generally to anything like the same extent. (See Figure 14). We have found that some experiences (typified by their unexpected *lack* of emotional response) fit the possible explanation of a hypnagogic image in the mind of the participant. We have wondered if some kind of cultural psychosocial explanation can be used to explain the enigma, but come across the difficulty of using this to explain *seemingly* real individual cases. Each of these seems to emphasize one point. The most obvious solution to the very real fear and apparently normal reactions is a very real phenomenon of quite *abnormal* origin. Whatever its cause, it can, and does, sometimes produce such deep and long-lasting effects that, whether it emerges from within our own subconscious or is the product of a baffling external reality, seems hardly the point. It is something very traumatic, very deep seated and very much in need of positive identification.

5

Cures for Space Sickness: Physiological Responses

'I stared at it . . . and I felt dizzy and weak at the knees. I knew I had to run so I started, but I just sort of fell over. I couldn't move!'

Witness describing his close-encounter experience

We come now to those cases which involve some sort of physical response to the presence of a UFO. Naturally, these possess value above the previous testimonial data because they might involve medical appraisal or at least offer us some degree of circumstantial evidence about energy systems associated with the phenomenon. We have, at last, something substantial for a scientist to study.

Figure 15 shows the matrix pattern for the JR Set. This can be compared with that in the last chapter for psychological responses (Figure 14). They are very similar, although there are more cases of physiological response (often there is an overlap). However, this still represents only 4.6 per cent of the total of reports in the study. An illustration of the kind of misidentification linked with such a response follows, although I would stress that this is one of the most clear-cut. In itself this shows that reports of very serious physiological disturbance are almost always related to unknowns, which is an immediate point of interest. This does seem to bear out what we have discovered so far.

20 March 1978. Horncastle, Lincolnshire. A lorry-driver set off at 4.30 a.m. carrying a load of paper sacks. He encountered a watery-yellow, egg-shaped object which cast down a curtain of pale light. As it seemed to pace the truck, the driver became very frightened and began to sweat profusely. The hair on the back of his neck stood on end. He stopped at the nearest callbox to phone the police, but

		UFO	IFO
VE 1	Only	7	6
VE 1	Plus		
	R1	5	3
	R2	1	0
	R3	4	1
	R4	1	0
	L1	1	0
	L2	5	0
	L3	—	—
	L4	1	0
	E2	5	0
	E3	5	1
	O1	3	1
	O4	3	1
	C4	1	0
	C5	1	0
	C6	1	1

Fig. 15: JR Set matrix: cases involving physiological effects

meanwhile the UFO had vanished (to return after the call but disappear for good as a car approached). He waited for the police and, still in a state of desperation, flagged down another lorry, whose driver (possibly thinking he was drunk or worse) said he too had seen the 'UFO' and it was the moon. In fact, checks show that this is quite probable. The colour and description match. The moon, although not full, was close to setting and thus distorted by the well-known 'moon illusion'. And of course there was the flat, open countryside, and we have seen the effect this can have on stellar objects. Add to this the fact that the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* had just opened in Britain (with its 'terror' sequence of a truck-driver being attacked by a UFO). Here we seem to have another interesting variation on the Bignall End moon misidentification (Chapter 2). Not that it makes it easier to understand *why* such gross distortion occurred yet again. A late-night lorry-driver must see the moon hundreds of times low on the horizon. But the circumstance of this witness, alone, in open country, with perhaps the memory of the movie attack in the background, shows why he became so disturbed, probably enough to create the physical sensation.¹

The witness in the above case will undoubtedly dismiss my suggestion that he saw the moon, just as he rejected the same remark from his fellow driver. Indeed, the spectre of a Bernard Delair idea looms large once again. Is some phenomenon camouflaging itself, appearing in the form of common stimuli to minimize detection? To develop this intriguing (if apparently ridiculous) concept just a little further, here is a slightly more puzzling recent 'identification'.

The report came to me direct from Michael Pereira.² On 25 December 1980 he was spending the holidays with his friend Pedro Carmo at Paco de Arcos, Portugal. The time was 9.15 p.m. on a fine but cold Christmas night. For several minutes the two young men watched as a fuzzy red egg appeared in the east and moved over the surface of the sea, causing the sea to agitate and churn. The egg trailed a long, thin streak behind it and seemed to hover, then change direction, before finally passing over their heads and disappearing behind some hills.

Now what is interesting about this sighting is that on that Christmas night there were many reports from Portugal of a blazing UFO having been seen. In addition dozens of tales came from much more cloud-ridden parts of Europe, including Britain. They were all attributed to the re-entry of space debris.

I have no reason to doubt what Michael and Pedro say they saw. But not only do they say that the UFO hovered and changed direction (which the debris could not have done) but they report a different direction of travel to the other witnesses. There is no obvious way they can be in error, because otherwise the UFO would have to be heading out to sea rather than in from it, as they state. And in addition they describe some very marked physiological effects. As their UFO moved slowly overhead, they felt a curious warming and tingling sensation. Then, a couple of days later, they both developed a red, irritating rash on their shoulders, as well as mild nausea and headaches (which began within hours of the sighting). This took three to four days to clear in Michael's case but only two for his friend. Naturally there *could* be other causes for these effects, but Michael is adamant that he does not suffer from exposure to the sun (and the intervening days were cool not hot), nor from any allergies. What is more, such after-effects are very consistent with other witnesses' stories: that it seemed to be rather like exposure to an infra-red heat source.

What do we have here? A UFO that just 'happened' to look like a prominent known stimulus (the space debris) around at the time? A curious problem.

As the matrix pattern shows, there is an interesting link between physiological effects and cases of electromagnetic interference. Infra-red and ultra-violet are part of a long spectrum of electromagnetic radiation which floods the universe all around us. The sun pours out energy with wavelengths across the breadth of this spectrum, including X-rays and radio waves, as well as *visible* light (from red to violet). In fact, this is but a tiny slit in this mass of energy (infra-red and ultra-violet describing its fringes on the borders of human perception). To ninety-nine per cent of the electromagnetic spectrum, man is all but blind!

Consider these summarized descriptions:

a) 10 July 1879. Pike's Peak, USA. After a snowstorm a member of a party at the meteorological station went outside and felt a peculiar tingling sensation all over his body. It was as if he were waking from being numbed. His head felt prickly and his hair stood on end. In fact, for three hours after he returned inside, his head felt as if it were burning. He noticed that the telegraph pole and all the nearby metal instruments emitted a humming 'like a swarm of bees'. This effect died away after about an hour.³

b) 25 August 1965. Florida, USA. On a hot day two women were sitting outside in chairs. One had just swatted a fly with a large swatter when an 'arc-welder' like light suddenly materialized beside the swatter. The woman dropped it in fright, and the tiny ball shot to earth and exploded in a second or so with a 'pop' sound. There were no marks left on the ground, and neither woman had felt any heat, but it was discovered that a neighbour's electric range had shorted out at the same moment, and the fly-swatting lady did subsequently suffer a pain in the back of her neck, resulting in headaches for some time afterwards. Her friend summed up the incident, with a wry glance at where the fly had been, saying, 'You sure got him that time!'¹⁴

c) August 1975. Smethwick, West Midlands, UK. A young housewife was in her kitchen when a blue/purple sphere of light appeared above her cooker. It flew towards her, and she instinctively brushed it away with her hand. It went 'bang' and vanished, leaving a small scorched hole in her skirt but not otherwise harming her. Even so, the hand she used to dismiss the ball grew red and

swollen. She said it was as if her gold wedding ring were burning itself into her finger.⁵

d) 21 August 1979. Brighton, West Sussex, UK. Two young men had driven south for a camping trip but found no room to place their tent. They decided to spend the night in their car (a Ford Capri). Around midnight one of the men suddenly felt tense and 'uneasy'. He observed an orange/yellow egg shape in the sky above, which was turning round and round. Partly in fear and partly in excitement, he leapt from the car and fell onto the damp earth. His friend beside him awoke and scrambled out, and they both looked on as the thing dipped towards the car 'as if draining it of power'. The car-owner even yelled out, 'Hey – leave off!' and the egg went back to its horizontal position, changed in sequence through yellow-red-blue-yellow and then vanished in a blur. Both men now noticed that their hair was standing on end and that there was a buzzing inside their hands. Their ears were 'popping' too, as if from a change in air pressure. They got no more sleep that night!⁶

e) December 1979. Halewood, Merseyside, UK. A man returning from nightshift on a cold, dark evening encountered a white light heading towards him along a deserted path across an open field. Thinking it to be a motorcycle headlight oncoming, he stepped aside, only to confront a white fluorescent 'balloon', about seven feet in diameter. The hair on his neck began to tingle as the thing silently swept by, just a few feet off the ground. When level with him, it shot upwards at an angle and disappeared in a few seconds. On his arrival home his wife remarked on his strange condition. All over his arms were 'goose bumps', and the hair stood out from his scalp as if it were 'full of electricity'. It remained like this for *two days*, before gradually returning to normal.⁷

There are a number of fascinating features about these case histories. Firstly, it should be obvious how similar they all are in many respects, and how many typical UFO parameters they contain – tingles, burns, strange feelings, even the extremely common UFO sound 'a buzzing of bees'. Yet only cases d and e were reported as UFOs. The first is an accepted account of an electrical storm; and b and c are classic examples from the annals of ball lightning (the mysterious energy form which, as these stories prove, is not *always* directly associated with thunderstorms). The one thing they all seem to share is the presence of an electrostatic field (creating the tingles and the hair-on-end effect). This is not unlike the sensation

one can reproduce by putting one's bare arm close to the screen of a recently switched-off TV set. Here the screen has built up a static charge which attracts to it the hairs of one's body. Some of the other effects in these synopses are not so easy to explain, e.g. the burns and the swellings, but it is considered very probable that ball lightning emits radiation across a broad band of the electromagnetic spectrum, and so these effects could result from contact with other types of energy.

Are all the reports b to e ball lightning? If so, then the Brighton case in particular is interesting because of the peculiar colour changes, the apparent extreme size (the witnesses estimated a hundred feet across) and the attraction of the object to the car's metal body. There are certainly grounds to believe that these cases describe phenomena which, if not the same, are at least closely related. Scientific research into such matters would once more be perfectly respectable.⁸ Indeed, a growing number of ufologists believe that such 'natural UFOs' are the key to the whole mystery. Steuart Campbell, for example, regards contacts and occupant stories as fantasy or hallucination and believes that all other TRUE UFOs are natural atmospheric electrical vortices (in other words, UAPs).⁹ His case is an impressive one, and I think the above data testify that he is certainly partly correct. *Some* UFOs are indeed natural electrical phenomena. But I am rather less happy about an understandable, but nonetheless premature, attempt to use this theory as a wonder cure for all our problems. To explain some UFOs in this way involves just too much stretching of the facts.

However, perhaps the most important aspect of these five synopses and Steuart's research (plus that of those who have preceded him), is that, while cases a, b and c were all published in respectable scientific sources and accepted without much question as scientific data to be evaluated, cases d and e, despite their important similarities and indeed valuable additional information content, are part of a set of 'evidence' which is rejected and laughed at. It would stand about as much chance of appearing in *New Scientist*, *Nature* or *Scientific American* as would the foretelling of the future by way of tea-leaves. Why? Because these events were interpreted and reported as UFOs by the witnesses. There is no other apparent reason!

Surely such a situation is scientifically intolerable, for the reports contain data which are given faithfully, soberly and in good

precision. The UFO records are full of cases such as this. How much longer can scientists refuse to study them and pass by the potential advance in knowledge they might provide? Just as in the last chapter we were forced to decry psychologists for turning their noses up at fascinating UFO data, here we must accuse physicists of doing the same thing. It is amazing how scientific ufology already is, even though scientists have little to do with it!

I suspect it might help a good deal if some over-enthusiastic ufologists stopped twittering about 'alien spaceships draining power from car engines as part of their exploration of earth', for it is perfectly obvious to any sensible observer that, whether 'alien spaceships' exist or not, cases d and e probably do *not* describe them but intriguing *natural* phenomena. And so do a good many other reports languishing in the dusty filing-cabinets of UFO-spotting groups.

Why am I unwilling to accept the Campbell and Philip Klass ideas that we can explain all non-fantasy UFOs in this way? Have we not found an acceptable answer for many contacts (hypnagogic imagery)? Have we not seen how normal stimuli can be misidentified? This is all true, and Campbell and Klass may eventually be proven right, but there seems to me still a gulf between the hypnagogic contacts and the natural atmospheric UAPs – a gulf which is far from empty. Can we really ascribe all the cases in this gap to lies and psychopathic disorders? I am afraid I see no evidence to convince me we should. And so, I fear, the search must still go on.

Before I relate an incredible case from Finland, here are some comments about it by Professor Stig Lundquist from Sweden's University of Uppsala: 'As far as I can say the phenomenon does not have any connection with known thunder or electricity.' He is a specialist in ball lightning and other types of atmospheric electrical phenomena but adds about this case: 'I do not think I can explain the phenomenon as being one.'

The story begins at 4.45 on the afternoon of 7 January 1970 in a forest near Imjarvi. The weather was bitter (minus 17 °C). Two men, a thirty-eight-year old farmer, Esko Viljo, and a thirty-six-year-old forester, Aarno Heinonen, were skiing when a light surrounded by a cloud floated across the sky, making a buzzing noise. The cloud descended, with the men paralysed beside it. When within a few feet of the ground, it was clear that the cloud

came from a disc-shaped object with three round protrusions on the underside and a central tube. The mist dispersed and the buzzing ceased. Next a beam of light came out of the tube and struck the ground underneath. Thicker mist swirled round it, but in the centre of the beam both men caught sight of a weird tiny creature (three feet tall). It had a pale, wax-like face and thin features and wore a light green suit with thick boots which emitted a pulsing yellow beam. Heinonen felt this beam push him backwards. The mist became thicker. The beam vanished, and suddenly something seemed to throw the fog apart. When the man looked up from their surprise at the blast, there was nothing there. (See Plate 1).

Immediately after the departure, Heinonen felt his right side numb (the one which had been closest to the object and beam). He tried to walk and fell over. Viljo, who seemed all right, had to help his friend back to the village, but he too became unsteady on his feet, and his face became red and swollen (remember the woman in the kitchen at Smethwick?). Both men visited doctors several times over the next few days. Viljo recovered fairly quickly, and the doctor said most of his symptoms could have been caused by shock. Heinonen, however, suffered more badly. In fact, he was unable to work for months and had to be sedated for a time. His blood pressure was low. He suffered severe headaches (note how common these are). He had a pain in his back and was extremely tired. However, the most inexplicable of his symptoms concerned his urine. This was darkly discoloured for some weeks – something the doctor could not understand (he believed it most unlikely urine would be discoloured by blood for so long). Dr Kajanoja from Heinola could make only one useful observation: ‘The symptoms described are like those after being exposed to radiation.’¹⁰

For some years after this, Heinonen went on to claim truly fantastic things, which even brought his sanity into doubt. He said he met a long-haired alien woman who looked 20 but said she was 180! She claimed to come from ‘the other side of the galaxy’ and told Heinonen he had had a device implanted into him to boost his psychic powers. He was given gifts which mysteriously vanished. He took photographs, then his camera went into limbo. And so on. In the end one is left very bemused. After an amazing, but perfectly serious, story which on its own is quite acceptable and which has the support of both Viljo and others who saw something in the vicinity of the forest that day, we are given a rambling series of anecdotes

which sound ludicrous and seem to belittle the whole affair. Yet why would Heinonen make himself look such a fool?¹¹

We might be tempted to think Heinonen is, and always was, mad. But there is nothing to support this inference. What about his physical symptoms? He could scarcely invent those. Did the encounter itself make him unstable? Perhaps. Or is this a further illustration of a strange phenomenon subsidiary to all the other puzzles. One might call it 'the smokescreen of nonsense'. One can almost see it as a means to distract serious folk from the truth. Certainly it serves to obscure the initial sincerity and make the whole affair ridiculous in many people's eyes. It is as if that is *meant* to be the outcome. Such a possibility is actually as plausible as most other answers, which do not explain what Heinonen and Viljo encountered in the forest that day. A hypnagogic image shared by two men skiing in and out of trees, in sub-zero temperatures, is close to impossible. An expert testifies it was not an atmospheric UAP in this case. I can conceive of no grossly distorted misidentification which this could possibly have been. *If* these men are telling the truth (and they are supported in the sense that this is one of hundreds of similar fantastic tales), *nothing* would explain this experience quite so well as some kind of interaction between them and some facet of a presently unknown type of reality. And if you think this is tantamount to saying an alien UFO, then that is not an unreasonable assumption!

There is an interesting point about the physical effects in this Finnish case, which seems minor but is in fact of crucial importance. This concerns Heinonen's difficulties with urine passage. Witnesses claim to have problems with the genital parts of their body to a surprising degree. Since it is an area of the anatomy many people feel embarrassed to talk about with strangers, this feature is even more impressive, for it might be rather more common than we suspect. Most sensitive investigators are hardly going to ask about it.

Four young men were out poaching by the banks of the River Weaver near Frodsham, Cheshire, on 27 January 1978. It was cold and dark when they saw a silver 'balloon' float along the river and settle in the undergrowth, sprouting flames from a skirt underneath, making a buzzing/humming noise as it did so. They were convinced the object was a satellite which had crash-landed and were terrified of it being radio-active (a satellite with an atomic motor had crashed

in Canada some months before). This fear was enhanced by a fuzzy blue/purple glow that came from the side of the 'balloon'. The men could not stare at it without it hurting their eyes.

From round the back of the object, at this point, appeared a man in a silver one-piece suit. On his head he wore a helmet, emitting a light of similar fuzzy hue. The man returned briefly round the back of the object and came back with a colleague, carrying between them a light frame of silvery tubes. This they took to some nearby cows, which stood immobile, as if paralysed. With the cage they moved the tubes up and down as if measuring. By now the men had worked out that it might be their turn next, and they fled, but they felt themselves pulled back and experienced a strange tingling sensation. Later one man reported that his legs were burning and looked bright red as if they had been over-exposed to a hot summer sun (which, needless to say, never appears during a British winter). He also sheepishly admitted that he felt a pain in his genitals, and they remained sore for some time afterward. 'It was as if I had been kicked there very hard,' he added.¹²

Now this story, always presuming it is true, of course, is extremely interesting. The fuzzy glow would seem to be an excellent description of an ultra-violet lightsource (which does give a pain to the eyes when stared at). And the physical effects would be quite explicable if the phenomenon were emitting radiation, e.g. infra-red or microwave. Microwaves are known to most people nowadays through their use in modern ovens, where they cook food rapidly by heating from the inside outwards (unlike conventional heat sources). They can readily lead to burns and are in fact rather dangerous if one is directly exposed to them for too long. It may not be a coincidence that when such over-exposure takes place the first parts of the body to be generally effected are the eyes (which can turn red and irritable or suffer conjunctivitis) and the genital organs (leading to urinary problems). For obvious reasons, not too much is known about severe over-exposure to microwave radiation. Perhaps discoloured urine and the other symptoms described by Aarno Heinonen are a consequence.

Figure 16 shows the electromagnetic spectrum in simplified form, adding some of the features known to be associated with the various types of emission. Remember that the sun pours out energy across much of the spectrum, but the atmosphere is an effective filter to a deal of it. Visible light gets through, as does infra-red radiation (it is

what heats up the earth across millions of miles of frozen vacuum). If there were a phenomenon which emitted radiation over a large part of the spectrum, *within* our atmosphere, including microwave, ultra-violet, infra-red and VLF, this could explain most of the effects reported in association with UFOs. As previously mentioned, ball lightning is one probable candidate. Fortunately, most observers do not get too close to this, and it is normally present for just a few seconds, so its effects are minimized. But an extreme variation on this, or a similar but slightly more active emitter of radiation, is quite feasible and would be a very dangerous thing indeed. If such a phenomenon does exist, then we really ought to be finding out more about it instead of attaching little-green-man labels and brushing it under the carpet of scientific apathy.

Perhaps this phenomenon might explain some of the mysterious cases where people have been found burnt to death whilst their immediate surroundings are relatively untouched. These incidents of 'spontaneous human combustion' are well attested (see the book by Michael Harrison, *Fire from Heaven*).

John Keel has done a good deal of research in this area, and his conclusions would seem to agree with mine.¹³ The fact that scientific research into yet another aspect of ufology *is* feasible is shown by the amount of experimental work he cites into the induced effects of such radiation.

One interesting case took place on 13 March 1980 at 7.50 p.m. It was followed up by investigator Tony Green and involved a thirty-one-year-old subcontractor who was driving between Worcester and Stratford-upon-Avon. Not far from the village of Haselor, Warwickshire, he saw a strange object whiz across his field of view. It was cigar-shaped, glowing white, with red lights on each end. The size was so enormous that it filled his windscreen as it swept across his path. This took only a couple of seconds, such was its speed, but craning his neck he was able to see it moving away from him north-eastwards. Coincident with this he had to wrench his hands from the car's steering-wheel as it had suddenly turned extremely hot. He suffered a nasty burn.¹⁴

On my request I received much thought on this case after its publication in *FSR*, including some detailed calculations by physics teacher Paul Stevenson. He argued that, as the steering-wheel contains a metal coil, the electromagnetic field associated with the phenomenon could (assuming it to exist) have induced a current

inside it, leading to the rapid heat rise. He worked out an estimate for the necessary field strength (making a few reasonable assumptions), and it turned out to be very large, many times greater than that of the earth.¹⁵

Fortunately, in this case the UFO passed by rapidly, and so the witness did not suffer any lasting effects from exposure to the postulated field and radiation. In a similar case at Barnard Castle, Durham, the induced heat was so great that it instantly evaporated a mass of rainwater from a motorcycle and the cyclist's leather clothing. He also suffered skin burns and subsequent nausea.¹⁶

Keel has a most interesting conjecture about all of this. What if the emitted radiation can precipitate hallucinations? The brain does contain electric circuits, being in fact an incredibly complex bio-computer. It is certainly reasonable to suppose that our postulated radiation-emitter might interfere with the neural circuits and lead to visionary experiences. Is that why Heinonen claimed what he did after the encounter? But if so, why did he *and* Viljo see the same thing initially?

In the light of Keel's ideas, the following tale is fascinating. It comes from investigator Margaret Fry. The witness remains very distressed and will only be called Mrs M. She is thirty-six, has five children and lives in South London.

On 17 July 1978 at 7.45 p.m. Mrs M was out on the common near her home. With her were two daughters and their dog, who had run on ahead playing whilst she sat resting in the grass by a copse of trees, enjoying the summer evening. Suddenly a ball of orange light fell out of the sky and settled on the grass a few yards from her feet. Of course Mrs M was very frightened. She saw two tiny men come towards her from this direction (at first she estimated they were three feet tall but as they approached they seemed more like five feet). The men wore fawn 'chauffeur' uniforms with peaked caps! On their chests were buttons of some sort. They came and stood in front of her, talking away, but she could not understand them. Glancing to her side, she suddenly saw her father. But he had been dead for six years! At this point she collapsed into unconsciousness, feeling 'cold and drained of energy', and retains only a brief memory of being led to a local hospital by her husband. In her own words she then 'lost an entire week' and only recalls a severe rash on all exposed parts of her body and great pain. She also lost her eyesight (recall the cases from the previous chapter). This returned

after three months but was badly affected two years later on interview by Margaret Fry. In hospital she was treated by a psychiatrist, but he decided she had not suffered a nervous breakdown and that her psychological illness resulted *from* whatever had caused her physical symptoms (although he did not have a clue what that was and probably would not have accepted the answer of a UFO anyway!). Mrs M was discharged from hospital as the physical effects subsided, but she remained under care until spring 1979.¹⁷

This extraordinary tale is not given much thought by most ufologists, but I think it may be one of the most important we have on record. To try to explain what Mrs M. experienced as the result of contact with an alien spaceship is as stupid and pointless as dismissing it as a dream or fantasy. The physical symptoms are very like all the others we have met so far. The phenomenon observed was simply an orange sphere (rather like ball lightning) and appears to have catalysed all the rest of her encounter. And the details of the remainder of her story do sound like an hallucination (chauffeurs, her dead father etc). In this case the most acceptable answer is that a UAP triggered loss of consciousness, severe physical and psychological disorders and attendant hallucinations. One is left to wonder just how many other stories of contact might be reducible to such a solution. I suspect we might again have found an answer to another major part of the UFO phenomenon.

In the last chapter we considered the sighting made by Ken Edwards at Risley, Cheshire, when he saw a white form (which he interpreted as a 'spaceman' but which could have merely been a floating white energy-source). A discharge occurred between it and the vehicle he was in (which he described as being hit by lightbeams from the figure). The energy output led to his van's radio transceiver exploding, loss of consciousness on his part (a lengthy time-lapse resulted for which he retained no memory for the rest of his life) and skin burns. Ufologists are tempted, when faced with such a blank in memory, to try to retrieve it by using regression hypnosis. It is speculated that a contact with aliens occurred and that its memory has been pushed into the subconscious. This idea has support from experiments of this type where alleged contact memories *have* emerged, but we still know little about hypnosis, and what we do know hardly confirms that this memory is objective truth. Hypnosis has *not* been used with Ken Edwards, but I think I

can guess what would have happened if it were. Might it not be that such cases are best left only as conscious testimony? To do anything else might be grossly misleading, or even deluding ourselves. Ken Edwards, and others like him, might have encountered a UAP and been rendered unconscious. In defence of this I would add one thing. I maintained a regular contact with Ken in the four years left to him after his experience. He had no other strange encounters, but he did contract cancer of the kidneys and a cyst on his vocal chords soon after the events. These may well have resulted from exposure to radiation. And in 1982 Ken died at a very young age from cancer. Both his wife and myself suspect the UFO phenomenon may not be without blame for this tragedy.

Recently a number of researchers (Patricia Grant, David Seargent and Paul Whetnall are three) have independently suggested that there may be a link between the pulsing lights (which, remember could have induced hypnosis) and attendant hallucinations. Indeed the correlation between flashing lights and attacks of epilepsy, in those who suffer from this, has not gone unnoted. A UAP radiating strongly might generate epileptic-like blackouts in those who get too close, leading to hallucinations (or dreams) during this period of unconsciousness. The dreams might later be recalled as fact, confused and distorted, as many UFO contacts are, of course. If the UAP were regarded as a UFO (with its alien connotations), it would not be surprising for the witness to hallucinate in this context (the ball of light energy thus turning into a spaceship populated by aliens of his own imagining). It is not without significance that encounters take on individual and personal characters (remember the test-flight engineer at Mickleover?), nor that each UFO, or set of aliens, seems to vary (as they would if each were imagining his own variation on the theme of 'a little green man') What is more, this hallucination-inducing phenomenon would probably have been around throughout history, and the attendant hallucinations would thus have taken the form appropriate to the era in question and the witnesses involved. There are, of course, stories of demons, and fairies, and airships, from previous centuries. Do these *all* relate to UAPs?

This final report, a detailed account by the primary witness, was given in *BUFORA Journal*,¹⁸ and the incident was also investigated for NUFON by Midland-based ufologists.¹⁹

Mrs E. Oakenson is head warden at a teachers' centre in

Daventry, Northamptonshire. On 22 November 1978 the day was wintry with wisps of cloud. At about 1 p.m. Mrs Oakenson felt a sudden tightening in the back of her head (like someone pulling a tight hat over her). This lasted about a minute. At 5.15 she was about to drive the few miles home to Church Stowe, a village on a hill just off the A5. She noticed a sidelight was not working so she drove on slowly through the dusk with dipped headlights. Turning onto the A5 at about 5.30, she saw two lights, one red and one green, in the southern sky towards Stowe Hill. At first she presumed it to be an aircraft which would pass over, but, as she drove towards it, she realized the lights were on a dumb-bell or egg-timer-shaped object, hovering over the road and straddling its width. Naturally the road was extremely busy at the time, but nobody seemed to pay any attention whatsoever to this weird sight. She drove on, nose against the windscreen, and passed right underneath the silent intruder.

Turning off the A5 towards the village, Mrs Oakenson glanced back a few times. It was still there, but the green light was now flashing. Suddenly her car lost power. Her foot was flat on the accelerator, but it was slowing down. She switched from third to first gear, and the engine revved up. But then, incredibly, she found herself a little way down the lane, now on the outskirts of the village. Her car was silent and dead. The headlights were off. What was more, a blanket of velvet darkness seemed draped over her. She could not even make out the outline of farm buildings she knew were right beside her. On the next night, at the same spot, even some minutes later, these buildings were perfectly visible.

It was at this point that strange flashes appeared over the car. They were about three feet wide and moved in a circle around her, flashing a dozen or so times. After this, the last light shot into the air. There was now a further blackout period, and she found herself further still down the road. The car was moving, and its lights were on. She drove the few yards home and noticed that the faulty sidelight was now working perfectly, and she did not suffer trouble from it or the car subsequently. When she gazed back towards the A5, she saw a single yellow light hovering there. She then realized that her journey (which she does each day and thus can time precisely) had lasted ten minutes more than it should have. On the next night she checked it just to make sure. Just over an hour later, at about 7 p.m., she felt the tightening sensation at the back of her

head one last time.

This is fascinating stuff (even more so when one realizes that almost two years to the day later a police officer in West Yorkshire suffered a ten-minute time-lapse in rather similar circumstances). One is tempted to think in terms of our UAP once more, even though the fact that nobody else on the A5 saw it is a considerable difficulty. The tightening sensation and the flashing lights are reminiscent of a migraine attack. The blackout might suggest epilepsy (and migraine and epilepsy have some things in common with each other). So is that what this was? When Andy Collins subsequently supervised regression hypnosis on the witness, no contact memory emerged, but there was a belief that the witness had been contacted and then rejected!

There is a more than interesting postscript to this affair. At 7.20 p.m. that night four unrelated women left the village of Byfield (about eight miles south-west of Church Stowe) to travel the fifteen miles across country to a Women's Institute meeting in Northampton. This journey would take them south of Mrs Oakenson's home and then across the A5. At about 7.30 they approached the village of Preston Capes, when the woman who was driving saw two parallel-sided beams of light shoot from a cloud, separated by three seconds. These beams, incidentally, were directed towards Church Stowe! Then, a few moments later, a red and green light (in the same configuration as those on the object seen by Mrs Oakenson earlier) appeared below cloud and crossed the road in front of them. The lights paced the car on their right, passing beside the village as the women travelled through it. As they came towards the adjacent village of Little Preston, the car engine started to falter, and the driver was forced to struggle to maintain power. Suddenly the two lights merged as one white ball, which then 'switched off'. The encounter had lasted three minutes, during which the driver, Mrs Laurie, said she felt a great sense of foreboding.

These reports were made independently, and this seems to suggest that what happened to Mrs Oakenson was rather more than an attack of migraine.

So, whilst it would be nice to think we can explain away all physiological effects as the result of some atmospheric UAP, we cannot honestly go so far. We find ourself pushed in the direction of our disturbing conclusion once again: that some other reality is directly imposing itself upon certain witnesses, producing physio-

logical effects as a by-product. If such an admission comes as a surprise to you, then you are no more surprised than I am.

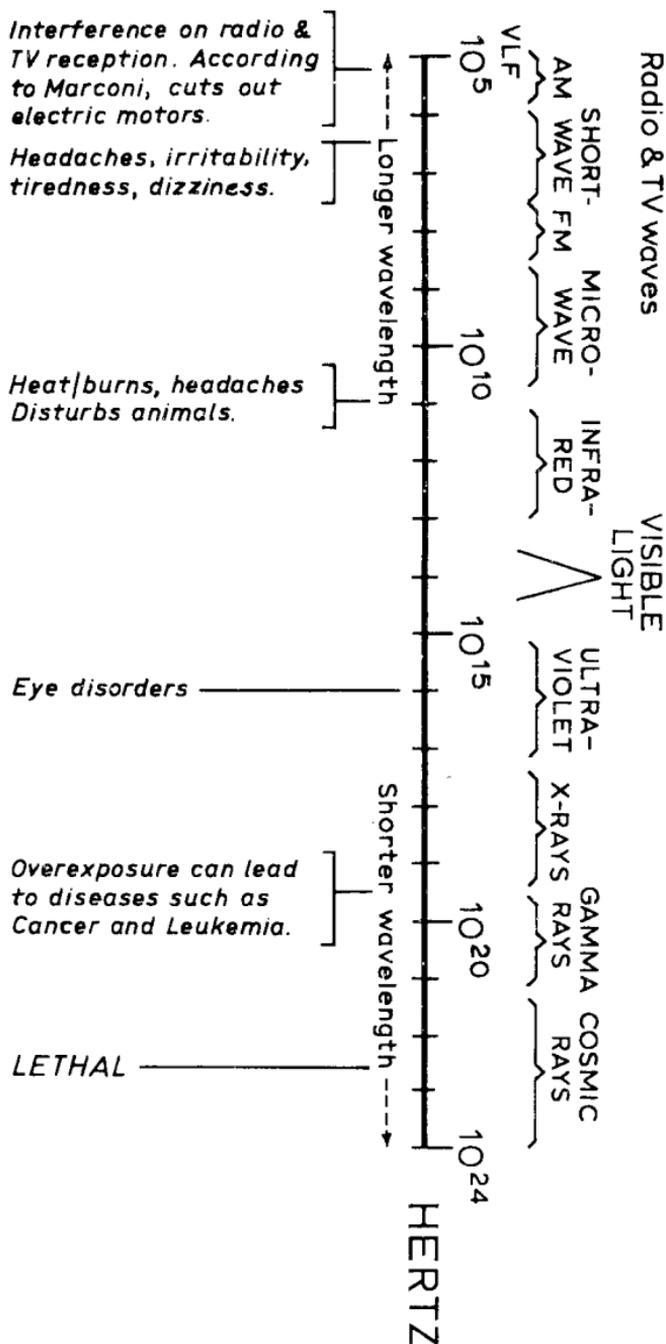


Fig. 16: The electromagnetic spectrum and some of the effects of radiation at varying wavelengths

6

Wizardly Spells from the Yellow Brick Road: Environmental Effects

'It was funny . . . the street at that time is normally so busy, but there was nothing. No people. No movement. Nothing. Everything was so quiet.'

Witness describing a close-encounter experience

In the earliest days of the UFO enigma, trout farmer A. C. Urie and his two sons encountered a blue hat-shaped disc near their home in Twin Falls, Idaho. It was 1 p.m. on 13 August 1947, a sunny day. The object passed swiftly along a canyon floor at only about seventy-five feet, seeming to follow the contours of the land in a rather precise fashion. As it crossed over some trees, they were clearly disturbed, not just as they would be by wind but as if they were 'spun around . . . in a vacuum'.¹

Geoffrey Grundill is now a UFO investigator in Workington, Cumbria, and his interest in the subject was (as is often the case) stimulated by a personal experience. This occurred in the summer of 1975 when he was fifteen. It was about 6.20 p.m., and he was alone in the house at the time. Suddenly he found himself staring out of the window at a strange 'aircraft' which floated into view around the gable end of the house. This weird thing possessed wings, a tail fin and a ball-like protrusion at the front but had no markings or windows and was totally silver. It moved 'like a balloon' and hovered just feet above his garden, seeming to be immense. It then appeared almost to collide with some trees, forcing them downwards and permanently bending the branches in one place. To get out of 'trouble', the 'aircraft' now proceeded to fly *backwards*! It also spewed out masses of grey smoke. Geoff watched with a mixture of horror and amazement as the thing

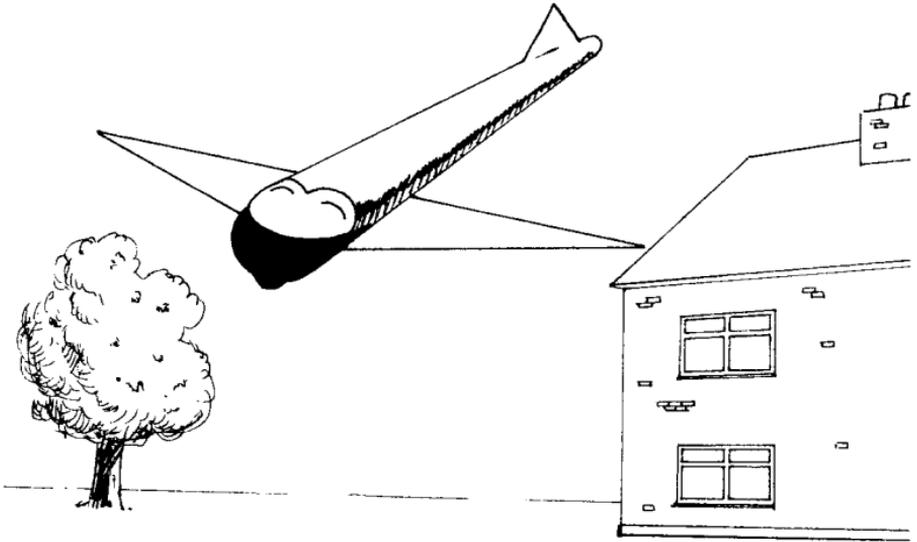


Fig. 17: Mystery aircraft at Workington, Cumbria, summer 1975

dissolved itself into the mist. Long after this vapour had faded away into the atmosphere the birds refused to fly into that part of the sky, manoeuvring round it. Although the after-effects on the tree were clear enough, Geoff could hardly use them to prove that a UFO had been there. For, of course, as you might now expect, nobody else in the surrounding area had seen this incredible sight. Yet again a UFO experience was personally convincing but tantalizingly elusive to the world at large.² (See Figure 17).

The next case raises the question of environmental effects to a new level. A. W. is the name we must use for a Frenchman who was on vacation in Togo, West Africa in 1974. Between 11 p.m. and 1.45 a.m. on the night of 28–29 March he had been bathing with a native lady friend in the sea near Lomé. The couple sat resting beneath coconut palms on a sloping, sandy beach, 150 feet or so away from a calm ocean edge. Above them glittering stars blazed in a beautiful tropic sky. Suddenly this tranquillity was shattered by a high-pitched whine. They saw a dark, cylindrical object moving just above the surface of the water, heading in their direction. About five hundred feet away it halted, but with no warning they were then struck by a massive tidal wave. Desperately A. W. grabbed his

companion with one arm and with the other anchored himself to the nearest tree. Around them came surge after surge of water, rushing up the beach and deluging them. Then powerful beams of light poured from the object and shone towards them. The man was wearing slightly tinted glasses and so was able to readjust his eyesight to the glare quite quickly. Beneath the hovering cigar, in the beams it was producing, he could see a deep trough dug into the surface of the water. It was far in excess of what one might expect from a downdraught that might conceivably be produced by a helicopter. It was as if a part of the sea had been scooped away. This was obviously the source of the water now flooding about them.

The object remained still for what A. W. later estimated (from his waterproof watch) as about twenty minutes, during which time the couple seemed to be immobilized and unable to swim clear. Then, suddenly, it left, moving out to sea and switching off its lights. The water flowed back out to sea, and they found themselves able to struggle back to their hotel. A. W. suffered from the by now familiar sensation of 'excessive tiredness', a pain in his ears (from the sound?) and fainting spells which lasted for a few more days.³

This amazing experience links well with the incident from Twin Falls, as both imply that the phenomenon had a kind of 'force field' shell around it. The shell must have been of a distinct radius and was the reason why the water of the sea was depressed. This shell might also push down on trees and bend them, but more resistant rock would not yield to the force exerted. Since the force would have to have an outlet, rather like when you push against a wall that does not bend *it* seems to push back on *you*, then the UFO to which the field is associated would be forced upwards. Hence the object would seem to follow the precise contours of the land. This is no more than speculation, but it seems to fit the evidence.

What we have seen so far is that physical phenomena are unquestionably involved in the production of environmental effects, on at least some occasions. These things are certainly not psychological manifestations. Their precise nature is not important at this stage. That they exist is an important enough conclusion. At times we can be reasonably certain of the origin of the primary event, but on other occasions we have an answer which merely begs more questions.

Derek James, an investigator for NUFON in Staffordshire, chased a remarkable series of reports in August 1973. A mysterious

'black cloud' floated across south Cheshire and north Staffordshire, performing some very odd antics. The cloud was oval, and at least one witness reported a 'white star' which kept bobbing in and out of the top of it. It moved southwards in broad daylight on a warm summer's day, heading straight *into* a light breeze. At Kidsgrove an astonished train-driver gaped as a heavily laden sack of coal took off into the air heading for the cloud! At Burslem luckless residents suffered a rain of hay, sucked up from a field a mile away by the thirsty cloud. And a local dignitary in Stoke was left to curse as his car became the garbage dump for the cloud when it decided to let go of the roof of a builder's hut which it had torn away.⁴

In August 1976 it happened all over again, this time further north, in Lancashire. Once more a black oval cloud was involved, hay was sucked up and subsequently dumped, and weather conditions were hot and dry. On this occasion, however, a humming 'diesel engine' type noise was heard in association.⁵

Of course, there is an explanation for these events, and this is that they were tornadoes. Such vortices, even on a minor scale, are uncommon in the temperate British climate and so tend to cause great consternation when they do occur.

Once more we see an illustration of how UFO files contain valuable scientific material, although yet again it is ignored *because* it refers to UFOs.

A phenomenon which is somewhat more difficult to comprehend is well exemplified by an intriguing case whose many ramifications begin with the date. 9 March 1977 was one of those nights when things went berserk, although such 'crazy days' are little recognized even in UFO circles. Between midnight and 3.30 a.m. a number of impressive sightings were made quite independently throughout northern Britain, the best known being a car-stop at Nelson, Lancashire. This sudden simultaneous arrival of the UFO phenomenon, with no media catalyst or link between the events, is one of those tiny details which serves to impress on ufologists the total reality of their enigma. For coincidence is a nonsense. This happens too often for that. It was repeated, for example, on 22 May 1977, a five-day spell in late November 1980 (during one of the quietest lulls in UFO reports Britain has known) and on other occasions.

It is not simply the fact that UFOs seem to be having a spree that day which stands out. Usually the calibre of the cases crammed into the few hours concerned are well above the mundane normality of

lights in the sky or meandering ovals. There are usually several close encounters in each phase.

This unrecorded 9 March 1977 event involves the clubmaster and professional golfer at the Ardeer course, on the pretty Ayrshire coast of south-west Scotland. The two men were about to lock the club for the night, about thirty minutes after midnight, when they spotted a light in the north-east. Thinking it was an aircraft with landing lights on, they watched only casually, but then the clubmaster (who had first seen it) brought his friend scurrying to the window, where a fine panoramic view was afforded inland over the course. The light was now longer, had turned and was hovering over the seventeenth tee, no higher than the telegraph pole. Its glare was so enormous that nothing could be seen behind it, even though it lit up the whole of the ground for some way about it. A farmhouse a mile away was perfectly visible in the otherwise pitch blackness. They could see that the grass and trees beneath it were totally unaffected, as they would not have been had it been a helicopter. In fact the golfer remarked, 'It's so light out there I could go and play a round!'

After hovering for about four minutes, the light suddenly streaked upwards into the low cloud-cover, leaving a clear hole in it as it passed through. The cloud just seemed to evaporate and then close in again around the UFO, eventually leaving it to shine through as just a veiled glow. At this point what the men describe as 'like a mirage' occurred. Glow and cloud formed themselves into a distinct shape of a grey dome with a shiny black base. The light was now seen to be projected outwards from the front of this in an arc. Without warning, the thing shot straight towards them. It was as if 'the light swept out a vacuum into which the trailing object was sucked', according to the witnesses. The golfer ducked instinctively, so swift was the motion. He was convinced it was going to hit the clubhouse and so stepped back, falling over a chair in the process. The other man stood transfixed and was able to see the object speed overhead and out to sea behind them, without making any sound whatsoever.⁶

Regardless of the uncompromising nature of this report (apparently either a hoax or a completely unknown aerial device), the 'hole in the sky' aspect does have a parallel. On 30 December 1977 four witnesses at Exhall, Warwickshire (actually very close to the location of the steering-wheel burns case mentioned in the last

chapter), watched a shimmering golden oval approach, hover for five minutes over some electricity pylons and then shoot into the sky leaving a hole in the low cloud base, about eighty to a hundred feet in diameter. Despite the wind moving the cloud about, it took several minutes for the hole to fill in.⁷

An electrical phenomenon of some kind is suggested by the relation with the pylons in this case. Perhaps the object induced an electrostatic charge into the clouds, causing them to ionize and separate. This charge may well have taken some minutes to drain away, thus keeping the hole intact. This speculation is interesting in view of the 'forcefield' proposed earlier. Are we discovering the physical nature of this hypothetical field?

Figure 18 shows the matrix for this chapter's group of cases. There is a higher degree of spurious data than in previous matrices, although in general cases with environmental effects are fewer in number (just 1.5 per cent of the JR Set). There are few other parameters in the pattern, and no responsive or contacts. Identified reports often concern the connection of quite irrelevant things in the environment to a mistaken stimulus (e.g. an aircraft was linked with the fact that a witness's alarm clock gained time). On other occasions the environmental effect is simply a glow left by the UFO. This may be attributable to an after-image formed on the retina by a very bright light source, and so not an actual effect on the environment at all. Landing-lights from aircraft, for instance, can be extremely bright.

Aside from the physical effects on the environment, it would be wrong to neglect the other side of the coin: one of the most common aspects of the close encounter story we have met already, e.g. in Chapter 4. It is a witness sensation which can be summed up with the words 'aura of silence' (see the quote at the head of this chapter). Often it is intangible, and witnesses feel uncertain about mentioning it. Yet it does seem a constituent of many strange phenomena, such as cases of 'time-slip', where people claim to relive an ancient battle scene, or something similar. Indeed, many writers over the ages have discussed what is sometimes called the 'timeless moment', a kind of separation of one's self from the manacles of time. Here is one illustration in a UFO context. Incidentally, this beautifully artistic UFO was observed by a female witness who is sensitive, emotional and earns money as an artist.

It was 21 July 1978, a warm summer's evening. At 10.15 Mr and

16 Events (IFO, 6 = 37%) Photo = 1 Radar = Nil

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
VE 2	Only	2	2
VE 2	Plus		
	R1	2	0
	R2	—	—
	R3	—	—
	R4	0	2
	L1	—	—
	L2	1	0
	L3	—	—
	L4	—	—
	E1	5	1
	E3	3	1
	O4	1	0

Fig. 18: JR Set matrix: cases involving environmental effects

Mrs W were at their home in Davyhulme, Manchester, when Mrs W saw an unbelievable object in the sky. Her husband rushed outside at her signal, whilst she searched the house to find a pair of binoculars before joining him. The sight which greeted them both was quite breathtaking. Interestingly, however, the artistic Mrs W saw it in much greater detail and vividness. There was a dark central dome hovering in the twilight sky. Around this was an aura and about thirty or forty lovely purple ‘rays’, shooting out at every angle like spokes from a wheel. They extended about twelve times the diameter of the central disc. After about 1½ minutes the ‘rays’ collapsed inwards in sequence, and the object slowly extinguished itself. It was massive, compared with the size of a rooftop opposite.

Mr and Mrs W had no idea what they had seen, but they did not want to think it a UFO, so they wrote to television astronomer Patrick Moore. He assured them they must have seen a bright meteor, and they were happy to accept this explanation. What Patrick failed to explain was how such a memorable sight was seen by just two people in a busy street in a city of a million inhabitants on a clear and pleasant summer’s evening!⁸

Had Patrick Moore been as knowledgeable about UFOs as he is about the stars, it would have been quite obvious to him that this

was not a meteor.

Both witnesses were puzzled with the way the normally active street was totally deserted in an eerie stillness and quiet, whilst this marvellous phenomenon paraded before them. Mrs W. even adds that she felt 'singled out' and 'alone' (she might have added 'privileged to see it', as many witnesses do).

This sensation of being isolated, or transposed from the real world into a different environmental framework, is one of great importance to our understanding of UFOs. It is almost suggestive of the witness being transported temporarily from our world into another, where reality is similar but slightly different. A world where miracles can happen. This effect is so common and important that I have adopted a name for it, on the basis that, if you name something, you are at least on the way towards finding out what it is. I call it 'the Oz Factor', after the fairytale land of Oz. I do not know whether this analogy is helpful or misleading, but it is as if a spell is cast by the famous magician from that land, taking the witness into a new reality. In one form or another the Oz Factor is very common. What we must do is follow the yellow brick road in search of the wizard.

A nineteen-year-old woman, Mariá Pretzel, had a frightening confrontation with the Oz Factor just after 1 a.m. on 14 June 1968, whilst locking up a small hotel owned by her absent father. The hotel was on a quiet road outside the Argentinian resort town of Villa Carlos Paz. Local investigator Dr Oscar Galindez produced an excellent report for *FSR*, which is well worth reading in full.⁹ To summarize it briefly, Mariá encountered a very tall, apparently flesh-and-blood humanoid figure, wearing a light blue one-piece suit. It behaved quite unlike an hallucination (e.g. it stopped in order to exit through a door which was slightly too small for it). In one hand the 'man' held a strange sphere, which radiated a coherent beam of light. Light also emanated from the extremities of his body. Whilst it stood inside the hotel foyer, for about four minutes, Mariá heard a voice inside her head constantly repeating the words, 'Don't be afraid.' She felt her face and body distort (as if in a funfare mirror). She suddenly found herself relocated a few feet away from where she had been standing, without any sense of motion. Her body tingled. Then she had the terrifying experience of falling backwards and sideways in ultra-slow motion, not quite touching the floor, and then righting herself, like one of those weighted dolls

it is impossible to tip over. What may well have been a UFO was seen outside on the road by two other witnesses at the time. Here is the Oz Factor truly distorting our reality, to an extent which leaves us marvelling at the prowess of the wizard. Whoever (or whatever) he is.

7

A UFO Did That to Me! – Physical Effects

‘The thing shone two beams of light at me from out of its eyes. I felt weird. My head swam with hundreds of strange thoughts. And it felt like two huge hands were pressing down on me from above. I couldn’t move!’

Witness Ken Edwards, describing his close encounter with an alien lightbeam

In the cases which concern us in this chapter, the effects themselves are not in doubt. They are real enough. No hoaxer, one would imagine, is purposely going to cause himself severe physical harm for the sake of a joke, which on past evidence is likely to bring ridicule rather than sympathy. At least the number who might go to such an extreme would presumably be rather small!

A glance at the matrix for this chapter (Figure 19) is a most revealing sight. We have the lowest number of cases so far (just 1.1 per cent of the JR Set) and yet an incredible 91.7 per cent of them unidentified. There are also clear relations between severe effects and both UFO landings and the presence of occupants. This is something we might not find too surprising. After all, these events are the most traumatic of which we can conceive.* The correlation is nonetheless important. It would be most interesting to see this study extended to a larger global sample of, perhaps, a hundred VE1 events, to discover just what percentage of this involves landings and occupants. This could then be compared with a similar study of VE2 data (cases like those in previous chapter). On present evidence we might expect a ratio of about eight to one more

* It might, incidentally, be thought that abductions would best qualify for this description. Yet abductions are *not* usually accompanied by severe physical post-effects, a point which might be rather important when we come to understand the reality status and nature of contacts.

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
<u>VE 1</u>	Only	1	1
<u>VE 1</u>	Plus		
	R1	2	0
	R2	1	0
	R3	3	0
	R4	—	—
	L1	1	0
	L2	4	0
	L3	—	—
	L4	1	0
	E2	3	0
	E3	3	0
	O1	4	0
	O4	2	0
	C4	1	0
	C5	1	0
	C6	1	0

Fig. 19: JR Set matrix: cases involving semi-permanent physiological effects landings and occupants in VE1 cases than in VE2. That would be significant.

A link between degree of effect and proximity of UFO (assuming that a landing suggests greater proximity), or with the presence of occupants, might simply be due to the greater stress the implied danger would generate in a witness. But it would equally be consistent with closer contact between the witness and an unknown energy source. In the JR Set, the high percentage (fully a quarter in fact) which also involve electromagnetic effects in association with physical post-effects, must reinforce this latter possibility.

Interestingly, some independent research from Europe has found the same connections – with a quite separate batch of data, of course. This also noted how the presence of an emitted lightbeam correlates with severe effects to a far higher degree than with other factors.¹ This finding is certainly borne out by the random sample of Primes we shall confront over the next few pages.

The only case in the matrix with a reasonable identification would be the one already referred to (p. 69), where observation of satellites brought a pre-existent anxiety complex to the surface. In the Primes to come there are no other examples of such an obvious diagnosed psychopathic disorder.

A Portuguese neurologist (who is also interested in UFOs), José Figueiredo, has made a special study of the effects noted by witnesses who come in close proximity to a UFO.² Some of the physiological factors he records are: feelings of warmth, burns, headaches, nausea, eyesight disorders, numbness, drowsiness, itching, skin diseases, diarrhoea, blood disorders and death. Almost all of these we have met more than once in the foregoing chapters. These are the effects most commonly found (although in their extremes they are still thankfully very rare). He has correlated the known effects of various types of radiation with this list and concluded that no one type seems capable of explaining all the symptoms. Microwave radiation he regards as a good candidate for some of the heat-related effects (as we have already noticed). However, his most useful hypothesis comes from considering atmospheric ionization (something which, again, we came to by another route in the last chapter). High-energy beams which ionize the atmosphere could lead to induced electromagnetic phenomena, most of the physiological effects which we encounter, and would also account for a minor (but common) curiosity of our data. Witnesses do sometimes describe the presence of a smell in association with a UFO. When analysed, or when a witness is asked to compare it with a known odour reproduced, it is found that two are most common. One is ozone (a kind of super-enriched oxygen molecule). Another is nitrous oxide. Both are possible by-products of ionization in our atmosphere (whose chief constituents include oxygen and nitrogen). Ionization has another big thing in its favour. Ions can be either positive or negative. If you strip electrons away from an atom, then it becomes positively ionized (because electrons have negative charge, and so the balance of the otherwise neutral atom is tipped in favour of the positive). On the other hand, free-floating electrons, or atoms to which they migrate, have an excess of negative charge and are thus negatively ionized. Experimentation has been conducted into the effects of both these kinds of ionization, and it is known that positive ions induce harmful effects (e.g. nausea, irritability and more serious problems), whereas negative ions can be beneficial (e.g. improving sleep, reducing nervousness and tension and improving bodily resistance to disease).

When we look at the wealth of world data involving serious effects (which is substantial enough despite their *relatively* low

incidence in the UFO record), it can be split into two clear groups. On the one hand there are maleficent effects, and on the other there are beneficial ones, just as if both types of ionization are involved.

Stephen Michalak, a fifty-one-year-old prospector, was examining a quartz vein in the bush some miles from Falcon Lake, Canada, in the early afternoon of 20 May 1967. He observed two dome-shaped objects, one of which landed nearby, allowing him to walk right up to it and allegedly pop his head inside. Here he saw flashing lights and heard voices talking in a high-pitched language. Presuming the thing to be some kind of experimental aircraft, he tried addressing the unseen occupants in English, Russian, German, Italian and French, but he got no response. The air around the object was warm, and he could see a purple light that was hurting his eyes, emanating from the upper part of the object. (Think back to the Frodsham case, on p. 84, and the purple light that was hurtful to look at.) As Michalak pulled his head out of the object, a panel slid across, sealing the opening. In his haste to step back, he touched the side of the object with his gloves and hat. Both partly melted. He now found himself beside a grid or vent with a checker pattern of holes in it. Suddenly a blast of hot air shot out, setting his shirt and undershirt on fire. He had to tear these off rapidly, as meanwhile the UFO flew into the sky and disappeared, leaving a smell which seems to have been ozone. (It sometimes occurs in association with overworked electrical equipment).

Michalak suffered severely for his daring and was in fact under the care of the hospital at Winnipeg after he struggled back there. The most extensive effect was a substantial burn on his chest several inches square. This clearly displayed the checker pattern which he says was on the UFO vent. (See Plate 2). In addition he suffered nausea, tiredness, weight-loss, muscular pains and an alleged change in the lymphocyte count of his blood. These persisted for some months, and he had to be re-admitted to hospital when the symptoms recurred some weeks later.³

This is clearly an impressive case, and it is difficult to imagine anyone going to the trouble of making up a story to accompany the distressing physical effects, which were unquestionably real and subject to intense medical scrutiny. Even so, the Condon team (who studied this as Case 22 in their report) reached the veiled conclusion that it was a hoax (although they never come straight out and say so). They talk much of how this case, if true, would prove the

existence of alien vehicles, of how the witness convinced subsequent police enquiries and of how their investigators found the man apparently truthful and sincere (an opinion shared by his employers, who were interviewed). In the case of Aarno Heinonen in Sweden, subsequent developments in his story seemed to make an initially plausible account look quite ridiculous. In other recorded cases unbelievable stories about physical changes in the environment detract from an otherwise straightforward contact experience. When investigating the amazing events related by the Sunderland family in North Wales, I was struck by the acceptability of the primary encounters, and yet later events described by the witnesses (quite naturally and helplessly) deteriorated to a state where outsiders just could not believe any of them, even normally hard-nosed UFO investigators.⁴ Other examples of this curious ground rule will appear. Here Michalak's story seems impressive and is backed by considerable physical evidence, but Condon chose to dismiss it because of subsequent rather silly testimony, where at times it seemed almost as if Michalak was planting false and easily identifiable evidence, at the alleged site, for reasons impossible to fathom.

This seems to be an important clue to the nature of the enigma. One might venture the opinion that the subconscious wishes to make it known that the event was *not* real, by making the witness inadvertently 'slip', when on past performance such poor attempts to fool others would be quite out of character. But, of course, if the physical evidence, or the validity of the initial story, is anything to go by, we have to consider an alternative possibility. The phenomenon (whatever it is) could be deliberately implanting false evidence, or causing the witness to implant it. This would seem specifically designed to make the whole thing less credible.

The answer could be quite simple. The elusiveness of the UFO is crucial to its nature, be it externally induced or a by-product of ourselves. Rule number one for a good UFO encounter might be as follows. It should be tantalizing, provocative and personally convincing. It should set people thinking and tend to provide initial proof. But ultimately it should destroy that proof or destroy the credibility of the percipient himself. The net result will be that the witness believes, and perhaps a proportion of society believes too, but on the whole there is a perpetuation of mystery. The donkey is led through the desert by a carrot dangling on a stick.

'Dr X' is the pseudonym given by Aimé Michel to a man with a PhD. and science training, living in a lovely villa aside a mountain in south-eastern France. Michel (who is one of the world's best-respected and most experienced investigators) was a personal friend of the witness, which is the only reason this fantastic account ever came to the attention of ufologists.

On the night of 1–2 November 1968 Dr X awoke (as he was later to discover, at about 3.55 a.m.). He had heard the cries of his fourteen-month-old child, who was shouting 'Rho! Rho!' (which was his babyish term for any shining light). Noticing that his wife was sound asleep, the doctor arose and went painfully to quieten the disturbed youngster – painfully because, three days before, the academic had suffered a nasty accident whilst chopping with an axe, doing damage to one of his feet, which had swollen considerably; he was now under medical supervision.

After settling the child, he ambled into the kitchen for a drink of water, idly thinking that a storm must be brewing outside. He could see continually bright flashes, which he took to be lightning, but no thunder was audible. Before returning to bed, he decided to find and close a shutter or window that was banging in the wind. On doing this he noticed that, despite pouring rain, the countryside was light, as if bathed by moonshine. But the source of this curious luminescence was out of view around the side of the house. On his way back to bed, still not much concerned with these things, he had to pass some French windows which opened onto a terrace. On impulse he decided to have a quick look for the source of this odd light. To his amazement he saw two disc-shaped objects hovering low over the valley, with silver-white tops and red undersides, both sporting antennae from their tops and sides. The objects appeared to be sucking power from the boiling storm and projecting beams of light towards the ground from the midst of their underbellies.

Dr X stood on the terrace for several minutes watching as the two moved slowly below him. Later he was able to record their passage accurately onto a series of panoramic photographs, and detailed triangulation by Michel made a surprising discovery. The motions which the doctor translated onto the photographs were complex and seemed to make no sense. However, when plotted, two very precise flightpaths emerged for the objects. It would have taken considerable skill and effort to fake such detail in advance, on the expectation that some investigator might attempt to unravel the

motions with reference to trigonometry. As Dr X possesses little mathematical training, this is indeed impressive evidence.

Eventually the two objects seemed to merge into one and move, very fast, towards the startled witness, before coming to rest, now rather close to him. He stood his ground, subdued but calm, as the now single object rotated and briefly projected a beam of light in his direction. It struck him and lit up the whole of the terrace. Almost immediately there was a flash and a bang, and the object just seemed to dematerialize. Shaken and disturbed, the doctor went back indoors, wrote out his story to ensure he would remember it clearly and awoke his wife. Her first reaction to him was to cry, 'Your leg!' for now he displayed no signs of his severe injury. Rolling up his trouser leg, he gaped at the sight before him. The vicious wound had now totally disappeared!⁵

For further details, of this story, readers are recommended to read Aimé Michel's excellent ten-thousand-word *FSR* report and his follow-up account of the strange things which came in the wake of the sighting (following the puzzling pattern we have come to recognize already).⁶ Just as an example, Dr X claimed to find himself levitating on several occasions. But nobody saw him. It always happened when his wife was momentarily out of the room. Ultimately he did provide proof, although this was of the kind we might by now anticipate. It consisted of a fly-paper stuck for posterity onto the twenty-foot-high ceiling of his living-room! The doctor himself is very embarrassed at the frailty of this evidence. Yet what can he do, he says. That is the way it happened.

For ten years prior to the encounter, Dr X had suffered from partial paralysis of the right side, the result of being badly maimed by a landmine during the Algerian war. But immediately after the sighting all trace of this apparently permanent disability vanished! Then, sixteen days after the encounter, Dr X suddenly felt an itching and prickling around his navel. Within twenty-four hours a geometrical triangle, of sides several inches long, manifested on this part of his body with a red pigmentation. A dermatologist was consulted but he had no idea of the cause of such a pattern. (See Plate 3). Indeed, he was so excited by the 'disease' that he asked to publish a report on it, but Dr X had decided against a public disclosure of the events (which he knew would scarcely be believed by his scientific colleagues), so he dissuaded the skin-doctor from this. Aimé Michel did his best to appease his friend by suggesting

that the triangle was psychosomatic in origin (i.e. a stigmata-like effect). The witness accepted this thought with much relief – until the next day, for then his son, still not eighteen months old, developed exactly the same mark in precisely the same place!

This strange skin reaction recurred several times during the subsequent years. It was never painful and needed no medication, always vanishing within a few days. On the first anniversary of the UFO sighting, Aimé Michel and his wife spent the night with Dr X and his wife at their home. At the start of the evening the mark was verified as not being present, but inexplicably (after never having left the presence of the others) the doctor said he felt that it had returned. Sure enough, when they looked, the triangle had reappeared. The son, now approaching 2½ years old, was at the time forty miles away, staying with grandparents, who knew nothing of the strange events of a year before. Dr X decided he had best call to make sure their child was all right. As Aimé Michel watched him make the call, they discovered that the grandparents were on the brink of calling them, being greatly worried about the strange red blotch which had mysteriously sprung up on the young boy's navel.

There is no reasonable explanation for all this or other cases like it, but one is naturally led to suspect a relation between the lightbeam and the skin reaction.⁷ Was it some kind of healing radiation which had a side effect on the skin? It is known that some people react to the presence of radiation (e.g. ultra-violet rays from the sun).⁸

In the Dr X affair a psychosomatic cause for the effects seems quite out of the question, but this need not always be the case. Indeed, if we are to believe the apparent effectiveness of voodoo magic, people can even die simply because they are convinced a spell has been worked on them to this effect. There could hardly be a more severe psychosomatic disorder!⁹

A worker in Brazil on 13 August 1967 allegedly fired a gun at one of three entities beside a landed UFO. The foolish man was rewarded by being struck by a green ray from one of the entities. This hit him on the head, and he fell unconscious as the UFO climbed into the sky. Within less than two months the man (aged forty-one) had died. The official cause was severe leukaemia (blood cancer).¹⁰

You may be tempted to dismiss this as a fantasy invented by a hyper-active South American Press – and you could be right. But

remember Ken Edwards and the results he faced when struck by an alien lightbeam: I have no idea how true the following story is, but it was supposedly verified by a local college professor, Felipe Carrion. His *FSR* report gives full details.¹¹

In February/March 1946 a forty-year-old farmer, Joao Prestes Filho, went fishing at the small town of Aracariguama in Brazil. Recently strange lights had been buzzing the local hillsides at night. Joao returned to his house and entered through a window he had purposely asked his wife to leave open, as she had taken their children to a carnival. Suddenly he was hit by a strange beam of light. He was stunned but did not lose consciousness, and he staggered to the town for help, screaming with terror.

Joao was taken to Senhor Aracy Gomide, the man responsible for looking after patients until a doctor could be brought in. Gomide swears that he and others stared in horror at Joao's flesh (which, like his clothes, showed no sign of heat). Within a few hours it was raw like boiled meat, and then it began to peel away in lumps. Ultimately just muscle and tendon were left, covering exposed bones. The man refused food and water and gave no hint of pain. The townsfolk could only look on without comprehension as his body deteriorated into an unimaginable mess. He tried to speak, but his mouth was just a distorted hole. When his nose and ears fell off, sliding down his body to the floor, they loaded him onto a cart to wheel him to the nearest hospital. But less than six hours after being struck by the beam, a near skeleton was brought back. He had died on the way, still muttering incoherent sounds from a non-existent mouth!

We might well smile. We were not there. But I have great difficulty explaining this to myself as a psychosomatic illness. Perhaps it is best we dismiss it as nonsense. That seems the wisest thing to do with such a fantastic tale. Or is it? As other, more verifiable cases in this chapter have shown. UFOs *can* damage your health.

8

Animal Crackers: Disturbance to Animal Life

'My dog was turned overnight into a devout coward and turned on his back, thrusting his legs up in a sign of complete submission whenever threats of any kind or source came his way.'

Witness at the Cyprus army barracks, describing the effects on his dog after a close-encounter experience

There is a major advantage that cases of alleged animal disturbance possess. Whatever other explanation someone might come up with, we presumably cannot accuse a cat or dog of hoaxing us. And another staple food of the debunker tends to disappear, for, whilst we can talk of humans fantasizing stories, because of the influx of UFO data their subconscious may have taken in, we cannot claim that this applies to animals.

Unfortunately, there is also an obvious difficulty. The illiteracy of animals means that we cannot interview them about their experiences, and so we are forced to rely on humans reporting what they *think* the animals experienced. This does tend to dilute the impact of these cases, but only a little. And things may change one day. Experiments with a chimp called Washoe, brought up in isolation from her peers solely with human companions, have shown that animals can learn a language. Washoe learnt to communicate by means of signs as chimpanzee vocal chords are unsuited for speech. Not only did these experiments prove that the chimp could produce abstract thought, but Washoe even reached the point where she was using words in a different context as a means of emphasis or swearing! If we could arrange for an animal like this to have a close encounter, then the result would be the most intriguing eye-witness description on record!¹

Figure 20 shows the JR Set for these cases (again a low total of

15 Events (IFO, 5 = 33%) Radar = Nil Photo = Two
 [1 Hoax 1 Insuff Data] (see text)

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
VR 4	Only	7	2
VR 4	Plus		
	R1	0	1
	R2	—	—
	R3	—	—
	L1	—	—
	L2	—	—
	L3	3	0
	L4	—	—
	E1	1	0
	E2	2	2
	E3	1	0
	O1	2	0

Fig. 20: JR Set matrix: cases involving animal disturbance

only 1.4 per cent). The point of most interest is the presence of two supporting photographs. One is a known hoax, however. The percipient created an elaborate story to accompany his shot of an ash-tray thrown into the sky. And the other case is not evidential either, for a curious reason. It came alongside the sighting of two oval objects at Kirkby, Merseyside, in October 1979, to which the family dog reacted. The polaroid print first showed one of the objects clearly, but over the next hour or so, according to the testimony, the UFO completely vanished off the picture! There is no precedent for this, so far as I know, and I cannot explain it – always assuming (as usual) that the story is true.

Of the other cases treated as IFOs, a couple were not positively identified and are placed in this category merely as a precaution. In one instance a dog barked at a bright object like a fireball meteor whilst he and his master were in open country. Another sat down and pricked up its ears as what seems to have been a military jet did a low-level swoop over a suburban area in the early morning hours. As both events were unusual and potentially disturbing to humans, it is not surprising to learn of these effects. Pet-owners will not need telling that their animals are as sensible as many humans – often more so in fact!

There is a great deal still to be discovered about animal intelligence. Even our assumption that animals do not *know* about UFOs might be presuming too much. Certainly it is rather foolish to underestimate other forms of life. Birds have incredible migratory and navigational sensitivity. A dog's sense of smell knocks ours sideways. A cat uses its whiskers in an amazing radar-like way which may even be capable of giving vision through solid objects. And one is left to wonder in face of the now verified tales of uncanny homing instincts displayed by some animals.

Animals clearly possess a range of senses, just as we do. And at times those senses are apparently boosted beyond the 'normal', by enforced needs such as survival.

We have already met some cases of animal disturbance in the face of UFOs, but here is an amusing anecdote which summarizes our basic dilemma.

On the cloudy afternoon of 9 March 1980, Mr Claridge of Pinehurst, near Swindon in Wiltshire, was out in his garden fixing a post. Suddenly, for no obvious reason, his cat gave him a tap on the head. Glancing round and up, he saw a silver cigar-shaped object which seemed to move fast across the sky.² The local group, SCUFORI, did a very thorough investigation and believe that it might have been a glider reflecting sunlight. They were able to prove that one was airborne at the time and might have been visible, but certain factors of the observation detract from a positive identification. Was it a glider, and was the curious behaviour of the cat simply a coincidence? Or was it something else altogether to which the cat was somehow sensitive?

Remembering that microwave radiation seems to be associated with some UFOs, and that animal sensitivity can rival and even exceed our own, in some areas, it is interesting to see that the Russians have been conducting experiments with microwaves and have found that quite severe reactions can be induced into animals by them – reactions well in keeping with what we note from UFO encounters.

'This overwhelming fear displayed by the animals and birds may be our proof, then, that the UFO phenomenon is not environmental, but really is "something from outside" ie . . . from 'outside of our planet' or from outside of our particular space/time framework.'³ So wrote UFO scholar Gordon Creighton, one of the most learned men to devote a lifetime to our field, at the start of his

mammoth research project into animal disturbance. What he means is simple enough. The fact that animals react, often violently, to the presence of a UFO, indicates that the phenomenon is something to which they have not become accustomed. Cows grazing by the side of a railway track soon get used to the passage of trains and do not stampede in panic if an unusual new high-speed engine whizzes by. Similarly one might not expect them to be too upset at the sight of a new type of aircraft (which even a mechanical UFO might be considered to be). The fact that they do react so much, he proposes, would imply that the UFO must be something totally alien to the animals' perception – as it might imply that it is totally alien to a human being's perception (causing him great distress too). Unless, of course, animals are merely responding to some form of emitted radiation.

Over a dozen issues of *FSR*, Gordon developed a catalogue of animal disturbance cases up to the year 1970. It contained over two hundred events.⁴ An updated version would probably contain at least twice as many. As Gordon says, this wealth of data is a decided thorn in the sides of would-be sceptics, as it is most difficult to dismiss this evidence in its entirety.

I have conducted an analysis on the Creighton data, with impressive results. 50.9 per cent of the effects were reported on dogs, with horses coming second, but a long way behind, at 15.6 per cent. Cattle were the next in line (12.1 per cent), and the remaining 21.4 per cent covers (in descending order) sheep, chickens, cats, birds, pigeons, canaries, geese, goats, fish, pigs, turkeys, seals and even an elephant! The prominence of dogs and horses might well be explicable by virtue of their common association with man – but why are cats relatively so low (only 0.2 per cent)? Dogs are, of course, specially sensitive to sounds outside the normal human range (e.g. the 'silent' dog-whistle), and this might prove to be important. UFOs do tend to make sounds which are on the threshold of audibility.

Patterns in the temporal occurrence of the Creighton data were also sought. Nothing too significant emerged for the month of year. Varying around a mean of twelve reports, June had only five and March six, whereas November came out top with seventeen. I doubt if this means anything. But time of day was more interesting (see Figure 21). Whilst the peak was between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., which is similar to a normal sample of UFO reports, the time spell

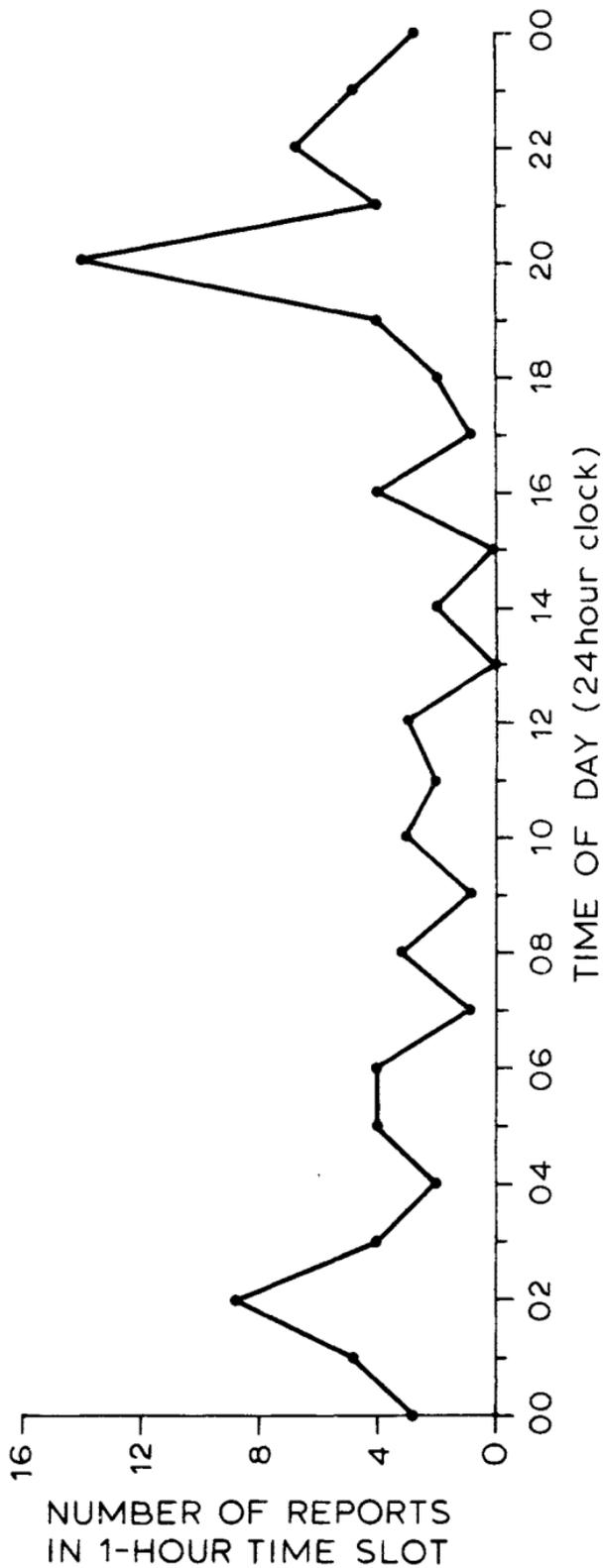


Fig. 21: Graph showing distribution by time of day of Gordon Creighton's *FSR* catalogue of animal disturbance cases

between midnight and 6 a.m. had a remarkable 36 per cent of the total, which is well in excess of expectations. However, this may have something to do with the fact that animal disturbance would be more noticeable in the wee small hours.

Some brief snippets from the catalogue illustrate the flavour of the problem. Case 6a refers to an incident in Texas, USA, where in 1873 horses stampeding from a UFO allegedly killed a man.⁵ According to Case 48, at Monza, Italy, on 8 November 1954, a crowd of 150 people attacked a landed UFO with bricks. Fortunately this did no obvious damage. One witness even set his boxer dog onto some entities beside the UFO, but the dog refused to attack. Instead it turned round and viciously bit its owner!⁶ In Case 92 about fifty witnesses (including a Catholic priest) at Lagôa Vermelha, Brazil, saw a tubular object cross their path, low down, on 2 August 1965. One intrepid gaucho, with the interests of science at heart no doubt, set off on his horse to lasso the thing. Sadly, he failed.⁷ Case 153 reports an instructive event from Saskatchewan, Canada, just before noon on 19 February 1968. A farmer's wife had seen a glowing UFO circle an electrical transformer beside their home, emitting a high-pitched whine which gave her a sensation not unlike a mild electric shock. The family dog was apparently not so lucky (perhaps because of his better hearing sensitivity). It cowered in the snow, desperately trying to cover its ears with its paws to keep out the penetrating noise.⁸ Case 73 takes us back to Brazil in September 1962. The town of Barcelos had apparently been plagued with UFOs for some while, and chickens, pigs and cows had vanished (with their destination clear in the minds of most citizens). On 16 September Senhor Telemaco Xavier had refereed a local football match, which the home side had lost (allegedly through his biased refereeing). The crowd were incensed but must have cheered as an obviously sports-loving UFO landed beside the pitch and promptly abducted the referee!⁹

A NCO in charge of one wing of an army barracks at Dakelia, Cyprus, in September 1968, wrote to me after reading *UFOs: A British Viewpoint*. He described a terrifying encounter which, whilst it involves no UFO, is clearly relevant.

He was alerted at 3 a.m. by his fierce Turkish wolfhound, a large and brave dog. Its fur was standing up very high, and it was obviously terrified. Fearing, perhaps, a terrorist attack which the dog had somehow heard signs of, the soldier tried to soothe the

animal, but it would respond to none of his normal commands and became even more upset before crawling under his bed, whimpering.

At this point the officer became aware of a high-pitched whine. (Remember Case 153 above?) Opening the door to confront the origin of this sound, he was horrified to see a weird figure climbing, or rather 'floating', up the stairs. It wore a light blue tight-fitting suit, and its face glowed orange, with large round eyes and a shock of red hair that stood out in all directions as if charged by electricity (perhaps it was). When the head swivelled through an impossible angle towards him, it is hardly surprising that the panicking man slammed the door shut and attempted to lock 'it' out.

The normally bold soldier sat on his bed trembling in terror as the humming whine increased. The dog was in an even worse state beneath him. As a sliding sound approached the door, the NCO reached out to grab his underwater speargun and diver's knife from the table beside him. Normally he could only load the gun underwater and by pushing himself against a rock to exert the enormous force necessary to press home the bolt. But in his present state he was somehow able to ram it beyond its normal limits, and he sat there shaking uncontrollably, willing to scythe down the door if the being tried to enter. He managed to restrain himself (something he says is now the most puzzling feature of the whole experience). Presently the sliding and then the whine disappeared. At 4.15 a.m. he was found by a guard coming to awaken him, still in a state of shock. The guard had been on duty outside the building but had seen and heard nothing. Yet the officer had evidence of his horrific tale in the form of the still loaded speargun. As he says, even if it had been possible to load it out of water, he would never have been so foolish as to keep such an unstable and deadly weapon in his bedroom. He had all the proof he needed that he had not been hallucinating.

The army man survived, with aching joints and muscular pains for a week or so afterward. The dog came out of the encounter less fortunately. The permanent effects on it are recorded in the quote from the NCO at the head of this chapter.¹⁰

UFO researcher Randall Jones-Pugh, a retired and very experienced veterinary surgeon, was particularly interested in the above case when I communicated it to him. He noted its similarity with an episode during the Welsh wave of 1977 which saw the character of a

pedigree spaniel change dramatically and permanently. He pointed out that animals, when affected by a UFO, are often worse off than human companions, although, as we have seen, humans can undergo some pretty nasty reactions themselves at times.

In a report to UFOIN investigators, he offered this advice: 'Keel states that he kept in touch with witnesses over long periods of time after the event, so that he can observe "any changes in personality or outlook which may occur"'. This is important because, whilst the initial effects on the animal can be physiologically immediate (in terms of instant reflex action) the long term effects are, not infrequently, even more bizarre.'¹¹

The fact that animals exhibit psychological responses to harrowing UFO situations should not be overlooked, for it has much importance. The question of whether a dog can hallucinate is presently unanswered, but even if it can, the likelihood of its doing so in sympathy with an attendant human is remote — unless the hallucination were the result of a real, physical phenomenon affecting both dog and human.

Randall believes that, whilst the extended sensory range of animals is important (e.g. dogs, with their hearing into the ultrasonic field), the permanent changes may be caused by other factors. He suggests that it is the period of confrontation between animal and UFO that counts. He also feels, as we found earlier, that pulsing lights and hints of 'hypnotic induction' imply that something within the phenomenon resonates with the brain rhythms of the animal. If the animal flees, these effects are minimized. If he stays his ground and the confrontation period is extended, then serious (possibly irreparable) damage to the personality may result. The same may obviously apply to man. Here is yet another field of research crying out for study.

In August 1970 a doctor was riding his horse on an Indian reserve west of Calgary, Canada. Suddenly the horse stiffened, showing great signs of nervousness, twisting and turning. The doctor struggled desperately to keep his mount under control as a strange object floated down towards them from a very odd low cloud. The object was made of blue fibreglass material and was circular with an internal vent-like system. The vents were rotating but with no sound (at least none the doctor could hear). The horse continued to thrash its head from side to side, and the doctor dismounted as the object rose back into the cloud, taking it away with it as it moved from

view. Only at this point did he hear a faint whistling noise. Subsequently the horse became very shy and also developed a nasty mass of tumours on its head.¹²

Fifteen years earlier, in August 1955, Richard Wade, a gardner with qualifications in aircraft recognition, sat on a wall near Jedburgh, Scotland, enjoying a lunchtime sandwich with his dog in an open country landscape. Suddenly the dog began to shake and whimper and took off, tail between its legs, heading for home. Richard decided it would make it back all right and started up a rise to see if he could find what had upset it. There, emerging from a fluffy cloud, he saw a large silvery cigar with portholes, literally floating into view. Quite unable to appreciate what it was, and hearing no sound, he watched it drift into another cloud and disappear. Hurrying home, he found his dog still shaking, and the poor animal never recovered. It degenerated into uncontrolled fits and within a couple of weeks was dead. But what killed it? An unknown radiation? Sound beyond the human threshold? Or simply fear? And once again we see a connection between close encounters and curious clouds – what does it all mean?¹³

Animal disturbance is certainly quite a puzzle, and one made all the more difficult to evaluate because of the constant possibility that the apparent effect has nothing whatsoever to do with the UFO stimulus. It is always hard to know whether this is so, as evidenced by one of Britain's most recent classic cases involving animal effects. On the face of it this incident is most impressive, but it has probably generated more controversy than any other single event in the country's UFO history! One set of investigators, evaluating the affair for UFOIN with a 117-page report, concluded that the event was decidedly mysterious.¹⁴ However, an independent evaluation from a Cheshire-based group called FUFOR came to quite different conclusions.^{15,16}

I summarized the events in an appendix of my previous book, *UFO Study* (Hale, 1981), so here I will confine myself to other salient facts. On 1 September 1978 many people in the village of Llanerchymedd, on the Welsh island of Anglesey, observed strange phenomena, which began in early evening with some folk noticing that the sky was an odd red colour and with the sighting of an unusual and isolated small black cloud (see previous remarks about the presence of clouds). A couple of hours later, at about 8 p.m., some boys playing on a football field at the edge of the village

alerted a woman from the adjacent estate to a white ball of light in the sky, seemingly falling to the ground. Some other boys elsewhere seem to have seen the same thing, as a bullet shape with a red band and 'antennae'. The object descended, as if to land behind some trees. Nearby a woman, also advised of the object, took her young daughter inside and upstairs. They did not see the UFO but did see some tall figures in grey suits walking in the gloom across a field, beside that where the UFO had seemed to come down. The boys went to call the police but noticed that the phone line was full of static and contained a humming sound they had not heard before. Some of them saw what seems to have been the same figures walking across the fields. When the police arrived an hour or so later, the events had ceased, although a strange purple object was seen by two other witnesses at the vicarage an hour or so later still.

There was considerable investigation of this complex multiple-witness case and generally good agreement between the testimonies obtained by UFOIN and FUFOR.

Some points of discrepancy occur in the testimony of some witnesses, as given to the UFOIN team and to FUFOR, although none that in my view are not understandable in the circumstances. The UFOIN report left the case unexplained.

FUFOR believe it possible that the figures and the 'UFO' were airmen and a helicopter connected with the island's active RAF base (Valley). Valley deny this and say they had no exercise that night. The police also say they were not informed in advance (as was customary) of such an exercise, nor did their investigations suggest that one had occurred. But nevertheless several people in the village are insistent that on the two days following the UFO furore they saw military activity in the fields around the village, including what were clearly low-flying helicopters using flares. Indeed, whilst the UFO event had many witnesses, FUFOR found more to the presence of RAF helicopters in the days after it. Yet Valley also denied that they were responsible for these subsequent sightings.

Did the RAF conduct a 'secret' exercise on *all* the dates? It is possible but seems to make very little sense. Why conduct a 'secret' exercise beside one of the island's largest villages and continue to hold it, in full view of many witnesses, having seen the consequences of the first night? What might well fit, however, is that the later observations *were* of a secret RAF exercise (or one they would rather not talk about) which involved hunting for evidence of the

previous night's UFO. That is certainly what the description of these helicopter sightings seems like. In any case, if *these* events were recognized by the villagers as military in origin, even in the face of official denials, then why did the villagers not recognize the 'UFO' as a helicopter (if that is what it was)? RAF Valley is so active that helicopters are seen often in the area. Indeed many witnesses referred to the possibility of a helicopter being responsible in their account of the UFO sighting, explaining why they ultimately rejected it. And why should the RAF create mystery by denying an exercise if they had one, although they might well feel justified in denying a subsequent UFO hunt? Also, what about the police investigation? UFOIN consulted closely with one of the officers on the scene that night. If the solution were as simple as an RAF exercise, it seems reasonable to suppose that the police would have found out. All this says nothing about the various anomalies (the atmospheric effects, the static on the phone and so forth) which would make little sense in the context of an RAF exercise (unless it involved something rather interesting).

Finally, we must consider the animal disturbance. Cattle in the fields allegedly ran away from the figures walking across. A dog nearby was barking furiously. Horses were 'acting up' and even when the police arrived were still upset. The later sighting by the vicarage also involved disturbance to some horses there. Following Gordon Creighton's reasoning, we would presume that these adverse reactions must have been caused by something rather more unusual than an RAF helicopter. The FUFOR report tends to ignore the animal disturbance, although it might be the most important facet of this enigmatic case.

FUFOR are right to be cautious and critical. It is easy to over-emphasize the significance of any one case. But there does seem to be at least as much evidence in favour of the UFO hypothesis as in favour of the military exercise.

And there is more. That night of 1 September 1978 was a 'crazy day'. Animal disturbance cases are relatively uncommon – normally Britain might expect two or three a year – but on that day there were, quite independently, two further examples.

Earth Mysteries researcher and author Paul Screeton was on holiday with his wife and children that Friday evening. From their caravan by the north-east English coast near Berwick, they saw a yellowish oval float over a flock of sheep. Paul told me that, as it

meandered across, the sheep became extremely disturbed.¹⁷ Meanwhile, across country on the coast of southern Scotland, near Stranraer, two independent groups of witnesses were seeing almost exactly the same thing at almost precisely the same time. No reported animal disturbance occurred at that point. But early that same day, at 4.30 a.m. sixty-two-year-old dairyman Tommy Gibson had been collecting a herd of cows, to take them into Carrochtrie Farm, Drummore, just south of Stranraer. 'Coincidentally' this is near another RAF base (at West Freugh). Tommy saw two metallic discs sweep over and out to sea, before returning with an odd whirring noise. The cattle, who are unperturbed by the low-flying jets they see, stampeded madly through the byre and for several days were so distressed they refused to give any milk. Tommy also reported that his hair turned white almost overnight after this close encounter!¹⁸

These things suggest one of two things: either the RAF bases were trying out something pretty unusual that night, or something pretty unusual was trying out the RAF bases! Either way, we ought to know the truth.

9

Ghosts in our Machines Mechanical Disturbance

‘Why this physical effect of all things? . . . cars are seemingly accosted on lonely roads, sometimes but not always resulting in a killed engine and the failure of lights and radio. It would almost seem as if the UFO regarded cars as creatures to be investigated . . .’

Dr J. Allen Hynek in his book *The UFO Experience*

In this chapter we will examine what is probably the most scientific aspect of our armoury of data. These are reports of alleged interference between UFOs and various forms of mechanical equipment – and, as you will see, reports which are strangely consistent. Indeed, this set of data is far more coherent than normal UFO reports and would be on a par with scientific investigations of other forms which rely on human observation (e.g. studies of rare forms of meteorological phenomena). These latter phenomena are the subject of erudite discussion and physical experiments in an attempt to duplicate the observations. Much of this is certainly plausible with the class of UFO event now to be considered – but it never happens. Most scientists will excuse themselves for this with the glib words, ‘UFOs don’t exist.’ But the data we are about to meet certainly *do* exist.

There are four specific types of effect we must look at, all covered by the slightly misleading ufological term ‘electromagnetic’ or ‘EM’ interference.

Firstly, we have reports where radio transmissions are effected by bandwidth interference at the time of a UFO sighting. Secondly, there are cases where mechanical equipment is somehow inhibited or permanently damaged. Thirdly, there are the alleged links between major power failures (in national transmission lines) and the presence of UFOs. And finally, the most well known but not

16 Events (IFO, 4 = 25%) Photo/Radar = NIL

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
VE 3	Only	5	4
VE 3	Plus		
	R1	—	—
	R2	1	0
	R3	4	0
	R4	1	0
	L1	—	—
	L2	—	—
	L3	—	—
	L4	—	—
	E1	5	0
	E2	3	0
	O1	2	0
	C4	1	0
	C5	1	0

Fig. 22: JR Set matrix: cases involving mechanical effects

most common, where a UFO apparently creates interference with ignition and lighting systems of a motor vehicle.

Figure 22 shows the JR Set for this group of cases (1.5 per cent of the total). The pattern is again interesting for different reasons. I would call particular attention to the presence of the 'Oz factor', suggesting that these cases might offer a further example of witnesses stepping outside normal reality (either actually, coincidentally or subjectively).

A very good example of a misidentification can be quoted. It is outside the time span of the JR Set, mainly because only four cases were here rated as IFO. Of these, two were so classified by reason of insufficient data (even though one was a multiple-witness car-stop and potentially significant). The other two involved real static effects linked with a real light source, but both being explicable (e.g. a witness observed a meteor at the moment of passing under an electric railway line, thus suffering static on his radio – of course, connecting the two and reporting a UFO-induced effect).

17 July 1980. Ellistown, Leicestershire. At twenty-five minutes after midnight a man found his car unexpectedly stopping. He

pulled to a halt, but the engine would not re-fire. Seeing the petrol gauge at zero, he cursed himself for running out of fuel. So he set off to walk to a garage. Shortly he saw a strange object in a field, like an upturned basin, which projected a beam of light into the sky. He hurried on to the home of some relatives and decided to sleep there. Next morning he found that his digital watch had jammed on the time 00.25 and on return to his car found that it now restarted easily and that the fuel gauge was no longer on zero. He now connected everything together and presumed that the 'UFO' was to blame. Excellent investigation for UFOIN by Mark Brown found numerous problems. The damage to the watch could not have been caused by an electromagnetic field. Experts advised that the most likely cause was a severe bang, probably done accidentally. As for the effects on the car, it was discovered that the stoppage had taken place on the steep hill by a bridge. Internal factors of the car system and the fuel gauge suggested what had happened. The tank was probably low on fuel, and, when tilted by the slope, with the car slowing, all the petrol had slopped to one side of the tank, causing the engine to cease. After several hours' rest it was quite feasible that fuel would have seeped through, allowing the gauge to read normally and the car to start. In this Sherlock Holmes fashion a potentially good EM case was solved.¹

But one fact stands out from this case, and others where coincidence has led to the report. The correlation between UFO and effect is always dubious. What is seen is seen at a distance, or is not physically unusual, or is there some time before or after the allegedly related effect. There is no pressing reason to connect 'UFO' with 'effect'. In the unexplained cases this trend is totally reversed.

Mark Rodeghier, a researcher from America's Center for UFO Studies, reported on a statistical analysis of 367 cases of interference between UFOs and the engine of a land vehicle. He found no real surprises, but he does note that entities were involved in fifteen per cent of these cases, which he compares with a figure of fourteen per cent of physical ground-trace reports which also involve entities.² My JR Set (two out of sixteen cases) is up to that level, but the number is clearly too few to be significant. Yet it is most important to remember that entities are involved in a normally tiny number of UFO reports, generally speaking (only 2.5 per cent of the whole JR Set for example). So this big increase in connection with EM cases

(also noted previously with cases of permanent physiological effect) suggests that occupants have a far higher tendency to be seen in association with those cases which have the most severe effects on the witness and environment. Whatever the reason for this, the finding is of great significance.

Geoff Falla, a BUFORA investigator who lives on the Channel Island of Guernsey, was one of the leading figures in a major research project into EM cases. He has drawn up a graph based on the times of 223 of the reports in the study (the other 199 were surprisingly untimed). Figure 23 shows that thirty-seven per cent of the reports occurred between midnight and 6 a.m. (which is almost exactly the same as the thirty-six per cent of animal disturbance cases during this same time period). Forty-nine per cent occurred between 6 p.m. and midnight, but only fourteen per cent took place during the other twelve hours of the day (those involving daylight). Whilst there is a small peak between 8 and 9 p.m., the number between 7 p.m. and 4 a.m. follows a very consistent pattern, rather more so than the sharply peaked curve one obtains when studying ordinary UFO events without close-encounter effects. In *UFO Study* (p. 194) I included a graph based on EM data from America's UFOCAT computer. The pattern this produced was very similar.

The first type of EM phenomenon involves radio static, illustrated by two cases, both well investigated and, though independent of one another, with some very interesting links.

The first case concerns a van-driver for a major security firm, twenty-six year-old Ray Faulkner. He had two experiences whilst on early morning delivery runs. The first occurred on 17 November 1978, and the other (more important) event followed eleven days later. As he filled in a report form and was interviewed within a few days of this, later attempting various reconstruction exercises with the investigator, Martin Keatman's UFOIN report warrants some consideration.³

On the 17 November drive he was in a new van on the outskirts of Northwich in Cheshire, the time being about 4 a.m. In the northern sky he noticed two white lights. The van had a two-way Pye Olympic radio which Ray kept switched on all the time because it relayed messages to him from his base. It operates on the VHF range, with a squelch control designed to cut out the local interference which can sometimes occur. As soon as Ray saw the lights, very bad static blocked out reception. He used the squelch control, but it had no

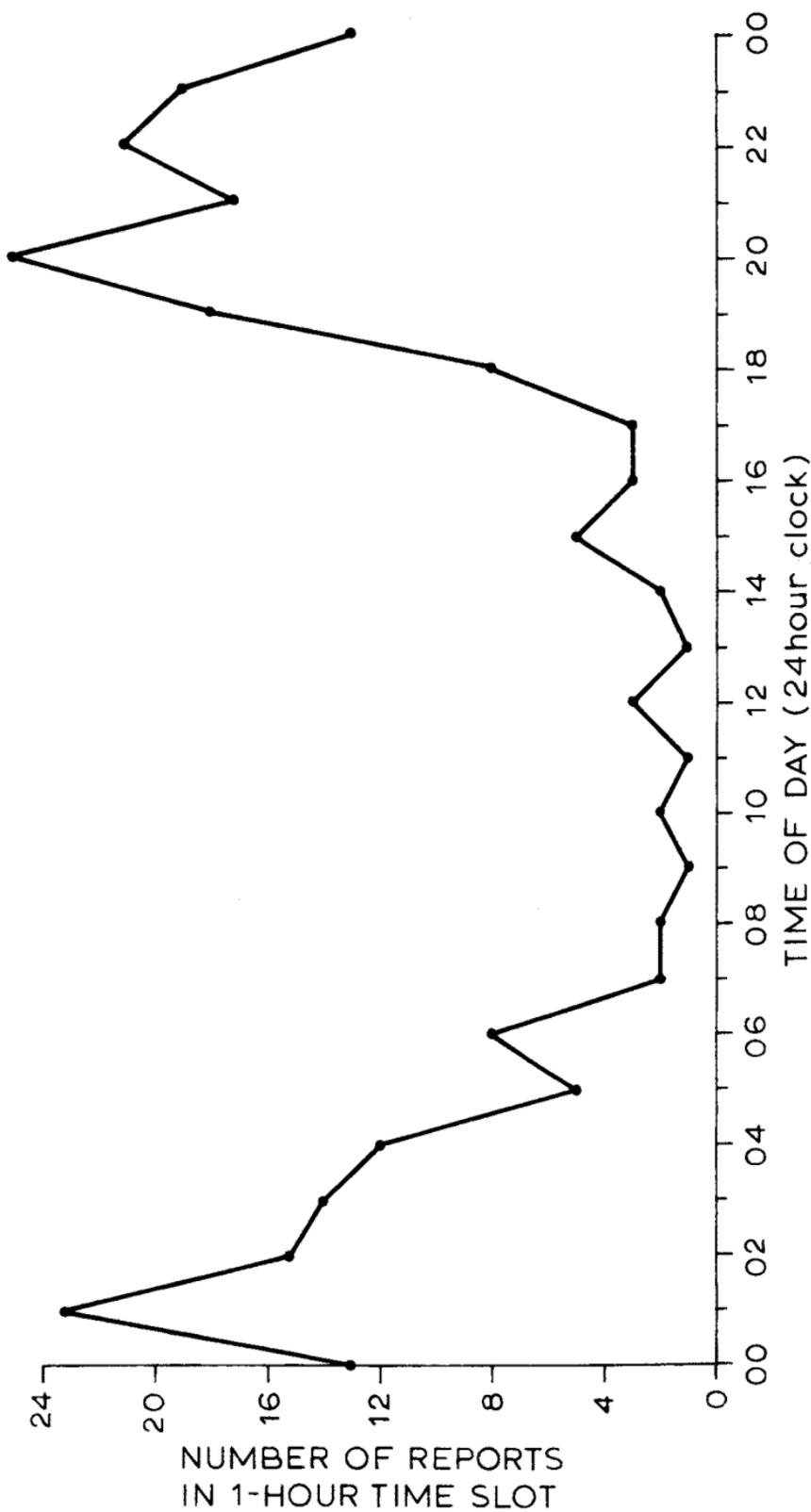


Fig. 23: Graph showing vehicle interference cases by time of day (based on a BUFORA study project)

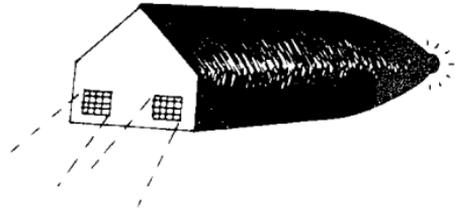
effect, which means that the interference was very strong. So he turned off the set, and a moment or so later the lights disappeared into cloud.

This could have been coincidence. The lights might have been stars or an aircraft. Certainly Ray places no great store on the sighting, but he mentions it because of the events of 28 November, at almost exactly the same time. He was travelling from Birmingham to Warrington along the M6 motorway. Traffic was light. The weather he describes as clear and cold with not much wind, all of which matches the information supplied to the investigator by RAF Shawbury. As he approached Junction 18, a mile or so west of Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, his attention was momentarily distracted by a meteor flashing past to his left. Looking across the fields, he noticed a bright light in the north-western sky. It was brighter than Venus (then almost at peak brilliance in another part of the sky) and larger than the full moon. Baffled by this, he slowed down and pulled up on the junction slip road, stopping at the roundabout close to the village of Sproston Green. He had now been observing for a minute or so and, leaving the van engine running and the radio on, stepped outside to watch the curious sight. At this point a car came up the slip road and passed him. Ray frantically tried to flag it down, to show the driver the UFO, but, as he says, 'He probably thought I was some kind of nutter.' The car drove on by.

About ten seconds after he had left the van, the light began to move in his direction, and Ray had the distinct impression it had seen him and was homing in! He took several paces backwards towards the security of his cab and noticed that his radio was again emitting very bad static, although he was out in the middle of nowhere. The volume control was quite low, so he cannot be certain that the static began precisely at the time when the UFO started to move. Remembering his previous experience, he did not even bother trying the squelch as the static drowned all sound out. He switched the set straight off and concentrated on the approaching light. The 'Oz Factor' now began to take effect, stretching time as the object behind the light moved slowly and majestically overhead. Indeed, he estimates that it took a full eight seconds for its entire length to pass over him, although the only noise he could hear was a quiet whoosh.

The object which passed over him was oval, bevelled underneath,

14 November 1977
Partington, Gtr M/Cr



28 November 1978
Sproston Green, Cheshire

11 January 1978
Mytchett, Surrey

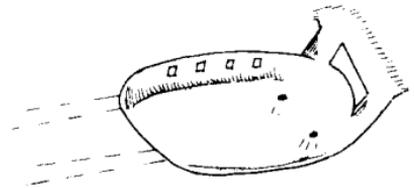


Fig. 24: Giant UFOs reported recently in Britain

with a raised fin at the rear. Two beams of light, angled apart at 45 degrees, were projected from the front. The object moved away south-eastwards, the rear fin eventually blocking out the light from the front. (See Figure 24).

Some excited readers might have noticed, as I have just done, that the case mentioned at the start of this book, beside the M53 motorway, is very much like the latter. And other very similar recent accounts are on record too. The Ray Faulkner case has not previously been published, to my knowledge. Once more evidence of a very strange reality is forcing itself upon us. I cannot pretend to be unimpressed by all these multiple 'coincidences' between extraordinarily similar UFOs.

In the Ray Faulkner case we cannot be certain that the object led to the interference, although this seems to be suggested. Ray has often driven his van near airports, such as London's Heathrow, and received no effects from low-flying aircraft, but Manchester Airport, not far from Sproston Green, was checked out and had no aircraft nearby.

The possibility of strange interference becoming evidential is supported by the next case. This also received no publicity and

comes from the meticulous Cheshire group FUFOR. The five witnesses had reported their observation to Jodrell Bank radio telescope. FUFOR's eighteen-page review of this case is termed a 'progress report', but it does give an excellent summary of all the important details.⁴

The date was 21 September 1980. A family of five (mother, father, two young children and the husband's mother) were returning to their home in Middlewich from a hospital visit at Crewe. Their route took them through Wimboldsley (a rural area about three miles south-west of the site of the Ray Faulkner encounter). It was 8.30 p.m. on another clear, cool evening.

The witnesses saw two white objects low in the eastern sky (remember the first Faulkner sighting?). The car was stopped, at which point the VHF transceiver which it possessed (the driver being a radio amateur) began to emit terrific interference. The driver climbed out of the car as one of the objects moved away northwards very fast, but the other seemed to descend and move towards them. At the peak of the sighting the interference became so great that the set had to be switched off. Ultimately an aircraft was seen to approach from the north-east, and at this the remaining object accelerated away, giving out a red glow at its rear. The driver also commented that the frequency of a radio repeater station (145.650 MHz) was computer-set into the radio and could not be changed without resetting the memory. Yet, on passing through this area fifty minutes *before* the sighting, it allegedly did make a spontaneous change to 145.525 MHz. Does this suggest that an atmospheric electrical anomaly was present in this vicinity? And why are two objects so often involved in these cases? We will meet another example of this later.

FUFOR did a great deal of work on the case, including on-site reconstructions with the witness (gauging a sighting duration of about 8½ minutes). They traced the aircraft which was observed (a light plane outbound from Manchester) and even tried to discover if its pilot observed anything. They checked for power discharges and meteorological phenomena and attempted to test the strength of signal from the same transceiver in similar conditions at the exact location of the incident. Their progress report finds no explanation, although they were still considering meteorological solutions. The service agents for the radio set suggested three possible causes for

interference around 150 MHz. a) A fault on the powerlines nearby (the local electricity board ruled this out). b) High electrical interference which was frequency modulated (there is no evidence that this was present). c) Some external inexplicable electro magnetic field (which, as the agents themselves added, 'could, of course, have been extraterrestrial')!

Taken together, these two events may be merely coincidental, or else indicative that this area has something unusual about it. Perhaps, under certain atmospheric conditions, it generates curious electromagnetic anomalies – but, if so, do these lead to the production of luminous phenomena in the sky?⁵

We saw how the witness at Ellistown claimed that his watch was put out of action by the 'UFO'. In fact such a claim is rather frequent. Ken Edwards said that his watch stopped, following his encounter at Risley.⁶ When I handled it a few weeks after this, it still did not work, but when my fiancé Paul, picked it up it immediately started, and it never failed again!⁷

In the Risley encounter there was also the destruction of the radio transceiver. The power surge which led to it (which it seems entered through the aerial) was obviously enormous. On inspection by the engineers at Ken's firm, it was decided that the damage was so extensive that it would be cheaper to spend hundreds of pounds on a new set than to endeavour to repair the mess that had resulted.

Again, in a case at Bridlington, Humberside, some witnesses to *two* UFOs (yet again), of which one came low down, say that a local factory suffered a coincident power failure on its equipment, as the object hovered above. Unfortunately, the investigators were never able to correlate these events to a satisfactory degree.⁸

If any of this is possible, it should not be surprising to discover that UFOs have been said to cause major transmission-line-power-failures. From earlier chapters it should already be clear that UFOs are often seen in the vicinity of power lines and pylons. Some choose to speculate that this is because the UFOs 'suck' power from them. Alternatively it might just be that some UFO events are power-discharge effects, which will naturally be more common in association with high-tension transmission lines (where strong electromagnetic forces operate). Two police officers on M62 motorway patrol, in January 1978, described on Granada TV how

they had seen an object like an inverted-T bar streak across the sky and hover twice, directly above both Bold and then Fiddlers Ferry Power Stations.⁹ Three years later, on 16 April 1981, a particularly well-investigated multi-witness sighting began with a blue oval object seen, once again, above Bold Power Station. This time it was followed south-westwards by UFO investigators, moving along transmission lines in the direction of the power station at Connahs Quay in North Wales.¹⁰ Whilst it is certainly tempting to believe that these reports refer to electrical phenomena which are a 'spin-off' from the power lines (e.g. the known and understood 'corona discharge' phenomenon), in this last case that seems unlikely. The electricity board were consulted and rule it out of court that night, and the object was clearly observed through binoculars for several minutes and seen to possess a very definite shape.

Perhaps we are only dealing with coincidences. More evidence is needed before we can claim otherwise with much certainty. But APRO (an American group) did draw up a fascinating graph comparing the number of UFO sightings recorded by the US Air Force between 1954 and 1966, in conjunction with the number of power failures cited by the Federal Power Commission during this period. The results seem to be rather provocative.¹¹ (See Figure 25).

But even should this link be proven, it will not answer the question we posed before. Is something draining power from our power lines? Or are *they* producing the phenomena themselves? This latter idea might not contradict our theories about atmospheric phenomena akin to ball lightning.

The most interesting type of EM case is undoubtedly the one where vehicle interference takes place. Some authorities regard such instances as the epitome of the super-technological UFO demonstrating its superiority over our 'primitive' systems, without endangering life. One point at least supports the contention. Whilst cars and motorcycles are often allegedly stopped by a UFO, there are relatively few instances of serious interference with aircraft power systems (where impediments could have much more disastrous consequences). And those vehicle-interference cases which we do have almost always refer to lonely roads, late at night, with attendant circumstances where a 'car-stop' would not be dangerous to the occupants. I know of no case where a serious accident has resulted from the sudden draining of power from a vehicle. Why has

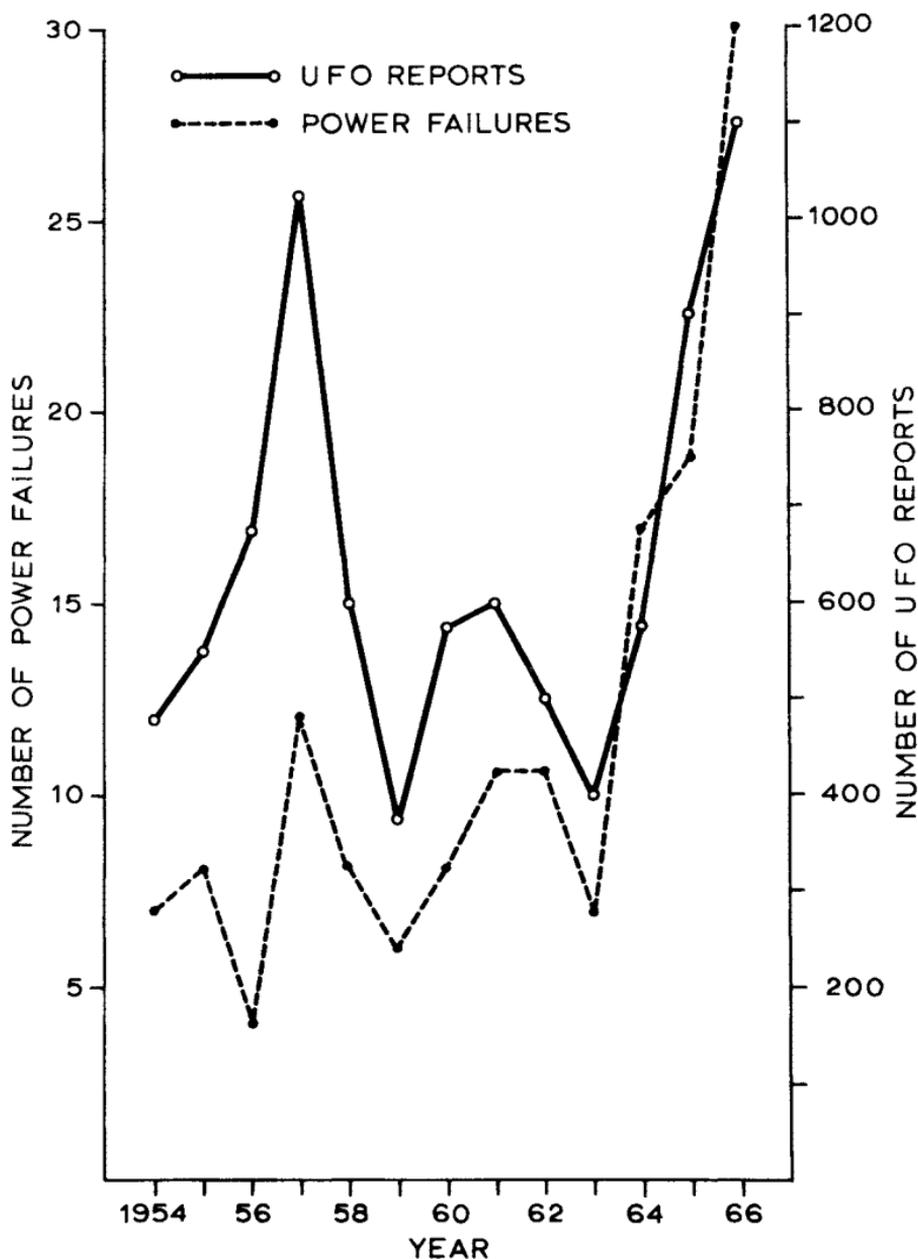


Fig. 25: Comparison between the number of electrical power-failures between 1954 and 1966 in the USA and the number of UFO reports made to the US Air Force during the same period

no car going at fast speed on a busy motorway ever been impeded by a buzzing UFO, for example? If the phenomenon were of a natural origin, there will have to be some explanation found for this apparent selectivity, because, on the face of it, we *can* readily understand the results, *if* we interpret them in terms of a deliberate and carefully thought-out human demonstration of technological superiority.

Vehicle stoppages do not seem to be new. In older days, long before man thought of UFOs, witches and sorcerers were sometimes credited with the power to 'stop' horse and carts, or wagons.¹² If true, this is most odd. And why were vehicle stops not recorded in the UFO literature before the 1954 wave? The movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still* appeared in 1951. In this film an alien lands on earth in his flying saucer and demonstrates his superiority by cutting out all electrical power and bringing vehicles to a halt.

Sometimes no other effects are reported in association with those on the vehicle, but quite often they are. The most common ones seem to be a sensation of 'invisible heat' (infra-red?), tingles and a pressure, particularly on heads and shoulders (electrostatic?), paralysis of limbs, and magnetization, as when in 1977, at Nelson, Lancashire, complete failure of lights and engine was accompanied by tingles and paralysis, and when, at Barnard Castle, Durham, a motorcycle and car were impeded (but not stopped) together, and tremendous heat emission was associated.

The existence of this 'motorcycle-stop' is rather important. Paul and I have had a motorcycle for years and he suggested to me the significance of such events. Whilst the consistency of the effects make it seem most unlikely, there is a school of thought that car-stops are hallucinations (i.e. the driver only *thinks* his vehicle stopped). On a motorcycle, particularly on a wet winter's night, one tends to be too alert and too open to environmental stimuli to be prone to falling asleep.

But if all these similar cases, or the stopping of two independent vehicles at the same time, do not lay the ghost of coincidence, then the Levelland, Texas, affair must surely do so. In the space of a couple of hours on the night of 2-3 November 1957, a spherical object (or objects) meandered around the town and was chased by police and fire officers. No fewer than four cars and three trucks were immobilized in separate incidents, and a fire marshal's car

suffered partial impedance. Now there *was* a storm in the vicinity that night, so ball lightning was quickly put forward as an explanation, but aside from the fact that it is not known to lead to car-stops, its manifestation on such a vast and repeatable scale would be unique. But what other answer is there?¹⁴

That aircraft incidents are much rarer, is strange if the answer is an atmospheric phenomenon. But here is one interesting case. It comes from Iran, a country which is rather unstable. One would expect Iranian Air Force planes to meet trouble occasionally – but a dog-fight with a UFO? The American CIA took it very seriously, however, as their once secret reports on the case indicate.¹⁵

It was 19 September 1976, and a brilliant light was seen by many witnesses in the skies north of Tehran. Eventually, after ground-based air-traffic control personnel had seen it, an F-4 jet fighter was sent to intercept from Shahrokhi Air Base. The plane left at 1.30 a.m., flew uneventfully for forty miles and then suffered total instrumentation loss and complete black-out on its UHF radio transmissions. Wisely the pilot turned tail for home. Ten minutes later a second F-4 was sent. It made radar contact with the target (the size of a Boeing 707) and visually observed the UFO, which poured out so much light that the night vision of the crew was seriously impaired for a good while afterwards, causing them difficulties when landing. The F-4 was closing on the UFO until it suddenly accelerated ahead of them and ejected a smaller object. Suspecting a weapon was being fired at them, the F-4 crew started to launch an AIM-9 missile at the approaching ‘projectile’. At that instant their weapons panel went dead, and the aircraft lost all communications (but its power was unaffected).

The UFO’s ‘projectile’ approached, but it simply tailed the Air Force jet for some distance before returning to the UFO. A second ‘projectile’ was later sent out, and it landed on a spot which the crew marked for later reconnaissance. They returned next day by helicopter and found nothing. The F-4 continued to have a few more adventures but regained communications, as the UFO sped off several times faster than any speed they could reach. Forced to return to base with a baffling report, they created a good deal of consternation.

This is one of those either-or cases again. Either we disregard it out of hand (as the CIA appear not to have done) or it is true. And if it is true, then it means nothing short of the proven existence of

intelligently controlled devices capable of powers well beyond the limits of any known human society.

I think the effects themselves are not in doubt. But what causes them? The most obvious answer would be electromagnetic radiation. But there are problems here. The Condon scientists studied this possibility and decided that the strength of any field capable of cutting out a car engine would be enormous. Yet none of the vehicles they subjected to test, which allegedly had been stopped by a UFO, showed evidence of this. The electromagnetic field would leave its mark by realigning the magnetic signature of a car's metal body. And why the difference between some cases when engine and lights *both* fail, and those where only one or the other is affected? Too many holes in this theory remain.

Aimé Michel suggests that it is the chemical combustion process which is the source of the trouble. All chemical reactions above a certain temperature are somehow inhibited.¹⁶ In favour of this Michel cites the sometimes reported failure of guns to fire bullets (which no electromagnetic theory can explain) and refers to an alleged French case where a diesel engine cut out. Since diesel engines have no spark plugs, a field would not effect them. And to confuse things even further, the BUFORA EM study found no verified reports of diesel-engine malfunction, and an impressive instance where both a petrol-engined vehicle and diesel truck were side by side when a UFO appeared. The petrol engine was cut out, but the diesel was unaffected.¹⁷ Since we have no cases which involve diesel trains, or buses, the point seems valid. But it hardly sorts out our difficulties.

Ian Cresswell proposes a mysterious 'something' which uses man's natural electromagnetic body-field and, through the medium of his consciousness, projects a kind of holographic image. In other words the car-stop is an epiphenomenon of the witness and would not occur if he were not there to project or channel the energy.¹⁸ Patricia Austin took the concept a little further: 'Suppose for a moment that information is constantly being disseminated through the galaxy . . . suppose it is broadcast in such a form that the human brain (not a giant radio telescope) is the direct receiver. The information takes the form of ideograms, so that the shape and detail need to be supplied from the background of knowledge already stored in that brain . . . suppose this faint signal needs a booster, not only to amplify it but to activate the designated

receiver. The necessary booster might be provided in several ways . . . perhaps the field generated by overhead cables or when switching takes place in a grid junction box . . . The right person (with a specially sensitive brain?) must be where an electrical booster happens to beat the time. Is this when brain patterns are passive and quiescent; early morning, in a quiet place, in a calm frame of mind? . . . Supposing the four conditions are present: signal, booster, receiver and brain patterns. Could the brain (with psychokinesis) produce enough physical reality to . . . cut out the car engine?'¹⁹ This basic marriage of the 'message from space' version of the extra-terrestrial contact, with the quite obvious human-orientation of the UFO phenomenon, seems an exciting and original concept. It merits much more consideration.

Recently Richard Colborne has put forward a further suggestion, which might be even more intriguing. He proposes that the nature of time itself might become warped so that, whilst the car engine still runs, the occupants are out of 'synch' with it and are unable to perceive its motion until released back to normal time reality. In this sense car-stops are merely extreme applications of the familiar timelessness we see in the 'Oz Factor'.²⁰

All these human-based ideas are certainly fascinating. But on balance there does seem more to suggest a physical origin of at least some of the reports. Dr Geoffrey Doel, former President of BUFORA, was one of the earliest to consider what may be a viable idea.² He wondered why battery-operated equipment (such as hand torches) have been said to fail, and proposed that the interference was with *ionic flow* in an electrical circuit. Since it is evident that ions have a good deal to offer in other facets of the UFO enigma (e.g. the effects on clouds and the known physiological results of exposure to ionizing radiation), Doel's thesis would provide a link with the postulated forms of atmospheric electrical phenomena. Many of the cases in this chapter, for example, would probably fit some form of atmospheric phenomenon.

I am not a physicist, but it is apparent enough to me that a physical solution to many of these problems is there to be grasped if only scientists will take note of the data.

Of course this might be a contributory symptom of a solution such as Pat Austin proposes. Otherwise what do we make of the high percentage of occupants associated with these cases? What about the EM cases involving clearly structured craft, seen at close range?

Why do car-stops seem to be humanly selective? Whilst a natural atmospheric phenomenon may indeed be reported *as a UFO*, and mixed in with our data in some situations, the best answer (yet again) is some type of intelligent action. But whose intelligence? Our own? Or something a little less human?

10

The Mark of the UFO: Physical Traces

‘There is an absence of tangible physical evidence available for thorough laboratory analysis . . . because of the absence of such evidence, we have not been able to devise a sound scientific procedure for investigating these phenomena.’

Dr Robert Frosch, declining President Carter’s 1977 invitation for NASA to mount a study of UFOs

On 29 December 1958 Joseph Bennett, an Irish farmer from Portglenone, Co. Antrim, was out in a field at Gartfadd. Suddenly a small black object came out of the sky making a weird noise. Like a flying buzz saw, it cut through some trees and scythed a forty-foot oak in two. Then it promptly vanished. No trace of the mysterious visitor was ever found, but according to Bennett the stricken tree was lasting testimony to the reality of the event.¹

This provocative incident is unfortunately one of an exceedingly rare group. UFOs certainly enjoy appearing within our environment, but it seems they draw the line at interacting permanently with it. At least not too often. A glance at the pitiful number of trace reports in the JR Set (see Figure 26) is ample evidence of that fact. And in those few cases which do occur, there are still major problems. Most common is the spurious connection between a UFO event and a trace subsequently discovered. In *UFO Study I* I described a situation where an elderly woman at Wallasey, Merseyside, saw a red cigar land in her garden. Next day she found some leaves with a furry deposit on them and immediately linked the two things together. In fact the damage was the result of ordinary garden fungus and had nothing to do with any UFO which may or may not have been there. The danger is always that the memory will unconsciously adapt itself so that the details of the sighting fit in with a quite irrelevant mark, uncovered by any

7 Events (IFO, 3 = 43%) Photo/Radar = Nil
 Some photographs of resultant traces

<u>VE 2</u>	Only	UFO NIL	IFO NIL
[I have <i>not</i> counted reports of a curious mark found in a field and linked to a possible UFO that was <i>not</i> seen]			
<u>VE 2</u>	Plus		
	R1	—	—
	R2	—	—
	R3	—	—
	R4	1	0
	L1	—	—
	L2	1	0
	L3	—	—
	L4	3	1
	E1	1	0
	E3	1	0
	O1	0	1
	O2	0	1

Fig. 26: JR Set matrix: cases involving physical traces

intensive search of the 'landing area'. We have had camp-fires, wind vortices and even a lump cut up by a council lawnmower, all appearing at first sight as 'proof' that a UFO had landed nearby. It only requires a typically zealous investigator or witness. Indeed I am somewhat doubtful whether it is ever worth *searching* for traces. Experience shows that it is only too easy to find something and then wrongly assume its relevance. It may be better only to examine traces found when the witness quite clearly spots the UFO causing them. The point is controversial but not, I think, unimportant.

Unfortunately, the number of decent trace investigations (those which in any sense could be labelled scientific) is considerably smaller than the already small number of alleged traces. This is quite often because a report of traces is received by investigators too late, or that they have neither the expertise nor the facilities to do anything about them even if they are reached in time. In a few instances (such as one case in the JR Set, from Shipley, West Yorkshire, on 16 October 1976) the problem is that the trace is unstable. Here an entity (later found by investigators probably to have been a shaggy dog) was seen to leave black footprints (or pawprints) on the pavement. Next day none were there, which is

hardly surprising. Had the people on site looked hard enough, of course, I expect they could have found something which might have *seemed* relevant. The saga of the traces in the Gaynor Sunderland landing at Oakenholt, North Wales, shows this.² Entities here dug holes in the ground, and the UFO allegedly left a circular impression in the grass. Next day the young girl visited the scene and found the holes filled in with fresh grass and the circle faintly tinged and barely visible. Two years later, we could find nothing, but other investigators did discover a patch of slightly rampant grass in the field. The problem is that it was not in the exact location where the witnesses' memory of the sighting said it should have been.

Bearing this all in mind, one could be forgiven for taking a sceptical stance. Traces do not seem to exist, *ergo* UFOs must not be real, physical objects. Because if they were, we would surely have incontrovertible proof by now. Perhaps so, but we must beware of taking scepticism to extremes. Have you ever seen a mark on the ground caused by lightning? Many readers, like me, will no doubt not have done so. Yet lightning strikes the earth's surface many, many times every single day, far more often than UFO landings, it seems safe to suggest. So the paucity of evidence is not in itself proof that UFOs are physically unreal, particularly, as we have seen, when much other data suggest that some of them are. Indeed, despite the paltry number of trace reports in the JR Set, interesting case studies do exist from all over the world (collected across a large time base from many countries). American specialist Ted Phillips has published a useful catalogue of some of the best.³

We must go back some years to the first well-documented case. It shows up many of our problems, for the then head of USAF's Project Blue Book, Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, describes it as both the best hoax in UFO history and one of the most puzzling cases with which he ever dealt.⁴ It also happens to possess some fascinating trace evidence, particularly in the light of our earlier discussions.

'Sonny' Desvergers was driving three boys from his scout troop back through scrubland to their homes near West Palm Beach, Florida, on 19 August 1952. When he spotted some flashing lights, Sonny decided to stop and investigate. He set off into the undergrowth, with machete and two torches, telling the boys to go for help to the nearest farmhouse if he did not return within fifteen minutes. They were to claim that they watched him head off

towards the lights. Sonny says that as he entered a clearing he was overcome by a wave of heat, oppressiveness and a sharp smell (which seems to have been ozone). He then realized he was standing beneath a circular object which blocked out the stars. He shone his torch at it and could see its grey, metallic surface. Suddenly a red light emerged from the shape and came towards him, engulfing him in red mist. He felt a burning sensation and passed out.

The boys claim to have watched this happen, and then they ran for help. The police arrived in time to see Sonny emerge from the bushes in a state of extreme shock (one officer later said he had never seen anyone so badly frightened). At the scene the police found a flattened area, as if someone had fallen, and one of Sonny's torches still burning where he had dropped it. They took him back for questioning, and he was also examined in hospital as his peaked cap was singed and his skin mildly sunburnt. Next day Captain Ruppelt flew in, and the USAF conducted a very thorough investigation. The results were infuriatingly contradictory.

From the interviews and the examination of the site, Ruppelt and colleagues were thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of the story – but then the doubts set in. Whilst most local people said Sonny was a truthful person, his past military record showed that he had been in a certain amount of trouble. And then a reconstruction of the events demonstrated that the boy scouts had at least been exaggerating, because they could not possibly have seen Sonny at the spot where he was allegedly attacked, even if they had stood on the car. When Sonny went on to get himself a 'press agent' and romanticized his story whilst describing it, things began to look bleak. Although it was never suggested that the boy scouts were other than innocent accomplices, it did seem easy to regard the case as a hoax perpetrated by Desvergers.

Of course the past record of this man might well be quite irrelevant. His subsequent actions in dealing with the Press might also not mean that his original story was untrue. Some people do capitalize on experiences which they have, and it is a basic rule that cases tend to inflict wounds on themselves with postscripts such as these. The thing which put Ruppelt in a real turmoil, wondering if he should not now re-evaluate his re-evaluation, came with the detailed analysis by USAF agencies of soil samples taken from the site where the UFO hovered. 'How did the roots get charred?' the

chief analyst asked the Blue Book officer. The roots of the grass were burnt, but the tops were not. They had been able to duplicate such an effect, but only by heating the soil under the grass to about 300°F. To plant expensive underground heating beneath the site of a story to be faked, out in the middle of bush country, seems a most improbable scenario indeed. But there was one other way, as the USAF analysts pointed out. An alternating magnetic field could have induced a current into the roots, causing a sudden heat rise (as in the steering-wheel heat induction in Warwickshire). Detailed examination of the scoutmaster's cap found tiny burn holes consistent with electric sparks – the sort of sparks a discharge from an alternating field might produce. And, as we saw before, ozone can be formed by sparking electricity through air. Also one result of being surrounded by too much ozone is loss of consciousness.

This fits together so neatly that it is rather easier to believe that this was *not* a hoax than to believe that it was.

Over the following couple of decades there were a few significant trace reports: in particular the Socorro, New Mexico, case which involved a police officer and a landing with entities. The site investigation left little doubt that a material craft of some kind had been present.⁵

Of course, not all types of terrain are suitable for marks to be left on them, which is one good reason for the rarity of trace effects. But, when an investigation can be mounted fast enough, the presence of snow is an excellent means of preserving evidence. *UFO Study* illustrated two British cases where this was so. At Meanwood, West Yorkshire, in February 1979, imprints containing crushed carbon were found at the scene of a UFO landing on a steep, snow-bound hillside. And nine months later, at Livingston in Scotland, a fortunate snowfall shortly after an encounter preserved imprints until investigators could arrive. But here is an even more intriguing situation, from the village of Saapunki, in Finland, on the morning of 3 January 1971.⁶

Just before 6 a.m. a strange light was seen over the lake. A violent windstorm whipped snow from its frozen surface, seriously hampering vision, although the blinding ball of light was so bright that it cut through this blanket and lit up darkened houses more than a mile away. The object was seen by several people, as it meandered slowly and silently just above the surface of the lake and against the near gale-force winds. After being visible from various

locations for fifteen minutes or so, it hovered over the sloping garden of a farming family for a minute, before finally disappearing. Whilst it hovered, the houselights flickered, and, when it vanished power was lost altogether for a minute or two. The power company reported nothing, but the area has many transmission lines, and there was severe weather of course.

If this is another example of an atmospheric UAP, it is a most impressive observation. But perhaps the most unusual aspect comes from the marks in the snow-bound garden which the family later found, right at the point where the object had hovered. A pear-shaped patch about five feet by ten had been melted (down to some distance), apparently by the application of sudden, intense heat. As the ambient temperature was well below freezing-point, this patch had rapidly refrozen when the external heat source had gone, leaving ice with a curious needle-like crystalline structure and a dark green stained colouration.

A number of samples of this anomalous ice were taken for analysis. When it thawed, a green colloidal substance formed in the water, although this turned dark grey over the course of some weeks. The analysis of a sample which was sent to *FSR* in Britain oddly conflicted to some extent with one published by a Finnish university. The British test found little of significance. Various salts were dissolved in the material. The substance itself was organic (i.e. some form of vegetable matter). There *was* an unusual amount of aluminium in the sample, a metal which was unexpected. But the British test searched for, and did not find, the presence of titanium. The Finnish test did confirm that the colouration was due to vegetable matter and found some of the materials produced in the British analysis – but it did find a significant proportion of titanium, which, it was also discovered, was not in the surrounding soil. This work also found that the amount of heat which had been involved had been far less than imagined (enough to form only about three hundred litres of meltwater). This was curious in the face of the enormous amount of visible energy which the UFO had emitted, as confirmed by a great deal of independent testimony.

So, once again, the analysis of traces produced more questions than answers, although it is quite obvious that something flew across Lake Saapunki that morning. Incidentally, for what it might be worth, both titanium and aluminium are light and heat-resistant metals, often used in the manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft

because of these properties.

While there is plenty of evidence that something has happened at many different sites, there is never anything which is demonstrably extra-terrestrial. Of course, this is no prerequisite of the existence of UFOs. It is possible to accept the existence of a real phenomenon and not that it is alien. But, even if an extra-terrestrial object were involved, it would probably be built of the same natural elements we already know about and be subject to the same physical laws. So the problem inevitably remains. Any mark which *may* have been caused by an alien device could quite conceivably also have been caused by some kind of earth-type device. So, even when such a possibility is remote and hard to envisage, it offers a convenient fall-back position for those who would prefer to accept the option.

Let us switch continents, just to prove how universal this problem is. At about 1 a.m. on a February morning in 1976 a witness at the small town of Kettering, Tasmania, saw what he took to be an aircraft make a forced landing beyond a sports oval near his home. He went outside, crossed fields and climbed up an embankment, to see if he could offer assistance. But he did not find an aircraft. Instead there was a dome-shaped object with ribbing and four windows (through which grey shapes could be seen silhouetted against the emitted yellowy light). The object was resting on the grass and was humming with a sound like an electric motor. It then proceeded to rise up and move away, after being visible for six or seven minutes.⁷

Next day the man went to the field and found the grass scorched in a circular area. The witness still thought he had seen an experimental aircraft of some kind and not a UFO, so he did not make an immediate report. But over the winter the grass died (February in Tasmania falls in late summer). By the time investigators arrived (over a year after the sighting), the grass in this circular area was a rich green, compared with the general straw-colour of the growth around it. The analysis team suggested that this might have been due to the increased nutrient content in the affected soil, because the UFO event had killed off the microscopic life which was previously there. This interesting idea might account for other features such as this, which have been found at other landing sites. Indeed, the Gaynor Sunderland landing in Wales later that same year had exactly this same kind of effect on the grass. This remarkable point (which the young child witness would certainly

not be able to think about in advance) is even more intriguing because there are more than just a few similarities between the object she saw on the ground and the one reported here in Tasmania. As the two events are certainly independent, this could be a very evidential fact.

The scientists involved in the Tasmania investigation were at a loss to know what to do with this evidence, as previous chemical analyses of soil, or search for residual radiation, had always proved negative, and so they tried something different. It was decided to test the soil for thermoluminescence, which is a property which would display itself in a specific fashion if strong ionizing radiation, or excess heat, had led to the scorching and apparent destruction of the micro-organisms. But the tests were pretty conclusive, as well as being negative. There was virtually *no* difference between the soil samples from inside and outside the affected area. There had not been any significant ionizing radiation, nor had there been any heat above about 155°C (which is a maximum figure, indicating that there was no substantial heat, if any at all). These consequences make life hard for the theorist. An apparently tangible effect, which would appear consistent with physical knowledge, has certainly occurred – but there is no evidence that it was caused in the only sensible way which can explain it. This begs the question as to *how* it was caused.

Trace reports continue to be made. On 30 September 1980 an event occurred at Rosedale, in Victoria State, Australia. On first account (by respected investigators Bill Chalker and Keith Basterfield) it seems to have just about everything!¹⁸

It was about 1 a.m. when a fifty-four-year-old farm caretaker was awoken by a whistling noise, which was apparently disturbing his cattle and horses. Going outside to see if he could calm them, he observed a large, circular, domed object, which moved low across his property. It rose above an open-topped ten-thousand-gallon water-tank and hovered there for a minute before settling onto the ground on the far side. Now fearing for the welfare of his livestock, the man hurriedly dressed and clambered onto his motorcycle. For the few minutes it took to do this, he could still hear the awful penetrating noise, and he had the object constantly in view as he drove toward it. Fifty feet or so away from it, he stopped the machine. Suddenly the object emitted a dreadful screaming sound, and he was forced to cover his ears. Then he was hit by a blast of hot

air and knocked over backwards by the force. As he scrambled to his feet, he could see the object rising slowly into the sky and moving away. It was now silent and dropping to the ground a trail of debris, including stones, weeds and cow dung.

In the moonlit glow after the object had departed, the farmer could clearly make out a ring of flattened grass where it had sat. Going home, feeling pleased that the thing had left, he found that fifty minutes had elapsed (which may indicate a time lapse or period of unconsciousness). His watch had stopped at 1.10 a.m. and every time he took it off his wrist it began to work, but it failed to function whilst *on* his wrist for the next three days. (As we have seen, this is a curiously common aftermath of a close encounter, suggesting, perhaps, that the body becomes 'charged' for a time, until this drains away naturally.)

In daylight the circle was very obvious. It stood out as a dark brown area twenty-eight feet across, with six spokes inside (which did correspond with six spokes on the underside of the object, seen as it climbed away). All the yellow flowers in this circle were missing, just browned grass remaining. And trailing away from here in the direction the UFO had taken was a collection of debris, which he had of course seen falling from the bottom. What's more, the ten thousand gallons of water in the tank had all disappeared!

1980 and 1981 were very poor years for UFO reports in Britain (over fifty per cent less than a mediocre previous year, like 1979, and no more than ten per cent of a wave year, such as 1977), yet between late November and late December (especially between 21 and 28 November) there was a spell of 'crazy days' which amounted to a mini-wave. An extensive concentration of close encounters was squeezed into this time slot, and it was certainly not precipitated by media interest (there was none!); nor was it recognized until after it was over, as so often is the infuriating case. The events culminated in an affair which only came out, two months later, as a series of 'rumours' (two independent ones from the UK and one from a US serviceman who had returned home). If these rumours are true, as there does seem at least a basis to believe, then what may be the most amazing UFO incident ever in Britain took place at the turn of the year (1980-81). An object is said to have landed in Rendlesham Forest, near Ipswich, close to a military base, and it (and, in some versions, its occupants) confronted military personnel in a jeep (which suffered total loss of power). The object was tracked on

radar (this is one part of the story for which there is reasonably good evidence). It is even said to have left radioactive traces in the woods. Possibly corroborative testimony to this is the way in which parts of the forest were 'closed off' when investigators went to visit, and local rumours of a major cover-up. It is also clear that residents who saw something go down in the forest were told it was an 'aircraft'. Perhaps it was, and the rumours just exploded from this and its cover-up (through secrecy?), or perhaps the 'aircraft' was more unconventional than military sources would like us to believe. Whatever the truth, all efforts to verify the stories flying around met a brick wall of 'no comment'.⁹

Aside from this fantastic event (or non-event), the November 'warm-up' spell provided quite a flurry (particularly in the north of England). There were two landings involving entities and contact, another landing and time lapse, a radar-tracked object by the Fylingdales early warning system (it is alleged) and an object over a North Sea oil rig. All these events occurred independently within a seven-day spell, and I am pretty certain that at least some of them are true, in which case a truly extraordinary 'something' was going on at that time.

The first incident in the chain resulted in physical evidence. On 21 November 1980 Mario Luisi, a mill worker in the bleak and lonely Cumbrian village of Burneside, was out in a field by a river on a windswept night when he came across what he first thought was a cow, and then maybe a cow shelter. But quickly he realized it was neither, but a hovering UFO of peculiar shape. On hearing squelching noises, he turned to confront two figures walking towards him. Shining his hand lantern in their direction, he could see that one was male and one female, both fair and 'very beautiful', wearing dark one-piece suits. The female held a pencil-like object which she raised and instantly fired at Mario (quite possibly in defence, which is certainly what Mario later came to believe). A beam of light emerged from this object and struck the lantern, causing its front glass to shatter and its light to extinguish. Mario clung on desperately to the plastic handle, and a conversation occurred between him and the woman. The couple eventually climbed back into the UFO and left with a flash, leaving just a glow in the clouds (see Figure 27).

Of course it was the lantern which made this case most intriguing. Seriously damaged it was readily made available for analysis by the

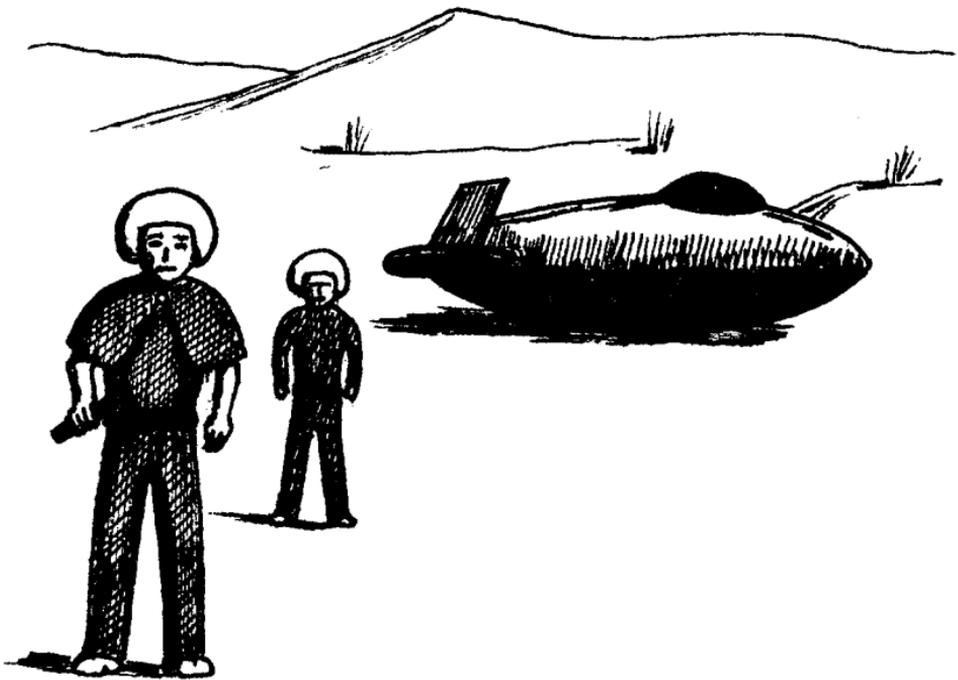


Fig. 27: Close encounter with landed UFO and entities in Burneside, Cumbria, 21 November 1980

witness. UFOIN first used a friendly forensic laboratory and then an independent electrical engineer (who was told the story behind the damage only after he had given his preliminary verbal report). The lamp's reflector was warped, the glass shattered and the plastic surrounds bubbled and discoloured (seemingly by heat). Mario stuck to his story, giving full co-operation (and two years on he still insists it is true). Yet both analysis reports agreed on one thing. There was no indication that the lantern had been struck by a coherent beam of radiation (e.g. a laser). They also confirmed that the lantern had been in one piece (i.e. workable) when destroyed. Finally, they concurred that the effects were the result of a short burst of intense heat.

The most obvious source for this heat is a blow-torch, and this is the suggestion both analysts made as the instrument of destruction. Of course, all the analyses truthfully could prove was that the effects were caused by something *like* a blow-torch. Presumably some alien weapon might emit a flame in this way (although Mario did not claim to feel heat from the beam he saw, and it was certainly believed by investigators that he was describing a laser-like beam of coherent light). The problem comes when one is forced to take

sides. Which is easier to believe: that Mario had access to a blow-torch, damaged his own lantern and made up the attendant story, or that some alien force created the damage which looked like it was done by a blow-torch?¹⁰ Whatever the UFO phenomenon may be, it seems to possess a self-negating system. Serious witnesses are made to appear silly. Evidence that ought to be there, never is there. And even when it is, it tends to crumble into an illusion of doubt and tenuosity. The most obvious solution to this would be that UFO events are the product of crazy witnesses and so do not possess any real physical evidence. But there is more than a hint to cast serious doubt on that idea. Would all these witnesses *really* manufacture their evidence in such unsubtle fashion, only to assist willingly in their own downfall and be labelled as frauds? Some perhaps would, with mercenary motives in mind, although Mario has asked me not to over-publicize his case, and he seems uninterested in money or fame. If we are to take this concept seriously, then it means there are many people who are geniuses when it comes to making up a story and fooling family, friends, the police and so forth. But when it comes to providing proof, they give us the most inept nonsense and say, 'Well, that's how it was.' Surely some hoaxers would make a better job of it than that, and I can just hear the debunkers saying, 'They do . . . those are your Primes'. But I very much doubt that, on the basis of what I have seen.

If the answer to the UFO enigma is a psychosocial one, then this strange pattern of behaviour must be integral. But if the truth goes beyond that, it must be integral just as much. For some reason the phenomenon is not only taking steps *not* to prove its existence but seems to be helping its witnesses to make themselves appear fools to the community at large. There is, if you like, a 'suicide' syndrome.

11

Gifts from the Stars: Physical Artefacts

'I do solemnly swear that, during a special assignment with the US Air Force on May 21 1953, I assisted in the investigation of a crashed unknown object in the vicinity of Kingman, Arizona . . . A tent pitched near the object sheltered the dead remains of the only occupant . . . It was about four feet tall . . . clothed in a silvery metallic suit . . .'

Part of an affidavit sworn by the witness (a scientist) before respected UFO investigator Ray Fowler in June 1973

This chapter lacks a JR Set matrix because accounts of pieces, or artefacts, allegedly left behind by UFOs or their occupants, are so rare that I have never personally come across one, and *none* of the sixteen hundred or so cases filed with NUFON since its inception in 1974 refers to such an incident. More is the pity, for such an event might, on its own, provide sufficient evidence to prove the alien reality of UFOs once and for all. To some the extreme rarity of these cases is further vindication of their belief that UFOs *cannot* be alien. But that is a misconception. Rarity (and it is not total absence) *could*, conceivably, be part of a deliberate policy by 'them' not to offer substantive proof of their existence. On the other hand, of course, the doubters may well be right.

It is the question of 'substantive proof' to which we turn in our last section of evidence. Or rather, it is what some people might like to term 'proof', for it tends to be well short of that. But it is, at least, evidence that is verifiable, because it is there before your eyes (e.g. photographs and movie films). Barring shooting down a UFO (which we must consider in a moment), this is just about as far as we can go. Scientific methodology may find a way, using instrumental means, to record more probative data. There are experiments (albeit rudimentary) using electronic detectors, geomagnetic recorders and even more sophisticated laser systems.¹ But such futuristic ufology remains limited and quite out of the question for

most UFO investigators and UFO groups, who have no financial aid and do, quite literally, struggle to afford the bus fare in pursuit of the latest case.

Presuming the UFO to be a technological device, one might expect it (no matter how superior) somewhere and at some time to malfunction. Indeed, the Rendlesham Forest rumour alleged that this *did* happen, but on this occasion the aliens were able to repair the damage. Certainly there do exist a number of stories regarding crashed UFOs locked up under tight security in military establishments. Nearly all of these emerge from America, although I was told by a former British government official once that he understood that such a 'device' could be found in this country. It was allegedly 'under wraps' at a military base 'somewhere in south Wales'. Needless to say, I treat such unsubstantiated stories as nothing more than interesting. They are less verified than the Rendlesham Forest affair and will probably remain that way. Even though provocative, they tend to be unprovable.

One fact which might (and I use the word very loosely) have some bearing on the story is the report that a mysterious object did crash into a Welsh mountainside on 23 January 1974. Whilst there is no reason to suppose a link with the alleged 'South Wales crashed UFO', nor do I support the contention that the object which hit the mountain was a mechanical device in the first place, the story is worth recording.

According to the BUFORA report, at 8.39 p.m. a violent explosion rocked the small village of Llandrillo in the Cader Fronwen range, Merionethshire (now Clwyd), Wales. The sound was heard thirty or forty miles away. Walls and windows of houses jumped about for a few seconds. The tremor was recorded at Edinburgh University (about 250 miles north). Finally, some residents who vacated their homes for the safety of the open air reported seeing unusual lights on the mountainside.²

BUFORA further refer to a ball of fire seen in Wales that night but attribute it, by clever identification, to a meteor which burned up over central England. The investigation leaves in some doubt whether this could be the same event as was seen by coastguards in West Wales, since the meteor apparently became non-luminous well east of the Welsh coast (over in England in fact). Certainly the meteor appears to have had nothing to do with the explosion at Llandrillo, or the lights seen, as the English meteor was an hour and

a half too late. Edinburgh University said they thought the 8.39 event was a small earthquake, involving a sudden release of energy over one or two seconds. This could have centred on a fault line through Bala (upon which resides the beautiful Bala Lake), about five miles from Llandrillo. Accepting this, it was speculated that the peculiar lights seen on the mountain might have been the postulated piezo-electrical effect, said to create 'earthquake lights' at the time of rock slippage. This speculation on the matter precedes by some years the recent North American laboratory experiments validating the theory. It is considered in detail in Paul Devereux's excellent book on the topic.³

These ufologists might have got it right. The phenomena of that night could be simply an unrelated meteor, an earthquake and the piezo-electric effect. But this interpretation is open to doubt. These facts remain. A small isolated village experienced a major 'explosion'. There were no publicized accounts of the earthquake being felt elsewhere. Lights were seen on the mountainside by the village. And coastguards reported a moving fiery object in the sky. The original theory was that a meteor had hit the mountain at Llandrillo. This was subsequently discounted, as no debris was found, but a major search *was* undertaken, with police, RAF and mountain-rescue personnel involved. Someone went to a great deal of trouble to find this 'meteor', which it was later claimed had never existed.

The crashed saucer rumours are no simple matter. As is often the case in this perplexing subject, there are two ways of looking at things. According to which view of the evidence you take, you can end up with the greatest story on the face of the earth (and the greatest conspiracy) or absolutely nothing whatsoever (save a further example of human gullibility). But you cannot help wondering why they *always* crash in out-of-the-way places and why our technology seems to have advanced not one jot despite them.

Best publicized of the rumours is the first recorded 'crash', near Roswell, New Mexico, in early July 1947 (before UFOs even officially existed).

In 1981 best-selling author and, to quote a *Probe* review, 'inventor of the Bermuda Triangle', Charles Berlitz, along with co-author William Moore, churned out the latest in a series of exciting, provocative (and occasionally factual) books entitled *The Roswell Incident*.⁴ This strings out what we know and what they

discovered about the 1947 crash, padding out the meagre facts with speculation. The book will be read by millions, and it is fascinating stuff, but it hardly proves its case, although it probably suggests there are some questions that we do not have a full answer for yet. In fact, the Roswell incident is one of the weaker of the 'Retrievals' (a term coined by the best researcher into such things, Leonard Stringfield).

The official 'truth' about Roswell is that a farmer did find pieces of metal on his land. These were erroneously and hastily 'identified' by military sources as a downed UFO, and Press releases to this effect were made prematurely. Subsequent checks found that the thing was a downed weather balloon, and in this way the Air Force defused the rumour. The Berlitz and Moore case rests on trying to prove that this subsequent explanation was a cover, after an over-zealous USAF Press officer had said too much. But, of course, the official explanation itself seems reasonably consistent with the facts. And one aspect of the book tends to inspire little confidence in it: a photograph is included, said to show USAF officers with a 'small alien' between them. Despite the authors' referring to the source of this picture, they clearly did not do much to check it out. German ufologist Klaus Webner did. The story and photograph first appeared in the *Wiesbadener Tagblatt* on 1 April 1950. From this fact you might not be too surprised to learn that it was all an April Fool's joke, such as newspapers love to play at that time of year.⁵

But not all researchers into stories of 'retrievals' display this kind of ineptitude, and some of the testimony (despite the constant anonymities) must be taken very seriously because of its extent. It is hard to imagine that all the people, some of whom signed affidavits (see the quote at the head of this chapter), are lying or deluded. And there is a curious, mildly disturbing thread between the essence (not the details) of the accounts. Len Stringfield produced a series of articles for *FSR* on his work, describing testimony of alleged crashes in Kansas (November 1964), New Mexico (1962), 'South West USA' (1957) and others. But the most impressive was one near Kingman, Arizona, in April/May 1953 probably 20/21 May 1953).⁶ Here at least two, possibly three or four, quite independent sources seem to be describing their involvement in the same incident. All the informants talk of the pressure they were put under to 'keep quiet'. They describe intense security precautions surrounding their arrival at the crash site (at night, in buses with

blacked-out windows, heavily blindfolded and so on). Stringfield even provides a 'death-bed' confession from one scientist.

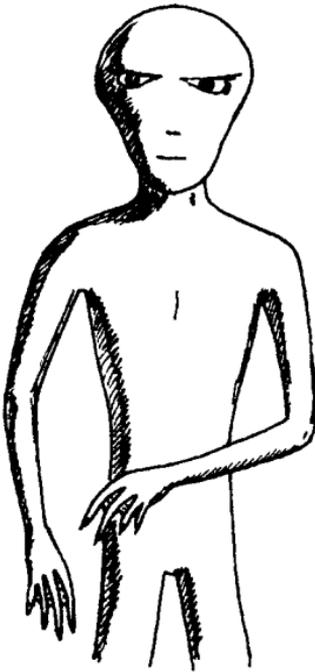
Amongst the consistent features of the stories there are the disc-like nature of the UFO, its aluminium-like (but not aluminium) structure and the remarkably identical data on the dead aliens, found and in some cases pickled! Indeed it is quite simple to produce an identikit alien from all these accounts (Figure 28) – around four feet tall, head larger than the body in proportion, greyish skin, large slanting eyes, thin mouth and so on. I have heard this many times from UFO witnesses too (with minor variations), and any reader who has noticed the similarities between this alien (and the transportation in blacked out buses) and the plot of the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* should be assured that the film is based on the stories and *not vice versa*.

Now I may be wrong, but one thing is clear. There are suspicious circumstances in the UFO mystery. I can understand why some less cautious researchers do conclude certain things about government motives. And, of course, if just *one* of the couple of dozen or so witnesses to an alleged crash cover-up is telling the truth as it was, then something is going on that will make Watergate look like a charity tea-party.⁷

Other artefact evidence is tenuous. The first case to come to attention was about the same time as the Roswell Affair and is known as the Maury Island, Washington, hoax. Bluebook director Captain Ed Ruppelt described it as the 'second best' hoax in UFO history (after the Desvergers case).⁸

Two harbour patrolmen in Puget Sound claimed to see a formation of six UFOs (note the connection with the formation of objects seen by Ken Arnold a few weeks earlier). One spewed out metal sheets and a rocky substance onto the sea. This fell on the patrol and supposedly killed a dog. The patrolmen collected some of the material and the attendant financial offers for it and the story. The USAF went to investigate, and a hoax was ultimately admitted. The 'extra-terrestrial' substance was really common terrestrial rock. There was a sad sequel when the two investigating officers lost their lives in a plane crash, during the fruitless search for non-existent evidence. The USAF considered prosecuting the hoaxers but eventually decided not to.

From such a background, further tales of 'physical proof' have been received with considerable scepticism. Several other stories of



Height:
3½–4½ feet

Skin:
Grey and hairless

Head:
Large and pear-shaped
No ears
Nose and mouth just slits

Eyes:
Large, cat-like

Body:
Thin, long arms

Hands:
4 fingers only, tapered
Webbing between fingers

Fig. 28: Identikit of an alien figure, based on a composite of “crashed saucer” rumours

fine filament material ‘spewed out’ from UFOs have been recorded over the years (almost all of them in the 1950s). Research by Dr Robert Morrell in Britain, as published in a privately circulated paper, makes it quite evident that most of these cases of what is termed ‘Angel Hair’ refer to fibrous spider-webs floating on wind currents. Any connection with UFOs must be seen as very unlikely in the light of Dr Morrell’s work.⁹

We usually find that the remaining artefact evidence is either quite absurd or extremely controversial. In April 1961 a chicken-farmer at Eagle River, Wisconsin, was supposedly given four pancakes in return for a favour he did some aliens who had landed in his garden. He ate one, and it tasted like cardboard. Others were analysed and found to be made of a non-gourmet recipe of fat, flour and sugar.¹⁰ In March 1974 a family living on an island off the Florida coast found a smooth metallic ball eight inches in diameter. No UFO sighting was associated, but the sphere does allegedly have some pretty weird properties. Dr James Harder, a civil engineer UFO expert, claims to have analysed it and discovered a hollow outer shell and two inner spheres, whose density indicated a composition from elements not only highly unstable on earth but so

far not even artificially produced under extreme earth conditions. None of this has been verified, and it is difficult to see how it will be. A not insignificant problem is the real danger that the release of these trans-uranic elements (if they exist), from the presumably protective shell, would lead to them exploding like a gigantic atom bomb!¹¹

There is just one artefact worth considering in some detail, because numerous independent studies into it have been conducted and a good deal of published material has been collated about it. Unfortunately (as we ought to expect), this mass of data has not cleared up the controversy. Far from it. Analyses seem to contradict each other, and we are little nearer the truth, more than twenty years on.

The story which surrounds the material is unsupported and valueless without recourse to the physical evidence. It comes in the form of a letter sent to a Brazilian newspaper columnist, who published it in the Rio paper *O Globo* on 14 September 1957. The signature was so bad, and so little hard data were in the script, that the witnesses referred to have never been traced. This obviously damages the credibility of the account.

Essentially, the story told how two fisherman saw a disc streak down from the sky over Ubatuba Beach, in São Paulo province. As it was about to hit the water, it turned upwards as if in a desperate attempt to escape its fate. But the UFO exploded, flaring into a glow much in excess of daylight, scattering debris over the sea and a little on the shore of this isolated spot. The fishermen claim to have picked up a few pieces, and three were sent to the Rio news-hound with the letter.

Dr Olavo Fontes, a prominent Brazilian ufologist, heard of the case and arranged to inspect the material. He found it remarkably light but not polished like metal. It was rough, irregular, pitted with fine cracks and coated with a white powdery layer, which adhered to the surface but could be displaced with a thumbnail.

One of the pieces was analysed by a Dr Fiegl, chief chemist of a department at the Ministry of Agriculture. It was split into several fragments, enabling a number of independent tests to be conducted at different laboratories. These included spectroscopic analysis, X-ray diffraction, density measurements and radiation testing. All of these pointed to that fragment being a very pure magnesium metal, which fitted the story attached to it, as magnesium burns

brilliantly in air. The white powder was identified as magnesium hydroxide. These tests totally consumed fragment one (apart from bits of it sent to the Brazilian Army and Navy and never heard of again). But two other fragments still remained.¹²

Dr Fontes was associated with APRO, the American UFO society run by Coral and Jim Lorenzon, who are respected, long-standing researchers. He sent fragments two and three to them in Arizona. Unfortunately, despite APRO being one of the largest UFO societies in the world, detailed testing was well beyond their means, but they were able to get some rather unsatisfactory tests 'bootlegged', as they put it. A metallographic analysis at Oak Ridge laboratories, Tennessee, did produce something of interest. The cracks in this fragment were filled with magnesium hydroxide (just as the Brazilian tests had found), and the structural basis pointed to the metal having been heated for a short time and then cooled suddenly, possibly by immersion in water. These facts are consistent to this point and tie in with the original story, although they far from prove it, of course.¹³

Naturally enough, this evidence was of vital importance to the Colorado University scientists in their government funded research probe (1968–9). APRO loaned their fragments to the team with no hesitation, and they were subjected to tests at a tax office laboratory (chosen by team leader Condon for their impartiality regarding UFOs rather than their scientific expertise). These did not confirm the remarkable purity findings of the original tests, which was in truth the sole basis of any claim to significance which the material had. The tax office found a number of trace elements but did confirm that the metal *was* magnesium, and quite pure magnesium at that. More intriguingly, some of the impurities they did find in relative abundance (barium and strontium) were most peculiar. Indeed, Dow Chemical Company (a leading metal manufacturer, who supplied a sample of magnesium metal to act as a comparison) said they knew of nobody who intentionally added strontium to magnesium, and the tests had shown that the impurity was not a natural one. On checking their records, however, Dow discovered that small quantities had been manufactured in this way by themselves, for experimental purposes, as early as 1940. So the argument that the Ubatuba fragments could not have been made on Earth in 1957 was no longer valid, although how they got onto the Brazilian beach (if indeed they did so) was not explained. Of course, the

Condon team's conclusion (that the metal could not be advanced as proof of alien UFOs) was both logical and correct. But the deduction still leaves one speculating and does not disprove that the fragments originated from an exploding UFO.¹⁴

APRO later handed the remaining metal to Dr Walter Walker of the University of Arizona. He was the first metallurgist to study it. His results (using microhardness and various microstructural techniques) were independently checked and confirmed by Dr Robert Johnson, another metallurgist, in New York. However, it has to be said that both men were previously interested in UFOs. They believe the metal showed 'directional crystalization', a hardening process which might well be valued in preparing magnesium (a suitable light metal) for use in a propulsive craft. In 1969, when these tests were done, this process was only just beginning to be used. In 1957 it was unknown. Unfortunately, from such small samples, it was impossible to prove that the whole of any larger body, from which the pieces might have originated, was directionally crystallized.

In 1971 BUFORA showed these test results (but *not* the metal) to a sceptical metallurgist with British Steel at Sheffield, Dr K. A. Ridal. He gave no support to the American findings, claiming that the results implied 'nothing unusual'. It must also be said that in a 1980 letter to American writer Ron Story, Dr Walker, whilst not denouncing or disclaiming his earlier work, said that he felt the *negative* aspects of the case (i.e. the dubious nature of the original story) had been *understressed*.

To date, the latest work conducted on the rapidly diminishing sample material is by Professor Robert Ogilvie, a metallurgist at the prestigious MIT science foundation in Massachusetts. This work was sponsored by the popular science monthly *OMNI*, who reported on the results in their November 1979 issue. Professor Ogilvie confirmed most of what had been discovered before. The specimen *was* quite pure magnesium, coated with oxide. It *did* have an unusual structure. In his opinion the sample was only consistent with having been burnt rapidly in air. He concluded, 'It is therefore quite possible that the specimen from Brazil was a piece of weld metal from an exploding aircraft or re-entering satellite.'¹⁵ Or, one might add, weld metal from almost anywhere.

There is no evidence that an aircraft exploded over Brazil in 1957. A satellite re-entry at this early date is most improbable. Of course,

Professor Ogilvie could have added many other things to his list of candidate origins, such as 'a military shell fragment', 'an experimental aerial device' – or 'a metallic UFO'. The many facts attendant on this evidence, whilst stemming from a source which is far from unquestionable and whilst certainly not confirming the alien origin of the pieces of metal, are at least not inconsistent with the possibility that they do have such a remarkable genesis. But, as with every other facet of this subject, it seems we are destined only to weigh things up and choose sides. We may never know who is right.

12

Bogies in the Scope: Radar UFOs

‘The apparently rational, intelligent behaviour of the UFO suggests a mechanical device of unknown origin as the most probable explanation of this sighting.’

Gordon Thayer of the Condon team, commenting on the commission’s investigation into the classic Lakenheath, England, radar/visual case

Once again there is no JR Set matrix accompanying this chapter. Radar/visual cases are certainly rare, although by no means as rare as the type of event discussed in Chapter 11. Indeed, the JR Set did contain one such case, and a couple of others can be found in the NUFON/UFOIN files outside the timescale set for this book. One or two further incidents also merit consideration, even though they do not exist in anything like such a coherent form as a report.

Radar/visual evidence is unique. It may or may not involve a permanent recording of the track of an unknown object – although in many cases it does. Even then, however, there is an almost zero likelihood of ufologists gaining access to this for study, due to a number of reasons, both technical and practical. Nevertheless, qualified and disinterested personnel at the time of observation, and the system itself will normally provide the observer with specific information about size, height and speed of the target in question. This is obviously why such cases are of great interest.

Those events with which I have had some contact offer a typical sub-set of data, plainly showing up many of the problems. As you will see, one of the chief such difficulties is that these cases (to a far greater extent than any other type) have a habit of reaching a complete impasse. Avenues of information, normally open, suddenly close. In no case which I have so far observed, from what is something of a co-ordinating role in British ufology, has anything

like a definitive report been possible – that is, to the standards I would expect from other close encounters. This might indicate a cover-up of the best cases. There is undoubtedly room for such a suspicion. But we must remember that cases involving radar trackings are some of those most likely to come under the umbrella of the Official Secrets Act, for reasons which might conceivably have nothing whatsoever to do with UFOs *per se*. Military radar systems (such as those which pepper the eastern seaboard of Britain, ever vigilant for enemy aircraft) have such a sensitive role that they are obviously not going to hand out information to anyone, let alone UFO investigators. Civil radar systems which might track a UFO could also easily find the Ministry of Defence involved. There is a directive to report to them, for reasons that a little thought will make apparent. A radar tracking of an unknown could be of a spy mission or even an invasion. Checks for military flights are inevitable, and so any civil tracking gets dragged along the same route. All roads tend to lead to the Official Secrets Act, and it seems quite certain to me that (whatever the reason) most radar trackings (which in some cases might correlate with visual sightings we do have reports of) are never going to reach diligent ufologists, and certainly not the public. When an airport fails to provide radar confirmation of a sighting, it either means there wasn't one, or there was and they are not allowed to say. Either way the answer is the same – no!

That this is so has an ample degree of back-up, as the following facts suggest:

a) The cases we do hear about usually come through chance or an indiscreet word in someone's ear. Usually only a little information is obtained before leads start to dry up. This implies the existence of other cases which never fortuitously get so far.

b) I have (on at least as many occasions as the UK cases we *do* have record of) received filtered information from various sources that a radar/visual event has taken place. This may come verbally, in a roundabout fashion, with the person responsible insisting either that his name be kept secret or that all identifying features be confidential or even that I do not publish at all. Usually this leaves me with nothing worthwhile that I can openly discuss. I have also had two or three letters, claiming to be from radar-operators, describing their specific military encounters. Mostly these are not signed or even give an address. The fear of contravening certain

regulations does appear quite significant.*

c) In certain open-minded countries (which sadly does not appear to include Britain or the USA) military and civil radar cases exist in some number, especially for the past few years. These include Spain and Italy, whose governments have recently displayed a remarkable turn-around in attitude to the UFO phenomenon. Since these countries have nothing like the radar coverage of nations such as Britain, it seems reasonable to predict that even *more* radar/visuals must be going on here. For some reason official sources are choosing to deny that simple fact.

From all these points, plus a subjective evaluation of all the rumours I have heard, and the general level of UFO reports themselves (some of which must surely have been recorded on radar), I have to reach a startling conclusion. It would not surprise me in the least to learn that cases of the calibre of Lakenheath (see quote at chapter head) have occurred *dozens* of times, over the British Isles alone, within the past thirty years.

I have come across four other radar cases in Britain, aside from the Rendlesham forest affair from December 1980, already discussed. One involved no object but excellent data on a radar tracking by a Ministry of Defence official.¹ Another civil aircraft sighting led us round in circles to nowhere.² A third involved a significant non-radar observation when all factors conspired that there should have been.³ The only truly good case concerns an object tracked on 1 April 1980 by Birmingham Airport. But that could have been a helicopter.⁴

I believe that it is most curious that, unlike other UFO cases, which stand or fall by the wealth of their data, radar/visuals in the UK are so consistently elusive. The truth may *not* turn out to be that someone, somewhere, is trying to hide something from us, but those who suspect such a thing have at least a fair basis for argument.

And not only private UFO societies face these problems. Captain Edward Ruppelt, head of USAF's Project Blue Book in the early fifties, opens up his book of 'memoirs' with a case described straight

* For example, in January 1982, a most interesting story came to my attention, which remains to be checked out. I received a call from a man who said he was an RAF radar-operator on the Isle of Wight in 1952. He described a tracking of eight or nine objects travelling at impossible speeds, although there was no visual back-up he knew of (even though this was implied by the subsequent developments). He had come to me, thirty years on, because Secrets Act files operate for only thirty years, and he felt he could now tell the truth without fear of reprisals.

from the top.

In summer 1952 he was called to visit a certain intelligence officer at a certain base (even with the head of Blue Book there are anonymity problems). The officer had been unable to send a report to Ruppelt because his superiors on the base had ordered it to be destroyed, in view of its controversial nature. Ruppelt saw the report (and it *was* then destroyed). It said that a few weeks earlier, at about 10 a.m., base radar had picked up a target, decelerating from 700 to 100 m.p.h. over a sparsely populated area north-east of them. This radar had no height-finding equipment (not unusual in those days), and the target began to fade. There were two obvious reasons why this might happen. The target could be either above or below the beam height of the radar. So two F-86 jets were scrambled towards the location of the target. At forty thousand feet they saw nothing. One F-86 was sent down to twenty thousand feet and the other to five thousand feet. The lower pilot encountered a flash of light which he took to be a weather balloon, but, as he pulled out of his descent and closed on the thing, he was amazed to observe a flat, silvery object not unlike a 'holeless doughnut'. He approached within half a mile or so, but the object (which was now clearly not a balloon) kept ahead of him. It was apparently travelling at some speed and, indeed, accelerated, because his rate of closure slowed down. The pilot was now right behind the object, close to the ground, and pacing it. He tried to call his base and his colleague (still searching at twenty thousand feet), but (he thinks), because of his proximity to the ground, or the fact he was excited and got frequencies mixed up, he could not do so. After about two minutes at a distance of five hundred yards, the UFO began to accelerate out of range. The pilot now decided that his only course of action was to treat the object as hostile and open fire. He did so, but the UFO went into a steep climb and vanished. The frightened officer took his F-86 back up to twenty thousand feet and contacted his colleague. They returned to base forthwith, to file a rather unwelcome 'hot potato' of a report.

The base commander privately concluded that the pilot must have panicked and fired at thin air, then concocting the fantastic story to cover up his error. But none of his colleagues on the base agreed. They could not disbelieve the terrified pilot. However, the command view held firm, and the report was 'grounded', despite clear regulations (which were well known) about the reporting of

UFO incidents. The base commander might have been right, of course. Ed Ruppelt was forced to admit, with an open-mindedness typical of his book, which failed to endear him to his superior officers: 'It might have been an hallucination, or it might have been some vehicle from outer space; no one will ever know. It was a UFO.'⁵ Imagine a prominent US Air Force officer making such a public statement these days. It does seem rather improbable.

I have no doubts at all that the importance of radar evidence can easily be overstressed. There must not be a belief that if something is seen *and* recorded on radar it is somehow immune from identification. That is nonsense. Whilst, with proper filtering of doubtful cases, the percentage of identified radar/visuals would not be anything like the agreed ninety per cent for general reports, it would also certainly not be zero. Allan Hendry makes this crystal clear in his excellent review of the matter.⁶ In the detailed study by the Condon team, five radar/visuals were considered, but only two were regarded as inexplicable. These were the Lakenheath and RB-47 cases. Since the amazing events in and around Lakenheath and Bentwaters USAF bases were summarized adequately in *UFO Study*.⁷ I will here describe the other Condon case. It is a fine example of a 'classic' radar/visual which has defied all serious attempts to explain it away – but yet it is still little known by the general public.

The summary in the Condon Report does not do the case justice. Indeed, it might be argued that it seriously misrepresents it. The best published account came some months after Condon with a re-investigation by Dr James McDonald who was (until his tragic and untimely death) Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at Arizona University, and one of ufology's greatest pioneers. In his words, 'The case is long and involved and filled with well-attested phenomena that defy easy explanation in terms of present day science and technology.'⁸ Those words, penned in 1969, remain just as true fourteen years later, about this and many other baffling cases. But science still plays with its ignorance.

McDonald spoke to all six airmen on board an American RB-47 photo-reconnaissance jet. By 1969 two were majors and one was a colonel. The heavily funded Condon team succeeded in finding only three of them, a good indication of the efforts they put in. The aircraft was on a complex mission over the southern United States (crossing Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma). It carried

what was then highly sophisticated electronic counter-measure (ECM) gear, for use in an exercise they were to conduct. The date of the incident was either 19 or 20 September 1957, at about 4 a.m. (local time).⁹

The ECM equipment was akin to radar, but with only a direction-finding capability. Its purpose is to detect ground-based radar emissions so that aircraft can avoid enemy systems of this type. On one of the scopes, officer McClure had spotted a target at the five o'clock position (which placed it out to sea). He therefore assumed that it must be a 180-degree reflection of a ground radar at their eleven o'clock position (thus over land). For this to be true the target would be seen to move in a specific way 'upscope', as they flew in a straight line past it. It was naturally presumed that the ground radar was stationary and only their motion would make the target seem to move. This is exactly what happened. McClure felt certain his interpretation was the right one and informed none of the other crew members. The signal had the characteristics of a radar system. However, on reaching the twelve o'clock (dead ahead) position, thus presumed to be a reflection of an object now *behind* them, the signal moved 'downscope', eleven o'clock, ten o'clock and so on. This made it impossible for it to be a reflection, but, as there was no other reasonable explanation for the anomaly, McClure dismissed it as a quirk of his equipment.

The flight continued to move north across Mississippi and then turned west. A few moments later, pilot Chase spotted a bright white light and quickly alerted the others that evasive action might be necessary, but this presumed other 'aircraft' made an almost instantaneous and quite impossible direction change, streaking from their eleven o'clock to their two o'clock position and blinking out. At this point McClure remembered his peculiar 'radar' emission from a few minutes before and scanned the two o'clock location at the same frequency (2,800–3,000 MHz). He received a strong return. One of the other sets on board was switched to the same target and received it also, proving that it was not just a set-malfunction. The equipment was also now checked against known ground radars and found to be working perfectly. Discussing options, it was argued that they had just coincidentally picked up a ground radar target at about the point where the light had disappeared, but, as the RB-47 moved onward, this became out of the question, for the target did not move, as a stationary ground source

would have done. For a hundred miles it maintained the two o'clock position abeam them, suggesting that it was tailing the aircraft.

At about this time the RB-47 came within radar range of Carswell Air Force Base near Fort Worth, Texas. They asked ground radar if they had any other traffic close by and were told the following. Ground radar could readily identify the RB-47 at 35,000 feet because of its transponder (a sort of bleeper signal which individually identifies all aircraft on radar). However, ten miles off to the aircraft's two o'clock they had another target with no transponder. By now the six-man crew were feeling rather uneasy, and their state of mind was not helped when they worked out that, if this object was the same target as their ECM gear had picked up earlier, then it had flown round the back of them, caught them up, tailed them for a couple of hundred miles at their eleven o'clock and then shot across their path to continue tailing them at the two o'clock. Such manoeuvrability would be quite phenomenal.

Suddenly the ECM recorded the target moving forward again (back to the dead-ahead position). Almost simultaneously Carswell called to report the same thing. As it went by the approximate position where the visual target had disappeared, both Chase and co-pilot McCoid observed a bright red glow come into view right in front of them. Ground radar confirmed that the target's range was now about ten miles.

Hanley, the RB-47's airborne navigator, tried to detect the object on his two radar scopes but failed. This airborne radar, however, was primarily for weather detection and not for recording other traffic. It could not pick up a target smaller than a super-tanker aircraft further away than four miles. As ground radar said the target appeared to be similar in size to an ordinary aircraft and well beyond this range, non-detection is actually consistent with the facts. An anomalous propagation effect probably would have been detected.

Chase tried to accelerate and close on the UFO, still maintaining steady distance ahead. He failed, and the target then turned right and moved off in the direction of Dallas. Obtaining permission to alter from scheduled course in order to give pursuit, the appropriately named pilot did so, and for the first time he seemed to get closer. At that instant ground radar came on the radio to say the target was now stationary. The aircraft roared towards the UFO, still visible to the men in the cockpit as a red glow, but as they got

nearer (noting it was definitely below them), it vanished. Immediately McClure (who was in the belly of the craft and so could not see outside) came on the interphone to say that he had lost the ECM target. Carswell simultaneously came on the radio to report that the ground radar target had gone 'off scope'. There is no doubt that this synchronous disappearance of a radar-visual-ECM target takes a great deal of explaining in terms of known science or technology.

The RB-47 was put in a left turn, with the two men up front constantly looking back to search for the UFO. Suddenly a bright red light flashed on again, back along their previous course and beneath them. Again, at the same time, ground radar advised they had a target once more, and McClure picked up a 2,800 MHz target on his gear at the same bearing. Chase asked permission to dive down towards it. This is hardly a standard procedure, but he was given permission. As he reached twenty thousand feet (with the target estimated as still five thousand feet below them) the light blinked out. At that instant (as I expect by now you will have guessed) both Carswell radar and the ECM operator lost their target. Low on fuel, Chase was forced to climb and return to Oklahoma for landing. No sooner had they ascended than both ECM and ground radar picked up a target, yet again, following the plane. Visual confirmation was impossible this time owing to the very restricted view offered by an RB-47 cockpit. But the target followed them most of the way home and then vanished abruptly. (See Figure 29).

A phenomenon seen on several occasions from numerous angles, detected simultaneously on ground radar and airborne ECM, observed to behave uniformly by all three modes of perception, and in a manner wholly inconsistent with any known technology (then or now): that is the essence of this case. That it was not a UAP, but a controlled device, is strongly implied because of the apparently intelligent pursuit of the aircraft, over several hundred miles for more than an hour. Attempts have been made to suggest explanations in terms of optical mirages, temperature inversion and even pure coincidence, but all have hopelessly failed. The facts of this case plainly contradict a rational explanation. Yet the Condon team, faced with it (and others of its calibre), concluded that such a phenomenon was not of scientific interest! Perhaps the detailed testimony of six senior, experienced Air Force officers, and specific instrumental data from ground radar and airborne ECM, is 'inade-

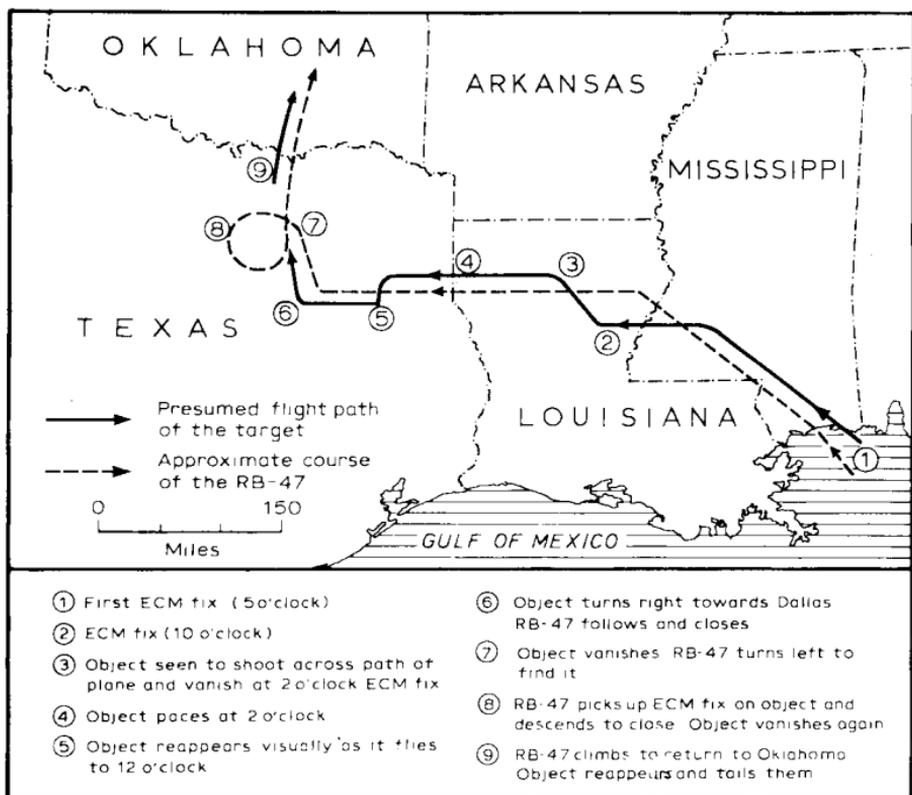


Fig. 29: Sketch map showing the various phases of the RB-47 radar case over the southern USA in 1957

quate' (although my summary here does no more than scratch the surface of McDonald's fine report). Somehow I find the Condon conclusions hard to comprehend. It seems to me that here we have rather more than a very good case that this phenomenon *can* be identified – as an unidentified flying object!

So, clearly, there *are* baffling radar/visual cases – but let us not forget the arguments which can be ranged against some of the data.

Gordon Thayer, consultant on radar matters to the Condon team, whilst accepting that some radar cases do remain a scientific enigma (he estimates around twenty per cent of those he has studied), still believes that atmospheric effects and false radar returns (i.e. anomalous propagations) are the principal causation of most reported cases. Few serious ufologists would disagree with this. Of course, this might tend to suggest that most radar/visual cases should occur during the warmer summer weather (when such effects are more common), but this is not borne out by random sample of cases. They show a relatively even spread through the course of the year, and I know of no research data that correlates radar cases with atmospheric conditions (although that *would* be an interesting project).

The decided temporal bias towards the early days of radar does seem a damning factor, but there is evidence that this might be partly due to more intense security precautions against cases being made public, operating in this ultra-security-conscious modern world. And we do have a couple of 1980 radar cases from the UK. In Chapter 9 we discussed a 1976 radar event in Iran. Later we shall consider the classic movie film sightings (and attendant radar trackings) from New Zealand in 1978.

There are other recent excellent cases, such as the remarkable radar-visual involving a civilian Spanish airliner forced to make an emergency landing after a confrontation with a UFO in November 1979.¹⁰ This prompted the Spanish Minister of Transport to say 'It is clear that UFOs exist'.¹¹ But some classic cases must be seen in perspective. One event at Turin Airport in 1973 was in my view explicable as Venus.¹²

Dr J. Allen Hynek, a consultant to the Air Force UFO projects for many years and undoubtedly the world's most distinguished ufologist, noticed that a very high proportion of radar/visuals are nocturnal. Of course, this is true of the UFO phenomenon in general, and it is not exclusively the case in radar terms, but

principally he is right, as he is with the concern that almost always just lights are involved (and virtually no structured objects in association with radar back-up). This is not really a crucial argument. Whatever the UFO phenomenon is may only manifest as lights. And also objects in radar/visuals rarely approach very close to aircraft (an interesting fact – for would weather phenomena or plasmas *never* come close?). But we can turn the problem around and take a ‘What if?’ situation. What if UFOs *are* controlled objects? What if they had a technology enabling them to be radar-invisible? At night there would be no need to use this often. Even if they were seen, it would probably only be as lights, and the sceptics could throw up many explanations to cloud the issue. But during daylight the use of this technology would be much more necessary, clearly biasing data to nocturnal events.

Looking at things like this, it is *possible* to propose that UFOs employ a radar screening device. This is by no means ridiculous, for most nations are working on the problem and may even have perfected it. When I was addressing the House of Lords group in December 1980, one former officer in the Admiralty raised this topic with me, and I was left in no doubt at all that the British government regard this as a serious possibility. Could this be why the military are so worried? Could it be a reason for a cover-up (especially of touchy radar cases)? Anti-radar technology in the wrong hands, at times of international crisis, would clearly be disturbing, especially if you are not very sure who (or what) possesses this technology!

13

If a Picture Paints a Thousand Words: UFO Photographs

‘Our collection of photographs was always a disappointment as far as positive proof was concerned . . . We had no clear pictures of a saucer, just an assortment of blurs, blotches and streaks of light’.

Captain Edward Ruppelt discussing the Blue Book files in his *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 1956

The cumulative evidence for the UFO, as I trust the reader might by now agree, is quite considerable. The overwhelming consensus of experts in the field of UFOs (including a growing band of multi-disciplined scientists) is quite definite. The UFO phenomenon is REAL. Consequently the visual documentation for the UFO (such as it is) should be seen by any fair-minded person as the final proof that UFOs exist — the confirmation of that great volume of witness testimony — provided, of course, that this visual documentation stands up to scrutiny.

Figure 30 shows the JR Set photographic cases. Note particularly the extremely high percentage evaluated as IFOs. This contrasts markedly with the decidedly low percentage we have found in the close-encounter groups so far. But it compares very well indeed with the usual figure of just ten per cent of general UFO data which prove to be of value. So immediately we see that the photographic evidence is largely spurious. A breakdown of a different set of data in *UFO Study* revealed a very similar residue, and Peter Southerst of Kodak also gave me an estimate of the sample percentage of UFO pictures his firm is sent by the public which he regards as worthy of study. That figure was five per cent, which agrees with the most stringent remainder after a filtering process by a pioneering American group, Ground Saucer Watch, using the latest computer enhancement techniques to uncover fakes. Of course, if only one of

		<i>UFO</i>	<i>IFO</i>
V	Only	2	29
V	Plus		
	R2	1	0
	R4	0	2
	L1	1	0
	E1	0	1
	E2	0	1

Time Spread of INST/P Cases

<i>Hours</i>				<i>Note</i>
00→		}	3%	<i>Note</i> Low nocturnal percentage
01→				
02	1			
03		}	8%	
04				
05	1			
06		}	28%	
07				
08	1			
09	1	}	25%	
10				
11				
12→	3	}	36%	
13	1			
14	2			
15	1	}	25%	
16	3			
17	0			
18	4	}	36%	
19	2			
20	3			
21	4	}	36%	
22→	5			
23→	4			

*Identifications:***MISIDENTIFICATIONS (20)**

Aircraft 5, Clouds 4, Satellite 3, Balloon 2, Kite 2, Vapour trail 2,
Bird 1, Optical phenomenon 1

HOAX (5)**INSUFFICIENT DATA (4)**

(e.g. uncooperative witness, negative, vanished, etc.)

PHOTOGRAPHIC FAULT (3)

(lens flare 2, processing fault 1)

Fig. 30: JR Set matrix: cases involving still photographs

the four reports I evaluate as unknown were to be a very sophisticated hoax (which Ground Saucer Watch could no doubt unmask) then my eleven per cent would drop towards this lower figure. Either way it is apparent that the real size of the photographic evidence for UFOs is but a fraction of what it seems to be on the surface. Four interesting photographs over a five-year period, for the whole of northern Britain, indicates the poor state of the data we have before us.

Why is this so? There are many reasons. Probably we do not obtain some of the photographs that are taken, although this factor will not be as important as it is with ordinary sighting reports, because with the existence of 'proof' a witness is likely to be far more willing to come forward. Allan Hendry gives a telling quote from a Canadian witness: 'If I'd been standing on a stack of cameras I'd never have thought of picking one up.'¹ The wonder of the experience – the shock and stupefaction – all tend to push away any thought but just watching and waiting. The often transient nature of the UFO is a problem too. There is rarely time to think about setting up a camera, and even if one is to hand, a witness may well be wary of missing a once-in-a-lifetime experience in order to use it.

Most air crashes occur at, or near to, airports, or perhaps at air displays. In both cases there are thousands of people around, many with loaded cameras taking pictures of aircraft, or waiting to go on holiday. Yet even with this tremendous degree of opportunity, photographs of the moment of an air disaster are rare. Most people do not overcome the shock and horror. And so with UFOs. They are generally isolated and unexpected events, at a time or place where there are very few witnesses. Situations where there are great numbers of witnesses almost always tend to have spectacular but understandable explanations – fireball meteors, satellite re-entries, weather balloons and so on. In a large number of these cases visual documentation *was* obtained (often from several independent sources) – but it is a veritable trademark of the more puzzling REAL UFO that it does not manifest in such brazen fashion. Indeed, I am tempted to state Randles' law of ufology: 'If a phenomenon is consistently reported by a large number of independent witnesses, over a large cross-sectional area, then it will *not* turn out to be a TRUE UFO and *will* have a readily understandable explanation.' It really is that clear-cut.

Another significant point is that, even were a photograph to be

<i>Description</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Common explanations</i>
Light only White	3	Aircraft (1 UFO)
Coloured	3	
Trail, blurred streak	White	6 Satellite
	Coloured	2 Vapour trail
Amorphous Blob	6	Cloud, photographic faults
Black dot or speck	1	Kite
White disc or oval (Night shot)	2	(1 UFO)
Black disc or oval (Day shot)	10	Mostly hoaxes or
Structured object	Night shot	0 suspected (1 UFO)
	Day shot	3 Hoaxes (1 UFO)

Fig. 31: JR Set INST/P cases: type of phenomenon photographed

taken, the conditions for recording the image properly are far from optimum. Cameras are often small and limited by a fixed shutter speed, far too slow to capture a moving object without appreciable blurring. Without a telephoto lens and something to stabilize the camera, the resultant picture may well show either a minute dot in the distance or a fuzzy streak which is quite unrecognizable as the object which was seen. And UFOs also tend to appear at night, when cameras (usually loaded with daylight film) are unable to cope with the low light-level or the drastic contrast between black sky and light UFO. To make things even worse, the photographer will probably be so excited by the event itself that even a professional will make basic errors of technique. The combination of all these factors makes it obvious why the JR Set turns up a sample breakdown like that categorized in Figure 31. The situation remains very much as Edward Ruppelt described it in the quote at the head of this chapter.

The 'black disc' category, whilst numerous, is actually quite useless. Most often attempted fakes turn out this way because the fake object is silhouetted against a vast expanse of sky, and the camera consequently underexposes it. Even were it a genuine

object (and there are easy ways to spot fakes of this kind), then it would almost certainly suffer the same fate and so be of little ultimate value for research. If you ever do find yourself in the fortunate position of being able to photograph a UFO, then it is absolutely essential to try to capture it in relation to some foreground and background. A UFO with other things about it will not be quite so poorly exposed and may also offer the analyst evidence about its exact shape, size, distance from the camera and so on. Naturally, if your intention is to fake a picture, this will be the last thing you will want, because it will immediately give the lie to your claims. The investigator will have proof that your 'domed disc' over the tree tops in the distance is really something the size of an ashtray just a few feet from the lens. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we have very, very few good-quality photographs which show a structured object amidst other features. Whilst, as you will see, in world-wide terms there *are* enough to be significant, even the best of those in my typical group (the JR Set) offer almost no real detail.

Figure 30 was most interesting in direct comparison with a similar temporal breakdown of reports for general UFO sightings. There are far more daylight cases than one might expect. One of the main reasons is probably that people are more likely to have access to a camera during the day or are more inclined to take the risk of obtaining a photograph when they are a bit more certain that it will develop. I have heard several witnesses tell me they *did* have a camera during the night-time sighting but thought it would be a waste of time trying to use it. This could conceivably have a great deal to do with the lack of really good pictures, for, as we have seen, the best cases tend to happen at night. And fakes will almost always be taken in daylight, forming a stereotype which once used to slip through the investigator's net but is now much more often detected. But the trickster still tries, despite the odds now stacked against him, for there is a thrill in fooling your friends, or the world.

So far as I am concerned, the most puzzling and important aspect of the UFO photographic evidence is not what it does possess but rather what it does *not*. There are plenty of photographs of distant objects, and even quite close ones floating in the sky, usually high up but sometimes in relation to the ground. A small percentage show some reasonable detail. Whilst the total number of photographs taken must now be in the thousands, the ones which remain puzzling probably do not exceed a couple of hundred. Three per

cent of the JR Set involved landings (i.e. reports of UFOs on the ground), but *no* JR Set photograph shows a landed UFO. Indeed, there is certainly nothing like three per cent of global pictures showing UFOs on the ground. The one or two I have seen are either proven fakes or very obvious candidates. I do not know of *any* photograph which unambiguously shows a UFO in a landed position and which its owner would be willing to submit for computer detection analysis. If any reader is aware of such a photograph, I would very much like to hear from them (see address 225), for as evidence this would be highly significant.

Furthermore, as mentioned at the start of our investigation, the JR Set has 13.1 per cent close encounters, and other samples of UFO data involve similar percentages. Yet the number of photographs attendant to close-encounter reports (as the various chapter matrices will have shown) can only be described as negligible. And there are *no* photographs at all of CE3 or CE4 (occupant or contact) cases, where humanoids or other forms of entity were involved. This absence in these three key areas (landings, close encounters and occupants) is suspicious in the extreme, for on a statistical basis somebody, somewhere, at some time, must surely have been in a position to bag photographic proof of a metallic disc on the ground, glinting sunlight, or a group of entities digging up the soil beside an egg-shaped craft. Yet where are those pictures? I find it hard to imagine that if someone had taken such a picture he would have kept it to himself – for it would create a sensation. Indeed, there have been only a couple of crude attempts to fake these kinds of image, which is not too surprising in view of how difficult and more expensive such a complex technique must be. Yet these fakes exist – and fakes are generally just a percentage of the overall total of photographs. Where are the ‘real’ ones to accompany them? Few people discuss this problem. Ufologists prefer to forget that it exists. But it is a very serious challenge to the proponent of any kind of UFO theory (other than the one which says ‘UFOs do not exist’).

I can think of only three reasonable explanations for this difficulty, one of which I am inclined to discount. To suggest that the increased shock of a landing or close encounter (and there are some photographs associated with close encounters) would be enough to prevent everybody from taking a picture, does not hold together. Someone would have had the presence of mind to do this. So it really comes down to a choice. Either something prevents a witness

taking this kind of picture (an inhibition factor), or there is nothing there to photograph in the first place. In other words, no exotic UFOs exist.

This puts us in a strange situation. The most obvious option is this latter one, for we have seen that many contact cases appear to be real only on a humanistic level. We cannot photograph a contact case, just as we cannot photograph our own dreams. But yet there is certainly evidence for the existence of some kind of reality in association with close encounters, and the evidence for physical reality in some contacts is very hard to reject. What is more, we have some photographs of close encounters (though many fewer than we ought to) and some photographs of structured objects which can only be either exotic UFOs (in the strictest sense) or outright fabrications. To accept the 'nothing there to photograph' stance, we must reject *all* of this evidence, and I fear that it is too much for us to do this with anything like a clear conscience. This conclusion is both paradoxical and disturbing.

There are cases which strongly suggest that a witness took a photograph of a normal and identifiable stimulus whilst having an hallucination of a complex UFO event.² This brings to mind our earlier thoughts about the importance of misidentifications of the moon.

If close encounters did prove to be a form of hallucination, then the mind might subconsciously provide its own inhibition factor, for a photograph would destroy the illusion it had carefully built up (presumably for a reason). So, in order to preserve the pseudo-reality of the experience, it would have to deflect the conscious part of the witness's mind away from the thought of taking a picture. Or, then again, perhaps the witness is unconscious in a literal sense, and so quite incapable of taking a picture.

I am sure there is some truth in this, particularly in contact cases (which, as we saw in Chapter 4, may often be hypnagogic in origin). But the question of the degree of physical reality in other cases still remains. We might be forced into the position of having to accept a physical phenomenon (creating the effects) which stimulates hallucinations (and thus the self-defence inhibition against photographs). The only other solution is to believe that something inherent within the UFO phenomenon itself prevents the witness from photographing anything which might approach definitive proof (i.e. a verifiable image of landed UFO and entities). The

intrepid French researcher Aimé Michel postulated this and the timelessness of the 'Oz Factor' does support him. But in that event the UFO phenomenon would have to be controlled by an intelligence.

The Condon Report severely downgraded the importance of photographic evidence, but it is necessary to bear in mind that at least two of the small handful of photographs evaluated by the Condon team remain unexplained to this day. We shall meet both of them a little later. However, it would be no true sample to concentrate only on the best cases (which are exceptions, not the rule). Figures 30 and 31 show that the normal cross-section of UFO photographs is pretty abysmal.

One category which should almost certainly be eliminated right away is the 'I didn't see anything when I took it – but here it is' type of case. Almost without exception you can be confident that this will be a processing fault, a drying mark, a scratch on the negative or a lens flare. Some of them do look vaguely like UFOs – but if no visual sighting accompanies the evidence, it is going to have to be pretty spectacular or clear to be of any value whatsoever. To date I have not come across such a case. In *UFO Study* I followed an example of this through the investigational analysis and showed how it turned out to be a bird, flying unnoticed past the camera.³

Also quite common are 'accidental' fakes. They also tend to follow the 'I didn't see it – but here it is' pattern. Plate 8 shows such a photograph. The witness was endeavouring to capture a 'UFO' which in fact turned out to be a light aircraft). This appears as a tiny black dot in the middle of the picture (arrowed). This shot was taken through a glass window, and a reflection of the room-light accidentally found its way onto the lower right of the frame. In this case there was never any doubt that this is what happened. But sometimes it is not so obvious, and at least one classic example of this kind of reflection of internal lighting is regularly paraded in UFO books (by authors who either should know better, or do and don't care!). It is also not unlikely that witnesses might subconsciously alter their story to fit in with the 'UFO' which their photograph has suddenly manifested. They will then go on to describe a very different phenomenon from the one they saw, because that is what was clearly there (it's in the picture!) – the real 'UFO' (which may or may not have been genuinely unidentified) is either not recorded on the film at all or too faint to be noticeable.

But, as you will see from Figure 30, the most common source of a UFO image on a photograph is simple misidentification of ordinary things. The camera records what is there, certainly. There are no photographs of hallucinations. But if what is there happens to be paradoxical to the eye, then it probably will reveal itself that way on film. The photograph just considered shows a dot, barely recognizable as an aircraft due to distance.

Plate 9 is an even more frequent representative. This is one of two shots taken at about 2.30 a.m. on 14 July 1980 in Lurgan, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland. The witness had seen the object a couple of times before, in the days prior to taking the photographs, always at the same hour of night. It was like a huge white blob of light which oscillated in the eastern sky, apparently spinning and moving up and down. On this occasion the witness (a certain Mr G) was up late watching for it. He was, of course, tired. As he stared at the light, remaining in one part of the sky for many minutes, he found himself grow a little dizzy, almost falling asleep (at 2.30 a.m. I have no doubt so would I!). Mr G was now feeling lightheaded but continued to gaze on as the object moved closer. In terror he fled back to the house to take the two photographs (still shaking with fright). Then he went inside, leaving the UFO still there.

The story does sound impressive, but the physiological effects are far less puzzling in view of the time of day and the man's tired condition. Adding the air of expectancy and the spice of the previous 'sightings', a solution begins to loom through the murk. Just try staring for some minutes into an expanse of darkened sky! You will probably soon emulate Mr G's lightheaded feeling. And it is also quite explicable that when you stare at a distant object (especially through tired eyes) it can *appear* to move closer and thus grow bigger. This feature of a story (often used by UFO proponents to prove that a case could not possibly be a star) is in fact due to the eye muscles relaxing, causing a point source to move out of focus on the retina and thus spread out into a 'disc' or 'oval' shape. It is particularly common with a very bright point source of light – such as Jupiter or Venus.

So the Irish close-encounter/photographic case is completely identifiable. It is actually Venus once more. The two photographs are fairly long exposures, and this, plus the fear of the witness, led to the appreciable camera shake. The trail which the object seems to follow, however, is aligned with the movement of the camera (as

shown by the duplicated motions of the house). Over the second or so of the exposure, the UFO did *not* move, nor did it move in any noticeable sense in the seconds between the shots. This flatly contradicts what Mr G believes, of course, but is quite consistent with the fact that it *was* Venus. The movements the witness thought he saw were merely illusions.

This photograph and attendant report were submitted in all seriousness by the witness, who was an ordinary person with average eyesight. He is not the first to have been fooled in this way. Nor will he be the last. Most ufologists have records of similar accounts from policemen, airline pilots, security guards and so on. It is even commonly accepted that no less a person than (the then future President) Jimmy Carter was tricked into making a 1969 UFO report by nothing more sinister than a planet.⁴

This UFO was easy to identify (even though many UFO investigators would not have tried). In this case we knew exactly where Venus was in the sky at the time. But what if the photographed object had really been a lighted balloon, or a helicopter, or a barium vapour cloud, or a dozen other possibilities? It might then have seemed a great deal stranger than it was and been a lot less easy to validate.

So pictures of lights, blurs and blotches are quite useless. A few might be UFOs, but they would need an excellent visual sighting to back them up in order to offer anything of importance. And the overwhelming likelihood is of their *not* being so. We must turn to those photographs which *do* show something substantial. Already (from Figure 31) you will appreciate that those are in a considerable minority. This is where we come face to face with the outright hoax.

Plate 7 is typical of the crude attempts at fakery we are confronted with. In April 1981 I received a well-written letter from Raja Samy, a ten-year-old East London boy, who claimed that on the 11th of that month he and his friend Spencer Neal had seen a UFO on Wanstead Flats. The story they submitted (complete with sketches of the various phases of the sighting) was well thought-out and held together a great deal better than many others I have seen. The object was described as, 'at the edges, light silver, and the rest of it a lightish black with round holes . . . in the middle of the UFO there was something whitish and yellowish.' To prove their point, two photographs were sent in of the 'disc' seen against dark clouds. Spencer said, 'Please write back to us if you think we've seen a

UFO, or if you think we've lied, or if you don't know what we've seen.'

I did write back, explaining diplomatically why I believed their story was a hoax. There are numerous ways of spotting a hoax. Often the attendant story is itself leaky or the pictures so bad there is never any doubt. Sometimes, as in this case, a little more care makes it slightly harder, but there are still telltale signs that stand out on careful examination. It is unlikely a cautious investigator would be taken in by a picture such as this these days – but there are too few cautious investigators.⁵

In this case (as in all others) it was essential to see the negative, which quite often gives the game away. The boys had either forgotten (or did not notice) that the prints were marked nos. 8 and 11 (print numbers are usually marked on in some way, even if this is not immediately evident). What had happened to nos. 9 and 10? The answer was simple. These were less successful fake shots – one of them even showing the culprit object lying on the floor! Raja responded to my offensive with an immediate admission that they had perpetrated a hoax. He had thrown up a car's hubcap whilst Spencer had taken the pictures. He was kind enough to supply me with all their material for use in this book.

Nowadays a range of sophisticated techniques has been devised for the serious researcher. Pioneered by Ground Saucer Watch in the USA, various computer enhancement methods have been adapted from modern space technology.⁶ It is now almost impossible to fool ufology without very expensive equipment and a great deal of time and effort. And those inclined to go to such lengths probably do so pointlessly, because most serious workers will still be suspicious, even if a photograph *does* pass the tests. The lessons of the past have been learnt. No longer, we might hope, will fakes such as those created by Raja and Spencer quickly evolve into classic cases. If an investigator can be fooled by a youngster casting hubcaps into the air, then one might be justified in treating his speculations on the way of the universe with a little reservation!

In the JR Set only two relatively interesting photographic cases warrant mention:

31 May 1975. Greave, near Rochdale, Greater Manchester. At 2.40 a.m. a twenty-seven-year-old security guard, Edward Kerringham, was making himself a cup of tea in his kitchen when he claims he saw six or seven lights in the garden. He grabbed his

polaroid camera and took one shot of a brightly lit object shining through and illuminating some trees (Plate 6). As he was reloading to take another shot, the object vanished. The resultant picture does show an interesting image which *might* be consistent with a domed object tilted towards the camera at an angle and reflecting light onto leaves in the foreground (seen out of focus due to their proximity). Unfortunately, it is also consistent with the effect that might have been produced, for example, by shining a spotlight at an angle towards the camera, maybe through a potted plant. I am not saying that is what happened, and the witness of course denies it. He says the object was beyond the rear of his garden over some waste ground and interestingly never described it as a UFO (merely 'strange lights'). However, against these facts one might range the observation that nobody else saw the phenomenon, although numerous houses are in the vicinity, and he did take the picture to the local Press the next day (although so far as we know he was paid nothing for it). Investigator Bill Skellon of DIGAP called it 'interesting', and really, if we are honest, that is the best we can say of it.⁷

11 July 1975. Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Close to the above case in time and space (which may or may not be relevant) this report has not been published before (not even in UFO circles). This is principally because a full investigation never proved possible. The witness was a young police officer to whom MUFORA investigators gave the pseudonym 'Bob Bland'. Bob claims that, whilst cleaning camera lenses on this summer evening in his bedroom (at about 9 p.m.), he noticed a dark shape fly very fast across the window. Trained to react to situations swiftly, Bob raised his loaded camera and took one shot before the dark object went out of sight. He felt that it was something powered and unusual but did not know whether his photograph would turn out. It did, showing an odd-shaped object very clearly (Plate 10). Preliminary work on the print only, suggested it was a real object over distant rooftops, and thus of reasonable size. So the story seemed to hold up. But at this point the case came to a sudden end, for the witness, apparently unimpressed by his own picture, failed to respond to several requests for the negative. It seems that he had 'lost' it, and without this evidence nothing further could be done about the case. Bob even mislaid his own copy of the print, although he was interested enough to call me six years later requesting a copy after

he had seen me use it on a BBC TV programme. He still does not claim to know what the picture shows, and it *might* be a UFO. On TV I commented that it 'might show a bird or a hang-glider – although what a hang-glider would be doing over the centre of Rochdale I have no idea. Both these theories are unlikely. But someone did later write to the BBC, his letter being read on the air, saying that in his opinion the UFO somewhat resembled a policeman's helmet if you looked at it in the right way (i.e. assuming it was catching the light in unconventional fashion).

This is hardly a world-shattering collection of data. So we are forced to look beyond our own meagre samples at the best of the global evidence accumulated since 1883 (the date of the first recorded UFO photograph). CONTACT, a world-wide organization dedicated to collating and publishing data, has produced an extensive catalogue of UFO photographs containing 424 items up to the year 1970. These involve only that percentage of shots which show a clear shape, and so are but a part of the real total. They come from every country one might imagine, although mostly from the USA. Thirty-two were taken in Britain (the first in 1908).⁸

People in search of alien technology are immediately drawn by photographs such as those of George Adamski, a 1950s cult figure who claimed to converse with aliens in the American desert.⁹ He supported his tales of trips to other worlds with graphic pictures, showing discs close up, the likes of which had never been seen before. They have hardly ever been seen since, either.

It is safe to say that most modern ufologists believe that Adamski was a trickster, albeit perhaps a genuinely misguided one. It is known that he earlier wrote as fiction what he later came to claim was fact, and his 'aliens' just happened to share the same religious and spiritual views which he had unsuccessfully tried to peddle for years. As for his photographs, it is almost impossible to take them seriously. They look like operating-theatre lamps. One can see signs of the spotlights used to create the illumination. His 'scoutships' were, I think, products of his imagination. Those who met Adamski seem more charitably inclined towards him. The question of whether *he* was hoaxed (presumably by 'them') in order to act as an agent who would deflect scientific interest away from 'their' true mission, has at times been raised.^{10,11}

But Adamski's photo album failed the Ground Saucer Watch computer tests. The photos showed small objects close to the

camera, not giant spaceships. Yet his pictures still appear in UFO books as if they were genuine.

Another set of photographs which failed the test was taken by highway inspector Rex Heflin on the early afternoon of 3 August 1965, near Santa Ana, California. They show the windscreen of his vehicle, a distant flyover, some foreground roadway and a hat-shaped object passing across cloudy sky. From the time when Heflin refused to take a lie-detector test (unless someone put up \$1,500) there have been suspicions. The USAF Blue Book investigators evaluated this one as a hoax on the basis of their work. The Condon team were far from convinced. And finally modern computers have found traces of thread apparently suspending the model object in front of the car. It would be less than wise to consider this case any further.¹²

Computer enhancement, whilst not infallible, has certainly not destroyed all the classic cases. As mentioned earlier, around five per cent of those submitted do seem to remain as a very great challenge to the complacent. Probably the best two such cases are those from McMinnville, Oregon (Case 41 in the Condon Report), and Trindade Island, off the coast of Brazil.

It was 11 May 1950, at 7.45 p.m. PST. Mr and Mrs Paul Trent, a farming couple near the town of McMinnville in Oregon, were the witnesses. Mrs Trent was feeding some rabbits out in the yard in the dusk when the strange object appeared. She called to her husband, who came out, saw the thing and hurried off to grab his camera. The object looked like a bevelled disc with a turret protrusion on top, passing some distance from them and moving slowly from right to left. It seemed to tilt its flattened underside towards their direction and travel very slowly, as if coming towards them, then moving away. Mr Trent was able to take two photographs, about thirty seconds apart, from the middle of a roll of film. Between shots he moved out slightly further into the yard as the object began to pass out of his line of sight behind a roof.

The witnesses were uninterested in UFOs and took no action with the photographs, developing the film some time later only when the complete roll was taken. They did not phone the police or media to report the sighting, believing (it seems) that they had seen a secret government aircraft of some kind. Eventually the local Press did discover and publish the photographs, through a banker to whom the Trents had shown the pictures. From here the story became

public knowledge, but the couple continued to display little concern about it and sought to make no profit from the sensational nature of their evidence. Indeed, one magazine borrowed the negatives and never gave them back. The Trents did not press them, but the Condon team secured their return for analysis *seventeen years* later.

William K. Hartmann, a professor at a lunar and planetary institute, researched the case for the Condon team. He found that the story held up. It was consistent with the photographs. Various photometric measurements were all consistent, and they strongly argued that a large object a kilometre or more from the camera had been filmed. There was no evidence whatsoever of any kind of hoax – indeed considerable suggestive evidence that it could *not* be one. Hartmann was later to revise his opinion somewhat, partly because UFO sceptics Robert Shaeffer and Philip Klass argued that faint shadows on the eave of the house suggested that the photographs must have been taken in the morning, and not the evening as claimed. Why the witnesses should make such an obvious and glaring error in an otherwise superb hoax was conveniently never explained by these people.

Dr Bruce Maccabee, a physicist, did considerable further work on this tricky problem. He satisfactorily proved (by taking pictures of the effect at the site himself) that reflection of sunlight from cloud surfaces could easily have left some shadow on the roof at the time claimed by the Trents.¹⁴) Furthermore, William Spaulding of Ground Saucer Watch applied all the computer techniques at their disposal to this important case. They all independently verified that the UFO was *not* a suspended model (the only hoax method Hartmann had considered viable). They likewise suggested (once more) an object tens of metres across, some considerable distance from the camera.¹⁵

These two pictures show a very structured disc shape (Plate 11). All the evidence from several sources supports the witnesses' story (which has stood up over thirty years). The only viable hoax option is that a farming couple built in 1950 a large-scale flying model of a UFO, which paraded (airborne) in front of their camera for two photographs, out of which they never made any money or notoriety. Not, I think you will agree, a particularly plausible option! There seems to be some considerable evidence that some form of large, artificial object performed aeronautical feats quite impossible for a conventional craft in 1950. No known craft in 1983

has a configuration remotely similar to the one clearly visible in these photographs. They are, without doubt, the most impressive photographic evidence we still have, and certainly present the sceptic with more than a few troubles.

On the face of it the Trindade Island case ought to be even more impressive, for these photographs (a sequence of four) were taken by Almiro Barauna, a freelance photographer on secondment to the *Almirante Saldanha*, a converted training-vessel of the Brazilian Navy. The ship was on a research mission as part of the International Geophysical Year (a massive world-wide science project to learn more about the planet on which we live). On board were a couple of hundred sailors, officers and scientists, doing work at this small and deserted rocky isle, some six hundred miles from the mainland.

It was not long after noon on 16 January 1958. The ship was preparing for the voyage home. Suddenly a peculiar light object appeared over the sea and seemed to approach the ship, as if curious. It hovered for some time over the nearby crags on the island and then departed. Many people on deck saw it, and Almiro, despite the confusion which ensued, managed to take his pictures. These were released by him to the media some weeks later, after, he claimed, a government investigation had pronounced them genuine. The Brazilians have, however, never officially confirmed or denied this fact, merely stating that they could 'not make any pronouncements concerning the object seen, because the photographs do not constitute sufficient proof for such purposes'.¹⁶

On the negative side of this tale we have the information that Almiro had been known to take the odd trick photograph (e.g. of treasure chests lurking beneath the waves). There is also the curious failure of the Brazilian government to comment on goings-on aboard one of their own ships. But on the positive side we have the photographs themselves which (unless some superimposition method was used) do *appear* to have been taken from the ship at the island. In addition, the Ground Saucer Watch computer techniques have promoted the case to a status it was fast beginning to lose sight of. However, these techniques are not, of course, impossible to fool with a superimposition method.

The object depicted is a typical lens-shaped UFO with a trace of a dome on top. It is nothing like the McMinnville object, except in general disc structure. The fuzzy and faint outline on the Trindade

pictures is difficult to explain as the foreground rock outcrops and sea are sharp and clear. The photographer says that the UFO was surrounded by a greenish vapour, a factor reported on a number of other occasions and which might account for the fuzziness.

Two sets of daylight photographs, showing substantive detail, one of which is to say the least still controversial: this is scarcely going to convince the hardened sceptic. It is always possible to say that both these cases *could* be hoaxes. But these two do not stand alone. Whilst being the most famous, perhaps, they do not hold the patent on intrigue or anomaly.

An impressive set of two pictures was taken in Sweden on 6 May 1971, by a man riding a moped near Skillingaryd. They show a great deal of detail (probably more than any other single photographic case), since they were taken close enough together (temporally and spatially) to afford a kind of stereo reproduction through a specialized technique. This gives the clear impression of a large object at some distance beyond a wall, by which the UFO appears. Indeed, a tree is seen in the foreground, and the UFO is hidden by some of its branches, proving that it was at least as far as this from the camera (Plate 12). This under-investigated case deserves more research.¹⁷

Back in the USA, at Wiliamette Pass, Oregon, there was a most curious photograph taken on 22 November 1966. On one single frame there are multiple images of the same UFO. This case has been subjected to much study, because it is believed by many that it offers important evidence about the propulsion mechanics of the phenomenon. The suggestion is that the only viable explanation for the photograph is that the object dematerialized and rematerialized several times in the space of a fraction of a second. To the man taking the photograph, the apparent effect was too swift to spot. All he saw was the object climbing steadily into the sky. The case has so far stood firm through all tests and is a very important piece of evidence – provided (as always) that it is not a clever fake.¹⁸

Both these above cases involve single witnesses and so leave themselves much more open to attack from critics. But what then of the incident at Baciú Woods, near Cluj in Romania? Here there were *four* witnesses when a series of four photographs were taken on a hot and sunny early afternoon, 18 August 1968. Romania being a Communist state, very little UFO information had filtered through to it by that date. The case could still be a hoax but it would

be rather more difficult to perpetrate. Once again the pictures display some interesting features.

The photographer was a forty-five-year-old technician, Emil Barnea, along with his thirty-four-year-old girlfriend and two other friends. They were enjoying a quiet picnic lunch at a pretty wooded clearing when the object approached slowly, hovered over some trees and climbed into the sky. The UFO was hat-shaped with a flat underside and rimmed top (more like the McMinnville UFO than any other discussed so far – although viewed at a greater height so not as clear). Between photographs 1 and 2 in the sequence it seems to have reversed course, and in photographs 3 and 4 it is surrounded by a darkish cloud or vapour, into which it allegedly vanished. Photographic experts who examined the case in its native country were convinced the witnesses were telling the truth. But the most problematic feature of the story concerns the shadows. These fail to behave in a rational manner. The shadow on photograph 2 is on top of the object, whereas in photographs 1 and 3 it is principally on the bottom. Several resident experts independently concurred that the resultant images made sense only if the object was internally illuminated. Whilst this is an interesting thought, it does occur to me that these ‘experts’ are glossing over the most plausible solution to these inconsistencies. If the photographs were faked by superimposing a shot of a model, or hat, or such like, onto an otherwise blank shot of the sky, then the effect might appear if the tricksters forgot to take account of different angles of illumination on the superimposed object. But this is not to say the case *is* a hoax. The local investigators do not think so. A multi-witness hoax is much more unlikely to stand firm than one faked by an individual. And there is less of a climate within Romania to make hoaxing a trade worth pursuing. What is more, the ‘cloud’ seen in the final two photographs does correspond with an often reported feature. So is the case genuine? The pictures have frequently been compared with the Rex Heflin sequence from the USA. Certainly the object’s shape is similar, and the Heflin case even had a cloud in subsequent shots. The fact that this case is now known to be a hoax and that it occurred almost exactly one year *prior* to the Romanian episode are suspicious circumstances I have yet to see any ufologist take note of!

Reconsidering the substance of this chapter, several things become evident. The most important is that, as with UFO sightings in general, a small residue of photographs remain which, when

taken together, do imply that some kind of real, structured device of unusual configuration is operating within our airspace. But they *could* all be fakes. And once more we have to ask why all the photographs appear to be different. They never show the same UFO photographed independently in different locations. The reason for this is certainly not obvious.

Is there such a thing as the perfect case? That is difficult to say. We would probably range arguments against almost anything. But we have come very close to the ideal with a recent incident in the Canary Islands. On 5 March 1979 a spectacle filled the sunset skies. Thousands of people on this collection of Spanish islands observed it. The government of that country, being open to discussion of UFOs, have proved co-operative. Not that there was very much they could do to deny it! Apart from all the visual witnesses, we know of at least *four* sets of totally independent photographs (at least two from separate islands) which show the phenomenon. Probably there are more. Odd, is it not, that this affair failed to create a world-wide Press sensation?

Around half an hour *after* sunset, people on both Gran Canaria and Tenerife saw a peculiar swirl of orange light on the horizon. They watched what they presumed to be a remarkable meteorological effect, although meteorologists later stated that, if it were that, then it had no precedent in living memory. By about 6.45 p.m., as people were still watching with awe, a dark object trailing a column of fire was seen to climb *out* of the sea and spiral upwards into the orange-coloured patch. Over some minutes it accelerated skywards and was lost into the glowing horizon. Behind, in its wake, lay a patch of orange cloud or mist, which took another thirty minutes to fade away.

Bob Rickard and Richard Kelly obtained a beautiful sequence of seven photographs taken from Gran Canaria between 6.45 and 7.30. The witness was twenty-six-year-old Antonio Llopis. They emblazoned them in magnificent full colour across two pages of their delightful book *Photographs of the Unknown*.²⁰ But well before this book was published, just a few months after the event, two Englishmen had returned from Tenerife with two photographs they had taken at 8.05 that March night. They showed them to Alan West (a local radio presenter in Sheffield, who has also written a book on UFOs). He passed them on to Peter Warrington and myself, all of us still unaware of the complexity of the case and of the

fact that Rickard and Kelly were in possession of very similar pictures.

Our photographs were taken by a chemical technician and a water official (both in their twenties), who were at Los Gigantes. As Plate 13 shows, they clearly display the remains of the orange cloud (which may in fact have travelled some distance to reach their vicinity). They used an exposure of f.5.6 at about thirty seconds. Neither they, nor we, know what is recorded. And there was obviously little we could do about it. One might speculate about a sea-launched rocket releasing vapour into the atmosphere. That is an idea not considered, to my knowledge, but worthy of some thought. And yet, had that been the case, I feel certain the explanation would soon have been forthcoming. As it is, the problems still remain, and all we know for sure is that we have a remarkable case of which, for once, we can be a hundred per cent certain. This was *not* a hoax or an hallucination. *Something* happened.

Do we here have multiple photographic evidence of a previously unknown atmospheric phenomenon – a UAP? I rather suspect that we might. I doubt that it was a flying saucer (in the exotic sense of the term), but that is hardly the point. If we have clear proof of a phenomenon in this one case, without any shadow of doubt, then what about all the rest? Does at least one of those photographs of a structured disc illustrate a real unknown? If so, then we do have proof of something truly incredible going on in our midst. For it would take only one picture of a solid disc, proven real beyond question. Exotic UFOs would exist.

14

The Interstellar Oscars: UFO Movie Film

'Two of the country's best military photo laboratories, the Air Force lab at Wright Field, and the Navy's lab at Anacostia, Maryland, had spent many hours trying to prove that the UFOs were balloons, aircraft, or stray light reflections, but they had failed . . . the UFOs were true unknowns.'

Captain Edward Ruppelt, head of the USAF Project Blue Book, discussing work on the Great Falls and Tremonton movie films (*The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*)

Film of a UFO in motion is perhaps the absolute limit of the proof we might seek. For movie film is extremely hard to fake, and the resultant images offer data not only of the appearance but also of the dynamics of the phenomenon in question. Unfortunately, UFOs recorded on film are *very* rare, undoubtedly the rarest category of all types of case we have studied. Consequently there is no JR Set analysis. Indeed only three or four analysable pieces of movie film are known to have been taken in Britain, and the substantive number of worldwide cases remains very limited.¹

It is not too difficult to appreciate why movie film is less common than still photographs. The necessary equipment is more expensive, and those who do possess it are likely to be more careful when using up film on borderline phenomena which may not prove recordable. This leaves us with the only option of studying the 'best of the bunch' – the interstellar Oscar nominees, if you like. It must also be recalled that 'official films' (e.g. taken from military aircraft) could exist; indeed there are several claims to that effect. For many reasons these might not be revealed. For example, the film might inadvertently offer detail of some kind of military hardware which is on the 'secrets list' – and so, UFO or no UFO, the public display of the film will be forbidden.

It is also wise to bear in mind that, whilst movie film certainly is very difficult to fake, there is always that slim chance that someone

has gone to a great deal of trouble to do just that. After all, Spielberg and his special effects team managed to create superbly convincing UFOs which moved, throughout *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and many less worthy feature films have done the same. Of course it is fair to say that Columbia Pictures gave him millions of dollars and the best facilities. It is safe to assume that no would-be UFO-faker would be quite so well endowed. Even so, the evidence must still be evaluated, and there are logical tests which can define a fake. In addition, the film *might* show a real phenomenon which is being misidentified (although this is less common in terms of film than with still photographs, for reasons which a few moments' thought should make obvious.)

I have selected for evaluation seven pieces of movie film (three from the USA, three from Britain and one from New Zealand). These are not the only clips I know to exist. But they are, so far as I am aware at this time (early 1983), the most evidential which have been proposed – and the only ones worthy of serious study. Needless to say, I would be interested to hear from readers about any others which I miss (see address on p. 225).

It was August 1950. The date was initially believed to be the 15th. Nick Mariana, manager of a baseball team in Great Falls, Montana, claims that he was at the ground, checking it out prior to a match, when he saw two unusual and stationary lights above a nearby water-tower. The time was 11.25 a.m. His secretary was with him (a nineteen-year-old), and Mariana called her attention to the unusual lights. They glinted silver, as if reflecting the bright sun. Mariana rushed back to the car for his 16-mm camera, as the objects moved off to the south-west at a speed estimated to be between 200 and 400 m.p.h. He was able to obtain about twenty seconds of colour film as the two lights passed behind the tower and then moved out of view. They maintained a steady oval shape and constant silvery reflection throughout the sequence, and the witness claimed that they were moving against the wind.

Mariana contacted the Press before the film was processed (a point in his favour, since, had he been hoaxing, or deliberately exaggerating known sources, he would almost certainly have waited to see the results of his trick before making it public). Subsequently someone notified the Air Force, and an investigation ensued. Unfortunately all early work on this case was based on a belief that the date *was* 15 August, even though right from the start the Air

Force files indicate that Mariana was unsure whether the date was the 15th or the 5th. The Condon team, re-evaluating the case seventeen years later, found that Mariana's team played no home games between the 9th and the 18th (why they failed to check on the 5th is a mystery). Indeed, on the 15th they played an away match (not an afternoon home match as Mariana had claimed). Since the 15th was a Tuesday and the 5th a Saturday (when an afternoon match would seem more likely), it does appear that the 15th is a mistake. I suspect that 5 August was the date when the film was taken, which gives us considerable problems in the evaluation process. Not exactly an unusual occurrence!

Based on the fact that two F-94 jets landed at a nearby Air Force base a few minutes after the sighting, the initial 1950 Air Force evaluation was 'possible aircraft'. The witness had simply seen and filmed the sunlight reflecting from their polished surfaces. Of course, these jets had landed at just after 11.30 on the 15th, and so this is really quite irrelevant information. After the Air Force announced its conclusions (later casually altered to simply 'aircraft' by the supposedly scientific, and then top secret, Robertson Panel), Mariana began to say that he and his secretary had *seen* two aircraft (i.e. implying *the* two aircraft) just after the UFOs had gone. This is suspicious. One is led to the possible conclusion that Mariana made this up to counter the Air Force arguments. Perhaps he did not want his UFOs to be explained. Certainly he was claiming this subsequent observation of the aircraft in a 1956 documentary about UFOs. But in 1967, when questioned by the Condon team, Mariana denied knowledge of any aircraft around the time of his filming. You may take this as you wish, but if, as seems likely, the sighting was on the 5th, not the 15th, we have no evidence that aircraft *should* have been visible. Indeed, it would be oddly coincidental if a formation of two were present at the same time on both dates. On the strength of this, it does appear that Mariana might have been covering up for an evaluation which the Air Force tried to present as fact but which was quite improbable in the first place (because of their poor investigation). What this fact, if true, might do to the rest of Mariana's story remains open to doubt.

In any event, Mariana claimed that he was purposely checking the wind direction, and so the observation that the UFOs moved *into* the wind could be just as valid for either date. This tends to rule against explanations such as balloons, although they are untenable

for a number of other reasons too. The only reasonable identification ever proffered is the aircraft one. But on the 5th we have no evidence that any aircraft were in the vicinity, and thirty-two years on no chance of ever knowing for sure. Indeed, Edward Ruppelt, in contradiction to the explanation adopted by his own project, said of the aircraft checks into the date of the 15th (which allegedly were somewhat positive): 'The two jets just weren't anywhere close to where the two UFOs had been'. How can the head of Blue Book make a statement like that and yet his superiors conclude, for public consumption, that the UFOs *were* the aircraft?

Dr Robert Baker analysed the film for the Douglas Aircraft Company, and he suggested that the aircraft hypothesis was most unlikely.² He found that the objects were probably about two miles from the camera, and at that distance, given the weather conditions and lighting, two aircraft would have been easily resolved. Baker also argued that an aircraft could not pass through twenty degrees of arc in twenty seconds of time, as the film shows the UFOs doing (they are seen in relation to the water-tower which allows this to be judged). For, in doing this, changes in angles and illumination would, in his opinion, give lie to the illusion and would not afford a constant level of reflection. When William K. Hartmann studied the film for the sceptical Condon team, he not only concurred but went even further. He verified that the elliptical shape of the objects on the film was not a reflective effect but was due to the elliptical shape of the objects themselves. These compounded arguments against the one reasonable explanation do seem to be significant.

The latest work conducted on the film is by the computer techniques of Ground Saucer Watch. The results confirm all that has gone before. The objects are not aircraft reflections but elliptical unknowns. All roads have led towards the UFO conclusion.

It must be said, in summation, that Mariana claims that the Air Force returned his film with the first set of frames missing. These, according to his story, showed the true shape of the objects more clearly. Of course, the Air Force totally deny this, and Mariana (whilst still insisting it is true) has been unable to produce a letter proving this point, which he says the Air Force sent to him. In view of his alleged visual observation of the 'aircraft', one must treat this claim with much caution. But there is some suggestive support in

the form of a Blue Book internal memo which refers (by accident or intent) to *twice* the length of film being sent on to Wright Patterson for analysis than was eventually returned by them to Mariana.

Are the Air Force concealing the best bits of the film? Or did Mariana make this up, as well as his statement about the aircraft, in counteraction of the Air Force explanations? Whatever the real truth, I suspect that the Great Falls film *does* offer us some limited evidence regarding some kind of UFO phenomenon. But, of course, it *might* show aircraft.³

Two years later came another case to baffle Blue Book, which is odd because on the face of it a very obvious solution is available. However, the closer one examines the case, the *more* this becomes open to doubt.

On 2 July 1952 Delbert C. Newhouse, a US Navy warrant officer and experienced aerial photographer, was travelling cross country with his wife and two children. At 11.10 a.m. he was near Tremonton, Utah, on Highway 30, when his wife pointed out a formation of bright objects near the eastern horizon. Her husband stopped the car and got out.

What happened next is crucial. The Condon Report relied heavily on the Blue Book files, which do not refer to any other description but reflective light sources 'milling about'. They *do* note that Newhouse, like Mariana, made new claims by 1956 (in the same UFO documentary, in fact). These were that at this early stage of the sighting the objects were gunmetal-coloured, large, close and of a pie-dish configuration. However, Ed Ruppelt has something different to say, once again. He states that Newhouse *did* make this claim from the onset but that the data were not on the Blue Book files because, 'When you have a picture of something you don't normally ask what it looks like'. Ruppelt added, 'I've talked to many people who have reported UFOs, but few impressed me as much as Newhouse'.⁴

And so here we have a very experienced and qualified photographer, a supporting adult witness and what amounted to seventy-five seconds of 16-mm movie film, which Newhouse succeeded in capturing as he snatched his camera from the car. He photographed what were now merely a dozen or so white ovals, moving around randomly, and then one oval which detached itself from the group to move off on its own. He stopped the camera several times from its tracking of the 'UFO' to let this single object move across frame.

Certainly at no point does the film display anything more than this. There is no trace of the pie-dish shape which Newhouse says was obvious when the objects were closer.

On submission to Blue Book, extensive analysis of the film was undertaken. The conclusion was, 'We don't know what they are, but they aren't airplanes or balloons, and we don't think they are birds'. Nevertheless, keen to use any loophole, the 'possible birds' tag was added in desperation by the upper echelon of the services. Blue Book loved to do this. 'Possible' explanations were a godsend, even though it always went unsaid that most of them could just as fairly be termed 'Possible UFO'. As Newhouse was a navy man, it was the Navy's photo laboratory at Anacostia which spent most time (over a thousand man-hours) on a frame-by-frame analysis of the film. The conclusions they reached were rather less restrained than Blue Book's. They came up with some rather dubious calculations, based on highly speculative estimates of distance, and accorded speeds of thousands of miles per hour to the supposed objects. This was nonsense, really, because there was nothing in the shots against which distance could be judged. But their results caused them to argue against aircraft, birds and so on, virtually proclaiming that the objects were spacecraft in fact!

By February 1953 Blue Book was in a bit of a pickle. Not only did they have an excellent witness, and the film, but the next best thing to a Navy admission that the film showed controlled alien craft. Some sources in the top bracket would have preferred to keep the whole thing secret, but this did not happen. A memo which Dr J. Allen Hynek reprints makes their dilemma plain. It bent over backwards to find ways of throwing Press and public off the scent. Despite all the analysis flatly contradicting it, they would under-stress that and play up the birds possibility.⁵

With the ghost far from laid to rest, there have been numerous attempts to evaluate the film since then. Dr Robert Baker analysed this film too for Douglas. Whilst he thought it unlikely, he concluded it could show birds. The Robertson panel, as with the previous case, cursorily dropped the 'possible' label and identified it as birds (apparently on little more strength than that one member of the panel had seen some birds which looked rather like it). Hartmann, for the Condon team, observed gulls on a field trip to Tremonton and found that they looked so much like the phenomenon on the film that he had to conclude, 'I now regard the objects

as so identified'. The only real problem was that, for them to *be* birds, reflecting bright sunlight from their shiny feathers, they would have to be just too far away to be resolved as such (appearing as out-of-focus ovals) and yet not too far away so that the minimum speed indicated by the film would be impossible for birds to achieve. According to the Navy report, there was no way these two extremes were compatible, although as pointed out they built this theory on shaky foundations. Of course, one would presumably also have to discount the bit about what the UFOs looked like at close range – for gulls are not shaped like pie-dishes!

Computer enhancement comes out against the birds hypotheses and in favour of a genuine anomaly. This disturbs me, because the film gives every indication that it does show birds. I have investigated a number of sightings which involved UFO formations behaving remarkably like the Tremonton case. In every instance I have been satisfied that the objects seen *were* birds, sometimes reflecting the blanket of streetlighting from their reflective under bellies. All aspects of the Tremonton film – the multiple formation, the milling-about motion and the detachment of one object from the group – do conform with what one would expect of a flock of birds. Indeed it is not difficult to see gulls which look very similar indeed if you watch the skies when the sun is high and illumination bright. This might seem an odd thing to say, but I recognize that an even better hypothesis could be that these *were* UFOs, deliberately disguising themselves to look like birds just to make things difficult for us.⁶

In 1977 the Freedom of Information Bill in the USA released Project Blue Book documents. A compilation clippage of the various movie film cases which they had handled was obtained by British researchers and given its premier at a NUFON symposium in Scunthorpe. A kaleidoscope of images cascaded across the screen, leaving one bemused, as there was no attendant commentary. I recognized the Great Falls and Tremonton cases, of course. I had seen them before. But when a hasty sequence of jerky frames clicked into my view, my instant opinion (extremely subjective!) was that somebody was waving a knitting-needle in front of the camera lens.

The reasons for this impression, which was, of course, nonsense, are threefold. The film itself is a negative, because that is how it was taken, thus showing a white trail as a black needle. It also stems

from a gun-camera aboard an aircraft, which records shots of a target ahead in short bursts of a few seconds each. What is more, the aircraft (a fighter) was twisting and turning about in an effort to close in on the UFO in front, thus causing the image to dance about wildly. But at the time of the Scunthorpe screening I did not know these facts, for the Luke Air Force Base report was one which had not been released by Blue Book previously and so was unknown. It was, however, very briefly referenced in Captain Ruppelt's book of memoirs, proving yet again just how valuable that forgotten text is.⁷

On 3 March 1953, at 1.25 p.m. local time, Captain Roderick Thompson left Luke Base, Arizona, in an F-84 strike jet, leading two other aircraft on a simulated combat mission. He was cruising at 23,000 feet when he saw what he took to be a condensation trail off to his left and above him. The trail was moving across his view, but he could see no aircraft at his head, and the pattern of the trail was of an unusual knife-edge appearance. Neither of the student pilots under his command could recognize what it was either, because to them it initially appeared to be crescent-shaped, as if the trail were forming from a *circular* wing base. Thompson, therefore, decided to climb towards it, ordering his students to stay below.

He rose above thirty thousand feet but still did not get close enough to see the object causing the trail. Indeed, the object now appeared to accelerate and climb, as if attempting to pull away from him. At this point a long, thin trail, with a double tail-fork, emerged from the still invisible object, which Thompson estimates was doing only 300–400 m.p.h. The choice of aircraft which could fly that slow, at what was a fair height in 1953 terms, was limited, and the very strange nature of the trail scarcely helped, but, being objective, Thompson decided it had to be some kind of experimental aircraft. After seven minutes of chase, over some sixty to eighty miles, he gave up. Meanwhile he had obtained about thirty feet of film whilst manoeuvring in an unsuccessful attempt to see the object head on.⁸

Blue Book tried very hard to explain this case but rejected all the options. It was not a cloud, for many obvious reasons. There were no aircraft in the area, experimental or otherwise, and the trail did not resemble any produced by aircraft. Had it been a secret device, this fact would surely have been acknowledged to Blue Book, even if that is all that was said. This kind of situation had occurred once or twice before. But, in any event, the USAF admitted that they

tracked *nothing* on their radar screens. A guided missile was considered unviable, and only one serious idea held up to scrutiny: that it was a fireball meteor, bright enough to be seen in daylight. But such an object would pass by in seconds, moving at a very great speed. This phenomenon was visible for too long and moving too slowly.

Extensive laboratory analysis led to the conclusions that the filmed object *was* a trail produced by a fast-moving object. But this object was never visible (even on high magnification). It also appeared to have accelerated away from Thompson's pursuit. Ultimately the Air Force had to conclude that the thing was inexplicable (maybe one good reason why this case was never revealed, and yet the previous two *were* at the time). Some officers tried to write it off as a 'possible meteor', but it was just too difficult to make that stick this time. A meteor was out of the question if the pilot's stories were in any sense accurate, and even the length of film that was available stretched the meteor theory to its absolute limit. Ruppelt concluded in his typical fair manner: 'If he (the pilot) did know that he'd covered some 80 miles during the case, I'd say that he saw a UFO – a real one. And I find it hard to believe that pilots don't know what they're doing'.⁹ (Plate 14).

Small wonder that this case was kept in the Blue Book files, that it was not evaluated by all the sources the previous two cases were and that it was not investigated by the Condon team. It does rather suggest that the US government had more than a little evidence, as early as 1953, that something truly anomalistic was up there in the skies. Their constant denials and current silence on the matter can only be regarded as somewhat enigmatic and perhaps not a little disconcerting.

It is curious that these various movie-films resemble a possible known stimulus: aircraft at Great Falls, birds at Tremonton, a vapour trail at Luke Air Base. One might think that this implies a lack of good evidence, which certainly in one sense it clearly does. Our most evidential form of data is not even producing the kind of material which still photographs did. Where are the films of hat-shaped discs, or McMinnville objects, cavorting about the skies? Their absence is disturbing, because it suggests that these would be too difficult to fake. All we really have is film of misidentifications. And yet all these extensive attempts to prove that fact have suffered defeat. The analysis work makes the case *more* unusual, not less so.

On 26 October 1971 the south Midlands of England were in the late stages of a flap of UFO sightings that had centred on the town of Banbury in Oxfordshire. A TV documentary was even produced from the town on these events. Certainly this must have set most observers of the phenomenon in this case thinking in terms of a UFO. At about noon the skies were blue and cloudless. A film crew from the ATV network were in a field near Enstone, eleven miles south of Banbury, preparing to record an interview with a shepherd for a farming programme. Suddenly one of the crew noticed an object in the north-north-west, which seemed to be stationary. It appeared silvery and tinged with orange, looking as if it were rotating, as it gave off flashes of light from its surface. Cameraman Noel Smart swung towards the object, extending his camera's zoom lens and locking onto the hovering mystery. Twenty-one seconds of film portray the object in this position, although in all but the first few frames (where traces of orange are seen) it is visible only as a small, round, silvery object.

The UFO now proceeded to move across the sky in a west-to-east direction and sprouted a thick vapour trail, apparently undergoing a dramatic acceleration as it did so. This sudden spurt is very noticeable on the film, creating a rocket-like impression. The witnesses claim that the object stopped briefly on several occasions, although the featureless blue sky background makes estimates from the film almost impossible. After the initial hovering sequence there are some thirty seconds more film, showing object plus trail, and towards the end a wide-angled shot of the object in the sky, seen in relation to the foreground people and fields. In order to obtain this invaluable sequence, Noel Smart had to stop filming for about half a minute and reset the camera. Eventually the object flew out of sight to the east.

Superficially the film appears to show a conventional jet leaving a vapour trail (which is a view expressed to the British UFO Research Association team by US Air Force personnel who saw the results), but there are several reasons why this cannot be accepted so easily. First of all, the camera and ground crew are adamant that the object they saw was not an aircraft. Indeed, Noel Smart had had experience filming fast jets (including the RAF's crack display team, the Red Arrows). He said that the object he was tracking behaved in a fashion out of the question for a conventional jet (stopping, accelerating, showing instantaneous motions and reaching speeds

in excess of those possible). He also argued that the object seen before the emission of the vapour trail was prominent enough to catch their attention, whereas a high-flying jet would have been so small it would practically have been invisible. The film crew were within seven miles of a US Air Force base at Upper Heyford, and they *had* seen F-111 jets and other craft from there. Indeed, the sensitive microphones they were using were picking them up, and they were creating havoc for their sound-track. The UFO made no detectable sound at all.

Probably the most important factor in this case, aside from the film itself, is the existence of dozens of other witnesses, as far away as Rugby (about thirty miles north) and Wolverton (twenty-five miles to the east). These figures in themselves indicate that the object had to be relatively high in the sky to be visible from such an area. Every one of these witnesses described the phenomenon in very similar terms. They were all puzzled by it and reported a shape and estimated size which, if accurate and *had* it been a conventional aircraft, would make its height far too low to be consistent with the other factors. In other words, we have yet again a confusing paradox. Of course, it is also true (according to my proposed Randles' Law) that the multiple-witness nature of this case may be the most probative factor to negate the UFO origin.¹⁰

I have studied at great length the extensive BUFORA collection of witness reports, marking flightpaths, object descriptions, elevations and so on. Combining these with the film crew data shows that the object passed from north-north-west to south-south-east, at about five miles north of Banbury (i.e. sixteen miles north of Enstone). It then travelled in the direction of Towcester in Northamptonshire. A reasonable estimate for its height, on this basis, would be 25,000 feet, which makes sense, as meteorological sources advise that on that day 26,000 feet was the minimum height at which a condensation trail would be formed. If the object were just on the limit (perhaps climbing up to it), then it would explain the stop/start nature of the trail. From the specific evidence of witnesses almost directly underneath this flightpath, and the few who reported it from north of there, there is a clear indication that the object *turned* north and south on at least one occasion during its general passage eastwards. This would provide a solution to the seemingly enigmatic hoverings observed from Enstone (i.e. the object would be at that point moving in relative terms either

towards or away from the witnesses).

The Ministry of Defence quickly advised that the object could be an aircraft dumping fuel, as their records indicated that one did so that day. Later they were to inform ufologists that this was an F-111 from Upper Heyford. Fuel-dumping is normally carried out only in emergencies, when an aircraft needs a rapid weight-loss for example. Provided the aircraft is high enough, the fuel should all vaporize before reaching the ground, but an action of this kind (for whatever reason) over a populated area (Banbury) and surrounding rich farmland would hardly endear the US Air Force to the British public. Upper Heyford was visited by investigators *before* the MOD declaration that it was their fault. Upper Heyford people denied (as they subsequently continued to do) that any of their aircraft were responsible.

And so we find ourselves once more with a choice. Do we believe that this was a fuel-dumping exercise by a naughty F-111? If there was some kind of emergency, was it serious enough to cause the US Air Force to deny the fact? Suppose, for example, the aircraft was carrying a nuclear weapon. Or is this just a convenient 'cover-up' explanation by the Ministry? But a cover-up of what? Film and multi-witness observation of a UFO disguised as an aircraft dumping fuel? Barring the production of any further evidence to the contrary, I think we must accept the aircraft explanation. It appears to make some sense, at least.

We move now just twenty miles across Oxfordshire, but forward in time to 11 January 1973. The incident took place on the A418 between Thame and Aylesbury, close to the village of Cuddington, over the border just into Buckinghamshire.

The story has been described at length by Peter Warrington and myself in a previous book,¹¹ but, as this is the only published account of this extremely important case, a brief résumé is required, followed by a discussion of recent evaluation work.

The main witness is building surveyor and planning consultant Peter Day. He was travelling to a business appointment nearby at around 9 a.m. The phenomenon appeared as a pulsing ball of orange light (for once a genuinely familiar UFO type). It crossed low along the horizon line, roughly parallel with him. After two minutes or so Peter found a convenient place to stop and remembered his 8mm camera in the back of the car. With this he was able to record what turned out to be the final fifteen seconds of the

sighting. The orange ball moved steadily, passing behind some trees, a few hundred yards from the road, on two occasions. This fortuitous occurrence provides invaluable information about the true size and distance of the phenomenon. It vanished instantly, by simply 'switching off', just as the film portrays. Indeed, the colour image disappears between one frame and the next, such is the speed of the event. At no time was any substance seen behind the light, nor sound heard, but the object is seen on the film as a ball, not merely a light. The witness was in open country, and it was daylight, of course. (See cover photo.)

After his appointment Peter approached the local newspaper to find out if any other witnesses had seen the thing. He discovered that about fifty children from a school at nearby Long Crendon had seen it passing very close by and lighting up the ground. A teacher travelling to work had seen it too, immediately in front of her car, apparently spinning and looking like a giant beachball with a flattened base. All these witnesses also attested to the sudden disappearance of the object.

As these facts probably suggest, the case is a good one. Indeed it is by far the most impressive which I have come across – and yet it is little known or discussed amongst ufologists. I am not certain why, but it might have something to do with the fact that it has never been actively proposed as a 'flying saucer', rather than as a UAP. And UAPs, as we have seen, tend to attract less interest than the elusive (and possibly illusory) exotic UFOs.

From certain valuable parameters within the film a number of things can be reasonably estimated. If the object were just beyond the trees (behind which it passes), it would be in the order of five feet in diameter, moving about twenty-five feet above the ground at a moderate speed. These must be regarded as minimum figures. These calculations would probably eliminate right away explanations such as a lighted balloon or glowing wind-borne debris. Peter Day himself estimates that the object was about three-quarters of a mile away. If he is correct, we would have a size of something like forty feet, moving at around two hundred feet, at a much higher speed. From a consideration of the geography of the situation, these are almost certainly the maximum limits in what is now becoming an attempt to narrow down our object to some specific dimensions. Of course, the speed cannot be too great in order to account for the duration of Peter Day's observation – i.e.

two minutes – otherwise it would have covered too much distance in that time and passed from view. The maximum distance it can reasonably have covered is about four miles, which gives a maximum plausible speed of about 120 m.p.h. This fits neatly with our calculations so far.

The witnesses at Long Crendon were a mile or so from Peter and yet, from their testimony, decidedly closer to the object. In addition, they stress that it illuminated the ground, which implies a fairly low height, in view of the light output the film indicates. Putting this all together, we can very reasonably ‘guess’ that the UFO was about two-thirds of a mile from the camera. This might suggest an object of 25–30 feet in diameter at a height of maybe 100–150 feet. Its speed would be a legitimate 60–80 m.p.h. (or within that sort of bracket). All of this makes sense. An object of this size, seen at maybe one-third of a mile from the children, could very well be described as beach-ball sized, as it was.

This was not merely an academic exercise. Whilst I make no claims as to great accuracy for my proposals, I do not see how they can possibly be very much in error. This has significant implications when we come to consider what the object was.

There have only ever been two reasonable explanations as to what the film shows. Favourite for a long while was ball lightning – a rare and enigmatic form of energy which does bear more than a superficial resemblance to the phenomenon on the film. Since few verified still pictures, and no known motion pictures, of this baffling natural event are in existence, the Day film offered scientific paydirt if this *was* the solution. However, after the screening of the film at a symposium of atmospheric scientists and a digestion of all the facts, the experts were universally in accord. The film did *not* show ball lightning. Primary objections (apart from the stable weather conditions) were the phenomenon’s duration, size, steady motion and apparent speed. All the scientists were clearly intrigued, seemingly willing to regard the anomaly as a UFO. But eventually they plumped (rather thankfully) for a tentative suggestion by a MOD munitions expert who was present, that the film showed a rotating orange searchlight atop a helicopter. As the object moved in a similar fashion to a helicopter and as the official informed the gathering that a base not far from the sighting location had once tested this unusual (and otherwise unused) lighting system, it did seem a viable option. It had to be checked, of course, even though

there are considerable doubts raised about the helicopter theory by both the visual image on the film and the multi-witness testimony. However, it was an acceptable escape route to many, as shown by the fact that, despite being offered it, not one of the atmospheric scientists in attendance was even willing to take the film back to their respective universities and research institutes for further examination – an unfortunately accurate reflection of the taboo still placed on UFO material, even in unquestionably substantive forms, such as this.

The theory about the alleged searchlight atop a helicopter theory, proved untenable. The experimental system was *not* in use in January 1973. Indeed, neither were helicopters at that date. And in any case it is very hard to believe that this was a helicopter, even had such things been in operation at the time. At a distance of two-thirds of a mile (even less from the school), in daylight, such an object would have been heard had it been making a sound (as, of course, a helicopter does). It cannot be argued that sound was carried away by the wind, as observation occurred from several different directions. What may be even more important is that a helicopter could not possibly have been seen only as a light at that distance, in clear weather, at that time of day. Yet the film shows no sign at all of a helicopter attached to the orange light. There is every reason to suppose that the witnesses described it as beachball-shaped, and the film recorded it in that way, because that is precisely what it *was* shaped.

Peter Warrington and myself are very grateful to science journalist Ian Ridpath and film manufacturers Kodak who put a lot of time and energy into assisting the investigation of this important case.

We must now fall back to earth with our penultimate case. This also was discussed previously by Peter Warrington and myself.¹² But readers must be made aware of its current status.

Briefly, two families were at a campsite by the Stonehenge monument, near the infamous Warminster 'Ufocal', in Wiltshire. They claimed to have seen orange balls of light fly towards them on several occasions over a three-day period (later inexplicably altered by them to a *one*-day period). Three minutes of film were provided by the six witnesses as proof of this, some on ordinary colour stock (showing the lights against a dark sky background), some on more light-sensitive film (affording some view of the foreground landscape and a deep blue sky). This experience happened in October

1977, although Peter and I learnt of it from a national newspaper (whom the witnesses had contacted) some five months later.

It was certainly easy for us to be amazed on first sight of the film. Not only is there a barrage of images, showing both single objects and also the lining-up of a part 'V' formation, but the similarity of the image with that on the Day film (with which Peter and I had already been working) was more than obvious at first glance. Added to all this was the witness descriptions of one close-up view of one of the objects, which allegedly hovered for some time – they just happened to choose the term 'beachball'! They also added detail such as supposed interference on their portable TV, fluctuations in a hand compass, radio interference and a burning sensation so severe that it led to the seven-day hospitalization of one of the witnesses. At least – so they all claimed.¹³

There is no doubt that if all these attendant effects are true statements and do relate to the objects on the film (which are real enough, for sure), then this is indeed a remarkable case. However, most ufologists are of the firm opinion that the film shows military flares of the parachute type, such as may be used by one of the many bases in the Salisbury Plain area. What this does to the attendant witness testimony is open to question.

A report by Cheshire group FUFOR says the witnesses contradicted their story on several occasions and that they had ascertained that military flares were used on the night of the filming. These would have been visible from Stonehenge.¹⁴ A Ministry of Defence spokesman told Peter Warrington and me, 'the filmed objects do not look like flares', but he added that as they behaved like them on balance he thought they must be.

After six months' work the case did begin to fall apart. Serious contradictions entered into the story given to Peter Warrington and myself, such as that about the one day or three days of filming. When Peter and I last spoke to the witnesses, they remained adamant that their story was essentially true and that they had not filmed flares. This leaves us with the following options. The witnesses are telling the truth and the film does show an unknown phenomenon rather than flares. The witnesses filmed flares without realizing it and still believe they observed UFOs, the alleged 'effects' thus being 'psychological'. Or the witnesses filmed flares knowingly and exaggerated the tale to make it more exciting.

This next series of events involves multiple witnesses, visual and

radar observation from the air, ground radar confirmation, extensive 16-mm footage by a professional TV cameraman and an accompanying 'live' commentary on tape of the events as they happened.¹⁵ It sounds too good to be true – so it is hardly unexpected that this combination produced a global sensation as the pictures were flashed by satellite all around the world.

It all began on 21 December 1978, on New Zealand's South Island. An Argosy freighter plane, owned by Safe-Air, left Blenheim for Christchurch with pilot J. Randle. At 1.20 a.m., passing over Kaikoura on the north-east coast of the island, Randle radioed in to Wellington control that he had some unusual lights in view. Wellington personnel confirmed they had these objects on radar and that they were doing a somewhat amazing 1,250 m.p.h. With Wellington still baffled by these mysterious events, a second Safe-Air Argosy came into the area, flown by Captain Vern Powell. It was now 3.28 a.m. Wellington had seen one of the objects on their radar travel south at 120 knots (too fast for a boat) over a distance of some thirty miles. It had then been stationary for forty-five minutes before moving off twenty miles to the west.

Powell was asked to investigate. At first he saw only lights, which he readily identified as boats on the water below. The plane's airborne radar confirmed this. But then a very bright red light appeared, both visually and on radar, just where Wellington had said it should be. Their airborne radar then picked up another target streaking towards them at an incredible (estimated) speed of 10,000 m.p.h. Indeed, it was so fast that it left a trail on the radar screen. It then veered off. The Argosy now climbed, its crew understandably a little perturbed, but the initial red light stayed with them. Wellington radar advised that this object tracked the aircraft for about twelve miles of its southward journey, before leaving. Not that the crew needed to be told. They were all watching it!

This clearly manoeuvrable object, seen visually and recorded on two independent radar systems, crossing many miles in doing so, was officially explained by the New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. According to them it was Venus. Quite how Venus managed these amazing feats they did not explain.

Australian TV's Channel O, Melbourne, became interested in these events (which were accompanied by a wave of other sightings in the Kaikoura area). Luckily, one of their reporters, Quentin

Fogarty, was then on holiday in New Zealand. He interviewed the witnesses and soon found himself more interested in UFOs than holidays. By late 30 December he had arranged for a reconstruction of the events of nine days earlier, to be filmed for TV broadcast. He, cameraman Davy Crockett and Davy's sound-recordist wife, Ngaire, left Blenheim on another Argosy for a brief flight across the straits to Wellington, North Island. The pilot was Captain Bill Startup, with co-pilot Bob Guard. They collected a load of newspapers and set off back to South Island, as the 30th became the 31st.

Fogarty recorded a rather melodramatic piece as they flew towards Kaikoura: 'We are now approaching the Clarence River, where the highest concentration of UFOs was sighted on the morning of December 21st . . . It's a beautiful clear night outside . . .' and so on. Then the pilot yelled, 'You'd better come up!' He had just received confirmation from Wellington radar that the lights he and Bob Guard were seeing (blinking on and off) were being tracked. As Davy Crockett swung his camera around trying to film these perverse objects, Fogarty bravely battled on with his commentary. For fifty minutes as they flew south towards Christchurch, things were seen. They paced the aircraft. Some were filmed. And the air on the plane crackled with a mix of excitement and terror. Fogarty summed up their feelings as he stared at one light, the camera clicking away, 'Let's hope they're friendly.'

After landing to refuel, the plane took off again with the quickest turn-round possible. It was heading back northwards at 2.15 a.m. Ngaire Crockett was so upset by what had happened that she refused to fly back over Kaikoura, although the cameraman and Fogarty readily accepted the offer from the aircrew to go with them on the return leg. With them went Dennis Grant, a local reporter who had learnt of the events from Fogarty. Only moments after take-off, they saw lights. One of them was reflecting onto the cloud layer, and it was this part of the sighting which produced the best film. Holding a TV camera steady in a rumbling aircraft, amidst all the excitement and with the windows offering awkward angles of view, was obviously not very easy. The result is images which jerk about, causing considerable difficulty in knowing what portion of the resultant image is due to camera shake and the continual changes in focus as the frustrated cameraman tried desperately to take in all there was to see. Quite clearly a good deal of the apparent

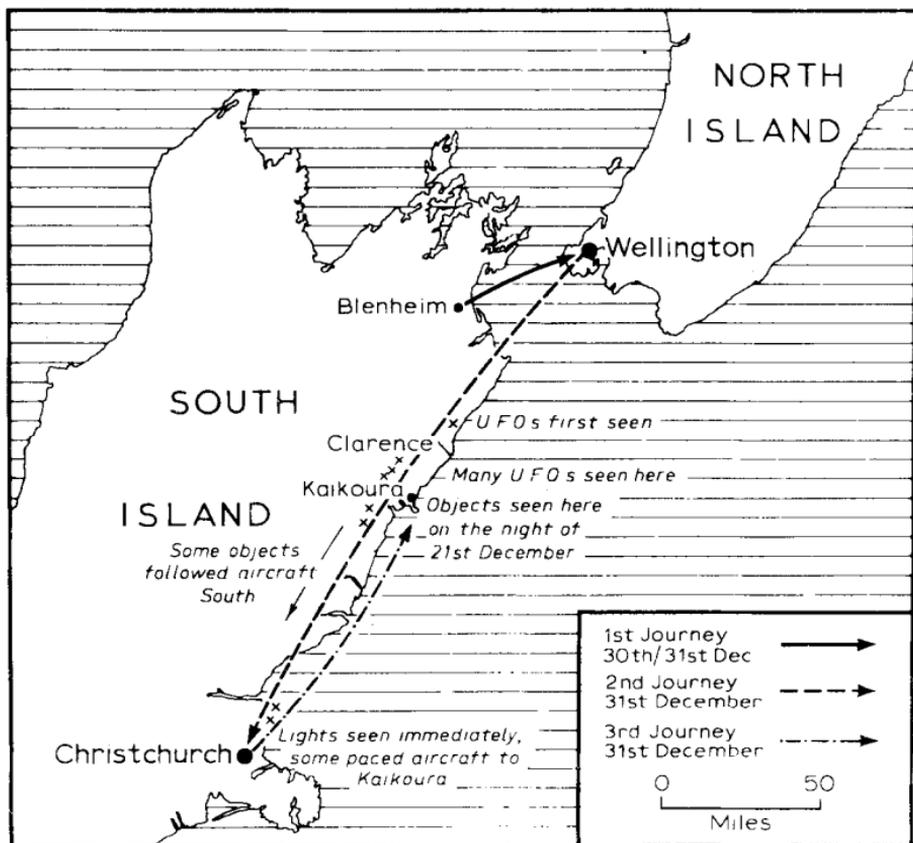


Fig. 32: Sketch map describing the complex multiple radar/visual/movie film case over New Zealand in December 1978

shape, if not all of it, is due to these factors. But at one point an allegedly in-focus image of a saucer-shaped object with some kind of dome was obtained. This seems to match the visual description as recorded on the tape at the time – indeed, Fogarty says, ‘that sounds like a flying saucer’ when the cameraman tells him what he is seeing. Which is just what it looks like. Another part of the film shows a light performing an incredible loop-the-loop within a single frame. However, I think it virtually certain this was caused by camera-shake.

Several other lights were seen. Both aircraft radar and Wellington control confirmed their presence. Later that day Fogarty flew back to Australia, arriving as the new year dawned, with what he thought to be a world exclusive. And of course, it was.^{16,17} (Figure 32). As he was travelling, Britain was enjoying its very own UFO spectacular, which may or may not be relevant. (See page 44.)

The Kaikoura affair had the unenviable distinction of generating more ‘explanations’ than any other in history. Well over twenty separate theories have been expounded by everyone from world-renowned scientists (most of whom went nowhere near New Zealand, let alone Kaikoura, yet still ‘knew’ what was on the film) to government bodies and the man in the street. Most did not come close to accounting for all the facts. Just a few theories suggested (mostly in all seriousness) are: squid-boat lights, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, stars, balloons, meteors and even (incredibly) moonlight reflecting off a cabbage patch!

Dr Bruce Maccabee, an optical physicist, is the only one who has done a truly thorough job, involving seventeen days of full-time study into the case, in Australia and New Zealand. The film has also been subjected to months of evaluation in Australia and the USA.

I have had opportunity to study the entire film when Dr Maccabee brought it to Britain. The fact that so many lights were seen, that those involved were on the look-out for UFOs and making a TV programme at that, plus their extreme excitement during the incidents, must (in my opinion) seriously detract from the value of this case. On the other hand we have the earlier sightings, the film analysis and the absence of any natural explanation which Maccabee and Fogarty cannot sink without trace.¹⁸ There certainly does seem to be something of interest here, although it would not surprise me to learn that one or two of the

events can be explained without recourse to anomalistic UFOs (i.e. perhaps they did see some of the normal things proposed, as well as genuine anomalies, misidentifying them because of the emotional nature of the circumstances).

At the time of writing the latest theory involves the piezo-electric effect, supposedly inducing luminous phenomena in the sky above an area of rock slippage.¹⁹ There are fault lines thereabout to make the theory tenable, so at least it has a basis of scientific merit. First it has to be shown that this novel phenomenon occurs, of course. But if it does, then the concept is well worth pursuing.

Of course, if this view is the right one, then ufologists ought not to feel deflated. On the contrary, the isolation of novel phenomena such as this, or the one probably shown on the Day film, is precisely what UFO study should be concerned with.

15

Conclusions: What Have We Found?

'Now – as we drift a little further down the stream,
Was it all what it seemed?

Was it true? Was it real? Or just a dream?'

Justin Hayward and John Lodge, 'When you wake
up', 1975

This book can be summarized in many ways. The statistics and the graphs (e.g. Figure 33) illustrate one possible outcome, but for other solutions we have to dig deeper and perhaps think more symbolically.

Imagine that your husband or wife comes in one day looking shocked and tells you that an elephant is sitting on your roof. A pink one no less. The most obvious reaction would be to smile and presume that one's loved one was having a little joke. But if they continued to insist we might recommend a stiff drink or a visit to the doctor. However, a few moments later a neighbour (who one has never trusted overmuch) comes in and corroborates the story. We would then naturally presume collusion and wonder at the purpose of this silly tale. However, a few minutes after this, the postman knocks on the door and blurts out, 'Do you know there is an elephant on your roof!' We might smile and start looking for the television cameras; for obviously this must be one of those stunt programmes which tries to make you act like an idiot in front of millions of viewers.

All this behaviour is quite rational. We might all be expected to follow it. All these thought processes must inevitably occur to any 'normal' person, because there cannot possibly be a real pink elephant on your roof. Yet, what if the next caller is Dr Clever-person, the well-known and respected zoologist? If he confirms the

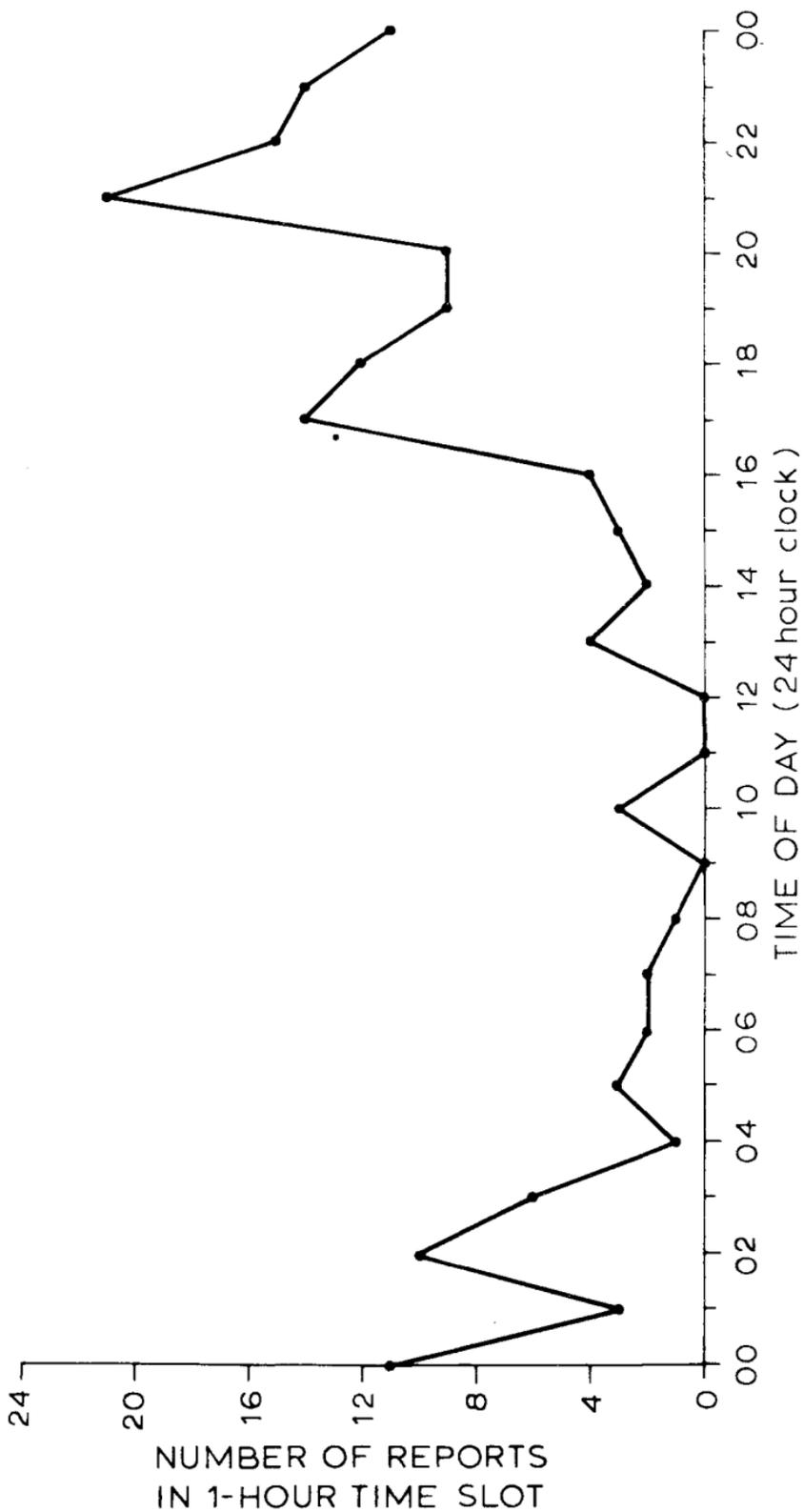


Fig. 33: Graph showing distribution by time of day of all JR Set UFOs

incredible tale you must surely have more than a suspicion that something unusual may really be happening above your head. I doubt if many will not by this point have been tempted to go outside and look for themselves.

But what if you do? There is no way that you can win.

The elephant might still be there, removing a brick from your chimney-stack with its trunk. So you dash round to the police station and bring out an amazed and somewhat bemused police officer to show him this sight, but the beast has gone! You point to the missing brick as 'proof', and he will merely argue that you knocked it out yourself, or that it was struck by lightning. Surely you cannot expect him to believe an elephant did it! Fortunately your wife took a Polaroid whilst you were away and so you now proudly present this cast-iron evidence. 'Very amusing', says the police officer. 'How on earth did you fake that?'

Of course, if the elephant is not there when you first go outside the dilemma is not improved. The others stare at you insisting it *was* on your roof. Do you disbelieve them, regardless of having no obvious reason to do so? Is everybody except you insane? Are they seeing things that are not really there? Or is it you who is somehow blinkered? Are you *not* seeing something that is really there?

I presume you see how this represents the UFO enigma, as we have uncovered it. But I am afraid there is no easy answer to the elephant paradox. Both solutions to the above question are equally viable.

Every one of the cases in this book could be a hoax. In my opinion many of them *must* be genuine, in the sense that the witness is telling the truth as he knows it. I have met too many frightened, disturbed, physically and emotionally disrupted people to believe anything other than that, and for every single example I did choose to mention there are a dozen or more like it I had no space to describe. And this total is growing all the time. The UFO mystery is real, and it is expanding.

No doubt some of the events herein described could be clever hoaxes, but I do not believe that more than a couple of our primes can be dismissed in such a simple fashion. That leaves us with close on one hundred baffling chapters out of human experience selected to form the hub of this book.

In the main, witnesses describe what they have seen to the best of their abilities, which often means pretty well. There *are* human

perception problems. There *are* all the pitfalls in the process between EVENT and REPORT. There *are* many strange, but explicable, things in the sky, and there undoubtedly exists a climate of belief in 'Flying Saucers', with all that this implies. Taken together this explains why ninety per cent (plus) of our data are IFOs and not UFOs, but in addition, and most importantly, why we *know* that ninety per cent of our data are IFOs. For, if their perception were not generally excellent, then we would be unable to isolate the causative stimulus far more often than we do. And the gap between the normal IFOs and the residual UFOs is to my mind too large to gulf with the rickety bamboo bridge of gross exaggeration.

True enough, gross exaggeration seems to have occurred, but I suspect that cases of this type (such as the Bignall End encounter with the moon) may often have more in common with UFOs than with IFOs. Certainly these cases pose more questions than they answer and are clearly significant. I am just not satisfied with the glib statement, as if it were a magic incantation, that such and such a close encounter with landed UFO and occupants was simply a 'fantasy' stimulated by a mundane observation of a star or planet. How did it happen and why? These questions demand answers, even if the basic premise of the sceptic is proven correct. The explanation may be the right one, but, as it stands, it is no explanation.

If one were to accept the gross exaggeration hypothesis as a grand solution for the residual ten per cent of reports, then one would have to dismiss as lies *all* the photographs and movie films, *all* the radar cases, *all* the animal disturbance, *all* the physical traces and *all* the resultant (and often quite severe) physiological effects. To be sure, these data are not extensive enough to be conclusive, but they *exist* and are well in keeping with a basically rare and seemingly covert phenomenon. I do not see how any fair-minded, rational human being can dismiss all of this.

Perhaps the most important discovery that we made was this. Within the generalized UFO phenomenon, which is so popularized by the media and the public, we found many cases which unquestionably described physical phenomena and not exotic 'Flying Saucers'. In other words, our fishing nets brought in UAPs as well as UFOs. Whatever doubts or reservations I may have about the nature of UFOs I am positive that UAPs exist. I believe we have

excellent, consistent witness testimony describing appearance, behaviour and attendant physical effects of at least one type of unknown natural phenomenon. I believe we have visual documentation of such. I think it is high time scientists began to take it seriously, for it is a scientific problem and not one for sensation-seeking authors or mystery movies. The mystery is in the mind. The solution in the facts.

Not that these UAPs are unimportant. Far from it. They seem capable (although fortunately very seldom) of inflicting great personal damage, and that is why I feel so strongly that we must remove the mystery surrounding them so that scientists can get to work finding out what they are. I suspect that people have even been killed by UAPs, and it is about time we all woke up to the danger (ufologists included). The danger is probably at least as remote as being struck and killed by lightning, but if science had refused to study that because it had become deified by modern society then where would we be? Not only would more people die than is strictly necessary but we would have failed to understand and harness one of the most powerful forces in the known universe. I suspect that the understanding of the physics of UAPs may be equally valuable, and on the strength of that who can argue that UAPs are unimportant?

There may well be several different UAPs, and some, no doubt, are relatively harmless; atmospheric phenomena akin to wind vortices for example. But others seem to generate broad-band radiation, such as microwaves, and certainly can be deadly under the wrong circumstances. The piezo-electric effect, which is a kind of electrical signal squeezed out of rock crystals under pressure, which can theoretically create plasma-like phenomena in the atmosphere, is yet another likely UAP. This particular kind of phenomenon seems to relate to fault-lines and possibly earthquakes. It is quite feasible that an understanding of it will be of interest to those searching for means to predict and prevent earthquake disasters.

All of this seems far removed from what most regard as ufology, as does the study of human perception in anomalous situations, another highly significant by-product of the UFO enigma. But UAP investigation and research is real. It can be, and is being, done. For example, after Paul Devereux (a British researcher) wrote his epic work *Earth Lights* in 1982, he joined forces with a handful of leading

UFO, earth mysteries, and psychic researchers to plan Project Gaia. This long-term research study is actually testing many parameters of specific theories of UAP origin and seems likely to lead to major scientific discoveries. The fact that scientists involved with the team include sociologists, physicists and geologists, illustrates the depth of research that can be undertaken thanks to an understanding of UAPs. We believe this is pointing the way for the ufology of the future.

Naturally we face a major difficulty. There is a great social myth of the UFO phenomenon which turns any light in the sky (be it Venus or a UAP) into alien spaceships. This must be overcome. The term UAP must enter our vocabulary, and only ufologists (or uapologists?) can lead the way. It is our firm duty to distinguish these decidedly real and scientific phenomena from the elusive, and quite possibly illusionary, UFOs. Such a change will not happen overnight. We must begin to impress humanity with its need now.

Thus far we have accounted for a good proportion of the mythical, single 'UFO phenomenon', with a host of very different phenomena. Probably as much as ninety-eight per cent of the data is explicable in terms related to all of the above: normal IFOs, hoaxes and UAPs. This leaves us with a tiny residue that at first sight seems hardly worth making an issue out of. In the JR Set, for example, perhaps no more than twenty cases. However, throughout the world over the last thirty years that still means thousands of reports. So the problem is not as inconsequential as this might make it seem.

Even when we allow for UAPs with associated radiation, to explain some effectives and landings, we do have *apparently* controlled UFOs, as involved in certain radar cases, and photographs such as that from McMinnville (which is certainly not a UAP). All of this remaining data could, of course, be faked. Yet I find that very hard to swallow in view of the calibre of some of the testimony, and I have seen enough hints to suspect that there are more cases of equivalent status which many of us never get to hear about. In other words, I am forced towards the conclusion that exotic UFOs (whatever they may be) do indeed exist.

It is at this point that the hypnagogic and hypnopompic experience becomes important and we enter the shady world of hallucinations. We know little more about these than about UFOs, so to argue 'Fred didn't see a UFO, he hallucinated one' is passing

the buck. If we are seriously to propose that the close encounters of the fourth kind, or Contacts, are hypnagogic or hallucinations, as nowadays many researchers are prone to do, then we must find out what hallucinations are. As with our UAPs, a whole new vista opens up and demands exploration. The quest for truth in this area of the UFO subject may be the quest for the fundamental basis of reality itself. Yet many ufologists bemoan the fact that we are getting nowhere, because 'they' (meaning the UFO aliens) do not come along and give us all the answers on a silver platter.

The connection between these hypnagogic contacts and the 'gross exaggerations' we talked of earlier seems to me to be much closer than we have formerly suspected. In both instances there is an intense subjectivity, a lack of physical corroboration, and a dreamy atmosphere spiced by witness preconceptions and what he believes *can* happen. I suspect that the only real difference might be that in a gross exaggeration the stimulus is essentially objective (and so detectable if we search hard enough for it), whereas in the hypnagogic cases the stimulus may be rather more internal and elusive. But in each case the chief common denominator is the mind – or consciousness – for this is the nexus of the UFO experience, whatever its explanation. Indeed the more we look at Exotic UFO stories, the more we discover that this is true. Think of the 'Oz Factor' (where consciousness seems to detach itself from reality and enter a timeless world). Think of the mental disruption caused in many cases. Think of the severely hysterical reactions of some witnesses. Think of the psychic connotations claimed by some witnesses *and* researchers (psychic being a cop-out word for complicated aspects of consciousness phenomena).

What all this suggests to me is that the Exotic UFO phenomenon (which is, remember, just about two per cent of the phenomenon, but is what most people actually think of as *the* phenomenon) is primarily a mind/consciousness problem. This means that it is either fed *into* the mind from somewhere outside, or it emerges into consciousness from *within* the subconscious.

The ultimate truth may prove that both processes occur. Certainly the bedroom visitor type of experience is quite evidently an internal effect. The event feeds upon images borrowed from the mental store within a percipient's head. That is why sometimes the 'visitor' is clothed as a spaceman, and other times as a demon or a

ghost. It all depends upon the individual involved. It almost certainly is not as simple as this, but essentially that seems to be the way of it.

Theoretical arguments and research are presently going on into the possibility of some of the hallucinatory experiences being related to a type of UAP. I have noted in previous books how 'time-lapse' cases might be understood as periods of unconsciousness caused by a discharge from an atmospheric phenomenon. Dr Michael Persinger in Canada is actively proposing the idea that the UAP can 'scramble' the brainwaves of the witness and cause him to misperceive what he sees. This has much promise, for it would explain how a basic light phenomenon can be 'seen' as a landed saucer with little green men. Paul Devereux argues from the other direction; that the percipient mentally controls the actual physical shape of the UAP and moulds it like plasticine. This is akin to the discussion in *UFOs: A British Viewpoint*, where Peter Warrington and I suggest a similar mechanism. When I talked with Paul about these ideas we agreed that a sort of feed-back loop was possible; in other words the UAP triggers an hallucinatory effect but also releases unconscious mental abilities to manipulate the phenomenon. So it does appear to be based on the subjective mind content of the witness, but it is more objective than an hallucination because the basic substance of the experience is there in the sky to be moulded by the witness, using unconscious psycho-kinesis.

However, it would be unfair of me not to admit that in some respects the best answer to our puzzles remains the one long favoured by ufologists. The existence of a real alien intelligence behind the reports is positively favoured by our having reduced the core problem to such a small percentage. This is because one of the main arguments against UFOs being representatives of alien technology was the plethora of reports. There were too many data. If we have all these other phenomena complicating the issue, mixed in with a few genuine cases of advanced technology, that no longer remains so.

There are many points for and against an alien hypothesis. We can range against it the gross exaggerations (which certainly do appear to be internal constructions of the mind); the limited correlations between individual cases, and the great personal subjectivity of the closest contacts. There is also the alarming dearth of photographic evidence for apparently structured devices and the

total lack of movie film of such. All of this seems very damning.

Yet we have to place these negative points against a host of positive ones. There are subtle threads that link cases together; the same kind of UFO being seen in different circumstances that preclude collusion (see for example my book *The Pennine UFO Mystery*, Granada, 1983). We must ask why occupants would be present more often when the effects associated with the case become more severe. The apparently symmetrical trace marks, the few photographs we have, the radar cases and the presence of multiple witnesses – all of these argue against an internal origin. Multiple-witness hallucinations are exceedingly rare, and if more than one person hallucinates they should ‘see’ different things, which does not seem to be the way of it in UFO close encounters.

Whilst I am far from happy about such a conclusion, because it seems to be rather difficult to believe, the balance of evidence would apparently favour an external origin for what we previously said was in essence a mind/consciousness phenomenon. Something from outside is feeding data into our minds.

We could try to fall back on a physical UAP catalysing subjective experiences. Can we make that account for all the remaining reports? Or do we have an intelligence, which is purposeful, external, and in that sense alien, contacting us primarily by way of our consciousness? Both are viable alternatives, and both are speculative, in that I am aware of no other evidence that supports either one. The UAP which stimulates hallucinations would clearly be the most acceptable of the two since it presumes less, but unfortunately it has the most problems associated with it. To accept it we would, at least, have to reject the seemingly controlled object cases, the symmetrical traces which imply machine-like structures, the range of photographic and radar evidence seemingly verifying the same, and the multiple-witness contact stories.

It is so difficult to dismiss fairly all this evidence that we must do the people involved in such observations at least the justice of trying to build an acceptable hypothesis. I believe we can do so.

Imagine an intelligence ‘out there’. This *could* mean elsewhere in the universe, or in another dimension of existence, or as our own future descendants who have mastered time-travel, or any other speculative and quite unprovable concept. Now further assume that ‘it’ wishes to contact us. The traditional science-fiction view would have them land, say ‘take me to your leader’ (in perfect English of

course) and proceed to hand over the secrets of the universe. In fact all these assumptions fail to match up to how *we* would behave trying to contact another species on earth. So why should we bestow human logic onto beings which we are speculating may not even be human? The trouble is we tend to conjure up images of aliens who are merely pseudo-humans. If we were in contact with an alien intelligence it would hardly be surprising if we could not understand what was going on.

Under such circumstances one might expect us to conduct some sort of programme of study, that may go on for years until we were really certain of the 'other' species. During that period the species concerned may be only dimly aware of our existence and would certainly have no idea what we were doing. We would probe and experiment into any species which we suspected might have intelligence, because that intelligence could be of an order that we could not appreciate, at least at first glance. The probes would be designed to be unobtrusive and yet to extract as much information as possible. Such probes might seem pointless or even absurd to the suspected intelligence under surveillance.

Having evaluated our results what might be our next step? We might decide to try to communicate, but we would have to tailor our communication in a way that would make sense to the species concerned. So we would have to use what we had learnt so far to place the communication onto a meaningful level for the species. Otherwise the chances are they might not even realize they were being contacted. Quite probably we would single out a few members of this species and conduct ongoing experiments in communication.

Now it might not have escaped the notice of this assumed other intelligence (which here we are equating with ourselves under similar circumstances) that the one thing apparently universal to all intelligent life is consciousness. Since all forms of sentient life appear to form mental pictures, whereas they might not have mouths to 'speak' or eyes to 'see', then the obvious choice through which to attempt contact would be the mind, to feed in meaningful pictures direct to the consciousness of the selected representatives of the species. Hopefully, the species will pick up the essence of the message and will clothe it in personally relevant terms. The message 'we are alien' might be received and translated by a human mind in terms of a science-fiction 'spaceship' and a 'little green man'. The

precise format of the picture would not be important. It would be the underlying message that counts.

The UFO phenomenon does have the appearance of an intelligence on a totally alien level, communicating directly with man in this internal way. In this sense we would expect the UFO stories to mirror our own concepts and yet portray an incomprehensible underlying reality.

Of course, we would have to assume that the contact which occurs implants data which are meaningful, and this seems a stumbling block for the theory because the data do not appear meaningful. But I think there are clear indications within the records (indeed this is a common motif within contact stories) that data enter the subconscious of the witness and are being deliberately placed there by the phenomenon, rather than in an openly accessible location, for a number of specific reasons. Another contact motif which we can 'distil' from the stories is that at some future date 'they' will release simultaneous 'triggers' which will enable the information to flow into our conscious mind, just as post-hypnotic commands can be triggered by a subsequent key word and translated into conscious actions. At this future date a bit of alien knowledge will be in minds in Russia, a bit in America, a bit in China, a bit in Britain, and so on. No one culture or nation would possess the full answer, and, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, one bit on its own would be useless: There is only one way to solve the puzzle: bring everyone together and co-operate. In the mental puzzle to which we are referring that would require global unity.

If I were in charge of an alien surveillance of earth and had seen the mess we were in, then I would under no circumstances land in any one place and approach that nation's government with all the answers. Indeed, I would feel inclined to keep well clear of governments or government-backed scientists. No nation could be trusted with such power, as might emerge from an alien technology. Instead I would attempt a process of information contact like that just outlined, specifically choosing individuals without power or influence. I might even seed in the absurdities, and have fun spinning cock-and-bull stories to George Adamski and his mates. The result would be that science and world governments would be put off the trail. The real essence of the plot would be communication by the back door; the back door of every nation on earth at once.

The idea seems to me to explain a great deal, including why close encounter witnesses seem to be both 'psychic' and 'repeaters'. This is necessary because the selected species members would be part of a long-term contact experiment and might have been selected in the first place because their minds were easy to communicate with. Even the gross exaggerations could be understood, as mind manipulations by the originators of the phenomenon, using the fortuitous circumstances to put across their message. And, of course such a concept would go a long way towards explaining the complex variety of social reactions to the UFO phenomenon; and even give a plausible basis for a cover-up.

I know the theory presupposes a great deal, and I have no intention of trying to proclaim it as fact. I am merely suggesting an idea that seems to make sense. But *if* it is along the right lines then it has several implications.

For example, it would mean that contact might well be the true purpose of most real UFO encounters. Internal transfer of data, on a subconscious level, may occur far more often than we generally realize. Note the presence of the 'Oz Factor', which may well be a symptom. The contact cases we do discover may simply be the 'ones which got away', or more probably, the 'ones which were meant to get away'. As most of them come out by way of hypnosis I am suspicious of much of the detail. It is almost certainly human fantasy spun during the enhanced suggestibility of the hypnotic state, perhaps with a helping hand from the instigators of the contact. But it is not the detail that is important. It is the message buried in the depths of the mental sea. Only small parts of that message may seep through, even during the best hypnotic experiments.

Secondly, the theory presumes that the intelligence does not wish its existence to be proven beyond doubt. This fits well with the fact that after so long we still have only suggestive proof, but nothing absolutely acceptable to all. As Aimé Michel speculated, the phenomenon does prevent objective proof being obtained, just as it helps to destroy the credibility of the witness after the contact. The suicide syndrome is the work of the phenomenon. Once truly fantastic stories are fed into the mind of the witness his credibility is severely damaged and the contacts can go on practically unhindered with very little chance that many will take the person seriously enough to put the contact project at risk. The result is a series of baffling paradoxes. The aim is to tantalize and lead onwards but

always to maintain mystery. These must be essential ingredients of the long-term programme (which may be long or short in our terminology).

Bear in mind that the one tangible result of forty years of UFO activity has been a belief in aliens amongst the grass-roots of society. Not science. Not (at least officially) the governments, but ordinary people. Any nation that suspected this hypothesis would have a very strong motivation to play down the significance of the phenomenon and cover up what information it did have – the desire to get to the truth first, or a fundamental suspicion of the motives of this other intelligence. Both make sense.

I could be wrong, in whole or part. Many others have been before me. The UFO phenomenon is a speculator's paradise. Certainly I would urge you to remember that whilst talk of UAPs and hypnagogic experiences are supported by hard and fast evidence and, in my view, are proven components of the UFO enigma, the above arguments about an alien contact programme are nothing more than theories which I believe make sense in the light of the highly complex evidence we see before us.

I mean you to take it seriously, but I cannot prove that it is correct. Yet there may be ways to prove or disprove it and I feel we should search for them. You may indeed like to hope that these ideas are pure fantasy, but you should always ponder one disturbing question:

What if I am right?

Note:

Readers who wish to correspond with the author on the concepts expressed in this book are invited to do so. You are also welcome to tell me of your own strange experiences (in confidence if desired). Please write to:

9 Crosfield Road, Somerville, Wallasey, L44 9EH.

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Useful Addresses

Publications:

Magonia, 64 Alric Ave, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4JW.

Flying Saucer Review (FSR), West Malling, Maidstone, Kent,
ME19 6JZ.

Northern UFO News, 9 Crosfield Rd, Somerville, Wallasey, Wirral
L44 9EH.

Fortean Times, BM-FORTEAN TIMES, London WC1N 3XX

Common Ground, 56 Ring Rd, Knighton, Leicester LE2 3RR.

The Ley Hunter, PO Box 13, Welshpool, Powys, Wales.

Organizations:

UK: BUFORA (British UFO Research Association)

Publishers of BUFORA Bulletin & Journal of Transient
Aerial Phenomena; distributors of PROBE. Britain's oldest
national UFO society.

6 Cairn Avenue, Ealing, London W5 5HX.

CONTACT: Formed in 1969 by the now Earl of Clancarty,
Brinsley Le Poer Trench.

48 Crown Rd, Wheatley, Oxfordshire.

USA: Center for UFO Studies

Founded in 1974 by Dr J. Allen Hynek, the world's most
respected UFO researcher. Holder of UFOCAT, the

biggest computer data repository.
PO Box 1402, Evanston, Illinois 60204.

AUSTRALASIA: UFO RESEARCH AUSTRALIA
Co-ordinates regional groups with the corporate title and works to a highly respected standard with some excellent publications.
PO Box 229, Prospect, South Australia 5082.

NB There are many other UFO societies throughout the world, a good many of which are worthy of your support. It would be impossible to list them all, but the above key centres will advise if there is a group more local to you.

Further Reading

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The Condon Report, section 6–3: Dr M. W. Rhine, ‘Psychological aspects of UFO reports’

C. Green and C. McCreery, *Apparitions* (Hamilton, 1975)

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Gordon R. Taylor, *The Natural History of the Mind* (Secker & Warburg, 1979; Granada, 1981)

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Chapter 8

R. Jones-Pugh and F. W. Holliday, *The Dyfed Enigma* (Faber & Faber, 1979)

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The Condon Report: R. Craig, 'Indirect Physical Evidence' (Bantam, 1969), pp. 97–115

Chapter 10

The Condon Report: R. Craig, 'Direct Physical Evidence' (Bantam, 1969), pp. 86–97

Chapter 12

J. Randles and P. Warrington, *UFOs: A British Viewpoint* (Robert Hale, 1979), Chapter 6 – for a basic discussion of radar systems in the UK

A. Hendry, *The UFO Handbook* (Sphere, 1980), Chapter 18 – for an excellent consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of civil, military and weather radar in the USA

R. Story (ed.), *The UFO Encyclopedia* (NEL, 1980), G. Thayer, p. 293 – for a good synopsis of anomalous propagation

The Condon Report (Bantam, 1969), G. Thayer, pp. 115–76 (case studies) and R. H. Blackner, pp. 655–716 (optics) – for a highly technical discussion of radar in application to specific UFO cases

Chapter 13

The Condon Report (Bantam, 1969), W. K. Hartmann, pp. 75–86 (see also Case Studies 46, 48, 50, 52–7, 59)

J. Randles, *UFO Study* (Robert Hale, 1981), Chapter 11, pp. 135–47 R. Richard and R. Kelly, *Photographs of the Unknown* (NEL, 1980), pp. 42–66

Chapter 14

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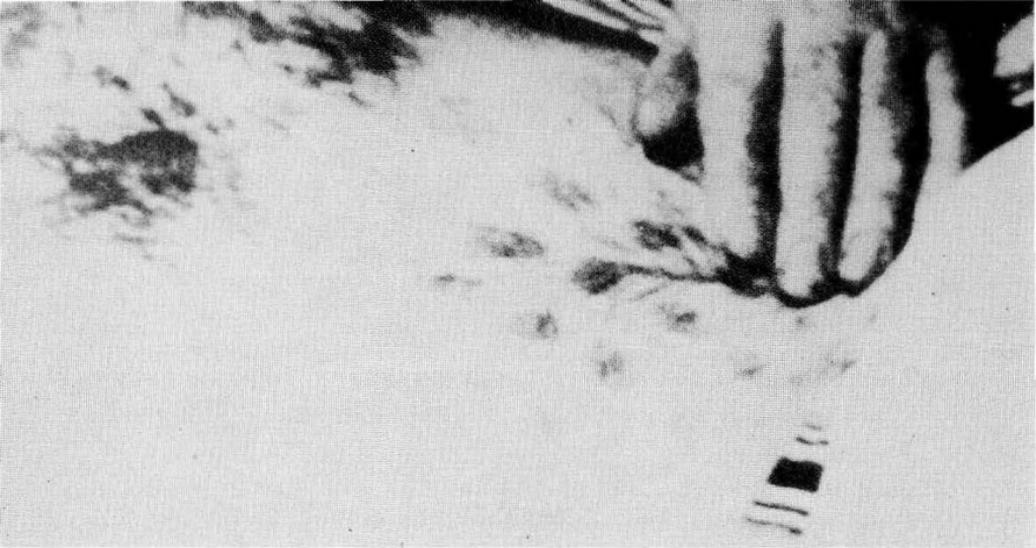
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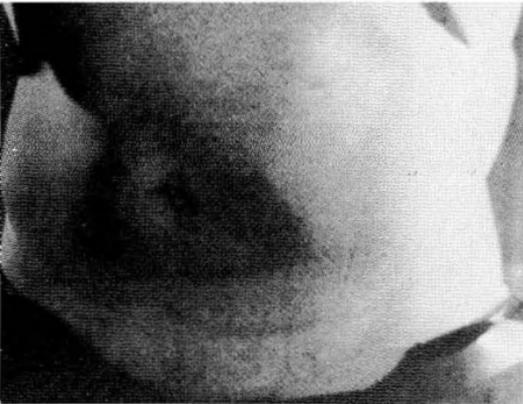
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1. The Imjarvi, Finland, close encounter as featured on the cover of *Flying Saucer Review*.



2. The checkerboard pattern of burns on the chest of Steve Michalak which he claimed to have received from the exhaust grill of a landed UFO.



3. The curious triangle skin marking which appeared on the Frenchman Dr X, after his UFO close encounter.

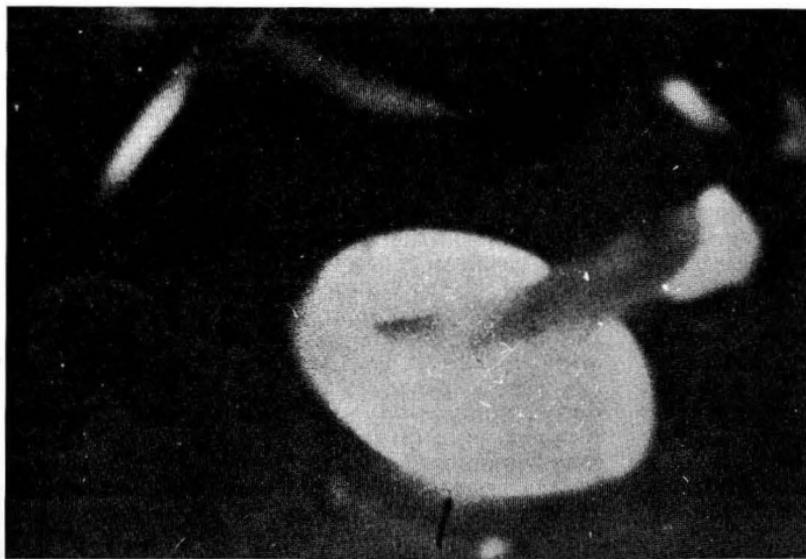


4. This photograph supposedly shows a captured dead alien in military hands. Nothing is known of its origin or veracity. It could well be a hoax.



5. Typical of UFO 'landing traces'. This oval patch was found in a Lancashire field after the witness claimed to have seen a UFO there. The story is inconclusive and the mark does resemble those left by certain kinds of fungal growth.

6. The inconclusive, but unexplained, photograph taken by security guard Edward Kerringham at Greave, near Rochdale, in May 1975.





7. A hoax photograph. This fabrication was part of a conspiracy using a car hubcap.



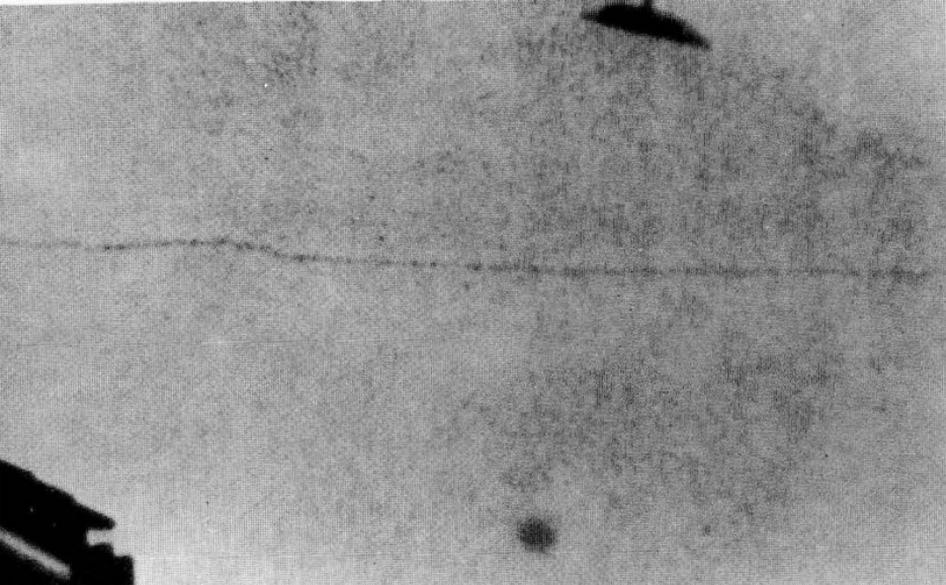
8. An 'accidental fake'. Whilst trying to photograph a suspected UFO (which turned out to be an aircraft) the witness inadvertently captured a room light reflecting on the window glass. The aircraft is arrowed.

9. An identified photograph. The Irish witness took a time exposure of this 'UFO'. It later proved to be the planet Venus.

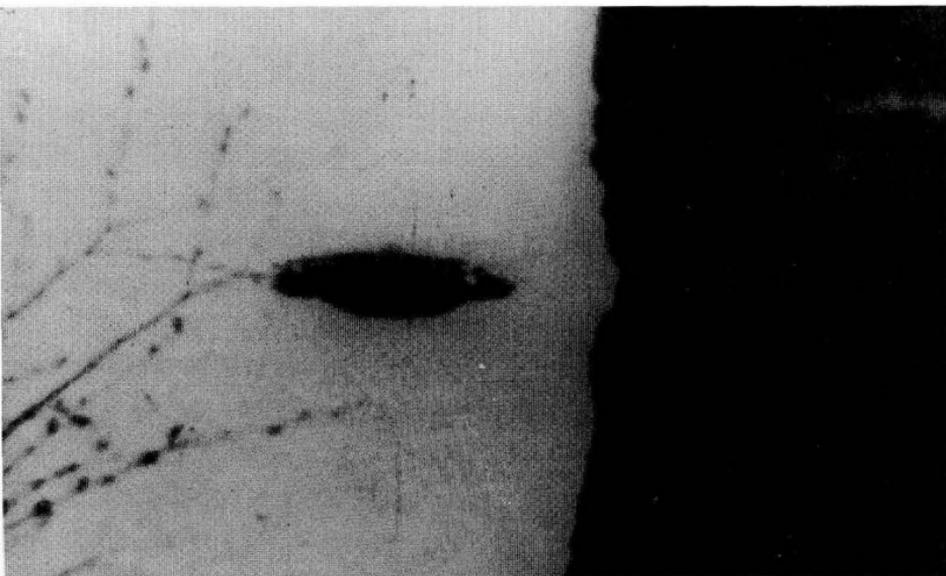




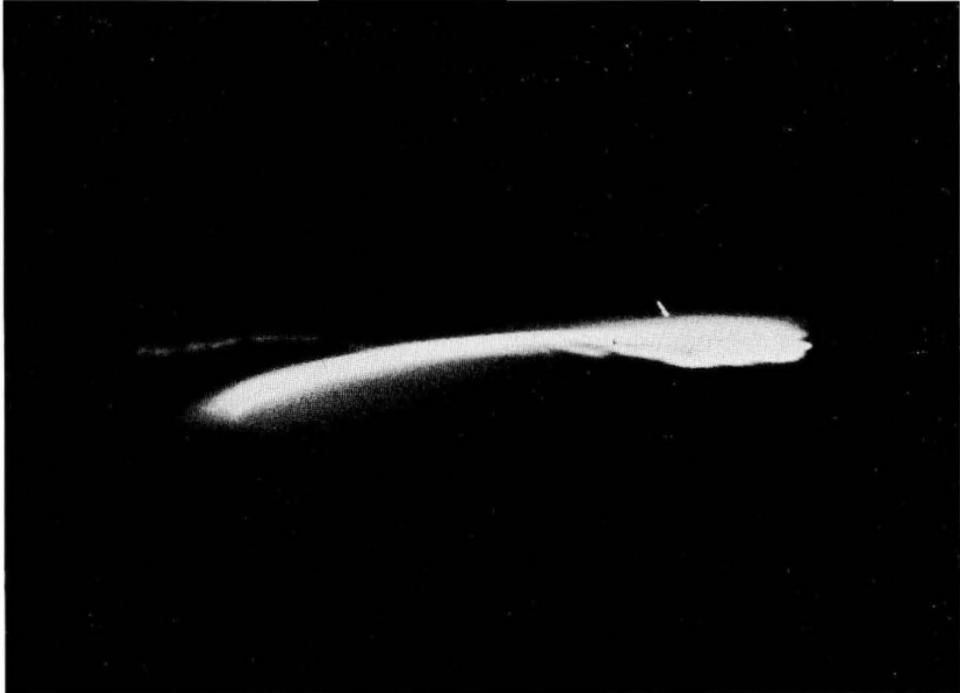
10. The photograph allegedly taken by police officer 'Bob Bland' in his bedroom at his Rochdale home, July 1975.



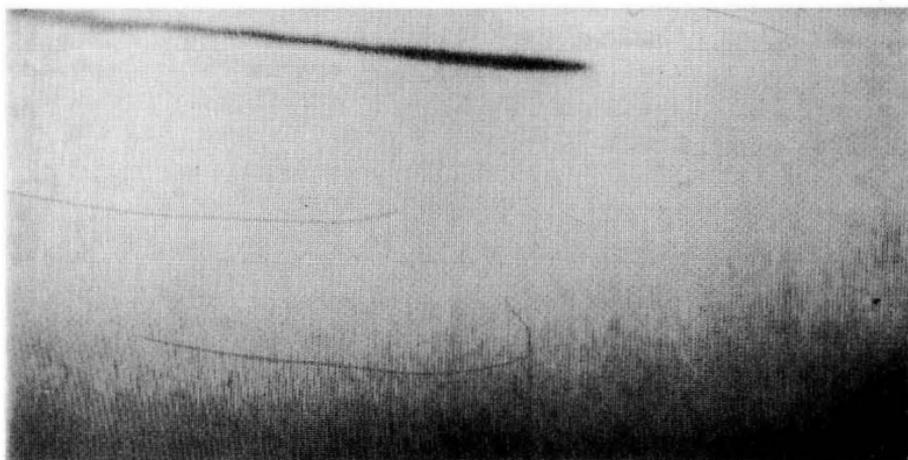
11. One of the famous McMinnville, Oregon, photographs taken by a farming couple in May 1950. This is one of the very few cases which does provide firm and substantial evidence for an exotic UFO.



12. One of the few very detailed UFO photographs. This is one of two taken in Sweden in May 1971. The two images were close enough to afford a limited type of stereo viewing. This indicated that the object was large and at some distance beyond the wall and tree shown in the frame.



13. One of two colour slides brought back to England by two men who observed the spectacular UFO event over the Canary Islands in March 1979. Several quite independent sequences of this phenomenon exist on film.



14. A still from the Luke Air Force base, USA, movie film. Taken by the gun camera of a US Air Force plane in March 1953 and still unexplained.



15. One of the most puzzling photographic anomalies to emerge in recent years. Experiments using film sensitive to infra-red light have led to strange images appearing when nothing was visible to the eye. Terry Cox is one

of curious results at sites in Cornwall. This 1978 photograph shows an object he calls "The Black Hole". It is interestingly regular in outline. If any reader can explain this effect the author would like to hear from him or her.

UFO REALITY

JENNY RANDLES

This third book in Jenny Randles' authoritative trilogy on the UFO phenomenon is a major statement about what has become the greatest mystery of our age. Bringing together a wealth of information and analysis the author squarely faces fundamental questions: are reports of strange unearthly beings really true? Is mankind in contact with an alien intelligence?

In setting out to produce this work the author determined to lay aside all previous thinking and let the evidence dictate what it would. The reader is enabled to share in the excitement of the hunt for solutions as data build up. Individual chapters are devoted to matters such as physical effects on witnesses, ground traces, radar trackings, movie films and artefacts left by UFOs, and packed with cases from all over the world, selected by the author as the most reliable we have. As back-up she provides examples and statistics from a personally collected and evaluated sample of over 1,000 reports. From this mass of information startling new concepts and theories arise.

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Jenny Randles UFO REALITY

About the author

Jenny Randles studied physics at university and later trained to be a teacher. Since 1978 she has been a full-time writer and researcher and become recognized as one of Europe's leading authorities on UFO phenomena. She has made many TV and radio appearances and has addressed the House of Lords All Party Study Group on UFOs. She is the investigations director for the British UFO Research Association and coordinator of investigations for the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena. Her many publications include the best selling *UFOs: A British Viewpoint* and *UFO Study*, both published by Robert Hale. She lives in Wallasey.

Jacket photo (by courtesy of Peter Day): frame from ciné film taken on 11 January 1973, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

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JENNY RANGLES

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