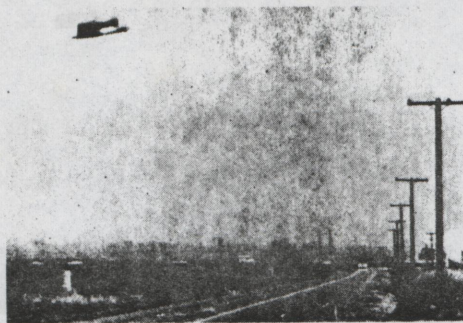


# UFOs A LOAD OF BALONEY?

When I took part in a "phone-in" programme on LBC (London Broadcasting Company) on 19th May, one caller dogmatically informed us that UFOs were a 'load of baloney', and couldn't possibly be visitors from outer space. He implied that anyone who 'believed' in them needed their head examined. Well I am not in the believing business, but I do regard UFOs as a subject worthy of serious scientific study. Millions of people the world over have reported strange objects or lights that they were unable to identify, and ufologists are interested in determining the cause of all these reports. Perhaps our LBC caller would maintain that life-peer, Lord Kings Norton, an engineer and scientist with a long association with terrestrial flying machines, and with a distinguished public service career, needs his head examined? Kings Norton, although adopting a sceptical approach to UFOs is nonetheless President of the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA). He is a prominent member of the "House of Lords All-Party UFO Study Group", which is open to MPs (Patrick Wall MP is a regular attendee). The 'Lords Group' was formed following a three-hour debate on UFOs in the Chamber on 18th January 1979, initiated by the Earl of Clancarty. Clancarty, BUFORA Vice-President, and founder of an international UFO group called "Contact", has written five popular UFO books under his other name of Brinsley Le Poer Trench. Even Woolworths sell them! The 'Lords Group' has held 16 meetings with speakers from the USA, Canada, Denmark, Spain and Italy. This May, Fred Hoyle, 66, distinguished astronomer, and author of sci-fi stories like "A for Andromeda" addressed their Lordships. The Duke of Edinburgh is known to have had a passing interest in UFOs for many years, and recently expressed interest in attending a meeting at the House of Lords. Lord Clancarty commented: "It has given the subject a marvellous fillip!" Clancarty told me that he hoped to have a seminar after the summer recess to discuss the objectives of his group. Some members suspected that there had been a Whitehall 'cover-up'. Should they probe under the blanket of secrecy?

Both their Lordships along with several hundred ufologists attended the 2nd London International UFO Congress at the Mount Royal Hotel, Marble Arch, over the Spring Bank Holiday, a premier event in the UFO-buffs' diary. Delegates came from Reykjavik, Toronto, Washington, etc. and a Soviet Air Attaché was also said to have been present! Dr Bruce Maccabee, an optical physicist from the USA, whose work for the US Navy is classified, outlined new information gleaned from the American intelligence agencies (FBI, CIA etc). There have been some startling attempts by the US Air Force in years past to track and detain UFOs, not to mention landing cases. What information there is, has been prised out of the authorities using the full weight of the Freedom of Information Act. Pressure groups argue that we badly need a FOI Act in the UK, but both Tory and Labour



*UFO photographs are easy to fake, and are only as valid as the story that comes with them.*



governments have been patronisingly obstructive.

There are rumours that a UFO and its small dead 'humanoid' occupants crashed near the Roswell Air Force Base in New Mexico in 1947. After being held at other bases, it is suggested that the 'remains' are now housed at the McDill A.F.B. in Florida, or at the CIA compound at Langley Field, Virginia.

Congress-speaker, Joaquim Fernandes, a newspaper journalist from Portugal, concluded from his researches in the Sanctuary archives at Fatima, that the "Marian Apparition" of 13th October 1917, witnessed by thousands, and events leading up to it, were more than a purely religious experience. He presented evidence of possible extra-terrestrial interference.

It must be emphasised that there are other theories to explain UFOs, besides the popular space vehicle one. These include the little known, and not understood natural phenomena of ball-lightning and earthquake lights. Perhaps some UFOs represent psychic or paranormal events, or some kind of mental projections? Even time-machines and parallel universes have been suggested. After careful investigation, only 5 to 10% of reports turn out to be potentially unexplainable. With no disrespect to witnesses, many cases turn out to be mis-identifications of man-made objects, perhaps seen under unusual conditions, or natural phenomena.

Reports in the UK have decreased in recent months, but we have been alerted to major activity in both Spain and China. The SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST of 1st February 1981 says that the China UFO Research Organisation, founded in May 1980, at Wuhan (city) University, had looked at 77 reports in 1980. One report from a

group of machinery workers on a prawn fishing-expedition on 5th October 1980 told of a smallish UFO at about 3,000 feet, which gave off such an intense heat that it was like standing under a stove. A whistling sound was heard and it also sent out a powerful light like a welding arc. Fortunately for the witnesses the event was limited to 10 seconds.

Sound featured in a UK sighting on 2nd September 1980, investigated for BUFORA by Tony Fox. A husband and wife living at Crawley, West Sussex, were awakened by a noise that seemed to shake the house. On checking their 12-year-old son (perhaps to see what he was up to?) they found him wide awake. He claimed that a large round object, compared to a tennis ball at arm's length (this would make it very large!) had disappeared over the trees. It seemed to make a sound that was both low and high-pitched, and he saw a number of small white lights on it. His drawing suggests that it was not an aircraft, although the possibility of a meteorite must be considered as they sometimes produce sonic bangs. But why didn't the neighbours hear it? We have heard rumours of strange activity in Rendlesham Forest, east of Ipswich, E. Suffolk, near Bentwaters US Air Force Base. UFOs were said to have been tracked on both civilian and military radar, and that landings had taken place. All this is said to have occurred from the end of December and on into January, and involved amongst other things a UFO crashing in the forest. If this story proves to have substance, I will give you fuller details in a later issue.

An intriguing report currently under investigation was reported in the *Rosendale Free Press*, dated 11th April 1981. Simon Hayworth, 13, and Mark Ashworth, 16, of New Church, Near Bacup, Lancashire, claim they saw a 6 foot high orange cigar-shaped object, coming down. It had lots of coloured lights and hovered, before disappearing behind a low wall. The boys gingerly looked over the wall but found the object had disappeared. They hurriedly set off for home. Suddenly, down a lane they saw a creature nearly 5 foot tall shaped like a ten-pin bowling pin. It had no eyes, mouth or ears, but they said it had a lump like a small swelling on one side of its head. In fact the 'forehead' seemed to over-shadow the 'face' area. No arms or legs were seen, and a long black shiny garment hung over the body. To their horror it just appeared to float along. The boys ran like mad to get home. The parents of Mark, told UFO investigator Alan Bramhill, that the boy arrived home absolutely terrified.

Incidentally, should you have the urge to do some sky-watching, you could try looking out for the Capricornid and related meteors from mid-July. These "slow-moving" shooting stars are usually yellow, and last into August, but reach a peak towards the end of July. Happy watching! ■

**Lionel Beer is a Director, founder and former chairman of the British UFO Research Association. He co-ordinated the First London International UFO Congress at the Mount Royal Hotel in 1979, and his UFO class at Morley College, Lambeth, was featured on national television news the same year. He published his own UFO magazine, SPACELINK for five years, and is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.**