

Abduction Watch 7 February 1998

KNITTING FOG AROUND CHOCOLATE TEAPOTS

The recent 'Abductions' conference at Southport produced the most constructive debate of the subject I've yet heard. It was a well-organised, balanced, purposeful day, and I hope that the plans Tim Matthews has for an event on a larger scale will be realised in the near future. Thanks to all those involved, definitely including Eric Morris!

David Caton and Harry Harris - see below - came up with some intriguing material on behalf of Quest International, and Jenny Randles began, with style and conviction, the long journey which will eventually lead to the removal of the Rendlesham case from the diminishing list of genuinely unsolved UFO mysteries.

Shock of the day, however, came from the BUFORA NIC, Gloria Dixon, who told us about the number of children, age 9 upwards, who are phoning and E-mailing BUFORA because they have become convinced that they are abductees. I'll hope to return to this issue, but for now two thoughts come to mind.

Firstly, that it's vital that there is a competent, accessible, national UFO organisation to provide a service of this kind, with somebody as sane and competent as Gloria to deal with those calls. And secondly, that we would be inviting tragedy if we left this difficult task to some of the crackpot UFO organisations and individuals who advertise their investigative services so freely. To me, this is the best argument yet for us to throw our support behind BUFORA, and ensure that it is a positive, active, intelligent organisation, able to command the authority and respect that no other national investigative organisation could possibly be seen as fit to assume.

Dead Loss

The first part of the 'Quest International' presentation at Southport came from one David Caton. I'd already, in my talk, explained how both MAFF and the RSPCA know nothing of the many extraordinary 'animal mutilations' reported repeatedly as having been investigated by Tony Dodd. Caton said nothing to counter my comments, but explained that Quest had some involvement and support in its investigations from a Professor Freemont, "Professor of Pathology at Manchester University", who had been shown photos that were somehow stronger than those published in *UFO Magazine*. Caton said the Professor's view of some of the evidence was that "He doesn't think it's humanly possible".

This appears to be a Professor A J Freemont, Professor of Osteo-articular Pathology at the University of Manchester. I was surprised that he appears to be qualified in human, rather than veterinary, pathology, but I have written to him enclosing some of Dodd's speculations on the links between dead animals and aerial light phenomena, my letters from MAFF and the RSPCA, and the advert for the Solihull Conference, all mentioned in earlier issues of *AW*. I asked him a variety of questions about his own views, and particularly whether he feels it is important that mysterious animal deaths should be dealt with by the Police and RSPCA.

I'll let you know what, if anything, the Professor has to say, but the real mystery here is this. To read Dodd's articles about UK mutilations, you'd think that there were numerous investigated cases, across a range of species. He's published pictures of dead deer, foxes, a lamb and a hedgehog. He writes about sheep and badgers, and that "I now have evidence that shows creatures as small as mice have been killed and their rectums cored out". Yet Caton explained that, despite spending money on advertising in the agricultural press, and though Professor Freemont is apparently keen to investigate a mutilation, Quest has not been able to supply him with one single carcass. Not one! Nothing but photos. Surely, it cannot be that Quest's written claims are not based on competent investigation of the physical evidence, on investigation of the carcasses of the animals themselves. Surely, those claims can't just be based on photographs, phone calls, and mere assertion. Can they? Possibly?

Alison's Balloon

Considerable excitement arose from the presence of Harry Harris, who spoke as part of the Quest presentation. He introduced one 'Alison', a young woman who had, it seems, videotaped an interesting aerial object for a number of minutes, from both inside and outside her house. To me, it looked like a balloon. I know very little about aerial phenomena, but a competent research group had also, apparently, reached that conclusion previously, among others. Harris gave some apparently persuasive reasons why it was not, but it seems that no analysis of this intriguing - and, if of a genuine unknown, potentially extraordinarily valuable - tape has been made by anyone not associated with Quest International.

'Alison' seemed lively and intelligent, and particularly remarked on the efforts Harris had gone to in locating her. She talked about making the video, and then Harris showed and explained it, and made the point that the circumstances of its making, and linked events, suggested that Alison had experienced a period of 'missing time' when she had moved from inside to outside her house. Harris said to me afterwards that "It's this missing time that intrigues me about UFOs".

I don't know how events moved from suspicion to investigation, but Harris then told us that he had arranged for 'Alison' to be hypnotically regressed by a currently practising GP, who had attended a hypnosis course for dentists. He named this GP, whose name I will not repeat at this stage. I don't know whether 'Alison' is registered as one of this person's patients.

Harris explained that 'Alison' "became very distressed and frightened under hypnosis", and recalled that she had been "taken from her home into a black hole". Given the choice of continuing the session or breaking it off - a choice signified, I think, by shrugging one shoulder or the other - she chose to break it off. I don't know whether there is an intention to regress her again, but I had the impression that 'Alison' regarded what she said under hypnosis as being a recollection of a real event. If so, I imagine that she must be living with a number of unanswered, and worrying, questions.

It is, of course, very rare for a case of this kind to have been given so much publicity: particularly a Quest case. It is unusual for the practitioner who used recovered memory, and caused 'Alison' "to become very distressed and frightened", to be identified, and in view of

the information we now have about the failure rate of recovered memory techniques, and the problems they have caused (see AW6), I don't feel that the matter should just be left. Who knows what else 'Alison' might 'remember' in due course?

This is very difficult ground. I have no reason to believe that anyone is acting dishonestly, or improperly, or other than in accordance with what they regard as reasonable in the context of their own beliefs. I know that Harris is held in low esteem by a range of people in the field, but here he appears to be pursuing a matter that he regards as important, in a way that he considers responsible: at least he has sought the services of a qualified medical doctor, with a professional code of conduct, which is more than many others have done. His personal view of man's relationship with alien beings is, undoubtedly, very different to mine, and I guess that those views lead him to seek out witnesses, and to conduct investigations of this kind.

I very much doubt that the GP involved has breached what the General Medical Council (GMC) sets out as the 'Duties of a doctor'. I have written to this person (all GPs are listed in the *Medical Register* and *Medical Directory*), and without in any way identifying the GP involved, I have spoken to the GMC via their Helpline. They have sent me information, and suggested that while I could not make a complaint, even if I wished to, as a third party I may be able to seek the GMC's view on the use of regression hypnosis in these circumstances.

And that, particularly in the context of the recently published views, and disciplinary provisions, of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, is what I intend to try to do. Not to specifically name, or cause any difficulty for this GP, who has presumably only learned hypno-anaesthesia (I don't think dentists do a lot of regression work), and considers his/her actions to be therapeutic in resolving a difficult personal situation. But I think it's worth attempting to establish some parameters for the use of recovered memory techniques by professional clinicians in cases where the patient's 'problem' arises from belief in perceived events, rather than from identifiably real ones. This case appears to provide the opportunity to work towards achieving that end, and to be able to inform this doctor, and others, accordingly.

This case, which I'll refer to in future as 'Alison's Balloon' until proved wrong, may be one of the most crucial yet in understanding the way in which false memory and recovered memory techniques work. If thorough investigation is allowed, it could even be the case that makes - or breaks - abduction research in the UK, and possibly elsewhere. Here, thanks to the open approach taken by Harris, we have a clear proposition that a recorded event - the aerial object - is linked to an amnesiac episode and the 'recovered memory' of the witness to the recorded event that she was "taken from her home into a black hole". The nature of the interruption of the regression inevitably suggests that there was more to be told.

If professional, independent analysis of the video shows - and I suspect that the definition is sufficiently good to allow this - that the aerial object is of unmistakably terrestrial origin, then it would seem to be reasonable to conclude that the material 'recalled' under hypnosis was probably deeply flawed, and did not derive from the recollection of real events. It would strongly suggest that this method of investigation is seriously unreliable, even when implemented by a fully qualified GP, and that where recovered memories are not supported by objective evidence, their content might best be dismissed. It would also suggest that a

'witness' can display fear and distress under hypnosis, even where there is no 'real' stimulus for the display of those emotional states.

This information will, I am sure, be tremendously useful in understanding how the widespread belief in alien abduction has come about. I look forward to seeing the results of a professional, independent analysis of this unusual videotape being made public, so that these issues can be resolved to the benefit of all involved.

Nazi UFOs - more information

Unless some convincing evidence emerges unexpectedly, it looks as though most of the wartime 'Nazi UFO' material has its roots in disinformation, and its survival in naivete and inadequate research. Many thanks to those who've provided accurate information - particularly David Sivier and Dave Newton - which together with what I've found on the Net, a bit of book buying, and an utterly fruitless search of conventional histories of air warfare in WW2, brings me to this conclusion. (David Sivier has written a substantial and impressive article about Nazi UFOs for *Strange Daze* No 15, which should be out in the last week in February. For a copy of the excellent *Strange Daze*, please send £1.50 to Dave Newton at 2A, East Cheap, Heaton, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE6 5UA). Thanks, too, to Tim Matthews, who I criticised in AW5, and who, at his excellent Southport Conference, most generously acknowledged his mistake in taking some apparently authoritative reports as true. I wish that might happen more often!

We know that the Nazis had plans for all sorts of unlikely and impossible schemes and structures. Plans were what they were best at. It seems that they even had plans for circular flying machines, but that there is little or no evidence that any flew convincingly during the War. Apart from the writings attributed to 'Renate Vesco' - just one article and one book that has been published under various titles - there is no evidence at all for either the *feuerball* or the *kugelblitz*, the two supposedly spherical, powered, wingless, controllable German craft which are meant to have given rise to the reports and rumours (and these need some serious sorting) of 'foo fighters'. The 'foo fighter' material actually seems to relate to lights of assorted different colours, moving in hugely different ways, much of it reported by one squadron of US night bombers at a time when the flyers would have been very anxious, very afraid, and very anxious to look for lights.

There's more work to be done here, and I'm delighted that *Fortean Times* want to publish the conclusions. But just to concentrate on Vesco for a moment, does anybody have a photo of him, an old or current contact address, or any biographical material beyond, or supporting, 'his' claim in the 1969 *Argosy* article that he 'was a fully licensed aircraft engineer, specialist in aerospace and ramjet developments, attended the University of Rome, studied at the German Institute for Aerial Development before the war, worked with the Germans at the Fiat Lake Garda secret installations during the war, and in the sixties worked for the Italian Air Ministry of Defence as an undercover technical agent, investigating the UFO mystery'. I have copies of 'Man' *Made UFOs 1944-1994* by Childress and Vesco, and of W A Harbinson's 'Genesis' and 'Projekt UFO'. Copies or a brief loan of any other relevant material would be greatly appreciated. As of now, I rather doubt that Vesco ever existed. But if I'm right, who made all this up, and why?

No more Unnamed Soldiers?

Too much to hope, probably, but the lack of them has been noticeable in past three issues of both *Sightings* and *Alien Encounters*. Even Jon Dillon's started writing about dull old unidentified flying objects again! Probably pure coincidence, but I'm slightly chuffed! And lest we forget how this disinformation works, *Sightings* Vol 2 No 9 reprints, in an article called 'The Wicklow Hotspot', an undated newsclipping which reports that "SAS soldiers waiting to ambush IRA gunmen were stunned when ALIENS walked in front of their gun-sights, it was claimed yesterday . . . The "aliens" and soldiers stared at each other for a minute. Then the "spacemen" disappeared - and seconds later the eight SAS troops saw a flash in the sky. They were so disturbed by what they had seen they took the rare decision to abandon the stakeout. Their commander was furious . . . but the eight stuck to their story and it was accepted. Now, four years later, it has been revealed to an Ulster UFO study group by a former Army intelligence officer. Belfast-based expert Hugh O'Brien said, "We are trying to interview the soldiers even though some may be too embarrassed to come forward . . ." If anyone knows where Hugh O'Brien is now, I'll send him some relevant back issues of *AW*, and explain how this thing seems to work.

Meanwhile, I'd be interested to hear your views on this disinformation issue. It's become traditional, particularly among the tunnelling classes, to blame all that's odd and misleading on 'the government'. Secret bases, agreements with aliens, mind-control, psy-ops, nuclear bunkers for the rich and famous, the suppression of Reich and Schauburger, world government, the United Nations, the New World Order, Freemasons, and all the rest. This material has been linked to alien abductions in a sort of celebration of helplessness, suggesting that because the phenomenon is in some way real, and widespread, there can only be two choices as to why it is allowed to go on. Either the government is in league with the aliens, and permitting them to do what they do, or the government is doing it, and misleading us all by blaming aliens who may, or may not, really exist.

Let's consider the 'Unnamed Soldier' - and similar - material in this context. It promotes the concepts of our helplessness and our ignorance, as we try to cope with apparently overwhelming official secrecy. That secrecy, however, turns out to leak like a sieve, and we are given sufficient information to be able to blame the government, the armed forces, the Americans, the secret services, and in passing some aliens, whose role is primarily to have carelessly crashed on a lonely hillside having successfully navigated their way across billions of miles of interstellar space, before being collected and kept secret - a very bad secret - by various agents and employees of the aforementioned government.

I can see parallels here with the way in which the Patriot and Militia groups and beliefs have been led to develop in the USA, nurtured by a similar diet of disinformation about a federal government allegedly dominated by freemasons, financiers, and the New World Order, so that the believers are now locked in their own loop of exclusive, defensive, self-protective, self-perpetuating belief, where nothing that comes from official sources can be safely accepted. While I can see how tragic and ill-conceived events like Waco can fuel those beliefs, they seem to derive more from conspiracy theory and disinformation - from people like William Cooper and Texe Marrs, to give both secular and religious examples - than from any factual

basis. I can see no logical reason why that disinformation should have come from government sources.

Similarly, if the 'Unnamed Soldier' material is in any degree deliberate disinformation - and I think it probably is - then I can see no reason why it should have come from a government source. It decreases respect for the government, it promotes fear and loathing of government agents and employees, and it appears to tempt the young and foolish into illegally entering government establishments in the belief that they are so wise and uniquely informed that by so doing they will defeat all this secrecy, and carry the truth back to their chosen people. In that I assume that the UK government's intention is broadly, subject to a difficult mix of dogma and expediency, to promote the well-being of its citizens - and I work for the government in an area where I have a slight acquaintance with the development of social policy - there is no apparent sense in planting and distributing information of this kind. Information which, as we have found, remains convincing only so long as it isn't properly investigated. There might just be an argument that the government is running an experiment to test gullibility, to see just how readily, and consistently, people can be persuaded to believe in the impossible and the absurd. But that kind of research doesn't really need to be done. We know it all already.

So, whoever is spreading this nasty, pernicious material because they have wilfully decided to do so - rather than because they believe it to be true - appears to be committed to promoting fear, hatred, secrecy, divisiveness, and underpinning it all a complex tissue of lies on which all the above reactions depend. There are not only parallels with the kind of people who encourage the Patriots and Militias, but also, historically, with the peculiar attitudes and personal problems of witchfinders and exorcists, both ancient and modern, and with those who for millennia have promoted belief in an imminent, unpleasant, fear-filled end of the world. I guess that we're in the area of inadequate people finding a way to wield considerable power over others, but if anybody can explain exactly who chooses to undertake these dark and depressing tasks, and why, perhaps they'd be good enough to share the secret with the readers of Abduction Watch!

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Finally, a warm welcome to *Magonia* readers who have just joined us, and many thanks to Mark Pilkington, who has elegantly linked *AW* back issues to the *Magonia* web site, itself a gem well worth your attention. Thanks for your letters, which are always welcome. I'll be back again in March with comments on *The Threat*, the gruesome new book from David Jacobs, discussing who the real threat is and, hopefully, seeing if Jacobs' publishers will explain why they are so involved with material of this kind. I'll include several damning judgements on the reliability of recovered memory coming from the US courts, ponder whether the Lynton & Lynmouth floods really were caused by cloudbusting and, with luck, share with you the earlier, and distinctly different, version of 'Alison's Balloon'!